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04 - 10 July 2025

[www.newsdayonline.co.ls](http://www.newsdayonline.co.ls)

Vol 07 No 21

**M6.00**

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# CABINET COMPLETELY SILENT ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

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# Cabinet completely silent on youth unemployment

**Seabata Mahao**

Less than a month after Prime Minister Sam Matekane dramatically declared youth unemployment a national disaster, the cabinet has issued a detailed statement of its June 2025 decisions, without a single mention of the crisis.

On June 18, 2025, speaking at the National Youth Dialogue on Unemployment, Matekane announced that cabinet had taken the historic step of declaring youth unemployment a national disaster, following advice from the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) board.

"Let us remember that jobs are created by businesses and investors. The main responsibility of the government is to create a level playing field," Matekane said last month.

"Unemployment, especially among young people — the government sees it as a crisis. As a result, the Cabinet, on the advice of the DMA, has decided to declare that youth unemployment is a disaster. Relevant ministries are already working to ensure that there is a legal declaration so that the work can start," he added.

In a country where close to half of the youth remain jobless, the Prime Minister's declaration was widely welcomed by desperate young people and policy advocates alike.

It was seen as a moment of long-overdue recognition that the youth unemployment crisis is not just a development issue, it is a national emergency threatening Lesotho's stability, prosperity, and future.

In a statement on June 19, a coalition of youth organisations in Lesotho welcomed "the Prime Minister's declaration of youth unemployment as a national disaster", crediting sustained advocacy, peaceful mobilisation, and legal action led by young people for the landmark decision.

"This declaration is a direct result of the united voice of young people from civil society organisations, political party youth leagues, and individuals who came together to demand a bold and lawful action under the Disaster Management Act of 1997," the youth said.

"With over 48.8% of the youth unemployed, this crisis has claimed lives, dignity, and hope; but today we reclaim the narrative. This is not just a policy win, it is a declaration of truth," they added.

They further noted that youth unemployment has, for years, been a silent catastrophe, shattering futures through mental illness, poverty, drug abuse, crime, and hopelessness.

Now, they said, it has been officially recognised as a national disaster, one that warrants urgent attention, allocation of resources, and structured recovery efforts.

"We thank the Office of the Prime Minister for hearing the cries of young people and responding to our call. We also honour every young person who stood up, spoke out, and marched forward with courage and conviction. To the youth of Lesotho, this is your vic-



Minister of Communications, Information, Science and Innovation Nthathi Moorosi

tory. To the government, this is just the beginning — not the end," the statement read.

However, in the cabinet's official June communique released on Wednesday, which details government decisions on a wide range of issues, from internet governance and international conferences to water laws and funeral arrangements, youth unemployment is nowhere to be found.

The communique was read by the Minister of Information, Communication, Science, Technology and Innovation, Nthathi Moorosi.

The June cabinet statement runs several pages, detailing international meetings, internet governance forums, and proposed water legislation.

There is no policy update, no response plan, no budget commitment, and no mention of the so-called disaster declaration.

According to the communique, the cabinet approved several key resolutions during its June 2025 sitting, ranging from internet governance and drought preparedness to water legislation and royal celebrations.

Among the notable resolutions, the cabinet approved government support for the funeral expenses of the late Honourable Justice Winston Churchill Matanzima Maqutu, recognising his significant contributions to Lesotho's judiciary.

In a move to bolster disaster resilience, the cabinet endorsed Lesotho's subscription to the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Ltd, which provides insurance for drought response. The aim is to protect vulnerable households and ensure food security in the face of increasingly erratic weather patterns.

The cabinet also gave a green light to Lesotho's application for membership in the African Network Information Centre (AFRINIC), a continental body responsible for internet resource management. Officials say the move is designed to improve internet governance and cybersecurity across the country.

Water governance featured prominently on the agenda, with cabinet approving the drafting of the Lesotho Bulk Water Authority Bill, 2025. The proposed legislation will establish a dedicated authority to regulate, manage, and distribute bulk water nationally.

Preparations are also underway for the 62nd birthday celebration of His Majesty King Letsie III on July 17, 2025, in Berea. As part of the festivities, 1,146 medals will be awarded to members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), and Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS).

In a symbolic gesture tied to Lesotho's

200th anniversary, cabinet also approved the release of 240 prisoners, highlighting themes of forgiveness and rehabilitation.

The Cabinet further reviewed and endorsed Lesotho's participation in several international and regional forums, including the 49th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group Session in Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on human rights, the US-Africa Business Summit in Luanda, Angola, aimed at boosting tourism and trade, and the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain, for resource mobilisation.

The 51st SACU Council of Ministers Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa; IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington, DC, and the upcoming Internet Governance Forum 2025 in Oslo, Norway, were also mentioned.

Cabinet was also briefed on efforts to develop a national labour relations communication strategy to strengthen ties between government workers and administrators, and on Lesotho's planned participation in PANAFCON 3 in Zambia and the SADC Ministers' Meeting on Energy and Water in Zimbabwe.

The omission of unemployment has sparked outrage and raised serious concerns about whether the government is backpedalling on its commitment or simply using strong language for political effect without any intention to follow through.

This silence is especially glaring considering that youth unemployment is at crisis levels in the country.

When delivering the 2025/2026 Budget Speech earlier this year, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, highlighted youth unemployment as one of Lesotho's most pressing challenges.

"I wish to bring to your attention a significant challenge that our country is confronting — youth unemployment," she said.

Citing the 2024 Labour Force Survey, Matlanyane revealed alarming statistics that underscored the urgent need for intervention. Of the 760,230 Basotho aged 15 to 35, approximately 145,087 are currently unemployed.

"This figure is striking. Nearly 39 percent of our youth actively looking for work are unable to secure a job. This situation represents more than just numbers; it reflects postponed aspirations, unfulfilled potential, and futures that remain uncertain," she said.

The Minister expressed particular concern over the gender disparity in youth unemployment. While the overall youth unemployment rate is 38.9 percent, young women face a higher rate of 40.8 percent, compared to 37.1 percent for young men, and without a coordinated government response, frustration continues to grow.

The lack of Cabinet follow-up also raises questions about the role of the DMA, which Matekane cited as the body that recommended the disaster declaration. To date, there has been no information on how the DMA intends to treat or respond to youth unemployment within the national disaster framework.

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# Ministry unveils reforms to National Volunteer Corps

## Ntsoaki Motaung

The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development has announced major reforms to the National Volunteer Corps Programme, aimed at improving transparency, accessibility, and effectiveness for young people across Lesotho.

Speaking at a press briefing on Thursday, Minister Pitso Lesaoana unveiled a new on-line application system set to go live next week, marking a shift from the program's long-standing in-person application process at the ministry's Maseru headquarters.

Launched in 2009, the National Volunteer Corps Programme has historically required applicants to submit forms in person, a practice that, according to Lesaoana, has disadvantaged youth outside Maseru.

"It is difficult for young people from districts outside Maseru to complete their applications, so much so that it seems that it is intended to benefit only young people in the Maseru district," the Minister said, citing findings from a recent internal review.

The review also uncovered other operational issues, including inactive individuals who remain registered on the system and weak transparency in volunteer placement.

To address these concerns, the Ministry is launching a digital application portal that will allow youth to submit applications re-



motely from anywhere in the country. The application link will be shared via the Youth Department's Facebook page starting July 4, 2025, and the system will officially go live on Monday, July 7, 2025.

The platform will include features such as frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a submission tracking tool, making the pro-

cess easier and more transparent for applicants.

In addition, the Ministry will implement a new "Proof of Life" requirement. Every three years, unplaced volunteers must re-register to confirm their continued interest in the program. This is intended to keep the database up to date and ensure active participa-

tion.

The government aims to enroll 2,500 youth into the program in the current financial year, starting with an initial intake of 104 youth in July. The programme's core goal remains to instill patriotism and offer practical work experience in various government departments.

Meanwhile, Minister Lesaoana also highlighted the success of the Pathways to Sustainable Livelihoods Project (PSLP), another key youth initiative under his Ministry. The project equips young people and vulnerable groups with entrepreneurship skills and startup support to help them launch small businesses.

To date, 950 youth have benefited from the program in five local councils: Thaba Mokhele (Mohale's Hoek), Metsi-Maholo (Mafeteng), Tosing (Quthing), Phuthiatsana (Berea), and Bolahla (Leribe).

This year, the Ministry aims to assist an additional 1,140 young people in the same councils. The application process is already underway at the council level, and selected participants will receive training in business development followed by financial support to launch their ventures.

"It is important to note that youth who have previously participated in the PSLP will not be eligible to reapply," Lesaoana emphasised.

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# PSFL wants hybrid SEZ model to spur industrialisation

## Staff Reporter

As Lesotho advances plans to establish Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to stimulate industrial growth, the Private Sector Foundation of Lesotho (PSFL) has weighed in with proposals for an ideal SEZ model tailored to the country's unique economic environment.

The PSFL recommends that SEZ enterprises be required to source a portion of their inputs locally and offer training to upskill local workers.

It also advocated for strong Public-Private Partnerships, suggesting the adoption of Build-Operate-Transfer schemes and private management of government-owned zones, similar to models in other countries such as neighbouring South Africa and Pakistan.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development has drafted the Special Economic Zones Bill, 2025 based on the adopted SEZ policy, and is currently seeking stakeholder input before presenting it to Parliament.

The Bill aims to establish a legal framework for the creation, regulation, and administration of SEZs, with the broader goal of attracting investment, accelerating industrialisation and generating employment.

By definition, SEZs are geographically defined areas offering targeted incentives and streamlined regulations to attract business. Globally, SEZs have played a key role in job creation, export growth, and economic transformation.

Lesotho's recently adopted SEZ policy aligns with the Extended National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II), which focuses on building a strong industrial base, attracting quality foreign investment, and reducing the cost of capital for SEZ ventures.

Prior to the policy's adoption, Newsday raised a controversial point that suggested the government intended to commit to a 99-year agreement with iSwiss, a supposed Swiss financial group, for the development of these SEZs.

But the plan seems to have been abandoned,



as the adopted policy has ditched the iSwiss idea and makes no mention of it like in the draft policy.

One of the draft SEZ Bill's key proposals is the creation of an autonomous regulatory body known as the Special Economic Zones Authority. The authority will be responsible for regulating and licensing SEZ developers and operators, monitoring compliance, and managing SEZ operations.

It will be governed by a nine-member board with expertise in trade, investment, economics, and SEZ management, drawn from both the public and private sectors.

Labour issues are also addressed in the Bill, by mandating SEZ operators to give employment priority to Basotho nationals, and implement skills transfer programmes among others.

In terms of community impact and environmental protection, the Bill requires SEZs to respect the rights and customs of local people, promote mutual development programmes, and ensure cultural sensitivity.

The draft also proposes the establishment of an SEZ Arbitration Tribunal to resolve private law disputes arising within SEZs. Additionally, an SEZ Court with exclusive jurisdiction over all other matters, including criminal cases, is proposed to streamline legal processes.

PSFL's Chief Executive Officer Thabo Qhesi

has welcomed the Bill's inclusion of the local private sector, but stressed the need for a hybrid model that balances government oversight with private sector efficiency.

"A hybrid model combines government oversight for policy alignment with private sector expertise for operational efficiency. Successful SEZs, like China's Shenzhen or Jamaica's logistics-centric zones, leverage private sector involvement to attract investment while maintaining regulatory control," said Qhesi.

He added that the SEZ Authority should function as a quasi-governmental body with sufficient autonomy to avoid bureaucratic red tape but should report directly to a high-level office, such as the Prime Minister's, for effective coordination and political backing.

Qhesi advocated for strong Public-Private Partnerships, suggesting the adoption of Build-Operate-Transfer schemes and private management of government-owned zones, similar to models in South Africa and Pakistan.

He also emphasised the importance of integrating SEZs with the local economy.

"SEZs succeed when they offer clear, stable incentives and foster integration with the local economy to avoid enclave-like structures, as observed in Jamaica's early SEZs."

The PSFL recommends that SEZ enterprises be required to source a portion of their in-

puts locally and offer training to upskill Basotho workers. It further suggests focusing on three priority sectors to broaden Lesotho's industrial base: cannabis production and export, agro-processing, and light manufacturing.

"Cannabis Production and Export: Capitalise on global demand for medicinal cannabis, ensuring compliance with international regulations; Agro-Processing: Develop food processing industries linked to local agriculture, as prioritized by the LNDC, to enhance food security and export potential; Light Manufacturing: Target electronics components and automotive parts, as suggested by the LNDC, to attract FDI from Asian and European firms."

The foundation emphasised that Lesotho should position its SEZ strategy to take advantage of international trade agreements like AGOA (if renewed) and regional trade deals, while building value-added production chains to avoid over-reliance on imports, as seen in the textile industry.

To ensure long-term sustainability, PSFL recommends that stakeholder engagement and capacity building be built into the SEZ legal framework. It pointed to countries like Ethiopia and Morocco, where collaboration between government, the private sector, and local communities has been key to SEZ success.

Community engagement should be prioritised to ensure social benefits such as jobs and skills development. Additionally, partnerships with development agencies like UNIDO and the World Bank could help equip Basotho workers and entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to participate meaningfully in SEZ activities.

"In conclusion, an effective SEZ Authority for Lesotho should adopt a hybrid public-private model, prioritising streamlined governance, targeted incentives, and infrastructure development," PSFL stated. "By focusing on cannabis, agro-processing, and light manufacturing, and ensuring local economic linkages, Lesotho can diversify its economy and attract sustainable foreign investment."

PSFL encouraged the government to draw lessons from global SEZ success stories while addressing domestic constraints such as bureaucracy and infrastructure gaps.

It also recommended consulting international resources like the UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub and seeking technical support from UNIDO to strengthen implementation.

# EU reaffirms commitment to stronger ties with Africa at Maseru luncheon

## Ntsoaki Motaung

The European Union (EU) reaffirmed its commitment to deepening partnerships with African nations during a special luncheon held in Maseru on Wednesday, bringing together alumni of the European Union Visitors Programme (EUVP) and participants of recent regional journalism seminars in Brussels.

The event served as a platform for reflection, networking, and the celebration of the longstanding relationship between the EU and Lesotho.

Among the distinguished guests was Relobhile Lebeta, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and EUVP alumna. Lebeta was joined by journalists Khotsofalang Koloi, Kabelo Mollo, Thoboloko Ntšonyane, and Rapelang Radebe, who recently took part in the EU's regional seminar for journalists in Brussels.

Participants shared their experiences from their visits to EU institutions, reflecting on the opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between Europe and Africa,



particularly in governance, media development, and resource management.

Lebeta commended the EU for its continued support to Lesotho's water sector; highlighting projects like RENOKA and Metsi a Le-

sotho, which aim to improve access to clean water, especially in rural communities.

She described her EUVP experience as eye-opening, especially in areas related to water governance, climate change, and ca-

capacity building. Lebeta also noted meaningful discussions on the Kimberley Process and the global diamond trade, emphasizing the growing importance of transparency and traceability, particularly in the face of synthetic diamonds.

Journalist Khotsofalang Koloi praised the EU programme for empowering Basotho media professionals with tools like access to the European Council Newsroom, enabling more accurate and comprehensive coverage of international affairs and high-level visits involving Lesotho officials.

Koloi added that this access helps local media overcome resource constraints, allowing for improved reporting on international developments.

He also reflected on one of his key takeaways: the mutually beneficial nature of EU-Africa relations, particularly around Africa's natural resources and Europe's ageing workforce, which could create new opportunities for African professionals.

Paola Amadei, Head of the EU Delegation to Lesotho, said the EUVP is designed to foster connections between Basotho professionals and their European counterparts. Amadei noted that the inclusion of Basotho journalists and officials in the programme reflects the EU's growing investment in strengthening its partnership with Lesotho.

"The EUVP creates opportunities for knowledge exchange and long-term collaboration," Amadei said, adding that such initiatives are essential for building mutual understanding and stronger diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties.



# Phapano claims he co-owns LEC

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Energy, Tankiso Phapano, has made a startling claim before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that he owns a 50 percent stake in the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) by virtue of his position as PS — a statement that has raised eyebrows and ignited fierce backlash in Parliament.

Appearing before PAC this week during a tense session focused on allegations of interference in LEC operations, Phapano defended his actions and asserted that he shares equal ownership of the national power utility with the Deputy Principal Secretary.

Phapano told the Committee he holds 50 percent shares in LEC and the Deputy PS holds the other 50 percent in response to questions about his involvement in operational decisions at LEC, including the dismissal of senior staff and control over tender processes.

The claim sent shockwaves through the committee, with members visibly stunned and questioning whether Phapano fully understood the legal and corporate structure of state-owned enterprises.

Commentators this week strongly rebuked the assertion, calling it misleading and dangerous. They said LEC is a public institution, not Phapano's private business. The people of Lesotho are the shareholders through the government, not him.

Official business registry records contradict Phapano's claim. According to documentation obtained from the Ministry of Trade's business registry, the Government of Lesotho, care of the Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, is listed as the sole shareholder of LEC.

The controversy adds to a growing list of allegations against Phapano, including

claims of interference in World Bank-funded energy projects and sidelining of the Lesotho Electricity Company's management structures.

The PAC is probing whether his actions have derailed major infrastructure developments meant to expand access to electricity in both urban and rural Lesotho.

This week, senior LEC officials appeared before PAC and detailed how Phapano allegedly overstepped his authority in matters concerning the national utility. The officials claimed his actions had compromised key projects, including those funded by international partners such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

One of the most contentious issues presented to the Committee was Phapano's unilateral dismissal of Mokheseng Mokuoane, project manager for the Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP), which is funded by the World Bank. In a letter terminating Mokuoane's contract, Phapano accused the suspended LEC Managing Director, Mohlomi Seitlheko, of being hesitant to take action against the project manager.

PAC members were critical of Phapano's decision, arguing that he had no authority to fire an LEC employee who reports to the Managing Director.

Appearing before the committee, Seitlheko testified that while the evaluation of one of the LREEAP tenders took place within the LEC's Project Implementation Unit (PIU), the awarding of the contract was done at the Ministry of Energy. This, he said, violated standard procedure, as the LEC had been tasked with implementing the project.

He further noted that LREEAP guidelines clearly state the utility must implement the project with the Ministry of Finance serv-

ing as the approving authority.

Seitlheko also told the committee he had no recollection of LEC issuing a tender for the Belo Substation.

Another project under scrutiny was the Tikoe infrastructure project, where the government has built factory shells intended to attract investors and create jobs. The Committee heard that the project has run over budget and been delayed due to incomplete work by contractors.

Litšitso Mahao, project manager within the AfDB-funded PIU, echoed concerns about Phapano's interference. He told the Committee that negotiations for further LREEAP components, which were scheduled to resume in January 2025, had stalled because of the PS's decision to suspend the process, despite prior approval by the funders. Phapano had allegedly wanted to renegotiate the scope of the work, something the funders said they would only consider responding to in September 2025.

Mahao noted that one of the delayed components was the Khukhune project, which was intended to feed power to the Belo electrification scheme.

The PAC also heard claims that the Ministry of Energy had "captured" the functions of the LEC's PIU, with staff now sidelined and projects micromanaged directly from the ministry.

When questioned about a recent World Bank inspection mission (16–23 May 2025) to assess progress on LREEAP, Phapano was unable to provide a clear response regarding the delegation's feedback.

Tensions in the hearing room rose when conflicting testimonies emerged. While Mokuoane claimed that LEC did not have an operational PIU, Mahao insisted it existed but had been sidelined.

Phapano denied all allegations.

PAC Chairperson, 'Machabane Lem-



phane-Letsie, lambasted Phapano for his apparent disregard for the Committee and Parliament. She condemned his public comments on radio, where he defended his position and criticised the PAC.

"This is where you set the record straight, not in the media, not on the radio," she said firmly. "This will be part of the report. We are not going to listen to the radio."

She further warned Phapano, stating: "The Committee won't just stand by and watch him do as he pleases with Basotho. Your problem is that you want to do as you please, and I will not allow that. This does not make you a hero, but a 'zero.'"

PAC member Dr. Tšelisio Moroke also reprimanded Phapano: "MPs are sent by the people, while you were hired based on your qualifications. This behaviour won't take us anywhere. You are going to respect Basotho."

Throughout the session, Phapano appeared defensive, a posture that lawmakers interpreted as disrespectful, further fueling tensions between him and the Committee.

# High Court halts eviction of Roma street vendors

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The High Court of has temporarily blocked an attempt by the government to evict street vendors and small business owners from their operating spaces in Roma, pending a final decision on the legality of the eviction order.

In an urgent interim order granted by Justice 'Maliepollo Makhetha on July 3, 2025, the court ruled in favour of the Roma Street Vendors Association, Container Ma-Foso General Café, and OB Joint (Pty) Ltd, who had jointly challenged the directive issued by the Manonyane A04 Community Council, which had ordered them to demolish their business structures and vacate their current location.

The respondents include the Secretary of Manonyane A04 Community Council, Manonyane A04 Community Council, Maseru City Council (MCC), the Roads Directorate, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Attorney General.

According to court documents, the vendors argued that the decision by the council was made arbitrarily and without proper justification. The court issued an interim relief, directing that the applicants should not be evicted until the matter is fully ventilated in court.

The court further ordered that the respondents must file their answering affidavits by July 11, 2025, applicants are to reply by July 16, file heads of argument by July 22, and respondents to do so by July 24.

A rule nisi has been issued, calling upon the respondents to show cause on July 28, 2025, why the eviction order should not be declared unlawful and set aside.

Manonyane A04 Community Council is required to dispatch to the court and applicants' attorneys, within three days, a full record of proceedings and the reasons behind the eviction decision.

The court emphasised that its interim relief, preventing the eviction and demolition of the structures, takes effect immediately.

The Roads Directorate has launched a campaign to raise public awareness, particularly among street vendors, about the illegal encroachment of road reserves, a campaign that has met resistance in some quarters.

While some vendors have vacated the areas following extensive consultations, others have quietly returned, setting up makeshift structures once more.

Lesotho's road network is classified into four categories based on size and function.

Class A roads are the main arteries, linking major towns, district centres, and border posts.

Class B roads are secondary roads that connect nearby districts and link smaller centres to the primary network.

Class C roads are local roads within districts that typically connect to Class A or B roads.

Class D roads are access roads that reach villages or small settlements.

Each road class has its designated road



Judge 'Maliepollo Makhetha

reserve and building restriction zone, areas meant to be kept clear for safety, maintenance, and future development.

Vendors operating near the main gate of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Roma had been ordered to vacate by this week.

The directive came as the Roads Directorate began reconstruction of the road stretching toward Semonkong.

Officials say the informal structures are unlawfully occupying land designated as a road reserve. This is not the first time the

vendors have been asked to move. Earlier this year, they were informed that their stalls were infringing on legally protected road reserve space.

The university itself has previously raised concerns over the growing number of informal traders near its campus, citing safety and aesthetic considerations.

However, vendors argue they position their businesses near high-traffic institutions like NUL because that is where their customer base—students, staff, and visitors, is concentrated.





# Newsday Business

## New border reform to curb tax evasion

**Seabata Mahao**

Lesotho has introduced major trade reforms to boost indigenous Basotho participation in foreign trade and curb tax evasion by tightening regulation of trade agents.

Un-

veiled during a press club session hosted by the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa – Lesotho Chapter (MISA), the new measures form part of the Business Licensing and Registration Regulations, led by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development.

At the centre of the reforms is the new Code 8294 in Schedule 34, which reserves the role of foreign trade agents exclusively for indigenous Basotho.

“Licensed agents are now authorised to solicit orders on behalf of international suppliers and are empowered to act as exclusive local representatives,” said RSL’s Client Education and Training Officer, Relebohile ‘Molaoa. “These agents will be legally recognised in all customs and import declarations.”

Starting from July this year, only registered Basotho agents will be allowed in customs declarations, a move intended to enhance tax enforcement and limit informal dealings with foreign firms. This reform follows years of

revenue losses due to unregistered intermediaries.

To enforce the new rules, RSL is introducing the Agent of Foreign Firms (AFF) Declaration process, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding signed in June 2024 with the Agent of Foreign Firms Association of Lesotho (AFFAL).

The concern, however, from other sections of the society regarding the signed MoU with a single body, is what happens to other agents of foreign firms that are not affiliated to AFFAL.

The new declaration process is to be integrated into ASYCUDA World system and the Private Sector Revenue Management (PSRM) system to strengthen oversight.

“This is about restoring order and fairness to our trade environment,” ‘Molaoa said.

In a parallel effort to enhance public service delivery, Ntebaleng Makharilele, Team Leader at the Digital Services Office, introduced a new customer feedback platform allowing clients to rate RSL services and submit complaints or praise.

“This platform gives our clients a voice and helps us assess and improve service delivery,” Makharilele explained.

MISA Lesotho’s Chairperson Kananelo Boloetse praised the reforms and the session’s educational value, calling on journalists to inform the public accurately.

“We must be vigilant in correcting biased narratives and promoting transparency,” Boloetse urged.

The event concluded with a joint call for greater cooperation between the media, government agencies, and the public to foster accountability in Lesotho’s trade system.

The reforms align with the 2024–2027 Corporate Lesokoana Strategy and the Media Relations Strategy, which prioritise public awareness on key policy shifts.

### TSEBISO! TSEBISO!

Mona ke tsebiso ea hore re le litho tsa mokhatlo oa Bahoebe Mafeteng (Mafeteng Chamber of Business - MCB). Re lahlehetsoe ke tokomane ea molao oa motheo oa mokhatlo. Nomoro ea ngoliso ke 2004/50.

‘Me re kopa mang kappa mang ea ka tholang molao theo ona kappa a ka bang le khanyetso ea taba tse na a italehe liatreseng tse na, nakong ea beke tse tharo (3) ka mora phatlalatso ena.

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# Mochoboroane highlights Lesotho’s progress in cancer fight

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoboroane, says the country has made meaningful progress in its fight against cancer, with support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Rays of Hope Initiative.

Speaking at the Rays of Hope Ministerial Meeting in Addis Ababa, Mochoboroane announced that, for the first time, Lesotho is now providing chemotherapy treatment for certain cancers within its borders.

He described this development as a major milestone, noting that previously, patients had to travel abroad, often at great financial and emotional cost, to access treatment.

He indicated that this is a big step forward for the country as it reduces the burden on patients and their families.

He said the government has also invested in human resource development for cancer care.

“We have trained nurses in oncology, supported doctors to specialise in medical oncology, and initiated training for radiologists and medical physicists,” Mochoboroane said, adding that efforts are also being made to strengthen services in surgical oncology, pathology, palliative care, and psychological support.

Despite this progress, Mochoboroane acknowledged challenges remain. Newly trained staff still require hands-on experi-



ence and mentorship.

He stressed the need for exchange programmes, continuous professional development, and academic partnerships to ensure that healthcare professionals are fully prepared by the time Lesotho’s first Comprehensive Cancer Centre opens.

He described the centre as “a bold statement of hope and national intent,” and noted that with the guidance of the IAEA, Lesotho has developed a detailed plan for its construction and long-term operation. The plan includes a modern facility design, cost-effective equipment choices, and a clear sustainability model.

Mochoboroane said the project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which calls for reducing non-communicable diseases and ensuring access to healthcare for all, including those in remote areas.

However, the Minister also spoke candidly about the country’s limitations. As a landlocked nation, Lesotho depends heavily on neighbouring countries to import essential cancer medications and radiotherapy supplies.

The country’s lack of pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity and the impact of global supply chain disruptions continue to

strain resources.

To address this, he said Lesotho is exploring smarter procurement strategies, regional collaborations, and support for local production and storage of cancer treatment supplies.

Another concern, he noted, is the retention of skilled healthcare workers. Like many developing countries, Lesotho faces a “brain drain” as professionals leave for opportunities abroad.

The government, he said, is working on improving career paths, providing incentives, and building a work environment that fosters compassion, purpose, and national pride.

He indicated that Lesotho’s vision is clear: a country where cancer is not a death sentence, but a fight waged with dignity, modern care, and a strong health-care system.

Mochoboroane expressed confidence that the partnership with the IAEA and others through the Rays of Hope Initiative is bringing this vision closer to reality. “The road ahead is steep, as steep as our mountains,” he admitted, “but our determination is just as strong.”

He concluded by calling for continued collaboration, deeper partnerships, and shared learning.

He said Lesotho hopes its Comprehensive Cancer Centre will not only serve the country but also become a regional leader in cancer care. He also underscored the importance of prevention, saying: “A fence at the edge of a cliff is always better than the ambulance at the bottom.”

# Africa CDC engages Lesotho media in strengthening public health communication



Africa CDC Engages Media in Lesotho for Continental Health Strategy

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

In a major step towards bolstering Africa’s public health defences, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) recently convened a high-level Focal Group Discussion in Lesotho, bringing together local media stakeholders to discuss their critical role in Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE).

Held as part of a continent-wide assessment, the session aims to lay the groundwork for a unified, standardised approach to public health communication across all

African Union (AU) member states.

Paidamoyo Magaya, head of the RCCE unit at Africa CDC, said the assessment is currently being conducted in 10 AU member states, including Lesotho and Malawi, with support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

The findings will inform the development of a continental RCCE guideline to improve preparedness and response to disease outbreaks and health emergencies.

“Our mission is to safeguard Africa’s health,” Magaya said. “This exercise is a crucial step in building a harmonised response

strategy and ensuring we have effective RCCE systems in place before the next public health emergency hits.”

Magaya stressed the essential role the media plays in public health.

“We understand and appreciate the media’s role in disseminating accurate information, addressing misinformation, reducing stigma, and driving community awareness,” she said.

“This dialogue is a chance for us to understand your experiences, achievements, and challenges in communicating health messages in Lesotho.”

The session promoted open discussion, encouraging media professionals to share their successes, challenges, and how they interact with communities to promote health and behaviour change. It also explored how key institutions like the Africa CDC and Lesotho’s Ministry of Health can better amplify community voices through media partnerships.

Lio Kariko, Africa CDC’s Regional RCCE Technical Officer for Southern Africa, outlined the objectives of the grassroots-level assessments.

“We are assessing how different AU member states implement RCCE behaviour change interventions and tools. This will help us establish a baseline to inform future interventions,” she explained.

Kariko emphasised that RCCE strategies must be rooted in the lived realities of each member state. “By engaging ministries of

health, media, and civil society, we’re aiming to understand how public health messages are currently delivered and how we can support improved coordination,” she said.

The assessments will culminate in detailed reports submitted to Gavi and Africa CDC leadership, identifying gaps and areas for support. These findings will guide Gavi’s investments in strengthening RCCE capacity across the continent, tailored to each country’s needs.

Kariko highlighted recurring outbreaks like cholera, malaria, and measles in the Southern Africa region as key motivators for the initiative.

“Outbreaks like measles require strong community engagement and communication strategies to counter vaccine hesitancy and misinformation,” she said.

“The media is the link between the work we do and the people we serve,” Kariko added. “It’s crucial that you not only understand the technical side of our work but that we also learn from your day-to-day realities, what works, what doesn’t, and how Africa CDC can better support collaboration between the media and public health authorities.”

Magaya concluded by reaffirming Africa CDC’s commitment to a member-driven approach. “Everything we do must be guided by the needs and priorities of each member state. Collaboration is the cornerstone of effective public health response.”





# Newsday Opinion

## Future-proofing careers in an agile era: A call to action for Lesotho and beyond

**Thato Ramafu**

Youth unemployment in Lesotho stands at a concerning 38 percent, with young women facing an even more acute rate of 41 percent. This crisis is not unique to the Mountain Kingdom; across Africa, countries such as Eswatini and South Africa report youth unemployment levels above 50 percent.

These statistics reflect a deeper issue, the disconnect between education systems, labour markets, and the rapid evolution of career landscapes worldwide. While hundreds of students graduate annually in Lesotho, formal employment opportunities remain limited, leaving a significant proportion of the population underutilised and underprepared for the future of work.

A rapidly changing world of work

Globally, the nature of employment is undergoing seismic shifts. Technological advancements, especially in artificial intelligence (AI), are reshaping the skills that matter. As Wharton professor Ethan Mollick has emphasised, workers must learn to collaborate with AI rather than fear its encroachment. The future of work will favour agility, the ability to adapt, learn continuously, and use digital tools effectively.

In this evolving environment, career paths that will remain relevant over the next decade and beyond are increasingly defined by flexibility and innovation. Content creation, for example, has emerged as a legitimate and thriving profession. Digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Substack and podcasting networks now support millions of careers globally.

The green economy is also gaining momentum, requiring professionals who understand sustainability and climate resilience. Meanwhile, technical and vocational skills continue to underpin in-

dustries and infrastructure, offering reliable and future-proof employment.

Reimagining career expos

Despite these shifts, career expos, in Lesotho and elsewhere, too often remain anchored in outdated models. They tend to highlight traditional professions such as law, teaching, and finance, while neglecting the burgeoning digital and entrepreneurial sectors that young people are increasingly drawn to. This is a missed opportunity.

To be impactful, career expos must evolve into dynamic, future-oriented experiences. They should introduce young people to the digital economy, creative industries, and innovation hubs. Fields like digital marketing, coding, online branding, and e-commerce deserve strong representation.

It would be especially powerful to see corporates make space for young success stories such as Arnold Mohapi, a rising star in Lesotho's creative and digital landscape, who exemplifies how passion, digital savvy and innovation can converge into a meaningful career. Such figures would provide invaluable insight and inspiration, showing attendees that it is not only possible to succeed in new industries but that the path is already being paved by Basotho talent.

Young people should be able to engage with online career platforms, understand freelance and remote work opportunities, and be equipped to access international markets from within their local context. Entrepreneurship, too, must be elevated as a desirable and realistic career choice, not just a fallback.

The digital divide in Lesotho

One of the greatest barriers to future-focused careers in Lesotho is the digital divide. Many young people remain excluded from online opportunities due to limited internet access, lack

of digital literacy, and minimal exposure to financial technologies. For a generation that could easily plug into the global economy, these obstacles are both frustrating and entirely preventable.

To address this, Lesotho must prioritise investments in internet infrastructure and digital education. Ensuring that every young person can access affordable, reliable internet is not just a technological issue; it is a matter of national economic resilience.

Equally important is enabling youth to sign up for international platforms, including freelance sites, remote work portals, and digital learning ecosystems.

Supporting youth through policy and innovation

There are encouraging signs of progress. The Lesotho government's allocation of M400 million for youth-led businesses signals a commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation. Moreover, youth-focused initiatives such as the Lesotho Youth Power Hub are playing a key role in empowering young people to take part in shaping national policies and solutions.

However, these efforts must be amplified and made sustainable. The private sector, particularly corporations and conventional businesses, must also recognise their role in shaping the future workforce. They can do this by participating in reformed career expos, supporting internship schemes in future-ready sectors, and helping bridge the skills gap through mentorship and training.

Global insights, local action

This issue is not confined to Lesotho or Africa. Globally, young graduates are questioning traditional career trajectories. In his influential book *Moral Ambition: Stop Wasting Your Talent and Start Making a Difference*, Dutch historian Rutger Bregman critiques the flow of top university graduates into finance and consulting, which he describes as the "Bermuda Triangle of talent".

He challenges young people to pursue high-impact, meaningful careers that contribute to society, a call that resonates strongly in contexts like Lesotho, where the need for socially and economically transformative work is urgent.

Conclusion: A collective responsibility

Lesotho stands at a crossroads. With one of Africa's youngest populations, the country has an opportunity to lead by example in redefining what career success looks like in an agile era. This will require a united effort, from government, educators, businesses and civil society, to ensure that the youth are not only prepared for the future of work but are empowered to shape it.

The PR and Brand Network is no stranger to this mission. As it celebrates its 10-year milestone, the organisation is soon hosting a pivotal Masterclass designed to bring together diverse voices in the same room, from internship applicants and media representatives to industry experts, influencers, local artists, and artist managers.

The event aims to create an engaging and empowering environment where attendees can gain critical knowledge, insights, and practical skills. The Masterclass will serve as a powerful platform to equip participants with the tools and expertise needed to thrive in the evolving worlds of PR, branding, and modern-day careers.

By embracing innovation, reforming traditional career guidance, and bridging the digital divide, Lesotho can unlock the full potential of its young people. The agile era is already here. It is time our systems caught up.

## Who really runs LEC? Unpacking accountability in Lesotho's state-owned enterprises

**Theko Tlebere**

This week's lively parliamentary debates surrounding the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and the role of Principal Secretaries (PSs) in managing state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have highlighted a crucial question that cannot be addressed solely through political sentiment: Who is ultimately responsible for the governance and accountability of public entities? While it is commendable that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is diligently scrutinising the financial and governance practices of institutions like LEC, this moment necessitates a broader public understanding of the legal framework and governance norms that dictate the operation of state-owned utilities in a constitutional democracy.

The first point I want to make very clear from the beginning is that the law is clear, oversight is not management. The Public Financial Management and Accountability Act (PFMAA) 2011 clearly defines the role of a Principal Secretary.

As Chief Accounting Officers for their ministries (Section 5), PSs are responsible for ensuring that budget appropriations and transfers align with national policies. However, they do not possess operational control over SOEs. The PFMAA, under Section 40, designates the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a public enterprise such as the Managing Director (MD) of LEC with the responsibility for day-to-day management, internal controls, financial reporting, and overall operational efficiency of the enterprise.

This separation of roles establishes necessary checks and balances between policy formulation, the responsibility of ministries, and operational execution, managed by the board and management of the enterprise. When PSs exert managerial influence — whether formally or informally they undermine this constitutional and statutory framework, eroding institutional autonomy and exposing the enterprise to financial, legal, and opera-

tional risks. This issue transcends mere semantics; it reflects a fundamental concern regarding structural integrity in governance.

The second equally important point that I should make is that energy governance requires clarity, not conflict. And why is that? Lesotho's Energy Policy 2015–2025 envisions a professional, efficient, and transparent energy sector that balances public interest with market-based principles. The policy encourages increased private sector involvement, the independence of regulators such as the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA), and the establishment of predictable tariff frameworks to ensure sustainability and affordability. This model underlies the recent LEWA approved energy and maximum demand charges for 2024–2026, which were assessed on economic and technical grounds rather than being dictated by political motives.

Interference in the operations of a state utility by a PS, particularly when personal

or political tensions are present, undermines these broader policy objectives. Such interference threatens to dismantle corporate governance structures, create divisions among staff, delay strategic projects, and ultimately discredit the utility's capacity to deliver. The misalignment between strategic direction and political oversight leads to dysfunction at the core of national infrastructure planning.

When the relationship between a PS and a Managing Director deteriorates into animosity as appears to be the case with LEC, the result is institutional paralysis. Strategic plans are stalled or abandoned, internal controls weaken under politicised pressures, board members may become complicit or ineffective, and the organisation risks becoming a hollow shell bureaucratic in appearance but lacking functional power or strategic direction. This dysfunction





has tangible consequences for the ordinary Mosotho, impacting the rural woman waiting for electricity to power her small sewing business, the urban student struggling to study through evening blackouts, the clinic unable to refrigerate vaccines, and the factory owner calculating economic losses due to unreliable supply. When institutions fail, it is always the most vulnerable who suffer the most.

Let institutions breathe and be held accountable, and how so? PAC is diligently fulfilling its constitutional mandate by questioning irregularities and demanding answers. However, no parliamentary committee can replace a culture that respects legal boundaries. The PAC serves as an oversight mechanism, not an operational fixer. Its role is to ensure transparency, not to mediate internal power struggles stem-

ming from poor governance practices. Therefore, it is essential that our institutions are allowed to breathe, free from the suffocating grip of micromanagement and informal power plays. We must prioritise strengthening State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) boards through professional, non-partisan appointments that reflect merit and experience.

We must protect the independence of Managing Directors and their executive teams, safeguarding them from political harassment while holding them fully accountable for their performance. Principal Secretaries should limit their involvement to financial oversight and policy coordination, as the law requires, rather than attempting to steer from behind

the scenes. Furthermore, whistle-blowers and professionals who resist undue interference must be protected, not punished. We need a culture that upholds the rule of law, not a system that rewards silent compliance and penalises principled resistance.

I need to stop here for now, therefore, I feel like I need to conclude by reminding all those in power now that governance is not a tug-of-war. The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) is not a personal fiefdom, nor is it a political prize. It is a national asset, one that belongs to every citizen of Lesotho. Its role in powering development, enabling livelihoods, and securing future investments cannot be overstated. When Principal Secretaries and Managing Directors turn their offices into battlegrounds, it is not egos that

clash, it is the nation that suffers.

Blackouts and tariff hikes are not isolated technical failures; they are often symptoms of internal dysfunction caused by blurred lines of power. We must stop viewing state-owned enterprises as mere extensions of ministries and start recognising them as professional institutions that require strategic leadership, operational independence, and robust public accountability. The future of energy in Lesotho and indeed the viability of all SOEs depends not on political dominance but on legal discipline and institutional integrity.

Either we allow our institutions to function, or we prepare to manage the collapse that will inevitably occur when politics take precedence over the law. The Future is NOW!

## How people with chronic mental health conditions remain on the margins of the disability conversation

**Rethabile Mathealira-Molapo**

In Lesotho, the conversation around mental health is gaining traction. More people are speaking about stress, anxiety, trauma, and depression, not just as private struggles, but as public health concerns that impact our families, schools, workplaces, and communities. This growing awareness is a welcome shift after years of silence. But there's still a critical piece missing in the national conversation. We are talking about mental health. We are talking about mental health challenges. But we are not talking enough, clearly or boldly, about mental illness as a disability.

This omission is not just a language gap. It is a gap that leaves people unsupported, invisible in key decisions which should include them, excluded from services, and denied their rights. In many cases, it is a gap that costs lives. It is time for Lesotho to recognise that chronic mental health conditions are not just temporary struggles. For many, they are long-term disabilities that affect their daily functioning, limit opportunities, and require transformed spaces for equal participation, just like any other form of disability.

Mental illness not only disables, but often interacts cyclically with poverty. People living in poverty are more exposed to chronic stress, violence, trauma, and deprivation, all of which increase the risk of mental illness. At the same time, when mental illness goes unsupported or not provided for, it pushes people out of learning, limits access to economic opportunities, and deepens poverty. Addressing mental illness as a disability is, therefore, not just a health issue; it is a human rights issue and a critical intervention for breaking cycles of economic exclusion.

Some may think that calling mental illness a disability is going too far, but according to international human rights frameworks, it is not going far enough. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) defines disability as including people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with social barriers, prevent full and equal participation in society.

Mental health conditions, when persistent, fit this definition. Conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and chronic depression can significantly impair memory, focus, sleep, energy, emotional regulation, and the ability to study, work, or maintain relationships.

Globally, these are recognised as psychosocial disabilities. But in Lesotho, people living with these conditions are still missing from disability policies, programming, and advocacy, and this aspect of their conditions is still missing from the mental health discourse. This is not because their needs are less valid; it is because both our definition of disability and considerations in mental health conversations remain too narrow.

Disability is not always visible. But invisibility does not equal absence. Imagine a student with bipolar disorder who cannot concentrate during hypomanic states. A worker with chronic anxiety who cannot handle live crowds. A mother with schizophrenia who cannot access employment because of stigma and misinformation. These individuals are not just dealing with "mood swings" or "a bad day." They are navigating real and persistent impairments in a world that often does not make room for them. And it is not just the illness itself that disables, it is also the discrimination, the lack of flexibility, the forced dropouts, and the missed opportunities that result from inflexible systems. This is why mental health conditions must be included in Lesotho's disability discourse, and the disability aspects of these conditions in the mental health conversation, not as afterthoughts, but as core components.

To be truly inclusive, mental health frameworks on one hand and those of disability on the other must make space for access for people with psychosocial disabilities, just as they do for people with physical or sensory

impairments. At home, this means challenging harmful beliefs that equate mental illness with laziness or weakness. It means offering support, not condemnation.

In schools, it means ensuring students with mental illness can access counselling, flexible deadlines, and teaching methods that support cognitive and emotional needs. Too often, the lack of such support pushes students out of the classroom and permanently derails their education.

In the workplace, it means creating psychologically safe environments through flexible hours, remote or hybrid working, quiet workspaces, supportive HR policies, and anti-discrimination protections. Without these, many are forced to exit the workforce altogether, deepening financial instability.

In churches and communities, it means offering spiritual support that acknowledges suffering without blaming it on a lack of faith or not wanting to be part of the community.

This is what true disability inclusion requires: systems, policies, and cultural attitudes that allow all people, including those with psychosocial disabilities, to participate fully and with dignity. And while many mental health conditions are long-term, others may be temporary but still seriously disabling during an episode. People with temporary mental illness also deserve compassion and access. Disability inclusion must recognise that the need for support can be episodic, and protections should not depend on how permanent a diagnosis is, but on how it affects a person's life and functioning.

One of the most urgent gaps in Lesotho's mental health and disability work is the exclusion of people with lived experience from decision-making processes. Too often, decisions are made about people with mental illnesses without involving them directly. Due to unwarranted paternalism and false beliefs that they cannot articulate themselves, their voices are discounted from policy rooms, advisory committees, and ser-

vice design, even though they know best what they need. This must change. Inclusion means more than being spoken about. It means being heard, respected, and positioned as experts in one's own experience. It means leadership roles, not just client roles. It means co-creation, not paternalism.

Recognising mental illness as a disability is not just a health issue; it is a human rights issue. And it requires coordinated action across multiple sectors: Institutions of learning must protect the right to inclusive education for learners with psychosocial disabilities. Workplaces must ensure that employment policies protect workers with mental illness from discrimination and make workplace culture and workday structures accessible for all. The health sector must expand community-based mental health care to provide psychosocial support. Faith-based institutions must reduce stigma and offer spiritual support that does not shame or silence. Local communities must create environments of care, dignity, and support for all.

Inclusion begins with each of us. This is how you can be part of the change: Educate yourself about mental illness and disability rights. Listen to people with lived experience when they name their needs. Challenge stigma wherever you encounter it, in your home, workplace, school, or church. Advocate for policies that recognise and protect the rights of people with psychosocial disabilities. Support organisations led by or working alongside people with mental illness.

It's time to widen our understanding of disability. Mental illness, when chronic, can and does disable. And yet, many people living with these conditions are left without the protections and supports they need. This is not just a gap in services; it is a justice gap. We need to rewrite the narrative. We need to name what has been unnamed. We need to bring those who have been pushed to the margins towards the centre. We need to make space, policy-wise, system-wise, and heart-wise, for the person living with mental illness.





Government of Lesotho  
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tender Notice

INVITATION TO TENDER REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026

Supply and Installation of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture

1. INTRODUCTION

The ministry of Natural Resources through its departments; Administration, Mining, Rural Water Supply , Water Affairs and Commissioner of Water Invites sealed tenders from eligible bidders for the supply of office Equipment and Office Furniture.

2. Tender Issuance and Submission

The tender is issued on the 12 June 2025, and closes on the 23 July 2025 at 10:00am. The MNR therefore invites competent bidders to bid for this tender. Tender documents are available at the Department of Rural Water Supply (Procurement Unit) at non-refundable fee of M500.00 (five hundred Maloti) from Thursday, 12 June, until Wednesday 16 July 2025. Tender document is payable in cash at the Ministry of Ministry of Natural Resources (DRWS) Accounts office, Railway Station next to WASCO Offices. Receipt issued by Accounts, must be produced to the DRWS Procurement Unit for collection of Tender documents.

Bid responses from competent bid-

ders must be submitted as follows: one (1) original and four (4) hard copies to the Ministry's Tender Box situated next to the Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru , not later than 10:00am, 23 July 2025. The bid response must be in a sealed envelope bearing no Identification of bidder marked "Supply of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026".

All tenders will be opened on Wednesday 23 July, 2025 at 10:30am at the Ministry of Natural Resources Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru.

3. CLARIFICATIONS

All requests for clarifications and queries on this tender must be addressed in writing to the Procurement Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru 100 no later than 12:00 noon, 16 July, 2025. Tel: 27325160.



Government of Lesotho  
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

Invitation for Registration

Registration of Vehicles for short term hire in the Ministry database

1. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho intends to improve Agricultural service delivery. Therefore, part of the proceeds will be utilized on eligible payments resulting from the procurement of the above.
2. The Principal Secretary now invites interested Basotho vehicle owners for the **Registration of Vehicles for short term hire in the Ministry database for financial year 2025/26**. Interested Basotho vehicle owners may obtain further information from the following address:

Procurement Unit and  
Administration Office  
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition  
Corner Constitution and Linare Roads  
Maseru 100, Lesotho  
Tel: (++ 266) 22322741

3. It is mandatory for Basotho vehicle owners to submit and note the following:

**Vehicle Type: Double Cab 4x4, Single Cab 4x4, SUV 4x4, SUV, Ten-Ton Truck, Minibus (13 Seater) or Quantum**

- ▶ Vehicle Registration
- ▶ Vehicle Model: 2015 upwards
- ▶ Valid third party insurance
- ▶ Complete tool kit
- ▶ Double Cab 4x4 with Canopy or Tonneau cover and Tow bar for pulling trailer
- ▶ Single Cab: Valid B permit & Tow bar
- ▶ Ten (10) ton: Valid F permit & Fitness
- ▶ 13 Seater: Fitness

4. Submission and registration with Administration Office.



# Together, Empowering Dreams:

Letshego Lesotho and the Government of Lesotho Join Hands to Tackle Youth Unemployment.

At Letshego Lesotho, we believe that the youth of today are the architects of tomorrow. In partnership with the Government of Lesotho, we have proudly taken a proactive role in the national effort to address youth unemployment, not just in words, but through tangible, life-changing opportunities.

Through our structured Graduate, Internship, and Apprenticeship/Trainee Programs, we have opened doors for young Basotho graduates to step into the professional world with confidence, skills, and purpose. These programs provide more than just experience; they are platforms of hope, mentorship, and empowerment for a generation seeking to make their mark.

Since 2022, a total of 24 young professionals have joined our Government Trainee Initiative, a flagship program that supports the objectives of the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) as well as other initiatives such as graduate and internship programs. This collaborative effort focuses on enhancing graduates' employability prospects and, ultimately, reducing youth unemployment across the country.

We are proud to share that:

- 9 of these trainees have been successfully absorbed into permanent roles within Letshego Lesotho.
- 2 are currently completing their training, with promising potential.

The remaining participants, though not absorbed, have gained critical skills and industry exposure that have strengthened their career readiness.

Each of these journeys tell a story; of a young life changed, a dream reignited, and a step forward for Lesotho's future.

This is more than a program. It is our heartfelt commitment to being part of the solution. As we continue walking hand in hand with the Government and other key partners, we remain steadfast in our mission to empower Basotho youth through learning, earning, and growing opportunities.

Letshego Lesotho is not just building careers; we're building futures and **Improving Lives**. We believe in creating meaningful opportunities that empower individuals, support families, and uplift communities for a better tomorrow.





REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR  
SUCCESSION PLANNING AND  
ETHICS AND CULTURE POLICY

Block A, Development House  
Kingsway Road Private Bag A96  
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012  
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) invites sealed tenders from locally registered and qualified Consultants for succession planning, ethics and culture Policy.

The main objective of this assignment is to provide consultancy services for succession planning, ethics and culture policy.

Interested and eligible Consultants may obtain the tender document by paying a non-refundable fee of **One thousand five hundred Maloti (M1,500.00)** at the Finance Office at LNDC Development House Block A level 6.

Tenders must be deposited in the **tender box** situated on the 1st floor of LNDC Development House Block A, Reception Area.

The compulsory pre-bid (briefing) session will be **on Friday, 11th July @ 10:00 am, LNDC Development House, Block A, Level 7 @ Audio visual room**. The deadline for submission of tenders is on or before **Thursday, 24th, July 2025 on or before 10:00 am**. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. The tender box will be opened publicly immediately thereafter.

All bids must be accompanied by valid copies of traders' license, tax clearance, and proof of authorized signatory.

The LNDC reserves the right to cancel the tender, reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The LNDC is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.



www.lndc.org.ls



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF  
THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND  
FINANCE FUNCTION

Block A, Development House  
Kingsway Road Private Bag A96  
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012  
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) invites sealed tenders from locally registered and qualified Consultants for re-establishment of the office of the Chief Finance Officer and Finance function.

The main objective of this assignment is to provide consultancy services for re-establishment of the office of the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Function.

Interested and eligible Consultants may obtain the tender document by paying a non-refundable fee of **One thousand five hundred Maloti (M1,500.00)** at the Finance Office at LNDC Development House Block A level 6.

Tenders must be deposited in the **tender box** situated on the 1st floor of LNDC Development House Block A, Reception Area.

The compulsory pre-bid (briefing) session will be **on Thursday, 10th July @ 10:00 am, LNDC Development House, Block A, Level 7 @ Audio visual room**. The deadline for submission of tenders is on or before **Wednesday, 23rd, July 2025 on or before 10:00 am**. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. The tender box will be opened publicly immediately thereafter.

All bids must be accompanied by valid copies of traders' license, tax clearance, and proof of authorized signatory.

The LNDC reserves the right to cancel the tender, reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The LNDC is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.



www.lndc.org.ls



Ministry of Agriculture, Food  
Security and Nutrition  
WaMCoP  
P.O. Box 24  
Maseru 100



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(Consulting Firms)

LESOTHO

WOOL AND MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT

Assignment Title: Feasibility study for the establishment of Angora Goats Breeding Centre

Reference No: IFAD/WAMCOP/C02/2025-2026

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has received a financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project.

The consulting services ("the services") include the baseline study which is expected to provide quantitative baseline data of the IFAD core outcome indicators as per the mandatory IFAD COI guidelines and methodologies. The baseline study is also expected provide an assessment of additional aspects of the project relating to current/existing knowledge, strategies, practices and perceptions in terms of nutrition and gender issues. The study must produce information that will be used to direct and guide project implementation processes. In addition, lessons from past and existing IFAD-funded projects/programmes will be a key resource for review and use in this assignment.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition ("the client") now invites eligible consulting firms ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services. Interested firms should submit their expressions of interest to the address indicated below.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. By entering in this document, you certify to have

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The consultant shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. A consultant with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. A consultant including their respective personnel and affiliates are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, b) participate in more than one EOI under this procurement action, c) have a business or family relationship with a member of the Purchaser's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of this REOI, (ii) the shortlisting or selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. The consultant has an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the EOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The following conflict of interest rules shall apply with respect to recruitment of government/client staff within the consultant's proposed team:

- No member of the client's board of directors or current employees of the client (whether part time, or full time, paid or unpaid, in leave status, etc.) shall be proposed or work as, or on behalf of, any consultant.
- Except as provided in sub-clause 8.6(d), no current employees of the government shall work as consultants or as personnel under their own ministries, departments or agencies.
- Recruiting former client or government employees to perform services for their former ministries, departments or agencies is acceptable provided no conflict of interest exists.
- If a consultant proposes any government employee as personnel in their technical proposal, such personnel must have written certification from the government confirming that: (i) they will be on leave without pay from the time of their official proposal submission and will remain on leave without pay until the end of their assignment with the consultant and they are allowed to work full-time outside of their previous official position; or (ii) they will resign or retire from government employment on or prior to the contract award date. Under no circumstances shall any individuals described in (i) and (ii) be responsible for approving the implementation of this contract. Such certification shall be provided to the client by the consultant as part of its technical proposal.

- In the case where a consultant seeks to engage the services of any person falling under ITC sub-clauses 8.6(a) – 8.6(d), who may have left the client within a period of less than twelve (12) months of the date of this RFP, it must obtain a written "no-objection" from the client for the inclusion of such a person, prior to the consultant's submission of its proposal.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in IFAD' project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at [www.ifad.org/project-procurement](http://www.ifad.org/project-procurement).

The shortlisting criteria are:

Criteria #	Description	Allocated Marks
1	General Experience of Firm/Company	20
2	Specific Experience of a Firm in Similar Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Have at least conducted and completed 3 feasibility studies in the past</li><li>experience in preparing an environmental and social management plans</li><li>experience in developing methods for conducting the environmental and socio-economic assessments</li><li>experience in capturing data, analysis and reporting</li></ul>	
3	Key Experts	20
4	Financial Capacity	20

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below no later than 16:00hrs, 14 July 2025, Lesotho time. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by 16:00hrs, 18 July 2025, Lesotho time. Expressions of interest must be delivered in written form using the forms provided for this purpose. EOIs shall be submitted to the address below no later than 12:00hrs, 23 July 2025, Lesotho time.

Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project

Attn: Procurement and Contracts Manager  
P.O. Box 24

Department of Livestock Services  
Old Airport Road, Moshoeshoe II

e-mail: [mlejota-thakong@wamcop.org.ls](mailto:mlejota-thakong@wamcop.org.ls) and cc: [nlepheana@wamcop.org.ls](mailto:nlepheana@wamcop.org.ls)

- The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.
- The policy is accessible at [www.ifad.org/anticorruption\\_policy](http://www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy).
- The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>.
- The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/privacy>.









Arts  
Entertainment

Newsday

# Daeman Collective ignites cultural revival with Kobo FEVER

Fusi Hlaoli

A creative revolution is taking shape in Lesotho, and at its centre is Daeman Collective — a five-member artistic force on a mission to reshape the country’s arts and entertainment scene.

Their upcoming event, Kobo FEVER, is not just a performance but a cultural statement. Scheduled for July 27, 2025, at Eliho Guest House, Kobo FEVER blends music, fashion, storytelling, and tradition to reignite pride in Basotho identity.

Daeman is more than an artistic group. It’s a movement built by five young creatives committed to making Basotho storytelling and talent visible and celebrated.

“We want to create something that helps Basotho appreciate their own,” said Tumelo Mosoeu, the group’s Creative Director, in an interview with Newsday.

“There is so much talent in this country, but not enough support. We aim to build a loyal audience that believes in Basotho creativity.”

That drive sparked the idea for Kobo FEVER, which originally began as a campaign concept during Selemo sa Basotho celebrations. The reaction from the public, Mosoeu said, took them by surprise.

“We were activating Selemo sa Basotho,

and the crowd’s energy caught us off guard. That moment showed us Kobo FEVER had real power; it became bigger than we expected.”

The name itself carries meaning. “Kobo” symbolises warmth, identity, and Basotho heritage. “Fever” captures the excitement and cultural fire the collective is aiming to ignite. Together, it represents a modern, youthful Basotho spirit grounded in tradition.

Kobo FEVER will offer a multi-sensory experience: live alternative music, traditional games, fashion showcases, storytelling, and bonfire gatherings. Guests will be encouraged to wear traditional likobo, creating a vibrant celebration of heritage and community.

“You’ll see people wrapped in likobo, hear sounds that blend the old with the new, and feel a real sense of togetherness. That’s intentional,” Mosoeu said. “We want people to feel proud of who they are.”

Daeman’s approach is clear: being young and creative in Lesotho doesn’t mean turning away from tradition; it means reviving it. Their events and collaborations are inspiring a renewed appreciation for local talent, fashion, and cultural expression.

“We’re not waiting for big names to validate us,” Mosoeu said. “We’re building from



Daeman x Kobo Feva

the ground up, with our people, for our people.”

As excitement grows for Kobo FEVER, it’s evident that Daeman Collective is more than just an arts group, they are lighting the way forward for Basotho creativity, inviting the nation to gather around the fire and re-discover its soul.

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# A legacy of faith, peace and service: Bishop David Ramela turns 60



## Chris Theko

The 60th birthday celebration of Bishop David Thakadu Ramela was not merely a personal milestone; it was a powerful celebration of a life dedicated to service, nation-building, and unshakable faith.

Held recently in Soweto, South Africa, the event brought together political figures, celebrities, religious leaders, and members of the community from both Lesotho and South Africa to honour a man who has spent decades uplifting others.

From the very beginning, Bishop Ramela's journey was marked by adversity and humility. Raised by his grandmother in the rural village of Thaba Phatšoa in Leribe, Lesotho, he experienced first-hand the struggles of poverty; walking barefoot to school, going days without food, and sleeping in traditional huts.

But these early experiences shaped a man who would later become a revered businessman, spiritual leader, and philanthropist with deep ties to both nations.

The 60th birthday celebration was both emotional and inspiring. Held at a venue filled with love and reverence, every speaker on the programme spoke passionately about the impact Bishop Ramela has had on their lives. Whether it was through prayer, mentorship, financial support, or his unwavering belief in second chances, he has lifted countless individuals from hardship to hope.

The event was attended by high-profile

figures, including the Minister of Education and Training, Professor Ntoi Rapapa, former Prime Minister Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, and Major General Ramanka Mokaloba from the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

Celebrities such as Lesotho-born actress Matšelis Mohale and South African comedian David Kau added a celebratory touch to the gathering, each sharing personal reflections on Bishop Ramela's selflessness and humour. Their presence alone was a testament to the respect and admiration he commands across various sectors.

Adding to the excitement, his radio station, Bokamoso Radio, broadcasted the event live from Soweto, ensuring his broader audience across both countries could be part of the moment. The most touching highlight came when his children presented him with a brand-new BMW X5, a heartfelt gift representing gratitude, admiration, and deep family love.

Though widely celebrated as a successful businessman, Bishop Ramela has always led with a servant's heart. As the leader of St. Paul's African Apostolic Church, he has long used his platform not for personal glorification but for healing and building bridges.

Notably, he has played a crucial role in mediating conflict between political rivals, most famously between then-Prime Minister Dr. Majoro and All Basotho Convention (ABC) leader Nkaku Kabi. His role as a peacemaker continues to be recognised and appreciated even at the highest levels of leadership.

Beyond politics, his church has been instrumental in community development projects throughout Leribe. These include the construction of homes for the elderly, police posts, local magistrate courts, and public preschools equipped with computer labs, offering much-needed infrastructure in rural areas that are often neglected by mainstream development agendas.

Bishop Ramela's influence also extends to the business world, where he has championed local enterprise and large-scale production. Under his company, Ramela & Associates, he launched Thakadu Poultry, a large-scale farm in Mahobong, Lesotho, that produces nearly 9,000 eggs daily and employs dozens of locals.

The poultry farm forms part of a wider food-security initiative which is aligned with the African Union (AU)'s nutrition drive, spearheaded by King Letsie III, Africa's Nutrition Champion.

He has also established Thakadu Filling Station, a supermarket, and a logistics business, all in his home village of Mahobong. These businesses are not just profit-driven; they aim to stimulate local economies, create employment, and inspire youth to pursue entrepreneurship over dependency.

In early 2025, his foundation announced a bold M2 billion investment in a food-security programme that will create over 700 jobs and establish a major abattoir in Leribe. The initiative is a shining example of how private individuals can contribute meaningfully to

national development.

Bishop Ramela's philanthropic work is especially impactful. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he donated food parcels worth over M1 million to elderly citizens across Lesotho, easing the burden for many who were hit hardest by lockdowns and rising food prices.

His personal motto, often quoted during his radio sermons, is simple but profound: "When riches are accumulated, they are for the benefit of others, not for self-glorification."

Through his Bokamoso Foundation, he continues to support orphans, single mothers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. His television and radio series, Metlakhola, chronicles his story and aims to inspire others to turn their challenges into purpose-driven lives.

As Bishop Ramela enters his seventh decade, he does so not just as a man of years but as a man of extraordinary impact. Whether in boardrooms, church halls, or rural farming plots, his presence is one of transformation. He embodies what it means to serve with humility while leading with vision.

In a world often defined by division and self-interest, Bishop Ramela's life reminds us that greatness is measured not by how high we climb, but by how many people we lift as we rise.

His 60th birthday was not just a celebration of age; it was a moment of reflection, gratitude, and renewed purpose for a man who has become a national treasure.



# Revamped Bantu eyes comeback

Seabata Mahao

Bantu Football Club, one of Lesotho’s top football institutions, has signaled the start of a bold new era after unveiling 10 new signings and an ambitious roadmap for the 2025/2026 season during a high-profile media briefing held at the Golden Hotel in Mafeteng.

The club's leadership, led by President John Leuta, outlined a comprehensive vision focused on discipline, professionalism, and mental strength, setting a new tone for the club's direction.

“Some players start off well but later show poor behavior,” Leuta said. “That is why we’re placing discipline at the heart of this project. The new players must carry themselves with the pride and responsibility this club demands.”

The club's 10 new signings, all on two-year contracts, come from across Lesotho, showcasing Bantu's national recruitment strategy.

Among the new faces are talented twins Kananelo Rapuleng and Katleho Rapuleng from Majantja FC, Thabiso Posa and Chesetsi Halejoetsoe from Machokha FC, and defender Motlomelo Mkhwanazi from Kruger United. Others include players from Matlama FC, Linare FC, and USA FC.

At the same time, the club confirmed the departure of nine long-serving players, with two more listed for transfer. These changes reflect a deep restructuring aimed at revitalizing Bantu's trophy ambitions.

Vice President Leoesha Mahase acknowledged the club's underperformance last season and explained that decisive steps, starting with a new head coach, have been taken.

“We want to compete for trophies again,” Mahase said. “Coach Motheo Mohapi was given the freedom to select players who fit his vision. Some of those leaving have been part of Bantu for over a decade, and we’ll honor them properly.”

In a move uncommon in local football, Bantu FC has enlisted the services of a mental health specialist, Dr. Tšepang Majara from Mind Liberation Psychology Consultancy, to support players’ psychological well-being throughout the season.

“Development begins with the mind. We are building not only footballers, but balanced individuals,” Leuta added.

To give players international exposure, Bantu will tour Botswana for a series of friendly matches in Jwaneng. Both the men's and women's teams will participate in the tour, reflecting the club's inclusive development strategy.

New head coach Motheo ‘Six to Six’ Mohapi expressed confidence in the squad, stating that every player was recruited to address a

specific gap in the team.

“Before signing, I analyzed our weaknesses. Every new player here fills a gap. We are not here to add numbers, we are here to win,” he said.

He also revealed plans to recruit a promising 14 or 15-year-old prospect, underscoring Bantu's long-term development goals.

Speaking on behalf of the new players, defender Motlomelo Mkhwanazi pledged to restore pride to the district.

“The smiles that welcomed us today must last all season. We'll bring peace and joy to this district through football,” Mkhwanazi said, urging fans to return to the stadium and support the team.

The club confirmed that long-time sponsors Naleli Funeral Planner and Metropolitan Lesotho remain on board, providing both financial support and continuity as Bantu begins its new chapter.

To close the event, Leuta reminded supporters of the upcoming end-of-year gathering, during which a new committee will be elected, an appeal for unity and renewed commitment from the loyal Bantu Army.

With fresh talent, a revamped mindset, and strengthened support structures, Bantu FC is poised to chase glory in what could be a defining 2025/2026 campaign.



# Kick4Life marks 20-year milestone

Karabo Ramathe

Lesotho’s groundbreaking football charity and club, Kick4Life, marked its 20th anniversary on Saturday with a vibrant celebration at its Maseru headquarters, honouring two decades of transforming lives through sport.

The event brought together trustees, players, alumni, supporters, and government officials to reflect on the organisation’s journey and the many lives it has impacted through football-driven programmes in health, education, gender equality, and youth empowerment.

Founded in 2005, Kick4Life has grown from a grassroots initiative into one of the country’s leading sport-for-development institutions, combining football with targeted social interventions to uplift vulnerable youth across Lesotho.

Speaking at the ceremony, Matšelis Lehlola, a member of the Kick4Life Board of Trustees, commended the organisation’s evolution and the dedication of those who have guided it along the way.

“As we celebrate the 20 years of social change in football, we also celebrate the milestones Kick4Life has achieved. It has been a great honour to be part of this process from the time of its inception to the prestigious organisation it is today,” Lehlola said.

She extended gratitude to the founders and past country directors, as well as the broader Kick4Life community, including management, staff, volunteers, and international partners, whose passion and commitment have shaped the club’s success.

Kick4Life is widely recognised for its holistic model that extends far beyond the football pitch. The organisation’s approach includes life-skills training, academic support, HIV testing and counselling, career development, and enterprise initiatives designed to provide pathways out of poverty for Basotho youth.



Kick4life Country Director, Motlatsi Nkhahle

Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission’s President Baba Maphalane, applauded the club’s role in shaping young lives and using football as a catalyst for national development.

“This centre has brought change among the children of Lesotho, which is exactly its mission,” Maphalane said.

“We want to see more centres like this across districts. Kick4Life welcomes every young person and gives them a chance to show their talents, even when facing challenges. Football here is more than sport; it is a catalyst. It has become a path out of poverty and unemployment for many.”

Reflecting on Kick4Life’s growth and achievements, Country Director Motlatsi Nkhahle noted how the club has embraced professionalism while maintaining its social mission.

“I come from a non-football background, but today, football is not just work, it is a passion,” said Nkhahle.

He highlighted recent successes, including the Women’s Super League title and the club’s rise into the top three teams nationally. Nkhahle also announced new develop-

ments, including the upcoming launch of a gymnasium and club shop in August, which will further enhance the club’s capacity and sustainability.

“We aim to uncover young talent and give every player a platform to excel. This club offers an opportunity to take it. Tsielo, for instance, and many others who have made us proud,” he added.

A highlight of the day was an emotional poetry performance by Kick4Life player Merriam Monnapula, titled “Kick4Life, a Welcoming Space.” Her poem celebrated the nurturing environment and opportunities the club has provided for countless young people.

“Kick4Life has been a mother to many, this is 20 years of hoping grace,” she recited. “We have created a culture where excellence is chased, where characters are shown.”

The celebration also recognised the achievements of student-athletes who started their journey at Kick4Life and have gone on to represent Lesotho locally and internationally. Many now serve as role models in their communities, demonstrating the long-term impact of the organisation’s work.

## All set for Lesotho’s AUSC games

Seabata Mahao

Team Lesotho is set to compete at the 11th edition of the African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5 Games, which kick off today in Windhoek, Namibia, and run until July 13.

The games bring together over 2,500 athletes and officials from 10 Southern African countries, with participants competing across 12 sporting codes.

Lesotho is represented by a delegation of 80 people, including 57 athletes and 23 officials, who will participate in Athletics, Athletics for the Visually Impaired (EAD), Boxing, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, Swimming, Special Olympics, and Girls’ Indoor and Beach Volleyball.

The team received an official send-off last Sunday from the Director of Sports and Recreation, Thabo Tsiki, and the President of the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), Baba Malephane.

Speaking at the ceremony, Malephane expressed confidence in the athletes’ abilities and stressed the importance of performance-based selection.

“Our athletes are selected for their aptitude, discipline, and potential to represent Lesotho at national and international levels. We hope this tournament is a stepping stone towards the 2028 Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games,” he said.

He emphasised mental strength, focus, and discipline as key ingredients for success, especially when competing against better-resourced countries.

“We want our teams not only to participate but to challenge the odds and reach the finals. Competing with better-funded nations will require mental strength, unity, and proper focus.”

Special attention is being given to the Girls’ Volleyball teams, who are among Lesotho’s strongest medal prospects. The indoor team is grouped with Namibia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, while the beach volleyball team faces tough competition from Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, and Angola.

Charlie Maanya, Public Relations Officer of the Lesotho Volleyball Association, acknowledged the challenges ahead but remained hopeful.

“Zimbabwe poses a significant challenge in Indoor Volleyball, but we are confident of emerging victorious,” he said. “Namibia, as the host, will also be tough, but our preparations have been thorough.”

Recognising the competitive edge of coastal nations in Beach Volleyball due to better access to sand courts, Maanya revealed that Lesotho had constructed new sand courts at Agric College to prepare the team.

“This has given the players more time to adapt and train effectively,” he explained.

He also cited the team’s participation in the Ditsala International Cup in Botswana as valuable experience. Lesotho finished fifth out of seven teams, facing strong opponents from Botswana, the United States, and Zambia.

“The tournament was a great experience and sharpened our team’s skills,” Maanya said.

The volleyball team heads to Namibia with a strong legacy, having won gold in 2021 and silver in 2023. They are now determined to return to the top of the podium.

Director Tsiki praised the volleyball team for its continued success and challenged the broader Team Lesotho to surpass past achievements.

“In Malawi 2022, our team won 18 medals. We aim to surpass that,” he said.

Tsiki also highlighted the importance of strong relationships between athletes, coaches, and managers, particularly for young athletes under 20.

“Strong relationships between athletes, coaches, and managers are critical. If unresolved, personal issues can push young athletes away from sport altogether,” he warned.

He closed his remarks by calling for increased investment in sports development, noting that with better resources, Lesotho could participate in more disciplines and achieve greater international success.





# Maso's star shines brightest

## Chris Theko

Lioli Football Club's striker Sihle Maso was the biggest winner at the 2024 Vodacom Premier League (VPL) End of Season Awards, held on Saturday night at Victory Hall.

The South African-born forward scooped two of the evening's top honours, Player of the Season and Players' Player of the Season, capping a transformative campaign that saw him rise as both a key performer and a team leader.

Maso played a pivotal role in Lioli's title-winning run this season, with his goal-scoring prowess, consistency, and growth on and off the field earning him widespread praise.

Speaking to Newsday Sports shortly after receiving his accolades, the visibly emotional striker expressed gratitude for the recognition and reflected on the journey that led to his breakthrough.

"I am very happy because it was not easy," Maso said.

"Most people who know me know how hard I have been working to make this dream come true. Everything falls into place when you are a player who also carries himself well, both on and off the pitch."

Maso reserved special thanks for Lioli head coach Motheo Mohapi, who he credited with guiding his personal and professional transformation.

"This is all thanks to Coach Motheo. I would not be here if it were not for him and his belief in me. I used to be a very troubling player, but he was patient with me. He taught me a lot about the discipline that comes with being a



professional footballer, and I am grateful for that."

Maso's journey from an unpredictable talent to a mature leader has made him a fan favourite and a role model to young players across Lesotho. Despite ongoing rumours linking him with a possible move, Maso reaffirmed his loyalty to Lioli, insisting that his focus remains on helping the team shine at continental level.

"I am in love with the team. Whether the coach has changed or not, I am still excited to be part of Lioli. I'm looking forward to us representing Lesotho at the CAF Champions League this year. That is where my focus is right now."

For his efforts this season, Maso took home M15, 000 for Player of the Season and M12, 000 for Players' Player of the Season, a total of

M27,000 in cash prizes.

Meanwhile, Lioli's dominance at the awards did not end with Maso. The Goalkeeper of the Season award went to Lioli's William Huni, who stood out against Matlama's Leluma Mofoka and LMPS's Nthebe Majoro, earning M9,000.

Lioli's defender Mphale Mphalaole won Defender of the Season gong, also pocketing M9,000. Lioli's former coach Motheo Mohapi was named Coach of the Season for the second year running, after guiding the team to another league title. His win came with a M12,000 cash prize.

Matlama's Charlie Hlalele, a midfielder who has impressed since his debut in the league, won Midfielder of the Season, with an equal cash prize.

Young Player of the Season was claimed by 18-year-old goalkeeper Mofoka, who also earned M9,000. Makara Ntatsane, the national team captain and LCS striker, won the Golden Boot after scoring 20 goals this season, taking home M13,500.

The evening also marked a major announcement: Lioli will represent Lesotho in the CAF Champions League this year, ending a three-year absence of a local club from the continental stage due to stadium limitations.

The decision was confirmed by Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) President Advocate Salemane Phafane KC, and reinforced by Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture Motlatsi Maqelepo, who both addressed attendees at the event.

"We have decided as Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) that we will facilitate the return to Champions League of a team from our premier league and yes, as things stand Lioli FC shall go to the CAF Champions League," said LeFA Executive Committee Member Katiso Lebetsa, speaking on behalf of the president.

He clarified that this return to continental football will be reviewed yearly, depending on infrastructure and other logistical considerations.

Participation in the CAF Champions League offers a golden opportunity for Lioli's players, especially stars like Maso, to showcase their talent on a bigger platform and represent Lesotho with pride. For Maso, who has already had a star-rated season domestically, the continental stage could be the next step in his football evolution.

# New programme aims to grow Badminton in Lesotho

## Palesa Moloinyane

The Lesotho Badminton Association (LESBAD), in partnership with the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) and the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission, has launched a new initiative to grow badminton in the country.

The programme, supported by the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations (DGI), was officially launched this week at Sefika High School.

Running from July 3 to July 11, the programme brings international expertise to Lesotho and aims to boost youth participation and develop local coaching skills. The collaboration is seen as a major step forward in making badminton more accessible and structured, especially for young people.

At the launch, Lerato Lepheane, also known as 'Coach Branden,' highlighted the purpose of the programme.

"This program aims to share skills, see how best we can practice, how best we can learn, and exchange ideas. It is also to help close the gap in badminton development across Africa," he said.

Lepheane also pointed out that very few young people currently take part in badminton and that must change if the sport is to grow in Lesotho.

Representing the LNOC, Mark West praised the initiative, stressing its potential to bring lasting change to local sports.

"This program will not only offer technical courses for coaches but will also be about transformation, capacity-building, and bringing people together to create a lasting sporting

culture," he said.

West noted that the ultimate goal is to give more young people a chance to play and train in badminton, especially those who have not had such opportunities before.

Leading the training sessions are two experienced facilitators from Denmark, Michael Dan Nielsen and Carolin Holm. Both are experts in grassroots coaching and leadership development. Over the two-week programme, they will work closely with local coaches and players to provide practical and hands-on training.

Carolin Holm explained that their approach is based on collaboration and sustainability.

"We are not here to dictate how things should be done. We are here to listen, collaborate, and help strengthen what already exists. The goal is to empower local youth to take ownership of badminton development, with

tools that are practical and sustainable," Holm said.

The programme fits well with LESBAD's mission to grow the sport in Lesotho, especially among the youth. It also marks a rare chance for local players and coaches to learn from international professionals and improve their skills.

The DGI Programme is globally respected for its focus on grassroots sports, community development, and support for sustainable sports growth in developing countries. With support from the Badminton Confederation of Africa (BCA) and the Danish Federation, it brings both resources and credibility to Lesotho's efforts.

This partnership is expected to spark new interest in badminton and provide a strong foundation for future development in the sport.



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