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# Environment ministry in chaos, PM procrastinates

## ... Mutiny erupts from fed-up officers

### Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is imploding under the weight of what insiders describe as a reign of terror by Principal Secretary (PS) 'Maphakamile Xingwana, whose alleged erratic, dictatorial leadership style has turned one of Lesotho's key ministries into a battlefield of fear, dysfunction, and paralysis.

In a scathing formal complaints addressed to Government Secretary (GS) 'Malisebo 'Mokela, top officers within the ministry, whose names are known to this publication, have laid out a damning catalogue of grievances against Xingwana, painting a picture of a hostile work environment under siege from her erratic leadership.

According to the complaints, Xingwana's style of governance has been marked by unilateral decisions, disregard for professional processes, and an alarming intolerance for dissent, all of which have paralysed internal operations and poisoned morale among staff.

One officer said that since assuming office, the PS has never met with the heads of technical departments. They also indicated that stakeholder workshops, central to the ministry's community engagement and implementation, were either approved at the last minute or outright blocked, causing confusion and panic among organisers.

The complainant further mentioned that when Xingwana is not in the office, no requisitions are signed, even in emergencies, because she allegedly refuses to delegate signing authority to the acting PS.

They said officers were routinely barred from attending fully-sponsored international events, with Xingwana allegedly cancelling approvals at the last minute without justification, denying the ministry valuable exposure, training, and partnerships.

Further, the PS has reportedly tried multiple times to force project managers to misallocate donor funds, including an attempt to sponsor a Member of Parliament (MP) to attend a United Nations (UN) Climate Conference, an activity not included in the official project document. Officers resisted, fearing donor backlash.

In a stunning act of overreach, Xingwana has allegedly confiscated the project vehicle, keeping the key locked in her office, after project staff refused to release it for her personal trip to Johannesburg to collect a visa, despite being informed that project fuel funds had been exhausted.

Astonishingly, the vehicle had already been used once for the same unapproved trip, and she had been explicitly notified that there were neither funds nor approval for a second journey.

The vehicle, allocated by the Government of Lesotho as part of its co-financing obligation, has since been withheld from project use, crippling operations and raising serious concerns about personal misuse of public resources.

Newsday made multiple attempts since last week to obtain a response from PS Xingwana regarding the serious allegations against her, but to no avail. Each time she was contacted, she gave evasive excuses, claiming she was about to



Prime Minister Sam Matekane

enter a meeting of unknown duration.

On Tuesday, she cited attendance at a Cabinet meeting. Then yesterday, she claimed to be at a meeting "attended by journalists" and went so far as to chastise Newsday's reporter, saying: "Your problem is that you don't attend meetings but want to call me."

When Newsday contacted 'Mokela yesterday for comment, she confirmed that she was aware of the issues raised but sought to downplay their severity, saying they were not "complaints" but "grievances."

"Yes, there are grievances, and a due process is being followed to address them. As a result, I am unable to comment further," she said.

Another senior officer complained about the treatment they received under the PS, saying it was beyond unfair. The officer detailed several shocking incidents that point to blatant discrimination and abuse of authority.

"Despite applying for a government house long before one of the Directors, the PS deliberately bypassed me and allocated the house to that Director instead. She knew I had applied first, but chose to overlook me, clearly out of personal bias," they said.

Another officer accused the PS of exploitation and retaliation against staff who demand fair treatment.

"The Ministry's HR team was not compensated for their work in recruiting staff for the ROLL Project, a practice that had been honoured by previous Principal Secretaries," the officer said. "When we raised the issue and lodged a formal complaint, instead of addressing it, she issued a transfer letter as punishment."

The officer described Xingwana in damning terms, calling her "authoritarian, exploitative, controlling, manipulative, and selfish, the kind of leader who crushes initiative and punishes professionalism."

This, staffers say, has become a pattern: raise concerns, and you are pushed out. Demand accountability, and you are met with intimidation. The result is a ministry where fear reigns and

integrity is penalised.

Newsday has learned from a credible source within the Office of the Prime Minister that Minister of Environment and Forestry, Letsema Adontsi, formally requested the removal of Xingwana over a year ago, but was allegedly ignored.

The minister's letter, dated July 2024 and addressed to both Prime Minister Sam Matekane, lays bare the dysfunction he himself faced in trying to run the ministry under Xingwana's grip.

"I humbly requested your office to change the PS I am working with now, Mrs. 'Maphakamile Xingwana. There are plenty of reasons to which I have come to this decision," Adontsi wrote.

He went on to describe a toxic and obstructive working relationship, stating that Xingwana denied department directors access to his office without her permission, effectively cutting him off from vital information and operations.

"This leads to me not getting any feedback or necessary information on anything that is being done in the Ministry," the minister lamented. "Though I may not put a nail to it, the majority of staff complain about her making it hard for them to fulfil their tasks to their maximum capabilities, because she delays or at times does not authorise documents."

Adontsi further recounted a specific incident from July 2024, when he had an official assignment in Mokhotlong. Despite it being an official ministerial duty, PS Xingwana refused to approve the requested number of days for travel and accommodation, saying she would only fund one day, a move he said was neither isolated nor justified.

"I have been given two vehicles (a Prado and a Hilux 4x4), but neither is in good condition," Adontsi wrote.

"This has come to a point where the bodyguards and chauffeurs do not feel comfortable using them because they have been told that they will be held accountable for anything that will happen because of travelling in such cars."

Instead of resolving the matter, the Minister says he was offered a battered Toyota Corolla, already in use by junior staff and unfit for executive work.

"This does not sit well with me especially because she has four vehicles in good conditions, a Prado, Lexus, Fortuner, and Hilux 4x4."

But the dysfunction goes far beyond vehicles. Adontsi explained that citizens had come to his office in distress, reporting they had not been paid, had been unfairly dismissed, or denied what was rightfully owed to them. Each time he asked Xingwana to address the complaints, she refused, allowing frustration to mount and the ministry's public image to deteriorate.

"I also fear it will taint the government as well," the Minister warned. "People have made threats to go public with their complaints and this will not look good for the government."

A year later, everything Adontsi feared has materialised, the internal implosion is now a scandal.

In a final plea to Prime Minister Matekane, Adontsi did not mince words:

"I have realised a lot of negativities from her when we must assist the community. She is totally against everything on behalf of the community. Honourable Prime Minister, I plead with you to treat this as a matter of urgency. All these that I have stated make me look incompetent, yet she is the barrier to me fulfilling, to my maximum capability, what you entrusted in me."

'Mokela yesterday insisted that Minister Adontsi's letter had not been ignored, but explained that matters of this nature "take time." She said the civil service was dealing with numerous issues and that each required due process to reach a logical conclusion.

In another appeal, this time to 'Mokela, Adontsi lamented that his ability to lead had been systematically undermined by PS Xingwana's iron grip on communication and access.

"While my office remains open to all staff members, the PS does not allow anyone to come to my office," Adontsi wrote. "This restriction makes it difficult for me to obtain first-hand information about the workings of staff members, thus impacting my ability to effectively monitor policy implementation."

He revealed that numerous staff members had complained to him about Xingwana's toxic leadership style, saying it was demoralising and disruptive.

"The PS is unwilling to share necessary information with my office, including inventory lists that I have requested on numerous occasions," he continued. "The inventory of the Ministry's vehicles is particularly important. I am currently using vehicles that are not roadworthy, putting the lives of my drivers, bodyguards, and myself at risk."

Citing the urgency and severity of the situation, the Minister pleaded with the GS to intervene and restore order.

"I believe that a constructive dialogue facilitated by your esteemed office can help address these challenges effectively," he wrote. "Please treat this matter as urgent and suggest necessary interventions to restore a functional and cooperative working relationship within the ministry."

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# Maseru Prep in over M3 million debt storm

... Faces cash crunch, delays July salaries

Staff Reporter

Maseru English Medium Preparatory School (MEMPS), one of Lesotho’s most well-known private primary schools, is at the centre of a growing financial storm after being slapped with a legal demand for more than M3.4 million in unpaid rentals and damages.

The claim, brought by Nashua Maseru through Webber Newdigate Attorneys, relates to two rental agreements signed in 2022 and 2023 for equipment hired by the school, each set to run for a period of 60 months.

According to a legal letter dated March 3, 2025, seen by Newsday, the school is accused of defaulting on rental payments, prompting Nashua to demand full settlement of outstanding arrears and future obligations under the contracts. The total amount claimed is M3,451,268.71.

The letter states that in addition to unpaid rentals of M647,786.39, Nashua is also claiming M2,803,482.32 in future rentals that would have become due by the end of the lease terms. The agreements also carried a clause allowing Nashua to demand full payment in the event of default.

“Nashua entered into two rental agreements with Maseru English Medium Preparatory School (“the User”) in terms of which Nashua rented to the User and the User agreed to hire equipment for a period commencing on the 1st day of September 2022 and 1st day of June 2023, respectively, both continuing for an initial period of 60 months,” the letter read.

“It is in light of these rental agreements that Sandisiwe Heather Nxumalo in her capacity as the Chairperson, and Moeketsi Jack Hlazi, in his capacity as the Acting Head Master, bound themselves as sureties and co-principal debtors respectively,” it added.



The attorneys further stated that under the terms of the rental agreements, should the school fail to comply with any provision, particularly the timely payment of rentals, Nashua would have the right to terminate the agreements and demand immediate payment of all outstanding amounts, including those that would have become due by the end of the lease period.

“We are instructed that the User has failed to pay rentals and is therefore in arrears in the amount of M3,451,268.71,” the letter read.

“As a result, the User is in breach of the rental agreements, and Nashua is entitled to claim immediate payment of M3,451,268.71, comprising unpaid rentals of M647,786.39, as well as future

rentals totaling M2,803,482.32, which we are duly instructed to demand.”

Nashua is also claiming interest on the total amount owed, calculated at 14.56 percent (six percent above the prime lending rate of 8.56 percent), to accrue from the date of the demand until full payment is made.

The attorneys warned that if payment is not received within seven days, legal action would be initiated against the school to recover the full amount, along with interest.

In such a case, Nashua also intends to recover the legal costs associated with the proceedings.

“Should legal action be instituted, the User may consider appointing a legal practitioner to defend

against the claim. However, it is important to note that this may result in significant additional costs,” the attorneys wrote.

They further advised that if the school is unable to settle the full amount within the specified time-frame, it may contact their offices to discuss the possibility of an extension or a payment arrangement in instalments.

Despite repeated requests for comment, the school has gone silent. Newsday submitted formal questions to MEMPS in June after uncovering the demand. The Acting Headmistress, Phano Sharite, acknowledged receipt of the inquiry and initially committed to responding by Wednesday last week.

“I kindly request that you give me until next week, Wednesday the 2nd July 2025, to have responded,” she said.

On Thursday last week, however, she requested more time, saying the matter would be discussed at an upcoming school board meeting and promised to respond after that meeting, specifically by Thursday this week.

That new deadline has now passed without any communication from the school. Follow-up messages sent to the Acting Headmistress yesterday were not answered.

Newsday has also learned that MEMPS is in financial distress and will not be able to pay staff salaries for July on time.

In a letter dated 10 July 2025, addressed to all staff members, Sharite confirmed that the school is experiencing a serious cash flow problem due to outstanding school fees from parents who had failed to honour their payment promises by the end of June.

“We had a genuine hope that parents would meet their school fees payment obligation as per promise. However, we are still experiencing further delays,” the letter reads.

As a result, salaries that are normally disbursed by the 20th of each month will now be paid on or after July 30, 2025.

“We understand the inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience and understanding. For that, we sincerely apologise,” the school stated.

The letter added that staff requiring proof of the delay to present to their creditors or service providers may collect supporting letters from the school office on Monday, 14 July 2025.

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# Recycling firm fights for seized property worth M500k

## ...amid cable theft, scrap metal smuggling concerns

### Staff Reporter

A local scrap metal recycling firm, Tšepe Recyclers, has expressed dismay at the members of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) for arbitrarily confiscating its processed copper and aluminium stock worth nearly M500 000, without basis.

The company claims that the continued withholding of its stock is crippling its business operations, which have been set up through a M10 million foreign direct investment (FDI) into Lesotho.

Established in 2023, Tšepe Recyclers collects and processes scrap metal and export it to overseas markets, marking a shift from the predominantly South Africa-bound exports.

In a strong -worded letter addressed to the CEO of the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), advocate Thabo Lerotholi, the CEO of Tšepe Recyclers, alleges that police officers attached at the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) acting alongside LEC staff randomly seized company property that was lawfully acquired and ready for export.

He said they expected the raid to have been informed by someone who claimed that their property has been stolen, but in this case there was none.

The confiscated metals were allegedly seized despite earlier verification by police officers that the company's premises located in Marabeng contained no stolen goods.

"To our great dismay they came back the next day with a team of LEC staff, and seized a

massive stock of copper and aluminium worth nearly M500,000," Lerotholi wrote.

"This stock was already processed and ready to be shipped to the Durban Port for overseas. The only explanation for this arbitrary unilateral seizure we got ...was that they needed to be verified if it was stolen from LEC or not."

The seizure took place in June following an initial search by police who had reportedly found nothing suspicious at the time.

Despite repeated efforts to clarify ownership of the goods, including interviews and submission of documentation to the police, Tšepe Recyclers says the materials remain impounded, and no charges have been laid against any member of its staff.

Tšepe Recyclers, which has already invested more than M10 million in Lesotho, is in the process of securing a sublease agreement with LNDC and has made ambitious plans to create over 1,000 jobs in the next two years.

Advocate Lerotholi warned that the current impasse threatens not only those jobs but also the company's long-term viability in Lesotho.

"In light of the prevailing circumstances, we feel as the Board of Tšepe that Tšepe is being forced to exit the market and leave the Kingdom of Lesotho," he wrote, urging the LNDC to intervene urgently.

The company had recently partnered with LNDC in showcasing its operations to potential investors in South Africa, presenting itself as a viable player in attracting foreign direct investment and boosting employment in the country.

While acknowledging the role of police in

curbing theft, especially in a scrap industry known for criminal infiltration, advocate Lerotholi insisted that law enforcement must act within legal bounds.

"We certainly have no problem when the police carry out their job where there is reasonable suspicion... However, where the police seem to be collaborating with our competitors in acts of sabotage, the law must also take its course to protect our business."

Contacted for comment, the Commissioner of Police, Borotho Matsoso, indicated that the police were currently continuing with their investigations regarding the property in question. He referred this publication to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Paseka Mokete for further indulgence.

On his part, DCP Mokete explained that while they were cognisant of the need to expedite their investigations on the matter, they still needed to be meticulous due to the widespread problem of vandalism on power and telecommunications cables, which tend to find their way to the scrap metal companies.

He also dismissed the allegations that the police were working in cahoots with Tšepe's competitors to plot its downfall.

"We are fully aware that we must carry out our investigations timeously, but unfortunately we must verify the authenticity of the claims of the scrap company regarding the source of their stock, and this process takes time," DCP Mokete told Newsday.

"For us it is not enough for the scrap company to provide us with the information. We still have to verify it ourselves.

"The country is also grappling with a high rate of vandalism around across the country particularly on transmission cables, and since the scrap company has claimed to have sourced its copper cables from the custodians of these cables, we have to verify all these beyond reasonable doubt before we can release the impounded property."

At this stage it is not clear whether the ongoing police investigations will lead to a court case against Tšepe or not.

Elaborating on their suspicion of foul play by the men in uniform, advocate Lerotholi told Newsday that the police failed to disclose whether there was anyone who reported stolen cables to warrant a raid on Tšepe Recyclers.

"You do not raid a legally operating business without any grounds. Who was complaining of theft of their property? They could not disclose that."

He further indicated that smuggling of scrap metal out of the country through a certain port of entry is going on unabated, which is hurting his legally operating entity.

"We believe there is rife smuggling of scrap metal between Lesotho and South Africa, and the government's lackluster stance in curbing it is hampering legally operating businesses.

"We are competing with South African companies for the scrap metal from Lesotho, and our prices are superior to theirs. In other words, the police are betting wrong on the wrong horse. And that is unfair and unfortunate considering the economic potential of this venture in the country."

Apart from the confiscation of their stock, advocate Lerotholi also indicated that they had to content with a series of break-ins at their business premises, where their equipment was stolen.

The LNDC and LEC declined to comment saying they do not interfere with law enforcement matters. LEC only added that it is common knowledge that it lost over M10 million worth of cables to vandalism during the past financial year.

# Productivity drops by 7% due to unemployment

### Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Lesotho's labour productivity has declined by seven percent, a drop that government officials and development experts are linking directly to the country's high and persistent unemployment rate — a crisis that the government officially declared a national disaster earlier this week.

The statistic was confirmed during the launch of the Lesotho 2025 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report on progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), held yesterday at the United Nations House in Maseru.

Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, admitted that despite years of effort and substantial financial investment, progress toward achieving the SDGs has been inconsistent. While there have been improvements in some areas, others, particularly economic growth and employment, are showing worrying signs of regression.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Matlanyane reflected on the country's long journey toward the 2030 development agenda, asking whether Lesotho would be able to look back with pride.

"If we are to take control of our development, we must be part of the solution. Leadership is required from everyone, not just the government," she said.

Earlier this week, the government declared unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, a national disaster, marking a dramatic shift in the country's ap-



proach to addressing joblessness. The declaration is expected to activate emergency response mechanisms and draw greater attention from both national institutions and international partners.

The VNR report, compiled by the Ministry in collaboration with the United Nations and other stakeholders, presents a sobering view of Lesotho's current position.

While maternal mortality has dropped by over 50 percent since 2009 and more women are giving birth with skilled health professionals present, economic indicators continue to fall short.

Real GDP growth has averaged below three percent, and SDG 8, focused on decent work and economic growth, remains among the most challenging.

Dr Matlanyane stressed that development partners would not continue to invest in Lesotho's progress if the country itself failed to take ownership of its goals.

"We cannot expect our partners to support us if we do not align ourselves with our development objectives," she said. "The government cannot do this alone. It requires a strong partnership with civil society, the private sector, and every Mosotho."

The VNR also revealed troubling trends in other areas. Gender-based violence (GBV) especially intimate partner violence, has increased despite awareness campaigns and policy reforms.

Climate change vulnerability remains high, though Lesotho has made some strides in implementing early warning systems and disaster risk financing strategies.

Even as a landlocked country, Lesotho has made progress on SDG 14, which focuses on life below water, through national water conservation programmes like ReNoka.

The report indicated that Lesotho's progress was being undermined by systemic challenges, including youth unemployment, weak health systems, limited disaster financing, gender inequality, and gaps in data coordination.

It called for urgent action to reverse these trends and accelerate SDG implementation.

Among the proposed solutions is the operationalisation of the Integrated National Financing Framework, institutionalisation of gender-responsive budgeting, and improved localisation of the SDGs at district level.

The report also urged the private sector to support youth employment through internships, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship, particularly for women and disadvantaged communities.

Development partners are being called upon to align their support with national strategies and invest in strengthening Lesotho's public financial management, data systems, and climate resilience.

Civil society, meanwhile, is encouraged to promote transparency and accountability through civic education and shadow reporting. Academic institutions are being asked to enhance data systems and embed SDG themes into research and education.

Innocent Modisaotile, Acting UN Resident Coordinator, commended Lesotho for conducting the review and stressed that the SDGs are not just government priorities, but national commitments.

"This VNR is not simply a government report. It is a national story, told by many voices: from ministries and NGOs to people living with disabilities, youth, and the private sector," he said. "No country can achieve the SDGs alone. We must move forward together, ensuring no one is left behind."

He reaffirmed the UN's commitment to helping Lesotho build a future rooted in equality, resilience, and sustainability.

Lesotho will present its findings to the international community later this month during the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York.



# Government caught in M940 million debt deal

## Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The government has entangled itself in a staggering \$53 million (about M940 million) debt, raising alarm bells in Parliament over what many are calling a repeat of the Fraser Solar debacle.

The deal, which involves a renewable energy project to be implemented by China-based Beijing Jinyuntong Technology Co. Ltd (JYT), has stirred controversy within the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) this week.

The agreement is structured as a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model, under which JYT will finance, construct, and operate a 40MW solar power plant with an integrated 20MW energy storage system before transferring ownership to the Government after a 15-year operational period.

Despite Lesotho’s need to boost local energy capacity, currently generating only 72 megawatts against a national demand of 200 megawatts, the project has raised significant legal, financial, and environmental concerns. At present, the country relies on imports from South Africa’s Eskom, spending over M600 million annually on electricity.

One of the most contentious revelations during the PAC hearings was that the project is moving forward without an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Such an assessment is legally required to evaluate the environmental consequences of major infrastructure projects.

The absence of an EIA has triggered outrage, particularly since the site selected for construction is the same Ramarothole location where the government is currently finalising Phase II of an existing solar plant, intended to generate 50MW.

PAC members questioned why officials appeared to know so little about a project of this magnitude. Concerns were amplified by the history of environmental issues at Ramarothole, including soil erosion, which previously forced the government to allocate additional funds for mitigation.

Some PAC members warned that this is déjà vu, referencing the Fraser Solar case, which plunged

Lesotho into a costly legal battle with a German company. Fraser Solar is suing the government for allegedly breaching a supply agreement for energy-saving equipment, claiming the country owes over M1 billion.

That case is still pending before the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein, with the government having hired high-profile South African legal counsel.

In the current deal, JYT’s electricity price is pegged at M2.10 per unit, significantly higher than the current LEC retail price of M1.43 per unit, and with a proposed annual increase of 5%. This price disparity has further alarmed lawmakers and energy experts alike.

During testimony before the PAC, officials revealed that the Government Secretary, Teboho ’Mokela, had issued a savingram on 24 January 2025 to the Principal Secretaries of Energy and Finance. The savingram included Cabinet’s approval of the BOT project and instructed the opening of an escrow account, with a M31.3 million deposit (3% of total project cost) as a performance guarantee under the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

The agreement stipulates that all revenues from the sale of electricity during the 15-year operational period will belong to JYT. It also commits the government to provide the construction site free of charge, to waive all customs duties and VAT for imported materials, and to ensure a stable legislative environment without policy shifts that could affect JYT’s interests.

Critically, any disputes that arise under the agreement are to be handled by the International Dispute Resolution Centre in London, further echoing the Fraser Solar scenario and raising questions about Lesotho’s sovereignty in enforcing or challenging international contracts.

PAC Chairperson ’Machabane Lemphane-Letsie expressed dismay that such a massive commitment seemed to have bypassed standard oversight mech-

anisms. She told the Ministry officials that if they had reservations, they should disclose who pushed the project forward against their advice.

During the hearings, Khotso Moleleki, Director of Debt at the Ministry of Finance, admitted that some projects are fast-tracked without meeting all regulatory requirements when the government is eager to secure foreign investment. “Chinese companies are willing to fund projects 100%, but the condition is that Chinese companies must implement them,” he explained. He noted that the Ministry often negotiates for local firms to be subcontracted.

Mothobi Letooane, Director of Project Cycle Management in the same ministry, confirmed that non-compliant capital projects have received approval in recent years. “Some decisions are beyond us,” said Moleleki, adding that the Ministry only conducts technical and financial assessments before handing recommendations to Cabinet.

Chief Legal Officer Motale Tseole stated bluntly that the JYT agreement is binding. “Sometimes we advise against it, but the principals go ahead,” he noted, acknowledging the difficulty of enforcing institutional checks when executive decision-making overrides expert guidance.

Suspended LEC Managing Director Mohlomi Seithleko further complicated the matter by noting that the JYT project is different from Phases I and II of the Ramarothole Solar Plant, suggesting the risk of infrastructure overlap and planning conflicts.

Adding to the concerns, officials admitted that JYT was the only renewable energy company presented to Lesotho at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing. This contradicts claims that multiple companies submitted proposals, prompting the PAC to question the transparency of the selection process.

Technocrats at the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) have reportedly raised red flags about the deal, citing viability concerns and implications for long-term energy pricing and sustainability.

# Gov’t distanced from xenophobic chaos in SA

## Ntsoaki Motaung

A government official this week appeared to back efforts by South African groups to exclude foreign nationals, including Basotho, from accessing public healthcare services.

Pulane Lesita, the Public Relations Officer for Lesotho’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aligned herself with controversial narratives that foreign nationals should not use South Africa’s state-run health facilities, saying South Africans are “within their rights” to prioritise citizens.

This comes amid growing reports of foreign nationals, including Basotho, being turned away from public hospitals and clinics across South Africa, with local groups citing pressure on state resources and asserting that foreigners should “pay in full” at private facilities.

“They are not saying foreigners, including Basotho, should not access services,” Lesita said. “They are saying foreigners must access services that are paid for and leave public services for South Africans.”

She added: “Basotho in South Africa are not paying tax there. If this were happening in Lesotho, even our own citizens would not be happy with foreigners burdening the system.”

Several Basotho living in South Africa have confirmed that they are being denied access to health services, even when in the country legally.

A Mosotho woman living in Vosloorus said she was turned away from a local clinic despite having a valid passport. Another, living in Soshanguve, Pretoria, said she was denied family planning services even though she had all her legal documentation in order.

These incidents mirror the growing hostility against foreign nationals in South Africa, fueled by groups such as ActionSA, an opposition political party, and a xenophobic Operation Dudula.

ActionSA, through its Parliamentary Chief Whip and National Spokesperson Lerato Ngobeni, has publicly affirmed its commitment to “end abuse of public healthcare by illegal foreigners.”

The party contends that public health facilities

are “overburdened, under budgeted and do not have the capacity, staff and financial resources.” ActionSA emphasises the need for “the right people in the country with documents,” stating: “We reject continued abuse of our hospitals by people who are illegal in the country because they are criminals.”

Operation Dudula has taken a more extreme position, demanding that all foreign nationals, documented or not, must use private facilities and “go back to your country” if they cannot afford them.

“South Africa’s resources are under pressure. It’s only fair non-citizens contribute their share by paying privately,” the group said in a recent statement.

They argue that “South Africa’s public resources are under immense pressure” and that “to protect and prioritise services for citizens, it is only fair that non-citizens contribute their fair share by accessing services through private means.”

These groups are demanding that South African citizens be given priority access to public healthcare services, citing instances where locals are allegedly “overlooked or delayed.”

Affected health facilities reportedly include Rosettenville, Vooslorus, Addington, and Hillbrow health centres.

However, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has issued a strong reminder to the public and all stakeholders that “the right to access healthcare services in South Africa is a universal right afforded to everyone within the Republic’s borders, as guaranteed by the Constitution.”

In a media advisory on July 2, 2025, the SAHRC highlighted Section 27(1) of the Constitution, which “clearly states that: ‘Everyone has the right to have access to healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare.’”

The SAHRC further clarified that “this constitutional provision means that all people in South Africa, regardless of nationality, legal status, race, gender, age, income level, or geographic location, are entitled to access basic healthcare services.”

This explicitly includes South African citizens,

refugees and asylum seekers, documented and undocumented migrants, stateless persons, children (including separated, unaccompanied, and stateless children), persons in detention, and vulnerable populations.

The commission stressed that “the Constitution does not qualify or limit this right based on immigration status or citizenship” and that “in accordance with Section 27(3), ‘No one may be refused.’”

While some reports from South African media houses have stated that 70 percent of patient files in Johannesburg belong to foreign nationals, the broader debate continues to rage, pitting calls for prioritising citizens against the constitutional guarantee of universal healthcare access.

The outcome of this escalating tension remains to be seen as different groups continue to assert their interpretations of the law and human rights.

Lerato Nkhetše, Director for the Migrant Workers Association of Lesotho, stated that their association has received reports from Basotho living in South Africa who were directly affected by the situation.

He said that after receiving these reports, the association contacted the municipal councils in the affected areas to understand what was happening.

“All we learned from them was that they are working to address the situation. We were told that what the citizens are doing is against the law and will be handled,” he said.

Nkhetše mentioned that the association was about to release a statement speaking out against these actions. However, after talking with their partners in South Africa and hearing South Africa’s president’s comment that the issue would be solved, they decided to wait and see what happens.

He asked the government of Lesotho to make sure that every Lesotho consulate and embassy in South Africa has a clinic or offers health services at their locations.

“Many Basotho are in South Africa, and it makes sense to have such facilities there to help our people,” he said.

# Charges against Peshoane struck off after years of legal battle

## Ntsoaki Motaung

The long-standing criminal charges against Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) Executive Director, Tsikoane Peshoane, have been officially struck off the roll by the High Court after a legal battle lasting nearly three years, during which questions were raised about prosecutorial conduct, donor interference, and executive overreach.

According to a memorandum authored by his legal representative, Advocate Monaheng Seeiso Rasekoai of Rasekoai, Rampai & Lebakeng Attorneys, the charges of sexual assault and/or harassment initially brought against Peshoane under case number CR/0480/2022 were dismissed on April 3, 2025, after the prosecution failed to comply with a court order demanding disclosure of crucial documents.

“The battle of Mr. Peshoane was concluded some three years after his battle with state agencies, compromised complainants and supra-national agencies which were both biased and polarised,” the memo stated.

The memo revealed that even before Peshoane’s initial court appearance on July 11, 2022, doubts had already been raised by prosecutors regarding the viability of the case.

“I have carefully read the statements herein contained... These incidents of sexual abuse happened as far back as 2018... No one took up the matter to the police, why? Was there any threat to the victims by the Accused? I need clarity to enable me to form my independent opinion,” wrote a senior prosecutor in a Savingram dated 8 March 2022.

Another prosecutor, Adv. L. Mofolikoane, added in a subsequent memo: “The explanation that was given by the suspect to the Investigating Officer after being cautioned [must] be filed herein and the docket be returned to us for further directives.”

The memorandum alleged that when the prosecution faced difficulties with evidence, complainants escalated the matter to TRC’s donor, the European Union (EU), a move Peshoane’s legal team claims was calculated to damage his credibility and threaten funding for the organisation.

“This was evidently a well-calculated measure to discredit him as Executive Director and to render him unsuitable to the primary donors...,” the memo read.

“It is noteworthy to observe that the complainants escalated their complaints to a supra-national body... over a domestic criminal case which must be independently investigated by law enforcement agencies in terms of the laws of the Kingdom of Lesotho.”

The memo also accused the Office of the Prime Minister of interfering with the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), citing undisclosed correspondences that allegedly influenced the course of the case.

Following multiple failed attempts to refer the matter for constitutional review and a refusal by the magistrate to stay proceedings, Peshoane sought an urgent interdict from the High Court.

When Justice Ralebese recused herself, the case was reassigned to Justice Khamo. A final blow to the prosecution’s case came when it failed to comply with a court order issued on 20 March 2025 demanding the disclosure of several key documents, including, a letter from the Prime Minister to the DPP, the investigation docket, the investigation diary, the list of witnesses, and all supporting documents relevant to the prosecution.

“This application was neither opposed nor reacted to by the Prosecution Authority,” the memo noted.

“On the 3rd April 2025, a final order for the striking-off of all charges... was made and granted accordingly.”

The memorandum included strong statements defending Peshoane’s innocence and condemning what his legal team describes as a “trial by accusation” often seen in sexual assault cases.

“This case is a classic case of the ripple effects of a trial by accusation... There will be some who will be unwilling or unable to disbelieve a false accusation...,” it argued.

“Mr. Peshoane did everything legal and ethical to clear his name... His battle was not only his, but of those many men who have been falsely accused by evil and vindictive women.”

Quoting Alan Dershowitz, the memo stated: “‘There must be justice both for the victim of false accusations and for those who falsely accuse.’”

Throughout the legal process, TRC reportedly lost donor funding and struggled to operate. According to the memo, he “has been operating and running the organisation without any resources for a period of almost two years to the chagrin of the marginalised members of society who are the primary beneficiaries.”





Newsday

# Business

## Yet another milestone in LHWP II implementation

### Seabata Mahao

Lesotho has marked another key milestone in regional infrastructure with the recent arrival of the second Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) for use in the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP II).

The TBM, described as a “marvel of modern engineering” by Lesotho Highlands Development Authority’s (LHDA) Reentseng Molapo, who spoke on behalf of the Chief Executive, will be used to excavate the 38-kilometre Polihali Transfer Tunnel.

This critical conduit will link the new Polihali Dam, currently under construction, to the existing Katse Dam, enabling the annual transfer of over 400 million cubic metres of water to South Africa’s Vaal River System.

“This TBM will be instrumental in ensuring we meet our ambitious targets. It brings with it not only engineering excellence but also real economic and social opportunities for our communities,” Molapo said.

The arrival of the TBM was hailed as a symbol of progress, regional cooperation, and economic promise. Minister of Social Development Pitso Lesaoana called the moment one of “national pride,” highlighting the broader benefits the project brings to local communities through infrastructure and job creation.



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) officially welcomed the arrival of a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM)

“This TBM represents more than technology, it is a promise of progress and development for our country,” Lesaoana declared.

Local leaders echoed similar sentiments. Chief Chona Nhlapho of Ha Belo village emphasised the economic potential the project unlocks for local businesses and services, particularly in construction.

From the South African side, High Commissioner Constance Seopasengwe praised the project as a cornerstone of regional development, both economically and diplomatically.

Referring to Lesotho’s water as “white gold,” she reaffirmed South Africa’s strategic interest

in the success of LHWP.

“This is the largest infrastructure investment by South Africa outside its borders. It is a shining example of public-private partnership,” she said, citing the role of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority in mobilising capital from South African financial markets.

Beyond its technical and financial scope, the LHWP has placed a strong emphasis on environmental protection and community welfare. Thousands of jobs are being created, while upskilling of local workers in advanced construction technologies is underway. Authorities also noted that affected communities have been thoroughly consulted, with compensation and relocation plans being implemented.

“The peace is paramount,” Seopasengwe said. “Without it, development cannot be achieved. Water binds nations together. It is the source and sustainer of all life.”

The tunnel construction is set to commence shortly, with the LHDA expressing confidence in meeting, if not beating, set deadlines. The Minister of Natural Resources Mhloni Moleko was praised for his active leadership throughout the process.

As construction begins, the TBM stands as more than just a machine, it is a symbol of unity and determination, underpinning a project that connects not just rivers and reservoirs, but people, economies, and futures across borders.

“Together, we have achieved a lot. We can still do more. Let us ensure that this project is completed successfully, for the prosperity of both Lesotho and South Africa,” Seopasengwe concluded.

## Econet’s new Wi-Fi Plus further bridges digital divide



### Seabata Mahao

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has launched Wi-Fi Plus, a new integrated connectivity solution that combines fixed broadband and mobile services into one seamless platform.

The service is set to transform how Basotho access the internet, at home, at work, or on the move.

Unveiled at a launch event this week, Wi-Fi Plus marks a significant step in ETL’s mission to digitise Lesotho and make connectivity more accessible.

Econet’s Chief Executive Officer Dennis Plaatjies described the product not just as a service, but as a shift in how people live and work in a digital society.

“We are making connectivity easier, simpler, and more seamless than ever before. Whether

you’re at home, at work, or on the move, it just works, wherever you are,” Plaatjies said.

Wi-Fi Plus allows users to manage both home and mobile internet services under a single flexible account. Customers can enjoy broadband internet, mobile data, and on-net voice calls, all from one subscription. The service is

offered in customised packages tailored for both households and small to medium enterprises (SMMs).

For residential users, the package includes unlimited home Wi-Fi, along with SIM cards for household members — each with mobile data and call minutes under one shared account.

For SMMs, the business package includes unlimited office internet and employee SIM cards, with support for prepaid lines and a 24-month data-sharing window, offering flexibility and efficiency.

#### Three-Tier Package Options

Econet has introduced three pricing tiers to cater to different user needs:

- Gold Package: M899/month — up to 300GB, 30Mbps upload, 90Mbps download
- Silver Package: M649/month —

25Mbps upload, 70Mbps download

- Bronze Package: M499/month — 20Mbps upload, 30Mbps download

The company says these plans aim to deliver high-speed internet at affordable rates to support families, students, and entrepreneurs.

Backed by Infrastructure Investment

Plaatjies emphasized that the new service is supported by ongoing investments in network upgrades that began in February 2025. The enhancements aim to improve data speeds, reduce congestion, and increase reliability across both 4G and 5G networks.

“We are expanding Econet’s core network capacity to allow for faster data flow and better routing. This means reduced congestion, improved voice quality, and enhanced data speeds on both our 4G and 5G networks,” he explained.

Currently, Econet has achieved full 5G cover-

age in all 10 districts and has deployed fibre internet in nine, with completion efforts underway in the last district. Additionally, Econet remains the only provider in Lesotho offering eSIM technology, further solidifying its digital leadership.

Describing Wi-Fi Plus as a tool for empowerment, Plaatjies said the company is committed to bringing connectivity to rural and underserved communities.

“Connectivity is a right and a necessity. It should not be a privilege. We are putting the customer in control of their world of connectivity — one account, one view, one experience,” he said.

With Wi-Fi Plus, Econet is reshaping Lesotho’s digital landscape. The merging of fixed and mobile internet into a single, accessible product represents a move toward a more inclusive and efficient future.

“We shall continue to listen, to innovate, and to lead in bringing solutions that change lives. A truly digital Lesotho must leave no one behind — and we are working every day to make that vision a reality,” Plaatjies said in closing.



MOLAO OA MOBU 2010  
TSEBISO!!! HO BATHO BOHLE BA AMEHANG

Mona ho etsoa tsebisoe hore Molula-Setulo oa Lekhotla la Teropo la Berea teropong ea Teyateyaneng o fumane molaetsa o latelang malebana le mobu o neng o sebelisoa ke mofu ea latelang:

LEBITSO LA BAFU	LETSATSI LA LEFU	SEBAKA SA MOBU	NOMORO EA SETS'A	MOFUTA OA MOBU	LEBITSO LA MOJALEFA	KHETHO EA MOJALEFA E ENTSOE KE
Sello Sechoala	24/08/2001	Ha Molemane	—	Bolulo	Sebabatso Sechoala	Lelapa
Mafelleng Sechoala	09/12/2004					

Molula Setulo oa Lekhotla la Teropo la Berea o fana ka tsebisoe ea hore lipelaolo le likhanyetso tseo ebang li teng li etsoa ho mang kapa mang ea hanyetsang hore moajalefa ea boletsoeng ha se eena ea nang le litokelo mobung ona, ba li etse ka mongolo 'me li tlosoe ofising ea mongoli oa Lekhotla, BERE A URBAN COUNCIL, PRIVATE BAG 028, BERE A 200. Lipelaolo le likhanyetso li finyelle pele libeke tse tseletlang (6) li fela ho tloha mola letsatsi la tsebisoe ena.





# Kidney cancer in kids mistaken for witchcraft

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

The Childhood Cancer Organisation in Lesotho has issued a stark warning about the urgent need for early detection of kidney cancer in children, an illness too often misinterpreted as witchcraft because of its primary symptom, a swollen abdomen.

Mampho Tšupane, founder and Deputy Chairperson of the Organisation, emphasised the devastating impact of delayed diagnosis and treatment. Tšupane cited a heartbreaking recent case where financial and family challenges led to a child’s death after treatment was discontinued.

“Last year, we lost a child to kidney cancer after treatment in Bloemfontein was halted,” Tšupane said. “The challenges were financial and family-related. These made it impossible for the baby to continue receiving care,” she explained.

“After stopping treatment, the child’s condition worsened. The abdomen became swollen again, the cancer spread aggressively, and multiple tumours developed.”

The Childhood Cancer Organisation plays a critical role in closing this gap, identifying vulnerable families, raising awareness, and helping them resume or access life-saving treatment.

Tšupane detailed the symptoms of kidney cancer in children, urging parents to be vigilant. “When a child has kidney cancer, the stomach may swell and harden, with visible blood vessels under the skin. In some cases, the tumour may be visible. The child may also suffer from intense pain, fever, and blood in their urine,” she said.

However, cultural beliefs are proving to be a dangerous obstacle.

“Because of the swollen stomach, many parents associate this with witchcraft. They often begin by consulting traditional doctors, moving from one to another,” she said.

“This delays the child from receiving a proper diagnosis and timely treatment. And by the time they seek help in hospitals, the cancer has often advanced and spread, making it far more difficult to treat.”

Tšupane also highlighted the distinction between types of kidney cancer in adults and children.

While adults are typically affected by Renal Cell Carcinoma (RCC), children often suffer from Neuroblastoma, a form that primarily occurs in children aged 0 to five years. A rarer childhood variant, Clear Cell Carcinoma, has not yet been observed by the Organisation in Lesotho.

“Like all cancers, kidney cancer in children is treatable if caught early,” Tšupane stressed. “We do have survivors within our Organisation, but sadly, there are also those we have lost.”

The Childhood Cancer Organisation supports families through various initiatives, including a WhatsApp group where parents of children diagnosed with any of the nine types of cancer known to affect children in Lesotho can share experienc-



es and receive both emotional and psychological support.

Tšupane called for intensified public education on childhood cancer.

“It’s crucial to raise awareness about all cancers. Informed people make informed choices, which improves survival rates. Awareness will help more parents understand what they are dealing with and seek timely help,” she said.

She challenged the government to ramp up its efforts.

“Our government still has a long way to go in creating awareness about childhood cancer. We have started the work, but we cannot do this alone. The Ministry of Health needs to do more,” she urged.

She also appealed for stronger government support for medical professionals.

“We need enhanced training for health-care workers to improve early detection. More children would survive if their cancer was caught and treated in time.”

Tšupane further urged the government to implement robust follow-up systems to ensure children complete their treatment. “We appreciate that government facilitates treatment, but they must also educate parents and ensure follow-ups. Some children never finish their treatment, either because the parents lack understanding, or because they simply can’t afford to keep travelling, especially from remote areas to Maseru, to be taken to South Africa.”

Meanwhile, Minister of Health Selibe Mochoboroane has recently confirmed that Lesotho is making progress in the fight against cancer, with support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Rays of Hope Initiative.

Mochoboroane cited the training of oncology nurses and specialists, as well as ongoing programmes for radiologists and medical physicists. Efforts are also underway to strengthen surgical oncology, pathology, palliative care, and psychological support services.

Globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 400,000 children and adolescents (aged 0–19) develop cancer each year. While over 80 percent of children with cancer survive

in high-income countries, the survival rate drops to less than 30 percent in low- and middle-income countries due to late diagnosis, misdiagnosis, treatment abandonment, and limited access to essential

medicines.

The WHO also reports that only 29 percent of low-income countries have general access to cancer medicines, compared to 96 percent in high-income nations.



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.**





**Nicole Tau**

Standing at any high point in Lesotho, you can almost always see South Africa. It feels like one can simply walk over there and start a new life. No borders, no fences, no visible guards, just plain South African plains. How can one want a better future for their children and not just take it when it's right in front of them?

Dubbed "The Kingdom in the Sky", Lesotho is the world's only nation above 1,000 meters, a mountain fortress where poverty claws at grandeur.



*Thetsane Industrial Area, Lesotho, home to several Chinese-owned factories (Saturday)*

South Africa completely encircles it, and its currency, the loti (plural: maloti), matches lockstep with the rand under the Common Monetary Area (CMA). Yet this economic tether fails to lift its people, 75% of whom are poor or vulnerably poor (Lesotho Poverty Assessment, 2019).

However, the brave Basotho women who take the chance to cross the border over to South Africa are now supporting families back in Lesotho. They are sending girls to school, taking care of the elderly, and ensuring the well-being of the families that depend on them.

The Thetsane Industrial Area pulses with the heartbeat of Lesotho's economy. Rows of factories, like FORMOSA, hum even on weekends, their gates swallowing streams of workers. Most here live where they labor, but others trek for hours from Maseru's surrounding villages, occasionally beginning their walks before sunrise.

By 5 AM, women balance their lunchbox containers of pap and morogo (any of the leafy green vegetables) as they hurry toward the factory floor.



Overlooking FORMOSA's sprawling complex, Mamalefane Lethibela (50) sits beside her husband at a weekend-quiet taxi rank. Drivers still shout for passengers heading into town, but her gaze is fixed somewhere beyond the fences.

A pause hangs in the air before she unspools her story of years spent on the factory floors of Mandeni, South Africa, where the machines sounded the same, but the world felt foreign and full of opportunities.

In Durban's Mandeni Industrial Zone, Mamalefane spent 2018 to 2024 sewing in a Chinese-owned factory. She earned roughly R1,000 a week, or more with overtime. Little by South African standards, but a lifeline in Lesotho. She sent remittances through Hello Paisa, an informal digital service that promised lower fees than Shoprite transfers but required lengthy vetting.

"It wasn't easy to apply," she explains. "You submit your documents, but sometimes the application gets declined. Others had theirs approved, so they helped us send money home. For us, it was the simplest way to send money. It felt like a real improvement, and we managed to make positive



# The Breadwinner Basotho Woman and the Families They Sustain from South Africa

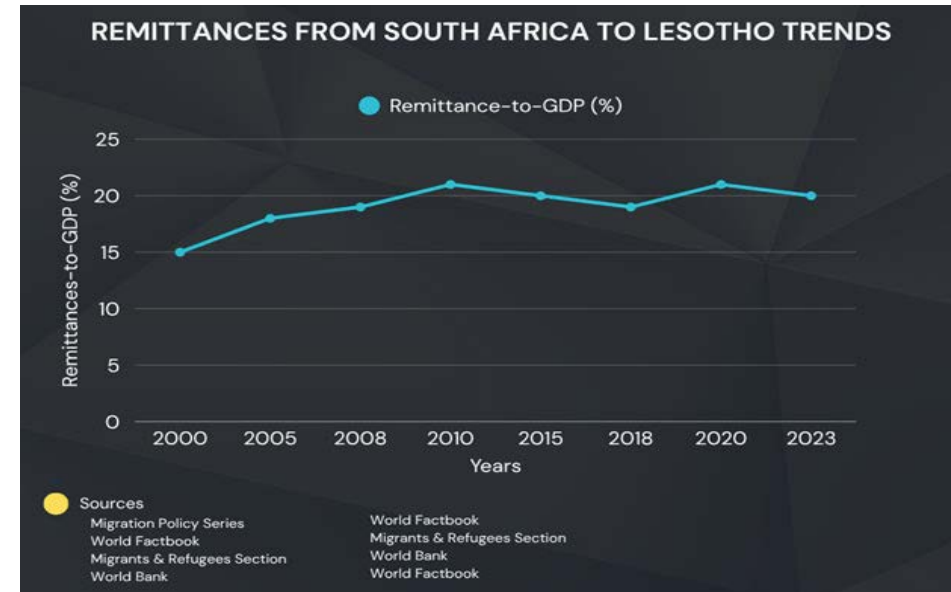
changes back at home."

Mamalefane's husband was unemployed when she left for South Africa, but found some work in her absence. However, although he tried to hold the family together, his meager earnings from doing odd jobs around Maseru couldn't cover the family of five's daily needs, including their deaf, special needs son, Katleho (21) and their ten-year-old grandson.

"When she was working in South Africa, her money was really helpful," he says. "In South Africa, they were earning per week. The money in Lesotho was small and finished quickly, so we relied on her; that when things finished, she could assist."

In 2023, Mamalefane brought her eldest daughter, Mantina (28), to join her in the factory at Mandeni.

"There was no work back in Lesotho. This was after the factories closed down due to COVID-19. She still works there now. Her money makes some changes because she's able to put the kids through school and make sure that the food is there," she says.



On the other side of the border in South Africa lives Matsepiso Makhabane.

Twenty-four years ago, Matsepiso left Lesotho for South Africa. Now 56, she wears multiple hats as an entrepreneur, energy specialist, and advocate for migrant women. Yet she still does not hold a South African ID.

"As soon as I say, 'My name is Matsepiso Makhabane, Lesotho passport RA...', the attitude completely changes. It's like you're no longer a person, like you're not one of them," she says.

Matsepiso's first taste of Johannesburg came in 2001, when she accepted a coveted energy policy post at a major organization. Married to a South African by civil law and traditionally, she assumed motherhood (all her three children are South African citizens) and her husband's paperwork would grant her smoother legal status.

Instead, every permit hinged on his intermittent support. "Whenever I needed a police clearance to renew my permit, I had to depend on him. But he appeared and vanished; it was complicated."

When her residency lapsed, she began making monthly pilgrimages to Maseru, six hours away, just to stamp out her passport.

"If I overstayed for two days, I would face a one to five-year ban. So, I would go home before the permit expires, even though it's costly. You can imagine coming home all the way from Johannesburg every month before the stamp expires. It's really costing me a lot."

Today, Matsepiso leads The Green Business College, based in South Africa, an agro-processing and renewable energy training hub she acquired during the 2020 COVID lockdown. Her institute offers free or subsidized workshops to migrant women, equipping them with organic farming and agro-processing to sustain families in Lesotho.



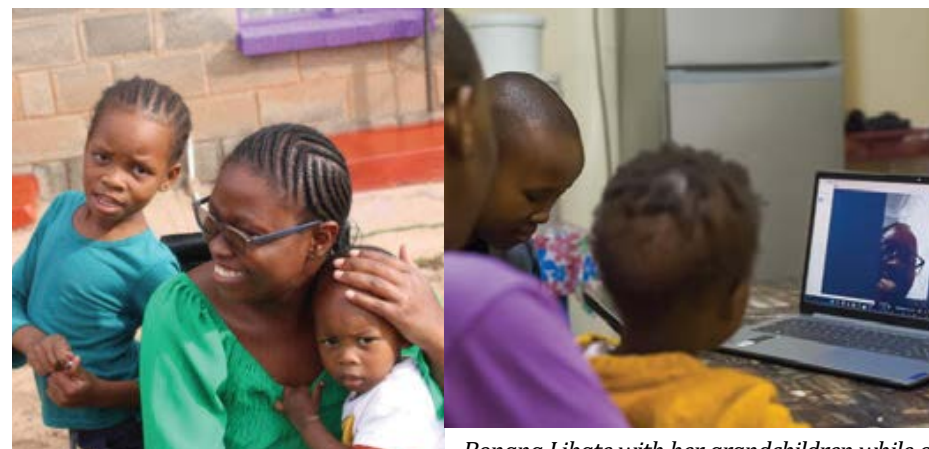
*Matsepiso (right) one of her Basotho students in South Africa at one of the Green Business College food preservation course events*

"I wanted to give other migrant women back home in Lesotho something they could control despite the broken systems. I understand their plight," she says. "After I make groups with them, I monitor their progress and encourage them. They are doing wonders. They learn to process food into jams and pickles, products they can sell."

Such grassroots initiatives reveal a pattern of resourcefulness that rarely makes headlines: women leveraging informal networks to launch micro-enterprises, despite living without basic civil rights.

"When the government of Lesotho couldn't be there for stranded Basotho in South Africa," Mamalefane says. "Some of us across Lesotho formed a cooperative called 'Moho Re Ka Atleha Basotho' (Together We Basotho Can Succeed). The cooperative is now three years old. We pool small grants to help Basotho women in SA who need them. For example, those stranded at a South African hospital or to cover funeral costs."

Bonang Libate (54), a mother of four, left Leribe's garment factories in 2010 when wages couldn't cover her children's school fees. For four years, she labored as a domestic worker in Mpumalanga, sending every maloti back to her own mother, Rethabile, who cared for the children.



*Bonang's daughter, Mamello Libate*

*Bonang Libate with her grandchildren while on video call with her daughter in South Africa*

"I knew nothing of Johannesburg," Bonang says, "Only that I had to provide."

When school fees rose once more, Bonang returned home and rented a two-room dwelling with her grandchildren, her eldest daughter having also gone across the border to work in a factory. All four of her children have since completed Grade 12, defying national dropout rates driven by poverty and early marriage.

It was a friend's tip that pushed her to travel alone to Pretoria's sprawling townships, certain she had no choice. But migration is woven into the Libate family's DNA. Bonang's mother, Rethabile (70), once made the same pilgrimage in her youth. Bonang's eldest daughter Hopolang has followed her mother's path too, traveling to Durban in early 2023 to work.

"Hopolang is really helping me the most. She takes care of me. She makes sure that we eat, that the kids go to school and have clothes, that I am able to pay rent."

Bonang Libate with her grandchildren while on video call with her daughter in South Africa

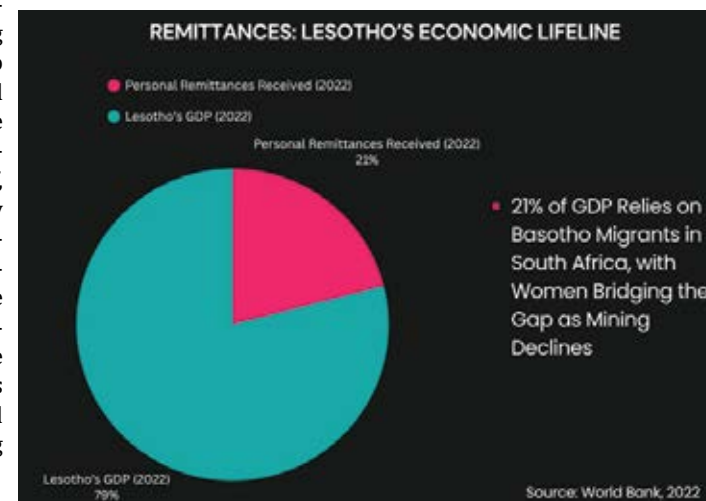
Free migration is the backbone of survival in Lesotho, with 43% of households reporting at least one member who's been working outside the country for decades. Remittances from Basotho migrant workers in South Africa have anchored Lesotho's economy.

In 2023, this flow reached \$485 million, 22.9% of GDP, making Lesotho Africa's fourth most remittance-dependent nation, according to the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief. Beneath this statistic lies the disproportionate role of Basotho women, who remit more of their income despite earning less, sustaining households while battling systemic challenges.

While specific remittance data for Basotho women migrants remains scarce, a critical trend reveals the invisible engine of female labor as mining jobs for Basotho men plummeted from 100,000 in 1990 to 40,500 by 2006, gutting traditional household incomes. Total remittances to Lesotho paradoxically increased (Migration, Remittances and Development in Lesotho, 2010).

This surge occurred alongside a documented rise in female migration, with women constituting half of Le-

growing flow to Africa and the textile force with-  
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For decades, Basotho migration was synonymous with men trudging to South African mines. Remittances from male workers once underpinned Lesotho's economy and defined gender roles at home. But the late 20th century brought mechanization, economic downturns, and stricter immigration policies, shrinking those male-dominated corridors.

Retrenched Basotho mineworkers pursued various paths to survive, including starting businesses back home, taking up farming, finding new jobs within Lesotho, or remigrating again for other types of work (Return, reintegration and survival: The case of Basotho labor migrants retrenched from South African mines, 2013).

With male remittances vanishing, the exodus of women became necessary. By the 1980s, scholars noted an uptick in female migration. First, internally, then across the border. By 2018, 52% of cross-border migrants were female, many of them leaving children with grandparents or siblings to sew jeans in Maseru or clean homes in Durban.

Metric	Women	Men	Source
Avg. Monthly earnings	R2,929 (Domestic)	R5,500 (Mining)	Stats SA, 2024
Income Remitted	60 80%	30 50%	UN INSTRAW/SATIA
Households Supported	93% buy food	76% buy food	SAMP Study

Women allocate 56% of remittances to school fees and uniforms vs. men's 32%. Men invest 67% in livestock or property.

Migrant women make up 37.4% of SADC migrants to South Africa, dominating the informal sectors at 70% working as street vendors, domestic workers, or textile laborers (UN-INSTRAW/SAI-IA). Although they earn 30-50% less than their male counterparts (e.g. R2,929/month vs. R5,500 for miners), they remit 60-80% of their income consistently.

Twelve SADC nations, including Lesotho, signed the Revised Protocol on Gender and Development, pledging "gender-responsive legislation" for migrants. South Africa and Lesotho's 90-day visa-free agreement offers critical flexibility for Basotho to seek work or reunite with family without immediate deportation risks. Although temporary, this window is a lifeline for women escaping exploitation or pursuing opportunities.



*The Border Entry Between the Two Countries*

Both governments are also negotiating portable social benefits, which are tricky to execute but a potential game-changer for mothers sending remittances home. If implemented, this would let migrants retain pensions, healthcare, and childcare support across borders. For Basotho women dominating informal sectors, this could mean safety nets beyond exploitative employers.

South Africa has a Family Reunification Visa option that allows the first kin (spouses/children) to secure permanent residency in South Africa, and second kin (siblings) to qualify for renewable temporary permits (SA Home Affairs). While financial requirements (R8,500/month) remain prohibitive for many, the framework exists, and migrant groups are pushing to expand eligibility.

The economic empowerment naturally shifts household dynamics. Basotho men must adapt to women as breadwinners, so decision-making becomes more collaborative. As these women assert agency, they catalyze policy debates, inspire new forms of cross-border collaboration, and reshape the narrative of migration in Southern Africa.

"My mother now handles most of the finances, and her strength has inspired all of us to work together," says one of Bonang's relatives in Maseru.

In Lesotho's villages, open-air meetings or traditional gatherings known as pitso convene to discuss migration's impacts. There, Basotho blankets and mokoroto hats lend cultural gravitas as advocates press for family-friendly policies, secure labor rights, and cross-border benefit portability. The message is that national security and economic growth must not eclipse human dignity and family unity.

Migrant Worker's Association of Lesotho (MWA-Lesotho) Coordinator, Lekhema Ramaphiri, emphasizes that lipitso are vital to informing rural and highland communities about policies, rights, and critical issues like human trafficking. These gatherings also educate participants on local challenges, ensuring grassroots perspectives shape solutions.

*This content is produced as part of the Move Africa project, commissioned by the African Union Commission and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the GIZ or the African Union.*



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Government of Lesotho  
LESOTHO COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST  
“ADVERTISEMENT”

CONSULTING SERVICES - INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT (IC) SELECTION

**Country :** Lesotho  
**Project Name :** Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project  
**Credit No. :** 7169-LS  
**Assignment Title:** Entrepreneurship Hub Manager  
**Reference No. :** CAFI-WB-0081

The Government of Lesotho has received credit from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development through the CAFI PMU, now invites interested individuals to indicate their interest in the assignment. Interested individuals should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience for the assignment.

- The selection criteria will be based on the following information, inter alia:**
- Master's degree or equivalent in business administration, entrepreneurship, accounting or related fields.
  - At least five (5) years of experience in business development, management consulting, entrepreneurship or related fields, with an emphasis on supporting start-ups and SMEs.
  - Experience in managing and building a network of incubators or entrepreneurship support organizations.
  - Experience in implementing capacity building and certification programs for entrepreneurship support organizations.
  - Experience in developing or implementing early-stage financing instruments for start-ups or SMEs.
  - Experience in building and maintaining relationships with various stakeholders, including investors, entrepreneurs, and government agencies.
  - Knowledge of entrepreneurship ecosystem and start-up business models; experience with Lesotho Entrepreneurship ecosystem will be an added advantage.
  - Excellent analytical, organizational and project management skills.
  - Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work in a team.
  - Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to make pres-

- entations to diverse audiences and facilitate training sessions.
- Demonstrated experience working in a multicultural and interdisciplinary environment.
- Excellent proficiency in English, both spoken and written.
- Fluency in Sesotho

The complete Terms of Reference (TOR) for the positions can be obtained at the address given below.  
Interested candidates are required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) and Curriculum Vitae (CV) together with educational certificates to the address below.  
The attention of interested candidates is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.  
A candidate will be selected in accordance with the Individual Consultant Selection method set out in Procurement Regulations.

**Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 16h30 local time].**

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled **“Entrepreneurship Hub Manager”** to the address below in person or by e-mail on or before **Friday, 25 July 2025 at 14h00**. E-mail submissions should be sent to [procurement@cafi.org.ls](mailto:procurement@cafi.org.ls) as a single attachment.

Managing Director  
Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project  
1st Floor 'Matanki House  
P.O. Box 747,  
Maseru 100  
Lesotho  
Tel.: (+266) 22 315 100

**NB: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**



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

1. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.
2. The policy is accessible at [www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506](https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506).
3. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>.
4. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/privacy>.

read, understood, and agreed to be bound by the Privacy Policy of IFAD.  
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:  
a. 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.  
b. 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.  
c. Recruiting former client or government employees to perform services for their former ministries, departments or agencies is acceptable provided no conflict of interest exists.  
d. 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.

- e. 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)



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# Wodemaya inspires Lesotho content creators at Master Class



**Chris Theko**

One of Africa’s most influential travel content creators, Wodemaya, sparked a wave of inspiration among aspiring digital storytellers in Lesotho during a powerful Master Class held on Monday at the ‘Manthabiseng Convention Centre.

The event, supported by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), forms part of the Corporation’s broader strategy to position Lesotho as a premier tourism destination, both locally

and globally.

The Master Class brought together a vibrant mix of vloggers, bloggers, photographers, social media influencers, and other aspiring content creators who gathered to learn from the Ghanaian-born YouTube star, whose content reaches millions across the world.

Wodemaya, born Berthold Kobby Winkler Ackon, is renowned for documenting untold African stories through his YouTube channel. His visit to Lesotho aligns with LTDC’s mission to boost the visibility of the country’s rich tourism offerings, from breathtaking natural landscapes and cultural heritage to unique local traditions.

“As part of its marketing initiatives, the LTDC works with international travel influencers who play a role in showcasing the country’s unique assets,” said an LTDC Chief Executive Officer, Mamello Morojele.

“In this regard, we are lucky to have struck a partnership with Mr. Obina Akon, popularly known as Wodemaya or more appropriately, as we Basotho have come to know him, ‘Kopano’.”

“To the participants of today’s event, indeed you are lucky to be able to be part

of this journey as it takes off, you must view this intervention is an opportunity for you to build your capacity, position yourself as being available and ready to join hands with the LTDC in its daring mission to showcase Lesotho and it is my believe that you crab this chance with both hands and absorb what is shared with you today because fortune favours the brave.”

LTDC views partnerships like this as critical to their mission of promoting the Mountain Kingdom to the world. “Partnering with global creators like Wodemaya is a smart investment,” said the spokesperson.

“He is helping us position Lesotho as a must-visit destination while also empowering local creators to become digital tourism ambassadors.”

During the Master Class, Wodemaya shared personal insights on how he built his brand, the importance of authentic storytelling, and how content creators can monetise their platforms while telling impactful African narratives. He encouraged local creatives to focus on originality and to use their own voices in capturing Lesotho’s stories.

“I believe Africa has the most beautiful

and unique stories to tell. What I saw in Lesotho, your culture, your landscapes, and your people, is special, and the world needs to see it through your eyes. Content is what we live with daily, and we should not think much of it,” Wodemaya said.

Participants left the session inspired and energised to start creating with purpose. “It’s not every day you get this kind of exposure and direct advice from someone at the top,” said one young filmmaker who attended the event.

Wodemaya’s presence in Lesotho is expected to boost both domestic and international interest in the country, putting a spotlight on its untapped tourism potential and the growing digital economy driven by local creatives.

This is the second time that the content creator visits Lesotho having first came to the country in December 2024 and spend about two weeks attending some of the big festivals such as ‘Maletsunyane Braai Festival and seeing some of the tourist attraction that Lesotho has to offer all the while capturing this moments and sharing with his millions of followers across Facebook, Twitter (Now known as X) TikTok and YouTube.

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# Mohale Media polishes talent in creatives

## Fusi Hlaoli

Mohale Media, in partnership with Toppers Acting Agency, hosted a vibrant and inspiring movie night on Saturday at the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology's MP Campus.

The event was a celebration of student talent, providing a platform for creatives who began their training in January to showcase their skills in film and other artistic disciplines.

The red carpet was rolled out for prominent figures in the creative sector, both locally and internationally. Among the notable guests were celebrated musician Omali Themba, popular radio personality Drama Queen, actor Lehlohonolo Mayeza, and historian and media expert Mahlomola Letsie, all in attendance to support and motivate the emerging artists.

More than just a film screening, the event featured a multifaceted showcase of student talent, including a fashion show, poetry readings, musical performances, and dance routines.

The evening was further elevated by performances from established acts such as Tsa Moshoeshe, Motsoalle Oa Koete, and DJ Soucy, who brought additional energy and inspiration to the event.

In her opening remarks, Matšelisio Mohale, Founder and Managing Director of Mohale Media, expressed deep pride in the students' achievements.

"Today we are here to see what you have been doing since January. Your stress and anxiety have been mine too, but you have worked hard, and I'm proud of you," she said.

Mohale reflected on her personal journey, sharing that the birth of her agency stemmed from her own struggles in the industry.

"When I started this agency, it was because I had suffered. I didn't have a 'Matšelisio' in my life, but I had people who inspired me. If you're inspired by me or someone else, take only the good. Lillian Dube inspired me, and when she saw my work, she saw herself in me, and that opened doors."

She encouraged the students to stay grounded. "There will come a time when you are celebrities, but don't let fame go to your head. Focus on your skill. Don't become a celebrity, let people celebrate you."

Lehlohonolo Mayeza, best known for his role as Leruo in Outlaws on Showmax, applauded Mohale Media for its dedication to nurturing young talent.

"This field is one of the most rapidly growing industries. A single production can hire over 5,000 people, from security and catering to makeup and drivers," he said.

He urged the students to persevere. "It's not easy to become an international actor. It may not happen in a day, a week, or a year, but it is possible. What matters is persistence."

Radio host Drama Queen also encouraged the students by sharing her journey from Lesotho to success in South Africa.

"I worked hard both in South Africa and here. I got a job in the Free State after my internship. Eventually, I was featured in Move Magazine. But I wanted to be known in my own country too, so I came back and joined Bokamoso 974," she said.

"You are already stars, believe it, work for it, and claim it."

The Films which were screened were shot and produced by the students and the event itself was organised and curated by the students which is testament to the work that Mohale Media and Toppers Acting Agency have done to polish Basotho talent in the country and expose it to the world.





# Lioli faces African giants

**Seabata Mahao**

Reigning Vodacom Premier League (VPL) champions Lioli Football Club (FC) will travel to Namibia for warm-up fixtures against African Stars (Namibia), Young Africans (Tanzania), and Pedro Atletico de Luanda (Angola), pending final clearance from the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA).

The Teyateyaneng-based side is preparing to step onto the continental stage for their CAF inter-club competition debut later in the year.

The announcement was made during a press conference held earlier this week at the club's headquarters in Teyateyaneng.

Club president Lebohang Thotanyana confirmed that Lioli has officially registered for the upcoming CAF competitions, a significant achievement that signals the club's ambition to compete at the highest level in Africa.

"This is a proud moment for us as a club and for the nation. Lioli is ready to compete at the highest level in Africa. Our preparations begin in earnest," said Thotanyana.

Preparations are already underway, with training scheduled to commence immediately. Due to the absence of stadia in Lesotho that meet CAF requirements, Lioli will host their home fixtures at Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

The club's CAF campaign will run alongside its domestic commitments. Lioli is also set to participate in the Alliance Insurance Top 4 Cup in August, where both the men's and women's teams will compete in line with CAF's requirement for clubs to field women's teams in national competitions.

Lioli's recent form provides a strong foundation for their continental ambitions. The club clinched the 2024/2025 VPL title, their second consecutive league triumph, and also lifted the T.J. Nthane Foundation Cup in June.



To celebrate these achievements, Lioli will host an awards ceremony this Saturday to honour the players, technical team, and club officials. The event has been allocated a budget of M200,000.

"This celebration is more than just a party, it is about recognising excellence, commitment, and hard work," said Thotanyana.

The club also revealed a new kit partnership with South African sportswear brand Umbro, which will supply official team kits

and enable the marketing of branded merchandise as part of a broader fundraising initiative.

Head coach Bongani Maseko used the platform to announce several key squad changes ahead of the new season. Lioli has secured three new signings on two-year contracts, Botshoko Sekai (South Africa, North West), Pontšo Moabi (from Matlama FC), Hlomelang Lebina (former Linare FC)

Departing the club are talented mid-

fielder-attacker Teboho Masuoane, and long-serving defender Thadea Moketo.

"We identified specific areas that needed improvement and brought in experienced players with a strong competitive edge," said Maseko.

The CAF inter-club competitions are expected to kick off in September, with both first and second leg matches set to take place before the start of the 2025/2026 VPL season.

# Youngsters shine at AUSC Region 5 Games

**Seabata Mahao**

Team Lesotho is flying the national flag high at the ongoing African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5 Youth Games in Windhoek, Namibia, with inspiring performances across several sporting disciplines.

Representing the Kingdom in table tennis, lawn tennis, beach and indoor volleyball, swimming, and boxing, Lesotho's young athletes are showcasing not only raw talent but also the rewards of increasing national investment in youth sports.

In one of the most notable achievements of the games, Lesotho's table tennis team captured a historic bronze medal, the country's first-ever podium finish in the sport at the AUSC Region 5 Youth Games.

Grouped with powerhouses South Africa and Angola, Lesotho started strong with a convincing 3-0 win over Angola. A competitive 3-1 loss to South Africa was enough to advance them to the semi-finals. In a nail-biting encounter, Lesotho narrowly lost 3-2 to hosts Namibia, but their place in the top four secured the historic medal.



Team Lesotho Lawn Tennis players, Mpho Leshoele and Kamohelo Khabele

In the girls' doubles on Monday, Zanele Mofechane and Nthabiseng Raleie added to the momentum, defeating Angola's Filomena Ferraz and Maria Simao 3-0 before falling to Zimbabwe by the same margin.

In Windhoek's courts, Mpho Leshoele and Kamohelo Khabele have flown Lesotho's colours with grit and determination. Leshoele lost a tightly contested match to South Africa's Simphiwe Ngwenya (1-6, 6-3, 1-6), but bounced back with an emphatic 6-1, 6-0 win over Malawi's Lusekero Kawole.

He now plays in classification rounds for 17th and 18th place. Khabele also showed promise with a 6-4, 7-5 win against Malawi's Maggie Banda before falling to Zimbabwe's Kudzai Chakanyuka (4-6, 2-6). She will now compete for 15th place.

The girls' beach volleyball duo of Thabelang Letsatsi and Lerato Chakache proved to be one of Lesotho's standout teams. After topping their group with wins over Botswana, Malawi, and Mozambique, the pair fell 2-1 in a tense semi-final against Zimbabwe. Their bronze medal hopes were dashed by Mozambique in a 2-0 play-off loss, but their semi-final appearance signals real growth for Lesotho in beach

volleyball.

Though Lesotho's indoor volleyball squad did not progress beyond the group stage, their campaign was marked by determination. They lost 3-1 to Zimbabwe and 3-2 to Malawi, both close contests, before bouncing back with a dominant 3-0 win over Namibia.

In the pool, young swimmer Mokhe-seng Mphofe delivered a personal best in the 100m freestyle, clocking 1:25.87, surpassing his previous best of 1:27.29. In the 50m freestyle, Mphofe placed seventh in his heat (00:34.09), with teammate Naleli Makote finishing in 00:48.13. The times may not have earned medals, but they signal strong potential for future improvement.

In the ring, Lesotho's boxers made a statement with three big wins. Relebohile Moso dominated Namibia's Deli Pwakuula in the 51kg flyweight bout. Reabetsoe Mokhitli impressed against Namibia's Kalingodi Matheus in the 54kg bantamweight division.

Meanwhile, Mvokelelo Snyman scored a commanding victory over Malawi's Banda Chifundo Lozani in the 57kg featherweight fight.





# Taekwondo star lands elite coaching training



Taekwondo champion-turned-coach Marumo Moloisane

## Seabata Mahao

Taekwondo champion-turned-coach Marumo Moloisane has taken a major leap in his coaching career after being selected for the prestigious International Coaching Enrichment Certificate Programme (ICECP).

The selection marks another milestone in his journey from elite athlete to internationally recognised coach.

The 10-month programme, which kicks off this month and runs until April 2026, is organised by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee in collaboration with the University of Delaware.

It is endorsed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and funded through Olympic Solidarity.

Moloisane will undergo a comprehensive multi-phase training experience compris-

ing online modules, in-person residencies in the United States and Switzerland, and an intensive apprenticeship designed to enhance advanced coaching skills.

Currently coaching at the New Millennium Taekwondo Club, Moloisane transitioned into coaching following his retirement from international competition in 2023. His post-competition career has been driven by dedication, discipline, and a deep passion for the sport.

In 2020, he received an IOC Olympic Solidarity Athlete Preparation Scholarship, which allowed him to train at the Taekwondo Competence Centre (TCC) in Friedrichshafen, Germany.

During his time there, he not only refined his athletic ability but also laid the foundation for his coaching journey by completing the World Taekwondo Level I Coaching

Course.

The Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) has praised Moloisane's selection as a proud moment for Lesotho, highlighting the impact it could have on the sport's development in the country.

"This is not a personal achievement but a significant milestone for the growth of taekwondo in Lesotho," the LNOC said in a statement.

"His ongoing dedication to developing and uplifting the sport has inspired many, and we believe this opportunity will further enhance his impact as a coach."

The LNOC further emphasised its continued commitment to helping athletes transition successfully into life beyond competition, aligning with the Olympic Movement's wider goals.

In an interview with Newsday Sports,

Moloisane expressed his appreciation for the opportunity and outlined his vision for how it will benefit taekwondo in Lesotho.

"This is a very big achievement for me and the entire taekwondo family," he said.

"After completing the programme, I am committed to sharing the knowledge and skills with other local coaches for the benefit of the entire sport code."

Moloisane added that coaching at the highest level has always been his dream, and he feels proud of the direction his career is taking.

His inclusion in ICECP not only recognises his individual achievements, but also elevates the profile of taekwondo in Lesotho.

It marks a new chapter in the country's sporting history, one that could pave the way for more coaches to pursue excellence on the international stage.



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