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Factory workers blast Matekane

- **Threaten march to PM's office over job losses**
- **Accuse Matekane of failing to deliver on campaign promises**

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Factory workers at Thetsane Industrial Area in Maseru have blamed Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane for deepening economic hardships following the imposition of 50 percent tariffs by United States President Donald Trump on Lesotho's textile exports.

Speaking at a meeting organised by the United Textile Employees Union (UNITE) and the National Clothing, Textile and Allied Workers Union (NACTWU), workers accused the Prime Minister of failing to uphold promises made during the 2022 election campaign and of turning his back on the very people who helped bring him to power.

"We were promised milk and honey. Indeed, he is in power now because of us – the men and women in the factories," said Sekake Ntho, Public Relations Officer for UNITE's Nsieng Branch. He cited unfulfilled promises of sustainable wages, day-care centres, and affordable housing for factory workers.

Workers say they are planning to visit the Prime Minister's office to table their grievances, demanding urgent government intervention as their livelihoods face collapse.

The outcry comes as the 90-day suspension of newly imposed US tariffs lapses today, August 1, 2025. The Trump administration introduced the 50 percent reciprocal tariffs on products from Lesotho earlier this year, jeopardising trade under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

The AGOA agreement allows eligible African countries to export goods to the US duty-free, with textiles and clothing being a key driver of Lesotho's economy.

The tariffs have already triggered a decline in investor confidence, with many factories cutting staff or shutting down altogether.

Lesotho's government previously stated that it was awaiting a formal meeting with President Trump's administration to negotiate improved trade terms, but that engagement has reportedly yet to materialise.

In May, Bloomberg reported that Lesotho was among 20 countries the US had earmarked for new trade negotiations. While the inclusion signalled potential for dialogue, workers say they have seen no action or communication from their government.

Factory workers expressed deep frustration with what they perceive as the government's inaction in the face of job losses and deteriorating working conditions.

UNITE President, 'Manthame' Malemohang Thai, expressed deep frustration over the impact of trade tariffs on factory workers, noting that some factories have been forced to lay off employees.

"One might ask how we got to this point. It wouldn't be surprising to see many women driven to the streets as sex workers," she said. "Workers are being exploited, some even have to trade sex for employment. When such reports reach buyers, factories risk losing business as orders are withdrawn."

Thai appealed to the government to subsidise basic commodities, arguing that this would help ease the financial burden on workers.

Some factories have come under fire for violating labour rights, failing to pay full salaries, preventing workers from joining trade unions, denying lunch breaks, and even dismissing workers without due process.

"We have a serious problem," she continued. "Investigations often reveal that some investors have ties to those in leadership. That raises the question, what kind of leadership do we really have? Perhaps this explains the government's silence on the issue of U.S. tariffs."

On the proposed Social Security Scheme (SSS), Thai criticised poor management and lack of urgency in passing the bill into law. She noted that the government should have learned from the COVID-19 experience, and emphasised the need for the scheme to cover maternity leave and also benefit male workers.

She lamented that after working in factories for over 15 years, many employees have little or nothing to show for it, having been denied opportunities to make meaningful financial investments.

UNITE is calling for 14 weeks of paid maternity leave for women, and an additional two weeks of paid leave for male partners whose wives have given birth.

Thai also raised concerns about the absence of speed humps near factory zones. "It is dangerous," she said. "If you are rushing to work, you are at risk; cars do not stop."

She also announced that workers were preparing to go on strike to deliver their grievances directly to the Prime Minister.

NACTWU shop steward at Nsieng Group, 'Masamuel' Thoahlane, issued a strong warning, saying: "We are women who can embarrass ourselves if we want to. We can bring this country to its knees. Don't disappoint the nation by favouring the Chinese."

Thoahlane lamented the lack of enforcement of existing labour laws, stating that at some factories, regulations are blatantly ignored. "There is a manager who doesn't follow the law, and those who are supposed to hold her accountable are too scared to speak out," she said.

"Our message to the Prime Minister is clear: when he campaigned, he promised to open new factories. If he cannot fulfil that promise, he should at least ensure that the existing ones comply with the law," Thoahlane added.

Ntima Makhetha, the Thetsane Local Chairperson under UNITE, echoed these sentiments, saying factory violations continue unchecked, flouting both national legislation and international standards.

These include the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 2024, and the Labour Act of 2024, which mandates, among other things, the provision of transport for workers.

"There is no overtime being paid, and the ILO's policy on lunch breaks is ignored in some factories," Makhetha noted.

He also pointed out that Lesotho's textile sector heavily relies on the South African market, which he described as "small and unable to absorb" the volume of jeans produced locally.

Makhetha criticised the government's failure to engage directly with workers about their concerns. He revealed that during recent engagements with union representatives, they were informed that funds initially pledged by the government to support factories were instead redirected to settle Lesotho Electricity Company's (LEC) debt with Eskom, South Africa's power utility.

The unions had proposed that the government reintroduce a financial cushion for factory workers during economic hardships, similar to the M800 monthly subsidy rolled out during the COVID-19 pandemic to support struggling businesses and their employees.

"We want the Prime Minister to answer clearly: what is our future in light of these tariffs? Our employers have confirmed there are orders in place, but the burden of high tariffs threatens everything," said Keneuoe Ncheke from Formosa.

Attempts to reach the Minister of Trade, Industry and Business, Mokhethi Shelile, were unsuccessful as his phone went unanswered at the time of going to print.



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Sewage flows into Mafateng's drinking water supply

Ntsoaki Motaung

A sewage spill first reported by Newsday at the beginning of this year is still continuing unabated, with untreated wastewater flowing directly into Raleting Dam, one of the main water sources for Mafeteng town and its surrounding villages.

The persistent discharge originates from a maintenance hole located behind the National Drug Service Organisation (NDSO). Wastewater can be seen leaking consistently from a pipe, flowing untreated into a stream that feeds directly into the dam.

The surrounding land has been severely eroded, a clear indication that the spill has been ongoing for a significant period. The presence of foam, discoloured water, and litter points to potential contamination that could pose serious health risks to nearby residents and the ecosystem.

Asked to comment, Matebele Sefali, the NDSO Manager, told Newsday: "The leaking pipe is not NDSO's, it is WASCO's. We are not in a position to answer any questions regarding that."

In response to inquiries, Bahlakoana Leshasa, Public Relations Officer for the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO), said he had consulted the Southern Region Area Manager, who confirmed that the matter was raised in a recent meeting involving WASCO, the District Administrator (DA), and the Urban Council.

According to Leshasa, the pipeline in that area was severely blocked with mud, hair from



salons, fat from businesses, and other debris. He also revealed that many local businesses were not properly connected to the sewage line, which has exacerbated the situation.

Leshasa said the meeting, held on Wednesday this week, resolved that WASCO will acquire new equipment to reconstruct the sewage line from scratch. Once the necessary machinery is in place, work is expected to begin, he said.

He indicated that WASCO has also appealed

to the District Administrator to engage the business community and encourage them to connect to the sewage network.

"As WASCO, we have no right to force anyone to connect to the sewage line. All we can do is close off their water supply, but they often find alternative ways to access water, and our problem remains unsolved," Leshasa explained.

He confirmed that WASCO bears full responsibility for addressing the current situation.

This position, however, contrasts sharply

with WASCO's initial response to Newsday in January. At that time, the company claimed it was unaware of the spillage, although it acknowledged the risks associated with such pollution.

"We are not aware of the incident in question. However, we are aware of the potential pollution that this can bring. Unfortunately, gravity sewer lines are constructed at elevations lower than the households they serve," WASCO said in a written statement at the time.

The company further explained that it regularly tests both raw and treated water and ensures compliance with water treatment standards.

"To this point, there have not been failures in the quality of either the raw or treated water. For this reason, we have not found it necessary to alert any authority about the issue. The company attends to sewerage overflows timeously and rehabilitates sewer lines when needed to minimise disruptions," it said.

Section 39(1) and (2) of the Environment Act of 2008 makes it clear that discharging harmful substances into water sources is illegal.

The Act states: "No person shall discharge any poisonous, toxic, exotoxic, obnoxious substance, or any matter which is likely to cause harm to human health or the aquatic environment into any waters."

Anyone found guilty of such an offence is liable, upon conviction, to a fine not less than M5,000 or imprisonment for not less than two years, or both.

The only exception applies when such discharge is for the purpose of treating water or aquatic life.

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MPs clash over hiring of unskilled labour for LLWDP II

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Members of Parliament (MPs) are at odds over their role in the recruitment of unskilled labour for the ongoing Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project Phase II (LLWDP II).

The division was evident during a stakeholders' meeting convened by the project team in Mafeteng on Wednesday this week.

Stakeholders at the meeting included MPs, representatives from the District Administrator's office, councillors from Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek, Principal Chiefs' representatives, local chiefs, and members of the security agencies.

The discussion on the recruitment of unskilled labour sparked heated debate. Minister of Natural Resources, Mohlomi Moleko, who also serves as MP for Qoaling, sought clarity on the role of MPs in the recruitment process, arguing that as public representatives, they must not be sidelined.

However, Montoeli Masoetsa, a proportional representation MP under the All Basotho Convention (ABC), insisted that the recruitment should proceed without political interference.

Moleko said he regularly receives job-seeking constituents at his office and expressed concern about being excluded from recruitment processes happening within his own constituency.

"It cannot be right for an MP to be unaware of developments taking place under their watch," he said.

But Masoetsa countered that MPs have clearly defined mandates and should not interfere in recruitment.

"MPs are not meant to compete with councillors whose duties include local development. Our roles include enacting laws, conducting oversight of the Executive, approving budgets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. We are not community undertakers," he quipped.

Masoetsa's position was strongly challenged by Moshe Makotoko, MP for Matsieng under the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), who argued that MPs cannot abdicate their oversight responsibilities.

"We must work hand in hand with local authorities to ensure the proper implementation of projects," he said, aligning with Moleko in asserting that MPs have a duty to oversee how public funds, including those for LLWDP II, are used.

Nthame Monare, the project's Environmental Health and Safety Specialist, clarified that LLWDP II does not directly handle the recruitment of unskilled labour but merely oversees the process and may offer recommendations on how it should proceed.

Concerns have been raised regarding the recruitment framework for community-based projects such as this one, which



An MP, Montoeli Masoetsa

are often marred by allegations of nepotism and political interference.

The recruitment committee is composed of representatives from the District Administrator's office (serving as the Secretariat), the District Council, Principal Chiefs, and two councillors from each affected council.

Addressing stakeholders, Monare acknowledged that the recruitment of unskilled labour has previously faced backlash, particularly when individuals from outside certain communities were hired.

She explained that the original arrangement was for each community through which the transmission pipelines would pass to provide temporary labour for the project.

However, complications arose when, in some areas, work lasted only two weeks. As these recruits moved with the project to other locations, they were often met with resistance and hostility from new communities who felt excluded.

To address this issue, it has now been recommended that unskilled labour be drawn from across all the affected councils. This approach will allow workers to be properly introduced to host communities and remain employed for longer periods.

Regarding recruitment criteria, Monare noted that while the law stipulates that unskilled labourers must be between the ages of 18 and 59, exceptions may be made for those in their early 60s, provided they are physically fit for manual work.

However, she warned that the Project

conducts routine drug tests, and any individual found with dagga (cannabis) in their system will be dismissed immediately. She emphasised that drug use poses a safety risk to both the user and fellow workers and is against the law.

Another pressing issue raised was the compensation of affected communities whose livelihoods, properties, and businesses have been disrupted by the Project's construction. While the long-term goal is to improve access to clean water, the process has required the relocation of families and the interruption of agricultural and commercial activities.

Member of Parliament, Dr Pinkie Manamolela, expressed concern about reports that some residents in Mohale's Hoek have misused their compensation funds. As funds are disbursed, Dr Manamolela noted, some recipients experience a mix of relief and anxiety.

She questioned what measures are in place to ensure the money is used productively.

Social Safeguards Officer at the Project, Mathuso Majoro, responded that training on sustainable projects is provided to compensation recipients, who are offered a range of investment options. Majoro shared an example of one recipient who initially misused her funds by purchasing a 4+1 taxi, which was later involved in an accident.

However, after receiving an additional M140,000 following the revision of compensation rates, the woman invested in poultry farming, a business that has since

become a sustainable source of income.

Monare added that compensation payments are based on property valuations and the assessed impact on businesses and agricultural operations. The process is guided by national legislation, and the project engaged three independent consultants to conduct the valuations.

Giving an overview of the LLWDP II, Project Manager Makotoko Lerotholi stated that Zones 4 and 5 have been completed, with work now extending into Zones 3 and 6. Lerotholi noted that Zones 2 and 3 are approximately 75 percent complete. System testing is scheduled for January 2026, and communities in these zones are expected to begin accessing water by March 2026.

He further explained that the project will cover approximately 635 kilometres of transmission pipelines and include 122 reservoirs.

Turning to Mafeteng, which is currently facing severe water shortages, Lerotholi announced that a tender will soon be issued for the removal of mud from the Rasebala Dam, a reservoir used by WASCO to supply water to Mafeteng town.

As the country awaits the construction of the Makhaleng Dam, the plan is to temporarily connect Mafeteng to the Metolong Dam pipelines in Morija. A tender for this work is expected to be issued in November this year.

LLWDP-II is an initiative under the broader Lesotho Lowlands Water Supply Scheme. The project focuses on two prioritised implementation areas: Zones 2 and 3, covering the Hlotse-Maputsoe area (financed by the World Bank), and Zones 6 and 7, spanning the Mohale's Hoek-Mafeteng corridor (financed by the European Investment Bank, in partnership with the European Union).

It involves the construction of bulk water infrastructure, including intake structures, pump stations, raw water mains, water treatment plants, service reservoirs, transmission pipelines, and booster stations. These developments are complemented by upgrades to distribution systems and the implementation of small-scale sanitation and hygiene interventions aimed at enhancing service delivery.

The project also seeks to build the capacity of water service providers to reduce non-revenue water (NRW), improve billing systems, enhance revenue collection, and strengthen overall planning and monitoring. Additionally, it will provide technical assistance to develop long-term solutions for water security, serving both domestic and industrial needs.

Crucially, LLWDP-II supports efforts to enhance the institutional capacity of water sector entities, enabling them to operate more efficiently and effectively in delivering essential services to the population.

Human trafficking survivor speaks out

... Mosotho woman's nightmare in Welkom

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lineo*, a 31-year-old Mosotho woman, carries a lasting and painful reminder of the horror she endured in a human trafficking ring in Welkom, South Africa, a one-year-old child, conceived through repeated rape by her captor.

Lineo's story offers a chilling glimpse into the exploitation faced by many Basotho women seeking employment across the border, exposing a brutal underworld where promises of work often mask exploitation, abuse, and lifelong trauma.

On October 20, 2023, she received a phone call that seemed like a lifeline. A friend told her about a job opportunity in Welkom, a glimmer of hope after months of unemployment. The offer included free transport and food, with only a blanket needed.

"I was so happy I got a job," she recalls, explaining that she was so excited she even forgot she did not get health services at the clinic that day.

Her mother, equally hopeful, agreed to let her go.

The next day, Lineo travelled to Maputsoe, where she met a man who took her and another woman across the border. They arrived in Welkom at midnight. The two women were separated and Lineo was taken to a guesthouse, while the other was dropped off elsewhere.

The following morning, Lineo met a woman she believed was the manager. She was interviewed and offered a salary of M2,500 per month. She was "loaned" M200 for food, an amount to be deducted from her wages.

What she did not realise was that the loans came with a 30 percent interest rate, and even her transport from Lesotho would be charged back to her.

Soon after, the true nature of her "employment" was revealed. The guesthouse owner demanded sex. When she refused, he raped her. He then bluntly informed her that she had been brought there to provide sex services.

"We were just sex slaves, in simple words,"

Lineo says.

She later discovered she was not alone. Another female worker confided that she had also been raped by the same man. Over time, more victims emerged, women too frightened to speak up, all trapped in silence and fear.

The owner ran several operations, including a farm, the guesthouse, and the sex work ring. Despite being moved from one part of the business to another, Lineo continued to be assaulted by the owner.

He never used protection. Eventually, Lineo became pregnant.

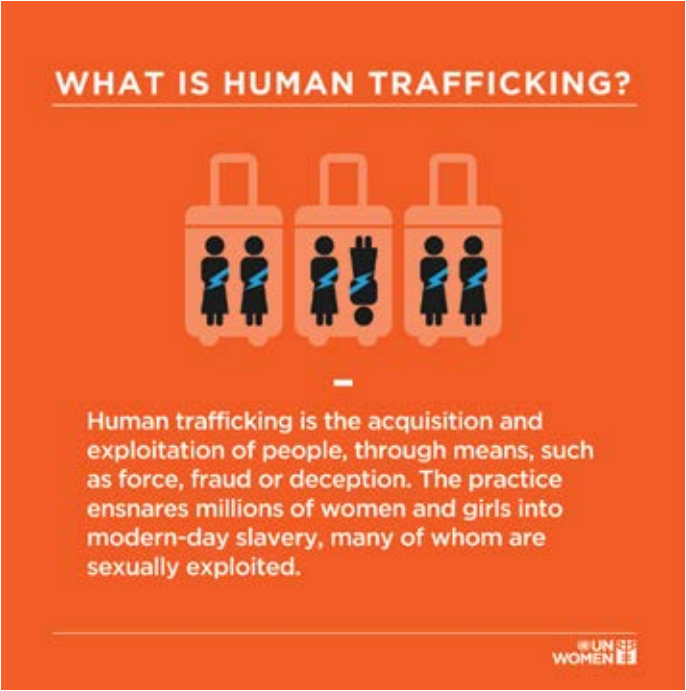
Today, she is raising a one-year-old child born of that abuse, an innocent life that serves as a daily reminder of her trauma.

After a month in captivity, Lineo saw a narrow window of escape. She pretended she needed to sort out her passport and confided in another girl. Together, they fled.

After deductions for her "expenses", Lineo was given only M1,100, but it was enough to get home.

Upon her return, her friend connected her with Beautiful Dream Society, an organisation that provided counseling sessions until November last year.

However, Lineo still struggles with the



emotional burden of raising a child conceived through such trauma and believes she needs further support.

Her mother recalls the heartbreak of watching her daughter return home in tears, forever changed by the ex-

perience.

"I thought she had found a job. But when she came back, she was just crying," she says.

Lineo's story is not unique. Many of the women working for the same trafficker were Basotho, and several remain trapped. She says others who have escaped share similar stories.

Her plea is urgent: "People should investigate the jobs they are being told about before they go. Welkom has many places like the one I escaped from." She warns that Welkom has many places like the one she escaped from.

Investigations reveal that the farm Lineo mentioned is part of a long-standing human trafficking syndicate. In January 2018, the Daily Dispatch published an exposé titled "Inside Free State Farm Suspected Human Trafficking Lair," detailing the rescue of 10 people from Lesotho and South Africa and the arrest of six suspects.

That article described a grim setting, including records of sex transactions and evidence of a larger operation trafficking women from

across southern Africa.

A cleaner at the time said: "There are all kinds of girls, Basotho, South Africans. They are guarded. You can buy a girl like you buy alcohol."

Sources in Welkom confirm that "Khune Village", where the guesthouse is located, is notorious for prostitution and the guesthouse has operated for many years.

"Everyone knows what's happening there," one resident said. "The owner is very much feared." Local rumours also suggest that "brown envelopes," bribes, may be helping to keep the operation running without legal consequence.

Many remain silent, too scared to come forward, or simply unaware that what they have endured constitutes trafficking.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) in Free State confirmed that Khune Village is a licensed liquor establishment. However, it remains unclear whether the guesthouses are legally operating.

Brigadier Motantsi Makhele stated that two rape cases linked to the area were investigated by the HAWKS and finalised in court in the past two years. Makhele added that police patrols in the area have increased, and there have been no recent reports filed at Welkom SAPS relating to the liquor establishment.

However, it remains unknown whether the trafficker in Lineo's case has faced any legal action.

Lesotho experiences trafficking in various forms, primarily forced labour and sexual exploitation. Vulnerable populations, especially women, children, and unemployed youth, are often lured by false promises of education, employment, or better opportunities in South Africa and elsewhere, only to be subjected to abuse and exploitation.

Internal trafficking also occurs, with children being exploited for domestic work, street vending, and cattle herding, often under coercive or exploitative conditions.

Poverty, high unemployment, limited law enforcement capacity, and porous borders contribute significantly to the persistence of trafficking in the country.

Although the country has laws criminalising human trafficking, implementation has been inconsistent due to limited resources, lack of specialised training among officials, and weak victim protection mechanisms.

In recent years, the government has partnered with civil society and international organisations to raise awareness and build capacity, but sustained efforts are needed to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute offenders effectively.

Sasai/Econet injects M200k into LDF youth programme

Seabata Mahao

Sasai Econet Financial Services (SEFS), the financial arm of Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), has injected M200,000 into the Lesotho Defence Force's (LDF) Youth Development Programme.

The financial boost was officially handed over during a ceremony held on Wednesday at the LDF's Ratjomose Barracks in Maseru.

This latest donation brings SEFS's total contribution to the transformative programme to M450,000 over the past three years, solidifying the organisation's role as one of the initiative's most steadfast private-sector partners.

Speaking at the handover event, SEFS' representative Lehlohonolo Matee lauded the LDF's youth boot camp as a "revolutionary and visionary" intervention in addressing the challenges facing the youth.

"As SEFS, we believe that true national development begins with empowering the youth. The LDF's Youth Development Programme is a transformative initiative that instills discipline, resilience, leadership, and



Sasai Econet Financial Services (SEFS), the financial arm of Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), has injected an additional M200,000 into the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF)'s Youth Development Programme

patriotism in young people. This is precisely the kind of impact-driven work we are proud to support," Matee stated.

He highlighted that the programme's structured approach aligns with SEFS's broader mission to drive inclusive growth and social cohesion through strategic public-private partnerships.

Matee also noted SEFS's broader commit-

ment to youth development, citing initiatives such as international scholarship funding that has seen Basotho students admitted to prestigious institutions including Harvard University.

"We hope to see Lesotho improved through these boot campers. And this is why we felt obliged to support the mission of LDF, enhancing the future of Lesotho with men and wom-

en of dignity who love their country."

Accepting the donation on behalf of the LDF, Major General Ramanka Mokaloba expressed deep gratitude to SEFS for their unwavering support. He said the youth programme was established in response to the growing socio-economic and behavioural challenges among the country's young population.

"This partnership with Sasai Econet Financial Services is an exemplary model of how public-private collaboration can change lives. With continued support, we can scale this impact even further and instil a renewed sense of purpose and direction among our youth."

Mokaloba indicated that the funds will be used to develop infrastructure tailored to the needs of the boot campers.

"We started the programme without a dedicated budget, and although the initial phase was challenging, the outcome was encouraging. We have already identified a site where we intend to build proper facilities to accommodate the trainees."

He acknowledged the difficulties faced during the pilot phase, particularly in managing youth from vulnerable backgrounds. However, he remains optimistic about the programme's long-term impact.

"We dream of producing the future leaders of this country, including LDF commanders and police commissioners who understand and honour Lesotho's sovereignty and history," he said.



Newsday Business

U.S. import tariff could curtail Lesotho orders by 30%

Bereng Mpaki

The Private Sector Foundation of Lesotho (PSFL) has issued a stark warning that Lesotho's economy could suffer a significant blow from the reinstatement of a 50 percent United States (U.S.) import tariff, which is expected to reduce export orders by up to 30 percent.

PSFL's Chief Executive Officer Thabo Qhesi said the tariff, due to take effect from August 1, 2025, threatens to derail the country's already fragile economy, with major consequences for the textile sector, one of Lesotho's key industries.

"A temporary tariff reduction from 50 percent to 10 percent is set to expire on August 1, 2025. If reinstated, it could slash orders by up to 30 percent, threaten factory closures, and wipe out over M1 billion in annual exports," Qhesi warned.

The textile industry, which contributes 13 percent to GDP and accounts for 47 percent of Lesotho's exports, is particularly vulnerable. The U.S. remains Lesotho's largest export destination under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which itself is due to expire in September 2025.

"If AGOA is not renewed, we will see a rapid decline in textile exports, loss of jobs, and reduced government revenue. It would be a perfect storm," Qhesi added.

In April this year, Trade and Industry Minister Mokheleli Shelile echoed these concerns, warning of "disastrous consequences" if AGOA is not renewed. Currently, 11 manufacturers serve the U.S. market and employ over 12,000 Basotho workers.

The PSFL statement forms part of a broader analysis of Lesotho's economic outlook, which Qhesi described as "precarious."

Growth projections have been revised downward by both the African Development Bank (AfDB) and



the World Bank.

"Lesotho's real GDP growth is expected to decelerate sharply—from 2.4 percent in 2024 to 1.1 percent in 2025, and a further dip to 0.5 percent in 2026," Qhesi said.

Foreign aid cuts have already taken a toll. The cancellation of the \$300 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact II and broader U.S. development assistance reductions have resulted in the loss of 1,500 healthcare jobs, significantly weakening HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.

The PSFL also highlighted an impending decline in Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenues, which currently make up nearly 30 per-

cent of GDP, expected to tighten fiscal space from FY2025/26 onward.

"While water royalties from LHWP II offer partial relief, overall fiscal balances remain under pressure," Qhesi said.

Lesotho's structural economic weaknesses remain a major concern. Unemployment stands at 22.5 percent (or 38.3 percent including discouraged job seekers), with over one-third of the population living below \$2.15 per day. The country also depends heavily on South Africa for imports and remittances.

Although inflation has eased to 4.2 percent as of March 2025, exchange rate volatility continues to pose risks due to Lesotho's currency peg to the

South African rand.

Despite the gloomy picture, Qhesi said opportunities exist if the government takes decisive action.

"Lesotho must diversify its markets, particularly within SACU, invest in tourism and manufacturing, and improve the ease of doing business. Establishing a revenue stabilization fund and adopting fiscal rules are crucial to withstand SACU shocks," he said.

Qhesi also urged support for initiatives like the World Bank's Economic Inclusion Program and climate-resilient agriculture to address food insecurity worsened by El Niño.

In its Lesotho Country Focus Report 2025, the AfDB echoed similar sentiments, warning that a combination of trade shocks, aid withdrawal, and weak diversification could spark widespread unemployment, poverty, and social unrest.

"Long-term risks include deindustrialisation, a further rise in unemployment, and social instability. Poverty levels could rise, particularly in urban centres which are heavily reliant on factory employment," the AfDB said.

To navigate these overlapping shocks, the AfDB recommended coordinated policy action, improved logistics infrastructure, and targeted investment in competitiveness, particularly in quality assurance, skills development, and SME growth.

"The uncertainty around the AGOA expiration, combined with trade tariffs on exports, necessitates the exploration of new markets, including AfCFTA, and the enhancement of manufacturing efficiency and value-addition in the country's textile niche," the report added.

The PSFL has called on the government, development partners, and the private sector to respond swiftly and cohesively to avert a deeper economic crisis and build a path toward inclusive and sustainable growth.

Seabata Mahao

Joans Enterprise has earned praise for its exceptional growth trajectory following the official launch of its expanded factory in Maputsoe, which has created 700 new jobs for Basotho.

The recent announcement is part of the ongoing #ReBulaLifeme (We Are Opening Factories) initiative led by the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), in partnership with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development.

LNDC's Interim Chief Executive Officer, Advocate Molise Ramaili, highlighted the company's transformation from a small-scale operation to a key player

Firm's remarkable growth rate applauded

in the textile sector.

"The factory initially employed 180 workers. Today, that number has grown to 700. We are already considering another location where we plan to ex-

pand further and employ an additional 700 Basotho," Ramaili said.

The expansion is part of a broader national effort to drive industrial growth and curb unemployment. The #ReBulaLifeme campaign has been instrumental in revitalising Lesotho's manufacturing sector, particularly textiles.

Trade Minister Mokheleli Shelile welcomed the growth of Joans Enterprise, underscoring the government's commitment to supporting private sector-led job creation.

"We continue to engage with American partners to strengthen trade relations, particularly regarding goods entering Lesotho. The expansion of Joans Enterprise and the upcoming launch of another factory are expected to create new opportunities and contribute significantly to the country's economic growth," Shelile said.

He added that Lesotho is positioning itself as a regional industrial hub, with continued government

support and investment facilitation at the core of this strategy.

Joans Enterprise's growth has been progressive. Floor Manager Celinah Mpakathe recounted how the factory began with 180 workers, increased to 350 by 2022, and added another 350 jobs in early 2025, bringing the total to 700.

"We started with shirt production, moved on to mechanical suits, and now manufacture a wide variety of clothing. This growth is thanks to strong leadership and continuous market expansion," Mpakathe said.

Factory Manager Maanoj Rooplall credited key government leaders for enabling the expansion through infrastructure support.

"Their assistance in securing the building made this expansion possible. We look forward to future growth with continued support from the Government of Lesotho and our stakeholders," Rooplall stated.



Joans Enterprise has officially launched an expanded factory in Maputsoe, creating up to 700 new jobs for Basotho

ESTATE NOTICE

Notice in terms of section 44 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024;

ESTATE LATE MALEBANYE C TAASO

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 44 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the EXECUTOR of the deceased's estate with thirty (30) days of this publication.

The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder;

EXECUTOR'S ADDRESS – Sehlabeng Sa Thuoathe TSITSA

MASERU

+266 59422119

EXECUTOR'S NAME – Matumane Earnestina Taaso



King calls for investment and unity to end malnutrition



His Majesty King Letsie III

Ntsoaki Motaung

King Letsie III, the African Union Nutrition Champion, has called for greater investment and collaboration to end malnutrition and improve Africa's food systems.

His remarks were delivered in a virtual address to the United Nations Food Systems Summit+4 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+4), held from July 27–29 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The summit was co-hosted by Ethiopia and Italy and aimed to assess global progress and drive collaboration on food systems transformation.

In his speech, King Letsie III stressed the importance of focusing on rural communities, referred to as the “last mile,” where people are most vulnerable to malnutrition and least likely to access support.

“Africa cannot defeat hunger without

first helping these regions,” he said.

“Our vision of a food-secure Africa cannot be realised without targeted investment where it matters most: in our villages, among smallholder farmers, and within communities battling both poverty and climate challenges.”

The King also highlighted the need for climate-resilient farming methods, as climate change continues to threaten food production across the continent.

He emphasised that smallholder farmers, who grow the majority of Africa's food, need support in the form of training, tools, and financial resources to confront environmental challenges and feed the population.

King Letsie III called for increased private sector investment in nutrition-focused projects and urged local banks to provide loans in local currencies to support small and medium-sized en-

terprises (SMEs) working in agriculture and nutrition.

He introduced the idea of a “womb-to-tomb” approach to nutrition, advocating for support throughout a person's life, from birth to old age. He said this life-cycle strategy is essential to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

“As Nutrition Champion, I will continue to raise my voice to ensure that nutrition is not forgotten, that it remains at the heart of Africa's agenda,” he said.

His speech reinforced Africa's position at the summit, reminding world leaders that nutrition is not only a development issue but also a foundation for prosperity and peace.

Meanwhile, a report by the UN Secretary-General identifies the transformation of food systems and nutrition patterns as one of six key entry points

to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023 (SOFI Report) notes that while global hunger rates remained stable between 2021 and 2022, they remain significantly higher than pre-COVID-19 levels.

In 2022, an estimated 691 to 783 million people faced hunger, an increase of 122 million compared to 2019.

The report also reveals that over 3.1 billion people, around 42 percent of the global population, were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, marking an increase of 134 million since 2019.

This affordability gap, the report warns, undermines global nutrition efforts and exacerbates the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Malnutrition, it states, remains a pressing concern.

Will Prime Minister finally listen?

It is often said that history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes. In Lesotho, the current cry from factory workers in Thetsane Industrial Area echoes a long, painful rhythm of broken promises, political indifference, and a leadership that campaigns on hope but governs in silence.

Workers, the very people who propelled Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane to power in 2022, say they feel betrayed. They accuse the man they voted for of turning his back on them as they sink deeper into poverty and joblessness. They have issued a strong warning that if the government does not come to them, they will march to the Prime Minister's office.

The textile and garment industry is not just another sector. It is the lifeblood of Lesotho's economy. It employs tens of thousands of Basotho, particularly women, and contributes significantly to the country's exports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

The recent 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S. under President Donald Trump's administration have already begun suffocating the sector, pushing factories to shut down or reduce staff. Investors are losing confidence. Jobs are vanishing.

In this context, factory workers are demanding not just relief, but answers. They want to know what the government is doing, or failing to do, to defend Lesotho's position in international trade negotiations. The government has previously said it is awaiting a meeting with U.S. officials, but as factories close and food disappears from tables, workers are left with nothing but silence.

Where is the urgency? Where is the leadership?

The anger is not just about tariffs. It's about promises that were never kept. During the 2022 campaign, Matekane promised to uplift the working class, to ensure decent wages, build affordable housing, provide day-care centres for workers' children, and introduce meaningful labour protections. Three years later, workers say they have seen none of it.

Instead, they face increasing exploitation. Reports of workers trading sex for jobs are horrifying and demand immediate investigation. Violations of labour laws, such as the denial of lunch breaks, unpaid overtime, and illegal dismissals, are not only widespread but seemingly protected by political connections between factory managers and government officials, as union leaders allege.

The truth is difficult to hear. It is that Lesotho's workers are being treated as disposable, and no one in power seems to care.

Textile workers are not asking for luxuries. They are asking for dignity. For wages they can live on. For laws that are enforced. For a government that keeps its word.

The unions' call for the reintroduction of a COVID-style financial cushion, such as the M800 monthly subsidy, is not unreasonable. It is a practical, humane, and affordable policy measure that could save thousands of households from falling into abject poverty.

The Prime Minister's silence is deafening. His ministers dodge questions, and when reached, they have little more than vague reassurances to offer.

The credibility of Matekane's government is now at stake. A leader who campaigned as a businessman promising efficiency and results cannot allow an entire industry to collapse under his watch. He cannot remain silent while workers, many of whom supported his rise to power, are being dismissed, underpaid, exploited, and ignored.

To govern is to choose. And failure to act decisively at this moment is a deliberate choice to abandon the working class.

To ignore the factory workers is to invite crisis, not just in the economy, but in our democracy. When people lose faith in peaceful negotiation, they turn to disruption. The women who make our clothes say they are ready to "bring the country to its knees" if they are not heard.

The people are watching. The world is watching. And the Prime Minister must now decide. Will he live up to the promises he made, or will he become just another politician who used hope as a stepping stone to power, only to abandon it at the door of office?



No Comment



Theko Tlebere

Common Concern

Who Steers the Ship? Reclaiming the Role of the Government Secretary in Lesotho's Governance

When the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recently interviewed the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, the nation gained insight into an often-unasked but essential question regarding the functionality of our government: who supervises Principal Secretaries? How are ministries held accountable for their performance, and, more importantly, who ensures that Cabinet decisions translate into tangible results on the ground? At the heart of these inquiries lies a constitutionally empowered yet publicly under-scrutinised office: that of the Government Secretary (GS).

According to the Government of Lesotho's official job description, the GS is more than a ceremonial coordinator or custodian of Cabinet documents. The GS is, in fact, "the overall Head of the Civil Service," responsible for coordinating the machinery of government, monitoring performance, and ensuring policy coherence across ministries. Unfortunately, most Basotho only see the GS at state funerals and official events. The seventh and final duty listed in the GS's job description, presiding over official state functions, has become the most visible role, while the more strategic and impactful functions remain obscured in bureaucratic shadows. This misconception not only weakens public understanding of the office but also undermines accountability and governance reform.

The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, articulated this reality clearly in his inaugural speech on 28 October 2022. Speaking with boldness and urgency, he reminded the nation that, "It is against this backdrop that your new government is assuming the responsibility to preside over the affairs of Lesotho's public service... to fix the public service to make it more efficient, transparent, accountable and effective." In a rare public directive, he turned to the Government Secretary and instructed the office to deliver a list of outputs within the first 100 days, which includes preparing and signing performance contracts with Principal Secretaries, developing standardised performance reporting tools, and implementing a citizen feedback system. These instructions are not optional; they are rooted in law.

Section 12 of the Public Service Act of 2005 outlines the statutory functions of the Government Secretary.

It states: "In addition to the functions vested in the Government Secretary under Section 97 of the Constitution, the Government Secretary shall—

- co-ordinate the activities of the Principal Secretaries and transmit communication from the Principal Secretaries to Cabinet;
- be responsible for conveying the policies and discussions of Government to the appropriate person or authority and for ensuring that those policies and discussions are properly carried out by that person or authority;
- enter into performance agreements with the Principal Secretaries, supervise and monitor their performance; and
- have overall responsibility over all public officers."

These are not ceremonial duties; they are strategic and operational responsibilities that directly affect how the government functions. For instance, the coordination of Principal Secretaries should ideally ensure that ministries do not work at cross purposes. However, in practice, many ministries operate in silos, contradict each other, or duplicate efforts. Who resolves these inefficiencies?

According to the law, it should be the GS. Likewise, communication from the Cabinet to ministries must pass through the GS. The Prime Minister emphasised this when he stated that the GS must "develop tools and a standardised system of performance reporting and reflection for the whole of government... and develop a system through which citizens can monitor and report on the performance of the public sector." Such tools cannot be developed in isolation; they must be driven from the top, with commitment and oversight from across ministries. That is the GS's domain.

Perhaps the most crucial, but often neglected role of the GS is performance management. According to both the Act and the Prime Minister, the GS must enter into performance agreements with Principal Secretaries and oversee their execution. The Prime Minister set a 30-day deadline for these contracts to be signed

and made public.

These agreements are meant to ensure that every Principal Secretary is accountable not just to their line Minister but also to the overarching standards of the public service. Without this system, the public service drifts without guidance. Yet, despite this framework, the only role the public consistently observes the GS performing is presiding over official state functions. While this seventh responsibility may be the most visible, it is the least consequential to national development.

We must resist the urge to reduce this powerful office to that of a mere figurehead. The GS is supposed to be the operational heartbeat of government, the one who translates political vision into administrative reality. The Prime Minister made it clear that reforming Lesotho's public service will not be easy. "The absence of a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation," he cautioned, "can easily foster a culture of impunity, in which there are no consequences for poor performance and wrongdoing."

He promised that under his leadership, public officers would operate in a system where "performance... will be transparently stated and reported upon," with open discussions about what has been achieved and which services have been delivered. That system starts with the Government Secretary.

To truly realise the Prime Minister's ambitious 21-point programme, the GS must be more than a ghost in government corridors. The office must be visible, active, and accountable. It must provide quarterly updates on ministry performance, manage cross-cutting challenges such as donor coordination and decentralisation, and serve as the first line of response in cases of poor delivery.

Ultimately, Lesotho cannot afford a Government Secretary who merely presides over ceremonies while ministries falter. The Prime Minister has exhibited vision and urgency. The law has provided authority and clarity. The public has raised expectations.

Now the GS must lead from the front or risk being remembered as a missed opportunity in Lesotho's reform narrative. The time has come to reclaim the full meaning and power of the Office of the Government Secretary. Not for spectacle, but for service. Not for presence, but for performance. Not for protocol, but for progress. The future is NOW!



Leadership by good intentions is not enough, Mr. Matekane

Kananelo Boloetse

When Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane took office in late 2022, he rode a wave of hope and public optimism. A successful businessman turned statesman, he was seen as the antidote to decades of political instability, fractured leadership, and bureaucratic incompetence. His promise to run the government like a business resonated with a nation weary of political drama and yearning for results. For the first time in years, Basotho believed they had chosen a man who could restore order, discipline, and delivery to the business of governance.

But nearly three years in, the glow is dimming.

Instead of the streamlined, efficient administration we were promised, what we see increasingly resembles a disjointed, fragmented state, where ministries function like silos, state-owned enterprises chase their own ambitions, and the Prime Minister himself appears removed from the daily operations of his own government. It feels, at times, as if several separate governments are trying to govern the same country, each unaware of or indifferent to the actions of the others.

Nowhere is this dysfunction more visible than in the confusion surrounding Lesotho's national brand. Last year, the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), a key state-owned enterprise responsible for economic promotion, launched the Lesotho Nation Brand in a grand ceremony attended by His Majesty King Letsie III and Prime Minister Matekane himself.

At the heart of this initiative was a powerful, aspirational campaign slogan: #ExperienceElevation. It was a fitting message for a country quite literally perched in the mountains, and metaphorically striving to rise above its limitations.

The Nation Brand launch was not a trivial PR stunt. It was a declaration of how Lesotho intended to present itself to the world, a unified identity, a compelling narrative to attract investors, tourists, and trade. It was meant to create alignment among all stakeholders, both public and private, who market and represent the country.

But less than a year later, the very agencies tasked with promoting Lesotho abroad are using entirely different messaging. The Lesotho Tourism Develop-

ment Corporation (LTDC), which arguably should have been the lead partner in this campaign, continues to operate on a different wavelength altogether. Visit LTDC's official X (formerly Twitter) page and you will find hashtags like #VisitLesotho, #LoveLesotho, and #TasteLesotho, but rarely, if ever, #ExperienceElevation.

When continentally renowned content creator Wode Maya visited the country recently, an opportunity ripe for brand amplification, his promotional content made no mention of the Nation Brand. The messaging was scattered. The branding was inconsistent. The opportunity was lost.

Even when LTDC does use the official campaign slogan, as it did on May 21 when it posted snow-covered scenes from Semonkong and Oxbow, the use is sporadic, inconsistent, and clearly not guided by any overarching strategy. Meanwhile, the official Nation Brand account, set up with much fanfare, posts irregularly and seems out of sync with LTDC. Instead of synergy, there is fragmentation.

If LNDC, LTDC, and the Nation Brand team are not coordinating on something as basic and vital as national messaging, what does that say about their coordination on investments, product development, tourism policy, or international partnerships? If the agencies that market Lesotho do not speak the same language, how can we expect the world to listen?

This communications disaster is symptomatic of a broader disease: a government without cohesion, led by a Prime Minister who seems either unaware or uninterested in bringing his team together. Ministries operate in silos. State-owned entities pursue disconnected goals. Cabinet ministers often appear not to be reading from the same playbook, if there even is one.

What's most troubling is that even at the top, there is an unsettling detachment. The Prime Minister, by all appearances, picks a few projects, like the Makoanyane Square renovation, and focuses his energy there. To be clear, the Makoanyane project is beautiful and symbolic, and the Prime Minister's involvement has given it momentum. But leadership is not about cherry-picking pet projects while the rest of the government drifts. Being Prime Minister is not about strolling around a new traffic

circle near Maseru Mall while ministries and agencies burn in dysfunction.

Nowhere is this disconnect more glaring than in the unresolved tensions within the Ministry of Forestry and Environment. In July 2024, Minister Letsema Adontši, appointed in November 2023, formally wrote to the Prime Minister requesting the removal of his Principal Secretary (PS) due to an irreparably broken working relationship. A full year later, July 2025, that request has yet to receive even a face-to-face response. The Minister and the PS remain trapped in a toxic relationship. And the Prime Minister? He is missing in action.

If a minister cannot get a hearing from the Prime Minister about a fundamental issue in his ministry for an entire year, what does that say about the executive's accessibility, responsiveness, and command? Is the Prime Minister aware? Is he waiting for things to sort themselves out? Or does he simply not care?

Those who know Prime Minister Matekane personally often describe him as a nice, humble, and grounded individual. He is said to be cool-headed, approachable, and sincere, exactly the kind of character you hope to find in a fellow human being. And that, in itself, is a virtue. In a world where power often corrupts and arrogance becomes a hallmark of high office, Matekane's humility is refreshing.

But here's the uncomfortable truth: being a good person with good intentions is not enough, especially when you are the Prime Minister of a country. Governing is not just about being liked. It's about making hard decisions, confronting uncomfortable realities, and sometimes even disappointing those closest to you in the interest of the greater good. It requires a kind of strategic ruthlessness, the ability to say no, to fire underperformers, to discipline wayward ministers, and to set a clear tone from the top.

Unfortunately, bad actors within government don't fear good intentions. They exploit them. They interpret kindness as weakness, silence as permission, and absence as opportunity. And judging from the dysfunction already visible in several ministries and agencies, it is increasingly clear that some within Matekane's administration are not only failing to match his vision, they are taking advantage of his passivity. When a Prime Minister is too trusting, too patient, too detached,

those around him are not inspired to rise to the occasion, they are emboldened to pursue their own agendas.

The stakes are too high for Lesotho to be run by people who are shielded from accountability because they happen to orbit a good man. A kind and honest Prime Minister surrounded by cunning, disloyal or self-serving lieutenants is no longer an asset to the nation, it becomes a recipe for betrayal and decay. History has taught us this time and again.

Matekane must understand that leadership is not just about being admirable. It is about being effective. He cannot merely hope that everyone will do their job just because he is polite and sincere. He must ensure they do it. And when they don't, he must act, not later, not quietly, but firmly and immediately.

Because leadership is not about how nice you are in a meeting, but how well your decisions ripple through the system. Right now, the ripples are chaotic. And the longer he waits to assert himself, the harder it will be to regain control.

When I was still new in the newsroom back in 2014, covering the National Assembly, I remember a moment that now feels eerily prophetic. The then Democratic Congress (DC) Member of Parliament (MP), Teboho Lehloenya, criticised Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's government, saying it was on autopilot. I didn't fully grasp the meaning then, but I do now. Lehloenya warned that an airplane left on autopilot for too long, without an active pilot, eventually runs out of fuel and crashes. And crash Thabane's government did, into disarray and scandal.

I say this not because I wish the same fate upon Matekane's administration, but because I desperately hope for the opposite. I want him to succeed, because if he fails, the country fails. But he must not mistake silence for stability, or delegation for detachment. A government cannot run on autopilot. It cannot function with disconnected ministries, uncoordinated agencies, and unresolved internal conflicts. It cannot survive if the Prime Minister is missing from the cockpit.

We elected a pilot. A man who promised to fly us through storms with businesslike precision. A man who said he would bring order to the chaos. We did not elect a ceremonial figurehead. We elected a leader. And we deserve to see one.



Kingdom of Lesotho

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

Invitation for Bids

Supply and Delivery of Laboratory Reagents, Consumables, Equipment, Biosafety and Biosecurity.

1. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho intends to improve agricultural service delivery. Therefore, part of the proceeds will be utilized on eligible payments resulting from the procurement of the above.

2. The Principal Secretary now invites sealed bids from interested bidders with relevant trader's licences for the **Supply & Delivery of Laboratory Reagents, Consumables, Equipment, Biosafety and Biosecurity.**

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the following address:

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

3. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **(M5,000.00) Five Thousand Maloti only**. The method of payment must be payable at Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. Bidding document will be available from **01st July 2025**.

4. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **07th August 2025 at 12:00 noon**. Late bids will be rejected. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **M20, 000.00** in the form of a bank guarantee or irrevocable/assurance letter of credit valid for thirty (30) days beyond the validity of the bid. As appears in the bid data sheet.

5. It is mandatory for bidders to submit the following valid documents: (a) Tax Clearance Certificates; (b) Trader's License, (c) Certificate of Bona Fide Bidding, (d) Bid Security and (e) a completed bid form. These documents [especially (a) and (b)] shall either be originals or certified copies from the source. **Non-compliance with this requirement may invalidate a bid.**

6. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **14:00hrs on Thursday, 07th August, 2025** at the address given below:

**Board Room
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
Corner Constitution & Linare Roads,
Maseru 100, Lesotho.**

7. Bidders shall ensure that the envelopes containing their bids are properly addressed as indicated under ITB above and are clearly marked **"Supply and Delivery of Laboratory Reagents, Consumables, Equipment, Biosafety and Biosecurity" GOL/ G002/2025/26**.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition also reserves the right to cancel the tender before submission or opening of the tenders, postpone the tender submission or opening date and accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.

Procurement Manager



Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Health
(Firm Selection)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, UPGRADING, AND RENOVATION OF FOUR (4) HEALTH FACILITIES IN RURAL LESOTHO.

RFP/QCBS/MOH/2025/26-06
First Date of Issue: 01-07-2025

1. Introduction
The Ministry of Health, on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, invites qualified, experienced, and reputable consulting firms or consortia to submit technical and financial proposals for conducting feasibility studies for the following health facilities:

- a. Construction of a New Health Centre at Senqunyane, Berea District
- b. Construction of a New Health Centre at Ketane, Mphahlele District

These feasibility studies are aimed at informing infrastructure investments that support Lesotho's national health development goals, improve access to primary health care, and contribute to the realization of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Scope of Work
The assignment involves:

- Technical, environmental, and economic viability assessments;
- Health service demand analysis and infrastructure planning;
- Environmental and Social Impact Screening (ESIA);
- Development of site-specific investment plans and implementation frameworks.

3. Eligibility Criteria
This RFP is open to national and international consulting firms or joint ventures that meet the following criteria:

- At least 10 years of experience in conducting multidisciplinary feasibility studies in the health or social infrastructure sector;
- A proven record of delivering at least three (3) comparable assignments in similar rural or developing contexts;

- Demonstrated financial stability, qualified personnel, and the ability to work in remotely located and topographically challenging environments.
- Local participation is encouraged, and preference will be given to consortia that include Lesotho based experts or firms.

4. Enquiries & Further Information
Clarifications may be requested in writing by email to the following addresses no later than **25th August, 2025: satbhssles@gmail.com cc:mot-sukunyanemolise@gmail.com.**

5. Selection Criteria

- Selection Method: Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) and only bidders whose technical proposal has scored 70% and above will be invited for Financial Proposal Opening.
- Proposal Format: Technical & Financial Proposals to be submitted in separate sealed envelopes. Technical Proposal 4 hard copies & 1 soft copy in Flash Disk (Word documents Converted to PDF).
- Proposal Document: Free, fill the bidding document request form.
- Submission Deadline: **12th September 2025 at 11:00hour (Lesotho Time)**.
- Submission Venue: Ministry of Health Procurement Office, Maseru.

6. Proposal Submission
All proposals must be written in English and properly completed. Proposals must be hand delivered to the address below. Proposals submitted via email will not be considered.

**Attention: Procurement Manager
Ministry of Health, Corner Constitutional and Linare Road
Maseru, Lesotho**
The Ministry of Health reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals without obligation to award the contract.



OPPORTUNITY

JOB TITLE : ICT MANAGER
GRADE : I
NO. OF POSITIONS : ONE (1)
RESPONSIBLE TO : DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS

JOB SUMMARY
Under the general supervision of the Director of Elections, the incumbent will be responsible for the development of ICT Strategy, Planning and Governance, Electoral Systems and Voter Registration management, project management, reporting and stakeholder engagement, leadership development, software development and systems management and ICT infrastructure and cybersecurity.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS/MAIN DUTIES
A. Managerial Role: Strategic, Supervisory, and Leadership Responsibilities

- 1. ICT Strategy, Planning, and Governance**
- Develop and implement ICT strategies, policies, and procedures in line with the IEC Strategic Plan and mandate.
 - Align IT infrastructure and systems with the electoral calendar and long-term electoral development plans.
 - Advise senior management on technology trends, digital innovation, and IT risk.
 - Establish an ICT governance framework aligned with IEC and national legislation, policies, and ICT standards.
 - Assist the Commission's management in the development and implementation of IT systems strategies and objectives.
- 2. Project Management**
- Develop and manage a coherent and technically qualified ICT project management structure.
 - Ensure ICT projects are efficiently planned and executed to maximize organizational competency and effectiveness.
- 3. Reporting, Budgeting, and Stakeholder Engagement**
- Provide timely, accurate reports, data, and validated management information to the Commission and senior management.
 - Prepare and monitor the ICT budget, ensuring cost-effectiveness and accountability.
 - Liaise with other Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and development partners on ICT-related matters.
- 4. Leadership and Human Resource Management**
- Instill a service-oriented culture in the ICT department through collaborative leadership.
 - Align departmental plans with IEC's strategic goals to ensure delivery of institutional objectives.
 - Build and maintain relationships with other departments to understand business needs and foster cross-functional collaboration.
 - Mentor and coach ICT staff by setting clear performance targets and supporting professional development.
 - Ensure that the IEC recruits, retains, and develops the necessary ICT skills in line with current technological advancements.

- B. Operational and Technical Responsibilities**
- 1. Electoral Systems and Voter Registration Management**
- Oversee the implementation, maintenance, and upgrade of critical electoral systems (e.g., EMIS, GIS).
 - Ensure system accuracy, availability, and integrity before, during, and after elections.
 - Coordinate technical support during registration, voting, counting, and transmission of election results.
 - Supervise and support the operation and maintenance of the voter register, including backups, disaster recovery, business continuity, software upgrades, and technical improvements.
- 2. Software Development and Systems Management**
- Oversee the design, development, customization, and maintenance of software applications used by IEC.
 - Define software architecture to ensure scalability, interoperability, and security.
 - Lead or supervise internal software development teams and/or manage outsourced software vendors.
 - Establish and monitor Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) standards, version control, and quality assurance.
 - Ensure continuous improvement of software through regular feedback, testing, and updates.
- 3. Database Management**
- Design, implement, and maintain secure, high-performing, and scalable databases supporting electoral systems and

- administrative functions.
 - Ensure data integrity, consistency, backup, and recovery across all database platforms.
 - Manage database access, user permissions, and roles in compliance with data security policies.
 - Optimize database performance through monitoring, tuning, and routine maintenance.
 - Collaborate with software and infrastructure teams to ensure seamless integration and reliability of data-driven applications.
- 4. ICT Infrastructure and Cybersecurity**
- Manage and secure IEC's ICT infrastructure, including networks, servers, databases, and cloud systems.
 - Establish strong cybersecurity frameworks to protect voter data and sensitive information.
 - Implement disaster recovery and business continuity plans.
 - Enforce cybersecurity protocols and data protection practices in compliance with the Lesotho Data Protection Act and related laws.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
The ideal candidate must possess:

- A Master's Degree in Computer Science, Information Technology or an equivalent discipline, with three (3) years in a managerial role in an IT services environment.

OR

- A Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, or a related field, with five (5) at a managerial level within an IT service environment.

KEY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

1. Advanced IT skills and proficiency in current software technologies and tools
2. Expertise in software project management, database design, management, administration, and security
3. Sound knowledge of financial management systems and accounting software packages
4. Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
5. Proven expertise in project management.
6. Professional certifications such as PMP, ITIL, COBIT, or cybersecurity credentials (e.g., CISSP, CISA) will be considered an added advantage.
7. Strong presentation and supervisory abilities to effectively manage technically skilled personnel.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Willingness to work outside normal working hours during the electoral period.
- Must be a citizen of Lesotho or legally eligible to work in Lesotho.
- Must be registered as voters with IEC.

Interested candidates must submit their applications accompanied by up-to-date Curriculum Vitae with three referees, copies of certified qualification certificates, send via email to recruitment@iec.org.ls under the subject line;
ICT MANAGER
OR
hand delivered to IEC Headquarters (Registry) or Respective districts head offices in a sealed envelope labelled;

The Director of Elections
Corner Maluti and Caledon Road
Maseru West
P.O. Box 12698
Maseru 100
Lesotho.

Closing date: 15TH August 2025 at 12:00 noon.
Only Short listed candidates will be contacted.



INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SUPPLIERS

Lerotholi Polytechnic wishes to update its list of preferred suppliers. Thus, we hereby invite applications from interested, eligible, competent and reputable contractors/suppliers and service providers to be considered to supply goods, services and other works as listed below.

SUPPLIERS CATEGORIES

CATEGORY A- (GOODS AND SERVICES)

- 1. General office stationery, cartridges, toners (etc)
- 2. Computers and computer accessories/consumables, printers (etc)
- 3. General Equipment- air conditioners, refrigerators (etc)
- 4. Cleaning Materials- Pine Gel, Brooms, mop,(etc)
- 5. Corporate Branding- Corporate stationery, printed materials, promotional items, business cards (etc)
- 6. Office furniture- Office desk, chairs boardroom tables (etc)
- 7. Medical Health Care: Hygiene and pharmaceutical suppliers (etc)
- 8. Telecommunication and network supply installation and maintenance
- 9. Printing and photocopying equipment supply and maintenance
- 10. IT equipment- routers, network switch (etc)
- 11. Electrical, power tools and mechanical equipment- wires, circuit breakers, welding machines (etc)
- 12. Hardware and building materials-
- 13. Protective Clothing – Dust coats, protective shoes (etc)
- 14. Laboratories Equipment
- 15. Industrial Machine supply and repairs
- 16. Textile distributors
- 17. Welding equipment and Materials
- 18. Automotive equipment supply
- 19. Book Dealers
- 20. Domestic Fuel
- 21. Sportswear Supplies

CATEGORY B (GENERAL SERVICES)

- 1. Provision of travel agency- Air ticket services (etc)
- 2. Provision of vehicle hire- Taxi and cab services, bus services, mini bus services (etc)
- 3. Advertising- Print, radio, mobile and digital advertising
- 4. Branding- All corporate Branding
- 5. Logistic Services- Clearing, road transportation and courier services
- 6. Catering- Provision of meals and drinks for students, meetings, and special ceremonies
- 7. Accommodation- Hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast accommodation, conference facilities

- 8. Provision of cleaning services- carpets (etc)
- 9. Provision of pest control and fumigation services
- 10. Events- Events management services
- 11. Fire System service and maintenance

CATEGORY C (BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION RELATED SERVICES)

- 1. Carpet fitting
- 2. Window blinds supply and fitting
- 3. Carports shades supply and fitting
- 4. Construction works
- 5. Air Conditioning service

Information obtained from the potential suppliers on the profiles must include the following:

- 1. Name of the company
- 2. Physical and postal address
- 3. Telephone numbers
- 4. Email address
- 5. Website where applicable
- 6. Directors' names
- 7. Contact details
- 8. Nature of products/services they supply
- 9. Company registration, trade and tax clearance certificates

Lerotholi Polytechnic shall have the right to:

- a. Ask for clarifications at the time of evaluating company profile
- b. Conduct a site inspection at the company's premises
- c. Reject all company profiles of the supplier that does not adhere to the submission of the requested mandatory documents

All interested parties are invited to apply for pre-qualification, by submitting the requested documentation. Suppliers should clearly indicate the category and the code number of the sub-category of goods and services they wish to supply. The request for qualification will close on 29 August 2025. All documentation should be emailed to procurement@lp.ac.ls or ltatsask@gmail.com. Heading should be the name of the company and category applied for.

PLEASE NOTE SUBMISSION IS ON EMAIL ONLY, NO HARD COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Enquiries: Should be forwarded in writing to the Procurement Manager at procurement@lp.ac.ls or ltatsask@gmail.com

Companies who have already registered on Lerotholi Polytechnic database are requested to submit their recent trading documents and a valid tax clearance ONLY.



Ministry of Public Works and Transport
P.O. Box 24
Maseru 100
Lesotho

August, 2025

Letter of Invitation

- 1. The Principal Secretary for Public works and Transport now invites sealed bids from interested bidders to provide the following service: **Cleaning Service for department of Moshoeshoe 1 International Airport in the Ministry of public Works and Transport.** More details on the services are provided in the bidding document.
- 2. The technical proposal shall clearly demonstrate your understanding of the expected outputs, your proposed approach to the services involved, necessary equipment, your comments on the Scope of Work, your relevant experience, and you will be expected to provide detailed and updated curricula vitae for the proposed key personnel for carrying out the assignment. The financial proposal should clearly reflect the breakdown of your fees and all other associated costs for carrying out the assignment.
- 3. A Service Provider will be selected in accordance with the current Procurement Act, 2023, and the procedures described in the RFP.A firm/company will be selected under the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method as stipulated in this Request for Proposals (RFP). Detailed RFP which comprises the following documents is available at the **Department of Traffic and Transport, Old Traffic Department Building. Next to St Catherine's High School for the bidders who will attend the site visit and provide their email addresses.**
- 4. Section 1 - Letter of Invitation
Section 2 - Information to Consultants
Section 3 - Technical Proposal - Standard Forms
Section 4 - Financial Proposal - Standard Forms
Section 5 - Terms of Reference
Section 6 - Form of Contract.
- 5. Your sealed proposals should be submitted at the following address by 12:00 noon on September 2nd, 2025 and will be opened on the same day at 12:30 p.m:

Tender Box of the Ministry is situated at the Foyer, on the First Floor of Public Works and Transport Building, Corner Senate Road & Lepoqo Road, Industrial Area, Maseru, Opposite Browns Wholesale.

dustrial Area, Maseru, Opposite Browns Wholesale.

- 6. The submissions should be clearly marked: **"Provision of Cleaning Service for department of Moshoeshoe 1 International Airport"-GOL/NCS 02/2025-26"**. It is the Service Providers' responsibility to ensure that their proposals are received on or before the closing date.
- 7. The selection criteria shall take both technical quality and costs into consideration to determine the overall preferred Service Provider. Therefore, it should be noted that technical proposals will be opened first and evaluated and only those companies attaining the technical scores above the minimum pass mark will qualify for financial proposals opening and evaluation.
- 8. Interested Service Providers from different firms may submit as an association or partnerships or joint ventures provided, they submit a letter of intent signed by all parties with a clear indication of the representative of such association or partnership or joint venture.
- 9. Mandatory site visit shall be held at **Moshoeshoe 1 International Airport on the 12th August; 2025.All bidders must wear the reflective vests and bring the valid National ID or Drivers license.**
- 10. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport also reserves the right to cancel the tenders before the submission or opening of tenders, postpone the tender submission/opening date and accept or reject any or all tenders. The ministry is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.
- 11. The numbers of copies to be submitted are one (1) original and four (4) copies. It is Mandatory to submit all legal documents such as Traders License, Tax Clearance, Vat Certificate(where applicable) they should be certified at source.

Procurement Unit

Re-Advert-Letter of Invitation for Prequalification (IFP)

Construction of the new Tebelling Bridge across the Senqu River at Thabana-Ts'oana (White-Hill) in Qacha's Nek

Ref No. RD/PS/1/TC/2025/2026

- 1. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho through the Roads Directorate intends to **construct a new bridge and road across the Senqu River at Thabana-Tso'ana (White Hill) and Tebelling (Ref No. RD/PS/1/TC/2025/2026)**
- 2. The Roads Directorate is inviting proposals from suitably qualified Civil Engineering Construction, local and international contractors, categorized by the Roads Directorate under **Category A**. International companies that are not categorized by the Roads Directorate are required to pay a non-refundable registration fee of **Twenty Thousand Maloti (M20,000.00)**. The payment details are specified in clause 6 below. Contractors with ongoing projects that have exceeded their completion time by more than 50% are not eligible to bid.
- 3. The scope of the Work comprising the Construction of the bridge and road is as follows: -
 - An 8-span bridge with main spans of 32 m and 35 m above riverbed level
 - 6.8 km surfaced approach roads
 - Retaining wallsThe Employer proposes to award the Contract in **November 2025**, and the Time of Completion of the project is set at 24 months.
- 4. A **non-compulsory** site inspection commencing at **10:00hrs**, and whose assembly point is located at White Hill (Ha Sehapa) Qacha's Nek (coordinates: 30°03'25.1"S, 28°28'28.5"E) has been organized for **Friday, 08th of August 2025**. Prospective bidders may attend at their own risk and non-reimbursable cost.
- 5. The Proposals must be accompanied by **1 original, 3 copies** and a **soft copy in a memory stick** of each required document as per the "Instructions to Tenderers". The original and all copies of the tender documents shall be clearly marked "original" or "copy". The original and all copies of the Tender Documents shall be placed in a sealed envelope clearly marked bearing no identification of the Bidder and marked as follows **"Construction of the new Tebelling Bridge across the Senqu River at Thabana-Ts'oana (White-Hill) in Qacha's Nek Ref No. RD/PS/1/TC/2025/2026** must be deposited in the Tender Box at **Roads Directorate, Ground Floor, Room G11, Near the Procurement Section, Corner Senate and Lepoqo Streets, Industrial Area** and addressed to Roads Directorate at the above address, to be received on or before **10:00 hrs, Thursday, 21st August**

2025. Bids will be opened on the same day at **10:30hrs** by the Roads Directorate's Tender Board, in the presence of the Bidders or their representatives who choose to attend. **Late Bids will be rejected.**

- 6. Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures specified in the pre-qualification document, to be issued in Hard Copy (soft copy will only be issued as a supplementary document for document control purposes) **upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Maloti and Zero Lisente only(M5,000.00). The method of payment will be by transfer or deposit into the following Bank Account: Roads Directorate Operating Revenue, Account Number No.: 021000067633, Swift Code: NEDLLSMX, Branch Code: 390161, Nedbank, Lesotho and proof therefore be presented to the Roads Directorate. Facility shall be made available for purchasing the documents by POS/swiping at the Finance Division (Room G03), Roads Directorate Headquarters.**
- 7. Late pre-qualification documents or evidence of mailing pre-qualification telefaxed or emailed pre-qualification documents will not be acceptable. The Employer is not bound to pre-qualify all or any of the applicants.
- 8. The currency applicable for the contracts shall be Lesotho Loti. **A valid Tax Clearance Certificate certified at source and a valid Trader's License certified at source.**
- 9. Any correspondence regarding this Proposal shall be addressed to:

Postal Address:-

Roads Directorate
Procurement Section
P.O. Box 194
Maseru 100
Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22229000/52229000
Email: manoelin@rd.org.ls ; cc: marek@rd.org.ls; mahiritonaf@rd.org.ls; moqobelam@rd.org.ls

Physical Address:-

Procurement Section, Ground Floor (Room 11)
Roads Directorate
Corner Senate and Lepoqo Streets
Industrial Area (Opposite Brown's Cash and Carry)

The Roads Directorate reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders for reasons that may be advanced.



Roads Directorate



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Road Directorate Lesotho

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Arts
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Newsday

Phoka Ea Boroa returns with bold new EP *Tebello*

Chris Theko

After a significant hiatus from solo releases, Lesotho-born artist Phoka Ea Boroa makes a powerful return with his highly anticipated EP *Tebello*, officially released today, 1 August 2025.

The title, *Tebello*, a Sesotho word meaning “expectation” or “anticipation”, encapsulates both Phoka’s personal journey and the faith his fans have maintained during his creative silence.

This new body of work is Phoka’s first release under the newly established Metsoaka Group label, launched earlier this year.

The EP is also in collaboration with Whole Time Entertainment, the label through which he released his previous project *Bayethe*.

Known for his poetic lyricism and spiritually grounded sound, Phoka continues to explore vulnerability in his music. But *Tebello* represents more than just a return, it marks a reinvention.

Following the critical success of *Mohlabani* and *Bayethe*, this latest offering signals a refined and re-energised chapter in his musical evolution.

“The EP was named *Tebello* because it took me a while to release this body of work,” Phoka explained. “Some people and media started suggesting I might be a one-hit wonder or had abandoned music. But there were still people who held on to hope, and that

hope is what *Tebello* represents.”

The EP features eight carefully crafted tracks and a diverse list of collaborators, including Ntate Stunna, Sannere, Maifi, Bobby Strings, Maleboo, C Max, and Litsepe Lr.

Each artist brings a unique flavour, yet the EP maintains a cohesive vision.

“Most of the artists I worked with on *Tebello* have completely different styles, and that’s what makes it special,” he said.

“The track with Ntate Stunna, for example, was inspired by *lekhele*, a traditional Sesotho music style. As soon as I started recording, I could already hear his flow. It was the same with Sannere, Litsepe, and others, the energy aligned naturally.”

The opening track, *Tlhophoho*, is especially personal. It features a heartfelt spoken-word contribution from Phoka’s mother, offering encouragement and grounding the project in familial roots and emotional memory.

“It’s my way of reflecting on how far I have come from humble beginnings,” he said. “Working with my mother made the song deeply emotional. It’s not just music, it’s memory, motivation, and a tribute.”

Despite the smooth final result, the making of *Tebello* was far from easy. Phoka admitted that balancing studio time with off-mic obligations and frequent fatigue stretched him thin.

“Time was my biggest challenge,” he recalled. “I had so many commitments and was constantly exhausted. But I kept going because I believed in the message of the project.”

That message is one of resilience. Through candid storytelling, Phoka addresses his upbringing in poverty, moments of self-doubt, and the decision to persist with his craft.

“This EP is me telling my story, coming from struggle and choosing to believe that no matter where you are in life, things can change,” he said. “It’s my way of giving hope to someone else who may be going through it.”

While *Tebello* remains rooted in Phoka’s signature style, the project showcases noticeable lyrical growth.

“I went hard on my pen game,” he said proudly. “I wanted people to hear the strength of my lyrics and recognise me as a true lyricist. That was important for me on this project.”

Tebello is available on all major streaming platforms. To celebrate the release, a special listening session will be held tonight at Café What? in Maseru.

The event promises an intimate gathering of creativity, reflection, and celebration.



Phoka Ea Boroa

Corporate
Challenge
2025



Ticket Price:
M3 400

Team of 5
Venue: Maseru Mall
03 - Oct - 2025



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International cultural expo bound for Lesotho

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho is set to host the inaugural Africa Cultural Exchange and Trade Expo 2025, a landmark event that promises to transform the Mountain Kingdom into a continental hub for business and cultural exchange.

The five-day extravaganza, running from September 3 to 7, will present a rare opportunity for local businesses to access new markets, forge international partnerships, and showcase Basotho products to buyers from across Africa right here at home.

The expo is expected to bring thousands of potential customers and business partners directly to Lesotho's doorstep. In particular, local artisans specialising in wool, mohair, straw crafts, and textiles will have direct access to buyers from 15 confirmed African nations, including major economies like South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

More countries are expected to confirm their participation, potentially expanding the market reach even further.

Organised by MM Legacy Tour and Adventure International in partnership with Heritage Inc. and Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), the event strategically coincides with Lesotho's Tourism Month, marking a unique way of commemorating the annual event this time around.

"Through this expo, we want to create a platform where African countries can come together, share heritage, and explore trade opportunities," said Malaita E. Simelane, one of the directors of MM Legacy, in an inter-



Lesotho prepares to host the inaugural Africa Cultural Exchange and Trade Expo 2025, a landmark event that will bring together participants from across the continent

view with Newsday.

For Basotho businesses, this represents more than just an exhibition, but a gateway to the \$3.5 trillion African market.

Kefuoe C Maroma, the company co-director, explained that the event was inspired by a need for deeper collaboration among African communities and entrepreneurs.

The expo's format is designed to maximise business opportunities for local participants. Exhibition stalls will allow Basotho entrepreneurs to display their products alongside

continental competitors, while structured networking sessions will facilitate partnership discussions.

Traditional Basotho performances including Mokhibo, Litolobonya, Ntlamu, and Lithoko will take center stage, creating a cultural backdrop that enhances the marketability of local products.

Youth and cultural groups will also showcase their talents, potentially opening doors to cultural tourism partnerships and performance contracts across the continent.

The event's signature "African Caravan" – a convoy of buses and cars departing Nairobi on August 18 and traversing multiple African nations before reaching Lesotho – is expected to generate significant media attention and position Lesotho's emerging potential as the ultimate destination for African unity and commerce.

"Our goal is to uplift Basotho businesses by exposing them to new markets and networks," said LTDC's acting Public Relations Manager Molapo Matela.

The economic impact extends beyond immediate sales opportunities. Local hotels, restaurants, transport operators, and service providers will benefit from an influx of international visitors during the five-day period.

The expo is expected to create temporary employment opportunities in logistics, hospitality, and event support services. More significantly, the connections formed during the expo could establish long-term trade relationships that continue generating revenue for Basotho businesses long after the event concludes.

The emphasis on small to medium enterprise (SME) empowerment means SMEs will have the same platform as larger companies to compete for continental contracts.

The expo's timing aligns perfectly with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) objectives, which aims to boost intra-African trade. Local businesses participating in the expo will be well-positioned to capitalise on reduced trade barriers and preferential access to African markets.

LESCOSA speaks out on music licensing in Lesotho

Chris Theko

"You may not know the law, but you're still breaking it."

That is the quiet but firm message from Tsoamotse Relebohile, Membership and Documentation Manager at the Lesotho Copyright Society of Authors and Artists (LESCOSA), as he sheds light on one of the most misunderstood aspects of the music industry in the country, copyright licensing.

In a sit-down interview with Newsday, Tsoamotse unpacked the widespread misuse of music in Lesotho, from public transport and local radio to restaurants and event venues, often done without proper licensing or awareness that permission is even required.

"Many people assume if it is on YouTube, it is free to use. That is the biggest misconception we face daily," he said. "The law is very clear; if you are using music in a public space or broadcasting it, you need a license."

What counts as public use?

The concept of "public performance" or "communication to the public" in copyright law refers to any setting where music is played outside of a private environment. This includes bars, radio stations, taxis, weddings, gyms, supermarkets, and even small shops.

"Even if you are not charging people to listen, if the music enhances your business or platform, then you are communicating it to the public," Tsoamotse explained.

"And that means one thing: you need a license."

The role of LESCOSA

Established to protect creators, musicians,



Tsoamotse Relebohile - membership & Documentation Manager

composers, authors, and artists, LESCOSA issues licenses, collects royalties from music users, and distributes them to registered rights holders.

It also operates under international reciprocal agreements with collecting societies around the world, ensuring that creators in Lesotho can receive royalties from overseas and that foreign artists are compensated for use of their work in Lesotho.

Yet confusion abounds.

"People think we are a government department. We are not," Tsoamotse clarified. "We are a collective management organisation acting on behalf of artists. We do not make the law, we enforce the Copyright Order of Lesotho."

The silent exploitation of creators

For every hit played at a wedding, every viral DJ mix, and every radio playlist, there is often a creator who never earns a cent, not because the work lacks merit, but because of systemic gaps in reporting, registration, and enforcement.

"We have radio stations that have been operating for 10, 15, even 20 years without ever paying for the music they use. That's exploitation, plain and simple," Tsoamotse said, visibly frustrated.

In the public transport sector, where music is a constant fixture, efforts to engage taxi and bus associations have been slow to bear fruit, with compliance still low.

Artists must step up, too

But the burden does not fall on users alone. Many creators are also failing to treat their work as a business.

"You cannot expect to earn royalties if you have not registered your music or reported its use," Tsoamotse stressed. "Artists need to see themselves as entrepreneurs. That means managing their rights, registering their work, and understanding their own value in the industry."

He highlighted the common scenario of songs involving multiple contributors, producers, writers, and featured artists. Unless all parties are properly declared and the work is registered, fair royalty distribution becomes impossible.

Priorities for the future

Over the next two to three years, LESCOSA aims to prioritise three key areas: enhancing royalty distribution systems to ensure timely and equitable payments to rights holders, expanding education and outreach, so both music users and creators fully understand their legal responsibilities, and broadening representation across other creative sectors, including literature, theatre, and visual arts.

Tsoamotse acknowledged that changing the current culture will take time.

"This is about building a culture of respect, for both the artist and the law," he said. "We're still in the early stages, but we are moving in the right direction."

Why this matters

Lesotho's creative economy holds enormous potential, but that potential can only be realised if rules are respected and all players, creators and users alike, are empowered.

"Music draws people into your business, sets the tone for your event, and energises your broadcast," Tsoamotse concluded. "If it adds value to your platform, then it's only right to compensate the people who created it"

Lesotho prepares to host SAIMSA games



ESIGA, IMSSA, LAHISA, LELASA & NALASRA. SAIMSA delegation for attending General Assembly and Team Managers meeting

Seabata Mahao

Preparations are well underway for the 2025 edition of the Southern African Inter Ministerial Sports Association (SAIMSA) Games, set to take place in Maseru from September 21 to 26. The annual event, hosted on a rotational basis within the Southern African Development

Community (SADC), brings together thousands of municipal employees from across the region. Its main objectives are to promote regional cooperation, employee wellness, and cultural exchange through sport. Lesotho will welcome delegations from Eswatini, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and the

host country itself. More than 6,500 participants are expected to converge on the capital for the week-long celebration of sport, health, and unity. In the lead-up to the games, the Lesotho Local Authorities Sports Association (LELASA), in collaboration with the Maseru City Council (MCC), recently held a three-day series of high-level preparatory meetings at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre. The meetings, attended by the SAIMSA International Executive Committee, the SAIMSA General Assembly, and General Managers, ran from Wednesday to Friday last week. LELASA's Secretary General Molelekoa Mafitoe confirmed that the meetings were designed to review Lesotho's readiness, assess venue suitability, and finalise the sports codes and regulations for the upcoming games. "The meetings were convened to address key issues including the sports codes to be featured, as well as the rules and regulations for the games," said Mafitoe. "We also conducted site visits with 160 delegates to inspect proposed venues." This year's edition will feature a wide range of disciplines including football, netball, volleyball, pool, darts, cycling, chess, hiking, and mo-

raba-raba, Lesotho's traditional board game, which is being showcased as the country's indigenous sport. According to Mafitoe, hosting the event will not only promote physical wellbeing and employee morale but also offer a vital economic boost to the Kingdom. "The games promote employee wellness and help bridge the gap between work and personal wellbeing. When workers are healthy and satisfied, they tend to perform their duties more effectively." He further noted that the event would generate significant tourism activity, create temporary employment opportunities, and provide a boost to local businesses. The SAIMSA Games were established to encourage sports participation among local government and municipal employees in the SADC region. The games are designed to improve physical health, foster social cohesion, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences across member states. With hosting duties rotating annually, the event also promotes regional integration and strengthens partnerships between cities and towns in Southern Africa. Previous editions have been held in countries such as Botswana and Namibia. The 2025 edition represents a milestone for Lesotho, as the country positions itself as a competent and welcoming host of international sporting events. With less than two months to go, stakeholders across the Kingdom are intensifying preparations to ensure the successful staging of what promises to be a memorable SAIMSA Games.

Beavers dominate King's birthday rugby tourney

Seabata Mahao

The Federation of Lesotho Rugby (FLR) delivered a thrilling spectacle at the King's Birthday 7s Rugby Tournament this past Saturday, during an event that was held at the LDF Airwing Grounds. Sponsored by 207 Retail enterprises, the annual event brought together some of the top rugby clubs from across the country, further highlighting the sport's steady growth in the Mountain Kingdom. Defending champions Mabote Beavers once again proved their dominance, claiming gold in both the men's and women's divisions with commanding performances. In the men's final, the Beavers overwhelmed Liqhomane with a 28-5 victory, while the women's side cruised to a 33-0 win over NUL Spears, securing back-to-back championships. The Beavers' double triumph confirmed their growing reputation as Lesotho's sevens rugby powerhouse. In the men's division, the Beavers clinched the golden status by coming first, followed by Liqhomane in second, who won silver, and Maseru Warriors in third with bronze. Likewise, they also won gold in the women's division, followed by NUL Spears with silver, and Liqhomane with bronze. The tournament also celebrated individual excellence. Mabote Beavers' rising star Sekhola Phate was named Men's Top Try Scorer, earning a M500 cash prize. In the women's category, teammate Kefuoe Mphasa received the same honour and reward for her outstanding performance. Participating clubs from the Econet Rugby League included Liqhomane, Lesotho Rugby Academy, NUL Spears, Mabita Gorillas, Maseru Warriors, and Mazenod Swallows, demonstrating the depth of talent



The incredible Sekhola Phate of Mabote Beavers scooped Top Tries Scorer accolade yesterday at the King's Birthday 7's Tournament

emerging within Lesotho's rugby scene. Speaking after the final, Mabote Beavers' Head Coach Letsielo Mabitle praised his players for their commitment and flawless execution. "In both men's and women's categories, we won all our games. This shows the determination of the teams to defend our titles," he said. "Now we must go back, work harder, and build an even stronger unit." Mabitle credited the team's success to discipline and focus, and revealed plans for upcoming domestic and international challenges. He also announced the upcoming 5-Star Memorial Tournament, which the Beavers will host in memory of players lost in a tragic road accident. "The tournament will bring international clubs and local primary schools together. The goal is to unite youth from Mabote village

through sport and steer them away from crime and drug abuse," Mabitle added. Meanwhile, Liqhomane's Head Coach Semethe Mosoeu acknowledged the Beavers' superiority but pointed to preparation challenges his side faced. "Due to work and geographical constraints, we didn't get enough time to practice. Despite this, I am proud of the team. They gave it their all," Mosoeu said.



VPL newcomers in sponsorship crunch



Seabata Mahao

With the 2025/26 Vodacom Premier League (VPL) season just a few weeks away from kick-off, newly promoted Members Football Club (FC) are racing against time to secure crucial sponsorship to boost their competitiveness in the elite league.

The Mazenod-based outfit is therefore making a public appeal to prospective sponsors to come forward to fund its dream of not just adding numbers in the top flight, but to make it count.

Currently bankrolled by Ramela and Associates, the club has managed to stay afloat logistically. However, Members' president Lekhooa Tšolo said the support is no longer sufficient to sustain the heightened demands that come with Premier League football.

"We are grateful for our sponsor who has stood by us since our days in the A Division,"

Tšolo told Newsday Sports.

"With the current sponsorship, we are able to facilitate the club's logistics and a few administrative duties. But entering the Premier League brings a new level of financial expectation, especially regarding salaries and player welfare."

Tšolo made an urgent call for more sponsors, stressing that enhanced financial backing is essential if the club is to remain competitive and meet the standards of the top flight.

"If we can get more sponsors, we would be able to cover more expenses, especially now that we are engaging in the elite league," he added.

The plea for support comes as the club begins assembling its squad, with a recruitment strategy focused on nurturing emerging talent over acquiring established stars.

Already, Members have brought in Rel-ebophile Tlabaki from Lioli FC and Molefe Moiketsi from Majantja FC, both on one-year loan deals. Tšolo also revealed they are negotiating with two other VPL clubs for additional developmental players.

"I want to develop the players as a whole because most times, developed players have an attitude towards developing players."

Yet, without increased financial investment, such long-term development goals may be undermined. From player salaries and equipment to medical care and travel, the costs of Premier League participation are significantly higher, and Members' current budget is stretched thin.

Adding to their worries is uncertainty around their home venue. The Swallows Ground in Mazenod is under review by the Premier League's licensing committee, and if it

fails inspection, the club will be forced to relocate to the Morija Ground, an additional logistical and financial burden.

Fellow newcomers Maroala FC make transfer statement

While Members seek funding, fellow VPL debutants Maroala FC have made waves with a high-profile transfer campaign. They recently secured the services of former Manonyane FC goalkeeper Utloanang Leoma (on loan from Li-jabatho FC), midfield duo Koenehelo "Copper" Mothala and Siyabonga Mkhize, both ex-Linare FC players, and are expected to add two Ghanaian imports soon.

Maroala, who also reached the Top 8 Cup final in May (losing to Members FC), have already enjoyed national exposure and prize money, a possible head start in their financial and competitive preparation.



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