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THOUSANDS FACE HUNGER AS CROP PRODUCTION PLUNGES

- Maize production, Lesotho's main staple, falls by 19 percent
- Sorghum production plunges by 43 percent
- Lesotho looks to South Africa for food imports

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Thousands face hunger as crop production plunges

- **Maize production, Lesotho's main staple, falls by 19 percent**
- **Sorghum production plunges by 43 percent**
- **Lesotho looks to South Africa for food imports**

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho is facing another difficult year as the cost of living rises sharply while crop production continues to decline, worsening the struggle for thousands of households already pushed to the brink by economic hardship and erratic weather.

According to the 2025 Annual Vulnerability Assessment Report, a combination of socio-economic shocks, including job losses, reduced casual labour opportunities, and persistent price hikes, has severely weakened household purchasing power across the country.

"Loss of formal employment, reduced on-farm income, and higher prices have significantly reduced total household incomes, further weakening already fragile livelihoods," the report states.

National crop production estimates reveal a grim picture. While more land was planted for maize, sorghum, and wheat during the 2024/25 agricultural season, yields per hectare declined across all major cereals.

Maize production, Lesotho's main staple, fell by 19 percent, dropping from 56,472 metric tonnes in 2024 to 45,780 metric tonnes in 2025. Sorghum production plunged by 43 percent, from 6,300 metric tonnes to just 3,616 metric tonnes.

Only wheat showed improvement, with a 17 percent increase, rising to 4,874 metric tonnes.

The report noted that the country will continue to rely heavily on cereal imports from South Africa, which recorded a good harvest, to ensure stable food supplies and open market access.

However, this dependence exposes Lesotho to regional market fluctuations and currency vulnerabilities.

"It should be noted that the country would still meet its annual cereal requirements through imports from RSA, which recorded improved maize production estimates," the report read.

"Supply chain for basic food and non-food items is still stable, an indication that food availability is adequate with no restrictions at the main borders with RSA and markets are projected to be fully functional throughout the consumption year," it added.

The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket, the amount needed for a household of four to meet basic needs, has climbed from M1,220 to M1,320 per month.

"The persistently high food prices compared to the previous year have significantly undermined the purchasing power of households, making it increasingly difficult for them to afford essential food and nonfood items," the report read.

"Most households which were interviewed indicated that one of the shocks that impacted negatively on their purchasing power was loss of employment. This was as a result of the US administration which led to closure of factories and projects," it added.

Food quality is also deteriorating. The Food Consumption Score, a measure of dietary di-



versity and frequency, shows that 25 percent of households now have poor food consumption compared to 19 percent in 2024.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, according to the report, projects that 258,300 rural residents will face crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) food insecurity between May and September 2025.

The situation is expected to worsen from October 2025 to March 2026, when 334,100 people could fall into acute food insecurity.

Urban areas are also struggling. The Economic Capacity of Households to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) assessment estimates that 190,850 people in towns and cities will be food insecure during the 2025/26 consumption year.

Altogether, 524,950 Basotho, roughly one in four people, are projected to be food insecure in the current consumption year, even though this figure represents a 25 percent decline from 2024/25.

The report urged immediate humanitarian assistance for all food-insecure populations in both rural and urban areas, while also calling on the government to strengthen long-term measures that can boost self-reliance.

It emphasised that supporting market opportunities for local farmers with surplus produce would not only improve household incomes but also enhance national food security.

It further called on all key stakeholders, including government institutions, NGOs, United Nations (UN) agencies, and the private sector, to work together in designing and implementing programmes that can improve food production, nutrition, and resilience.

Among the urgent priorities is the intensification of Integrated Catchment Management to restore degraded rangelands and protect water sources, alongside comprehensive livestock vaccination campaigns to curb seasonal disease

outbreaks.

The report also recommended that the government scale up anticipatory actions, strengthen people-centred early warning systems, and invest in impact-based forecasting and risk financing to ensure timely responses to climate- and disaster-related shocks.

Finally, it stressed the need to fully operationalise the National Strategic Resilience Framework, which aims to diversify livelihoods and build long-term resilience to future crises.

Effective collaboration and partnerships, it concluded, remain central to improving preparedness, ensuring coordinated response, and reducing vulnerability across Lesotho.

The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) was established in 2002 as a government-led, multi-disciplinary body operating under the Office of the Prime Minister through the Disaster Management Authority (DMA).

Its membership brings together representatives from government ministries and departments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

The Committee's main responsibility is to assess livelihood vulnerabilities across the country and provide timely information for both emergency interventions and long-term planning.

While the process of vulnerability assessment has traditionally been centralised, efforts to decentralise it have made significant progress. District teams now collect data in their respective areas, and some district representatives also take part in data analysis and report preparation.

Since its inception, LVAC has conducted annual vulnerability assessments without interruption. The 2025 exercise, carried out in June, continues this important work of monitoring and analysing the factors that affect food and nutrition security in the country.

The overall aim of the 2025 assessment was to analyse the state of food and nutrition security and to determine the extent and nature of vulnerability among the population for the 2025/2026 consumption year.

The assessment sought to provide policymakers, government institutions, and development partners with up-to-date and reliable information to support effective decision-making and programme design.

Specifically, the assessment set out to estimate the number of vulnerable people, their geographic distribution, and the level of severity of their situation during the 2025/2026 consumption year; identify both the underlying and immediate causes of food and nutrition insecurity, and provide clear and actionable recommendations for targeted interventions and assistance.

The 2025 Vulnerability Assessment combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Data were collected through household surveys in rural and urban settlements, while the Household Economy Approach (HEA) was applied in rural areas to gain deeper insight into household livelihoods and coping capacities.

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather information at the household level on agricultural performance, water availability, food security, income and expenditure patterns, protection concerns, as well as health and nutrition. The assessment also took into account cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender, migration, and protection dynamics.

Among all households interviewed, at least 35 percent reported having one or more members living with HIV. These cases were found to be common across both urban and rural areas, with a notable concentration among female-headed households.

District-level analysis showed that Maseru's Hoek recorded the highest proportion of affected households at 42 percent, followed by Maseru and Thaba-Tseka at 38 percent each, and Leribe at 37 percent.

The majority of households hosting a member living with HIV were headed by adults aged between 35 and 64 years (41 percent), while 31 percent were led by elderly persons aged 65 years and above. Only two percent of respondents said they did not know the HIV status of their household members.

Encouragingly, 99 percent of individuals living with HIV were reported to be on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). However, adherence challenges remain, with nine percent of those on treatment admitting to having missed between one and five doses in the 30 days prior to the survey.

The most commonly cited reason for missing doses was lack of money for transport to health facilities, while a smaller proportion (five percent) reported non-adherence due to lack of interest or motivation.

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Phamotse yearns for closure on fraud case

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

A Member of Parliament (MP), Dr Mahali Phamotse, says the prolonged fraud case in which she is charged alongside two others has taken a heavy toll on both her personal and political life.

Phamotse spoke to this publication this week at the High Court, where her case once again failed to make meaningful progress due to the prosecution's continued failure to furnish the defence with key documents requested months ago.

Phamotse, who faces charges of fraud and abuse of power together with former Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Education and Training, 'Mapaseka Kolotsane, and former Deputy PS and current PS in the same ministry, Ratšiu Majara, expressed frustration over the slow pace of the case.

The United Africans Transformation (UAT) leader said she was eager to move forward and serve her constituents effectively, stressing that the drawn-out proceedings have caused her emotional exhaustion and financial strain.

On Wednesday, when the court was expected to receive an update on the progress of evidence preparation, the defence, represented by Advocate Kabelo Letuka, told the court they had not yet received the documents.

In response, Advocate Peleha Joala for the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) said some statements were faint, prompting him to consult the former private prosecutor, Advocate Shaun Abrahams, who allegedly confirmed that he had already provided the defence with all necessary documents.



Dr. Mahali Phamotse

However, Advocate Salemane Phafane KC, representing Phamotse, has previously disputed this, and insisted that several key pieces of evidence were still missing. He has also complained that some of the documents previously shared were illegible, prompting the prosecution to undertake to replace them.

Advocate Joala attributed the faint documents to technical issues with photocopying cartridges.

Judge Molefi Makara, visibly displeased

with the lack of progress, remarked: "So, in a way, we are still back to square one, we are still where we were yesterday."

He stressed that the matter could not proceed until the defence received all the required documentation, adding: "Whenever we assign a date for a case, there must be progress."

The judge directed that a Pre-Trial Preparation Session (PTPS) be convened to clarify outstanding issues between the defence and prosecution and to ensure all relevant documents are exchanged before trial.

It also emerged that notes from the PTPS conducted during Advocate Abrahams's ten-

ure were never shared with the court.

Taking a swipe at the prosecution, Judge Makara said it appeared the crown had failed to cooperate, suggesting that it may be deliberately protracting the matter.

Advocate Joala, recently appointed to lead the prosecution, had earlier requested one month to familiarise himself with the extensive case file, but the defence successfully argued that he should be granted two months, a move that further extended the delays.

During an earlier appearance, Judge Makara reminded the prosecution that: "It is the constitutional right of the accused to be provided by the crown with documents that form the basis of the charge so they can build their defence going forward."

At that hearing, Advocate Phafane had sought a permanent stay of prosecution, arguing that the state's persistent delays infringed on his client's rights. The court declined the request, citing resource constraints within the justice system. However, Judge Makara acknowledged that another jurisdiction might have dismissed the case entirely, prompting Advocate Phafane to warn that the court might later regret its decision.

He further accused the prosecution of misleading the public into believing that the court was unwilling to proceed, "when in fact the record shows the crown has never been ready."

Among the outstanding documents requested by the defence are records showing how Epic and Molumeli were initially awarded the Grade 5 textbook tender, and any documentation proving alleged interference in the process.

The case has been postponed to 23 February 2026.

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Renewable energy powers transformation in rural schools

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Renewable energy has long been hailed as a potential game changer for remote and rural schools, offering a sustainable and reliable source of power that enhances both teaching and administration.

In many parts of Lesotho, rural schools continue to struggle without dependable electricity. However, the installation of renewable energy systems such as solar panels is transforming these institutions, bringing light, power, and new possibilities for learning.

Recently, the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Government of Ireland rolled out the Access to Affordable Renewable Energy (AARE) Project under the Renewable Lesotho initiative at Itekeng Combined School in Sehonghong, Thaba-Tseka.

The school's principal, Motšelisi Mosehle, said the project is already making a tangible difference. "This initiative has enhanced education in our school," Mosehle said, noting how access to electricity has allowed them to integrate technology into teaching.

The recent acquisition of computers, powered by solar energy, has been a turning point. In the past, Itekeng students were at a disadvantage during examinations compared to peers from better-resourced schools.

Now, computer education is equipping learners with essential digital skills and enriching their overall learning experience.

Proficiency in computer use, Mosehle noted, is vital not only for accessing higher educa-

tion but also for future employment.

Despite lacking a science laboratory, teachers now use computer-based simulations to demonstrate experiments, allowing students to engage with scientific concepts through virtual learning tools.

According to EU Ambassador Mette Sunnergren, Renewable Lesotho represents more than just a development project.

"It stands as an example of international partnership in action, fully embodying the spirit of Team Europe and uniting funding and expertise to expand the use of sustainable energy for the benefit of both Lesotho and the planet," she said.

"This collaboration ensures that efforts on the ground contribute directly to global environmental goals while fostering national energy security and growth."

UNDP Resident Representative Dr. Jacqueline Olweya emphasised that improved access to energy also promotes gender equality.

"Empowering young women through education ensures they can compete equally with their male counterparts," she said. She added that bridging the urban-rural divide in access to power and technology remains central to UNDP's mission.

Through the AARE Project, energy access has expanded across Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Mohale's Hoek, and Botha-Bothe, powering households, schools, health centres, and businesses through solar-powered mini-grids.

The project is built around three interlinked components designed to transform Lesotho's

energy landscape.

The first component, the Renewable Lesotho GET:pro Country Window, focuses on strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks, building technical capacity, and fostering public-private partnerships to attract renewable energy investments. Implemented by GIZ through the Global Energy Transformation Programme (GET:pro) since April 2023, this initiative will run for 39 months with a budget of €6.86 million, supported by the European Union and the Government of Germany.

The second component, the Access to Affordable Renewable Energy (AARE) project, seeks to promote equitable and gender-responsive access to clean energy through off-grid technologies and innovative financing mechanisms. Led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since August 2024, it is expected to continue for 48 months with a budget of €3.7 million (M72.9 million), jointly funded by the EU, UNDP, and the Government of Ireland.

The third component, the Renewable Lesotho Country Window, serves as an investment facility to assist early-stage companies with equity or debt financing. It supports enterprises committed to delivering clean energy solutions across the country. This includes an ElectriFi country window valued at €5 million (about M98.5 million), currently in the final stages of preparation and scheduled to launch in early 2026. An additional €10 million (around M197 million) will be mobilised af-

ter a related feasibility study to support large-scale energy infrastructure projects.

By the end of 2028, the initiative is expected to deliver substantial results in expanding access to renewable energy. Key targets include the installation of 4,400 green mini-grid connections, 3,402 solar home systems (SHS), and 9,194 improved cookstoves, with a particular focus on female-headed households, which will account for 60 percent of these installations.

In addition, 24 off-grid schools and clinics are set to be electrified, along with the deployment of 98 solar water pumps and 100 productive-use energy systems. The programme will also establish 100 kilowatt peak (kWp) of solar capacity specifically for commercial and industrial applications.

Since its inception in August 2024, the project has already registered measurable progress. A results-based financing facility has been established, complete with a comprehensive operational manual. So far, 564 households have been connected to clean electricity, nearly half (48.2 percent) of them female-headed. Furthermore, eight schools have been electrified, positively impacting 1,136 learners and improving the overall quality of education in their communities.

Thaba-Tseka District Administrator Tlali Mphafi described the project's impact as transformative. "The effect of electricity on community life is hard to quantify, but its importance cannot be overstated," he said. "Electricity is not just about convenience, it is about enabling growth in education, research, and other sectors vital for development. Without it, our communities risk being left behind in a technology-driven world."

Mphafi praised the ongoing investments in renewable energy for improving living standards and equipping children with tools to thrive in a modern economy.

Lesotho on track to end AIDS

... Collaboration hailed as key to sustained progress

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has reached a historic milestone in the fight against HIV, achieving all three of the ambitious UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets by the end of 2024.

This landmark success, alongside a sharp decline in new infections, was highlighted during a Media Breakfast Meeting hosted by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Lesotho on Thursday, which focused on the "Role of Media in HIV Response in Lesotho" and the need for continued stigma-free, collaborative messaging.

The year 2025 offers a moment of reflection on Lesotho's HIV journey, which began with the first reported case in 1986.

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) notes that the country is among just five globally to have reduced annual new HIV infections by at least 75 percent since 2010.

Maema Ramaema from the National AIDS Commission (NAC) lauded the nation's commitment. "Lesotho is now one of the seven countries that have reached all three 95 targets by the end of 2024," Ramaema announced.

Ramaema emphasised that this success is a national effort, "We are clapping hands for the Mosotho who decided to go and get tested, for the partners and friends of the Basotho who have made programs that send SMS's to patients to remind them."

The latest data from NAC, according to Ramaema, shows the adult HIV prevalence has reduced by 32 percent, falling from 25 percent in 2010 to 17.1 percent.

However, Ramaema pointed out a continuing challenge, is a disproportionate burden on women, particularly young women aged 20 to 29, often driven by economic vulnerability and intergenerational sex.

"Women seem to have a greater burden, as

far as prevalence is concerned," he observed, underscoring the necessity of continuing to address gender dynamics.

The meeting served as a crucial platform to reinforce the media's role in advancing the next phase of the HIV response.

Nthoesele Letoao, Program Country Manager for AHF Lesotho, opened the meeting by stressing the media's pivotal influence.

"The media has always played a very pivotal role in shaping public understanding, influencing attitudes, and driving social change," Letoao stated.

She called for continued vigilance. "Stigma, misinformation and complacency continue to threaten the gains we have made, it is therefore crucial that the media remains active, informed as a partner in helping to sustain public awareness."

Letoao highlighted the importance of media collaboration to not only disseminate accurate information but also to tell the "stories of resilience, stories of progress and hope, while continuing to shine the light on the challenges that still need to be addressed."

Dr. Patrick Kanyema, AHF Medical Director, provided an overview of the organisation's comprehensive approach, which works in partnership with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders.

"Our main goal is to contribute to the fight against HIV and AIDS," said Kanyema. He detailed AHF's robust program components, including condom distribution, Voluntary Male Medical Circumcision (VMMC), primary prevention wellness centers, and the Girl Act program to empower young women and combat early marriage and pregnancy.

Kanyema stressed the focus on quality and accessibility, noting the use of a mobile supportive supervision team to ensure remote areas receive the same standard of service.

New dawn for remote Botha-Bothe communities

Seabata Mahao

The long-awaited upgrading of the 9.5-kilometre gravel road linking Ha-Paramente, Seboche, Ha-Lebetla, and Khukhune villages in Botha-Bothe to tarred road status is finally becoming a reality, a development set to facilitate access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities for these remote rural communities.

This came to light this week when the Minister of Public Works and Transport, Neo Matjato Moteane, visited the area to announce the contractor to carry out the construction.

Moteane revealed that the project, part of the government's broader rural infrastructure programme, will be financed through a M354 million allocation from the national budget.

"This project was initiated two years ago under the leadership of Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane," Minister Moteane said.

"We urge all Basotho to put politics aside and focus on the development work that will improve their lives. If we work together in this spirit, we can achieve meaningful and lasting development for our communities."

As part of the initiative, the contractor will contribute M150,000 towards community-led development projects. Minister Moteane appealed to residents and local leaders from the two affected constituencies, Hololo and Mechechane, to unite and support the smooth implementation of the road construction.

The minister underscored the importance of reliable access roads to key health facilities, pointing out that Seboche Hospital in Botha-Bothe and Tebellong Hospital in Qacha's Nek are the only church-owned hospitals in Lesotho still accessible only via gravel roads.

He assured residents that government efforts were already underway to address this, including the construction of a bridge over the Senqu River and a new gravel road leading to Tebellong Hospital.

Speaking at the same event, Lejone Mpotjoane, the Member of Parliament for Hololo and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, described the road as the fulfillment of promises made by himself and the Prime Minister.

"Many people did not believe this project would ever happen. We are here today to prove that our promise is being fulfilled," Mpotjoane said.

He further announced that another road connecting Ha Mphoroane to Tipping will soon be developed, a move expected to strengthen connectivity within the region.

Mpotjoane encouraged residents seeking temporary employment on the project to register with local committees to ensure better management of wages and preparation for future opportunities.

"With this new road, our community is on the path to becoming a small town, and we must prepare ourselves for that. Institutions like St. Charles High School and Seboche Hospital will greatly benefit, and patients will be able to reach medical services much faster," he said.

He also urged close cooperation with the contractor and revealed that a clean water supply project will soon be launched in nearby villages.

"Our people have suffered for too long. All Basotho deserve improved public services, and it is the government's commitment to make that a reality," he added.

Meanwhile, Jane Lekunya, MP for Mechechane, expressed deep appreciation for the project, saying it would drastically improve travel conditions and access to healthcare services.

"For years, travel here has been difficult, with even vehicle owners refusing to drive on these roads. This development brings real hope," Lekunya said.

He encouraged the contractor to prioritise hiring local workers during the construction phase, while acknowledging that certain specialised tasks might require outside expertise. Lekunya also urged authorities to handle compensation issues promptly for residents whose fields or gardens might be affected by the construction.

Once completed, the 9.5km gravel road is expected to cut travel time, enhance access to essential services, and improve safety and mobility for the people of Botha-Bothe, marking a major milestone in the government's ongoing drive toward inclusive rural development.

LESOTHO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WELCOMES THE NEWLY APPOINTED CEO MR. THABO KHASIPE

The Lesotho National Development Corporation is proud to announce the appointment of the incoming Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Thabo David Khasipe. The Corporation looks forward to Mr. Khasipe's wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated over a myriad of roles that have contributed to shaping of Lesotho's economy, both locally and internationally.

Mr. Khasipe is Lesotho's first, of now three, CFA Charterholders. He is also a holder of a Harvard Kennedy School of Executive Education certification for Leading Economic Growth. His ascension to this area of specialisation started with a choice to pursue a bachelor's degree in economics at the National University of Lesotho where he obtained his degree in 1994. He later obtained a master's degree in Economics from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Mr. Khasipe later continued his studies at the University of the Free State where he obtained a Master of Business Administration (MBA), Business/Commerce, General Degree in 1998.

His career started as a Project Officer at the Lesotho Fund for Community Development. He then joined NUL as an economics lecturer followed by a brief stint as an economist at the Central Bank of Lesotho. Mr. Khasipe's professional endeavour in contributing to the shaping of the economic landscape of Lesotho continued in his role at the Lesotho Communications Authority as the Director of Strategic Planning. He has also worked as a General Manager at Stanlib Lesotho from 2007 to 2008.

In 2003, he became the founding Commissioner of Customs and Excise at what is now known as Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL). This would later culminate into him being appointed to position of Deputy Commissioner General at the same institution from 2004 to 2007 and later acting as Commissioner General for one year. In 2016 he was appointed as Commissioner General at the RSL where his strategic leadership led to the change of the institution from an Authority (LRA) to RSL. In 2008, Mr. Khasipe was appointed as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the state of Kuwait and served in this role until 2014.

Mr. Khasipe's appointment to position of CEO, is preceded by his role as the third Executive Secretary of SACU since 1st February 2023 until 31st October 2025. His work at SACU began in 2015 where he served as Deputy Executive Secretary for a year.

As the Corporation welcomes Mr. Khasipe and looks ahead with great eagerness to fulfilling its purpose, it also wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the outgoing Interim Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Molise Ramaili for his diligent service at the Corporation, and to wish him success in his future endeavours.



CEO HITS THE GROUND RUNNING IN HIS FIRST WEEK

...outlines strategic focus areas and shares his vision with LNDC staff. "It can not be business as usual"

Mr. Khasipe addressed the Corporation's staff and implored them to think of what higher purpose could be pursuit collectively. He said, "In this poverty war, the soldiers are in this room". He further asked them to open their minds and hearts in order to impact Lesotho's economy, community, and environment for the creation of intergenerational value



...participates as a panelist at the Lesotho Geo-Political & Economic Situation through a Decolonial Lens.

In his first week in office, he also honoured an invitation from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to serve as a panelist at a panel discussion hosted by the Faculty of Humanities. The panel discussion was "Lesotho's Geo-Political and Economic Situation through a Decolonial Lens," an engagement that was described as an "intellectual feast" by the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities in his closing remarks. The engagement was also graced by the presence of the NUL Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kananelo Mosito (KC), who delivered opening remarks. The discussion interrogated sovereignty, trade and interdependence in the current volatile geo-political climate.

In his deliberations, Mr. Khasipe cited food deficits, energy deficits and low value added manufacturing as some of the effects of the inherited colonial economic structures. These deficiencies correlate with Lesotho's priority sectors that are being promoted by the Corporation such as agriculture and agro-processing, renewable energy and manufacturing, particularly touting for investment for the manufacturing of high value goods.



Basotho children endangered by illegal trips to SA



Ntsoaki Motaung

With 23 reported cases between June and October this year, the Ministry of Youth, Gender, and Social Development, through its Department of Child Protection, is intensifying efforts to raise public awareness about the growing issue of unaccompanied and separated mi-

grant children.

The reported cases involve children aged eight to 16, with two exceptional cases of children under five years old. On October 24, 12 unaccompanied minors were returned from South Africa to their families at the Qacha's Nek border post, the ministry confirmed.

These children, six boys and six girls aged five to fourteen, had been under the care of the Eastern Cape Social Development after their attempts to visit parents working in South Africa went awry.

Two of the children, siblings born in 2018 and 2020 and believed to be from Quthing, had left in 2022. The remaining ten children departed in June 2025 from Ha Sekake, Qabane, Ha Ramoroke, and Mosaqane. Among them, two grade-seven students missed their examinations due to the journey.

The awareness campaign aims to educate parents and caregivers on the severe risks and legal violations associated with illegal cross-border migration arrangements for children. Senior Child Welfare Officer Mamahlubi Phororo highlighted that unaccompanied and separated migrants are among the most vulnerable children in the child protection system.

"The issue often arises from Basotho adults moving to South Africa for work, leading to hazardous and often illegal arrangements for their children," Phororo said. "Parents are violating the Children and Welfare Protection Act and immigration laws by allowing children to travel on their own, often through public or private transport they organise without a responsible carer."

Many children cross into South Africa without essential documents such as passports or birth certificates, and frequently use illegal border points. "Parents often entrust their children to individuals whose backgrounds they do not know," Phororo warned. "This exposes children to abuse, stress, depression, and, most critically, human trafficking."

When such children are found by South African authorities, they are often suspected of being trafficking victims and are placed in child protection facilities while investigations continue.

The subsequent process of repatriation involves multiple levels of coordination, from the South African authorities to the Lesotho Ministry, and then to the relevant district offices to trace families and determine care arrangements.

"Officers must locate the families, conduct interviews, and assess who will care for the children upon their return," Phororo explained. "This tedious process often disrupts the children's education and adds to their emotional strain."

The ministry is intensifying this campaign in response to the increasing frequency of these cases. "We are stepping up because these children are at significant risk of trafficking and abuse," Phororo said. "Our goal is to ensure parents understand the full impact of their actions before it's too late."

Sesinyi fights for disabled community

Ntsoaki Motaung

Refiloeape Sesinyi, Gender Officer for the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD), is more than an advocate, she is a voice demanding visibility for a community too often overlooked and left behind.

Her passion for inclusion is rooted in personal experience, a moment in her youth when the system failed her, altering the course of her life.

Sesinyi was thriving in high school, excelling in mathematics and science, when she became visually impaired. Suddenly, the future she had envisioned was no longer within reach.

"I was told to stop taking those subjects because there were no materials to support my disability," she recalls. "That meant I had to change the career I wanted to pursue."

That one barrier, the lack of accessible learning materials, illustrates how easily systemic neglect can derail a young person's potential. In Lesotho, she notes, only two well-established resource centres cater to the visually impaired. As a result, many talented learners are excluded from the education system altogether because of logistical and institutional shortcomings.

The problem extends beyond visual impairment. Sesinyi says students who are deaf or hard of hearing often find themselves in classrooms led by teachers with no training in disability inclusion.

The assumption that people with disabilities cannot study technical subjects like mathematics or science remains widespread, a quiet but powerful injustice that limits opportunities and deepens inequality.

Beyond education, Sesinyi's advocacy focuses on three major challenges that continue to isolate persons with disabilities: vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV), lack of access to information, and economic exploitation.

She notes that women and girls with disabili-



Refiloeape Sesinyi, Gender Officer for the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD)

ties are particularly at risk of GBV, often from those closest to them. Reporting abuse, she explains, is fraught with difficulty when the perpetrator is also a caregiver or family member who provides food, shelter, or daily assistance.

"Victims are forced to choose between reporting their abuse and keeping a roof over their heads," she said.

Access to information is another barrier. Much of the content shared through government channels or on social media is not accessible, websites lack compatibility features for people with visual or hearing impairments, and information for those with intellectual disabilities rarely includes simplified text or pictorial aids.

"If you are not intentional, you can easily forget to include persons with disabilities," she cautions.

Sesinyi also raises concerns about the exploitation of people with intellectual disabili-

ties, many of whom are used for cheap labour because they cannot effectively advocate for themselves.

"Are we saying that simply because of their disability they must remain trapped in poverty?" she asks, urging society to confront this injustice and take collective responsibility.

Encouragingly, Sesinyi is not fighting this battle alone. Key partners are beginning to

heed the call for inclusion.

UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti emphasised that organisations must be deliberate in ensuring inclusion, particularly in promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and eliminating GBV. He reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to supporting both the government and Parliament in creating inclusive policies and engaging communities to ensure that "no one is left behind."

The private sector is also stepping up. Vodacom Lesotho CEO Mohale Ralebitso underscored the importance of collaboration, describing corporate responsibility as "making profits with a heart." He said businesses have a duty to help shape the nation's social architecture.

"As business, we cannot succeed in a country that's failing," Ralebitso said, pledging Vodacom's continued support for infrastructure and technology that promote accessibility and inclusion.

The remarks were made during the National Assembly Capacity Building Workshop, organised by UNFPA with full logistical support. However, the event faced an early setback when Members of Parliament (MPs) failed to show up on the opening day.

Despite the venue, catering, and facilitation teams being ready, only one MP and the Clerk of the National Assembly attended. The organisers were forced to postpone the session to Tuesday.

The Clerk apologised on behalf of the Speaker and MPs, citing conflicting meetings as the reason for the poor turnout.

The workshop is intended to strengthen MPs' capacity to fulfil their oversight, legislative, and representative responsibilities, with a special focus on advancing SRHR, ending GBV, and preventing HIV in Lesotho.

TSIBISO! TSIBISO! TSIBISO!

RE LE LITHO TSA MAJANTJA FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION RE HLAKOLA BOTHO BA RONA LAW OFFICE. MANG KAPA MANG EA KA BANG LE TABA A IKOPANYE LE MONGOLI OA MAJANTJA FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION KAPA MONGOLI OA MEKHATLO LAW OFFICE PELE MATSATSI A LESHOME LE METSO E MENE A FETA.

MONGOLI OA MAJANTJA FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION
BOX 58
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MONGOLI OA MEKHATLO LAW OFFICE
GOVERNMENT COMPLEX



Tragedy turns to triumph

... Bereng wins award after losing baby due to medical negligence

Ntsoaki Motaung

A heartbreaking personal loss has ignited a movement to save lives in Mphahle's Hoek.

Chieftainess Matšeno Bereng, the Town Clerk of Mphahle's Hoek, has turned her pain into purpose and spearheaded a campaign that has transformed maternal and neonatal health outcomes in her community.

This week, Bereng was honoured with a prestigious United Nations award for her outstanding contribution to improving the Quality of Maternal and Neonatal Health Services in the district.

Her journey began with tragedy. Years ago, she lost her unborn baby when doctors at Ntšekhe Hospital failed to detect a critical complication in time. But instead of succumbing to anger or despair, she chose to return to the same hospital, this time as a volunteer advocate for safer motherhood.

"I could not change what happened to me, but I could help prevent it from happening to others," she said.

Through her tireless work as a Maternal Health Champion, Bereng launched community awareness drives, village dialogues, and hospital partnerships encouraging women to seek antenatal care (ANC) as soon as they know they are pregnant.

The results have been extraordinary. From January to July 2025, Ntšekhe Hospital re-



corded zero neonatal deaths, a milestone credited directly to her campaign.

"The recognition means I need to do more until no woman in Lesotho, not just in Mphahle's Hoek, has to die because of childbearing," she said. "Every pregnancy must be wanted, and every childbirth must be safe."

Her success stands in stark contrast to Lesotho's national maternal and neonatal

health crisis. According to UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti, Lesotho's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) remains at 530 deaths per 100,000 live births, while the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) is 26 per 1,000 live births, among the highest in Southern Africa.

The 2023-24 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) paints a similar picture.

It shows that 26 babies out of every 1,000 die in their first month, 39 before their first birthday, and one in every 19 children never reaches the age of five. Still, the figures reflect progress – neonatal deaths have dropped by 43 percent since 2004.

UNFPA's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Coordinator, Blandina Motaung, said the persistently high maternal death rate, comparable to countries at war, is a major concern.

"It is alarming that nearly 90 percent of Basotho women deliver in health facilities yet continue to die. This points to poor quality of care," Motaung said.

"The main killers, postpartum haemorrhage and hypertensive disorders, are preventable. These deaths occur inside the very institutions meant to save them."

She said the solution lies in full implementation of the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) system, a mechanism designed to ensure that every death is reviewed, lessons are learned, and accountability is enforced.

"This system shifts the culture from blame to learning," she added. "Parliamentarians, in particular, must hold the Minister of Health accountable for its effectiveness and ensure that funds go toward critical interventions such as midwifery training, blood banks, and emergency services."

Indian Association of Lesotho brings free healthcare to Mantšonyane

Seabata Mahao

The Indian Association of Lesotho (IAL), in partnership with the Ministry of Health, held a free medical camp in Mantšonyane on Sunday, providing vital healthcare services to hundreds of residents from the surrounding mountain communities.

IAL President Biju Abraham Korah said the association was honoured to bring the initiative to the people of Mantšonyane, describing it as part of their ongoing commitment to uplift communities and promote public well-being across Lesotho.

"Each year, we organise three to four medical camps, offering free consultations, blood donations, and meals for patients," said Korah. "These camps benefit around 2,000 people at each event."

He expressed gratitude to the Government of Lesotho and the Ministry of Health for their continued partnership, noting that about 80 percent of IAL members are Basotho citizens who actively contribute to national development locally and abroad.

Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane, who attended the event, commended the collaboration, describing it as "a wonderful moment where health practitioners have come together to address the challenges faced by our people, many of whom travelled long distances to be here."

He welcomed the visiting medical team and said such gestures of goodwill reflect the strong friendship between Lesotho and



The Indian Association of Lesotho (IAL), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, hosted a free medical camp in Mantšonyane on Sunday, extending vital healthcare services to hundreds of local residents

India.

"Your compassion truly touches the hearts of Basotho," he said. "This initiative shows what can be achieved when people unite in service of humanity."

Minister of Health Selibe Mochoboroane echoed the Prime Minister's sentiments, thanking the Indian community for supporting national healthcare, particularly in remote areas with limited access to medical services.

He noted that Lesotho's health system, once primarily focused on fighting communicable diseases like HIV and AIDS, now faces rising cases of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

"The large turnout here today shows how critical these services are," Mochoboroane said. "We are grateful to the Indian Association for helping us close healthcare gaps, especially in hard-to-reach mountain areas."

For many locals, the day brought both relief

and hope. Fumuli Masumuthe, one of the beneficiaries, said the camp made a meaningful difference.

"Many of us came with different health challenges, but we were treated with great care and respect," she said. "Accessing healthcare is often difficult for people here, so this camp has been a real blessing. It not only provided medical care but also made us feel valued and supported."

A nation that cannot feed itself cannot fully stand on its own

Lesotho finds itself at a critical juncture. The 2025 Annual Vulnerability Assessment Report has revealed a harsh reality. The country's agricultural production is declining at an alarming rate, and with it, the very foundation of national resilience is being eroded.

Maize, the staple of the Basotho diet, has fallen by 19 percent, and sorghum, another crucial cereal, has plunged by 43 percent. Even with some growth in wheat production, the gains are insufficient to offset the widening gap between food supply and the nutritional needs of the population.

Over half a million Basotho, approximately one in four, face food insecurity this year. Rural and urban communities alike are grappling with reduced purchasing power due to escalating costs of living, job losses, and shrinking income sources.

Household vulnerability is further compounded by systemic challenges, including erratic weather patterns, soil degradation, and a lack of robust irrigation and crop management systems. The survival minimum expenditure basket has risen to M1,320 per month, a figure that highlights the immense strain on households already struggling to make ends meet.

The implications of this crisis extend far beyond empty plates. A nation that cannot feed itself is one whose economic and social independence is undermined. Reliance on food imports from South Africa exposes Lesotho to global and regional market fluctuations and currency vulnerabilities, and places its people at the mercy of factors entirely beyond their control.

National sovereignty is not only about governance but also about self-sufficiency, the ability to meet the basic needs of a population independently. Lesotho's current dependence on imports is a reminder that the country's food system is fragile and vulnerable, threatening the very notion of self-reliance.

Food insecurity is not merely an economic issue; it is a threat to human potential. Hunger undermines education, health, and workforce productivity. Children who go to school without adequate nutrition are less able to concentrate and perform academically.

Adults struggling to meet basic caloric needs have diminished capacity to work, innovate, or engage in community development. The compounding effect of hunger, poverty, and disease, including the continuing prevalence of HIV, creates a cycle of vulnerability that is difficult to break without deliberate, sustained interventions.

The LVAC report also underscores the critical link between food security and public health. Households burdened with hunger are often forced to make difficult trade-offs between food, healthcare, and other essentials.

High levels of HIV, especially among female-headed households, exacerbate these pressures, highlighting the intersectionality of vulnerability. Without a secure food system, even the best health initiatives are undermined, as nutrition and disease management are inseparable.

Immediate humanitarian assistance is necessary, but it is only a stopgap. The real solution lies in long-term strategies that strengthen Lesotho's capacity to feed itself. Supporting local farmers, investing in sustainable agriculture, improving irrigation and soil fertility, restoring rangelands, and promoting climate-smart crop and livestock practices are all essential steps.

Policies must prioritise market access for local producers, enabling them to sell surplus produce while generating income for households and communities. Strengthening early warning systems and risk financing for climate shocks will also ensure that the country is prepared for recurring droughts and other environmental hazards.

Furthermore, the crisis presents an opportunity for introspection. A nation that cannot feed itself cannot be expected to do anything for itself. Economic development, social progress, and national security all depend on a population that is nourished, healthy, and resilient.

Lesotho must recognise that food security is not an isolated sector; it is the bedrock upon which all other development rests. Without it, ambitions for a thriving economy, improved education, and sustainable health outcomes will remain unattainable.



No Comment



Theko Tlebere

Common Concern

Capacity building in Lesotho: Beyond workshops and refreshments

In Lesotho, we often conflate capacity building with workshops and refreshments. While this statement may be uncomfortable, it encapsulates a painful truth about our current development culture. Frequently, youth empowerment initiatives are reduced to one-day seminars, branded folders, a certificate, a transport refund, and a lunchbox. We celebrate attendance instead of transformation, counting workshops rather than results. In doing so, we fail our young people not due to a lack of potential, but because we are not equipping them with the tools, skills, and systems they need to thrive. This week, I want us to closely look at the term capacity building. The narrative in today's articles will be about looking beyond just workshops and refreshments, so let's engage.

Academically, capacity building is a much deeper, structured, and long-term process. According to Eade (1997), capacity building is "the process by which individuals, groups, organisations, and societies strengthen their abilities to carry out functions, solve problems, and sustainably achieve objectives." Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) defines capacity development as "the process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve development objectives over time." These definitions emphasise continuity, structural support, and system-wide empowerment, not an isolated event. Capacity building is not a moment; it is a journey. It is not a certificate; it is competence. It is not motivation alone; it is mastery.

In the context of Lesotho, capacity building must be understood as the intentional, long-term strengthening of knowledge, skills, values, institutions, and opportunities that allow Basotho young people not only to participate in development but to lead it. This means equipping youth with market-relevant education, professional exposure, entrepreneurial readiness, digital literacy, and leadership skills, while simultaneously improving systems across education and labour markets, as well as governance and finance, to absorb and

support their growth.

Currently, however, the dominant model is superficial. A young graduate may attend a training session on entrepreneurship but leave with no access to capital, mentorship, or incubation afterwards. A youth-centered organisation could hold a leadership retreat, yet fail to establish the structures necessary for participants to lead. Public programs may passionately advocate for youth empowerment but provide only short-term activities without pathways to employment or enterprise support. Capacity building should not end when the refreshments run out; that is when true learning and impact must begin.

Why does this matter so urgently? Lesotho is a young nation in demographic terms, with over Sixty (60) percent of its population under the age of thirty-five (35). Yet youth unemployment remains alarmingly high, and many highly educated young people face a cycle of joblessness, underemployment, and migration. If we fail to invest in our young people meaningfully, our demographic advantage risks becoming a demographic burden. Countries that harness their youth through sustained human capital development, such as Rwanda, Mauritius, and Botswana, transform potential into productivity. Conversely, those that neglect structured youth development slip into stagnation, social frustration, and economic fragility. Youth capacity building is not merely a development agenda; it is a national competitiveness strategy.

Lesotho cannot afford to remain a country from which the most ambitious young people must migrate to South Africa, the United Kingdom, or the Gulf to realise their growth potential. We cannot continue to train nurses, engineers, economists, and innovators for export while importing the skills we fail to nurture at home. True capacity building means creating an ecosystem where young people can thrive within Lesotho, not escape it. This requires modern education aligned with labor market needs, not outdated curricula; practical digital and technical skills training, not theory-only instruction; mentorship and apprenticeships, not motivational speeches;

youth innovation hubs, not token "youth desks"; and sustained enterprise financing, not once-off grants framed as miracles.

It also demands accountability. A society serious about youth development does not celebrate attendance sheets; it measures outcomes. How many trainees secured jobs? How many start-ups survived beyond one year? How many young leaders participated in policy decisions and governance? How many innovative solutions developed by Basotho youth received funding, were adopted, and scaled by the government and the private sector? If we do not measure impact, we cannot claim success. And if we cannot claim success, we must change our approach.

To progress, we need a national shift in mindset. Capacity building must evolve from a donor-driven, event-based ritual to a strategic national program integrated into education, governance, entrepreneurship, and labor systems. It must be budgeted for, institutionalized, monitored, and protected from political cycles. Most importantly, it must be youth-designed and youth-led. The young people of Lesotho do not lack ambition, creativity, or resilience; they lack platforms, resources, and structured support. Give them these, and they will not only uplift themselves, they will uplift communities, industries, and the nation.

Lesotho stands at a generational crossroads. We can continue to admire certificates and celebrate workshops, or we can build genuine capacity that transforms lives and strengthens our economy. We can keep feeding events, or we can choose to nourish minds. We can persist in pretending that progress is happening, or we can produce it. Capacity building is not about refreshments; it is about responsibility. If we treat it as such, we will shift from survival mode to prosperity mode as a nation. The question before us is whether we dare to invest in long-term empowerment instead of short-term optics. Young Basotho are ready. The country must now respond with seriousness, vision, and sustained commitment, not just through water and sandwiches. The future is **NOW!**



Who can restore dignity and pride among Basotho?

“A great nation is a nation that respects the services of a hero” – Sukarno (1901-1970)

Nkopane Mathibeli

For a number of decades after establishment as a nation, Basotho existed in utmost dignity as testified by a lived experience of what later became our national motto, Khotso, Pula, Nala. In turn, this made our forebears a very united, proud and strong nation. Despite being robbed 81.1 percent of their land by the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854, they had by 1873 earned their country the status of being a granary of the Free State and parts of the Cape Colony (Kimberly). This was made possible by the wisdom of its leaders, Basotho's sheer resilience, dedication and discipline. Unfortunately, a combination of factors later demoted the Kingdom from being a granary to a labour reserve. Prime among them were the rinderpest-induced death of 90 percent of the total cattle population (1896); severe drought (1897) and tariffs on Lesotho grain exports by two Boer republics: Transvaal (1886) and Free State (1893). Due to an increase in labour migration followed by a decline in agriculture, our Kingdom had become a net importer of grain by 1933. It was only from 1970 that Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan's visionary and virtuous economic leadership began to reinstate Basotho's dignity and pride. Unfortunately, this programme fizzled into thin air the moment he left office (1986).

It may be true that within his successors' combined tenure of 39 years (1986 – 2025), milestones can be identified. However, none of them really reinstated the dignity and pride of Basotho because most were conceived and implemented with the next election, not the next generation, in mind. This either made them hollow victories (the textile industry) or unsustainable burdens on the fiscus (free primary education). In passing, I briefly demonstrate this with the issue of free primary education. That students dropped out of school due to their parents' failure to pay school fees did not make that failure a problem, but a symptom of rampant joblessness. This technically makes free primary education an ill conceived solution of joblessness. Instead, a suitable solution would have been an intensive programme of job creation. As a result of such solutions, it is safe to conclude that Prime Minister

Leabua's successors all demonstrated a lack of requisite vision and virtue. What kind of leader then do we need to reinstate our dignity and pride as a nation?

Back to basics

Only a leader that is informed by and builds upon the basic foundational structure of our Kingdom that can truly reinstate the dignity and pride of Basotho. This has clearly happened in Botswana where the sense of nationhood was born out of the post-independence leadership's subservience to the electorate. This subservience was Seretse Khama's conscious imitation of the subservience of the traditional leadership (chieftaincy) to its subjects. Leabua Jonathan did the same thing while at the helm in Lesotho, and his success remains unmatched to date. This success goes a long way to show that it is possible to arrest a country's underdevelopment only if its development programme is built on that country's basic foundational structure. Anything else will end in confusion and failure. Here is a very simple example to get this point across. This example is, however, related to cars. If, for example, the engine of a Toyota Hilux seizes up, it needs to be dismantled and rebuilt from scratch. If the rebuilding process is to end with a perfectly functional engine, only spare components specifically made for such an engine must be sought and used. There would be total failure if, instead, spare components of a Ford Ranger were sought and used.

The fixing of nations and countries ought to follow the same logic, failing which, crises become the order of the day. This in itself explains why many African countries are experiencing unending problems since entering the modernisation phase; it is because they are being modernised in the overall image and soul of Europe. It is precisely for this reason that Africa is failing democracy, which is unfortunately interpreted as the failure of democracy in Africa. The solution is straightforward, new systems have to be adapted to the basic foundational structure of an African nation. Lately, this is popularly referred to as decolonisation. The foundation of Prime Minister Leabua's developmental success was being from the chieftaincy and therefore well aware of this foundational structure. His task was to proceed using it forth-

right. What is however regrettable is that he never formalised it into what could have easily become our national/State ideology. Although some African countries used to have formal state ideologies (for instance Tanzania had Ujamaa), none were exclusively indigenously rooted but were adaptations of Western political concepts. Before I sum this piece by outlining what could possibly work for our Kingdom, I briefly outline how Indonesians formulated and mainstreamed their own state ideology (The Pancasila) into the DNA of their society. Today, their country has the 17th largest economy in the world and less than nine percent of its population living in poverty.

The Pancasila of Indonesia

Just as was the case with Botswana before Seretse Khama, Indonesia's numerous tribes (over 1,300) were all independent entities before Sukarno became President (1945). This deprived the territory both a nationhood and central government. In order to unify these inhabitants of Indonesia divided not only by language and ethnicity but also by religion, Sukarno simply took the general foundational structure of every ethnic group as a template to found a single Indonesian nation. The outcome is what he called the Pancasila. This was a collection of five principles on which the constitution of Indonesia was to be founded and has indeed been founded. They are: Belief in the Almighty God; A just and civilised humanity; A unified Indonesia; Citizens led by the wisdom of representative consensus; and Social justice for all Indonesians. These principles are not only part of the preamble of the Indonesian constitution, but they have also been integrated into the Indonesian curriculum from kindergarten to universities. This essentially makes the Pancasila the software of every Indonesian. The Pancasila also serves as a framework for the development of the country. It is so central to national life that even Indonesian academics have written extensively on it. The attitude of Indonesians to their Pancasila has produced very good fruits for their country, as demonstrated by development indicators, including the human development index. Basotho as a nation are older than the Indonesian nation. Unlike both Indonesia and Botswana, whose founding fathers are their first

presidents, ours founded it in precolonial times. However, despite the wisdom he employed being public knowledge, nothing similar to the Indonesian Pancasila was formulated in his honour and the transformation of his country. Nothing more than that demonstrates our disregard for our hero. Basotho often talk about se-Moshoeshoe, but nothing as concrete as the Indonesian Pancasila has come out yet.

Se-Moshoeshoe, our Pancasila

On the 26th April 2023, Members of Parliament Mokhothu and Rakuoane submitted a notice of motion proposing the establishment of an Ad hoc Committee to formulate the Moshoeshoe code. The explanation was that the code would emulate the nation-building principles of King Moshoeshoe I. Unfortunately, nothing has come out of this proposal. Probably, the parliamentary majority did not find it worthwhile and that is not surprising. Basotho generally do not have an appreciation of history, how can they appreciate a historical figure like King Moshoeshoe I? It therefore goes without saying that formulating a state ideology using his principles of nation building is definitely not something many people think about much. Unfortunately, our national experience of failure to transit from poverty to prosperity since Leabua's exit is more than enough proof that we need to go back to our indigenously philosophy of development and nation building.

It is indisputable that the reason why Basotho, unlike the Zulus, Xhosas, Ndebeles and Bapedi maintain their status as a nation as opposed to them being tribes within a nation, is a philosophy that is today taken for granted. This is the philosophy that Mohlomi gave to Moshoeshoe in the form of five pieces of advice. According to Gill in his compacted Short History of Lesotho, these were: take care of the weak and vulnerable (social development policies); do not prosecute witchcraft; share your wealth with your subjects (wealth redistribution policies); enjoy the profits of hard work not the fruits of war (virtuous living/moral uprightness) and; marry many wives (broaden diplomatic footprint). Only a leader that can formulate a national development programme with our indigenous nation building philosophy as a foundation can take over from where Leabua left.

INVITATION

INVITATION TO REGISTER AS AN APPROVED SUPPLIER ON THE PETROLEUM FUND’S PREQUALIFIED SUPPLIER DATABASE

The Petroleum Fund is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Finance, which was established through the Legal Notice No. 96 of 1997 under the Finance Order of 1988. The organisation is further delegated, under the Fuel and Services Control (Delegation Notice) Number 32 of 2021, the powers to set the price and time at which Petroleum Products may be adjusted. It is managed by the Board of Directors, while day-to-day activities are administered by the Secretariat, which is headed by the Chief Executive Officer, and its operations are guided by the Lesotho (Petroleum Fund) Regulations of 2021.

Petroleum Fund invites legally registered suppliers interested in doing business with the organisation to register on its database. The Fund specifically request service providers in the following categories:

No.	Category	No.	Category
1.	Accommodation	13.	Events Management
2.	Asset Valuers and Auctioneers	14.	Furniture and Fixtures
3.	Billboards and Outdoor Advertising	15.	General Supply
4.	Corporate Branding	16.	Graphic Design
5.	Catering	17.	Office Equipment and Stationery
6.	Clearing Agents	18.	Printing and Photocopy
7.	Computer Equipment and Electronics	19.	Print Media and Advertising Agencies
8.	Conferencing Facilities	20.	Photography and Videography

9.	Corporate Gifts	21.	Radio Stations
10.	Corporate Wear	22.	Transport hire
11.	Courier Services	23.	Travel Agencies
12.	Editing and Publishing		

1. Mandatory Documents for submission
Interested vendors must submit the following mandatory documents:

- Company Profile;
- A valid Tax Clearance certificate;
- A valid Traders' Licence or equivalent;
- Evidence of physical location (depending on the nature of the company);
- Three Reference letters for services recently provided;
- Three Copies of client Purchase Orders or Service Agreements not older than three years

2. Submission Instruction:

Step 1
Interested vendors must first register their company details and select categories on the following link: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/wgGYN4PTaM>

Step 2
Mandatory documents must be sent by e-mail to supplier@petroleum.org.ls and the e-mail subject should be **PF Database 2025/26_ *Name of the Company***.

The deadline for registration and submission of mandatory documents is **Thursday, January 8th, 2026, at 12:00 noon**.

For further clarification, please contact the Human Capital and Administration Specialist at +266 22312137.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

HEADQUARTERS INTERIOR DECORATOR
PF/RFP/2025/2026-07

The Petroleum Fund (referred herein as the Fund) is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which was established through Legal Notice No. 96 of 1997 under the Finance Order of 1988. Under the Fuel and Services Control (Delegation Notice) Number 32 of 2021, the organisation is further delegated the powers to set the price and time at which Petroleum Products may be adjusted. The Board of Directors manages it, while day-to-day activities are administered by the Secretariat, headed by the Chief Executive Officer, and its operations are guided by the Lesotho (Petroleum Fund) Regulations of 2021.

The Petroleum Fund is in the final stages of constructing its new five-story headquarters located at Lower Prison Gardens, Old Europa, Maseru, Lesotho. To ensure the building's interior environment reflects the organisation's professionalism, national identity, and modern energy sector values, the Fund seeks to engage a qualified and experienced Interior Decorator to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of interior spaces by selecting and arranging decorative elements in an appealing, professional and cost-effective manner.

Interested, eligible bidders may obtain the Terms of Reference from the Petroleum Fund Website (<https://petroleum.org.ls/procurement/>) from **Monday, the 17th November 2025**. Interested Service Providers are required to attend a compulsory pre-bid meeting on **3rd of December 2025** at 10:00 hrs at the Petroleum Fund Headquarters Construction site offices at Lower Prison Gardens, Old Europa, Maseru. Requests for clarifications should be made in writing on or before **17:00hrs on Friday the 5th of December 2025**, to the following e-mail address: supplier@petroleum.org.ls.

The Proposals must be submitted to Petroleum Fund offices in sealed packages clearly marked **‘PF/RFP/2025/2026-07 INTERIOR DECORATION SERVICES’**, containing Technical Proposals and Financial Proposals sealed in separate envelopes. The deadline for submission of proposals is **12:00hrs on Tuesday, the 6th of January 2026**, with a public opening of Technical Proposals at **12:15hrs** on the same day, the **6th of January 2026**.

Online submissions may be made by sending encrypted Technical and Financial proposals to supplier@petroleum.org.ls by the set deadline.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI):

IMPLEMENTATION OF USED OIL MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING PROGRAMME IN LESOTHO
PF/EOI/2025/2026-01

Background

The Petroleum Fund (referred to herein as the Fund) is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which was established through Legal Notice No. 96 of 1997 under the Finance Order of 1988. The organisation is further delegated, under the Fuel and Services Control (Delegation Notice) Number 32 of 2021, the powers to set the price and time at which Petroleum Products may be adjusted. It is managed by the Board of Directors, while day-to-day activities are administered by the Secretariat, headed by the Chief Executive Officer, and its operations are guided by the Lesotho (Petroleum Fund) Regulations of 2021. Guided by its 2025 - 2030 Strategic Plan, Petroleum Fund actively implements initiatives that drive economic growth, foster job creation, and advance environmental sustainability. In 2023, the Fund commissioned a Feasibility Study on the Management and Recycling of Used Oil in Lesotho, which estimated that over 1.1 million litres of used oil are generated annually across the country. The study identified significant environmental hazards associated with improper disposal and presented an investment case for a nationally coordinated used oil collection, recycling, and re-refining system based on Vacuum Distillation Technology. The proposed system demonstrated strong economic viability, with a Net Present Value (NPV) of LSL 42 million and an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 24.8% over a 25-year horizon.

Objective of the EOI

The Fund seeks Expressions of Interest from qualified and experienced organisations, companies or consortia to implement the Used Oil Management and Recycling Programme recommended in the Feasibility Study. The objective is to establish an environmentally sound, financially sustainable, and circular system for used oil management in Lesotho.

Scope of Work

The selected partner(s) will be expected to:

- Design and operationalise a national used oil collection and transportation network across all regions to ensure efficient and environmentally sound handling;
- Establish a used oil re-refining facility, preferably employing Vacuum Distillation Technology as recommended in the feasibility study;
- Develop and implement an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework in collaboration with relevant ministries and industry stakeholders, and communities to promote producer accountability and sustainable practices;
- Support policy, regulatory, and institutional strengthening, including the domestication of Basel Convention principles;
- Implement awareness, monitoring, and reporting programmes to ensure compliance and environmental protection.

Eligibility Criteria

Interested organisations should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in hazardous waste management, petroleum recycling, or environmental infrastructure projects;
- Technical expertise in used oil re-refining technologies (e.g., distillation, solvent extraction, or similar);
- Financial capacity to mobilise capital and sustain project operations;
- Strong partnerships with local entities, government institutions, or international development partners;
- Commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.
- Proven track record of successful project management and execution;

Submission Requirements

Interested applicants must submit:

- A cover letter indicating interest and understanding of the assignment;
- A company profile detailing relevant experience and track record;
- Project concept outlining the approach and technology;
- Preliminary financial model or investment concept;
- Details of key experts and consortium partners (if applicable);
- Valid business registration and tax clearance certificates.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted in sealed packages clearly marked: **“PF/EOI/2025/2026-01 – USED OIL MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION”** to the following address:

Petroleum Fund of Lesotho
LCCI Building
Orpen Road, Old Europa
Maseru 100, Lesotho

Online submissions may be made by sending password-protected PDF documents to supplier@petroleum.org.ls by the set deadline. The e-mail subject must be **“PF/EOI/2025/2026-01 – USED OIL MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION”**

Deadline for submission: Friday, 16th January 2026 at 12:00 hrs (Lesotho time).
Late submissions will not be considered.

DISCLAIMER

Only shortlisted applicants will be invited to participate in the subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) stage. The Petroleum Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any submission without assigning reasons.



Kingdom of Lesotho
National Assembly of Lesotho

ADDENDUM TO EXPRESSION OF INTREST (EOI)

EOI Reference: NO: NA-01/2025/2026
Subject: Correction of Dates

This serves to **inform all prospective bidders** that the dates indicated in the original Expression of Interest (EOI) **have been corrected**. The revised dates are as follows:

ORIGINAL SUBMISSION DATE: 04 NOVEMBER 2025
CORRECTED DATE: 04 DECEMBER 2025 AT 11:00 a.m.
OPENING OF SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ON THE SAME DATE 04 DECEMBER 2025 AT 11:30 a.m.
All other terms, conditions, and requirements of the original EOI **remain unchanged**.

Bidders are therefore advised to take note of this correction and ensure that their submissions are made on or before **11:00 a.m. on 04 December 2025**, as **no late submissions will be accepted**.

This serves to notify all prospective bidders that of the above-referenced RFQ has been corrected as follows:

Provision of Consulting Services for Conducting an assessment, development and supervision of a five-year maintenance and renovation plan for the national assembly of Lesotho building
The National Assembly Building is a national asset of great significance, housing critical parliamentary operations. Over the years, the building has experienced wear and deterioration requiring major refurbishment, painting, and renovation to preserve its structural integrity and maintain functionality. With this National Assembly wishes to engage eligible consulting firms to make **assessment, development and supervision of a five-year maintenance and renovation plan for the national assembly of Lesotho building**

Eligible firms are required to meet the following requirements:

a. Valid Trading License and/or business identity

- card
- b. Valid Tax Clearance Certificate and VAT Registration Certificate (where applicable)
 - c. Certificate of incorporation and company extract detailing ownership and business operations together with identity documents of shareholders

The Clerk to the National Assembly now invites eligible **Consulting Firms or Engineering firms** ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are; qualifications and expertise, experience, team composition, financial capacity and understanding of the project brief approach and methodology for undertaking the assignment, proof of professional registration with relevant engineering councils or regulatory bodies and References from previous clients for similar work. Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Further information (including detailed Terms of Reference (TOR)) can be obtained at the address below during office hours (i.e. 08hr00 to 16hr00). Mandatory site visits will take place on 18th November 2025 during the morning hours (10hr00 to 11hr00). Expressions of interest must be delivered to procurement unit tender box on or before to the address below (in person and by e-mail) by **04th December 2025 at 12:30am**.
Procurement Unit, National Assembly P. O. Box 190 Parliament Building Top Mplilo Hill Maseru 100, Lesotho. Tel (+266) 22323035. Attention: (Email:malehakoek.mokone@gov.ls and Mamello.Monokoa@gov.ls

All the submissions shall be properly addressed as indicated above and clearly marked thus on the envelope: **"Expression of Interest for the assessment, development and supervision of a five-year maintenance and renovation plan for the national assembly of Lesotho building"**.



Kingdom of Lesotho

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INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT) TENDER REF. NO: NA TENDER NO.3 OF 2025/26

THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND CONFIGURATION OF WIFI ACCESS POINTS AND NETWORK SWITCHES LOT 1, AND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTO AND VIDEO CAMERAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS AND SIX PTZ CAMERAS FOR COMMITTEE ROOMS LOT 2 AND DISPLAY SCREENS FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LOT 3

The National Assembly of Lesotho invites qualified and reputable suppliers to submit tenders for the following:

1. Lot 1: Supply, installation, and configuration of Wi-Fi access points and network switches.
2. Lot 2: Supply and delivery of professional photo and video camera and for parliamentary proceedings and six (6) PTZ cameras for **committee rooms**.
3. Lot 3: Supply and installation of display screens for the National Assembly.

Interested and eligible bidders may obtain the tender documents from the Procurement Office, National Assembly of Lesotho, during working hours (08:30am – 16:00 pm) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of M 2 000.00.

SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

1. Sealed tenders clearly marked "Tender for the Supply, Installation and Configuration of Wi-Fi Access Points and Network Switches, and Supply and Delivery of Professional photo and video Cameras and Display Screens for the National Assembly" must be deposited in the Tender Box located at the Procurement Office, National Assembly of Lesotho, on or before 19th December 2025 at 10hr00. Late submissions will not be accepted.
2. Opening of the bid documents will be on the 19th December 2025 at 10hr15hr at National Assembly premises. Interested bidders are invited the bid opening. Only one representative from a bidder may attend
3. There will be a MANDATORY site visit at National Assembly premises on the 13th November 2025 at 10hr00
4. The tender submission should be addressed to Procurement Unit, National Assembly P. O. Box 190 Parliament Building Top Mplilo Hill Maseru 100, Lesotho. Tel (+266) 22323035. For enquiries: (Email: malehakoek.mokone@gov.ls and botseba.sesinyi@gov.ls

All the submissions shall be properly addressed as indicated above and clearly marked thus on the envelope: **"THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND CONFIGURATION OF WIFI ACCESS POINTS AND NETWORK SWITCHES LOT 1, AND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTO AND VIDEO CAMERAS FOR PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS AND SIX PTZ CAMERAS FOR COMMITTEE ROOMS LOT 2 AND DISPLAY SCREENS FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LOT 3"**.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CVs)

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS SPECIALIST FOR LREEAP

Name of Project: Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP)
Project ID: P166936
Position: Environmental Safeguards Specialist for LREEAP Project Implementation Unit
Reporting to: Project Manager LREEAP
Selection Method: Individual Consultant Selection

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project (LREEAP). The LREEAP demonstrates the GoL's commitment to advance the electrification agenda and the implementation of the Lesotho Energy Policy 2015 – 2025 by supporting the provision of off-grid electricity services as well as grid electrification of economic zones to enhance job creation. The project aims to accelerate electricity access along two (2) dimensions: (i) grid extension to economic development zones in peri-urban areas, and (ii) the deployment of mini-grids to reach rural and remote communities. A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) established within the Ministry of Energy is responsible for the overall implementation of the LREEAP. Within the PIU, the Lesotho Electricity Company (Pty) Ltd is implementing Component 1 of the Project namely Grid Extension to Peri-urban Areas of Lesotho through a Technical Unit established as an implementation arm of the PIU. Component 1 of LREEAP finances the design, procurement of materials and construction of works required to electrify selected industrial and commercial loads in peri-urban areas of Lesotho, as well as providing connections to residential customers in adjacent areas. The environmental safeguards function under the LEC Technical Unit within the LREEAP shall be led by an Environmental Safeguards Specialist who shall be responsible for the overall implementation and providing guidance on all the environmental safeguards activities. The LREEAP is therefore in the process of recruiting a capable individual for this key position in the LEC Technical Unit.

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The key objective of this position is to ensure that environmental, health and safety aspects are adequately observed and addressed during the design and implementation of project activities. The selected consultant will be responsible for coordinating and leading in planning, technical supervision, compliance monitoring and analysis, and reporting implementation on environmental aspects of the project in line with environmental requirements of the Government of Lesotho and in conformance with the World Bank Operational Policies and international industry's best practices. The assignment involves monitoring the implementation of the Environment and Social (E&S) documents, Environment Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the Project Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), Health and Safety Plans (H&S Plans) developed for the project, ensuring compliance with national legislation and reporting on all environmental and health and safety issues relating to the project. The main responsibilities of the Environmental Safeguards Specialist are as follows:

- Provide necessary coordination and relevant input into the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and other safeguards documents deemed necessary during implementation;
- Undertake regular field visits to project sites to assess environmental impacts and verify environmental monitoring information provided in the reports of contractors and implementing partners, including photo documentation as applicable;

- Provide Environment and Social (E&S) oversight and support to the project in ensuring that the construction contractors prepare and implement the Contractors' Environmental and Social Management Plans (CESMPs), Health and Safety plans (HSP) and related safeguard management plans prior to the commencement of project related activities;
- Review, supervise and monitor progress of the contractors' occupational health and safety plan and ensure that the health and safety of the general public and the contractors' workforce are not compromised as a result of the programme;
- Conduct environmental due diligence and impacts of projects and develop implementable environmental action plans for implementation;
- Coordinating recruitment of environmental safeguards consultants, including drafting TORs, estimating budgets, providing assistance in shortlisting and evaluation firms/individuals consultants proposals/qualifications, negotiating, and preparing contracts;
- Analyzing project implementation reports to ensure that all work is completed in full compliance with environmental and social standards under the Operational Policies (OPs); supervising contractors' performance in handling specific environmental issues, such as Occupational Health and Safety, etc;
- Provide coordination support to review environmental instruments and liaise with the World Bank for clearance. Review for quality environmental risk management instruments (e.g., ESMP) as per the ESCP that are prepared by consultants prior to being sent to the World Bank for clearance and provide inputs and edits as needed;
- Build capacity of project teams and other stakeholders in identification and use of environmentally friendly practices including systematic implementation of environmental and social safeguards.
- Coordinate closely with the project team, including the Social Safeguards Specialist, consultants, contractors, and implementing partners in planning, managing, monitoring and reporting environmental risks and performance in the project, and provide necessary technical assistance;
- Support the Social Safeguards Specialist in the design and execution of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) with particular regard to environmental matters;
- Undertake stakeholder engagement and awareness creation on all environmental matters related to the programme in line with the E&S documents;
- Draft E&S documents as an when it is necessary;
- Monitor, coordinate and produce periodic (monthly and quarterly) performance reports on environmental and social safeguards of the programme;
- Any other related duties as may be assigned by the supervisor from time to time.

Qualifications and Experience Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Management or Environmental Sciences with at least seven (7) years' experience in environmental field and relevant experience in managing complex teams and/or projects; conducting environmental impact assessments, reporting and monitoring
- OR
- A Master's degree in Environmental Management or Environmental Sciences with at least five (5) years' experience in environmental field and relevant experience in managing complex teams and/or projects; conducting environmental impact assessments, reporting and monitoring.
- Significant experience in the implementation of similar projects especially fund-

- ed by the International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank;
- Proven experience in operationalizing environmental and Environmental standards, Environmental safeguard policies of major donor agencies, in particular the World Bank's Operational Policy OP4.01 on Environmental assessments;
- Field experience highly desirable;
- Skill in Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
- Must possess a driving license with at least three (3) years driving experience in Lesotho terrain.

5. Other Competencies:

- Must speak Sesotho and English efficiently;
- Team player with strong leadership abilities and experience in working with large teams of people from different background;
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision;
- Must have good interpersonal skills;
- Skilled in organising and prioritising work schedule to meet deadlines;
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision;
- Must have good interpersonal skills;
- Skilled in organising and prioritising work schedule to meet deadlines;

Recruitment Process and Contract Type

The selection method shall follow the World Bank's Individual Consultant selection method the procurement process shall be governed by the *World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers February 2025 (Sixth Edition)*. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.15, and 3.16 of the World Bank's Procurement Regulations, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment: *Consultants shall not be hired for any assignment that would be in conflict with their prior or current obligations to other clients, or that may place them in a position of being unable to carry out the assignment in the best interests of the Borrower.* This is a time-based assignment. The incumbent shall be employed full time on the assignment at the Project's office based in Maseru, Lesotho with frequent travel to other parts of the country. The assignment duration is 13 months and the envisages start date is no later than 1st January 2026. The incumbent shall be selected on the basis of their relevant experience, qualifications, and capability to carry out the assignment. Candidates shall be considered if they meet minimum relevant requirements which shall be determined by the Client on the basis of the nature and complexity of the assignment, and assessed on the basis of academic background and relevant specific experience and, as appropriate, knowledge of local conditions such as national language, culture, administrative systems, and government organization. **Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours i.e. 0800 to 1700 hours, local time.**

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Interested candidates must submit their curriculum vitae with covering letter and certified copies of their educational certificates in a **single PDF format** to the email addresses mentioned below on or before **27th November, 2025 at 17H00**. The subject of the email must be **"Application – Environmental Safeguards Specialist"**. Hand delivered expressions of interest shall not be accepted.

Email addresses for submission and clarification requests:

Attention: The Project Coordinator LREEAP (ai)
120 Lancers Road, Opposite New State House, Maseru West
Emails: makhabanel@lec.co.ls with a copy to lmokhutsoane@yahoo.com

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Arts & Entertainment

Newsday

YME Tunes returns after two-year pause.



Chris Theko

Lesotho's music landscape is ushering in a new era with the return of YME (Young Musicians Emporium) Tunes following a two-year hiatus.

Branded as the only digital music platform in Lesotho tailored specifically for artists, YME Tunes offers a suite of features that centers artists' ownership, autonomy, and earnings.

The platform, proudly built "for artists, by artists," has relaunched with new features aimed at empowering musicians through ownership, transparency, and regional market access.

YME Tunes initially operated as a web portal, but its growth potential soon demanded a more robust platform. According to founder Sir Schaba, the team paused operations to rebuild and enhance the service.

"We upgraded from a web portal to a fully operational app and added more functionalities for better usability and convenience," he said.

During its downtime, the company focused not only on technology upgrades but also on strengthening systems to better serve artists and their audiences.

Unlike many global digital music platforms that assume universal banking access, YME Tunes is tailored for smaller economies like Lesotho, where mobile money services are more widespread than formal banking infrastructure.

"YME Tunes has always been perfectly placed for smaller economies where banking infrastructure is not highly compatible but mobile money platforms are more user-friendly," noted Sir Schaba.

This approach allows even rural listeners to purchase their favourite tracks using Mpesa and Ecocash, widening market reach for artists. International fans are also accommodated through Visa and other card services.

This inclusive financial model positions YME Tunes as one of the few platforms that truly understands and designs for the unique realities facing African musicians and consumers.

YME Tunes places decision-making power firmly in the hands of artists. Eliminating traditional intermediaries such as distributors and aggregators, the platform deals directly with content owners.

"If an artist applies to be a Content Manager, they can upload music on their own,

set their own pricing, and monitor sales performance in real time," Sir Schaba explained.

This independence gives musicians unprecedented control over their creative output and revenue, making artist empowerment not just a slogan but a working system.

To strengthen trust between the platform and creators, YME Tunes has introduced a Know Your Customer (KYC) process. Artists must submit identification and relevant documentation before being approved to upload music. This ensures that the rightful owners are credited and compensated.

The revamped platform also allows: Monthly cash-outs, real-time sales tracking, music storage in the cloud - removing the past barrier of limited device storage.

Schaba said these features respond directly to complaints and feedback from the music community, offering a more secure and convenient service.

While streaming dominates global music consumption, artists often earn only fractions of a cent per play. Schaba believes this model was never designed to pay artists sustainable income.

"Streaming will never compensate artists fairly, it is never meant to do that," he said.

Instead, YME Tunes prioritises music sales, ensuring that artists earn directly from each purchase. By embracing a pay-per-track model, it challenges the assumption that streaming is the only future of music distribution.

Looking ahead, YME Tunes aims to cement its place in the regional market.

"In the next five years, we see YME Tunes as one of the giant African music platforms in the Sub-Saharan region," Sir Schaba said.

The rollout will begin in Lesotho before spreading to Botswana, Eswatini, and South Africa, with a focus on KwaZulu-Natal, home to the vibrant Maskandi genre.

For artists eager to join, the process is simple: register via www.ymetunes.com. Schaba encourages young artists to embrace continuous learning.

"Fame comes to an end, but if you are knowledgeable in the music business, you are for keeps."

With its relaunch, YME Tunes offers renewed hope for a fairer, more accessible, and proudly African digital music ecosystem.

Création Africa returns to boost Lesotho's creative entrepreneurs

Fusi Hlaoli

Creative entrepreneurs in Lesotho are once again being offered a golden opportunity to turn their ideas into thriving businesses through Création Africa, a regional initiative aimed at empowering innovators in the cultural and creative industries.

The French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, in partnership with the Embassy of France and the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS), has announced the return of the programme, which supports creative talent across South Africa, Lesotho, and Malawi.

According to information shared with Newsday by Bronwyn Coppola, on behalf of the French Embassy in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi, the programme seeks to boost cultural entrepreneurship through mentorship, incubation, training, funding, and networking opportunities.

Launched in 2023, Création Africa forms part of a continent-wide initiative by the French government to strengthen Africa's cultural and creative industries in 16 countries. It reflects France's renewed commitment to investing in innovation and entrepreneurship on the continent, helping artists and creators transform their passion into sustainable businesses.

The call for applications is open to entrepreneurs aged 18 and above who are active in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) and reside in one of the three participating countries. From the pool of applicants, 50 entrepreneurs will be selected for a seven-week mentorship programme scheduled to start in February 2026.

This phase will focus on helping par-



Creation Africa - South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi

ticipants refine their business models, strengthen their creative projects, and prepare for investment readiness. After the mentorship, candidates will pitch their projects before a professional jury, with the Top 15 advancing to a six-month incubation phase running from April to October 2026.

During incubation, participants will receive tailored business support, access to industry mentors and investors, and strategic guidance — along with financial assistance to help scale their enterprises. The programme's ultimate goal is to develop sustainable creative businesses capable of competing regionally and internationally.

While Newsday did not speak directly with a participant, Création Africa's 2024 publication featured Katleho Monyako, a creative entrepreneur from Maseru and founder of SourceCode Motion Pictures, who shared his reflections on the programme.

Monyako said Création Africa had expanded his knowledge, connections, and market access in the audiovisual sector. His company, SourceCode Motion Pictures, focuses on producing high-quality visual effects and celebrating original African storytelling, a mission he continues to pursue despite challenges such as limited resources, technology, and skilled talent.

"What I have found most useful about the Création Africa experience is all the valuable information and business insights about the creative industry. I've also enjoyed interacting with other founders, learning from them, and seeing how different creative businesses collaborate," he said.

He also highlighted the broader significance of creativity for Lesotho's development:

"I believe in the power of the creative and cultural sectors to create jobs, drive innovation, and foster a strong sense of cultural identity. Yet it can be difficult to navigate the industry and compete at the highest level."

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Eight athletes awarded Olympic scholarships

Seabata Mahao

Eight of the country's most promising athletes have been handed a golden opportunity to pursue their Olympic dreams after being awarded four-year Olympic Solidarity scholarships, marking a major boost in the country's preparation for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) announced the awards on this week, describing them as one of the most significant investments in athlete development in recent years.

According to the LNOC, the six athletes, four from athletics and two from cycling, will begin receiving funding immediately, while two boxers will join later once the Lesotho Boxing Association (LEBA) finalises its affiliation with World Boxing, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)-recognised governing body that replaced the now-defunct International Boxing Association (IBA).

The confirmed names are Tebello Ramakongwana, the national marathon record holder (2:06:18) and history-maker after finishing 7th at the 2024 Paris Olympics; Kamohelo

Mofolo, a rising long-distance talent and national 10km record holder, recently crowned champion of the Nelson Mandela Bay Half Marathon; 'Mamakoli Senauoane, the national 400m record holder; 'Mangabang Tsibela, a middle-distance sensation who broke the national 3000m record at just 14 years old in 2018; Kabelo Makatile, the national road cycling champion; and Pontšo Makatile, Kabelo's sister and the national women's cycling champion.

Two boxers, whose names have not yet been disclosed, will be added to the programme once LEBA completes its realignment with World Boxing, a process that includes constitutional reforms and ratification by the association's national congress to restore Olympic eligibility.

Each athlete will receive a monthly stipend of M19,000, paid directly into their accounts to cover training, coaching, travel, and competition expenses. The scholarships will be renewed every four months based on performance and accountability reviews.

"Just last week we received confirmation that our scholarship application was accepted," said Mark West, LNOC's Head of Sport Services.



Lesotho's Olympic marathon star Tebello Ramakongoana

"Initially, we were recommended to apply for six scholarships, but we were later allowed to increase that number provided we maintained gender balance. You'll notice the ratio is equal, four men and four women, and the stipends are the same."

West highlighted that the initiative represents a long-term investment in Lesotho's sporting future.

"They are very young athletes. We are excited because this is not just an investment for now but for the future. Qualification is never

easy, but we have great confidence in them."

The Olympic Solidarity Programme, funded by the IOC, provides athletes from developing nations with the financial and technical support needed to reach Olympic qualification standards.

The LNOC hopes that with consistent funding, expert coaching, and international exposure, this new generation of athletes will represent Lesotho not just to participate, but to contend at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

"We want to build continuity and confidence. These matches are not just friendlies they are an opportunity to grow as a team," Notši concluded.

Likuena Final Squad to Face Malawi

Goalkeepers:

Katleho Mochesane (LMPS FC), Sekhoane Moerane (Orbit College – South Africa), Leluma Mofoka (Matlama FC).

Defenders:

Rethabile Mokokoane (Matlama FC), Siyabonga Monyaka (Majantja FC), Motlomelo Kwanazi (Bantu FC), Thabo Makhele (Siwelele

FC – South Africa), Fusi Matlabe (Lioli FC), Tlotliso Mapola (Majantja FC), Thabang Mlane (African Stars – Namibia), Ntoa Mphale (LCS FC).

Midfielders:

Tholang Makuru (Lioli FC), Kananelo Rapulung (Bantu FC), Tšoarelo Bereng (Upington City FC), Tumelo Shai (Majantja FC), Tšepang Sefali (Linare FC), Jane Habantšo (Matlama FC), Lisema Lebokollane (LCS FC), Mpho Teele (Libabatho FC), Makara Ntatisane (LCS FC).

Forwards:

Motengbong Seta (Venda FC – South Africa),
Keketso Snyders (LCS FC)

Likuena ready for Malawi



Likuena Head Coach, Leslie Nots'i during a pre-match interview

Seabata Mahao

The senior national team, Likuena, will go into their upcoming international friendlies against the Flames of Malawi in high spirits despite missing a few key players.

Likuena will be without two Botswana-based players, Lehlohonolo Fothoane of Township Rollers and Neo Mokhachane of Jwaneng Galaxy. Fothoane misses out due to a right groin strain, while Mokhachane has been excused at the request of his club.

Likuenta are set to host Malawi at Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein on 15 and 18 November 2025, with the team departing for South Africa today.

Addressing the media on Wednesday, Li-kuena's head coach Leslie Notši expressed satisfaction with his side's readiness for the back-to-back fixtures, noting that all players in camp are fit and available for selection.

"Since reporting for camp, all the players are in a good state with no injuries. The preparations have gone well, and the spirit in camp is high," Notši explained.

He also commented on the two unavailable players: "As for Mokhachane, his team asked for him to be excused as they are in the middle of a critical training program, and to maintain

good relations and ensure future cooperation, we accepted their request.”

Fothoane's absence has paved the way for Lijabatho FC attacking midfielder Mpho Teele, who has earned a call-up as his replacement. Notši said the changes would give other players an opportunity to showcase their abilities.

"Their absence gives other players, especially new ones, a chance to play and show what they can offer the national team," he said.

The two friendlies are expected to serve as a valuable test for Likuena, who last recorded a 1-0 victory over Zimbabwe in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. Notši said the games would help his team maintain momentum and cohesion.

"We ended our World Cup qualifiers on a promising note, so these games will help us maintain consistency. Friendly matches are also a great platform to introduce young players without much pressure," he added.

While maintaining a solid core of experienced campaigners, Notši has also introduced a few fresh faces, including Katleho Mochesane (LMPS FC) in goal, Ntoa Mphale (LCS FC) in defence, Mpho Teele (Lijabatho FC) in midfield, and Tlotliso Mapola (Majantja FC), who returns to the squad after a long absence.



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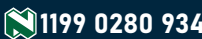
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The Roof adopts new global status

Seabata Mahao

The iconic motorcycle race, the Roof of Africa, is set to make history this year by closing off the global Hard Enduro World Championship (HEWC), a first for both the event and the country.

Known as "The Mother of Hard Enduro" due to its rugged and challenging nature, the Roof of Africa will this year determine the 2025 Hard Enduro World Champion, thereby placing Lesotho in the heart of the world's toughest motorcycle racing circuit.

The recognition follows the race's formal inclusion in the HEWC calendar by the International Motorcycling Federation (FIM) earlier this year, a milestone that elevates the Roof of Africa from a continental event into a globally sanctioned world championship finale.

From November 19 to 22, the Lesotho Off Road Association (LoRA) will host what promises to be a record-breaking edition of the race, marking a momentous leap from regional prestige to international acclaim.

At the official launch this week, LoRA's Chairperson Mopeli Ntabe said preparations were in full swing to ensure the event meets international standards.

"This year we are having a different race as it is going to serve as the final round of the World Hard Enduro Championship," Ntabe said.

"We certainly hope we will be able to deliver something special for Basotho, for motor-sport lovers, and for the world."

Event Director Ross Whitehead added that the Roof's new global status is the culmination of years of effort to grow the race's scale and appeal.

"I invite everybody to come and enjoy the Roof this year and put it out in a positive light about what we are trying to achieve to make this a truly Lesotho event," Whitehead said.

"Our primary goal is to grow the economy and trade within Lesotho through the Roof of Africa."

The Roof's elevation to world championship status is also expected to boost Lesotho's profile as a premier adventure tourism destination. 'Manchafalo Motšoeneng, who spoke on behalf of Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), said the event continues to play a crucial role in stimulating the economy.

"The economic relevance of the Roof of Africa rally cannot be overlooked. Each year, thousands of spectators from different parts of the



world come to witness the spectacular race, generating millions of maloti for the country's hospitality and service sectors," Motšoeneng said.

She revealed that last year alone, the event generated an estimated M5 million in direct spending, mostly through accommodation, food, and transport. With its new global championship status, even higher visitor numbers and revenues are expected this year.

The 2025 edition will begin with administrative checks and scrutineering at Avani Lesotho and Casino on November 19, followed by a new city parade through downtown Maseru on November 20, giving spectators a rare chance to see the elite riders up close before they head into Lesotho's rugged mountains.

The main race will then shift to Ha-Lebamang, Roma, where competitors will take on some of the most punishing terrain in southern Africa over three intense days.

Lesotho will once again be proudly represented across several categories. In the Silver Class, local riders Basia Maseatile, Sechaba Chabeli, and Moiphepi Bereng will fly the national flag.

In the Bronze Class, Timello Tsolo, Malakane Besele, Katleho Tlhaole, and Joseph Motenane will be in action. The Iron Class will feature Peter Andrews, Jabulani Mhlanga, Thabo Monaheng, Eric Salley, David Salley, and Hlaoli Lesekele.

In the elite Gold Class, defending champion Wade Young of South Africa will once again be

the rider to beat as he chases a record 10th Roof of Africa title. The 29-year-old has dominated the event since his first win in 2012 and will look to secure another victory to seal his status as one of Hard Enduro's all-time greats.

He faces stiff competition from fellow South Africans James Moore and Matthew Green, alongside international heavyweights Teodor Kabakchiev (Bulgaria), Billy Bolt (England), and veteran Graham Jarvis (UK).

Since its inception in 1967, the Roof of Africa has grown from a regional endurance race into a symbol of Basotho resilience and adventure spirit. It has only been cancelled twice, in 1998 due to political unrest and in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, further underscoring its enduring legacy.



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