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Is the \$364 million US-Lesotho Health MoU unconstitutional?

Four months after enacting historic reforms to protect national sovereignty, the very government that passed them may have brazenly defied its own Constitution to lock the nation into a foreign pact that surrenders citizens' biological heritage, health data, and regulatory independence to the United States for a generation.

Staff Reporter

On December 19, *Newsday* exposed the sweeping terms of a \$364 million health Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Lesotho and the United States.

The report revealed a 25-year commitment to share pathogen samples and national health data, unilateral U.S. audit and termination powers, and a requirement for Lesotho to surrender its medical regulatory sovereignty to America's Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Now, a deeper legal examination reveals an even more fundamental problem. The signing of the MoU may have directly violated Lesotho's Constitution, enacted just four months earlier, rendering the entire agreement potentially void and without legal effect.

The core of this constitutional crisis lies in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which came into force in August 2025. This amendment introduced a rigorous new democratic safeguard, Section 153A.

This new constitutional clause was designed to end the era of secret diplomatic deals. It mandates a clear, transparent process for binding the nation.

For binding international agreements (Section 153A(2) and (3)), the section directs that the Executive must table the agreement in Parliament with an explanatory memo and obtain approval from both houses. The Executive may sign for expediency, but "the signing shall not have effect until" parliamentary approval is granted.

For non-binding instruments (Section 153A(8) and (9)), it states that the full parliamentary process does not apply to items like "non-binding memoranda of understanding." However, even for these, a "designated person" shall not sign such non-binding instrument without the approval of the Executive" (i.e., the Cabinet).

This creates a binary constitutional test for any document like the US-Lesotho Health MoU.

The \$364 million question: Which path was taken?

The MoU was signed on December 10, 2025, by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane. Based on the draft text and the Constitution, only two legal pathways existed.

Pathway A: The "non-binding" route

The MoU's own Section 6.9 declares: "This MOU is not an international agreement and does not give rise to legal rights and obligations under international or domestic law. Nothing in this MOU is intended to override



The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane

or invalidate any existing arrangements between the U.S. government and Lesotho."

If the government relied on this U.S.-drafted clause to classify the deal as "non-binding," it could argue the full parliamentary process under Section 153A(2) was unnecessary.

However, the Constitutional hurdle is that even on this path, Section 153A(9) applies. The Minister, as a "designated person," needed "the approval of the Executive" (Cabinet) before signing.

Now, there are two critical questions for the government. Where is the Cabinet resolution or minute authorising Dr. Matlanyane to sign this specific MoU? Was the full draft, with its 25-year commitments and requirement to change Lesotho's laws, presented to and approved by the full Cabinet?

If this internal approval was not formally sought and documented, the signing was unconstitutional from the outset.

Pathway B: The "substantive agreement" route

A powerful legal argument exists that this MoU, regardless of its "non-binding" label, is de facto a binding international agreement due to its profound implications.

Firstly, it commits Lesotho to change its laws (Section 2.7 – recognising the U.S. FDA over LEMERA).

Secondly, it establishes 25-year commitments for specimen and data sharing.

Thirdly, it triggers significant domestic co-investment of \$132 million.

And lastly, it creates enforceable conditions with real consequences, such as aid withdrawal.

If this is the correct legal characterisation, then Sections 153A(2) and (3) may apply in full force.

If this is the pathway, the sequence mandated by the Constitution is clear that the

draft MoU must be tabled in Parliament with explanatory memo, both houses of parliament must debate and pass approval via resolution, and only then can a minister's signature have legal "effect."

The MoU was signed in December 2025. Parliament was in recess. There is no public record of it being tabled, debated, or approved by the National Assembly or Senate.

Therefore, if Pathway B is correct, Dr. Matlanyane's signature is, according to Section 153A(3), currently without legal effect. The MoU is constitutionally stillborn.

The government's silence

Newsday's attempts to get clarity from the signatory, Dr. Matlanyane, and the negotiating minister, Lejone Mpotjoane, were unsuccessful. This vacuum of official explanation fuels the crisis.

By remaining silent, the government creates the perception that it either ignored the new Constitution it swore to uphold, or deliberately used the "non-binding" label – a term written by the American counterparty, as a loophole to evade the democratic scrutiny the Tenth Amendment was designed to guarantee.

"This is a classic case of substance over form," argued one activist who preferred to remain anonymous. "A court looking at this would ask: does an agreement that demands we change our laws, spend our money, and bind our successors for 25 years merely 'not give rise to legal obligations'? The label is a shield for the executive against the people. The Constitution was amended precisely to break that shield."

Newsday understand that a group of local rights groups last month planned to write to the government but the plan did not materialise as after drafting the letter, all efforts to have the letter signed and sent were unsuccessful.

This publication has seen a copy of the draft letter.

"We strongly recommend that the MOU be subjected to formal constitutional and legal review by the Attorney General, consistent with Section 98, to confirm full compliance with the Constitution and the laws of Lesotho, as now amended," read the draft letter.

"No administrative, operational, or financial measures be undertaken that would anticipate, substitute for, or pre-empt statutory or Parliamentary authorisation, where such authorisation is constitutionally or legally required," it added.

The U.S. Embassy's defence and the sovereignty paradox

The U.S. Embassy's statement to *Newsday* last month, that the MoU "does not create new legal obligations" and that "Lesotho retains full authority" now rings in a hollow constitutional echo chamber.

Their defence hinges on the very Section 6.9 that creates the legal ambiguity Lesotho's executive may have exploited to avoid Parliament. It is a profound irony that the United States is providing the textual justification for a potential bypass of Lesotho's democratic process.

The Embassy's assurance that "all programmes will continue to operate within existing national legal frameworks" is starkly contradicted by Section 2.7 of the MoU, which requires Lesotho to change its existing legal framework to suit the U.S. FDA.

An agreement built on shaky ground

The December 19 exposé revealed an agreement of concerning substance. This analysis reveals it may also be an agreement of flawed and illegitimate process.

The Tenth Amendment was a hard-won victory for parliamentary oversight and public transparency in foreign affairs. If the government signed this monumental MoU without adhering to its new rules, it represents more than a policy error but also a fundamental breach of constitutional trust.

The path forward is dictated by the Constitution itself. The government must immediately table the final, signed MoU in Parliament, along with a clear explanation of which constitutional pathway (153A(9) or 153A(2)) it followed and the supporting documentation (Cabinet resolution or parliamentary vote).

Both houses must now perform the duty the constitution mandates which is to scrutinise, debate, and approve or reject this agreement that will shape Lesotho's health and sovereignty until 2050.

It is highly likely this will end before the courts. The judiciary will have the unavoidable task of deciding whether a document labeled "non-binding" but laden with consequential, long-term commitments can circumvent the clear intent of Section 153A.

Until these steps are taken, the \$364 million US-Lesotho Health MoU exists in a constitutional limbo, a deal that promises to build a resilient health system, but whose own legal foundation is dangerously unsound.

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Ombudsman knocks on prison doors

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Ombudsman Advocate Tlotliso Polaki will next week begin an inspection tour of correctional and health facilities across the country, during which she will hear detainees' complaints firsthand.

Advocate Polaki confirmed the planned inspections yesterday, saying the exercise forms part of a nationwide follow-up campaign to assess whether recommendations made after previous visits to these institutions have been implemented.

Section 10 of the Ombudsman Act No. 9 of 1996 mandates the Ombudsman to "enter and inspect police, military or prison cells, government hospitals, asylums, or any other places or centres where any person is detained or kept whether for safe custody or in terms of any law".

As part of the campaign, the Office of the Ombudsman will establish Mobile Intake Clinics at the facilities to receive complaints directly from detainees. The initiative will also include education sessions to inform detainees about their rights and the role of the Ombudsman.

The inspections will begin in Maseru, covering the Maseru Central Male Correctional Facility, the female correctional facility, and the juvenile facility. The Ombudsman will also visit Mohlomi Mental Hospital and Lepereeng centres. The programme is scheduled to run from 12 to 20 January 2026.

Responding to concerns that institutions may temporarily improve conditions ahead of the visits, Advocate Polaki said the law requires her office to notify authorities before inspections. She stressed, however, that prior notice should not be interpreted as a soft approach.

"The inspections will be thorough," she said.

Polaki added that while she would prefer to conduct unannounced inspections, the current legal framework does not permit this. She noted that her office is drafting a regional model law that would remove the requirement to notify institutions in advance.

Asked whether the timing of the visits was linked to the alleged killing of an inmate through food poisoning in late December, Advocate Polaki said the inspections had been planned long before the alleged incident.

Ideally, she said, inspections should be conducted annually. However, she explained that her office had previously issued recommendations and allowed sufficient time for the affected institutions to implement them.

In 2023, the Ombudsman conducted inspections at the country's only mental health facility, Mohlomi Mental Hospital, to assess conditions and operations. These visits followed earlier inspections of correctional facilities and hospitals, after which the Ombudsman released a scathing report highlighting widespread concerns.

In a report published in 2024, the Ombudsman stated that the objective of the inspections was to determine whether conditions at the institutions were fit for human habitation. The report found that living conditions at Mohlomi Mental Hospital violated patients' rights to a conducive environment, negatively affecting rehabilitation and recovery.

"The Ministry of Health [should] further ensure that the mental health programme is integrated with other communicable disease programmes such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, given that mental illness among HIV and TB patients affects treatment compliance and outcomes," the report stated.

While the Ombudsman noted that there was no overcrowding that could increase the spread of tuberculosis, she found that the fo-



rensic unit at Mohlomi Mental Hospital was congested and required urgent intervention.

Her report on correctional facilities revealed that female detainees were often housed in police stations without proper cells, forcing them to sleep on benches day and night.

"Most stations and posts had only one cell designated for male detainees. Female detainees were kept on benches at the reception area day and night," the report said. It

added that even where female cells existed, they were frequently used as storage or exhibit rooms, a situation described as degrading and unacceptable.

Chief Public Relations Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman, Bonang Mokhele, said if the recommendations made by Advocate Polaki have not been implemented by the time of the inspections, the Ombudsman will issue a special report to Parliament to enforce compliance.



Newsday Interview

UK pledges stronger engagement with Lesotho

The United Kingdom (UK) has reaffirmed its commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation with Lesotho, with British High Commissioner Martine Sobey pledging continued, results-driven engagement between the two countries. Sobey assumed her post in September 2025, bringing with her extensive experience in climate diplomacy, environmental policy and international development. Prior to her appointment to Lesotho, she served at the British High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, where she worked within the economic team and senior management, leading the Climate and Nature Team. During the UK's presidency of COP26 in Glasgow, Sobey spearheaded key nature-focused campaigns and managed bilateral partnerships with Amazon rainforest countries, including Colombia, Brazil and Peru. She holds a Master's degree in Environment and Politics from King's College London and has worked with environmental research and international development organisations across Africa and Europe. Beyond her professional work, Sobey has developed a personal appreciation for Lesotho's landscape, enjoying activities such as golf, hiking and swimming. She has notably swum twice at Mohale Dam. In her first interview since assuming office, Sobey told Newsday reporter Thoboloko Ntšonyane that her tenure will prioritise strengthening partnerships, advancing shared priorities and ensuring that diplomatic engagement continues to deliver tangible benefits for both nations, which share long-standing historical ties.

Below are excerpts from the interview.

Thoboloko Ntšonyane (TN): Who is High Commissioner Martine Sobey?

Martine Sobey (MS): I arrived in Lesotho in September, coming directly from my previous posting in Nigeria, where I worked in the economic team and served on the senior management team. My professional background is in climate change and infrastructure, and I have worked in this field for many years across the region and the continent. I am here with my husband, Will, and our cat, Ruby.

TN: How have the past four months been?

MS: They have been a whirlwind, but also a real privilege. Looking back, I am surprised by how much I have managed to do in such a short time. I am very aware that I have only begun to scratch the surface in getting to know the Mountain Kingdom and understanding the richness of Basotho culture. Moving straight from Nigeria into this role meant hitting the ground running, but I have truly enjoyed the experience. I have loved swimming at Mohale Dam, sampling local delicacies such as trout, and, of course, Maluti Lager. It has been a fantastic start, and I am looking forward to learning more about the country, seeing more of it, and introducing my family to Lesotho.

TN: It may be early days, but is there a particular highlight so far?

MS: One of the highlights so far was taking part in the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay, which was special to me for several reasons. I come from a family of sports fans, my father was a semi-professional rugby player, my mother loves football, and

sport has always been a big part of my life. From a young age, we regularly attended live football and rugby matches, with season tickets at Crystal Palace and debenture seats at Twickenham. I also love major global sporting events such as the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games, which I believe showcase the best of national spirit and camaraderie, and remind us that sport

activity, history and symbolism. My role in handing it over to Their Majesties felt both special and important. The Commonwealth Games will take place next year in Glasgow, a city with strong personal connections for me, and knowing that this baton will make its way to Scotland carrying a piece of Lesotho is very special. The relay was celebrated as part of the National Youth Games, bringing together young athletes from Lesotho and Eswatini, with performances by Sannere. The energy, excitement and sense of anticipation among the young sports-

breadth and the depth of our partnership. At its core, my work is about people. It involves strengthening cultural ties, deepening bilateral trade relations, and working together on global challenges such as climate change. Recently, for example, we hosted a commemorative event marking 50 years of the visitors' book at the High Commission, just a small snapshot of a relationship that stretches back much further. I have also met four talented young Basotho footballers from Kick4Life who returned from a life-skills exchange programme in



is about more than competition, it is about coming together. Taking part in the Baton Relay in Lesotho was particularly meaningful because I met some of the country's most successful sportsmen and women and saw the beautifully designed baton, created by students from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. Dressed in a Basotho blanket, the baton is small, about 20 centimetres high, but powerfully reflects cre-

men and women made it an unforgettable evening and a true highlight of my time here.

TN: Please tell us a bit about your work. What does the work of the British High Commissioner entail?

MS: Put simply, my role is about building bridges between the UK and Lesotho. I use the word "bridges" deliberately because our relationship has many layers. No two days are the same, which reflects both the

Wales. They came back full of ideas and energy, and I know they also shared their experiences with their counterparts in Wrexham, underscoring that this is a genuinely two-way partnership. Another highlight was taking part in the 100th centenary celebrations of the Lesotho Girl Guides alongside Her Majesty. It was a vibrant event, full of dancing, with girls and boys from the Scouts looking smart and proud in their



uniforms, and clearly committed to being part of something larger than themselves. In addition, I met with the Governor of the Central Bank of Lesotho to discuss the business-enabling environment and what more can be done to make it easier to do business in the country, an issue that matters not only for British investors, but for all businesses operating here. That gives a sense of what a single week can look like. The role is varied, demanding and rich, carrying significant responsibility given the long-standing relationship between our two countries. It is about people, programmes and policies, very much a blend of all three.

TN: How does the UK prioritise which sectors are likely to receive support, and which areas are you facilitating or considering for support in Lesotho?

MS: The UK has recently launched a new approach to Africa, announced by our Minister, Baroness Chapman. This strategy is the result of more than a year of consultations with over 600 organisations across the continent and reflects a process of deep listening. It identifies seven priority areas of shared interest and marks an important shift away from relationships based on aid, towards partnerships founded on mutual respect, innovation and investment.

In Lesotho, our focus is on using British expertise and resources for maximum impact. We have prioritised three key areas: economic growth and trade, education, and health. On economic growth and trade, we are working through initiatives such as the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) and the SADC Economic Partnership Agreement to expand bilateral trade. We are also supporting Basotho businesses to access UK markets and boost exports, while contributing to efforts to strengthen the global financing system. Recently, the UK co-hosted the African Development Fund replenishment in London with Ghana. This is a significant fund, providing billions of dollars in concessional finance to countries such as Lesotho for transformative projects in agriculture, infrastructure and health. It was the largest replenishment to date, with 23 African countries contributing, which is historic. Importantly, these investment pipelines should be country-led, reflecting a shift towards strengthening African-led institutions. Education is an

other long-standing area of support. We fully fund Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships and maintain partnerships with British universities such as Sheffield Hallam, Westminster and Liverpool, all of which have active memoranda of understanding with institutions including the National University of Lesotho. We are keen to expand these partnerships further. We also continue to support the long-standing Wales-Lesotho partnership through Dolen Cymru, which enables annual two-way exchanges between schools, teachers and students. These exchanges are deeply personal, highly impactful and help to build lasting educational and research capacity. The third priority area is health, particularly maternal health, HIV and AIDS, and health system strengthening. The UK is one of the largest contributors to the Global Fund and recently co-hosted its eighth replenishment with South Africa, committing £850 million. The Global Fund remains vital in supporting health systems globally and in strengthening prevention and response to diseases such as HIV and TB.

TN: Given your strong background in climate change, what specific area of UK-Lesotho cooperation do you see as most promising in supporting the country to build long-term climate resilience?

MS: I will start with what I see as the key to unlocking everything else, and that is climate finance. The UK has long been a contributor to global climate finance, and we continue to push for global climate finance goals to be met. We have also been one of the largest contributors to the Green Climate Fund. My personal view, however, is that countries like Lesotho have not been receiving the level of finance they need. Climate impacts are already being felt here: excessive rainfall and flooding are affecting harvests, and the country has also experienced recent droughts. We know that climate change is already affecting countries like Lesotho, yet finance has been reaching them too slowly and not sufficiently at the level of farmers and communities. I was therefore very pleased that, at COP30 in Brazil this year, Lesotho was announced as one of around 13 or 14 countries to receive support through the Green Climate Fund's Readiness Programme. This is very important and a positive step forward. However, it

is not just about the funding itself; the readiness fund will also help Lesotho to build the institutional capacity needed to move into the implementation of adaptation and mitigation projects. Renewable energy is another critical area. We often hear about the untapped potential of water and other natural resources in Lesotho, but it is not enough to talk about potential; we must turn it into reality. There are challenges around investment, and more work is needed to create the right investment climate. Private sector finance has been moving too slowly, and this is something I would like to focus on. His Majesty's Just Energy Transition Fund is an important part of this, as it sends a signal to the global investment community that there is significant potential in Lesotho, alongside a well-governed framework for investing in bankable projects. A third area, closely linked to renewables, is water. Lesotho is widely recognised as the water tower of the region. Water transfers already supply South Africa and may in future extend to Botswana, providing a critical source of revenue. However, climate change is placing increasing pressure on water sources, making the protection of river catchments essential. Sustainable land management and integrated catchment management are therefore vital for long-term water security and for future generations of Basotho. Water diplomacy and water security are areas in which the UK, as an island nation, has long-standing expertise. In March last year, we hosted a ministerial roundtable on water security, and this is an area I would like to champion further in Lesotho. This year, we plan to work with UNESCO, Seinoli Legal Centre and British academic institutions on a water resilience dialogue. Climate has always been an area very close to my heart, and I am passionate about bringing my own expertise in this field to my role here in Lesotho.

TN: What is one of the enduring contributions you aspire to make during your time in Lesotho, and that you hope will remain long after your tenure?

MS: I recently visited the National Archives in the UK, located at Kew Gardens in London. They hold our public records and are open to everyone. It is a beautiful, welcoming public space, free to access, warm and comfortable, and I felt quite strongly,

sitting there and looking through historic records of the British-Lesotho relationship, that this is an extraordinary public good. As a British citizen, I can spend an entire day there if I wish, and no one will ask me to leave. I believe every Mosotho should have the same opportunity to access their own history. This is something I also discussed with His Majesty when I presented my credentials, which was a very profound day for me. He spoke about the importance of preserving his family's history, not for personal reasons, but for the future of the country. Lesotho already has some excellent institutions, such as the Thomas Mofolo Library at the National University of Lesotho, and the team there under Dr Buhle are doing impressive work. There are passionate professionals committed to preserving the country's archives. I hope to help bring together British institutions, such as the National Archives and the British Library, which have deep expertise in archiving, to learn from and collaborate with their counterparts here. This, too, is a form of cultural exchange. We are living in a digital era, with technologies that allow us to scan and preserve documents in ways that were unimaginable in the past. When the visitors' book was first signed in 1975, there were no emails or mobile phones; my predecessors relied on telegrams that took weeks to reach the UK, and documents moved slowly from desk to desk. Today, information can be shared instantaneously. We should take advantage of these tools to preserve historic records, whether from the missionary era or the period after independence, there is so much to record and treasure. A second area I would highlight is the creative industry. As I mentioned earlier, the Commonwealth Games baton was one of my personal highlights, and I believe Lesotho has a strong and growing creative spirit, particularly among young people. There are many talented artists here. In November, I attended a compelling talk at the Gallery by a local artist whose work is inspired by initiation ceremonies and traditional medicine. It was deeply thought-provoking. I would love to support more artists and help build bridges between British and Basotho creatives. That is something I am very passionate about, and I hope that, over time, you will see more Basotho art displayed on these walls.

CLASSIFIEDS

ESTATE NOTICE

Notice in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024

ESTATE LATE TS'EPANG NEPHTHALLY MAFA E1358/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 37 of the administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon surviving spouse ,the heirs ,legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the Master of the High Court at the office of the Master of the High Court, in Maseru on MANDAY, 27TH OCTOBER 2025 at 09:00 am for the purpose of:

Proposing some person/ persons to be appointed by the Master as Executor dating.

Dated at Maseru this 11th SEPTEMBER 2025

Magistrate Court Building

Maseru

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby made that a correction is made for the following arrangement of official names for Mr Abdul. The current documentation shows the names as MAHMOOD AMBERKAR as first names whilst ABDUL AZIZ as the surname. Notice is therefore made that the correct order is ABDUL AZIZ MAHMOOD as given names and AMBERKAR as the surname.

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Any objection to this matter should be forwarded the following address:

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Notice to change Company Name

Notice is hereby given that Bokamoso HR Consulting (PTY)LTD is changing its name to Cornerstone Consulting Group (PTY)LTD.

All persons having objection to the name change are hereby requested to lodge such objection in writing to the Ministry of Trade and Industry at the Registrar of Companies.

ESTATE NOTICE

ESTATE LATE MASEEPHEEPHE EXNIA SEONA

EC 292/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024; calling upon all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the Administrator of the said estate within thirty five (35) days of this publication.

The addresses at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder:

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LERIBE

SEEPHEEPHE SAMUEL SEONA
(ADMINISTRATOR)
+266 57751245 / +266 63612763

ESTATE NOTICE

ESTATE LATE CASSIM ABDOOL ISSA D263/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 61 (b) of the Administration of Estate and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon all persons having claims against the deceased or his estate to lodge the claim with the administration within such period from the date of the latest publication of the notice not being less than thirty (30) days or more than three (3) months, as the administration considers it proper in the particular consistence of each case.

The address which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned here under.

Dated at Berea On The 19th NOVEMBER 2025

Teyateyaneng Reserve
Berea
Ha Mokhotu

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High adolescent pregnancy rates challenge Sehonghong health centre



Ntsoaki Motaung

Sehonghong Health Centre, a key facility serving 27 villages in Thaba-Tseka district, is grappling with high rates of adolescent pregnancies, cultural barriers, and health challenges linked to nutrition and chronic diseases.

During a recent visit by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and members of parliament, Nurse Midwife and Acting Manager

Mamokhoabo Notoane revealed that approximately 60 percent of pregnant women seeking services at the clinic are adolescents.

"If we have 50 pregnant women to provide services to, about 30 of them would be adolescents," Notoane said. She attributed the high numbers to the large population of out-of-school youth and the absence of specialised infrastructure for young people.

Currently, Sehonghong lacks a designated Youth Corner (Thakaneng), a safe space where young people can access family planning services privately. While school outreaches and contraceptive services are provided with verbal parental consent, the absence of this space discourages many adolescents from seeking help.

Notane also highlighted cultural challenges

among older women, particularly in the context of cervical cancer screenings. Many women aged 70 and above refuse tests, believing they are no longer at risk, or feel uncomfortable being examined by younger nurses.

"The painful thing is they refuse to test," Notoane said. "They say it is because nurses are still young and they cannot afford to be examined by young people like that." She stressed that early detection remains critical for effective treatment.

The challenges at Sehonghong go beyond reproductive health. The clinic is also seeing a rise in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

While many patients faithfully take their prescribed medication, their conditions often continue to worsen. Notoane attributed this not to a shortage of medicine, but to poor nutrition.

"The diseases continue to be hard to control, mainly because of poor nutrition," she explained. In a region where food security is fragile, unhealthy diets are undermining the benefits of modern medicine.

Despite these obstacles, Sehonghong remains a vital resource for the community. Its mini-laboratory provides local testing for TB and HIV, sparing patients long and difficult journeys for basic diagnostics.



INVITATION TO TENDER

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Lerotholi Polytechnic hereby invites locally registered, eligible companies to submit bids for supply and delivery of laptop computers. Bidding documents can be obtained from the Procurement Office for a non-refundable fee of **Three Thousand Maloti Only (M 3000.00)**. Sealed bids, **Original and four copies of bid documents bearing no identification of a tender and clearly marked "Tender No. LP/ADM/01/2026 For Supply and delivery of laptop and Desktops computers"** must be deposited in the Tender Box situated in Administration II Foyer, on or before 12 Feb 2026 at 12:30p.m.

Tenders will be opened the same date at 1400hrs at the Administration I Block Conference room, in the presence of the tenderers who choose to attend or their representatives. Bidding documents must be accompanied by a bid security amounting to 2% of the Bid Price. Additional requirements and instructions are as specified in the tender document.

All bidders must attach copies of:

- Valid Trader's license.
- Valid Tax Clearance Certificate.
- Certificate of incorporation where applicable.
- VAT Registration Certificate where applicable.

Interested bidders should make payments at the following:

- MPesa: 14096; Pay Merchant & Fees, Pay School Fees, Ref: Company Name
- Ecocash: 52629; Pay Merchant; Pay Fees; Ref: Company Name
- Banking Details:**

Account Number: 9080003510146
 Account Type: Business Current Account
 Account Name: Lerotholi Polytechnic
 Branch Name and Code: City; 060667
 Swift Code: SBICLSMX
 Bank Name: Standard Lesotho Bank
 Reference: Company Name

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours: 0800hrs-1700hrs:
 Procurement Office
 Lerotholi Polytechnic
 P.O. Box 16
 Maseru
 Email: procurement@lp.ac.ls
 Tel: 22324402



VACANCY

APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL

The Independent Electoral Commission is empowered by law to appoint a Tribunal to hear and determine complaints concerning contravention of the Code of Conduct subscribed to by Political Parties registered with Commission.

Commission invites interested Lesotho Nationals, who are registered as electors in terms of the National Assembly Electoral Act, 2011 to submit their applications and comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (CV) to fill the vacant position of the Chairperson of the Tribunal mentioned below on or before the 19th January 2026.

The terms of reference for the Chairperson of the Electoral tribunal

The Chairperson of the Electoral Tribunal shall chair and oversee the proceedings of the Tribunal and the Tribunal terms of reference are to:

- Assess complaints instituted in terms of section 123 of the Act;
- Schedule hearings;
- Ensure adherence to the cardinal principles of natural justice;
- Produce reports upon completion of each matter;
- Produce end of elections period reports;
- Table the reports before the Commission with recommendations;
- Set rules of procedure for the Electoral Tribunal;

Minimum Qualifications

Interested candidates must possess at least LLB with a minimum of five years working ex-

perience in the private sector.

OR

A university degree in Public Administration, Political Science or related fields with a minimum of 5 years working experience.

Applicants should have and demonstrate an integrity and a well-established traceable record.

IEC IS A GENDER SENSITIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Interested candidates must submit their applications accompanied by up-to-date Curriculum Vitae with three referees, copies of certified qualification certificates, send via email to recruitment@iec.org.ls under the subject line; **THE CHAIRPERSON ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL**

OR

hand delivered to IEC Headquarters (Registry) or Respective districts head offices in a sealed envelope labelled.

The Director of Elections

Corner Maluti and Caledon Road
 Maseru West
 P.O. Box 12698
 Maseru 100
 Lesotho.

Closing date: 19TH January 2026 at 12:00 noon.

Applicants should be registered as an elector.

Only Short-listed candidates will be contacted.



Dr Tšeliso Moroke

Common Concern

How the country moves: Power changes, the system doesn't

Every change of political party and every transition of administration in this country is presented to the people as a renewal. We are told that a new government means a new direction, a clean break from the past, a fresh commitment to serve the public good. Yet time and again, the opposite happens. The very moment power changes hands is where our system begins to crumble, not from transition risks, but from empty promises.

We do not experience democratic transformation; rather, we experience elite rotation.

Our political system does not dismantle extractive institutions when incumbents fall. It simply reallocates control of those institutions to new hands. The old rulers are challenged and sometimes displaced, but the machinery that enabled abuse, exclusion, and enrichment remains untouched. Newcomers break through under the same weakly constrained political architecture, and once inside, they quickly learn that the system rewards continuity, not reform.

This is the fatal flaw in how our country moves.

The system enables those in power to repeat past abuses. Lax constraints on executive authority and weak oversight ensure failures are reproduced and passed off as governance.

New administrations see extractive institutions as sources of resources and influence. Instead of reforming them, leaders entrench these structures, viewing reform as a threat.

This is not accidental. It is structural.

Power in our country rests with a few, unchecked. When the executive faces little parliamentary, judicial, or civic restraint, politics becomes absolute. Absolutism does not require a dictator, only unchecked power.

Such institutions let those in charge enrich themselves, block opportunities, and profit at society's expense. Access to markets, jobs, and justice depends on proximity to power, not merit. The economy becomes political, politics transactional.

Economic resources are wasted, not to grow the economy, but to reward elite loyalty. Leaders promise development, but practice extraction. The state becomes a tool for private gain.

This reality stands in direct contradiction to the Constitution.

The Constitution of Lesotho is clear: sovereignty belongs to the people. Government must serve the public, not parties or individuals. Parliament oversees the executive. Independent bodies restrain leaders. Separation of powers is fundamental, not decorative.

Yet in practice, constitutional principles are treated as inconveniences, not commands.

Parliament's oversight is often undermined, politicised, or ignored. When Parliament tries to hold the executive or civil servants accountable, the answer is not to comply, but to resist. We now accept a culture where civil servants rush to court to avoid scrutiny, pretending it is about rights. Yes, access to the courts is a democratic right, but the courts were not meant to shield public officials from accountability.

Worse still is the silence, and at times, complicity, of parliamentarians. Party loyalties and personal interests divide them. Many fail to defend the very institution that empowers them, instead benefiting from the corruption they should fight.

This is a constitutional crisis disguised as political disagreement.

The Constitution does not allow an executive that acts without limits, a Parliament that avoids oversight, or powerless institutions. It expects balanced power, shared accountability, and strict adherence to the rule of law. When these fall apart, democracy becomes little more than a set of procedures. Elections bring no accountability; power has no responsibility.

Our challenge is not just poor leadership;

the system is engineered to produce poor outcomes regardless of who leads. The flaw is structural, not personal.

As long as institutions remain extractive, each administration adopts the same behaviours. Changes in language, faces, or slogans are superficial; system incentives drive persistent cycles of extraction and resistance to reform.

This is why political change feels empty. Voters see that their choices do not bring real change. Cynicism rises, trust fades, and participation declines. Democracy becomes something done to people, not with them.

That is a dangerous place for any country to be.

To achieve real progress, we must actively demand and support changes in how power is structured, constrained, and distributed. Engage with parliamentary processes, advocate stronger oversight, insist on institutional independence, and push for the enforcement of constitutional limits. Challenge and help dismantle economic incentives that reward abuse. Only through collective action can we shift the system from elite rotation to genuine democratic transformation.

Until then, we will continue to rotate elites while the country stagnates.

That is how the country moves, not forward, but in circles.

Part 1: Lesotho's journey to reform: What we expected vs. what we got with Act No. 2 of 2025

Theko Tlebere

As the New Year commences, I find it pertinent to reflect on a journey that began over a decade ago, a journey marked by aspirations and challenges. Back in 2014, Lesotho was clouded by political turmoil that led to elections the following year. It was evident that the much-needed reforms were vital as the Basotho nation came together with a shared sense of hope and optimism for a more promising future. This collective spirit led to the establishment of the National Reforms Authority (NRA), a body that was aimed at addressing the political instability that had long plagued our nation. The NRA was tasked with drafting comprehensive reforms designed to transform Lesotho into a more peaceful, stable, and democratic state.

The optimism was palpable; it resonated through the halls of power and the communities across our nation. Parliamentarians, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, and ordinary citizens alike believed that these reforms would pave the way toward a more just society, one where the voices of all would be heard and respected. Even the Southern African Development Community (SADC) concurred that Lesotho needed reforms, and they supported us by giving us President Ramaphosa, who later assigned Justice Dikhang Mo-seneke to help us fulfil our reform dream.

We were perhaps overly optimistic in our belief that, once drafted, these reforms would swiftly be enacted into law. We envisioned a scenario in which the parliamentarians, elected to represent our interests and concerns, would recognise the urgency of these necessary changes and pass the proposed legislation without delay. However, as we have come to understand through experience, the trajectory of reform often deviates significantly from ini-

tial expectations and hopes.

Despite the unprecedented consultations that reflected our collective desires and a shared vision for a better Lesotho, the path to reform has proven to be complicated and fraught with obstacles.

Rather than a seamless implementation of our envisioned reforms, the NRA Omnibus Bill underwent substantial revisions, culminating in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution (Act No. 2 of 2025). This Act, while grounded in the original proposals that were fervently discussed, has experienced several modifications, some of which were anticipated while others have emerged unexpectedly, prompting us to question what we can genuinely expect from this new legislation. The alterations raise critical concerns about whether the essence of the original vision has been preserved or diluted.

What should we anticipate from Act No. 2 of 2025? Will it ultimately deliver the peace and prosperity envisioned by many during those initial consultations? Or will it represent yet another instance in a long history of political promises that fail to materialise and resonate with the realities of our lives? As Basotho, it is imperative that we critically evaluate the implications of the Act and hold our leaders accountable for its implementation. This series of articles will undertake a thorough comparative analysis of the NRA Omnibus Bill and the final Act, meticulously examining what has been retained, what has changed, and what these alterations signify for us as citizens navigating the complexities of our political landscape.

Lesotho's pursuit of substantive constitutional reform has been a complex endeavour, shaped by decades of political instability, governance challenges, and socio-economic disparities. Central to these reforms is the NRA Omnibus Bill (2022), a comprehensive pro-

posal designed to address a range of concerns, from parliamentary procedures to political inclusivity. What originated as the Omnibus Bill has now evolved into Act No. 2 of 2025, which introduces significant constitutional amendments affecting the governmental structure, the tenure of the Prime Minister, official languages, and the functions of the Lesotho Parliament.

This article will conduct a comparative analysis of the NRA Omnibus Bill and the final legislation, Act No. 2 of 2025, elucidating the evolution of these proposals, their implications for the Basotho populace, and the prospective trajectory of governance within the nation.

First, let's make a little recap of what the National Reforms Authority (NRA) was. Established pursuant to NRA Act No. 4 of 2019, it assumed a pivotal role in the future trajectory of Lesotho. Its mission encompassed the coordination, leadership, and management of the nation's reform processes, with a particular focus on executing the resolutions and decisions of Plenary II – a significant compilation of proposals designed to address challenges about governance, political stability, and national unity. The NRA's objective was unequivocal: to complete the reform process within a time frame, thereby facilitating the advent of a new era in Lesotho's governance.

The organisational structure of the NRA incorporated both political and technical components, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to reform. The political structure comprised 35 members drawn from various political parties, including 18 representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), thus reflecting a diverse cross-section of society.

Furthermore, three non-voting members represented the government. Supporting this

framework was the NRA Secretariat, directed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and augmented by Special Advisors who provided specialised expertise in key thematic areas, thereby offering essential guidance for the implementation of reforms.

The NRA's responsibilities were threefold: it focused on legal reform, the reform of institutions, and the recommendation of mechanisms for peace, national unity, and reconciliation. Through its initiatives, the NRA endeavoured to confront Lesotho's entrenched governance challenges and to establish a framework conducive to sustainable peace and political stability. Reporting directly to both Houses of Parliament, the Review Chamber (Senate) and the Lower House (National Assembly), the NRA catalysed the transformative changes that shaped the future of Lesotho.

The Honourable Lekhetho Rakouane, former Minister of Justice and Law, underscored that the Omnibus Bill emerged from consultations (Plenary 2), which involved not only political leaders but also civil society representatives, stakeholders from various sectors, and ordinary citizens. The aim was to establish a legal framework conducive to good governance, mitigate political instability, and provide all segments of society with a voice in the political process.

Rakouane's statement at the time underscored several key provisions, including the recognition of marginalised communities, the necessity for comprehensive political reforms, and the introduction of policies to enhance citizen control over political processes. However, it was evident from the outset that these reforms would be contentious and would necessitate refinement as they advanced through the legislative process... **To be continued.**

The Future is NOW!



THE MADLANGA COMMISSION: A death trap and whitewash in one

"When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time, they create for themselves a legal system that authorises it and a moral code that glorifies it" - Frédéric Bastiat (1801 - 1850)

Nkopane Mathibeli

On December 5, 2025, a former EMPD officer turned private security and recovery specialist named Marius Van Der Merwe was killed at Brakpan, Johannesburg. He was initially known as witness D while giving witness testimony in camera at the Madlanga Commission. Given the current state of South Africa and the brazen violation of the commission's established modus operandi regarding in-camera witnesses such as Marius Van Der Merwe, this did not come as a surprise at all. Since July 6 press briefing at which Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi highlighted the treasonous bromance between sitting politicians and criminal syndicates, it has become irrefutably clear that South Africa has indeed gone to the dogs. Regrettably, some Lesotho politicians passionately advocate that Lesotho be inducted into this orgy of shame. Triggered by the irrational and suspiciously rushed disbandment of the Political Killings Task Team (PKTT), Mkhwanazi brought to the attention of the already crime-weary South African public details too explosive to ignore.

Through a description of scenarios, specification of dates and mentioning of names, he demonstrated how the established link between sitting politicians and a specific criminal syndicate is just a tip of the rot discovered. Rather, the high point is that this syndicate is controlled by a drug cartel whose membership, besides politicians, includes high-ranking officials from the South African Police Service (SAPS), metro police and correctional services. To make matters worse, also involved are the people's last line of defence against injustice - the prosecution and judiciary. But why must Lesotho hand its sovereignty to a country currently at the door of the deepest depths of hell? This is not just rot but an undeniable capture and collapse of the state by the underworld. True to its deceptive ways, the government quickly announced a hollow plan of action - the establishment of a commission of inquiry into these allegations. A now refined tactic of the ANC is to either absolve criminally liable comrades or postpone criminal proceedings against them. This, in essence, is the real tragedy of the Madlanga Commission. To paraphrase Frédéric Bastiat's words, it is nothing but a vehicle for further plunder authorised by the legal system overseen by a group of men (ANC) to whom plunder is second nature. What is more offensive about its existence is that its establishment highlights parliament's neglect regarding its oversight mandate. How so?

Neglect, impotence or both?

It is now common knowledge that the epicentre of the allegations being investigated by the Madlanga Commission is the disbandment of the PKTT, a decision that was made on December 31, 2024. According to sections 55 and 199 of the Constitu-

tion of South Africa, the Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Police has a twofold mandate: to ensure accountability and exercise oversight on both the SAPS and the executive. Two parliamentary processes used to execute this mandate are investigations and budget reviews. By admission of Ian Cameron in his capacity as Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Police, the disbandment of the PKTT came to his attention through a leaked notice. This he admitted in a podcast (SMWX) interview on November 6, 2025. In order to seek clarification on the matter, he claims to have enquired with the minister in early January. He further stated that Mkhwanazi did request and was twice granted invitations to the committee earlier last year (March 5 and April 2). This request came shortly after his mention, at the National Police Day celebration (January 27, 2025) in KwaZulu Natal, of a tug of war inside SAPS and that he and his team were prepared to fight back.

When asked why the committee did not urgently act on the allegations Mkhwanazi made in the meeting, his response painted a picture of wanton negligence. He stated that no mention was made of Cat Matlala or a drug cartel but only of Brown Mogotsi. On his first day at the commission, Mkhwanazi did indeed acknowledge attendance of these committee meetings. However, his explanation of the information he gave the committee about Mogotsi invalidates Cameron's insinuation that what he said about Mogotsi was negligible. How could it be when he did not only provide evidence of Brown Mogotsi being an ordinary civilian with extraordinary access to confidential police information, the minister of police and high ranking police officials? Additionally and through evidence, he made the committee aware of a serious anomaly where officers in crime intelligence compromise state security by sharing classified information with civilians, including known Members of Parliament. This information alone was enough for the committee to seek accountability from the ministry and SAPS through a deeper investigation, but it never did. The outcome is not only a complete whitewash but a death trap for witnesses.

Endangering lives

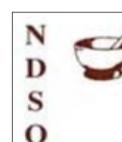
It was only after the assassination of Witness D that the media began questioning the safety of witnesses; unfortunately asking the right questions at the wrong time. Two opportune moments at which such questions should have been asked were squandered. The first was on September 17 when the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development (Mmamoloko Kubayi) broke down the R147.8 million allocated to the commission. R64 million is earmarked to pay the Commissioners, evidence leaders and legal researchers; R4.9 million for the support staff and R78.8 million to cover operational logistics. It was at that moment

journalists should have demanded to know under which category witnesses were classified and exactly how much was specifically allocated to guarantee their safety. The second moment presented itself on the 15th day of the hearing (October 20) when the first in-camera testimony was given. Two working days earlier (October 13), the Chair had ruled that some evidence would be heard in camera. On the day the first of such witnesses (Witness A) testified, the evidence leader (Adv. Sello) began first by outlining the three categories of in camera evidence lined up for the commission.

She stated that in the first category, neither the witness nor the testimony will be revealed to the public. In the second category, the witness will not be seen, but in her (Adv. Sello's) own words, she said in this particular instance, "*their voices will probably be distorted.*" The last category entailed witnesses who already reside in safe houses due to a determined level of danger facing them. As a result, they would not mind their voices being recognised. After this helpful explanation, Witness A proceeded to testify. However, his voice was not distorted, yet he did not reside in a safe house. It was based on this gross misstep that the media should have asked questions. That did not happen. As a result, three more witnesses (Witnesses B, C and D) who did not fall in the last category testified without voice distortion. This effectively turned their testimony into a dance with the devil; a Russian roulette in literal terms. Unfortunately, the last witness was killed. It was only thereafter that the media woke from its slumber. Even the Commissioners, who by virtue of not ensuring voice distortion are guilty of dereliction of duty, still mustered the audacity to visit the deceased's house to pass their condolences - a real bastardisation of morality.

Operation whitewash

The primary goal of a judicial commission of inquiry is not to determine criminal liability. Rather, it is to inquire/investigate what went wrong and, thereafter, make non-binding recommendations as a remedy. South Africa's post apartheid landscape is littered with examples of such unhelpful commissions. Some of the most prominent include: (a) The Seriti Commission of 2011 inquiring into allegations of fraud, corruption, impropriety or irregularity in the Strategic Defence Procurement Packages (Arms Deal); (b) The Marikana Commission of 2012 inquiring into tragic incidents at or near Marikana Mine in Rustenburg and; (c) The Zondo Commission of 2018 inquiring into allegations of state capture, corruption and fraud in the Public Sector including organs of State. Interestingly, the ANC used all these commissions to clear every other senior comrade with the exception of its black sheep - Jacob Zuma - as per the unprecedented private appeal of the outcome of the Seriti Commission of 2011. There is no doubt that if a moment presents itself, even the current commission is going to be used to clear criminally liable comrades, including Mchunu. A warning is how both the commissioners and the evidence leader watched as Mchunu's lawyer underhandedly attempted a brazen clearance of his client. On a balance of probabilities, it is therefore a waste of hope to hope that the commission will be helpful. In this state of organised rot, what instead ought to have happened was for the police to execute arrests and for the NPA to criminally prosecute based on evidence already gathered by the PKTT and Gauteng's Organised Crime Unit of SAPS. Anything else is a scam. Regrettably, Social Revolutionaries believe Lesotho deserves a place in this festival of destruction.



NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION

P O Box 1167
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 2221 5300
Fax: (+266) 2270 1340

NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION (NDSO)

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

Date of Issue: 07th January 2026

The National Drug Service Organisation (NDSO) invites **interested and eligible suppliers** to submit quotations for the following procurement, funded by the **Global Fund**:

- Provision of Pharmaceutical Quality Control Testing** for Antituberculosis and Antiretroviral Medicines

RFQ Reference: NDSO/QC/2025/12/

GF

Closing Date & Time: 29th January 2026, 16:30

Interested suppliers may visit www.ndso.org.ls for detailed requirements and evaluation criteria.

Quotations must be submitted via email to:

tenders@ndso.org.ls Cc: sebofit@ndso.org.ls

Late submissions will not be considered.



NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION

P O Box 1167
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
Tel: (+266)2221 5300
Fax: (+266)2270 1340

OPPORTUNITIES

INVITATION TO REGISTER AS AN APPROVED SUPPLIER ON THE NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION'S PREQUALIFIED SUPPLIER DATABASE

1. The National Drug Service Organization (NDSO) is a Trading Account for the Ministry of Health in Lesotho. It is mandated to procure, store and distribute Medicines, Medical Supplies and Laboratory Consumables for the Health Institutions in Lesotho. NDSO was legally established through a gazette Supplement No.4 to Gazette No.19 of the 2nd March 2007.

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

No.	Category	Scope of Supply / Services
1	Travel, and Transport Services	Travel agency services, transport hire, including airline
2	Valuation and Asset Disposal Services	Asset valuation, auctioneering and disposal services
3	Branding, Media and Communication Services	Corporate branding and promotional materials, graphic design, print media and advertising agencies, radio advertising, photography and videography
4	Accommodation, Catering, Conferencing and Events Services	Accommodation, Catering services, conferencing facilities, event management
5	Logistics, Courier and Clearing Services	Courier services, customs clearing and forwarding

6	ICT Equipment and Electronics	ICT equipment, electronics, and related accessories
7	Office Equipment, Furniture and General Supplies	Office equipment and stationery, furniture and fixtures, general supplies
8	Printing, Publishing and Content Services	Printing and photocopying, editing and publishing
9	Facilities Management and Maintenance Services	Facility maintenance and repairs, fumigation and pest control
10	Utilities, Power and Environmental Systems	Power supply solutions (generators, UPS, solar), HVAC systems including cold rooms and refrigeration units
11	Fleet Maintenance and Vehicle Support Services	Tyres, spare parts, panel beating, repairs and service, towing and accessories
12	Legal and Professional Services	Legal advisory and related professional services
13	Health, Safety and Environmental Services	Personal protective equipment (PPE), Pharmaceutical waste management services

14	Construction, Engineering and Technical Works	Construction and renovation of building facilities, electrical installations and repairs, plumbing and sanitation works, fire detection and suppression systems, cold room construction and maintenance
15	Insurance service	Staff/employees Property Fleet and equipment

3. Mandatory Documents for submission

Interested vendors must submit the following mandatory documents:

- Company Profile
- A valid Tax Clearance certificate
- A valid Traders' License or equivalent
- Three Reference letters for services recently provided

4. Submission Instruction:

Mandatory documents should be send in **PDF format** not exceeding 9MB by e-mail to tenders@ndso.org.ls. The e-mail subject should be **Supplier Database 2026**. Suppliers should on the body of the email explicitly show the category and scope of supply that they fall under for proper classification. If one supply falls in more than one category, all those categories must be listed.

The deadline for registration and submission of mandatory documents is **Thursday, February 12th, 2026, at 17:00 pm**.

For further clarification, please contact the Assistant Procurement manager be email at tenders@ndso.org.ls Telephone +266 2221 5300.



Ready. Set. Shop!
Bank on great deals at the
National Market Day

Pitso Ground (Maseru)

06:00-1700

2026

January
Friday **30**



SADPII



LIMKOKWING
UNIVERSITY
IN COLLABORATION WITH



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids

Small Works

(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Procurement of:

DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR

SEAKA IRRIGATION SCHEME QUTHING DISTRICT, LESOTHO

Employer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II Project
 Project: Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme
 Contract title: Design-Build of Seaka Irrigation Scheme
 Country: Lesotho
 Loan No. /Credit No. / Grant No.: P165228
 RFB No: LS-MAFS-530022-CW-RFB
 Issued on: 24th December 2025

1. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II Project has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the SADP II Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design-Build of Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design-Build of Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme, construction period Four months, Seaka, Quthing No margin of preference applicable, etc.] .
3. Bidding will be conducted through **open international competitive procurement** using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers February 2025 Procurement Regulations edition as per legal agreement ("Procurement Regulations")", and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition,

SADP II Project, and procurement@sadpii.org.ls and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0800 to 16:30 hours or download the bid document at the address given below ;
<https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

5. Bids must be delivered to the address below [state address at the end of this RFB] on or before **30th January 2026 at 12:00hrs**. Electronic bidding **will not** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below [state address at the end of this RFB] on [Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices SADP II, Mosheshoe II Maseru 14:00hrs and 30th January 2026]. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening.
6. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of LSL400,000.00.
7. The address(es) referred to above is :

Procurement Office
 Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices, SADP II Project, Mosheshoe II
 P.O.Box 24, Maseru 100, Lesotho
procurement@sadpii.org.ls, +266 22312578
www.sadpii.co.ls



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids

Small Works

(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Procurement of:

DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR

TSIKOANE IRRIGATION SCHEME LERIBE DISTRICT, LESOTHO

Employer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II Project
 Project: Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme
 Contract title: Design-Build of Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme
 Country: Lesotho
 Loan No. /Credit No. / Grant No.: P165228
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1. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II Project has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the SADP II Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design-Build of Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design-Build of Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme, construction period Four months, Tsikoane, Leribe No margin of preference applicable, etc.] .
3. Bidding will be conducted through **Open International Competitive procurement** using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers February 2025 Procurement Regulations edition as per legal agreement ("Procurement Regulations")", and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Ministry of

Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, SADP II Project, and procurement@sadpii.org.ls and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0800 to 16:30 hours or download the bid document at the address given below ;
<https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

5. Bids must be delivered to the address below [state address at the end of this RFB] on or before **30th January 2026 at 12:00hrs**. Electronic bidding **will not** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below [state address at the end of this RFB] on [Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices SADP II, Mosheshoe II Maseru 14:00hrs and 30th January 2026]. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening.
6. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of LSL400,000.00.
7. The address(es) referred to above is :

Procurement Office
 Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices, SADP II Project, Mosheshoe II
 P.O.Box 24, Maseru 100, Lesotho
procurement@sadpii.org.ls, +266 22312578
www.sadpii.co.ls

Ministry of Trade, Industry & Business Development
 COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

INVITATION FOR BIDS

SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF HAIL NETTING FOR SEVEN (7) FARMS FOR LESOTHO HORTICULTURAL INCUBATION AND TRAINING CENTRE

1. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project. The Government intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the Supply, Delivery and Installation of Hail Netting for seven (7) farms for Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and training Centre (CAFI-WB-G-06).

2. The Ministry of Trade, Industry & Business Development through the CAFI Project Implementing Unit now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply, Delivery and Installation of Hail Netting for seven (7) farms for Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre.

3. Table 1

Ref	Farms	Delivery and Installation Sites	Estimated Completion Period (Weeks)
1.	Majaheng Farm	Mapoteng Majaheng, Berea District	4-6
2.	Peka Fresh Produce	Peka, Leribe District	4-6
3.	Botle Farms	Sehlabeng sa Thuathe, Berea District	4-6
4.	Nala farmlands	Sehlabeng sa Thuathe, Berea District	4-6
5.	Healthwise Farm	Thaba Khupa, Thaba Bosiu, Maseru District	4-6
6.	Ts'akholo Farm	Ts'akholo, Mafeteng District	4-6
7.	Mountain Fruit Growers	Ha Ntsi (Nazareta), Maseru District	4-6

4. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive pro-

curement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" Sixth Edition, February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from *Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project Management Unit* from following email Address: tmohejane@cafi.org.ls and copy nieutsoa@cafi.org.ls and itsoinyane@cafi.org.ls and inspect the bidding document during office hours *Procurement Unit from 09h00 to 16h00 hours* at the address given below.

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of LSL1,000.00. The method of payment will be direct deposit to the *Nedbank Account Name is: Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project Maloti Account (Ministry of Trade and Industry), Account Number is: 11990167259 and Branch Name is: Maseru Branch*.

7. A mandatory site visit will be conducted on the dates below to allow suppliers to familiarize themselves with the scope of work.

Farms	Sites	Site Visit Date
Peka Fresh Produce	Peka, Leribe District	11/12/2025 at 09h00
Majaheng Farm	Mapoteng Majaheng, Berea District	11/12/2025 at 11h00
Botle Farms	Sehlabeng sa Thuathe, Berea District	11/12/2025 at 14h00
Nala farmlands	Sehlabeng sa Thuathe, Berea District	11/12/2025 at 15h00
Ts'akholo Farm	Ts'akholo, Mafeteng District	12/12/2025 at 10h00
Mountain Fruit Growers	Ha Ntsi (Nazareta), Maseru District	12/12/2025 at 12h00

Healthwise Farm	Thaba Khupa, Thaba Bosiu, Maseru District	12/12/2025 at 14h00
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8. Bids must be delivered to *Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project, 1st Floor 'Matanki House, Corner Balfour and Kingsway Road* on or before **January 15, 2026, at 10h00**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **January 15, 2026, at 10h15**.

9. All Bids must be accompanied by Bid Securities as follows

Ref	Farms	Amount (LSL)
1	Majaheng Farm	10,000.00
2	Peka Fresh Produce	10,000.00
3	Botle Farms	10,000.00
4	Nala farmlands	10,000.00
5	Healthwise Farm	10,000.00
6	Ts'akholo Farm	10,000.00
7	Mountain Fruit Growers	10,000.00

10. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

11. The Ministry of Trade, Industry & Business Development through CAFI Project reserves the right to cancel the procurement process at any stage before the bid opening, during the bidding process, or prior to awarding the contract without incurring liability or obligation to any bidder. Cancellation may occur due to changes in project requirements, budget constraints, administrative or technical challenges, irregularities, non-compliance with regulations, or if the process no longer aligns with project objectives or funding availability.

Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
 1st Floor 'Matanki House, Corner Balfour and Kingsway Road
 P.O. Box 747, Maseru 100, Lesotho
 Tel: 22 315 100



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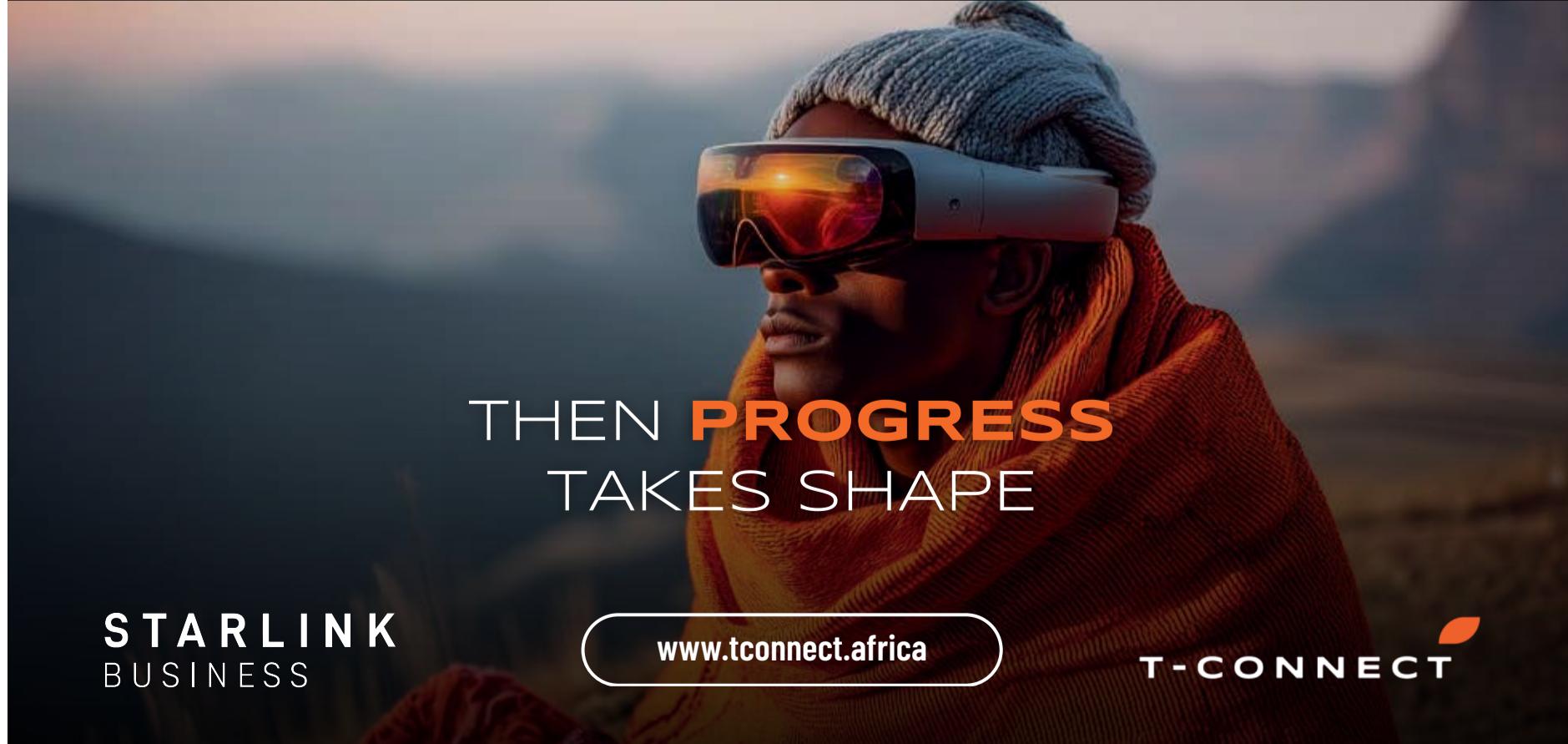
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Juvy signals retirement from music

Chris Theko

Celebrated hip-hop artist Juvy has announced that his latest EP, Motebang, will mark the end of his music career, bringing to a close a journey that has spanned 17 years.

The veteran musician made the announcement during a listening session for Motebang this week, revealing that the project would be his final official release. The decision signals the closing of a chapter for one of Lesotho's most recognisable hip-hop voices.

Over the years, Juvy rose to prominence through hit singles such as "Skipa Se Ntekane," "K'hotho," and "Mosali Oa Lekhooa," as well as projects like Brace Yourself, which helped shape and sustain local hip-hop culture. His music has long been praised for its authenticity, storytelling, and reflection of everyday Basotho experiences.

The Motebang EP serves as both a celebration and a farewell, featuring a strong lineup of collaborators from across the local music scene. Tracks such as "Tumelo Eaka," featuring Princess Sihle, set a reflective tone for the project, while "Telephone" brings together HBK and Fifi Ngoana Mosotho on a contemporary, melodic sound.

Other standout collaborations include "U Nkuka Joang" with HBK, "Energy" featuring Skoen Pampiri

and HBK, and "Keo Emetse" alongside Killer Joy.

The EP also highlights Juvy's continued partnership with artists such as Mitter, Masapo, and Princess Sihle on tracks like "Na Le Mmone," "Katarina," "Hallelujah," and the title track "Motebang Nkoko."

Production on the EP is handled by a range of producers including Ismoke, VibeboyBeatz, Ntota Mafifi, Scutum, RiskyBeats, and Motabz, reflecting the collaborative spirit that has defined Juvy's career.

While Juvy did not go into detail about his reasons for stepping away from music, he indicated that Motebang represents a personal and intentional final statement.

Explaining the title of the EP, Juvy said Motebang represents a turning point in his life.

"There was a time when I was really going through it, getting a lot of backlash on Facebook, from people who actually know me. I did not understand why," he said.

"Then I saw a comment from a lady who said, 'No matter what, remember that what you name represents, what your clan name is, you are a conqueror.' That spoke to me. I woke up, faced life and told myself that whatever comes, it won't move me. That is where I drew my strength."

He added that the title reflects resilience and



self-belief, themes that run throughout the EP.

"Motebang is about being yourself, about standing firm in who you are," he explained.

Juvy confirmed that the project is indeed his final EP, linking the decision to the longevity of his career.

"Yes, it is my last EP. In the next four years I will be celebrating 20 years in the industry. I feel like I have done my part. Every good dancer knows when to leave the stage."

However, he clarified that retirement does not mean disappearing completely from the industry.

"It does not mean I am quitting completely. It just means I still have this project to carry for the next three or four years."

Reflecting on age and evolution in hip-hop, Juvy spoke candidly about knowing when to step aside.

"When you are an old player, you start feeling the speed catching up with you. But when I see these young guys perform, I still feel like I can be there, I still have a few years in me."

According to Juvy, the project allowed him to fi-

nally be vulnerable with his audience.

"For the longest time I have been shying away. But I told myself, this is my last EP, let me give the people me. Let me pour my heart out."

He explained that many of the songs reflect real-life experiences and people who influenced his journey.

"If you were an ex and you hurt me, or you played a role in my life, somehow the people need to know. This project is just me saying, 'This is where I've been.'"

One of the standout tracks, "Katarina," features artist Masapo, whom Juvy praised openly during the session.

"I wish he could believe in himself the way I believe in him. His voice, the texture, it's something I have never heard before. It is clean, it is crisp, it is amazing. That is why I worked with him."

Motebang was officially released on January 2, 2026, the project stands not only as a farewell, but as a personal statement, a final chapter told in Juvy's own words.

Weaving hope through wool, one stitch at a time

Fusi Hlaoli

In the quiet highlands of Mokhotlong's Mangaung village, a young woman is transforming tradition, resilience and creativity into a livelihood, one stitch at a time.

Katleho Duma (20) is steadily carving a name for herself in the arts and crafts space, turning locally sourced mohair into beautifully knitted products, despite limited resources and significant challenges.

Duma's journey is one shaped by determination rather than convenience. She attended Seeiso High School and later completed her Grade 11 at Senkoese High School. Like many young Basotho, her path after school was disrupted by financial constraints.

In 2024, she enrolled at a hand craft school where she learned practical skills such as working with wood planks, installing ceilings and tiles, and interior and exterior decoration. However, a lack of funds forced her to discontinue her studies before completing the course.

Rather than surrendering to circumstance, Duma redirected her energy to a skill she had known since childhood, working with wool. In May last year, she began knitting seriously as a way to earn a living. Although she had basic knowledge of knitting, her experience was limited at the time.

The turning point came when she met Matsitsa Sefate, a fellow craft enthusiast who encouraged her to pursue knitting with purpose and consistency.

Through mentorship and collaboration, Duma's skills rapidly evolved. Together with Sefate, she began learning advanced techniques from online



Katleho Duma turns mohair into yarn



platforms such as TikTok, proving that digital spaces can be powerful tools for skills development, even in remote rural areas. The duo shared ideas, experimented with techniques and gradually refined their craft.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Duma's work is her use of local mohair to create yarn from scratch. She explained that they rely on simple, accessible methods passed down through practice and innovation.

The mohair is first washed using ordinary liquid soap and left to dry naturally. Once dry, the wool is brushed to stretch and soften it. Using handmade tools known locally as mankalanyane, the wool is

then spun and rolled into yarn by hand.

Colouring the wool is equally creative and resourceful. With no access to industrial dyes, Duma and her peers use whatever is available, drink powders such as Op-Op, beetroot water and other natural or household colouring agents to produce vibrant hues. The result is uniquely coloured yarn that reflects both creativity and local ingenuity.

However, the journey has not been without challenges. Duma notes that maintaining consistent measurements while spinning yarn remains a difficulty. Variations in thickness, sometimes too thin or too thick, which can affect the quality of the final product. Despite this, she views each challenge as a

learning opportunity rather than a setback.

For her, knitting is more than a means of survival; it is a statement of independence. She is clear about her motivation of not wanting to sit idle, waiting for government assistance in a country grappling with high unemployment. Instead, she is focused on using her hands, knowledge and determination to put food on the table and build a future.

Looking ahead, Duma and her collaborators share an ambitious vision. They dream of opening a handicraft school where they will teach others how to knit and produce high-quality looping yarn. Their long-term goal is to establish a company that produces premium wool products locally, adding value to Lesotho's mohair instead of exporting raw materials to other countries.

She believes Lesotho has the potential to lead in wool production beyond farming, by empowering young people with processing and creative skills. Her story is a reminder that arts and crafts are not merely cultural expressions but viable economic opportunities.

Duma concludes her journey with words of encouragement to fellow youth: never be afraid to start small, start late, or even start over. What matters is beginning and continuing. Every skill learned, every lesson faced and every step taken builds the future. She urges young people to work hard even when unseen, stay hungry for knowledge, and remain persistent.

"Success doesn't always come fast," she says, "but those who keep showing up, who learn, unlearn and start again, become unstoppable. Your dreams are valid. Chase them with courage."

Sesotho language launched on global learning app

Sebata Mahao

Speakers of Sesotho and language learners worldwide can now access the language on the uTalk app, thanks to two Basotho scholars who helped bring the project to life.

Hlokomelang Rakajoana from Matelile, Mafeteng, and Tlhaloso Mpopo from Lithabaneeng, Maseru, collaborated with the UK-based language learning company while they were in the UK as Chevening scholars. The app uses native speaker audio and interactive games to teach more than 2,500 everyday words and phrases in Sesotho.

uTalk founder and CEO Richard Howeson expressed gratitude for their contribution: "We are immensely grateful to Hlokomelang and Tlhaloso for helping us record and translate the Sesotho language. Having Sesotho on the app means that it can now be used by learners worldwide and be given the international attention it deserves; it will also help Sesotho speakers learn other languages directly from their own tongue."

Rakajoana described the experience as "something that I had never done before, so it was definitely a new challenge," while Mpopo added: "This experience was not only rewarding but also opened my eyes to the intricacies of language translation and the power of technology in language learning."



uTalk

nology in language learning."

The pair recorded their voices at uTalk's London studio over two days in February, re-

viewing and adding to the company's existing Sesotho translations.

The app allows users to record and com-

pare their pronunciation with native speakers and includes memory-boosting games and thematic lessons covering topics such as social phrases, technology, and food and drink.

Basotho teachers who tested the app in Wales also praised its impact. David Ralebese said: "I used the Sesotho app to teach basic words and the learners were eager to learn and also wanted to teach others what they had learned. It was interesting to see their curiosity in knowing Sesotho."

Emmanuel Lebakae added: "I taught the junior leadership team using Sesotho app, how to say some Sesotho basic phrases and they enjoyed so much."

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Matlama, Majantja share spoils in dramatic first league game of 2026

Seabata Mahao

The Vodacom Premier League (VPL) burst back into life in dramatic fashion on Wednesday as Matlama FC and Majantja Football Club played out a tense 1-1 draw in the first league match of 2026, staged at Russel Sebata Ground in Mohale's Hoek.

After the festive break, expectations were high for the year's opening fixture, and while the scoreboard ultimately showed parity, the encounter delivered intensity, late drama and a clear reminder of how unforgiving the title race is shaping up to be.

Matlama, who resumed the campaign under pressure to arrest an inconsistent run, approached the new year opener with urgency. They dominated possession for long spells in the first half, pinning Majantja deep in their own half and probing relentlessly for an early breakthrough.

However, despite their territorial advantage, the traditional giants were left frustrated by wasteful finishing and Majantja's well-organised defensive block.

Majantja, meanwhile, appeared content to absorb pressure in what was a cautious but disciplined approach. Their compact shape denied Matlama clear-cut chances, allowing the hosts to reach the interval with the scores still level in a match that was steadily building towards a decisive moment.

That moment arrived when Rethabile Mokoane finally broke the deadlock, putting Matlama ahead and seemingly setting them on course for a morale-boosting start to 2026. The goal sparked celebrations among Matlama supporters, who sensed that the opening-day victory they craved was within reach.

However, the drama that has come to define the Vodacom Premier League was never



Matlama FC squad

far away. As Matlama pushed for a second goal, Majantja gradually grew into the contest, showing greater composure on the ball and more ambition going forward.

Their persistence was rewarded in the 77th minute when Limpopo Motanya struck the equaliser, silencing the Matlama bench and ensuring the first league game of the year ended with honours even.

Speaking after the match, Majantja's head coach Bafokeng Mohapi conceded his side had been tested physically but praised their resilience.

"Matlama had a strong physique which we had no match against," Mohapi said. "They dominated the match and created multiple goal-scoring chances. In the second half we found our form, maintained possession and, despite conceding, we managed to score back."

On the opposite bench, Matlama's head coach Shalane Lehohla cut a visibly frustrated

figure as he reflected on missed chances that cost his side a winning start to the new year.

"Our players did not want to score even though we created so many chances. We delayed in finding our rhythm, but towards the middle of the first half we returned to our strategy. Majantja are a very tricky side they changed their style of play many times, from short passes to long balls."

Lehohla added that improving finishing remains a priority for his team. "We are working on our goal-scoring techniques. It is tight at the moment, but I am confident we will get back to our scoring ways."

Beyond the opener, attention now shifts to a crucial weekend of fixtures as the championship race remains finely balanced. Lijabatho, who trail leaders Lifofane by three points, face a stern away test against Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) on Sunday. A win for the Morija-based side would heap pressure on Lifofane and keep the title contest wide open.

The league table underlines the tight margins at the summit. Lifofane lead with 28 points from 13 matches, followed closely by Lijabatho on 25 points from 12 games. Lioli, Majantja and Bantu are all locked on 24 points, meaning any slip-up could dramatically alter the standings.

Fans can expect an action-packed weekend as the VPL continues in full swing. On Saturday, Matlama host Members at Bambatha Stadium, while Liphakoe travel to Manonyane in a match to be broadcast live on FIFA+. LMPS face LU FC at the Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) Ground, and Lioli take on Bantu at Saxophone Thejane in another live FIFA+ fixture.

Sunday's programme features LDF against Lijabatho and LCS hosting Majantja, both live on FIFA+. Lifofane welcome Machokha at Saxophone Thejane, while Maroala travel to face Linare, as the momentum generated by the dramatic 2026 opener carries into the rest of the league.

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Phamotse finally leaves for the US

Seabata Mahao

Promising volleyball youngster Relebohile Phamotse has finally realised her long-held dream after clinching a fully-funded sports scholarship and is currently departing for the United States, marking a major milestone for both her career and Lesotho volleyball.

After securing the scholarship in early 2025, Phamotse is now en route to the US for a two-year stay, where she will combine competitive volleyball with furthering her education.

She has earned a prestigious full scholarship to McCook Community College in Nebraska, an opportunity that places her among a select group of young athletes to break through onto the international stage.

The scholarship covers tuition, books, accommodation, insurance and airfare, a rare, life-changing package that removes the financial barriers which often limit talented athletes from Lesotho. For the 22-year-old Titans Volleyball Club standout, the journey to this point has been one of patience, discipline and unwavering belief.

When the acceptance finally came, the moment felt almost surreal, bringing to an end months of waiting and uncertainty. The move to the US represents not just a change of scenery, but the fulfilment of a goal she has quietly worked towards for years.

Speaking to Newsday, Phamotse said she is mentally and physically ready to embrace



Lesotho's rising volleyball sensation, Relebohile Rebo Phamotse

the demands of life as a student-athlete abroad.

"I am ready for the next chapter in my career and academics," she said.

"I have been told by others who have gone on similar scholarships that it takes discipline and time management, and I believe I am prepared."

Upon arrival, Phamotse will begin her studies while competing in the junior college volleyball league, a highly competitive

environment that serves as a pathway to elite collegiate and professional levels. She sees the opportunity as a crucial stepping stone rather than an end point.

"For now, I will be playing in the junior league, but my goal is to rise to the elite league and ultimately turn professional. This scholarship gives me the platform to pursue both my education and my dream of playing volleyball at the highest level."

Phamotse's rise has been built on years

of consistent performance at club level, where she has established herself as one of the country's most promising young players. Despite limited resources and exposure, her work ethic and commitment set her apart, eventually attracting international interest.

The move to the US will expose her to advanced training facilities, experienced coaches and a faster, more physical style of play, elements expected to accelerate her development. Competing in a structured collegiate system will also test her ability to balance academics and high-performance sport, a challenge she embraces with confidence.

Beyond her personal ambitions, Phamotse's achievement carries wider significance. As a young Mosotho woman breaking into international volleyball, her journey serves as inspiration to aspiring athletes back home, particularly girls who may doubt that such opportunities are attainable.

Her departure signals a powerful statement about the potential that exists within Lesotho sport when talent meets opportunity. For her, this is more than a scholarship but the beginning of a new chapter defined by growth, ambition and possibility.

As she begins life in the United States, all eyes will be on how far her talent can take her. One thing is certain; Phamotse is no longer just a promising local prospect; she is now a global student-athlete, carrying her dreams, and her country's hopes, onto a much bigger stage.

More athletes for Maseru City Marathon

Seabata Mahao

The 2026 Nedbank Maseru City Run is seeing a surge in athlete participation, with registration figures shooting from 1400 in 2025 to 2358 this year with three weeks left before the end of registration.

The steady rise in numbers signals growing confidence in the annual race, scheduled for February 22 this year, and also highlights its expanding appeal among both recreational and elite runners.

Of the total registrations this year, 348 athletes are international competitors, mainly from South Africa, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. This growing foreign presence reflects the race's strengthening regional profile and its emergence as a preferred destination for road running enthusiasts beyond Lesotho's borders.

The elite and professional field has also grown, with 35 professional runners confirmed so far, further enhancing the quality and competitiveness of the event.

A strong contingent of top local athletes is expected, including Kamohelo Mofolo, Khoarahlana Seutloali, Tebogo Sello, Tebogo Noosi, Nthabiseng Lekotoko, Reitumetsa Thethana, Mopenyane Lebolo and Tsepoe Mathibelle, among others.

Adding to the profile of the race, Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Lerotholi have once again confirmed their participation this time in the 21-kilometre half marathon, while Speaker of the National Assembly, Tlohang Sekhamane, has registered for the 10km race.

The involvement of high-profile figures continues to draw public interest and further boosts athlete registrations.

The growth in participation has been matched by strengthened corporate and financial backing. The 2026 edition is headlined by Nedbank Lesotho as title sponsor, alongside key sponsors Maseru Toyota, Maluti Mountain Cement, Stanlib Lesotho and Lehakoe Club. In total, organisers have secured 22 sponsors to date, reflecting increased confidence from the corporate sec-

tor.

Among the major milestones for this year's race is Nedbank's elevation to title sponsor, while Maseru Toyota has stepped up to Gold Sponsor. This enhanced sponsorship support has provided financial and logistical stability, enabling organisers to accommodate the rising number of participants and improve overall race delivery.

Another significant boost to the race's growth followed the successful World Athletics route measurement and certification exercise conducted in Maseru in October. As a result, the flagship 42.2km marathon is now an official Comrades Marathon and Two Oceans Marathon qualifier, placing the Maseru City Run among a select group of internationally recognised races.

Marketing Director of the Maseru City Run, Thabo Tšoete, said the certification reflects the organisers' long-term vision of professionalising the event.

"We are intentional about improving the status and standards of the race to deliver a world-class athletics event," Tšoete said.

The certification process was overseen by renowned international course measurer Norrie Williamson, a Scottish-born endurance expert based in South Africa. All race categories, 42.2km, 21.1km, 10km, 5km and the 1.6km fun run, were measured and certified to stringent international standards.

"This certification means local athletes can now qualify for Comrades and Two Oceans right here at home, without having to travel outside Lesotho," Tšoete added.

Organisers are also pursuing inclusion of the Maseru City Run on the World Athletics annual calendar, a move expected to further drive international participation. The long-term target is to attract at least 400 international runners in future editions.

Despite the positive growth, organisers have acknowledged challenges, including late entry fee payments, with many runners settling on the final day. However, in response to overwhelming demand, the registration deadline has been extended to January 31, 2026.



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