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# Sekhametsi's shocking financial health exposed

## ... Massive profits mask deep operational crisis, audited statements reveal

Sekhametsi Investment Consortium presents a Jekyll-and-Hyde portrait in its 2021 financial statements. On one hand, a profitable investment consortium with M1.27 billion in assets, growing membership, and a strong stake in Stanlib Lesotho. On the other hand, an operationally bankrupt entity whose core business loses millions, whose expenses are spiralling out of control, whose accounting is unreliable, and which is technically unable to pay its bills. The only thing standing between the consortium and financial ruin is its stake in Stanlib Lesotho. If that investment were to falter, the entire house of cards would collapse.

### Staff Reporter

On paper, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium looks like a success story. In reality, it is a company in crisis.

Its latest financial statements, signed off in March 2022, audited by New Dawn Chartered Accountants, and obtained by Newsday recently, paint a portrait of profound contradiction: impressive profits masking a deeply unwell core business.

The consortium, established to provide Basotho with investment opportunities, according to the statements, was entirely dependent on its investments to stay afloat while its own operations haemorrhaged cash.

**THE NUMBERS THAT LIE: Profit of M62.7 million hides operating disaster**

At first glance, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium appears prosperous, reporting a profit after tax of M62.7 million, an impressive 42 percent increase from the M44 million posted in 2020.

But beneath this veneer of success lies a terrifying reality. The company's core operations lost M5.6 million during the year.

How did the consortium manage to report a massive profit while its actual business haemorrhaged cash?

The answer to this question reveals a dangerous dependency. M19.9 million came from dividend income, and a staggering M53.2 million was generated from the share of profit from equity accounted investments, primarily from the company's 25 percent stake in Stanlib Lesotho.

Without these investment windfalls, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium would be reporting a catastrophic loss, Newsday has learned.

The company that exists to provide Basotho with investment opportunities cannot make money from actually providing those opportunities, the statements show.

**CASH CRISIS: Operating cash flow collapses 80%**

Even more alarming than the operating loss is the company's cash position. Despite reporting a massive profit, cash generated from operations plummeted from M52.7 million in 2020 to just M8.2 million in 2021, an astonishing 84 percent decline.

This disconnect between reported profits and actual cash in the bank is a classic warning sign that the quality of earnings may be poor or unsustainable.

While revenue remained relatively flat, expenses went nuclear. Administrative expenses more than doubled from M272,820 to M640,042, while other expenses skyrocketed by over 400



percent from M2.9 million to a staggering M14.7 million.

Included in this M14.7 million black hole are directors' fees of just over M1 million, electricity and water expenses exceeding M1.1 million, employee benefits of M415,613, consulting fees of M227,644, insurance of M373,956, and most alarmingly, a M10 million impairment charge.

**THE M10 MILLION QUESTION: What happened to Afri Expo?**

Buried deep in the notes to the financial statements lies a bombshell: the consortium completely wrote off its entire M10 million investment in Afri Expo Textiles. The investment, which represented a 30 percent stake in the textile company, has been valued at zero.

Afri Expo's own financials paint a picture of devastation, with equity attributable to owners standing at negative M840,645, a loss from operations of M1.2 million, and interest expenses of M432,391.

The company, according to the statements, is technically insolvent, with liabilities far exceeding assets.

However, the consortium's directors provided no explanation to shareholders about what went wrong at Afri Expo or why this M10 million investment, a significant portion of the consortium's portfolio, has been completely destroyed.

Afri-Expo Textiles, according to information on its website, is a privately held, 100 percent Basotho owned textile manufacturing company registered under the laws of Lesotho.

"The company is under the directorship of Three Directors (Indigenous Basotho experienced in different fields). Afri-Expo Textiles (Pty) Ltd was registered in Lesotho in 2011, with the aim of increasing local entrepreneur participation in the manufacturing sector."

**TECHNICAL INSOLVENCY: The Company**

**cannot pay its bills**

Perhaps the most alarming revelation in the financial statements is the consortium's catastrophic liquidity position. The company had M142.5 million in debts due within one year, but only M29.2 million in assets that could be quickly converted to cash.

This means that for every M1 of debt due in the next 12 months, the consortium had only 20 lisente available. The company's ratio stood at an extremely dangerous 0.20, and by any conventional measure, the company was technically insolvent.

The only thing that prevented immediate collapse was that the largest liability, a staggering M136.7 million intercompany payable, was likely owed to related entities that did not demand immediate repayment.

But this created a precarious house of cards. If any of those related parties called in their debts, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium would be unable to pay.

**ACCOUNTING SCANDAL: Material errors force restatement**

The company was forced to restate its entire 2020 financial statements due to what auditors described as a material misstatement.

The error involved expenses paid by a subsidiary, Sekhametsi Enterprises, on behalf of the parent company being incorrectly recorded in the subsidiary's books, even though they related to the parent's activities.

This was not a minor bookkeeping error. The restatement affected multiple line items across the financial statements, including intercompany payables adjusted by M5.2 million, retained earnings adjusted by nearly M16 million, and employee costs, electricity, insurance, legal expenses, and rent all requiring correction.

For a company of this size, with professional directors and auditors, such a fundamental accounting failure raises serious questions about

the competence of the finance department, the effectiveness of internal controls, the reliability of all previously issued financial statements, and the oversight provided by the board of directors.

**WHO'S WATCHING THE STORE? Board changes and governance concerns**

The company's board saw significant changes during the year 2021, with Malitšitso-Moteane-Thahane and Ntee Bereng resigning, while Palo Kotelo, Naledi Maphathe, Lerotholi Seeiso, Limpho Maema, and Relebohile Sefako joined.

While board turnover is not inherently problematic, the timing coinciding with a year of massive accounting errors, an M10 million write-off, and an operating loss merits scrutiny.

Directors were paid a total of just over M1 million in fees during the year, with Chairman Leboela Lebete receiving M192,325, Matjato Neo Moteane (now minister of public works and transport) receiving M172,575, Dr Lebohang Khomari receiving M143,460, Palo Kotelo receiving M127,700, Lintle Thamae receiving M77,760, Lerotholi Seeiso receiving M77,760, Naledi Maphathe receiving M72,000, Limpho Maema receiving M72,000, and Relebohile Sefako receiving M72,000.

**THE STANLIB LIFELINE: One investment holds the key**

Without its 25 percent stake in Stanlib Lesotho, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium would be in ruins.

Stanlib remained the crown jewel of the portfolio, with non-current assets of M5.5 million, current assets of M37.2 million, revenue of M37.1 million, profit from operations of M16.6 million, and cash and cash equivalents of M32.5 million.

The consortium's investment in Stanlib was valued at M16.5 million at year-end, and the dividends and profit-sharing from this single investment were the only things keeping the consortium afloat.

**MYSTERY ASSET**

Buried in the Statement of Financial Position is a puzzling line item, Sekhametsi Development Trust valued at M37,590.

The financial statements provide no explanation of what this trust is, who controls it, why it is considered an asset of the company, or what its purpose is.

**MEMBERSHIP BOOMS WHILE DIVIDENDS SHRINK**

The company added 148 new members during the year 2021, growing its shareholder base from 320 to 468 members with total share capital of M2,858,098.

However, despite this growth and the reported M62.7 million profit, dividends paid actually decreased from M35.2 million in 2020 to just M27.9 million in 2021.

For the 148 new members who joined, hoping to share in the consortium's success, the reduced dividend payout, coupled with the revelations of operating losses and accounting errors, must be deeply disappointing.

**DIRECTORS INSIST: "We are a going concern"**

Despite the alarming financial indicators, directors insisted the company remains viable. In their report, they stated that they had given due consideration to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

They believed that the pandemic would have a temporary impact on the business activities and that notwithstanding these short-term challenges, the company had sufficient resources to continue as a going concern.

They attributed the company's challenges to COVID-19, though many of the structural problems, the operating losses, the dependency on investment income, and the liquidity crisis predated the pandemic.

Auditors, New Dawn Chartered Accountants, issued an unqualified audit opinion, stating that the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the company.

However, an unqualified opinion does not mean the company is healthy, only that the financial statements accurately reflect its position.

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**Staff Reporter**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Directors Lesotho (IoD), 'Malehlohonolo Mahase, has issued a stark warning that weak corporate governance lies at the root of the corruption scandals and financial mismanagement plaguing Lesotho and other nations.

Mahase was speaking at a media training workshop on corporate governance organised by the IoD in Maseru this week, where she emphasised that good governance is not merely a compliance exercise but a cornerstone of sustainable development and public trust.

"We believe that when organisations are run well, institutions function properly, and governments are run well," Mahase said. "When we uphold accountability, which is one of the first virtues we stand for, along with transparency and fairness, all those principles will be taken care of. They will be catered for."

She delivered a blunt assessment of the consequences when governance fails.

"A lot of the scandals we see – corruption scandals, mismanagement of funds, both here in Lesotho and in other countries, most of them, you will find, are a result of corporate governance that has issues," she added.

The training focused on key pillars essential for building a culture of good governance in Lesotho, including an overview of corporate governance and its rationale, the applicability of Lesotho's home-grown Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code, and a deeper exploration of the code's values-based approach.

The Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code, launched in September 2021, is Lesotho's first-ever corporate governance framework. It is named after Morena Mohlomi, an 18th-century philosopher and mentor to Morena Mo-shoeshoe I, the founder of the Basotho nation.

Chief Mohlomi (circa 1720–1815) is remembered in Basotho history as a visionary leader who championed ethical governance, peace, and wisdom.

According to historical accounts, he established a leadership academy at where he mentored leaders from across the region that now

# 'Weak corporate governance breeds scandals, corruption and mismanagement'

constitutes the S A D C community.

His philosophy was anchored on five pillars dedicated to transformational leadership, with the core outcomes of peace, productivity, and intergenerational value.

One of Mohlomi's most powerful teachings was: "A responsible leader pursues peaceful and productive alliances, accommodates stakeholders, and uses new instruments of power to create intergenerational value".

The code draws inspiration from these indigenous leadership values, embedding them in a modern governance framework that emphasises accountability, transparency, ethical conduct,



Journalists attend a media training workshop on corporate governance, organised by the Institute of Directors of Lesotho in Maseru on Tuesday

stakeholder inclusiveness, board leadership, and risk management.

The Mohlomi Code operates on both an "apply or explain" and "apply and explain" regime, allowing flexibility

while upholding high standards. Its 22 principles are divided into six clusters, all aimed at fostering sustainable socio-economic development.

For decades before the code's launch, Lesotho organisations had relied on South Africa's King Reports as a governance yardstick, often applying principles without consideration of local context.

Kananelo Boloetse, Chairperson of MISA

Lesotho, expressed gratitude to the Institute of Directors of Lesotho for inviting the media to the training, describing the initiative as vital for strengthening the nation's institutional fabric.

"Your organisation's commitment to advancing ethical leadership, accountability, and sound governance practices across all sectors is truly commendable, and events like this play a vital role in strengthening our nation's institutional fabric," Boloetse said.

He underscored the media's critical role in holding power to account.

"Today's programme could not be more timely. As media professionals, we serve as the bridge between institutions and the public, holding power to account, informing citizens, and fostering transparent dialogue. Yet, to report effectively on corporate governance, we must first understand its foundations: the principles that guide boards, directors, and organisations in acting responsibly, sustainably, and in the best interests of all stakeholders."

He urged his colleagues to engage deeply with the training.

"Let us approach this training with open minds and active participation. The knowledge we gain today will sharpen our ability to ask the right questions, tell compelling and accurate stories, and ultimately support the growth of responsible corporate citizenship in our country."

Despite the code's launch, the broader corporate environment in Lesotho remains constrained by limited resources, weak enforcement mechanisms, and underdeveloped institutional capacity. State-owned enterprises, often burdened by political interference and a lack of skilled leadership, continue to struggle with accountability, transparency, and efficiency.

Governance experts have warned that without sustained commitment from the government, improved coordination among regulatory institutions, and deliberate investment in training and professional development, the principles outlined in the Mohlomi Code risk remaining aspirational rather than transformative.

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# High Court orders parliament to pass conflict of interest law

## Staff Reporter

In a landmark constitutional judgment delivered yesterday, the High Court has delivered a stinging rebuke to the National Assembly, declaring that Parliament's rejection of a private member's bill on conflict of interest was unconstitutional and ordering legislators to enact the long-delayed law within 24 months.

The three-judge bench comprising justices Moroke Mokhesi, Tšeliselo Mokoko, and Acting Justice Tsebang Putsoane found that by voting down the Conflict of Interest Bill, 2024, the National Assembly had unlawfully thwarted a clear constitutional obligation that has remained unfulfilled since the Constitution came into force in 1993.

"The use of the words 'may be' in the sub-section are located in the context in which the Constitution sets out the factors which disqualify the would-be Senators or Members of the National Assembly," the court stated in a powerful passage of the judgment.

"It is not difficult to fathom why the Constitution would set its face against anyone ascending to such high public offices when they have commercial interests in government: owing to human natural inclination for self-preservation, anyone who has a commercial interest in government would seek to unjustly protect them through unscrupulous means such as policy manipulation or other means."

The application was brought by Teboho Mojabela, leader of Socialist Revolutionaries (SR), together with the Basotho Covenant Movement (BCM) and the Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) – all political parties with representation in the National Assembly. They sought to review the House's decision to reject the bill, which was introduced by BCM leader, Dr Tšepo Liphohlo, under Section 59(1)(e) of the Constitution.

The respondents – including the Speaker of the National Assembly, Tlohang Sekhamane, the Leader of the House Deputy Prime Minister Nthomeng Majara, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane, and the Minister of Law and Constitutional Affairs, Richard Ramoetsi –

raised a preliminary objection arguing that the court lacked jurisdiction.

They contended that Parliament had followed its procedures and that the principle of parliamentary sovereignty precluded judicial interference.

But the court was unequivocal in dismissing this argument, drawing extensively from comparative jurisprudence. Quoting the South African Constitutional Court case of *Doctors for Life International v Speaker of National Assembly and Others*, the judges emphasised: "When it exercises its legislative authority, Parliament 'must act in accordance with, and within the limits of, the Constitution', and the supremacy of the Constitution requires that 'the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled.' Courts are required by the Constitution 'to ensure that all branches of government act within the law' and fulfill their constitutional obligations."

### The interpretative crux: 'May' versus 'Must'

At the heart of the dispute lay the interpretation of the word "may" in Section 59(1)(e), which disqualifies from Parliament any person who "subject to such exceptions and limitations as may be prescribed by Parliament, has any such interest in any such government contract as may be so prescribed."

The Speaker's office argued that the permissive language gave Parliament a discretion whether to enact such legislation or not. The court rejected this construction emphatically.

Citing the 19th-century English House of Lords case *Julius v The Lord Bishop of Oxford*, the court noted that "there may be something in the nature of the thing empowered to be done, something in the object for which it is done, something in the conditions under which it is to be done, something in the title of the person or persons for whose benefit the power is to be exercised, which may couple the power with a duty."

Applying this principle, the court concluded: "Was Parliament obligated by the constitution to enact this disqualifying factor into law? The answer to this question should be in the affirmative."

### 'A profound misapprehension'

Perhaps the most damning section of the judgment concerns the Speaker's understanding of parliamentary power. The court described the respondents' averments as "symptomatic of a profound misapprehension under which Parliament operated on the day they jettisoned the motion in question."

The judgment continued with devastating clarity: "The misapprehension is that Parliament can refuse to do what it is obligated to do by the Constitution. Put differently, and in a form of a question, having concluded above that in terms of Section 59(1)(e) Parliament was obligated to enact the law regulating disqualification of persons from being elected as members of Parliament or being nominated or designated as Senators when they have interest in government contracts, can Parliament legally vote not to comply with this constitutional obligation? The answer should be in the negative."

The court grappled directly with Section 75(1) of the Constitution, which provides that questions in Parliament shall be determined by majority vote.

However, it imposed a crucial limitation: "The right of Parliament to decide a question put before it cannot be used to defeat its obligation to do what the Constitution has instructed it to do. To construe the power of Parliament to decide by majority vote on any question put will lead to a situation such as the present where the National Assembly voted to disobey the Constitution."

In a passage that will resonate through future parliamentary proceedings, the court declared: "It 9Parliament) does not have a right to vote to disobey the Constitution but rather it has a right to decide the issue which constitutionally falls within its purview."

### A 32-year legislative vacuum

The judgment highlighted the extraordinary delay in giving effect to this constitutional provision. "Since the advent of this Constitution in 1993, the disqualifying factor under Section 59(1)(e) has not been effective. The reason for this is that all the successive Parliaments since 1993 have not enacted it into law."

For 32 years, Lesotho has operated without

legislation preventing parliamentarians with government contract interests from sitting in the House – precisely the situation the Constitution sought to prevent.

### Judicial scolding on affidavit practice

In a unusual aside, the court took aim at the quality of the applicants' founding papers, expressing judicial frustration at "prolixity in affidavits."

The judges noted with irritation: "A lot of argumentative material made its way into the founding affidavit, for example an argument about members of parliament violating their oath under Section 71 of the Constitution. The founding affidavit is also replete with examples of irrelevant materials being included in it such as quoting the Bible and tabulating the names of the members of the National Assembly who voted against the Bill."

Citing South African appellate authority, the court warned: "Prolixity in affidavit is quite an endemic problem in this court and should be nipped in the bud. Counsel are therefore warned that in the not-too-distant future, appropriate sanctions will be meted out on counsel who are responsible for preparing these affidavits and attaching irrelevant annexures."

### The order

The court granted the application with costs, issuing a two-part order of significant constitutional importance.

First, it reviewed and set aside as unconstitutional "the Government and/or coalition of ruling parties' conduct of casting majority votes against motion on the Bill paving way for passing of 'Conflict of Interest' legislation mandated by Section 59(1)(e) of the Constitution."

Second, it directed "Parliament to promulgate legislation in terms of Section 59(1)(e) of the Constitution within 24 months of the delivery of this judgment."

The judgment was delivered on Thursday, 05 March 2026, with Mokhesi J and Putsoane AJ concurring. The ball now lies in Parliament's court, with a 24-month deadline to do what 32 years of successive parliaments have failed to accomplish.

# Herd boys break silence on decades of exploitation

## Ntsoaki Motaung

In a rare moment of visibility for one of Lesotho's most invisible workforces, herd boys have broken their silence to deliver a searing indictment of a system that has left their wages frozen for generations while they guard the nation's livestock under brutal highland conditions.

The outcry erupted during a ceremony at Matsoaing Herd Boy School, where 130 shepherd learners received hygiene kits from Vodacom Lesotho (VCL). But what began as a celebration quickly became a platform for confronting decades of systemic neglect.

"The herd boys are the most wounded among us because of how they are treated. They are frequently violated and overlooked," declared Chief Mofoka Letsie, speaking on behalf of the Area Chief for Matsoaing.

The chief's words carried the weight of half a century of witnessing the same exploitation repeat itself.

"I am nearly 60 years old, yet the payment for a herd boy has remained ten sheep or one cow per year for as long as I can remember," Letsie revealed.

"When we fight for salary increments across national sectors, the herd boys are forgotten. Their pay remains frozen in time."

### 'We are generally not cared for'

Rapelang Rapheello, a herd boy from Maphiring, stood before the gathering to represent his peers. He expressed gratitude to UNFPA, Vodacom Lesotho, and the educators teaching them about hygiene, land conservation, and their fundamental rights. But Rapheello refused to sanitise the reality of their existence.



Herd boys from Matsoaing proudly display hygiene packs donated by UNFPA and Vodacom Lesotho – a gesture affirming that they are seen, loved, and cared for:

"We are generally not cared for," he shared bluntly. "When we depart for the cattle post, we are often provided with nothing but maize meal and salt. We are expected to figure out how to survive on our own. On top of that, our payment is entirely unsatisfying, especially considering we work under such extreme and harsh conditions."

The image he painted was of boys as young as eight or nine dispatched to remote mountains for months at a time, equipped with minimal food, no wage security, and zero legal protection, all while safeguarding the primary wealth of Basotho families.

### A call for law, not charity

Chief Letsie directed a pointed plea to the Minister of Youth, Gender, and Social Development, Pitso Lesoana, who was present at the gathering. He did not ask for handouts. He demanded legal protection.

"We plead with the government to enact a law that protects herd boys. It should explicitly state

that anyone herding animals, whether for their parents or an employer, must be paid a fair wage," he insisted.

"Furthermore, their salaries must be reviewed periodically, just like any other professional sector."

Lesoana, did not mince words in response.

"It is unacceptable that some children do not even know how much they earn or where their salaries go," Lesoana stated. "When parents take their children's wages, that is pure human trafficking and exploitation."

His acknowledgment that parents themselves are often the exploiters laid bare the uncomfortable truth at the heart of the herd boy crisis which is that the system of abuse is intergenerational, normalised, and protected by silence.

### Beyond charity: A structural crisis

The handover of boots, overalls, towels, and hygiene products by the Vodacom Foundation

brought temporary relief. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has mobilised partners including Letšeng Diamond Mine, Nedbank Lesotho, and SolidarMed to address the needs of marginalised youth in the highlands.

But UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti made clear that material aid is only the beginning.

"Our role is to ensure that no young person is left behind, especially those in remote areas like Mokhotlong," Mosoti said, stressing the need to tackle structural inequalities including gender-based violence and limited access to reproductive health services.

The visit followed a high-level stakeholder tour last November, where partners engaged directly with students to understand their socio-economic hardships.

That these discussions are now translating into tangible support is progress. But as Chief Letsie's words underscored, dignity cannot be donated, it must be guaranteed.

### Education as liberation

Sister Elizabeth Lerotholi acknowledged the ongoing challenges at Matsoaing School, including resource constraints and unpaid staff. However, Lerotholi praised the learners' determination.

The success seen so far, many learners can now read and write, is a direct result of sustained partner support. Through specialised workshops, students are learning that their circumstances are not inevitable and that their rights exist, even if unrecognised by law.

### The question that remains

As the ceremony concluded and the herd boys returned to their posts, one question hung in the cold Mokhotlong air. Why, in a nation that proudly calls itself the Kingdom in the Sky, are those who safeguard its primary source of wealth forced to survive on maize meal, salt, and the hope that this year's ten sheep might actually be paid?

Chief Letsie's voice echoed long after he stopped speaking: "Their pay remains frozen in time."

For Lesotho's herd boys, the thaw cannot come soon enough.

# Lesotho, UNICEF partner to develop MOSIP-based integrated national ID system

## Staff Reporter

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) will support the government of Lesotho in developing an integrated national digital identity ecosystem, marking a significant step toward modernising the country’s identification and civil registration systems.

The initiative forms part of the 2026 Action Plan contained in the Lesotho–UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 2025–2028, according to a government announcement released this week.

The agreement was formally signed by the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) and the UNICEF country office for Lesotho.

Principal Secretary (PS) Kanono Ramashamole signed on behalf of MICSTI, while UNICEF Representative Deepak Bhaskaran signed for the agency. The signing was witnessed by Director-General of ICT Thapeli Tjabane and UNICEF Technology for Development Specialist Ramoletane Lekhanya.

“The Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) and UNICEF have signed the 2026 Annual Work Plan under the Lesotho–UNICEF Programme of Cooperation



Principal Secretary Kanono Ramashamole signs the agreement on behalf of the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, as UNICEF Representative Deepak Bhaskaran looks on.

2025–2028 to advance Lesotho’s digital identity and civil registration systems,” the government said in a statement.

The work plan supports the development of an integrated national digital identity ecosystem designed to improve a range of essential services for Basotho.

“It will improve services such as national ID and passport renewal, biometric registration, proof-of-life verification and updating of expired identity documents,” the statement read.

Beyond identity documents, the system will strengthen verification for financial services, enabling more secure transactions and contributing to better monitoring of financial flows.

“It also strengthens identity verification for financial services and contributes to improved monitoring of financial flows and prevention of fraud and money laundering,” the government added.

The initiative is aligned with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) II and the National Social Protection Strategy II. It will continue the deployment of digital public infrastructure based on the Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP).

MOSIP is an open-source platform that enables countries to build their own digital identity systems without relying on proprietary vendors. It has been described as the go-to platform for building digital public infrastructure ecosystems, particularly in the

Global South.

The system will enable secure authentication across government and private-sector services, including mobile-based verification, making it easier for citizens to access services remotely.

Lesotho is a member of the 50-in-5 campaign, an initiative that seeks to help countries of the Global South build secure, inclusive and interoperable digital public infrastructure by 2028. The campaign aims to support 50 countries in five years to develop digital identity systems that can drive development and service delivery.

UNICEF plays a major role globally in facilitating access to legal and digital identity. As co-chair of the UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force, the agency supports initiatives particularly in Africa, where many countries are behind schedule in meeting Sustainable Development Goal target 16.9.

SDG 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030. For many African nations, including Lesotho, achieving this target requires significant investment in modernising civil registration systems and linking them to digital identity platforms.

The partnership represents a coordinated effort to build foundational digital infrastructure that can support multiple development goals. By creating a robust digital identity ecosystem, Lesotho aims to improve service delivery, enhance financial inclusion, strengthen social protection programmes, and combat fraud.

The system’s interoperability means that once fully deployed, Basotho citizens could potentially access government services, financial services, and social protection programmes using a single digital identity, verified securely through mobile devices.

The work plan signed by MICSTI and UNICEF sets the framework for implementation throughout 2026, with the broader programme of cooperation extending through 2028.



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Mafeteng	4 – 5 March 2026	2	City Center Hotel
Berea	9 – 10 March 2026	2	Assumption High School, Berea
Thaba Tseka	12 – 13 March 2026	2	Motherland Guest House
Leribe (Hlotse)	17 – 18 March 2026	2	Naleli Guest House
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Newsday

# Business

## Trade Ministry road show promotes entrepreneurship in Quthing



Mojakisane Motaung, speaking on behalf of the Ministry's business development management, addresses community members during the Trade Ministry roadshow in Quthing.

### Refiloe Molise

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) this week held a roadshow in Quthing aimed at encouraging Basotho to start, formalise and grow their businesses as part of efforts to strengthen the economy.

The engagement forms part of the Ministry's nationwide outreach programme designed to showcase its services and encourage micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to utilise available government support.

Delivering opening remarks, Lebohang Khali, representing the Department of Business Development, assured entrepreneurs that the Ministry exists to serve and support them.

"Our purpose of being here in Quthing is to show ourselves and build trust with you. We are here to protect you and provide services for your businesses," Khali said.

He stressed that the Ministry's services are not only meant for established businesses but also for aspiring entrepreneurs who have not yet registered their ventures.

"We know there are big and small businesses here in Quthing, but we are not only here for them. We are also here for those businesses that are not yet formed but have to be formed," he said.

Khali encouraged residents, particularly young people, to embrace innovation and use their creativity to develop new products and services.

"All these buildings around us and the cars we drive exist because someone used their brain to create them. For new things to happen, someone must think of them. Young people, you still have fresh minds. Come with new innovations and let us guide you on the right path. Register your business now," he urged.

Thapelo Moeti from the Ministry's trade, cooperation and marketing department outlined the Ministry's role in ensuring that Basotho products access both local and international markets.

"The work of the Ministry of Trade is to see that Basotho products enter the market inside and outside the country and to ensure that everyone is protected," Moeti explained.

He said the Ministry works closely with producers to promote local goods, including indigenous products such as lengana and spices, so that they can compete internationally.

"We work together so that our products can reach international markets and compete fairly. We also assess what both local and international markets lack so that Basotho can fill those gaps," he added.

Speaking on behalf of the Commissioner of Cooperatives, Bokang Makhothi highlighted the role of cooperatives in reducing poverty and creating jobs.

"The aim is to eradicate poverty and create jobs, and we do that by encouraging people to work together through cooperatives," Makhothi said.

He explained that forming a cooperative requires at least ten members, after which the department assists with registration, guidance and ongoing support.

Makhothi added that producers are also supported to showcase their products locally and internationally, while youth cooperatives are represented through district committees that connect

with regional structures within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Also addressing the gathering, Mojakisane Motaung explained that the road show aims to educate communities about the Ministry's broader role beyond business registration.

He said many people associate the Ministry mainly with registering businesses, yet registration also opens doors to funding, training and development opportunities.

Motaung noted that government is implementing priorities outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), which focuses on sectors such as agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, technology and innovation to strengthen the private sector and reduce reliance on government employment.

He said the Ministry of Trade plays a central role in this process because businesses must first be formally registered before they can access government support programmes.

Motaung further highlighted institutions such as the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) programme and the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) as key partners that support businesses through training, funding opportunities and expansion.

He also encouraged community members to consider forming cooperatives, noting that many development programmes prioritise projects that can create employment for more Basotho.

Motaung also spoke about the Inclusive Growth Fund (IGF), a government initiative supported by the Prime Minister which has allocated M400 million to stimulate private sector growth.

He said 70 percent of the fund is reserved for youth- and women-owned businesses, urging them to take advantage of the opportunity by registering their enterprises.

## Lesotho takes steps towards green economy

### Staff Reporter

Lesotho is moving to position itself within the growing global carbon market as stakeholders gather for a national sensitisation programme aimed at building knowledge and unlocking green investment opportunities.

The Private Sector Foundation of Lesotho (PSFL), in partnership with the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) and international technical partner One Carbon World, will host a Sensitisation Programme on Carbon Markets on March 12-13, at Lehakoe Recreation and Cultural Centre in Maseru.

"This programme is the first major, coordinated effort to bridge the knowledge gap and build the foundation for a thriving carbon market in Lesotho. It is designed to be the catalyst that transforms potential into action," PSFL said in a statement.

The programme seeks to equip government officials, entrepreneurs, investors and other stakeholders with the fundamentals of carbon markets and climate finance.

Organisers say the initiative will introduce participants to global carbon market frameworks, including Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and voluntary carbon trading systems, which allow countries and companies to offset their emissions by investing in projects that reduce greenhouse gases.

The programme also aligns with government efforts to attract climate finance and support green economic development initiatives, including the HMKLIII JET Ltd platform announced during international climate negotiations.

For Lesotho, participation in carbon markets could open new revenue streams while supporting sustainable development. Countries and organisations that successfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions can generate "carbon credits," which are then sold to buyers seeking to offset their own emissions.

This means projects such as hydroelectric power generation, reforestation, sustainable agriculture and clean cooking technologies could generate income while also addressing environ-

mental challenges.

Despite its potential, Lesotho has yet to establish a strong presence in the global carbon mar-

ket. A 2024 assessment found that the country currently lacks a formal regulatory framework to support carbon trading and has no active carbon credit projects under development. As a result, Lesotho trails regional leaders such as South Africa in this emerging sector.

Other challenges include limited technical expertise in carbon finance and project development, as well as low awareness of carbon markets among communities, investors and government agencies.

### Notice of Change of Address

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 82(3) of the Companies Act 2011, MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism is intending to change its registered office address from Transformation Resource Centre, No.1 Oak Tree Garden Qoaling Road, Old Europa Maseru Lesotho to House No.21 Ha-Mosalla Thaba-Bosiu Maseru Lesotho from the 11th February 2026.

The application to have the said registered office address changed, will be done with the register of Companies after the third publication of this notice.

### ESTATE NOTICE

#### ESTATE LATE ZIPHO FLIX RAMOLOKO B71/24

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 44 the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 2024, calling upon all persons having claims against the deceased or here estate to lodge the claim with that executor within such period from the date of the latest publication of the notice not being less than thirty (30) days or more than three months

DATED AT BUTHA-BUTHE ON THIS 05 MARCH 2026.

ADDRESS

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# Newsday Health

## 'If I had known': The high cost of information poverty in Thaba-Tseka

### Ntsoaki Motaung

"If I had the information I have now, I would never have fallen pregnant unplanned or at that age," said 20-year-old Nthabeleng (not her real name), gazing at her eighteen-month-old son as she reflects on the cost of growing up in one of Lesotho's most remote districts.

Nthabeleng shared her painful reflection with Newsday during a Monitoring and Evaluation visit to Ha Matšumunyane conducted by the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative Lesotho (REPSSI Lesotho).

The visit assessed the impact of community support groups for young mothers, fathers, and adolescents under the project "Achieving Better Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Outcomes for Young People."

For Nthabeleng, these sessions have become a lifeline. She admitted she eagerly anticipates every meeting and refuses to miss a single one.

**The turning point was a session on family planning.**

"The session that made me realise most of us make mistakes due to a lack of information was our discussion on contraceptives," she reflected. "I always thought contraceptives were only for married people. I realise now that if I had known how to avoid early and unintended pregnancy, I would not be in this position, especially since I am not married."

Nthabeleng considers herself one of the lucky ones. Unlike many girls in her village forced into early marriages after falling pregnant, her mother provided unwavering support, walking with her through a pregnancy that required exhausting four-hour round trips to Bobete Health Center for antenatal care.

**The numbers tell a devastating story**

The statistics at Bobete Health Center are staggering. 66 percent of pregnant women seen at the



Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for REPSSI Lwandle Khanyile conducting interviews with members of the support group in Thaba-Tseka Ha Matšumunyane

facility are adolescents, primarily aged 15–19. The clinic serves 77 villages, with some residents walking up to six hours to reach care.

These local figures mirror a national crisis. According to the Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS), approximately one in four adolescent girls aged 15–19 have begun childbearing, with rates significantly higher in rural areas and among girls with lower education levels.

**'They think I am teaching their children to have sex'**

Despite the success of REPSSI's interventions, significant barriers remain. Maliteboho Nyai, a Peer Educator serving five villages, covers vital topics including HIV prevention, mental health, and livelihoods. However, she faces two persistent challenges: male absence and parental suspicion.

"Most men do not attend. It could be because the sessions are led by a woman, or perhaps they sim-

ply lack interest in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights," Nyai explained.

Social stigma runs deep. Some parents pull their daughters out of the program, fearing that discussing sexuality encourages promiscuity.

"They think I am teaching their children to have sex," Nyai said. "What they do not see is that their children are already sexually active and desperately need information on self-esteem so they can negotiate condom use with their partners."

The health system itself compounds the problem. Bobete Health Center lacks a dedicated youth corner, and this forces adolescents to seek SRHR services in the same spaces as their parents and neighbours.

In a culture where youth sexuality remains taboo, this lack of privacy creates a barrier of fear that keeps young people away until it is too late.

**Poverty: The silent driver**

Tšoete Ramone, speaking on behalf of the Chief, did not mince words about the root cause.

"Many people still think it is impossible to discuss sexuality issues with their children," Ramone said. "But the main cause of the challenges is linked to poverty. Due to poverty, our young girls engage in sexual activities not only with their peers but also older men with whom they cannot negotiate safe sex because they are looking to get some benefits out of

it. Unfortunately, they fall pregnant at a young age, and that is where their problems start."

**A roadmap for survival**

REPSSI Lesotho Project Officer Lefulesele Tjellane explained that their intervention, built on partnership with the Ministries of Health and Youth Development, aims to break this cycle.

The peer support groups provide Psychosocial Support for adolescent girls and young mothers suffering trauma induced by early and unplanned motherhood. REPSSI has trained a network of facilitators and nurses to serve as a frontline support system, focusing on holistic development including self-awareness, mental health, and livelihood opportunities.

Nurses receive specialised training in psychosocial support and mental health disorder screening to ensure that when a facilitator refers a young person to a clinic, they meet youth-friendly services rather than judgment.

**The community groups are open to anyone under 24 who is married or has a child.**

"We teach them how to care for their families and how to raise their children effectively," Tjellane said. "But most importantly, we focus on self-awareness. We want them to understand that even if they have a child at a young age or are married, their lives are not over. There is still a future for them."

The four-hour divide

For girls in Thaba-Tseka, the difference between an unplanned pregnancy and a finished education often comes down to a four-hour walk and the courage to break a cultural silence.

Nthabeleng's voice, soft but steady, captures the tragedy of information poverty in Lesotho's highlands: "If I had known."

REPSSI focuses on mental health and psychosocial support integration targeting social service sectors and programs focused on livelihoods improvement, youth empowerment, and poverty reduction in Southern Africa.

## Lesotho launches landmark twice-yearly injectable PrEP



Health experts present Lesotho's latest HIV data during a media briefing in Maseru, highlighting a 75% decline in new infections since 2010.

### Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has officially welcomed its first consignments of Lenacapavir, a groundbreaking twice-yearly injectable for HIV prevention, in a ceremony that highlighted both the promise of the new technology and the complex fears surrounding it.

For some patients, the arrival is bittersweet. A patient who spoke to Newsday, on a condition of anonymity, disclosed that they currently take daily oral Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) in secret and hide the pills from their partner to ensure their own safety.

While they admitted that not having to swallow a pill every morning would be a relief, they are terrified by rumours regarding the long-term effects of the injection.

"I want to protect myself, but I also hope to start a family soon," they explained. "The thought that the medication stays in the bloodstream for so long – that it might prevent me from becoming pregnant – makes me wary."

They fear reflects a significant communication challenge facing health officials as they roll out the new prevention tool.

**'A game-changing intervention'**

During the handover ceremony, Principal Secretary (PS) for the Ministry of Health 'Maneo Ntene emphasised that the shipment is a vital step in strengthening the country's prevention services. The consignment was procured with support from the Global Fund to Fight HIV, AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

"The Ministry is honoured to have esteemed partners present to mark this milestone," Ntene said, particularly recognising the US Department of State for supporting additional consignments.

World Health Organisation (WHO) Representative Innocent Nuwagira described the medication as a "game-changing biomedical intervention" in the national HIV response.

"The country continues to face a high burden of HIV, with adult prevalence remaining very high and disproportionately affecting women and young people," Nuwagira said.

He noted that despite the success of various treatments, prevention remains an area that needs more work because infections persist among vulnerable populations. Daily oral pills present adherence challenges, which is why innovation is so necessary.

"Lenacapavir strengthens this package by offering an option that overcomes the struggle of remembering a daily pill," Nuwagira explained. Following the WHO's recommendation in July 2025, the drug was approved as the first twice-yearly injectable PrEP, offering almost 100 percent protection against HIV acquisition.

He called upon all global health actors to make the drug viable in low-income countries at an affordable and sustainable cost.

**6,000 doses delivered**

Representing the United States of America, Chargé d'Affaires Thomas Hines announced the delivery of 6,000 doses of Lenacapavir, calling the occasion a "historic milestone" and a breakthrough that represents "the best of American innovation and the strong partnership between the U.S. and Lesotho."

Hines directly addressed concerns like those voiced by Neo, highlighting that the medication is particularly promising for pregnant and breastfeed-

ing mothers.

"It safely protects them during and after pregnancy to prevent mother-to-child transmission, which is a key goal for the international community," he said.

Hines noted that the delivery is the result of a landmark partnership between the United States, Global Sciences, and the Global Fund, with a goal to provide at least two million doses to high-burden countries. He reflected on the long history of cooperation, noting that the U.S. government has provided over \$1 billion in assistance to Lesotho over the last 19 years, contributing to a 15-year increase in average life expectancy for Basotho.

"These 6,000 doses represent hope for mothers, high-risk individuals, and everyone working to end new infections," Hines said.

**Over 20,000 doses expected this year**

Minister of Finance and Development Planning Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane officially handed the consignment over to the Ministry of Health, describing Lenacapavir as an innovative long-acting therapy that is the result of extensive research.

"The partnership between the Global Fund and the U.S. government will support the procurement of over 20,000 doses this year," Matlanyane confirmed.

She said this contribution reflects a shared commitment to expand patient-centered care, especially for those who face the greatest risks or have difficulty accessing daily healthcare. As the principal recipient of the grant, she extended her appreciation to the Global Fund and the people of the USA for their critical support.

**'Not a panacea'**

Matlanyane concluded the ceremony with a message of caution and encouragement.

"This injection is not a panacea for all problems but is a preventive tool," she stressed. "We urge the citizens of Lesotho to remain familiar with the norms and practices that help keep infection levels low."

By maintaining cultural norms and existing protective measures alongside this new biomedical innovation, she expressed confidence that the Ministry of Health will successfully reduce new HIV infections and build a healthier future for all Basotho, regardless of where they live.



Dr. Tšeliso Moroke

# Common Concern

*How the country moves*

## When politics becomes self-preservation

Political parties in this country are the same. They thrive on well-known social ills. They campaign on unemployment, inequality, corruption, poor service delivery, and an unhealthy economic climate. They speak passionately about reform while in opposition. They promise structural change, institutional renewal, and economic transformation. Yet once in power, the urgency fades. The language softens. The outrage disappears. The system remains intact.

Even the new parties formed in moments of public frustration follow the same script. They emerge promising to be different, cleaner, more accountable, more transparent, and more people-centred. They speak the language of renewal. They brand themselves as a break from the past.

But once in power, they fall into the same trap their predecessors fell into.

The pressures of incumbency, the temptations of executive authority, and the realities of patronage politics all begin to reshape their character. The reformers adapt to the very machinery they once criticised. The system they vowed to dismantle becomes the system they defend. And the cycle continues.

This is how the country moves.

In Lesotho, political competition has not translated into political innovation. Party alternation in government has not produced

structural reform. Instead, it has produced a rotation of elites presiding over the same administrative machinery, the same economic dependency, and the same fragile fiscal foundation.

The leadership often does not welcome scrutiny. Debate is tolerated only when it is flattering. Constructive criticism is perceived as hostility. Those who question are labelled enemies. Those who probe are accused of sabotage. Those who speak uncomfortable truths are told to be patient, to be loyal, to be "responsible."

But democracy without scrutiny is performance. Leadership without accountability is entitlement. Speaking the truth makes some uncomfortable. The role of a politically conscious citizen, and especially of a public representative, is not to flatter authority. It is to provoke thought, demand results, and shine a relentless light on the obstacles holding the country back.

The people's interests must come first. Not political sensitivities. Not fragile egos. Not coalition arithmetic. And certainly not the comfort of those who occupy office.

Our politics have become self-serving.

Instead of being instruments of public purpose, political parties have become vehicles of survival. Survival of leadership. Survival of patronage networks. Survival of influence.

Government appointments become rewards. Public contracts become currency. Oversight becomes selective. Silence becomes strategy.

And here lies the deeper problem: the system is designed in such a way that even well-intentioned leaders are absorbed by it. New parties enter believing they will resist it. They insist they are morally stronger, more disciplined, more committed to reform. But they underestimate the institutional gravity of power.

They discover that the executive structure concentrates authority. They realise that loyalty secures stability faster than reform does. They find that patronage builds political insurance. Gradually, principle negotiates with pragmatism. Reform is postponed for "strategic timing." Oversight becomes inconvenient. Transparency becomes conditional. The trap closes quietly.

We must confront a difficult truth: political parties have mastered the art of identifying problems, but not solving them.

They understand unemployment statistics. They can recite poverty levels. They eloquently speak to youth frustration and economic stagnation. But transformation requires more than diagnosis. It requires institutional reform. It requires discipline. It requires restraint in the use of power.

And our political culture does not incentivise

restraint.

Once in office, parties inherit a centralised executive system. Instead of reforming it, they adapt to it. Instead of decentralising power, they enjoy it. Instead of strengthening oversight institutions, they negotiate with them. The system becomes too useful to dismantle. This is not about ideology. It is about incentives.

Whether old parties or newly formed ones, reformist or traditionalist, they operate within the same extractive logic: secure power, consolidate influence, maintain networks, and prepare for the next election. Long-term structural change is politically expensive. Patronage is politically efficient.

The result is stagnation disguised as stability.

We see it in fiscal dependency. We see it in administrative inefficiency. We see it in youth migration. We see it in outsourcing state capacity rather than building it. We see it in the private sector, which depends heavily on government contracts, while the government depends on uncertain external revenues.

Criticism becomes personalised rather than institutionalised. When you question governance, it becomes an attack on personalities. When you demand reform, it becomes disloyalty. When you insist on transparency, it becomes a political ambition.

But governance is not a friendship club. It is a constitutional responsibility.

Political maturity requires welcoming scrutiny, embracing debate, and acting on constructive criticism. It requires understanding that disagreement strengthens democracy. It requires recognising that accountability is not humiliation; it is correction. A country cannot move forward if its leadership fears discomfort. And citizens cannot demand better outcomes if they are satisfied with better slogans.

If political parties are truly different, let them prove it, not through speeches, but through structural reforms that outlast their term in office. Let them strengthen institutions that may one day hold them accountable. Let them design systems that do not depend on personalities. Let them resist the trap that consumed those before them.

Until that happens, the country will continue to move — but in circles.

And circles, no matter how confidently defended, are not progress.

## When politics becomes self-preservation

Parliamentary oversight must become the defining watershed of the 11th Parliament. The stakes are simply too high for it to remain ceremonial or timid. At a time when the country's expectations for infrastructure development have reached unprecedented levels, the institutions responsible for oversight must rise to meet the moment.

Infrastructure is not a marginal issue in Lesotho's development agenda. It is central to economic expansion, job creation, regional competitiveness, and the basic functioning of society. Roads, bridges, public buildings, housing projects, water systems, and energy infrastructure are the backbone upon which any modern economy rests. For a country that has long struggled with unemployment, spatial inequality, and slow economic growth, infrastructure development is widely seen as a pathway to renewal.

But infrastructure also carries a shadow. Around the world, large-scale public works have historically been fertile ground for corruption, patronage networks, inflated procurement, and opaque contracting arrangements. Lesotho is not immune to these risks.

What makes the current moment particularly delicate is the political and institutional configuration surrounding infrastructure development. Many of the key players in the sector — contractors, construction companies, suppliers, and investors — are closely connected to individuals who sit within the

Cabinet and the National Executive Committee of the ruling party. This reality does not automatically imply wrongdoing. However, it undeniably creates the conditions for potential conflicts of interest.

When those tasked with governing the country are simultaneously embedded within the economic sectors most dependent on government contracts, the lines between public duty and private benefit can become dangerously blurred. Even the perception of such conflicts can erode public confidence in government decision-making.

This is why parliamentary oversight cannot be treated as a routine administrative exercise. It must become a serious institutional safeguard.

The 11th Parliament must recognise that oversight is not about embarrassing the executive or engaging in partisan battles. It is about protecting the integrity of the state and ensuring that public resources serve the public interest. Parliament must ask difficult questions about procurement processes, tender allocations, cost escalations, and project timelines. Committees must be empowered to interrogate ministries, summon officials, review contracts, and scrutinise expenditure with professional rigour.

Without this level of scrutiny, infrastructure development can easily become the arena where development ambitions collide with corruption risks.

This moment presents a profound paradox for the country: the tension between development and corruption. On the one hand, Lesotho urgently needs infrastructure investment. The country cannot industrialise, attract investors, or create jobs without modern transport networks, reliable energy systems, and functional urban planning. Delays in development carry real economic costs.

On the other hand, infrastructure spending typically involves large financial flows, emergency procurement decisions, and complex contracting arrangements. These conditions create fertile ground for illicit financial flows and financial leakages that weaken the state.

Across the world, governance institutions are struggling to keep pace with these evolving challenges. The complexity of illicit financial flows, the opacity of algorithms governance in procurement systems, and the sheer volume of crisis-related spending have outstripped the monitoring capacity of many traditional oversight bodies. What once could be tracked through straightforward auditing now requires specialised technical expertise, digital transparency tools, and coordinated institutional effort.

Lesotho's governance system was not originally designed for this level of complexity. Parliamentary committees often operate with limited research capacity, insufficient technical advisors, and inadequate access to real-time financial data. Yet the scale of modern infra-

structure investment requires exactly those capabilities.

This is why the 11th Parliament must transform oversight into a professional discipline rather than a political ritual. Members of Parliament must be supported by independent experts in finance, engineering, procurement law, and project management. Parliamentary committees should be equipped with the tools necessary to analyse contracts, evaluate project feasibility, and monitor expenditure patterns.

Transparency must also become the default setting of governance. Large infrastructure contracts should not exist in secrecy. The public must know who wins tenders, how much projects cost, what timelines are agreed upon, and what mechanisms exist for accountability when delays or cost overruns occur.

This is not about creating hostility between Parliament and the executive. It is about building a governance ecosystem that protects development from being captured by private interests.

If parliamentary oversight fails, the consequences will not simply be political embarrassment. They will be economic stagnation, wasted public funds, unfinished projects, and deepening public cynicism about politics itself.

But if oversight succeeds, the outcome could be transformative. Infrastructure development could become a genuine engine of economic inclusion rather than a vehicle for enrichment by a connected few.

The 11th Parliament therefore stands at a crossroads. It can either continue the familiar pattern where oversight exists in theory but rarely in practice, or it can establish a new tradition where Parliament actively safeguards the national interest.

How the country moves will depend on which path it chooses.



## **The budget speech is not the budget yet; so let's talk about what it gets right**

In Lesotho, every February, there is something predictable that happens. The Minister stands up, reads the Budget Speech, and before the ink is dry, the whole country becomes a panel of experts. Local Radio phone-ins heat up, WhatsApp groups explode, and the newspapers sharpen their knives with well-articulated articles. Of course, public criticism is healthy, as it forces leaders to explain themselves. But we also need to be honest about a basic fact that many people skip: a budget speech is not a final budget.

Today's article is not written to praise the government. It is written to inform the public, using simple language that even my uncle in Ha Kholopo can follow and comprehend, about the positive signals in the budget estimates that many "analysts" will not mention because good news does not sell as fast as outrage. You can be critical and still be fair. You can oppose waste and still acknowledge a good direction. That balance is exactly what a mature democracy needs, hence my intention to look at the positives from the estimates presented to us last month.

The Westminster system that we follow dictates that the Minister's speech is a proposal tabled before Parliament. It must still go through committee scrutiny, debate, possible revisions, and final approval. That process is not a small formality. It is where real accountability is supposed to happen, where MPs interrogate the numbers, committees call officials to explain priorities, and the country gets a chance to adjust course before the actual appropriation bill is passed. If we miss that point, we end up arguing about the speech as if Parliament is just a theatre, when in fact Parliament is the place where the budget should be improved.

The theme of the budget estimates speaks about accelerating economic transformation and building resilience. That sounds like big English until you translate it into normal life. Transformation means we cannot keep surviving on one or two sources of money and hoping they will last forever. Resilience means we must be able to stand when shocks come, like drought, job losses in textiles, uncertain SACU revenues, or sudden price increases in things we import. The positive signal here is not that a theme automatically changes reality, but that the budget is being framed as a tool to change the structure of the economy, not just to keep offices open and salaries paid. That framing matters because it tells Parliament and the public what to measure: not only

whether money was spent, but whether spending actually reduces vulnerability and expands productive activity.

One of the most painful ways the government can take money from citizens is silently, through bracket creep. When prices rise, wages often rise a little just to keep up, and then the worker is pushed into a higher tax bracket even though their real buying power has not improved. The Estimates indicate an intention to adjust tax credits and thresholds to offset some inflation impact and protect lower- and middle-income earners. This is not a headline-grabbing policy, but it affects the monthly reality of teachers, nurses, police officers, all who are in the lower grades of A to D. Parliament should still demand the exact numbers and verify who benefits most, but the principle is important: it signals a willingness not to punish ordinary earners simply because inflation has moved.

If you want to understand Lesotho's economy, don't start with speeches; start with the pot at home. When food prices rise, it is not a theory. It is hunger. That is why it matters that the budget estimates allocate serious funding to agriculture and spell out practical interventions rather than vague promises. The agriculture package includes commitments that speak directly to production, stability, and value. Irrigation is one of them. In Lesotho, irrigation is not a luxury; it is survival. Rain-fed farming is too risky and outdated in an era of climate uncertainty, and the proposal to operationalise multiple irrigation schemes is the kind of shift that can help households produce beyond one season.

Storage and logistics are another. Producing food without proper storage means we lose value after harvest, and the plan to operationalise the Maseru Storage and Logistics Facility speaks to reducing post-harvest losses and improving national reserves. Livestock protection also features strongly. For many Basotho, livestock is savings, school fees, and status; it is wealth that walks. A national vaccination programme targeting major livestock diseases, alongside stronger border biosecurity and steps toward improved diagnostic capacity, is a pro-rural signal that deserves recognition. The wool and mohair value chain is also treated as something that can be improved through breeding and facility upgrades, which is important because value is not only



**Theko Tlebere**

about quantity; it is also about quality and market competitiveness.

The key point is this: such commitments are measurable. Parliamentarians should ask the right questions, like (rather than point of orders all the time): where exactly are the irrigation schemes, who will benefit, what is the time-

line, and what safeguards prevent the same names from winning every contract? That is how scrutiny should work. A budget is not good because it says the right things; it is good when it sets clear actions that can be tracked and corrected.

When a country is under pressure, it is tempting to cut social spending and then later wonder why society is breaking down. One positive signal is that the budget estimates still place heavy emphasis on human capital, especially education and health. Education spending matters not only for classrooms, but for skills, productivity, and long-term national capability. The stated priorities around curriculum reform, strengthening TVET, early learning, and investment in facilities and training point to a recognition that education must produce competence, not just certificates. Health remains a major focus, too.

Anyone who has been to a public hospital knows that shortages are not abstract: staff shortages mean long queues, equipment gaps mean referrals, and medicine stock-outs mean suffering. The budget will not solve everything in one year, but maintaining health as a core priority rather than a side issue is a positive, because a weak health system drags the whole economy down through lost productivity, higher household costs, and preventable deaths.

Some people hear tourism and sports and immediately think "extras," as if these are luxuries for good times. But that view misses how jobs are created in small economies. Tourism can absorb youth and rural communities faster than many formal sectors because it links directly to small business activity: transport, food, accommodation, guiding, crafts, events, and local services.

The Estimates include allocations tied to tourism infrastructure, destination marketing, heritage protection, and the legislative work needed to modernise the sector. Sports infrastructure is also given attention. The public is right to demand transparency, district fairness, and value for money.

But it is wrong to assume that sports

spending is automatically waste. If facilities are built or upgraded properly, they can enable tournaments, community programmes, talent development, and local commerce around events. The scrutiny question is not "why sports?" The scrutiny question is "how will this spending widen access, grow participation, and stimulate local economic activity?"

One of the hardest truths in Lesotho is also one of the most necessary to say out loud: government cannot employ every graduate and every job seeker. A budget that talks about jobs must therefore do more than announce public hiring or wage adjustments. It must strengthen the foundations for enterprise growth, especially for MSMEs, because that is where employment can expand if barriers are reduced and support systems are credible. Even the broader public discussion around entrepreneurship support, incubation, and investment and mentorship, including contributions from Basotho in the diaspora, points toward an understanding that growth must be built with citizens producing, not only with government spending. The real test for Parliament is to ask whether these support systems are accessible beyond Maseru, whether selection is transparent, and whether funding and mentorship are structured to produce businesses that survive beyond one grant cycle.

As Basotho, if we are really serious, we need to do two things at the same time. The first is recognising positives in the budget estimates, such as protecting ordinary earners from bracket creep, treating agriculture as a practical programme with irrigation and livestock protection, and maintaining strong investment in education and health, and second, we need to also continue demanding hard accountability.

A budget is not a poem. It is a contract with numbers. Parliament must interrogate timelines, procurement rules, fairness across districts, and measurable outcomes. Citizens should demand reporting that is simple enough to follow, because public money must be explained in public language.

I want to conclude by saying, this is how we avoid childish politics where every fair comment is treated as praise, and every criticism is treated as sabotage. You can acknowledge what is constructive and still insist on accountability. In fact, that combination is the most patriotic position. Shouting is easy. Understanding is harder. But Lesotho needs more citizens who can do both: feel strongly and think clearly. The Future is NOW!



Kingdom of Lesotho

FEBRUARY 2026  
ITT: 004 of 2026/27

Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development

## Invitation for Bid

Tender for supply and delivery of Baby formula, Diapers, Hygiene kits and Groceries -  
ITT: 004 of 2026/2027

Tender for supply and delivery of Baby formula, Diapers, Hygiene kits and Groceries - ITT: 004 of 2026/2027

- The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development invites bids from locally registered eligible companies for the supply and delivery of **Baby formula, Diapers, Hygiene kits and Groceries** for Maseru District.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 12th March 2026 at **12:00 noon**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of a Bid bond from a financial institution recognised by the Central Bank Lesotho.
- \*NB\* Tenderers will not be awarded more than ONE Lot**
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **(M2,000.00) Two thousand Maloti only**. The method of payment will be cash at Accounts Office at Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, office Maseru. Second Floor 1010 Building.
- It is mandatory for bidders to submit certificate of bona fide and will be included in the document, their tax clearance certificates from the Lesotho Revenue Authority together with their bids as well as their trader's license. These documents shall either be originals or certified copies by Lesotho Revenue Authority and Trade Department. Non-compliance with this requirement may invalidate their bids.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 14:30hrs on Tuesday 12th March, 2026 at the address given below.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at:

Procurement Unit  
Gender, Youth and Social Development Headquarters,  
10 10 Building Opposite Pitso Ground  
Second Floor Room 201  
Maseru 100, Lesotho.  
Tel: + 266 – 27003549

## Confidentiality

Due to the nature of this assignment, the Ministry of

Gender Youth and Social Development (MGYSD) shall require that documents and any other information acquired by the company from any source during the course of undertaking of the assignment be kept strictly confidential, and that such information shall not be shared with third parties without the express permission of MGYSD.

## 1.1. ITT Process

The Principal Secretary for Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development now invite sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **supply and delivery of Baby formula, Diapers, Hygiene kits and Groceries - ITT: 004 of 2026/2027:**

LOT 1	
ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	HUGGIES BABY DIAPERS
LOT 2	
2	CLEMENSE ADULT DIAPERS
LOT 3	
3	BABY FORMULA
LOT 4	
4	HYGIENE KITS
5	GROCERIES

**No one Bidder will be awarded more than one Lot, however Bidders**

## Clarifications:

All clarifications and queries on this tender must be addressed to the Secretary Tender Panel, Procurement Unit, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development Headquarters,

10 10 Building  
Second Floor Room 201  
Tel: 27003549

Email [nmohomaneva@gmail.com](mailto:nmohomaneva@gmail.com). All requests for clarifications should be received no later than 10 days before 12th March 2026. All requests for clarifications must be in writing through email.

## Invitation to Bidders

## BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE BIDDING

06/03/2026

Drilling and Blasting Services - TTDC/  
MoLGCHP/01/2026/2027

- The Thaba-Tseka District Council] has allocated/received funds to be used for the acquisition of Drilling and Blasting Services for Thaba-Tseka rural roads.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above works.
- Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures contained in the Public Procurement Act and the Regulations made under the Act and is competitive to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 8(a) from **8.00am to 16.30pm**.
- The bidding document which has been prepared in English *language* may be purchased by interested bidders at 8(b) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **M2,500.00**. The method of payment will be **cash at Thaba-Tseka Urban Council**.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **21/04/2026**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **2% of the bidding amount**. Bid securities must be valid until **21/06/2026**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **10.30am on the 21/04/2026**
- There shall be a site visit at Ponseng-Bobete, Mokoto-Matsaile, Ramabetha-Phuleng, Khanyetsi-Khoshane and Mantsonyane- Chooko on the 18-20/03/2026 and the meet up place

will be Thaba-Tseka District Council at 9.00am on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.

- Bidders should note the following:
  - Documents may be inspected at: **Thaba-Tseka District Council Near Education office 63205290**
  - Documents will be issued from: **Thaba-Tseka District Council Procurement office near Education office 63205290**
  - Bids must be delivered to: **Thaba-Tseka District Council procurement office near Education Office 63205290**
  - Address of bid opening: **Thaba-Tseka District Council Reception near Education Office 63205290**

- The Planned Procurement Schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Publish bid notice	06/03/2026
(b) Site visits where applicable	18-20/03/2026
(c) Bid closing date	21/04/2026
(d) Bid closing Time	10.00am
(e) Evaluation process	22-24/04/2026 and 27-28/04/2026
(f) Display and communication of Notice of Tender	To be decided
(g) Contract signature	To be decided

Signature:

Name: Makhauhelo Koali

Position of Authorised Official: Assistant Procurement Officer



## TSEBISO HO SECHABA

## THUTO/THUPELO KA TLHOPHO BOCHA EA PHEPELO EA METSI MABALANE

Morero oa Phepele ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tsebisa sechaba sa libaka tse anngoeng ke Morero hore khoebo e bitsoang 4D Climate Solutions eleng Moeletsi, e ntse e potoloha le libaka tsa Morero ho fana ka thuto, ho ruta le ho hlokomelisa sechaba ka Tlhopho Bocha ea phepele ea metsi mabalane, e reretsoeng ho kenngoa tšebetsong ke 'muso oa Lesotho

## Ele karolo ea lenaneo lena, Moeletsi o ntse a:

- Tšoara likopano tsa sechaba le lipitso,
- Etsa likopano le Baetapele ba Sechaba (Marena, Makh'anselara),
- Akofisa mananeo a thuto le tlhokomeliso ea sechaba.

Sechaba se khothaletsoa ho nka karolo ka mafolofolo likopanong tsena molemong oa ho fumana kutloisiso e pharalletseng ka Molao oa Metsi o sisintsoeng le bohlokoa ba oona tsamaisong ea metsi Lesotho.

Morero oa Phepele ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tšhelitsoe ka lichelete ke 'muso Lesotho, Banka ea Lefatse, Banka ea Ntsetsopelo ea Europa le Mokhatlo oa Linaha tsa Europa (European Union).





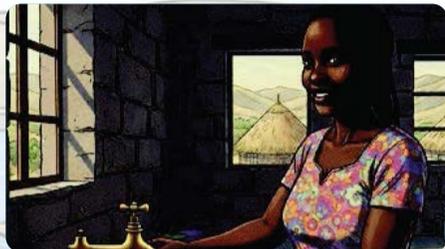
# METSI A HLOEKILENG A TLA MOTSENG OO U PHELANG HO OONA

Morero oa Phepelo ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tsebisa sechaba sa libaka tse anngoeng ke Morero hore Kh'amphani ea 4D Climate Solutions eleng Moeletsi, e ntse e potoloha le libaka tsa Morero ho fana ka thuto, ho ruta le ho hlokomelisa sechaba ka Tlhopho Bocha ea phepelo ea metsi mabalane, e reretsoeng ho kenngoa tšebetsong ke 'muso oa Lesotho.

## TŠEBELETSO E NCHA EA METSI E TLISA METSI A:



**A hloekile:** A bolokehileng ho thibela mafu.



**A nolofatsang bophelo:** U bula pompo ea hau, ha u sa lokela ho tsamaea leeto le lelelele ho ea pompong ea sechaba kapa selibeng.



**A tšepahalang:** A fumanehang le har'a komello, le litukiso li etsahalang kapele.



**A theko e bobebe:** Ha u sebelisa 5000L, utla lefella 1000L e nngoe le e nngoe M6.11 feela ka khoeli. Litjeo li phahama ho latela tšebeliso ea hau ea metsi.

## MATHATA A LITŠEBELETSO TSA KHALE TSA METSI KE A FE?

- Ha a hloekisoa, joale a ka u kulisa,
- Ha a tšepahale:
  - Pompo e ka robeha 'me ea se lokisoa,
  - A ka fela ka nako ea komello,
- Ha a nolofatse bophelo:
  - U lokela ho nka leeto ho a lata selibeng kapa
  - pompong ea sechaba.



## BOIKARABELLO BA HAU KE BO FE?

1. Fokotsa (se ke ua sebelisa metsi a mangata ho hlatsoa)
2. Sebelisa Hape (sebelisa metsi a hlatsoitseng ho noesetsa lijalo tsa hau)
3. Lokisa moo metsi a rothang kapa ho lutla motseng oa hau
4. Lefella tšebeliso ea metsi bonyane khoeli le khoeli



## SE BOLELANG HO UENA?

U ka kenya kopo ea khokelo ea metsi a fihlang ka peipi ntlong ea hau kapa, ua tsoela pele ho fumana metsi pompong ea sechaba kapa selibeng haeba li ntse li sebetsa.

## HOBANENG TŠEBELETSO EA HO TLISA POMPO LEBALENG LA HAU E LOKELA HO LEFELLOA?

Metsi ke mahala, empa khokelo le besebeletsi ba ho a tlisa nako tsohle abile a hloekile li hloka ho lefelloa hobane:



Letamo le aheloa hore metsi a fumanehe le ka linako tsa komello.



Ka nako ea tlhoekiso, ho sebelisoa mechini le lihlahisoa tse thusang hore metsi a bolokehe.



Ho hloka hla litjeo ho pompa metsi ka mechine le motlakase ho bopa marangrang a isang metsi malapeng.



Ho hiroa basebetsi bakeng sa ts'ebetso ea letsatsi le letsatsi le tukiso moo ho robehileng malapeng.

## TEFISO EA TŠEBELETSO EA METSI E TLA TSAMAEA JOANG?

- **Ho hokeloa** peipe e boholo ba limitara tse 150 kapa ka tlase: **M1,620.00 – M4,860.00.**
- Limitara tse fetang 150 u tla fuoa litjeo ho loatela bohole ba sebaka.
- Mofani oa lits'ebetso o tla bala mithara khoeli le khoeli,
- Litefiso tsa khoeli li latela tšebeliso ea hau ea metsi mekhahlelong ena:

Band A	0 – 5 kl	M6.10/ 1,000 litara
Band B	5 – 10 kl	M10.39 / 1,000 litara
Band C	10 – 15 kl	M18.29 / 1,000 litara
Band D	>15 kl	M25.24 / 1,000 litara

**Ha u sebelisa ka holimo ho 5000L ka khoeli, u patala tjena khoeli le khoeli:**

Band A	0 – 5 kl	M0.00
Band B	>5 – 10 kl	M49.18
Band C	>10 – 15 kl	M49.18
Band D	>15 kl	M49.18

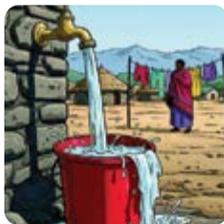
## Mohlala oa litefiso tsa khoeli

160L ka letsatsi kapa linkho tsa 20L tse 8 ka letsatsi.

**Tefiso ea khoeli:** (Matsatsi 30 x 160L) **4800L/4,8kl x M 6.11 +**

**Tefiso e tlamang + Lekhetso Kakaretso:** M29.28 ka khoeli

## SEO U LOKELANG HO SE E TSA TŠEBELISONG EA METSI



Seke oa siea u buletse pompo.



Se ke oa sebelisa metsi a mangata ho hlapa.



Tšella feela ka metsi a hlapileng kapa a hlatsoitseng.



Hlapa matsoho ha u tsoa ntloaneng.

**BAKENG SA LITLHAKISETSO HOKAHANA LE LESOTHO LOWLANDS WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - PHASE II LINOMORONG TSE LATELANG: 266 6282 7550 (WhatsApp).**



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### Chris Theko

Lesotho's food and outdoor lifestyle scene is set to welcome a unique culinary experience with the introduction of "Sizzle in the Sky," a barbecue-themed event that promises to bring a new flavor to the local events calendar.

The event, scheduled for 21 March 2026 at Ka Mafikeng, is the brainchild of Refiloe Mokone and Libuseng Rakhomo, who were inspired after attending several barbecue festivals and cooking competitions in South Africa.

According to the co-founder and the organiser Mokone, their experiences at these events sparked the idea of introducing a similar concept in Lesotho, one that celebrates the craft of slow-cooked barbecue while offering a distinctive twist.

"We have been going to cooking competitions and barbecue festivals in South Africa, and that's where the inspiration came from. We realised that this kind of experience doesn't really exist here at home, so we decided to create our very own," Mokone explained.

What sets Sizzle in the Sky apart from the typical braai experience is its focus on slow smoking techniques, a cooking method that uses flavored wood to gradually infuse meat with rich, smoky flavors over time.

Unlike conventional grilling, where meat is cooked quickly over open flames, the Mountain Sizzlers team uses carefully selected woods to create unique flavor profiles.

For example, flavored wood such as oak and marula may be used for certain meats, while specialized wood types are chosen specifically for smoking trout and other dishes.

The result is a slow-cooked barbecue experience that emphasizes patience, technique, and depth of flavor.

Guests attending the event can expect a diverse menu featuring a variety of smoked meats, including beef, chicken, duck, trout, and even crocodile meat.

The organizers say the goal is to introduce people to different flavors and show that barbecue can go far

# New barbecue experience to ignite foodies' palate



beyond the traditional braai many are familiar with.

While the March event serves as an introductory edition, the long-term vision is much bigger.

Organisers hope to establish Sizzle in the Sky as an annual event, with a larger flagship festival planned for September each year. The September edition is expected to be the main highlight, where the organizers plan to expand the experience and attract even more barbecue enthusiasts.

"This event in March is just the introduction. The main vision is to host a bigger event in September every year, where we really go big and bring the barbecue culture to life," Mokone said.

With its blend of outdoor cooking, unique flavors, and social atmosphere, Sizzle in the Sky aims to become a major attraction for food lovers and lifestyle enthusiasts in Lesotho.

If successful, it could mark the beginning of a new culinary tradition, one where smoke, fire, and flavor bring people together in celebration of the art of barbecue.

**21 MARCH 2026 @KA MAFIKENG**

**MEATS: PORK, BIRDS, TROUT & GAME | Gates open @11AM - 10PM**

**M50.00 COOLERBOX** • **M350.00 200 LTD TICKETS** • **ticketbox Pick n Pay**  
NB: NO TICKET SALE AT THE GATE

**Ticket sales: 20/11/25 - 28/02/26 - No Weapons allowed.** **For more info: +266 5143 1682 / 5918 2686** **@themountainsizzlers**

# Celebrating visual art in water conservation

**Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

Water in Lesotho is more than a natural resource; it is a lifeline that reflects cultural heritage, emotional depth and community resilience.

This message was vividly captured during the recent Water Resilient Art Competition, where local artists used creativity to explore the relationship between people and water while raising awareness about conservation.

The initiative, organised by the United Kingdom High Commission and the Lesotho Commission for UNESCO, brought together artists from different backgrounds to express the importance of water resilience through visual art.

Participants submitted drawings and paintings that highlighted the value of water and the need to protect what is often referred to as Lesotho's "white gold". Outstanding artists were recognised with prizes for their powerful artistic interpretations.

British High Commissioner to Lesotho, Martine Sunshine Sobey, praised the creativity displayed and emphasised the role of art in connecting communities and addressing important issues.

"We launched the competition to bring together the artistic community and to highlight the vital topic of water, cultural, emotional, and deeply human."

Providing an overview of the competition, Pheko Mathibeli commended the British High Commission for supporting an initiative that allowed Basotho artists to engage with an important environmental issue.

"The artists have carefully considered the relevance, clarity of message, depth, diver-



sity, and creativity of their pieces," he said, acknowledging their efforts to highlight the challenges surrounding water access.

One of the standout artists, Senate Nkuebe, produced a painting of a woman carrying a baby and a clay bucket of water, symbolising the daily realities of many Basotho families.

"This art piece also inspires and encourages people to know the value of water," she explained, linking her work to Sustainable Development Goal 6, which promotes universal access to safe water and sanitation.

Nkuebe scooped the first prize, winning a laptop. Despite Lesotho's abundant water resources flowing from its mountains, concerns

remain about balancing conservation and exploitation of the resource.

Another runner-up, Tlotliso Mathews, painted a vivid depiction of the rainy season, illustrating the importance of rainfall for rural communities that often lack adequate water infrastructure.

"The persistent generosity of water sustains life and shapes communities," he said, emphasising how closely water is tied to Lesotho's cultural identity.

In the under-16 category, Khati Moroma highlighted the importance of conserving water resources for the benefit of both Lesotho and neighbouring countries.

"If properly conserved, water could benefit not just Basotho, but also neighbouring countries," Moroma said, calling for stronger policies to protect the resource.

However, climate change continues to threaten water availability in Lesotho. Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, including droughts and floods, pose risks to agriculture, water supply and livelihoods.

A World Bank report has warned that climate change could lead to significant water shortages in the future due to reduced rainfall and rising temperatures.

Large infrastructure projects such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project have also sparked debate, with some communities arguing that the initiative benefits South Africa more than local residents who still struggle with water access.

To address environmental challenges, several initiatives are promoting community involvement in water conservation. Programmes such as the ReNOKA movement encourage communities to protect natural resources through integrated catchment management.

Educational initiatives supported by the European Union have also engaged schoolchildren in climate change awareness through creative activities, including photography exhibitions and art competitions.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Natural Resources continues to implement projects such as the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project Phase II, aimed at improving water supply systems in communities that have long struggled with access to potable water.

Senior Arts and Crafts Officer 'Mabokang Mokotso said art remains a powerful tool for raising awareness about environmental issues while supporting the growth of the creative sector.

"Artists, through their art, help us see beyond statistics and policies. They address the current challenges, making us feel the urgency, the beauty, and the responsibility of protecting this vital resource," she said.

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## Mamello Rakotsoane

In a move to strengthen long-distance running in Lesotho, Alliance Insurance has once again partnered with Hillbusterz Running Club to host a 60-kilometre marathon scheduled for May 9 around Maseru.

Dubbed the Alliance Hillbusterz Long Last Run, the ultra-marathon is designed to help Basotho athletes prepare for international competitions, particularly the upcoming Comrades Marathon in South Africa.

Speaking on behalf of the organisers, Alliance Insurance's Manager for Public Relations, Communications and Sponsorships, Limakatso Mokobocho, said the collaboration is driven by a shared vision to support local athletic talent.

"The sole purpose of this partnership with Hillbusterz is to support Basotho runners who have qualified to compete in the Comrades Marathon. We want to ensure they are fully prepared and confident when they represent the country," she said.

The event marks an important addition to Lesotho's athletics calendar as it offers elite runners a competitive platform on home soil ahead of one of the world's toughest ultra-marathons.

The race will start and finish at Maseru Mall, taking runners through several areas across the capital. The route will pass through Bambatha, Ha Hoohlo, Stationeng, Fokothi, Domiciliary, Masoleng, Maqalika Dam, Khubetsoana, Mine Workers, Koalabata, Ha Tsosane, Khorong, Lancers Gap and Lesotho China Fellowship Collegiate.

The first stretch of the race will cover approximately 30 kilometres before athletes return along the same route to Maseru Mall, completing the demanding 60-kilometre distance.

Organisers say the course has been carefully designed to challenge runners physically and mentally, focusing on endurance,

# Comrades marathon preparations boosted



Representatives of Alliance Insurance Company, athletes from the Hillbusterz Running Club and other stakeholders gather during the launch of the 65km ultra-marathon.

stamina and resilience — qualities essential for success in ultra-distance competitions such as the Comrades Marathon.

Although the race primarily targets athletes who have already qualified for the Comrades Marathon, organisers expect strong participation from the broader local running community.

The event is also seen as an opportunity to further promote the culture of long-distance running in Lesotho and encourage

emerging athletes to test their limits in ultra-distance races.

During the launch, experienced runner Seatile Papashane of Mountain Runners Athletics Club was invited to share his journey in long-distance running with fellow athletes and guests.

Papashane revealed that he has earned two Comrades Marathon badges and two Alliance silver medals from previous races, including the Hillbusterz Last Long run.

Reflecting on his career, he spoke openly about the lessons he has learned from competing in demanding endurance races.

He explained that while the sport has brought moments of triumph, it has also presented challenges that have shaped his growth as an athlete.

"There are good moments and challenging moments in every race. But each experience builds strength, discipline and character," he said.

## Masianokeng academy moulds future stars



Tlokotsi Ndlovu, President of Masianokeng Sports Academy

### Refiloe Molise

Founded in the heart of Maseru, Masianokeng Sports Academy is using sport as a powerful tool to keep children off the streets and shape them into responsible future leaders.

Established on 21 March 2020, the academy now nurtures about 115 boys and girls between the ages of five and 20, offering them opportunities in soccer, boxing and beauty pageants while promoting

academic excellence.

Tlokotsi Ndlovu, president of the Masianokeng sports academy, said the initiative was born out of deep concern for the welfare of young people in the community.

"The aim is to take children away from the streets, away from drugs and early teenage pregnancy. We wanted to create a safe space where they can focus on sports and education," said Ndlovu.

He explained that each child pays a subscription fee of M50 to help sustain some of

the academy's activities. Despite this contribution, the organisation still faces financial constraints.

"One of the challenges we have is that we do not have sponsors and full equipment. Many of our children are vulnerable, so we try to minimise costs so that it does not affect them," he said.

Beyond sports training, the academy also prioritises academic performance. Learners who excel in school and in sports are rewarded during annual awards ceremonies held between May and June, with this year's ceremony scheduled for 30 May 2026.

"We give them awards for performing well in school and in sports so as to motivate them. We are looking forward to seeing these children performing well in their schoolwork and in sports," Ndlovu added.

The academy has also extended its footprint beyond Lesotho's borders through international sports exchanges. From 16 to 20 July 2026, the team will travel to Botswana to participate in a soccer tournament as part of an ongoing friendship with teams from that country.

One of the academy's players, 17-year-old Malefetsane Ntlopo said that the institution has been life-changing. Having joined five years ago, he said the academy helped him avoid negative influences and focus on building a better future.

"I was inspired by the discipline and success of the athletes in my community. I wanted to stay focused and avoid negative influences," Ntlopo said.

He participates in football, a sport he says allows him to express himself and work as part of a team. According to him, the academy ensures that education comes first.

"The academy encourages us to focus on our education first. We have scheduled training times that do not interfere with school and our coaches always remind us that education is important," he explained.

Ntlopo said his school results have improved since joining the academy because he has learned discipline, time management and responsibility.

"Being part of the academy has taught me discipline and responsibility, which help me focus better on my studies," he said.

He described the upcoming trip to Botswana as a major opportunity.

"Travelling to Botswana means a lot to me. It is a great chance to represent my academy and my country and compete at a higher level," he said.

Ndlovu reflected that when he founded the academy, he had set a five-year goal which he believes has now been achieved. His new ambition is to see Masianokeng Sports Academy become one of the biggest academies in Lesotho.

As the academy continues to grow, he appealed to individuals and companies to support the initiative through sponsorships or equipment donations, stressing that investing in young people today will secure a better tomorrow for the nation.



# Blockbuster league action to reopen Setsoto



*Setsoto Stadium*

## Seabata Mahao

The Vodacom Premier League (VPL) is set for a cracking quadruple header this weekend as top-flight football finally returns to Setsoto Stadium after more than five years.

The Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) recently confirmed that Week 22 fixtures will be staged at the iconic Maseru venue, marking the first time in years that league matches will be played here following a long ban imposed by continental football authorities over stadium standards.

All Saturday fixtures will be played at Setsoto Stadium, with the first match scheduled for 11:00 hours while the final game will kick off at 18:30 hours.

The curtain raiser promises fireworks as title-chasing sides Lifofane Football Club (FC) and Lioli FC square off in what could prove to be one of the defining matches of the season.

Lifofane, head into the clash sitting at the summit of the standings after a fairytale start to the campaign, collecting 45 points from 21 matches, and enjoying a strong run of form in recent weeks.

However, their leadership will face a stern

test against defending champions Lioli, who are breathing down their necks in fourth place with 37 points from 21 matches.

Lioli will also be eager to bounce back and close the gap on the leaders after a mixed run of results in recent weeks. The Teyateyaneng giants have the experience and pedigree in big matches, and their clash with the free-scoring Lifofane is expected to set the tone for the day's action.

At 13:00 hours, struggling Liphakoe will battle traditional giants Matlama in a match that carries significant implications at both ends of the table.

Liphakoe are fighting to escape relegation, and will be desperate for points, while Matlama will aim to maintain pressure on the top sides and keep their title hopes alive.

The third match of the day will see second-placed Lijabatho take on Majantja in what promises to be another thrilling encounter between two of this season's surprise packages.

Lijabatho have been one of the outstanding performers this season, currently sitting second on the log with 42 points and boasting the league's most disciplined defensive records with only 11

goals conceded.

Majantja, who are also in the top-four race, will look to disrupt Lijabatho's momentum and strengthen their own ambitions for a strong finish this season.

The final fixture of the day will see Linare lock horns with Bantu in a mouth-watering evening encounter.

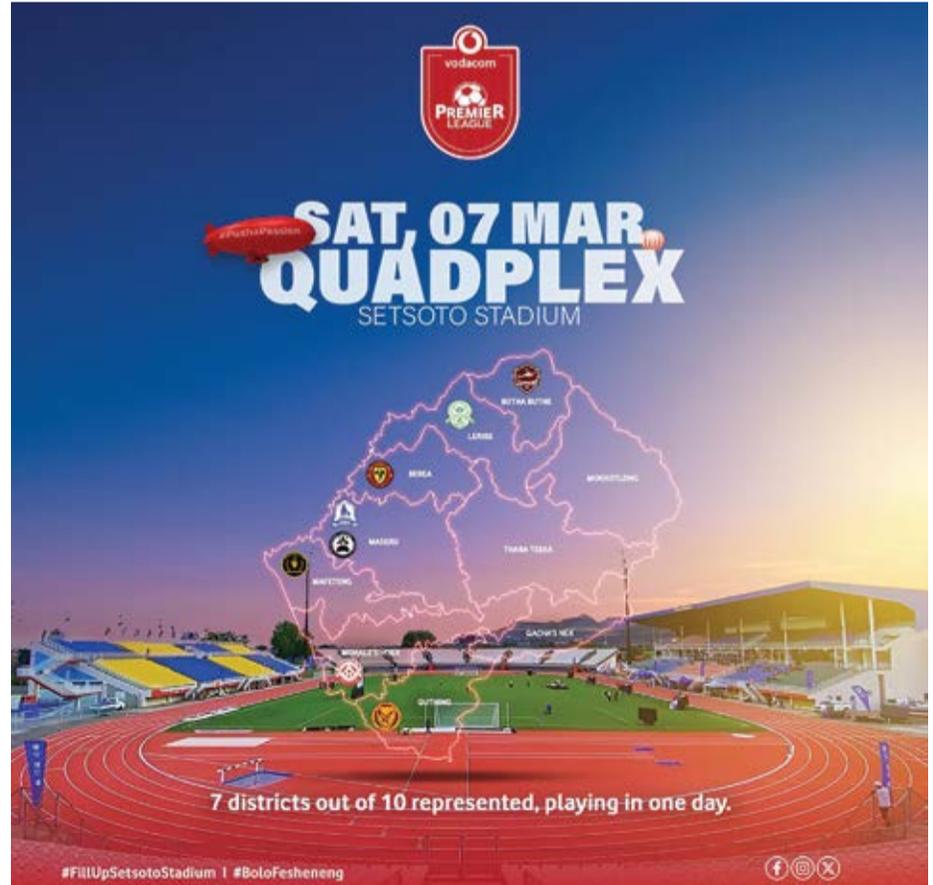
Bantu, currently among the title contenders, will be eager to keep pace with the league leaders, while Linare will hope to climb further up the table with a statement victory.

Meanwhile, the VPL action continues on Sunday with three additional fixtures scheduled across different venues.

At Ratjomose Ground, Limkokwing University (LU) will host Members FC in a crucial encounter for both sides as they seek to move away from the lower half of the table.

Elsewhere, Manonyane will take on Machokha in another battle involving teams fighting for consistency this season, while LCS will welcome LMPS at the LCS Ground in what promises to be a tightly contested affair.

Beyond the football spectacle, the return of league matches to Setsoto Stadium is being celebrated as a milestone for local football. The stadium recently underwent renovations including the installation of a new playing surface and improvements to surrounding infrastructure, which are expected to enhance both the quality of play and the experience for supporters attending the matches.



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