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# Monaphathi's pension withheld over 128 unfinished judgments

## ... High Court rules he must work until cases are finalised

### Thoboloko Nfšonyane

Retired High Court judge, Justice Tšeliso Monaphathi, who left behind 128 undelivered judgments and 11 part-heard cases, some dating back to 1995, is not entitled to his pension until he completes the outstanding work, the High Court has ruled.

In a judgment delivered on Tuesday this week, a full bench of the High Court dismissed most of the claims brought by Justice Monaphathi, who sought to compel the release of his retirement benefits and challenged Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane's decision to withhold them pending the finalisation of his judicial backlog.

#### 'A serious dereliction of constitutional duty'

The court heard that Justice Monaphathi reached the mandatory retirement age of 75 on 4 August 2024. At that time, he had 128 reserved judgments and 11 part-heard matters outstanding. A table submitted to the court revealed that some judgments had been pending since 1995, the year he was appointed to the bench.

In a letter dated 26 July 2024, Chief Justice Sakoane directed the applicant to provide a written timetable of not more than four months to deliver the reserved judgments and six months to complete the part-heard matters. The letter also stated:

"I have taken the decision that the processing of your retirement benefits will depend on completion of all outstanding judicial work."

Justice Monaphathi challenged this decision, arguing that the Chief Justice had no power to withhold his benefits and that the directive interfered with his judicial independence.

#### 'May' does not mean discretion, court holds

Central to the dispute was the interpretation of Section 121(2) of the Constitution of Lesotho, which provides:

"Notwithstanding that he has attained the age prescribed for the purposes of subsection (1), a person holding the office of Chief Justice or other Judge of the High Court may continue in office for so long after attaining that age as may be necessary to enable him to deliver



judgement or to do any other thing in relation to proceedings that were commenced before he attained that age."

Justice Monaphathi argued that the word "may" gave him discretion to choose whether to continue working after retirement. The court rejected this interpretation.

In a unanimous judgment delivered by Mainga AJ, with whom Mkandawire AJ and Mangota AJ agreed, the court held:

"The use of the word 'may' does not denote that a judge who has attained the age prescribed has a discretion to continue or not, as the applicant alleges. He or she has no discretion. To interpret the section 121 (1) and (2) of the Constitution and section 4 (1) and (2) of the High Court Act as the applicant alleges leads to absurdity and renders these provisions worthless. A judge may accumulate pending cases like in this case, and choose not to continue. That could never have been the intention of the Legislature."

The court further endorsed the earlier interpretation of the Chief Justice in *Rex v Sebolai and Another*, stating:

"The Constitution categorically requires a Judge whose period of appointment expires or is revoked to continue to deliver judgment or to do any other thing in relation to proceedings that were commenced before him previously thereto."

#### 'No evidence of interference'

Justice Monaphathi had also alleged that Chief Justice Sakoane's actions violated Section 118(2) of the Constitution, which guarantees judicial independence, and Section 9, which prohibits forced labour.

The court found no merit in these claims:

"With greatest respect to the applicant, his narrative rings hollow as a naked attack on the first respondent and is meritless. There is no evidence that the first respondent interfered with the applicant's decision-making or judicial independence, nor is there evidence that the first respondent is imposing forced labour on him. Applicant himself accepts that the pending cases are his constitutional obligation to finalise."

On the forced labour claim, the court noted that Section 9(3)(e) of the Constitution expressly excludes from the definition of forced labour:

"Any labour reasonably required by law as part of reasonable and normal community or other civic obligations."

#### Entitled to benefits, but only if he works

While the court ruled against the judge on most of his prayers, it did grant partial relief on one issue: the question of whether a judge who continues after retirement to finalise pending matters is entitled to the benefits of office.

The court held that although the applicant cannot access his pension until the work is done, he should be paid a salary for the period he spends finalising the cases:

"Had the Legislature intended otherwise, it would have said so in no uncertain terms. He or she is entitled to a salary, especially as no pension is payable during the period in which the outstanding judgments and part-heard matters are being finalised."

The court rejected the Chief Justice's submission that paying a judge under these circumstances would "reward incompetence," stating:

"That might be the case, but practice cannot substitute for the law. In this case, it would have been virtually impossible for the applicant to continue without a salary or access to his pension."

#### 'His claim of having served honourably is brazen'

The judgment was sharply critical of Justice Monaphathi's conduct. The court noted that he had accumulated judgments dating back nearly three decades, and that in 2023 the Court of Appeal had drawn attention to a case in which he had failed to deliver judgment for ten years.

"This is a regrettable case, as litigants have waited for decades to obtain justice. The noble and laudable efforts of the first respondent to turn around that ugly face in the High Court of the Kingdom should be supported and met with much appreciation."

The court added:

"His claim of having served honourably is brazen, particularly in light of the number of outstanding cases he accumulated during his tenure as a judge."

On the issue of costs, the court declined to award them to either party, stating:

"Applicant succeeds on prayer 5 only; the rest would be dismissed, but we cannot award him costs, much of the blame is attributed to him."

#### The final order

The court ordered: "In the event that the applicant complies with section 121 (2), he should be given the benefits of a Puisne Judge for the period he will be finalising the pending cases."

The rest of the prayers are dismissed. There was no order as to costs.

**Newsday** (+266) 2231 4267 / 5945 8983

Carlton Centre  
3rd Floor  
Room 302  
Kingsway  
Maseru

MANAGING EDITOR  
Lerato Matheka  
managingeditor@newsdayonline.co.ls

NEWS EDITOR  
Kananelo Boloetse  
editor@newsdayonline.co.ls

SUB EDITOR  
Bereng Mpaki

NEWS ROOM  
Nisoaki Mofaung  
Seabata Mahao  
Thoboloko Nfšonyane

INTERNS  
Mamello Rakotsoane  
Refiloe Molise

CONTRIBUTORS  
Theko Tlebere  
Motsamai Mokotjo

PRODUCTION  
Bataung Monaheng

VIDEOGRAPHER  
Tumelo Taole

DISTRIBUTION  
Lehlohonolo Mantsoe

MARKETING  
Tefah Sello  
Tumelo Ramotsoane  
marketing@newsdayonline.co.ls

WEBSITE  
www.newsdayonline.co.ls

FACEBOOK  
Newsday Newspaper LS  
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# COMPOL Matsoso tells detractors to 'hang themselves'

**...As it emerges that he has an alleged undisclosed criminal record**

## Thoboloko Nfšonyane

Police Commissioner Advocate Borotho Matsoso has lashed out at his critics, urging them to "jump into the nearest dam" or "find a tree to hang themselves" after it emerged that he has a criminal record in South Africa, which detractors claim he failed to disclose before he was appointed Commissioner of Police in 2024.

"This thing you are talking about has reached a point where it has annoyed me. I therefore have no intention to respond to a trivial matter like this one. Whoever is concerned, let him jump into the nearest dam or find the nearest tree to hang himself or herself," Matsoso said when confronted with the information on Wednesday afternoon.

"I think that is the only answer that I have. Otherwise, let him go to court if he thinks he can do it anywhere on this planet. That is all.

I am not going to engage in this kind of thing," he added.

Documents seen by this publication show that Matsoso acquired the criminal record in South Africa about a decade ago. The record states: "The subject was an accused in the following case: Lady Brand 80/09/2016, operating a vehicle/trailer exceeding 22m. Result: Guilty. Sentence: Acknowledgement of guilt = R3,000. Subject has a criminal record in South Africa."

The Police Service Act of 1998 requires the disclosure of any criminal record before a person can be appointed as a police officer. Under Section 10 (Attestation), the Act states that every member of the police service shall, on appointment, be attested as a police officer by making a declaration before the Commissioner.

Before making the declaration, every person must answer truthfully any questions

regarding their previous service, career, employment, and whether they have ever been convicted of any offence punishable under the laws of Lesotho or any other country.

Section 31(1)(f) further provides that the Commissioner may, at any time, after giving the police officer concerned an opportunity to make representations, dismiss an officer who is convicted of an offence other than one against discipline.

Matsoso's detractors, who spoke to this publication on condition of anonymity due to fear of reprisals, argued that the law is designed to prevent individuals with criminal records from joining the police service and allows for the dismissal of serving officers who commit crimes. They contend that this effectively prohibits people with criminal convictions from serving as police officers.

Citing Section 19 of the Constitution of Lesotho, which guarantees equality before the



law and equal protection of the law, the critics called for Matsoso's dismissal from his position as head of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS).

The appointment and removal of the Commissioner are governed by law. The King, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoints the Commissioner of Police on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed. The King, acting on the Prime Minister's advice, may also require the Commissioner to retire in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness. Before doing so, the Prime Minister must give the Commissioner an opportunity to make representations and consider any such representations.

Matsoso is a veteran of Lesotho's law enforcement sector. He previously served as a police officer before retiring. He was later appointed Director-General of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) in 2014. He left the DCEO in June 2019 after being placed on forced leave in February 2019, four months before the expiry of his contract on June 30, 2019, following a decision by then-Prime Minister Thomas Thabane not to renew his contract.

He was appointed to head the LMPS for a three-year term by the King on the advice of Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane. Matsoso assumed office as Commissioner of Police on May 23, 2024.

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# Parliament endorses controversial health MoU with the U.S

## Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The National Assembly has passed a motion rescinding its previous decision to halt a controversial five-year Government-to-Government (G2G) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States valued at US\$364 million (approximately M6.2 billion).

The funding is intended to strengthen the country's health sector, particularly the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The motion, moved by Reverend Paul Masiu, Chairperson of the Pandemics Committee, was adopted by the House just before it adjourned for a short Easter break.

### It faced resistance from some opposition members.

Earlier, the Economic and Social Clusters had recommended that the G2G MoU be suspended and halted. Masiu argued that maintaining the suspension could cause serious adverse implications for the country.

He highlighted Lesotho's past receipt of aid that helped address the HIV/AIDS pandemic and navigate broader health challenges, warning that halting the agreement could leave the nation vulnerable.

The US State Department, in collaboration with Congress, plans to provide up to US\$232 million to support Lesotho's HIV/AIDS response, strengthen the health workforce, improve data systems, and enhance disease surveillance and outbreak response.

### Lesotho's government has committed US\$132 million to its domestic HIV/AIDS programme.

"From internet connectivity for health clinics to advanced robotic delivery of life-saving medical supplies, the US\$364 million memorandum of understanding creates opportunities for innovations that will advance health care and benefit the local economy," said Thomas Pigott, the State Department's Deputy Spokesperson.

The MoU, signed on December 10, 2025, forms part of the US "America First Global Health

Strategy." It shifts from traditional donor-funded aid to a "co-investment" model, under which Lesotho is expected to gradually increase its own health spending over the five-year period (2026–2030) as US funding contributions are structured to promote greater national ownership.

### Concerns raised in Parliament and by civil society

During debates, opposition MP, Nqosa Mahao, urged caution, describing the agreement as potentially amounting to "biological warfare." Another opposition MP, Machesetsa Mofomobe, supported the MoU, saying it would benefit Lesotho's health sector and welcomed the US audit of fund usage.

He called on the government to engage the public more openly, noting that the MoU allows either party to make the document public "for the avoidance of any doubt."

Mofomobe defended the data-sharing provisions, arguing they are not new. He referenced a 1995 study involving children's stool samples sent to the US and stressed that data would be anonymised, with no individual information revealed.

He added that the agreement would help upgrade local health facilities to meet World Health Organisation and International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards, improving access for Basotho who cannot afford private care.

'Machabane Lemphane-Letsie expressed concern over potential cost implications for Lesotho and questioned whether the document could truly be called a MoU, arguing that the US had not made sufficiently clear commitments.

A coalition of 19 civil society organisations (CSOs), coordinated under the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN), issued a statement on in March this year raising serious concerns about national sovereignty, transparency, public consultation, and compliance with Lesotho's constitutional frameworks.

The CSOs warned that the language and

structure of the MoU appeared to place Lesotho in a subordinate position, potentially undermining the country's dignity and sovereignty. They emphasised that Lesotho is a sovereign nation with a proud history of self-determination, and any international partnership must be based on mutual respect, transparency, and equality.

"Basotho deserve better. They need transparency, accountability, and a voice in decisions that affect the future of their children and country," the statement read.

A draft of the MoU reviewed by Newsday reportedly included provisions that could require Lesotho to share citizens' biological samples and sensitive national health data with the US for extended periods. Government officials have since stated that some contentious clauses, including the duration of certain data-sharing arrangements, were rectified during negotiations, reducing them significantly, for example, from 25 years to five years in some cases, and that the MoU is non-binding.

### Regional Context

Similar US bilateral health MoUs under the same strategy have been signed with several African countries. In Uganda, a nearly US\$2.3 billion agreement was concluded, with the US committing up to US\$1.7 billion and Uganda co-investing over US\$500 million.

However, not all countries have embraced the terms. Zimbabwe reportedly paused and later ended talks, citing one-sided conditions, data-sharing risks, and concerns over access to resulting medicines or diagnostics.

Zambia has criticised the heavy co-investment demands and restrictive conditions. In Kenya, a court suspended implementation of a related US\$2.5 billion agreement amid data privacy concerns.

The parliament's decision to rescind the earlier suspension paves the way for the MoU's implementation, scheduled to begin this month, though public debate and calls for greater transparency are expected to continue.

"The public is hereby informed that failure to meet this timeline will leave the Association with no option but to reconvene and take necessary action to safeguard the interests and welfare of its members," Mohalenyane said.

The crisis was triggered by a March 25 memo from the Ministry of Health's Human Resources department, which informed staff of salary delays but failed to provide reasons or a clear payment timeline.

Both LeNMO and the LMA have criticised the communication as inadequate, saying it lacked transparency and did little to reassure workers.

In a statement issued this week, the Ministry of Health acknowledged the crisis and apologised to staff, attributing the delay to a shortage of funds.

The Ministry said it had since engaged relevant government departments to secure the necessary resources and committed to settling salaries before the end of the week.

It further appealed to healthcare workers to continue providing services in the interim, assuring them that measures had been put in place to prevent a recurrence of the situation.

However, the unfolding crisis highlights deeper systemic challenges within the country's public health sector, including persistent funding constraints and the vulnerability of essential services to administrative and financial disruptions.

With Lesotho already grappling with a high burden of diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis, any prolonged disruption to healthcare delivery could have serious public health consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations who depend entirely on public facilities.

# Police association plans march to PM

## Staff Reporter

The Lesotho Police Staff Association (LEPOSA) has announced plans to hold a peaceful procession to the Office of the Prime Minister, Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, as part of its ongoing push for improved working conditions.

In a memorandum dated March 30, 2026, addressed to "all regional & district committees, portfolio committees and entire membership," the association said it had "formally written to the Dispol Maseru Urban requesting permission to hold a peaceful procession to the Office of the Honourable Prime Minister."

The planned action follows earlier engagements with the government over members' grievances.

"This action is in connection with the letter previously submitted to his office on the 24th February 2026 regarding inflation adjustment and police allowances," the memo read.

According to LEPOSA leadership, the decision to proceed with the march comes after what it describes as a lack of response from the government.

"Members will recall that the Government Spokesperson recently indicated in the media that the LEPOSA leadership would be invited by the Honourable Prime Minister to discuss these matters. However, to date, no such invitation or engagement has taken place," the association said.

It added: "In light of this lack of response, the Association decided to proceed with the planned procession to the Honourable Prime Minister's office on the 16th April 2026 to seek direct feedback and resolution on these critical issues affecting our members."

The association said the date was carefully selected, noting that it "is selected based on the promise made to the entire Basotho Nation that we intend to offer them services despite our grievances and taking into consideration that we are on Easter standby mode."

LEPOSA has since called on its members to prepare for the demonstration.

"All members are therefore advised to begin preparing themselves accordingly for participation in this important activity. Further details regarding the date and logistics will be communicated in due course," the memo states.

District committees have also been instructed to organise participation.

"District Committees are requested to compile a list of their district membership who will partake in the procession and relay the information to their Regional Leadership," the statement reads, adding that the information will be used "to facilitate proper transport arrangements and ensure smooth coordination."

The association emphasised that participation will be limited to subscribed members only.

"Kindly note that only those subscribing members of the Association will take part in this procession," it said.

# Health system under strain

## ... As unpaid workers scale down services

### Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho's healthcare system is facing a deepening crisis, with services significantly disrupted after nurses, midwives, and doctors embarked on coordinated protest action over unpaid salaries for March 2026.

The standoff has forced many healthcare workers into an untenable position, balancing their professional duty to patients against their own basic survival needs, resulting in a sharp reduction in services across the country.

The Lesotho Nursing and Midwifery Organisation (LeNMO) this week confirmed that its members have begun a limited strike, describing the non-payment of wages as unacceptable and likening it to "modern-day slavery."

Union leaders said the failure to pay salaries left nurses unable to meet essential costs such as transport and food, even as they are expected to continue reporting for duty.

In response, the union said it has introduced what it terms "reasonable accommodation measures,"

scaling back non-essential services while maintaining critical care.

Under the arrangement, nurses have suspended routine services but continue to operate in high-risk areas to prevent loss of life. These include casualty departments handling urgent triage cases, maternity wards, intensive care units, and operating theatres for emergency procedures only.

The protest has been reinforced by the Lesotho Medical Association (LMA), which has issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the government to settle outstanding salaries.

Following a meeting with the Director General of Health Services on March 31, LMA General Secretary Dr 'Matheko Mohalenyane said the continued delay undermines both the dignity and professional commitment of medical practitioners working under already strained conditions.

"The Association strongly condemns this unacceptable situation," he said, warning that failure to resolve the matter could trigger a full withdrawal of services.

# Fuel price hikes hit Lesotho amid Middle East conflict

## Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Over the past weeks, the world has experienced significant volatility in crude oil prices due to the ongoing war in the Middle East involving the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, and the United States.

The conflict has disrupted energy supplies, with Iran leveraging the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for crude oil exports from the Gulf, as a strategic bargaining tool.

These developments have plunged global markets into economic uncertainty, with commodity prices expected to surge. Concerns over food security are also mounting this year, exacerbated by the war that erupted on February 28, 2026, following Israeli and US strikes in which Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in Tehran.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has warned that disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are particularly alarming.

The waterway typically carries about one-third of global seaborne trade in fertilisers and other agricultural chemicals, alongside roughly 20-25 percent of the world's seaborne crude oil, significant volumes of liquefied natural gas (LNG), and other essential goods.

This week saw unprecedented fuel price increases in Lesotho. In a televised ad-

dress, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane announced sharp rises but confirmed that the government would subsidise part of the cost to cushion consumers.

Paraffin increased by M13.00 to M26.30 per litre; with a M5.00 government subsidy, consumers will pay M21.30 per litre.

Petrol 93 rose by M6.70 to M24.50 per litre; a M2.00 subsidy reduced it to M22.50 per litre.

Petrol 95 increased by M7.35 to M25.30 per litre; after a M2.00 subsidy, it will sell for M23.30 per litre.

Diesel 50 jumps by M13.10 to M32.50 per litre; a M2.00 subsidy lowered the pump price to M30.50 per litre.

The government said the move aims to shield consumers from the worst of the fuel shocks while maintaining steady supplies.

The economic ripple effects of the conflict are already triggering inflation and supply-chain disruptions. Many workers and students in Lesotho depend on the taxi industry for daily commutes to work and school.

Unlike fuel, this sector receives no direct government subsidy, though fares remain regulated.

Some commuters have already started walking to save on transport costs, even before the latest fuel hikes take full effect.

Lebohang Moea, public relations officer for the Maseru Region Transport Operators

(MRTO), told this publication that public transport fares are expected to rise, with new rates likely to be published on 1 May.

Moea said operators held discussions with the Transport Board at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and submitted proposals for revised fares. He noted that these talks began in December 2025 and were not solely driven by the recent fuel spike.

Further consultations with the government are needed, Moea added, as higher fares may not be sustainable for the struggling public. The proposed local fare in Maseru is M15, subject to board approval.

Operators are also calling for government subsidies on public transport, as they do not plan further increases within the next year.

Nkareng Letsie of the Consumer Protection Association criticised subsidies as unsustainable. He warned that diverting funds this way could strain government coffers and affect future generations, particularly children.

Instead, Letsie suggested cutting taxes on essential products. He also urged suspending the fuel levy.

The government has already zero-rated certain commodities, including sunflower oil, fruit, vegetables, and bread, for a three-month period.

Letsie emphasised that borrowing for consumption is not viable; any loans should

focus on strategic investments. While acknowledging short-term relief from the subsidies, he reiterated calls to suspend the fuel levy and advised the government to remain neutral in the conflict.

He urged Lesotho to join other nations in pressing US President Donald Trump to pursue peace with Iran, citing the devastating global impacts of the war.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that American involvement was intended to preempt imminent Iranian retaliatory attacks, which were themselves a response to Israeli actions. Rubio described the operation as "Operation Epic Fury."

Fears are growing that prolonged conflict could lead to global fuel shortages. Asset management firm JP Morgan has noted that the surge in energy prices and market corrections could limit how long the confrontation can continue from Washington's perspective.

Key factors include munitions availability, market reactions, and US mid-term political considerations. JP Morgan analysts highlight that, while Iran itself accounts for only about four percent of global crude oil supply, the Strait of Hormuz serves as a major chokepoint.

Its potential closure or severe disruption could affect roughly 20 percent of global oil supply (or up to 38 percent of seaborne crude in some estimates), along with 17-20 percent of global LNG.

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	Foreign	650	800

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Newsday

# Business

## Why taxman missed revenue target

### Seabata Mahao

The Revenue Service Lesotho (RSL) has fallen short of its revenue target for the 2025/26 financial year, citing a combination of economic pressures and structural challenges, even as overall collections showed modest growth.

Acting Commissioner General Rakokoana Makoa yesterday revealed that the tax authority remitted M9.76 billion to government against the set target of M10.39 billion, resulting in a negative variance of M640.3 million.

The shortfall comes despite total tax collections reaching M10.89 billion, which were significantly reduced by M1.13 billion in processed tax refunds.

Makoa attributed the underperformance to "factors beyond the RSL's control", including the high volume of refunds issued during the year, subdued economic activity, rising inflation, and taxpayer non-compliance.

A significant portion of these refunds is linked to mining companies operating in Lesotho, which are exempted from paying Value Added Tax (VAT) on their exports. As a result, the firms routinely claim back VAT paid on inputs, creating a persistent refund burden on the fiscus, an issue that has been highlighted in previous reports.

Efforts to address this structural challenge have already been initiated at policy level. Parliament previously approved the VAT Amendment Bill framework aimed at reducing or eliminating the need for such costly refunds, particularly for export-oriented sectors like mining. However, the proposed changes have yet to be implemented, leaving the current refund-heavy system in place.

"Refunds remain a crucial part of maintaining a fair and credible tax system, ensuring businesses and individuals receive what is rightfully due to them," he said.

The RSL's revenue base remained anchored on four key streams: Income Tax, Value Added Tax (VAT), Tobacco and Alcohol Products Levy, and Gaming Levy.

Income Tax continued to dominate, contributing 55.8% of total revenue. Collections reached M5.44 billion, surpassing the M5.16 billion target by 5.4%. This category includes personal income tax, corporate tax, withholding taxes, and fringe benefits tax.

In contrast, VAT, the second-largest contributor at 42.1%, significantly underperformed. Collections stood at M4.11 billion against a target of M5.05 billion, representing a shortfall of M940 million or 18.6%.

The weak VAT performance reflects both reduced consumer spending and the structural impact of refunds. While households tightened their budgets amid economic strain, leading to lower consumption of taxable goods, the continued outflow of VAT refunds, particularly to mining companies, further eroded net collections.

Smaller tax streams delivered stronger results. The Tobacco and Alcohol Products Levy exceeded its target by 12.2%, generating M195.36 million, while the Gaming Levy recorded the highest proportional growth, outperforming its target by 24.9% to reach M12 million.

The RSL's performance unfolded against a difficult global and domestic economic backdrop. Growth in Lesotho remained subdued at around 1.4% in 2025, with projections indicating a further slowdown to



Acting Commissioner General of RSL, Rakokoana Makoa

1.1% by 2027.

Globally, the International Monetary Fund forecasts economic growth of just 1.4% for 2025 and 2026, well below the pre-pandemic average. Regionally, Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow at 4.6%, while South Africa, Lesotho's largest trading partner is projected to expand by only 1.4% in 2026.

Domestically, the economy was largely supported by construction activity linked to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II, but remained vulnerable to external shocks such as global unrest, trade tensions, and climate change.

Inflation eased to 4% in 2025 and is expected to rise to 4.6% in 2026. While less severe than in the previous year, inflation continued to influence consumer spending patterns, dampening VAT performance.

RSL reported a 3.9% increase in taxable imports, equivalent to M71.8 million, while non-taxable imports declined sharply by 42%, or M233.4 million. These shifts, coupled with intensified customs inspections and anti-smuggling efforts, contributed to improved revenue efficiency.

The country's tax-to-GDP ratio edged up from 22.5% to 22.9%, with a tax buoyancy ratio of 1.7%, indicating improved responsiveness of tax revenue to economic growth. However, annual remittance growth remained marginal at 0.1%, underscoring the constrained fiscal environment.

Despite ongoing challenges, the RSL highlighted improvements in taxpayer compliance, with more individuals and businesses registering, filing returns on time, and meeting their obligations.

"Failure to comply with tax laws is a criminal offence," Makoa warned, stressing the role of taxation in equitable resource distribution.

To strengthen compliance and efficiency, the RSL rolled out several digital and operational reforms. These include a Private Shopper online platform for declaring personal imports, reducing paperwork and easing customs processes, and a new payment gateway developed in partnership with Standard Lesotho Bank, enabling payments via USSD, mobile apps, and internet banking.

Additionally, a mobile office initiative has been introduced to extend tax services to remote communities, offering registration, filing assistance, and electronic payment support.

On the enforcement front, the RSL has partnered with global and regional bodies including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations Development Programme, and the African Tax Administration Forum under the Tax Inspectors Without Borders programme to combat financial crime and strengthen investigative capacity.

These initiatives form part of a broader strategy to modernise tax administration, widen the tax base, and curb leakages that continue to undermine revenue collection.

While the RSL's latest figures represent a 3% increase in gross collections compared to the previous year, they fall short of the stronger performance recorded in 2024/25, when the authority remitted M9.74 billion, a 9.9% increase year-on-year, exceeding its target.

The persistence of large VAT refunds, particularly to the mining sector, remains one of the most significant structural challenges facing the tax authority. Until legislative reforms are implemented, the pressure on net revenues is likely to continue.

At the same time, subdued economic growth, shifting consumer behaviour, and external vulnerabilities are expected to keep revenue performance under strain in the short to medium term.

The tax authority, however, remains cautiously optimistic, pointing to ongoing reforms and planned initiatives for the 2026/27 financial year aimed at broadening the tax base, improving compliance, and enhancing administrative efficiency.

Should the long-delayed VAT reforms finally be implemented alongside these administrative improvements, they could significantly ease the refund burden and strengthen Lesotho's fiscal position, helping the RSL better meet its revenue targets in future.



Governor of the Central Bank of Lesotho, Dr. Maluke Letete

### Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's monetary authorities have opted for caution, keeping interest rates unchanged as global risks mount, even as easing inflation offers short-term relief to households.

At its recent meeting, the Central Bank of Lesotho's (CBL) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) resolved to maintain the policy rate at 6.50 per cent, indicating a delicate balancing act between supporting a fragile domestic economy and safeguarding external stability.

"The MPC has decided to maintain the CBL policy rate at 6.50 per cent per annum. At this level, the Committee noted that it is appropriate to maintain a modest negative interest rate differential of between 0 and 50 basis points relative to the SARB repo rate of 6.75 per cent. This is intended to sustain the exchange rate peg and, consequently, support domestic economic activity," said CBL Governor Dr Maluke Letete.

"The MPC will continue to closely monitor global developments, particularly the evolution of the Middle East conflict and its implications for energy prices, inflation, and capital flows, alongside domestic inflation dynamics and the evolution of the external position. Future policy decisions will remain data dependent and guided by the need to safeguard reserves and preserve macroeconomic stability," Letete added.

The decision comes at a time when inflationary pressures in Lesotho have eased significantly. Headline inflation slowed to 2.7 per cent in February 2026, down from 3.4 per cent in January, largely driven by declining food and transport costs.

Improved cereal harvests and earlier drops in global oil prices contributed to the slowdown, offering some breathing space for consumers.

However, Letete warned that this relief may be short-lived. The Committee revised the medium-term inflation outlook upwards, pointing to rising global oil prices, potential El Niño-induced weather shocks in 2027, and exchange rate volatility as key risks.

He said the decision to hold rates steady reflects

## CBL holds rates as global storm clouds gather

the need to strike a balance between maintaining macroeconomic stability and supporting growth.

"At this level, it is appropriate to maintain a modest negative interest rate differential of between 0 and 50 basis points relative to the South African Reserve Bank's repo rate of 6.75 per cent," Letete said.

"This is intended to sustain the exchange rate peg and support domestic economic activity."

A key factor underpinning the MPC's stance is Lesotho's relatively strong external position. Net International Reserves stood at US\$1.125 billion as of 18 March 2026, about 30.9 per cent above the minimum threshold, equivalent to 4.3 months of import cover.

This cushion has given the central bank room to avoid tightening monetary policy despite growing global uncertainty.

Nonetheless, external risks are intensifying. A sharp escalation of conflict in the Middle East has

disrupted global oil supply, with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz pushing crude oil prices up by nearly 50 per cent since December 2025.

"These developments could raise fuel and transport costs and feed into broader price pressures," Letete warned.

At the domestic level, economic activity remains subdued. The Composite Indicator of Economic Activity grew by just 1.5 per cent in January 2026, a notable slowdown from 4.3 per cent in December, as declines in construction and transport sectors offset gains in domestic demand and financial services.

While private sector credit growth remains relatively strong at 12.8 per cent year-on-year, it is projected to slow significantly to 4.6 per cent by 2028. This anticipated slowdown is linked to reduced investment as major infrastructure projects under Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project wind down.

### NOTICE

CHANGE OF REGISTERED AND BUSINESS ADDRESS  
PHYSIOTHERAPY & OUTREACH PROGRAM (PTY)  
REGISTRATION NUMBER: 80616  
"THE COMPANY"

KINDLY TAKE NOTICE THAT THE COMPANY HEREBY CHANGES ITS REGISTERED AND BUSINESS ADDRESSES TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

THE WORKSHOP C/O	FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE	3RD FLOOR, ROOM	TEL (+266) 2231 0849/
ABIA HIGH SCHOOL	CONTACT:	310	(+266) 56281601
HA SELESO	E-LEGAL SOLUTIONS INC	KINGSWAY ROAD	EMAIL: info@e-legal.
MASERU, LESOTHO	CARLTON CENTER	MASERU 100	solutions

### Notice of Change of Company Name

Notice is hereby made to inform the public that BISHIVE (PTY) LTD (of registration number 98196) has decided to change its name to BIZHIVE (PTY) LTD. Anyone with an objection to this change may lodge their concerns with the registrar of companies at One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre Ministry of Trade & Industry P.O. Box 747, Kingsway, Maseru Telephone: 22310893 or directly contact the director of the company Mr Tumelo at 68758875



# 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL INTERGENERATIONAL VALUE CREATION CONFERENCE 2026 - KHOTLA

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# The people do not exist for the government



## Kananelo Boloetse

In the shadow of renewed conflict in the Middle East, global oil markets have once again convulsed and sent fuel prices spiralling across southern Africa. Here in Lesotho, where every litre of petrol is imported and every price hike bites into the cost of bread, transport, and medicine, the government has announced palliative measures, subsidies. Predictably, the language that accompanies these interventions frames them as acts of benevolence: the state “coming to the rescue,” “extending a helping hand,” “cushioning the vulnerable.” This rhetoric is not merely imprecise; it is corrosive. It inverts the proper relationship between a democratic government and its citizens. The government does not do the people favours by mitigating shocks it cannot prevent. It discharges the very purpose for which it exists.

We elect governments. We pay taxes. We surrender certain individual freedoms so that a collective authority might provide the public goods and protections that no single citizen can secure alone. That is the social contract in its simplest, most enduring form, from Locke to the Lesotho Constitution of 1993. The state is not a paternal benefactor dispensing largesse from its own pocket. It is the instrument we have created, funded, and periodically renew through the ballot. When fuel prices surge and threaten to destabilise households already stretched by unemployment, inflation, and the structural constraints of a small, landlocked economy, government intervention is not generosity. It is the repayment of a debt incurred the moment we consented to be governed.

To pretend otherwise is to flirt with a dangerous fiction. If we truly believed in the libertarian idyll of “every man for himself,” we would dissolve the state tomorrow. There would be no Ministry of Finance collecting VAT from market vendors in Maseru, no Revenue Services Lesotho auditing diamond revenues, no army or police funded by our taxes. We maintain these institutions precisely because we reject that atomised vision. We ac-

cept, indeed, we demand, that the state pool resources to smooth the rough edges of life: building roads, running schools, maintaining clinics, and, yes, shielding citizens from external shocks that no teacher or factory worker in Maputsoe caused. To call such shielding a “favour” is to suggest that the citizen is the supplicant and the state the patron. That is the language of monarchy, not of a constitutional democracy where sovereignty resides with the people.

Nowhere is this inversion more unjust than in Lesotho, where poverty is too often misdiagnosed as a character flaw rather than a circumstantial inheritance. Many of our fellow citizens were born into conditions not of their making: a mountainous terrain that limits arable land, an economy historically tethered to migrant labour in South Africa, and, crucially, decades of governance failures, corruption scandals, policy inconsistency, and institutional fragility, that have compounded rather than alleviated disadvantage. These are not abstract statistics. They are the lived reality of families in Leribe or Quthing who work diligently yet remain trapped by forces larger than personal effort. Had they drawn their first breath in Gaborone or Windhoek or even parts of South Africa, their life chances would, on average, be markedly different, not because they are more intelligent or industrious, but because the institutional and policy environment around them would have been less hostile.

This is the uncomfortable truth governments prefer to evade. Some poverty is iatrogenic. It is caused or worsened by the very state that later claims moral credit for alleviating it. When public resources are squandered, when tender processes are opaque, when economic diversification stalls while neighbouring countries advance, the state does not merely fail to create opportunity; it actively narrows the corridor through which citizens must pass. In such circumstances, to decry welfare programmes as “breeding dependency” is not fiscal prudence, it is moral sleight of hand. It blames the victim for

the wound while ignoring the scalpel.

The social contract does not require citizens to be superhuman. It requires the state to be competent. When external events, wars, pandemics, commodity shocks, expose vulnerabilities that bad governance has left unaddressed, the state’s response is not optional philanthropy. It is the minimum expected of an entity that has monopolised the legitimate use of force and taxation. To portray relief as charity is to erode the legitimacy of both taxation and representation. Citizens begin to ask, rightly: why pay taxes if the return is presented as a gift? Why vote if the elected are cast as benevolent overlords rather than accountable servants?

This is not a call for unlimited entitlement or fiscal recklessness. Prudent governance demands targeting, transparency, and sunset clauses on emergency measures. It also demands, more urgently, that Lesotho’s leaders address the structural frailties that make every global tremor feel like an earthquake on our soil. Fuel subsidies today must be paired with serious investment in regional logistics, and skills development tomorrow. But these long-term imperatives do not negate the immediate duty. A government that creates or fails to mitigate hardship cannot then treat mitigation as an act of grace. That is not leadership; it is gaslighting.

The people of Lesotho do not want “everything from government.” They want what they were promised when they queued at polling stations and when they pay their taxes: competent administration, basic security, and a fair chance to build lives of dignity. When crises strike, government intervention is not the state stooping to help its subjects. It is the state doing the job the subjects hired it to do. Anything less is a breach of contract. Anything more rhetorical, any talk of “favours” or “rescues,” is an attempt to rewrite that contract in the state’s favour. Basotho deserve better. They deserve the truth: their government exists for them, not the other way around.

# From donor compliance to national alignment: Lessons for Lesotho from Sierra Leone's NGO directorate

**Theko Tlebere**

Informal discussions can often illuminate critical policy deficiencies. Recently, a colleague of mine from Sierra Leone shared his forthcoming role in a government office tasked with overseeing Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The way he told me his story was both interesting and relevant to my own country. Lately, that's how I think these days, anything new that I learn, I think about the status of my country in relation to that new phenomenon. The office he called NGO's Directorate, according to him, was to ensure that NGOs function not merely as donor-driven entities but as development partners aligned with national priorities. For me, that raised very critical questions for my country, Lesotho. Who is responsible for ensuring that NGOs operating in health, social development, and other essential sectors are accountable not only to donors but also to the Government of Lesotho?

This concern is far from hypothetical. In Lesotho, NGOs and international partners play a vital role across various domains, including social protection, HIV programming, maternal and child health, orphan care, and community development. Organisations such as Mothers2Mothers and the Baylor Foundation Lesotho are deeply integrated into service delivery. Baylor, for instance, has publicly affirmed its partnership with the Government of Lesotho since 2005, asserting that the fundamental operations of its clinical sites are funded by the government via the Ministry of Health. Similarly, Mothers2Mothers has established itself as a longstanding health actor in Lesotho. However, many of these organisations depend heavily on substantial external funding from sources such as the European Union (EU), PEPFAR, USAID, Africa CDC, private foundations, and multilateral agencies.

This dual accountability is not inherently problematic; indeed, donor support is often, if not always, essential. The core issue lies within the institutional framework: when an NGO operates in Lesotho, who determines the reporting structures, enforces compliance with national plans, and ensures that project delivery aligns with the country's long-term priorities rather than merely the donor's objectives?

Sierra Leone is a West African nation situated along the Atlantic coast, bordered by Guinea and Liberia, with Freetown serving as its capital. Like Lesotho, Sierra Leone is a developing country that has confronted numerous challenges, including limited state capacity, dependence on donor assistance, and the imperative to



strengthen public institutions in the aftermath of periods of national instability. Over the years, Sierra Leone has relied significantly on development partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in critical sectors such as health, education, and social welfare. This reliance prompts critical inquiries regarding the state's coordination and oversight of NGO activities. In this regard, Sierra Leone's NGO Directorate presents a pertinent case study for Lesotho to investigate further.

Sierra Leone offers a practical model worthy of examination and best practice replication. What I found is that the government of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has established an NGO Directorate responsible for registering NGOs, processing renewals, compiling annual reports, collecting monthly data on NGO activities by sector, and conducting site visits. This office serves not merely as a registration entity but as a coordination and oversight mechanism.

The rationale behind this structure is noteworthy. According to Sierra Leone's National NGO Policy Framework for 2023–2028, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development is assigned the responsibility of maintaining a database of NGO registrations, monitoring relationships among government, donors, NGOs, and beneficiary communities, and sharing this database with local councils. It also stipulates that new NGO registrations are valid for two calendar years, after

which renewal is required. NGOs that fail to renew may face suspension of their activities.

This framework establishes a clear chain of accountability. In Sierra Leone, NGOs must satisfy both donors and the state. They are included in a national registry, their activities can be tracked by sector, and there exists a cohesive environment linking planning, registration, renewal, and site verification. The key lesson is that effective oversight is not antagonistic to civil society; rather, it integrates external resources into national development planning.

In contrast, Lesotho appears to possess a more fragmented system. Legally, associations and similar entities are registered under the Societies Act, with oversight from the Registrar and further affiliation to what we call the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN). In terms of service delivery, oversight appears to occur through line ministries, memoranda of understanding, partnerships, and project-specific arrangements. The National Health Policy indicates that the Ministry of Health collaborates through formal public-private partnerships, including agreements with the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) and the Lesotho Red Cross Society, for delivering the Essential Health Package. PEPFAR's planning documents also demonstrate coordination with the Ministry of Health and District Health Management Teams.

Having made that contextual narration, to whom does Sesotho Media, World Vision, Solider-med, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), Care For Basotho, Lesotho Inter-Religious AIDS Consortium, Send a Cow, Baylor and mothers2mothers report to? In practice, they likely report to multiple entities. They must comply with donor requirements regarding finance, results, and safeguards. However, as they deliver services within Lesotho's public health system, they also bear functional accountability to the Ministry of Health, district structures, and the policy frameworks governing service delivery. The current setup, which is built from experience, suggests a hybrid accountability structure rather than one solely driven by donor interests.

The challenge for Lesotho lies in the absence of a centralised directorate akin to Sierra Leone's NGO Directorate, which would unify these various elements across sectors. Although registration, partnerships, and donor reporting mechanisms exist, national coordination remains weak and overly reliant on individual ministries or specific projects. Even in the ministries, there are still no clear lifeline accountability measures, and that's why NGOs are setting the agenda, which ideally should be set by someone else. Benchmarking against Sierra Leone provides valuable insights. Lesotho need not replicate Sierra Leone's model verbatim, but it can adopt several functional principles.

First, Lesotho could establish a central NGO coordination and compliance unit within a ministry focused on planning rather than a purely ceremonial registry. This unit would maintain an active national database of NGOs, detailing their sectors, districts of operation, donors, budgets, and implementation partners. Second, registration should initiate ongoing government oversight, requiring NGOs to submit annual organisational reports and shorter periodic updates by sector and district. Sierra Leone's system of annual status reports and monthly sectoral updates serves as a useful reference.

Third, ministries such as Health and Social Development should hold formal authority to certify whether NGO activities align with sector strategies before projects are renewed or expanded. This would ensure that NGOs demonstrate alignment with the relevant ministry's plans, data systems, and service protocols. Fourth, district-level accountability must be enhanced. Sierra Leone's framework suggests sharing the NGO database with local councils, which Lesotho could adopt through District Administrators (DAs), District Council Secretaries (DCSs) and local health and social development offices, ensuring that national oversight extends beyond Maseru.

Ultimately, the issue is not whether NGOs should cater to donors or the government; responsible organisations must satisfy both. The real question is whether the Government of Lesotho possesses a coherent mechanism to define national priorities, receive regular reports, verify operations, and address misalignment. Sierra Leone's example demonstrates that it is possible to achieve this through a dedicated directorate, a registry linked to planning, routine reporting, and site verification. For NGOs to remain genuine development partners, their success in Lesotho must be assessed not only by donor accolades but also by how well their work aligns with the country's laws, plans, systems, and public accountability. The Future is NOW!



**Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP II)  
Matching Grant Programme**

**4th Round Call for Applications**

**Background:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security of Lesotho, with the support of the World Bank has established within the SADP II, a Matching Grants Programme (MGP) to support investment by small and medium agriculture-related businesses, farmers, farmer groups, cooperatives and rural youth seeking to increase climate resilience, raise productivity, improve commercialization and increase production and consumption of high nutrition food products.

**Priorities:** The MGP invites applications for investment projects, with a maximum duration of one year, which focus on the adoption and use of appropriate technologies and business initiatives by smallholder farmers and small and medium-scale private agri-business enterprises in Lesotho. These investments should: increase climate resilience, raise farm productivity and improve commercialization among smallholder farmers; increase competitiveness and profitability, increase value-added to local products among agri-business enterprises and increase market opportunities for smallholder farmers; and increase the production, consumption and availability of high nutrition food products.

**Eligible investments include:**

- Improved seed and seedling varieties for vegetables under shade nets, tunnel houses, drip irrigation, water storage equipment, boreholes and pumps
- Improved piggery production
- Improved broiler production.
- Product collection, storage, post-harvest handling, processing, grading/sorting, marketing, packaging, labelling, brand development, presentation and promotion of agricultural products
- Diversification and introduction of high value-added and niche products.

**Grant financing:** Two grant windows will be available to applicants: (i) grants for smallholder farmers and farmer groups to support investment in climate smart agricultural technology and other productivity enhancing technology up to a maximum of \$US 30,000 (M400 000.00); (ii) grants for small and medium size agri-businesses up to \$US 100,000 (M1 500 000.00), to support investment in value added activities including small-scale processing and marketing as well as provision of inputs and services

**Eligible Applicants:** Applicants with farms and/or agri-business activities operating in all ten districts of Lesotho are eligible for grants. Eligible applicants include a) farmers or farm groups; b) registered cooperatives or associations; c) registered small and medium size agri-businesses; d) registered local, district and national associations and cooperatives; e) sub-groups of registered associations and cooperatives; rural youth; and f) partnerships between the above categories and registered processing/trading businesses in Lesotho. Smallholder farmers, members of farm households, rural youth and small and medium-scale agri-business enterprises will receive priority for grant support but non-farm applicants with demonstrated farming experience and a strong knowledge of the proposed investment will also be considered. Eligible applicants may also submit joint proposals up to the maximum grant stipulated above. Youth under 35 and women are particularly encouraged to apply. Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition, Project Financing institutions (IFAD and World Bank Group) and their direct beneficiaries are not eligible. Persons with an annual income of more than 600 000.00 Maloti and having access to more than 0.1 ha of irrigated land are not eligible to the Smallholder grant window, but only to the Agribusiness window.

**Partnership with Service Providers:** The potential applicants will be required to form partnerships with a qualified service provider(s). The service provider(s) will (i) provide technical and financial assistance and advice to the applicant to develop the business idea and prepare the application, (ii) work with the applicant to clarify different technical and financial aspects of the activity and prepare an activity implementation plan; (iii) provide technical and financial assistance to the applicant during project implementation and provide the products and services to be delivered according to an agreed schedule; (iv) support the applicant in managing grant funds, including keeping the necessary accounts and collecting contributions from beneficiaries; (v) supervise the inputs of beneficiaries/applicants and sub-contract technical assistance as necessary; (vi) monitor the progress of activities; (vii) support the applicant in the preparation and submission of the required financial

and technical reports. Eligible service providers include a wide range of specialists such as private sector technical specialists and business consultants, traders, associations, NGOs and on-going international-funded projects and programs present in Lesotho, as well as university and college faculty, and public extension and research staff outside of normal working hours. Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security are not eligible to work as Service Providers.

Service Providers will need to show that they have successfully completed a training program on the preparation and technical and financial analysis of investment projects approved by the PMU or the MGC.

**Beneficiary contribution:** In all cases, successful applicants will be required to make a co-finance contribution in cash to engender ownership and demonstrate commitment. The larger grants for agri-business enterprises will also be conditional on their willingness and ability to generate employment and build effective supply agreements with smallholder producers. Co-finance cash contributions will vary according to the grant sub-program as follows: (i) Improving smallholder production grants for farmers or farmer groups: grants up to \$US 30,000 will require a 20% co-finance contribution; (ii) Agri-business grants for registered agriculture-oriented and privately-owned enterprises, associations and cooperatives: grants in this program will require a 30% co-finance contribution. 100% of the needed matching contribution for both grant categories must be available upfront.

The participation and contribution from different partners should be confirmed by written agreement reached between the principal applicant, the service provider and/or other partners.

**Eligible Expenditures under Grant:** Of the grant amount, the indicative types of financial support are:

Investment Acquisition, Installation and Operation: This category must comprise at least 60% of the grant amount and may include costs associated with the purchase of improved seed, seedling and livestock varieties; the purchase and installation of equipment for cultivation, harvesting, post-harvest handling, processing, preservation, storage, grading, packaging etc; the construction of necessary buildings for livestock production, storage, processing, marketing; the purchase and installation of tunnel houses, shade nets, irrigation equipment, pumps, boreholes, tanks etc; product development; alignment with national and international food and safety standards; and marketing campaigns. Where the investor is making substantial physical investments, the costs of land surveys will be covered for smallholder farmers in order to ensure that they have secure land ownership as a means to secure the benefits of investment. Agri-businesses will not be eligible for support for land surveys. Land survey costs may not be more than 10% of the grant amount, up to a maximum of \$US 2000 equivalent. The costs of land purchase, land lease or land rental will not be covered for any grants.

**Non-Eligible Expenditures under Grant:** The following items would not be covered out of the grant amount: (a) Salaries or payment for works and services provided to the project by the grant applicants or its members; b) any expenditures made prior to the date of signature of the Grant Agreement or after closure date of the project; c) purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings; d) any expenditure related to operating costs, which are expected to be the direct responsibility of the applicant; e) any expenditure made in territories of any country that is not a member of the World Bank for goods produced in or services supplied from such countries; f) any expenditure with a hazardous impact on the environment.

**Deadline and Place for Submission of Applications:** The deadline for submission of applications is not later than 17 April 2026. Applications should be submitted in four copies (one original plus three photocopies) and delivered by hand at the District Agricultural Offices in the 10 districts of Lesotho at 12:00 noon. Applications submitted after deadline will not be considered.

**Evaluation of the Applications:** All applications received within the deadline will be screened by the MGP Secretariat for compliance with the above rules. The successful applications will then be evaluated by specialized Technical and Financial Reviewers and submitted to the MGC review and field verification. The list of successful applicants will be published in SADP II website and social media pages. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed and their original project documents could be returned to them on request.



Kingdom of Lesotho

Ministry of Education and Training

### Expression of Interest for short term Consultancy of Procurement Record Keepers (2)

**COUNTRY** : Kingdom of Lesotho  
**PROJECT** : Lesotho Education Improvement Project (LEIP)  
**SECTOR** : Education  
**LOAN #** : 7587-LS  
**PROJECT ID NO.:** P500587

The Government of the Lesotho (GOL) signed Loan with World Bank to support implementation of the Lesotho Education Improvement project (P500587) (LEIP) for a total value of US\$ 20 million in August 2024. The project aims to improve basic education service delivery and student retention in targeted schools. Mainly construction of classrooms and pit latrines in primary schools, and workshop, science laboratory blocks and latrines in secondary schools is included in the project. MoET intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for goods, related services and consulting services to be procured under this project.

The three components of the project are:

Component 1: Improving the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools

Component 2: Enhancing physical learning conditions in targeted primary and secondary schools, (I) Improving basic infrastructure in targeted primary schools, (II) Constructing laboratories and workshops in targeted secondary schools with the total allocation of US\$ 15 Million.

Component 3: Strengthening project management, and governance of education system.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) now wishes to recruit a **Two (2) Procurement Record Keepers** to be part of the Project Facilitation Unit (PFU) which is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the project.

#### Objective:

The principal objective of this assignment is the provision of consulting services for procurement record keeping using Systematic tracking Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) to record all procurement activities in real time.

#### Qualification and Experience:

Interested candidates must have:

- a. **Educational qualifications:** at least diploma in Office Management or Business Management or Diploma in

- b. **Procurement and Supply or related field.**  
**Work Experience:** minimum of 2 years working in an office environment. Past experience in projects funded by development partners such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union, the USAID, and the Millennium Challenge Account will be an added advantage and must have at least completed one (1) similar assignment in the past Seven (7) years.

#### Selection Criteria:

The selection of the suitable candidate will be based on the qualifications and experience as follows: (i) qualifications (30%), (ii) experience (professional, specific and general) (60%); and (iii) other relevant attributes (10%) consistent with the requirements of the Terms of Reference pursuant to the relevant requirements of the World Bank's applicable Guidelines: Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers' **Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers** July 2016 and **updated February 2025** (Sixth Edition), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest available on [www.worldbank.org/procurement](http://www.worldbank.org/procurement).

#### Duration:

The duration of this assignment will be approximately from 6 months with possibility of extension subject to satisfactory performance.

#### Details:

Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) can be attained from the following address between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on working days: **Procurement Unit, EFU, Site 130 Fokothi, Off Moshoeshoe Road, P.O. Box 1279, Maseru 100, Lesotho. Tel (+266) 22324968.** Attn: Mr. Relebohile Nkalai Email: [relebohile.nkalai@gov.ls](mailto:relebohile.nkalai@gov.ls) with a copy to [nhthabi.hleoheng86@gmail.com](mailto:nhthabi.hleoheng86@gmail.com).

#### Submission:

Interested consultants should submit their detailed expression of interest and updated Curriculum Vitae (CVs), indicating names and contact details of at least two (2) referees, and should enclose certified copies of educational certificates. The Expression of interest must be hand delivered to the address indicated above on or before **April 13th, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. (local time).**

Submissions must be clearly titled (including on the submission envelope where applicable):

**"Expression of Interest for Procurement Record Keeper"**



### NOTICE OF WINDING UP AND CLOSURE OF OPERATIONS MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT – LESOTHO II (MCA-LESOTHO II)

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that Millennium Challenge Account – Lesotho II Authority (MCA-Lesotho II), established for the implementation of the Millennium Challenge Compact II, has commenced the process of winding up its operations following the termination of the Compact.

In accordance with applicable laws, Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funder requirements, and approved closure procedures, MCA-Lesotho II hereby advises all its stakeholders as follows:

1. All operations of MCA-Lesotho II shall cease on April 18, 2026, being the official Compact Closure Date.
2. All activities, programmes, and operations are being brought to an orderly close in line with the Policy on Compact Closure.
3. All contracts, obligations, and liabilities are in the process of being settled, assigned or terminated in accordance with applicable agreements and governing law.
4. All assets of MCA-Lesotho II are being disposed of or transferred in accordance with approved asset disposition procedures.

#### NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS:

Any person, vendors, service providers, entity, or stakeholder having outstanding invoices or claims against MCA-Lesotho II is hereby required to submit full particulars of such claims, together with supporting documentation (such as invoices, contracts, proof of service delivery), within ten (10) days from the date of publication of this notice. Kindly note that any claims not submitted within this period may not be considered for payment, as MCA-Lesotho II is in the process of closing its operations.

Claims must be submitted to:

#### The Liquidator

e-Legal Solutions Inc.  
 Carlton Centre, 3rd Floor, Suite 310  
 Kingsway Road, Maseru.

#### Contacts:

(+266) 22310849  
 (+266) 56281601 (Adv. Thapelo Donald Ntsiki)  
 e-mail address: [info@e-legal.solutions](mailto:info@e-legal.solutions)

Failure to submit claims within the prescribed period may result in such claims not being recognized during the closure process.

DATED at Maseru this 30th day of March 2026.

For and on behalf of MCA-Lesotho II:

*[Signature]*  
 Liquidator

(Authorized Representative)



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition  
 WaMCoP  
 P.O. Box 24  
 Maseru 100



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### REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Consulting Firms)

#### LESOTHO

#### WOOLAND MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT

Assignment Title: **Establishment of the WMF-WME**

Reference No: **LSO-2000003942-0138-CS-QCBS**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has received a financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project.

The consulting services ("the services") include establishment of Corporate Management System (CMS) that complies with international standards for the Lesotho WMF-WME Consortium: Solution Architecture, Corporate Governance System Framework, a befitting business model and strategy for the WMF-WME Consortium: Business Plan, etc., as stated in the PTORs. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition ("the client") now invites eligible consulting firms ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services. Interested firms should submit their expressions of interest to the address indicated below.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy

to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. By entering in this document, you certify to have read, understood, and agreed to be bound by the Privacy Policy of IFAD.

The consultant shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. A consultant with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. A consultant including their respective personnel and affiliates are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, b) participate in more than one EOI under this procurement action, c) have a business or family relationship with a member of the Purchaser's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of this REOI, (ii) the shortlisting or selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. The consultant has an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the EOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The following conflict of interest rules shall apply with respect to recruitment of government/client staff within the consultant's proposed team:

- a. No member of the client's board of directors or current employees of the client (whether part time, or full time, paid or unpaid, in leave status, etc.) shall be proposed or work as, or on behalf of, any consultant.
- b. Except as provided in sub-clause 8.6(d), no current employees of the government shall work as consultants or as personnel under their own ministries, departments or agencies.
- c. Recruiting former client or government employees to perform services for their former ministries, departments or agencies is acceptable provided no conflict of interest exists.
- d. If a consultant proposes any government employee as personnel in their technical proposal, such personnel must have written certification from the government confirming that: (i) they will be on leave without pay from the time of their official proposal submission and will remain on leave without pay until the end of their assignment with the consultant and they are allowed to work full-time outside of their previous official position; or (ii) they will resign or retire from government employment on or prior to the contract award date. Under no circumstances shall any individuals described in (i)

and (ii) be responsible for approving the implementation of this contract. Such certification shall be provided to the client by the consultant as part of its technical proposal.

- e. In the case where a consultant seeks to engage the services of any person falling under ITC sub-clauses 8.6(a) – 8.6(d), who may have left the client within a period of less than twelve (12) months of the date of this RFP, it must obtain a written "no-objection" from the client for the inclusion of such a person, prior to the consultant's submission of its proposal.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in IFAD's project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at [www.ifad.org/project-procurement](http://www.ifad.org/project-procurement).

The shortlisting criteria are:

Criteria #	Description	Allocated Marks
1	General Experience of Firm/Company	20
2	Specific Experience of a Firm in Similar Assignment	50
3	Organisation and availability of technical staff & supporting staff	10
4	Financial Capacity	20

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below no later than 16:00hrs, **08 April 2026, Lesotho time**. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by 16:00hrs, **10 April 2026, Lesotho time**.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in written form using the forms provided for this purpose. EOIs shall be submitted to the address below no later than 12:00hrs, **17 April 2026, Lesotho time**.

Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project

Attn: Procurement and Contracts Manager

P.O. Box 24

Department of Livestock Services

Old Airport Road, Moshoeshoe II

e-mail: [procurement@wamcop.org.ls](mailto:procurement@wamcop.org.ls) and cc: [mlejota-thakong@wamcop.org.ls](mailto:mlejota-thakong@wamcop.org.ls)

1. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/as-set/41942012>.
2. The policy is accessible at [www.ifad.org/anticorruption\\_policy](http://www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy).
3. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/as-set/40738506>.
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### Refiloe Molise

Lesotho's dancesport athletes delivered a commanding performance at a regional competition held at the University of eSwatini last Saturday, returning home with an impressive haul of 12 gold, nine silver and one bronze medal across multiple categories.

The competition attracted participants and adjudicators from across Southern Africa, including South Africa, Botswana and the host nation, eSwatini. Lesotho fielded a strong team competing in both Latin and Standard divisions, dominating several events.

Bafokeng Liphilana and Hape Mathejane were among the standout performers, clinching gold in the Adult Championship Latin category. The pair also secured another top finish in the Adult Rising Star Standard division, reinforcing their status as leading figures in the sport after being named Sportsman of the Year in 2025.

Other gold medal winners included Sentjamela Mosehle and Mosili Ntho in Adult Rising Star Latin, Thapelo Mohlekoa and Mahlonolo Makoetje in Adult Level 3 Latin, and Molemo Mofeli and Khahliso Letuka in Adult Level 1 Latin.

In the junior categories, Lebohang Shea and Nthabiseng Rasethuntša emerged victorious in their respective solo Latin events, further underlining Lesotho's depth of talent.

Nthejane Nthejane, acting president of

# Lesotho dancers strike gold in eSwatini



Lesotho dancesport athletes after winning a regional competition at the university of eSwatini

the Federation of Dance Sport in Lesotho, said the results reflect the growing strength and commitment of local dancers.

"We currently do not have a national team because once it is formed it has to be fully funded and our resources have not yet reached that level, however, we

continue to give local clubs opportunities to compete internationally whenever we receive invitations."

He said the team's participation in eSwatini was made possible through sponsorship support, which included first aid kits and makeup kits, enabling athletes to compete effectively at the regional event.

Nthejane explained that dancesport is a fully recognised competitive discipline requiring both technical skill and artistic expression.

"Dancesport is a sport played by both males and females, and it is judged on technical quality, partnering skills, choreography and presentation," he said. "It is not just dancing for entertainment, there are strict principles and rules that athletes must follow."

He noted that many of the dance styles featured in competitions originate from Latin American countries such as Cuba and Brazil, but have evolved into structured international sporting codes.

Lesotho also hosts one of the region's premier dancesport events, the Queen's Cup, held in honour of Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso and attracting competitors from neighbouring countries.

According to Nthejane, the annual competition has played a key role in promoting the sport locally while providing Basotho dancers with exposure to international standards.

### Refiloe Molise

Masianokeng Sports Academy has strengthened its youth development efforts after signing a partnership agreement with Moonlight Enterprise Ink during a ceremony held at the Metcash Building this week.

The academy, established in March 2020 in Masianokeng, was founded to provide children with a safe and structured environment where they can participate in sports while focusing on their education.

It currently accommodates 115 boys and girls between the ages of five and 20, offering training in football, boxing and beauty pageants.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Academy's president, Tlokotsi Ndlovu, said the organisation has been searching for support from companies to help it grow and better serve young people in the community.

"We are one of the smallest academies in the country and we are still growing, so we have been looking for assistance from companies to support us. That is when we came across Moonlight Enterprise Ink, which agreed to assist us in promoting sports at the academy," said Ndlovu.

He explained that the academy was formed to guide children away from neg-

# Academy gets timely boost



Masianokeng Sports Academy president Tlokotsi Ndlovu and Moonlight Enterprise Ink Managing Director, Chakane Sepetla signing a partnership agreement

ative influences such as drug abuse and early teenage pregnancy while encouraging discipline, teamwork and commitment to education.

"Our main objective has always been to take children away from the streets and create a space where they can focus on their education and their talents," he said.

Despite the progress made over the past five years, the academy continues to face challenges, particularly a shortage of

sports equipment and limited financial resources.

Members contribute a monthly fee of M50.00 to support the running of activities, but this is often not enough to meet all operational needs.

Ndlovu said the partnership would help improve the academy's visibility and provide the support needed to sustain its programmes.

He added that the academy also recog-

nises learners who perform well in both school and sports during annual awards ceremonies held between May and June, with this year's ceremony scheduled for May 30, 2026.

On his part, the Managing Director of Moonlight Enterprise Ink, Chakane Sepetla, said the company decided to partner with the academy because of its role in shaping the lives of young people in the community.

"As Moonlight Enterprise Ink, we want to see young people actively participating in sports and staying away from negative influences. Supporting initiatives like Masianokeng Sports Academy is one way of contributing to community development," said Sepetla.

He explained that the agreement signed on March 30, 2026, will run for three years until March 30, 2029, after which both parties will review and possibly renew the partnership.

Sepetla added that the company's support will focus on branding and providing tools rather than direct financial sponsorship.

"We will not be sponsoring the academy with money, but we will assist with branding and providing tools to promote the academy. Branding costs can change, which is why it is difficult to set a fixed budget," he said.

# LHDA empowers Katse artisans



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) hosted a graduation ceremony for beneficiaries of its Skills Testing and Accreditation Programme and Community-Based Tourism training initiative

## Seabata Mahao

Against the backdrop of the Maluti Mountains and the shimmering waters of Katse Dam, a story of hope, skills development and economic renewal unfolded as the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) hosted a graduation ceremony for beneficiaries of its Skills Testing and Accreditation Programme and Community-Based Tourism training initiative.

Held at the Katse Old Information Centre, the ceremony brought together community members, government officials and development partners to celebrate the achievements of hundreds of Basotho who have completed training aimed at improving livelihoods in the highlands.

The event marked a significant milestone for the programme, a flagship initiative launched in 2025 to identify individuals with existing but uncertified skills in the

built environment and formally assess them.

Under the initiative, participants undergo rigorous testing and, upon passing, receive accreditation and certification in their respective trades. These credentials are recognised across the SADC region, enabling beneficiaries to access broader employment opportunities.

This certification allows graduates to secure work within the Lesotho Highlands

Water Project (LHWP) and beyond.

A total of 386 artisans graduated during the ceremony, including 116 in bricklaying, 78 in masonry, 48 in roofing, 101 in plastering and 43 in welding. In addition, 36 participants received certificates in community-based tourism disciplines such as crafts and tour guiding.

To date, more than 1,000 beneficiaries from Mokhotlong have graduated from the programme and are actively participating in Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, highlighting the initiative's growing impact.

Speaking at the event on behalf of LHDA's Chief Executive, Ntšoli Maitetso highlighted that the programme is designed to accelerate access to employment for young people and adults living in project areas, many of whom previously faced barriers due to lack of formal certification despite possessing practical skills.

"The Skills Testing and Accreditation Programme is transforming lives by opening doors that were previously closed," an Maitetso noted.

"It is about recognising talent, formalising it and ensuring that communities benefit directly from large-scale infrastructure projects."

Equally significant was the recognition of graduates from the Community-Based Tourism training initiative, implemented in partnership with the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

The programme equips local communities with skills in hospitality, guiding and cultural tourism, enabling them to actively participate in and benefit from tourism opportunities linked to Katse Dam and surrounding areas.

For the graduates, the ceremony was more than a formal occasion; it marked a turning point. Dressed in their finest, they stood proudly as they received certificates symbolising not only skills, but renewed opportunity and dignity.

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**Kananelo Mokhele**

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has been credited for spearheading the rapid growth and revival of rugby in Lesotho, with the Federation of Lesotho Rugby (FLR) pointing to the Econet Rugby League (ERL) as the backbone of the sport's recent success.

The federation said the sustained investment and support from ETL have transformed rugby from a struggling code into one of the country's fastest-growing sports, anchored by structured competition, improved safety standards and increased nationwide participation.

Since its establishment in 2019, the ERL has evolved into Lesotho's premier rugby competition, providing a consistent platform for clubs while elevating the overall standard of the game.

Beyond competition, Econet's backing has enabled the introduction of critical medical support systems, including collision-related supervision, significantly enhancing player welfare.

FLR's president Fetang Selialia said the partnership with ETL has been instrumental in reviving rugby in Lesotho since 2012.

"The support has not only increased participation but also improved visibility of the sport, attracting more spectators and recognition from international bodies," Selialia noted.

The impact of Econet's involvement is also evident in the growing competitiveness of the domestic league. The 2024/2025 season saw Lesotho Rugby Academy Rugby Club (RC) crowned champions, while Alex Bokang Ncheke walked away with the Most Valuable Player award. Mabote Beavers' Sekhola Phate claimed the Top Try Scorer accolade.

The 2025 season, which kicked off in April, has continued to build on this momentum, recording increased fan engagement and participation levels across clubs.

Structurally, the federation operates under

# Econet credited for stimulating rugby revival



**The Federation of Lesotho Rugby (FLR)'s Annual General Meeting 2026**

a well-defined system led by the president and supported by executive members, with development directors deployed across the north, central and southern regions to ensure nationwide reach.

On the international stage, Lesotho rugby has also made significant strides. The federation recently secured full membership status with World Rugby, unlocking access to funding through its Development Investment Programme.

National teams have also delivered strong performances, with the men's 15s side winning the BOLESWA TRY Nations Cup against eSwatini and Botswana, while the

women's team continues to dominate the regional Khansi'cala Tournament, clinching the title three consecutive times.

The national Sevens team also showcased its competitiveness in Mpumalanga, South Africa, narrowly missing out on victory after a final decided by a coin toss.

At grassroots level, the sport is expanding rapidly. In partnership with the Lesotho Rugby Academy, rugby has been introduced to over 7,000 learners within a year, while school competitions run alongside LISA and LEPSA continue to nurture emerging talent.

Despite the progress, challenges remain.

The federation continues to grapple with the lack of a dedicated national rugby field, with officials appealing for government support to develop proper infrastructure, including changing facilities.

There is also a shortage of qualified referees, prompting calls for increased training and stricter enforcement of discipline within clubs.

"We remain committed to improving behaviour, strengthening officiating, and ensuring the game is played within the rules," the federation stated.

Governance within the sport has also strengthened, with a recent Annual General Meeting recording 98 percent attendance, reflecting growing stakeholder confidence. Clubs such as Maseru Warriors, Mabote Beavers, Liqhomane, NUL Spears, Academy and Gorillas were all represented.

Key resolutions included the inclusion of Mabita Gorillas in both men's and women's competitions, as well as the expansion of the partnership with the Lesotho Rugby Academy.

Selialia described the past season as exceptional, once again crediting ETL's continued sponsorship, now in its fourth year, as a major driver behind the league's success and the broader growth of rugby in Lesotho.

The federation also acknowledged support from 207 retailers, All4one Sports, World Rugby, Rugby Africa, government institutions, clubs, players, parents and supporters for sustaining the sport's upward trajectory.

## Lesotho chess growth gains momentum

**Mamello Rakotsoane**

Lesotho's chess is showing encouraging signs of growth and competitiveness, with the Chess Federation of Lesotho (CFL) pointing to the recent international results as clear evidence of the country's rapid development in the sport.

Batloung Lesala (under 16) and Thato Moorosi (under 14) took part in the Susan 50 Chess Championship, which took place in Lilongwe, Malawi from 26 - 30 March 2026.

Moorosi dominated the under 14 Section, claiming first prize with a whopping 5/7 points. He walked away with a free Air Ticket to Uganda for the 2026 AYCC in May, gold medal, trophy, chess set, and a one full year mentorship and training scholarship.

Lesela on the other hand tied with Margaret-Zambia's Rapid and Blitz Champ at 5.5/7 rounds in the Under 16 section and won third place prize. He walked away with a smart watch, gift of Chess Chess Set, bronze medal, and a one year mentorship and training scholarship.

Reacting to the duo's performance, the federation has described Team Lesotho's latest performance on the global stage as a historic breakthrough, underlining the progress made through sustained grassroots programmes, school competitions and structured player development pathways.

Lieketseng Makhamele, CFL's Public Relations Officer said the results marked a significant milestone for local chess, reflect-

ing years of deliberate investment in nurturing young talent.

"This is the first time in the history of chess in Lesotho that we have seen such a performance at an international tournament. It is both commendable and deeply encouraging," Makhamele said.

The achievement is being viewed as validation of the federation's long-term strategy, which has focused on building a strong foundation through junior development, regional competitions and early exposure to competitive play.

According to the CFL, Lesotho is now beginning to position itself as an emerging force in youth chess across Africa, with its development structures increasingly producing players capable of competing at international level.

The federation praised the team for displaying discipline, professionalism and mental strength—qualities seen as critical to sustaining the country's upward trajectory in the sport.

"They demonstrated resilience, composure and a growing tactical maturity. Their conduct and work ethic reflect the values we are striving to instill in all our players," Makhamele said.

Leading the charge was Thato Moorosi, whose dominant performance saw him secure top honours with five points out of seven, highlighting the calibre of talent now emerging from Lesotho's chess system.

Makhamele said Moorosi's composure un-



*Thato Moorosi concentrates during a match at the Susan@50 Chess Championship. Moorosi dominated his section, scoring five out of seven points to claim first place*

der pressure and technical precision, particularly in the endgame, showcased the benefits of improved training structures and competitive exposure.

The result is expected to open further opportunities for Moorosi at higher levels, cementing his status as one of the country's brightest prospects.

Batloung Lesela also delivered a strong showing, finishing third overall after tiebreaks despite tying for second place, another indicator of the growing depth of talent within Lesotho's chess ranks.

Makhamele noted that Lesela's performance reflected consistency, strong preparation and strategic awareness, attributes increasingly evident among local players.

In a major boost to development, both Moorosi and Lesela have secured a year-long mentorship under a Grandmaster in India, a move expected to accelerate their growth and expose them to elite-level training environments.

The programme is set to enhance their technical knowledge, deepen their understanding of advanced strategies and introduce them to

professional chess culture, key components in bridging the gap between local and international standards.

The federation has already begun preparations for the African Youth Chess Championship 2026 in Uganda, where Lesotho aims to build on its recent success and further assert its presence on the continental stage.

Plans include intensive training camps, performance analysis sessions and expanded mentorship support, reflecting a more structured and ambitious approach to international competition.

Makhamele emphasised that school-based chess initiatives remain central to the country's progress, serving as the primary pipeline for talent identification and development.

"This success underscores that junior chess in Lesotho is on a promising trajectory. The foundation is now visibly strong, but we must continue building on it," she said.

Despite the strides made, challenges persist, particularly around funding and logistics. The federation noted that financial constraints continue to affect travel, preparation and participation in international events.

Makhamele said overcoming these hurdles makes the team's recent achievements even more significant, highlighting the determination of players and administrators alike.

As Lesotho looks ahead to Uganda 2026 and other international assignments, the CFL has called for increased support from sponsors and institutions to sustain the sport's growth.

"Sponsorship is not merely financial support; it is an investment in national pride, youth development and the intellectual future of Lesotho," Makhamele said.

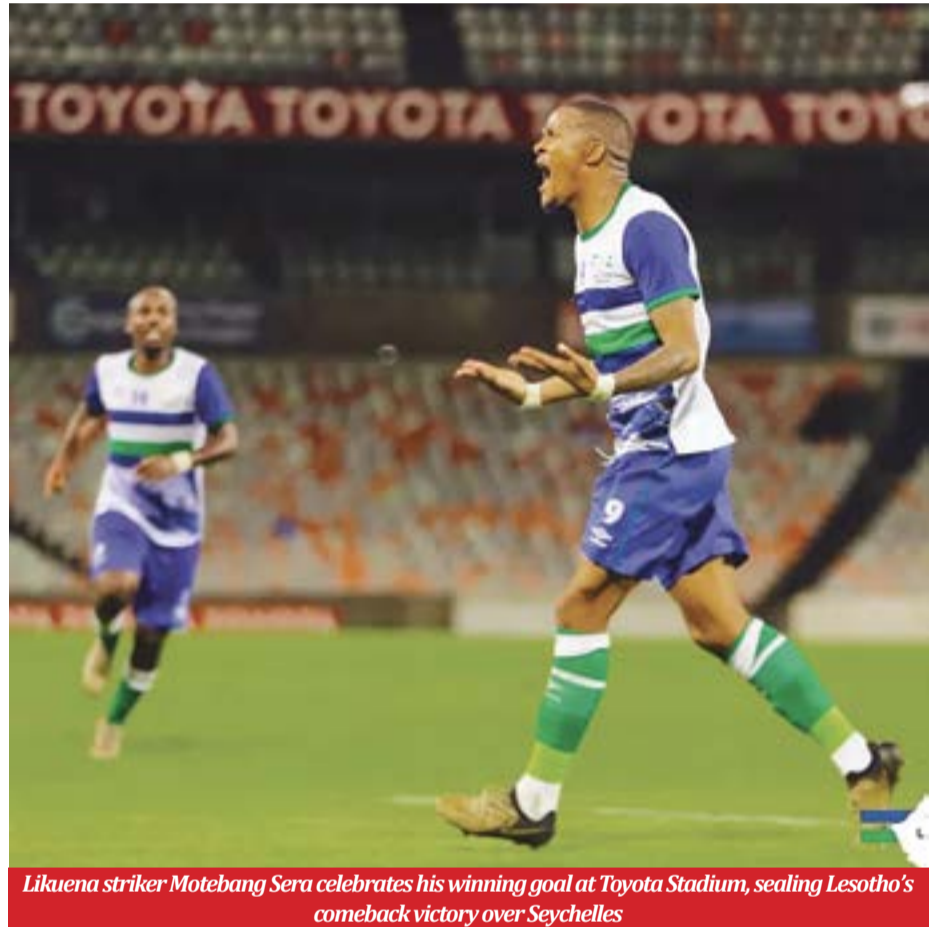
With a stronger development pipeline, rising young stars and increasing international exposure, Lesotho's chess is steadily gaining momentum, signalling a promising future for the sport in the Mountain Kingdom.



# Likuena's AFCON dream remains alive



*Sports Minister Motlatsi Maqelepo and LeFAs president Nthunya Lijane watching Likuena's dramatic comeback win to advance to the AFCON 2027 group stage*



*Likuena striker Motebang Sera celebrates his winning goal at Toyota Stadium, sealing Lesotho's comeback victory over Seychelles*

## Mamello Rakotsoane

The senior national football team, Likuena, have kept their Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) dream alive after coming from behind to defeat Seychelles 2-1 at Toyota Stadium on Sunday, sealing progression to the group stage of the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON 2027 qualifiers.

The hard-fought victory sees Lesotho successfully clear the preliminary round hurdle, placing the team within touching distance of a historic first-ever appearance at the AFCON finals, should they navigate the upcoming group stages.

The win sealed the preliminary round tie for the side coached by Atang 'Bob' Mafoso after the first leg between the two nations ended in a goalless draw at the same venue.

Likuena dominated possession from the start and created several scoring

opportunities but initially struggled to break down a disciplined Seychelles defence that had already proven difficult to penetrate in the first leg.

Despite Lesotho's control of the match, it was Seychelles who struck first just before half-time. Forward Brandon Labrosse capitalised on a defensive lapse in the 45th minute, beating goalkeeper Sekhoane Moerane, who had rushed off his line in an attempt to clear the ball.

The goal handed Seychelles a 1-0 lead at the break and briefly threatened to derail Lesotho's ambitions.

However, Likuena returned from the interval with renewed urgency, maintaining pressure and eventually finding an equaliser through Lebohang Lesako. The Orbit College FC attacker showed composure inside the box, dribbling past two defenders before slotting home to level the match.

With qualification still hanging in the balance, Mafoso introduced attacking reinforcements, including Neo Mokhachane and Lesotho's all-time leading scorer Jane Thabantšo, in a bid to sharpen the team's attack.

The decisive moment came in the 82nd minute when striker Motebang Sera rose above the defence to head home a well-delivered free kick from Itumeleng Falene, sealing a 2-1 victory and Lesotho's passage to the group stage.

Following the win, Lijane Nthunya, the president of the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), expressed gratitude to stakeholders who supported the team during the two-legged encounter, which was played in South Africa.

"We are grateful to all stakeholders who made time to travel to Bloemfontein to support the team in its two crucial matches, where it secured qualification

into the group stage," Nthunya said.

He praised the government of Lesotho, particularly the Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, Motlatsi Maqelepo, who attended the decisive second leg alongside other officials, corporate partners, and supporters.

The Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, in partnership with LeFA, had announced a M300,000 performance incentive to motivate the team to reach the group stage of the tournament, which will be hosted in East Africa in 2027.

Nthunya said the gesture helped inspire the players to push harder in the decisive moments of the tie.

"We thank the Ministry for the incentive, encouraging the players to double their effort. Likuena belongs to Basotho we call on corporate partners to help make securing qualification into the main tournament a reality," he said.



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