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# MATEKANE WANTS PASSPORTS IN SIX HOURS

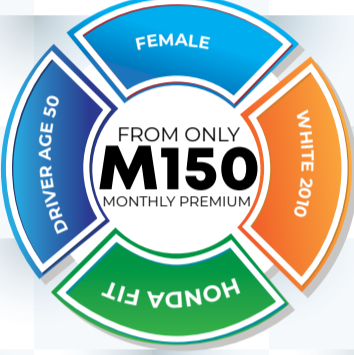


*... Basotho still waiting years in the queue*

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# Matekane wants passports in six hours

## ... Basotho still waiting years in the queue

### Thoboloko Nfšonyane

Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane has called for passports to be processed online within six hours, questioning why Lesotho cannot match the efficiency of other countries.

"Other countries are doing it, why can't we do it?" Matekane asked on Monday during the opening of the 64th Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) Council Meeting and the Commonwealth Digital Roadshow in Maseru.

His remarks were met with applause from participants. The event marked the first time an African country has hosted the CTO Council Meeting.

For many Basotho, obtaining or renewing a passport remains a frustrating ordeal. As of April 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs was grappling with a backlog of over 51,000 unprocessed applications.

Some citizens have waited up to two years for their documents, while others report delays stretching from several months to over a year.

Long queues form daily outside the passport office in Maseru and other districts, with desperate applicants, including migrant workers who risk losing jobs in South Africa, spending hours or even days trying to submit or collect documents.

The ministry has occasionally suspended new applications to clear the backlog, yet crowds persist. Reports of outdated equipment, technical glitches, supply chain issues for passport materials, and allegations of bribery allowing some to jump the queue have compounded public frustration.

These delays severely impact livelihoods, family visits, business opportunities, and cross-border movement, turning what should be a basic service into a major barrier for ordinary citizens, especially those in remote highland areas.

Matekane also recounted challenges he faced communicating with communities in the highlands, including Matsaile, Tlaling, Leseling, and Hloahloeng. He directed the Minister of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and



Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane

Innovation, Nthathi Moorosi, and her team to fast-track connectivity projects in these areas.

He stressed that Basotho deserve quality services at reasonable costs.

"Since assuming office, my government has demonstrated strong commitment to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation," Matekane said.

This commitment, he noted, is evidenced by Minister Moorosi's participation in CTO engagements in 2023, the first ministerial-level involvement from Lesotho in recent years.

"We also applaud the fact that Lesotho is the first country in Africa to host the CTO's Roadshow. We thank you for bringing it home, Madam Secretary General," he added, addressing CTO Secretary-General Bernadette Lewis.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude for the CTO's ongoing support in building the capacity of Lesotho's institutions and personnel in the ICT sector. He said this assistance has been crucial in strengthening the country's digital infrastructure

and policy framework.

"As we accelerate our digital transformation agenda, we seek deeper collaboration and support from the CTO, particularly in cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence. Targeted capacity-building programmes in these domains would greatly enhance our ability to protect our digital ecosystem and harness emerging technologies for national development," Matekane said.

He added that technological advancement would serve as a pillar for youth employment, efficient service delivery, business development, and navigating geopolitical challenges that sometimes hinder international transactions.

Despite these aspirations, analogue practices continue in Lesotho's public sector: Job seekers must still travel to government offices in Maseru to collect and hand-deliver application forms. Some ministries require newspapers to attach the physical page of a job or tender advertisement to their invoice before processing payment.

These examples highlight persistent analogue

mindsets in a digital age, practices that frustrate citizens, burden taxpayers, and undermine the government's stated transformation goals.

Talk of e-government has persisted for years, promising to revolutionise public services and improve convenience for citizens. However, a significant gap remains between policy intentions and on-the-ground reality.

Lesotho adopted its first e-government framework following the 2005 ICT Policy, while Vision 2020 also aspired to position the country as a technology-driven nation.

This week's CTO events placed e-governance under sharp focus. Delegates from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, the Pacific, and Europe attended the gathering.

CTO Secretary-General Bernadette Lewis commended Lesotho for hosting the historic event, noting that the Commonwealth Digital Roadshow and Council Meeting were designed to align with the country's national priorities.

Minister Moorosi reaffirmed Lesotho's commitment to strengthening partnerships with CTO member states to accelerate digital development across the Commonwealth. She emphasised that digital transformation must remain inclusive and impactful.

During the tabling of the 2026/2027 national budget, Minister of Finance and Development Planning Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane declared: "We live in a digital era, and Lesotho cannot afford to fall behind. Digital transformation is both urgent and indispensable to accelerating growth, inclusion, and effective participation in the global economy."

Dr Matlanyane promised accelerated investments in digitisation and the development of a digital economy across all sectors. These would focus on expanding ICT access and connectivity, improving reliability, and bridging the digital divide.

"Within government, digital systems will be modernised, cybersecurity strengthened, and electronic platforms expanded to improve service delivery, transparency, and information sharing," she said. "Investments in digital skills for public servants will ensure that systems are secure, accessible, and responsive to the needs of citizens."

The Minister announced an allocation of M386.4 million for ICT infrastructure to advance digital transformation and expand access to modern technological services.

Minister Moorosi added that the government is preparing to launch e-government services, including online passport renewal, driving licence renewal, identity document renewal, and residence permits. Applicants will be able to apply and pay online, then book an appointment to collect documents at their nearest centre.

She instructed technicians to incorporate a Sesotho voice guide to ensure the platform is accessible to all citizens.

# UN urges Lesotho to phase out special education

### Staff Reporter

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has called on Lesotho to repeal discriminatory provisions in the Education Act 2010 and phase out special education in favour of a quality inclusive education system.

The Committee further recommended that Lesotho remove barriers to access and ensure reasonable accommodation, individualised support, and accessible pathways to tertiary and vocational education for all learners with disabilities.

The recommendations form part of the CRPD's concluding observations on Lesotho, issued after its recent session in which it reviewed Lesotho, Liberia, the Marshall Islands, Pakistan, and Samoa.

In its findings, the Committee expressed seri-

ous concern over persistent disability-based stigma, degrading treatment, and harmful beliefs affecting persons with disabilities, including people with albinism. These attitudes, it noted, continue to result in abandonment, exclusion, and dehumanising treatment.

The Committee also raised concern about legal provisions that allow termination of pregnancy on the grounds of foetal impairment, stating that such laws reinforce discriminatory stereotypes that devalue the lives of persons with disabilities.

Regarding education, the Committee highlighted that children with disabilities in Lesotho are still not fully benefiting from free and compulsory primary education.

"The Committee highlighted that children with disabilities are still not benefiting from free and

compulsory primary education as the Education Act 2010 exempts children with disability from registration and attendance on the basis of disability and because of high drop-out rates," the press release read.

"It also underscored concern about the prevalence of special education that excludes students with disabilities from mainstream regular education. It recommended that the State Party repeal discriminatory provisions in the Education Act, phase out special education in favour of a quality inclusive system, remove barriers to access, and ensure reasonable accommodation, individualised support and accessible pathways to tertiary and vocational education for all learners with disabilities," it added.

The Committee also recalled earlier recom-

mendations by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism and urged Lesotho to strengthen nationwide human rights awareness, adopt a national strategy on albinism, and provide rights-based counselling and support to families and communities to challenge harmful beliefs and uphold the dignity of persons with albinism.

Under the current Education Act, parents who fail to enrol or ensure regular attendance of their children face penalties, including community service, a fine of not less than M1,000, or imprisonment for a term of not less than one year. However, the law currently exempts children with disabilities from this compulsory requirement, a provision the UN Committee views as discriminatory.

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# Villagers beg for water, electricity as LHWP reaches new frontier

## Seabata Mahao

Community leaders in Mokhotlong have called for urgent access to water and electricity, saying residents living near the multi-billion maloti Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Phase II continue to face basic service shortages despite ongoing developments.

Malingoaneng Constituency Member of Parliament, Monethi Ramakalima, urged the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) to ensure that Basotho directly benefit from the country's natural resources.

Speaking during the launch and naming ceremony of the second Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) at Polihali this week, Ramakalima said communities were promised improved livelihoods when Phase II preparations began in 2012, a commitment he believes has yet to be fully realised.

"For our people and livestock, we hope the authorities will hear our plea. We are hopeful that soon we will have access to clean water networks for each household," he said.

He added that while electricity infrastructure is visible at project sites, surrounding communities remain without access.

"We only see electricity at the project sites; however, we hope that communities around these areas will also benefit," Ramakalima said.

The MP also raised concerns about high unemployment, noting that many residents are willing to acquire skills to improve their livelihoods.

"We hope that once Phase II is complete, we will see improved living conditions and sustainable means of income," he said, while commending LHDA for infrastructure improvements such as roads.

Representing the Principal Chief of Tlokoeng, Chief Matšohlo Sekonyela acknowledged the significance of hosting one of the country's largest infra-

structure projects but said local communities continue to face serious challenges.

"We are fortunate to host such a major project, but many of our people are yet to benefit meaningfully," he said.

Sekonyela appealed for access to water, pointing out that project water flows through their communities to South Africa while locals remain without supply.

"This water passes through our area to South Africa; we also want access to clean water in every household," he said.

He further called for the expansion of electricity infrastructure in Tlokoeng and surrounding villages.

"We plead with LHDA and the ministry to include us in their plans," he added.

The Polihali TBM, named Leboborane la Manyokola-Thita, is the second machine working on the 38.5-kilometre tunnel linking Polihali Dam to Katse Dam.

Winners of the naming competition were announced as follows:

First prize: 'Malira Chefa of St Paul's High School (Botha-Bothe), receiving M12,500, with M37,500 awarded to the school for the name Leboborane la Manyokola-Thita.

Second prize: Fikile Mpopo of St Catherine's High School, receiving M7,500, with M22,500 awarded to the school for Leboborane la Loti.

Third prize: Karabo Selebalo of Holy Family High School, receiving M5,000, with M15,000 awarded to the school for Makoanyane oa Lithaba.

Responding to the concerns, Minister of Natural Resources, Mohlomi Moleko, said the project remains a key economic driver, contributing to employment and infrastructure development.

He noted that Phase II has created more than 17,000 jobs, bringing total employment generated by the project over four decades to over 33,000.



Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) launch and naming ceremony at Polihali addit

"The project is a key economic driver and continues to create employment opportunities for Basotho," Moleko said, adding that skills development remains a priority, with over 1,000 individuals already trained.

He emphasised that while infrastructure progress is important, improving livelihoods must remain central.

"We strongly urge LHDA to prioritise livelihood restoration and social development. We must not leave anyone behind," he said.

South Africa's Minister of Water and Sanitation, Penny Majodina, described the launch of the TBM as a major milestone in a project that will connect the Polihali and Katse dams through a 38.5-kilometre tunnel.

"This is transformative infrastructure," she said, noting that the system will significantly increase water transfer capacity and support hydropower generation.

Acting Chairperson of the LHDA Board, Peete Molapo, said the milestone signals steady progress in Phase II of the project.

He recalled that the arrival of TBM components at the Caledonspoor border in July 2025 marked a critical step, followed by months of assembly by engineers, contractors, and workers.

"Their dedication, expertise, and resilience have made this achievement possible," Molapo said.

He revealed that the TBM has advanced 793 metres into the mountain, describing the progress as a reflection of years of planning and technical effort.

"Each metre excavated represents progress to-

ward connecting Polihali and Katse dams, strengthening water infrastructure, and delivering long-term benefits," he said.

Molapo added that the project, valued at approximately M9.2 billion, has created employment for around 2,062 people, 80 percent of whom are Basotho. More than 1,100 individuals have participated in skills development programmes, with over 700 receiving certification.

He noted that community initiatives, including healthcare support, infrastructure upgrades, and environmental conservation, form part of the project's broader impact.

"This progress reflects not only engineering success but also innovation, collaboration, and national development," Molapo said. "The TBM is not just a machine, it is a symbol of growth and a bridge to future opportunities."

He acknowledged the challenges of such a large-scale project but said steady progress continues.

"With every rotation of the cutterhead, we move closer to securing water resources, generating energy, and expanding development opportunities," he said.

Molapo concluded by thanking all stakeholders for their continued support.

"Together, we are building a legacy that will benefit future generations," he said.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project, established through a 1986 treaty between Lesotho and South Africa, is designed to supply water to South Africa while generating hydroelectric power for Lesotho.

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# Leaders call for WASH to be recognised as a child's right

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

African policymakers, development partners, and child advocates gathered in Maseru this week for a high-level engagement that blended policy debate with deeply personal testimony, issuing a clear call that Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) must be treated as a non-negotiable human right for every child on the continent.

The side event, held during the 47th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), came at a critical moment.

With the African Union (AU) designating 2026 as the year of "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability," attention is turning to the millions of children still living without access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation.

## The human face of the crisis

The event opened with a sobering account from James Chifwelu Nkemba, Country Director for World Vision International Lesotho, who illustrated the link between water access and child protection.

Nkemba recounted a case in which a mother left her home to collect water from a distant, unprotected source, leaving her children alone. During her absence, one child was abducted and later found dead.

"When we talk about safety and security in relation to water, it can sound abstract," Nkemba said. "But this is a real case where a child's life was lost because water was not accessible nearby. Girls and women face abuse while trying to meet this basic need."

In Lesotho, access to clean water is estimated at around 80 percent, while fewer than half of the population has access to adequate sanitation. Across Africa, the situation is more severe, with roughly half the population lacking safe drinking water.



*A panel of international experts, government officials, and child advocates convene in Maseru for a high-level side event during the 47th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC.*

## A rights-based approach

Wael Abdel-Razek of the ACERWC Secretariat argued that WASH has long been treated as a discretionary development issue rather than a legal obligation. He linked the absence of water and sanitation services to violations of children's rights under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

"How can member states better integrate WASH into child rights frameworks?" he asked, noting that the lack of these services undermines rights to health, education, nutrition and protection.

He called for minimum standards to guarantee the availability, accessibility, quality, safety and affordability of water. He also stressed the need for schools and health

facilities to provide adequate privacy for girls, particularly to support menstrual health and hygiene.

## Identifying policy gaps

Fanese Nketsi, Project Coordinator for World Vision International, highlighted weaknesses in current governance systems. He noted that national strategies tend to prioritise water supply infrastructure while neglecting sanitation.

"If sanitation is compromised, children will still be affected," Nketsi said. "Open defecation contaminates water sources, creating a cycle of infection."

He added that while hygiene policies introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic helped reduce the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis, momentum has since declined.

Nketsi urged governments to adopt inclusive policies that consider people with disabilities, who are often excluded in infrastructure planning.

## Government response

Representing the Ministry of Natural Resources, Nkopane Masheane, outlined Lesotho's response. He acknowledged that existing legislation is outdated and confirmed that the 2008 Water Act is currently under review.

"We are incorporating issues of climate change and water security," he said.

Masheane also pointed to newly introduced WASH in Schools guidelines aimed at improving infrastructure across all levels of education.

A key reform under consideration is the Water and Sanitation Services Bill, which seeks to formalise community water committees into regulated service providers with legal authority.

"Accountability must be mutual," Masheane said. "Government must be accountable, but communities must also take responsibility for maintaining these resources."

## The role of partnerships

UNICEF WASH Specialist Hanchul Kim emphasised that the scale of the challenge requires coordinated partnerships. He cited the Metsi-a-Lesotho Rural WASH Project as a model initiative.

The \$17 million project, funded by the European Union and UNICEF, is a five-year programme targeting 200 communities and 125 schools. In addition to infrastructure development, it promotes decentralised management by empowering local councils to oversee and maintain water systems through coordinated inter-ministerial structures.

## Children's voices

The event concluded with contributions from child representatives. Liekolo Montši reminded policymakers that children must be included in decisions that affect them.

"Government must treat water, sanitation and hygiene as basic rights, not a luxury," she said. "Children can identify unsafe areas and failing facilities if they are given the opportunity to be heard."

## Law ministry launches new drafting handbook to strengthen legislation

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

The Ministry of Law and Justice has taken a significant step toward modernising Lesotho's legal system with the launch of the third edition of the Legislative Drafting Handbook.

The launch took place during a high-level workshop aimed at strengthening the skills of legal officers and ensuring that national laws are clearer, more effective, and better coordinated.

Speaking at the event, Principal Secretary (PS) for Law, Lira Ralebesa, described the

gathering as a defining moment for the country. Ralebesa noted that recent constitutional amendments require the development of numerous new Acts of Parliament to strengthen the rule of law and national stability.

"We are building a Lesotho where institutions are stronger than individuals," he said.

He emphasised that the new handbook is not merely a technical manual, but a practical tool to ensure laws are drafted on time, properly costed, and aligned with international governance standards.

The workshop also outlined the complex process a law undergoes before it is enacted. Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Dr Serabele, explained that while his office does not create policy, it serves as the architect that translates government objectives into precise and enforceable legal language.

Advocate 'Mabokang Nthabiseng Sekokotana reminded officials of the strict procedures governing law-making, stressing that no policy can be translated into law without prior Cabinet approval, underscoring the importance of

high-level oversight.

The initiative received strong support from the European Union (EU) Delegation to Lesotho, a key partner in the country's governance reforms.

Participants included legal officers responsible for aligning statutes with government policy, representatives from civil society and the media, recognised as critical to transparency and public accountability, and the National University of Lesotho (NUL), acknowledged for its role in training the next generation of legal professionals.

## Matheka named Southern Africa ambassador for Africa Women Experts platform

**Staff Reporter**

Lerato Peggy Matheka, Managing Editor of Newsday, has been appointed Southern Africa Ambassador for the Africa Women Experts (AWE) platform, a continental initiative aimed at amplifying the visibility of women experts in the media.

Matheka joins three other journalists selected to represent different regions of the continent: Makoubama Samba Irène Nadège (Congo Brazzaville) for Central Africa, Koffi N'Guesshand Aya Nadège (Côte d'Ivoire) for West Africa, and Maura Ajak (South Sudan) for East Africa.

The appointments follow a competitive selection process that began with a call for ap-

plications in December 2025. Eight journalists were shortlisted in February 2026, with final selections made after interviews, and the ambassadors officially announced in April.

The Africa Women Experts platform, launched in 2018 by Moroccan television channel 2M, is designed to address the persistent underrepresentation of women in media content by providing a database of African women specialists across more than 200 fields.

In a statement outlining the initiative, organisers said the platform was created to improve gender balance in media representation.

"As part of its commitment to improving the representation of women in the media, and

more specifically to promoting African women's expertise, the Moroccan television channel 2M launched the Africa Women Experts (AWE) platform in 2018," the statement read.

"The website [Africanwomenexperts.com](http://Africanwomenexperts.com), available in both French and English, is dedicated to women experts across the African continent. It is a digital directory that lists African women experts in more than 200 fields of expertise.

"It is made freely available to journalists, media professionals, content creators, institutions, and researchers who wish to identify and connect with experts from across the continent.

"The objective is to promote equitable

speaking opportunities between women and men and to improve the presence of women in the media in Africa."

The platform also showcases the achievements and career paths of women through profiles and multimedia content, while encouraging greater engagement between experts and media practitioners.

As Southern Africa Ambassador, Matheka is expected to promote the platform, support the identification and registration of women experts, and advocate for their increased inclusion in media and public discourse across the region.

Her appointment places Lesotho at the centre of a growing continental effort to reshape media narratives and ensure that women's expertise is more visible, accessible, and influential.



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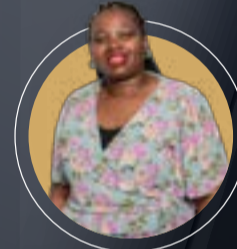
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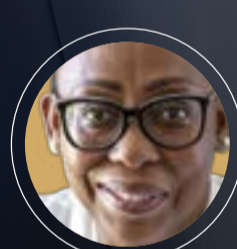
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# Newsday Business

## Kao mine to retrench workers

**Bereng Mpaki**

Lesotho's diamond sector is bracing for an imminent blow as Storm Mountain Diamonds (SMD) has confirmed plans to temporarily close its Kao-based diamond mine from July 2026, a move that will trigger significant job losses to compound a growing unemployment challenge.

SMD board chairman Robert Cowley this week laid bare the scale of the crisis gripping its operations, citing sustained weakness in the global rough diamond market alongside rising operating costs.

He did not, however, specify how many employees face retrenchment from the mine's 700-strong workforce.

In a memo issued to employees on April 22, 2026, Cowley said the mine has been going through a tough period over the last two years, when the rough diamond market went into a slump from which it never recovered.

The recent geo-political crisis sparked by the on-going war in the Middle East has not made matter any easier, with a surge in diesel prices and heavy price increases in the cost of consumables expected to follow.

Cowley said the mine came to the regrettable conclusion of temporarily suspending operations as it would not be able to fund them under the prevailing low revenue and increasing costs conditions.

"At a special meeting of the Board held today, it was decided that the best and most responsible way forward was to place the mine on care and maintenance," he said.

In mining, care and maintenance refers to the temporary suspension of operations, keeping a mine safe and stable under the guidance of skeleton staff, while preparing for po-



*Kao mine plant*

tential future reopening.

While SMD has indicated that the care and maintenance strategy is designed to preserve the mine for a future restart when market conditions improve, the indefinite timeline offers little immediate relief to affected workers and communities.

"As the period of care and maintenance will be for an indefinite period, SMD will unfortunately have to commence a retrenchment process. This is regretted. It was decided that the mine will continue with its current operations until the end of June 2026, and the care and maintenance programme will be implemented as from July, with activities on the mine diminishing until the care and maintenance plan is fully rolled out."

He said the mine would seek alternative ways to minimise job losses and to alleviate the effects of possible retrenchments.

"The process will follow the requirements of the law and will be conducted in good faith. The process will commence by distributing notices to the affected, followed by consultations. During the consultation process we will be looking at all possible ways to avoid retrenchments, and I ask that employees participate meaningfully"

This development highlights mounting pressure for Lesotho, where unemployment rate, already among the highest in the region, could worsen as retrenchments take effect.

SMD is not the only Lesotho mine to suffer the effects of the weak performance of the global rough diamond market in recent times. Mothae diamond mine retrenched majority of its workforce last August after unleashing its own care and maintenance plan.

Letšeng diamond mine, perhaps the jewel of Lesotho's diamond mining, has not escaped unscathed either, as it retrenched over 200 employees in late 2025.

## Metropolitan Lesotho unveils Boiketlo Life Cover

**Mamello Rakotsoane**

Metropolitan Lesotho recently launched a new life insurance product, Boiketlo Life Cover, aimed at providing financial security, dignity, and peace of mind for Basotho and their families.

The new offering marks a significant milestone in the company's ongoing commitment to empowering communities and protecting the financial futures of its customers.

Metropolitan Lesotho's Managing Director, Rethabile Motsoahae, who spoke at the launch, noted that the new product demonstrates the organisation's dedication to serving as a reliable partner in the financial journeys of its customers.

"For 59 years, we have walked alongside Basotho, and today we reaffirm our role not just as a financial services provider, but as a long-term partner in building and protecting their financial dreams," said Motsoahae.

Tieli Ntiea, Metropolitan's Learning and Development Facilitator described the product as a reflection of the company's purpose: 'Rea aha, le ho sireletsa litoro tsa Basotho' to build and protect the financial dreams of Basotho.

Boiketlo, which loosely translates to peace of mind, is designed to respond to the everyday realities faced by households across Lesotho. The product offers accessible, relevant, and dependable life cover to support families during critical and often difficult moments.

The new offering focuses on simplicity, affordability, and flexibility, ensuring that more Basotho can access meaningful financial protection. It caters to individuals and families seeking not only to meet present needs but also to secure the future of their loved ones.

It comes with a range of options tailored to different customer needs. These include Term Assurance with Bond, which ensures that outstanding home loans are settled in



the event of death, protecting families from losing their homes.

Another option, Term Assurance without Bond, provides a lump sum payout to beneficiaries for expenses such as education and daily living costs. The third option, Whole Life Assurance, guarantees a payout whenever death occurs, offering long-term security and supporting legacy planning.

Boiketlo Life Cover is accessible to a wide segment of the population, with entry available from the age of 19, enabling young adults to begin securing their financial futures early.

Metropolitan's Head of Retail, Tšelislo Rammoko highlighted that the product was developed with a deep understanding of customers' needs, challenges, and aspirations.

"This product is about more than cover; it is about enabling every Mosotho to protect what matters most and to create a secure future for their families," he said.

The introduction of Boiketlo Life Cover further strengthens Metropolitan Lesotho's role in advancing financial inclusion by making life insurance more accessible to a broader segment of society.



# Newsday Health

## AU, EU launch €100m health initiatives to strengthen Africa's disease preparedness

### Ntsoaki Motaung

The African Union (AU) and the European Commission have launched three major health initiatives in Addis Ababa, aimed at strengthening Africa's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future disease outbreaks while improving primary healthcare systems across the continent.

Valued at more than €100 million, the programmes were unveiled this week in the presence of senior officials, including the Director General of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Dr Jean Kaseya, and the European Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jozef Síkela.

The funding package focuses on three strategic pillars intended to enhance health security and system resilience across participating countries.

First, the initiatives will support national public health institutes in ten countries to strengthen

disease surveillance, laboratory capacity, and emergency response systems.

Second, they will advance health security through a coordinated approach to tackling antimicrobial resistance, with an emphasis on prevention, early detection, and containment.

Third, the partnership will accelerate the rollout of digital health technologies in six countries, aimed at modernising patient care systems and improving preparedness for future



pandemics.

European Commissioner Jozef Síkela said strong health systems are as critical to global stability

as energy security and resilient supply chains. He added that investing in Africa's health infrastructure enhances the continent's ability to manage its own priorities, contributing to broader global security.

He further noted that strengthening local capacity reduces dependency on external assistance and supports greater health sovereignty for African states.

Dr Jean Kaseya welcomed the initiative, describing it as a shift from commitments to concrete action. He stressed that the focus is on building systems capable of producing, financing, and managing health priorities locally.

The initiative also forms part of a broader agenda to expand local vaccine manufacturing and strengthen pharmaceutical supply chains across Africa.

According to the Africa CDC, the programmes reflect a deepening of the 25-year partnership between the African Union and the European Union.

Implementation will be led by the Africa CDC in collaboration with international partners and technical experts.

"As the world continues to face evolving health threats, this investment marks a major step toward ensuring African health systems are resilient, innovative, and capable of protecting their populations," the Africa CDC said.

## Ramaphosa pledges R30 million to bolster Lesotho's fight against HIV and TB



His Majesty King Letsie III and the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa

### Ntsoaki Motaung

In a significant gesture of neighbourly solidarity, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a R30 million humanitarian assistance package to support Lesotho's national response to HIV and tuberculosis (TB) during the official inauguration of the Senqu Bridge.

The funding, drawn from South Africa's African Renaissance Fund, aims to help sustain critical health services in the Kingdom as traditional international donors scale back support.

Ramaphosa made the announcement this week while joining His Majesty King Letsie III and Prime Minister Samuel Matekane at the high-altitude event in Mokhotlong.

"This will help Lesotho to strengthen its national response to HIV and tuberculosis in the context of dwindling levels of international humanitarian assistance," Ramaphosa stated, describing the contribution as a reaffirmation of deepening bilateral cooperation.

Lesotho continues to grapple with one of the world's highest burdens of HIV and TB. Adult HIV

prevalence stands at approximately 17–18.5 percent (with higher rates among women), while TB incidence remains among the highest globally at around 664 cases per 100,000 people, with nearly 50 percent of TB cases co-infected with HIV.

The country has made notable progress toward the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets through strong domestic leadership, community health workers, and differentiated service delivery models, achieving high treatment coverage and viral suppression rates.

New HIV infections have dropped significantly over the years. However, challenges persist due to Lesotho's rugged mountainous terrain, which complicates access in remote areas like Mokhotlong, as well as socio-economic factors including poverty and labour migration to South Africa.

Recent sharp reductions in external funding, particularly from major partners like the United States through PEPFAR, have created gaps. These cuts have affected supply chains, community outreach, and overall health system sustainability, prompting Lesotho to accelerate its HIV and TB Sustainability Roadmap for greater self-reliance.

The R30 million from South Africa is expected to provide targeted support for prevention, treatment, and care services, helping to prevent disruptions that could reverse hard-won gains.

The announcement came during the co-launch of the Senqu Bridge, the longest in Lesotho at approximately 825 metres and a flagship component of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

The bridge enhances connectivity in the Senqu River Valley, improves access to remote mountainous communities, and supports the broader LHWP goals of water transfer to South Africa while generating hydropower and economic opportunities for Lesotho.

For many Basotho, the project and this new infrastructure represent more than engineering. They embody the deep interdependence between the two nations.

Lesotho, a landlocked enclave entirely surrounded by South Africa, relies on such cooperation for trade, employment, including migrant labour), and

shared development. The bridge will ease movement, potentially aiding health service delivery in hard-to-reach districts.

Ramaphosa highlighted the bridge as a powerful symbol of growing economic and social ties, underscoring that South Africa views itself as a responsible partner committed to ensuring Lesotho's health progress does not stall.

Lesotho, like many developing nations, has faced declining traditional foreign aid in recent years, exacerbated by global shifts including budget constraints and policy changes among major donors. This has

placed greater pressure on domestic resources and regional mechanisms for support.

The African Renaissance Fund contribution reflects Pan-African principles of mutual support, particularly valuable in southern Africa where cross-border health issues, like migrant workers managing HIV treatment between Lesotho and South African facilities, are common.

Local health authorities and civil society have long advocated for sustainable, integrated responses that combine HIV/TB services with broader primary healthcare strengthening.

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## LUPUS WARRIOR BRUNCH

MAY 10TH 2026 | 12:00

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Lupus Warriors Brunch is a refined awareness event celebrating strength and resilience beyond lupus. The brunch features expert health talks, lived experience storytelling, live music and connection in an elegant, supportive setting designed to inform, inspire and uplift.

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Lerato Matheka

# Common concern

## Knowledge is power

### ...Why Newsday is backing platforms that open global trade for Basotho entrepreneurs

Across the globe, one truth is becoming increasingly clear: access to credible information is no longer just empowering — it is economically decisive.

In today's interconnected economy, markets extend across continents, enabling even the smallest enterprise to engage with global supply chains. However, participation is not automatic; it hinges on one critical factor: knowledge.

For entrepreneurs, understanding how global markets function is as vital as access to capital or infrastructure. The distinction between a struggling business and a competitive one often lies in the ability to identify opportunities, build the right networks, and navigate international trade with confidence.

This reality is particularly relevant for economies like Lesotho.

While global trade continues to expand, many small and medium-sized enterprises across Africa remain on the margins — not because opportunities do not exist, but because access to practical and reliable knowledge remains limited.

And this is where the real challenge

arises.

For years, many Basotho businesses have relied heavily on intermediaries to access international markets. While these channels offer convenience, they often come at a cost — higher prices, reduced control and limited scalability. Over time, this dependency quietly undermines competitiveness.

But the landscape has changed.

Digital platforms, global manufacturing ecosystems, and evolving logistics networks now allow entrepreneurs everywhere to engage directly with international markets. What is missing is not access but understanding.

This is precisely why platforms like the Xport China Sourcing and Global Trade Symposium are important.

They do more than merely convene people; they demystify global trade.

They provide entrepreneurs with practical insights into sourcing, supplier engagement, logistics, and the realities of international manufacturing. In many cases, a single insight gained in such environments can fundamentally trans-

form how a business operates.

An entrepreneur who learns to source directly from manufacturers can significantly reduce costs.

A small producer who understands import processes can expand capacity.

A retailer who connects with reliable suppliers can unlock entirely new markets.

These are not distant possibilities. They are immediate, practical opportunities.

At Newsday Media, we believe that information is the foundation upon which economic participation is built.

Journalism is not merely about reporting events; it is about amplifying the ideas, platforms and conversations that shape the future of our economy.

Our decision to support the Xport China Sourcing and Global Trade Symposium as a media partner and sponsor is therefore intentional.

We are investing in visibility for platforms that equip Basotho entrepreneurs with the knowledge to compete.

When critical conversations about

trade and enterprise occur behind closed doors, their impact is limited. However, when those insights are shared widely, they become catalysts for broader economic transformation.

This is where media must evolve from being observers to becoming enablers of access.

The private sector also has a role to play.

When businesses invest in knowledge platforms, sponsor industry events, and support entrepreneurial ecosystems, they are not just contributing to individual success stories but also strengthening the entire economy.

For Lesotho, the implications are significant.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of our economy. When they become more competitive, the effects ripple outward: more jobs, increased trade, stronger industries, and a more resilient national economy.

The opportunity is clear.

The question is whether we are doing enough to ensure that Basotho entrepreneurs are equipped to seize it.

At Newsday, we believe that supporting platforms that open access to knowledge is not optional. It is essential.

Because in today's world, those who understand how to navigate global markets will define the future of local economies.

*Lerato Matheka is the Co-Owner and Managing Editor of Newsday Media*

#### Palesa Motšoeili

## Is the 12-hour workday keeping Lesotho poor?

### The case for a 24-hour economy

The silence that settles over Maseru between 9pm and 5am is not just a sign of rest, it is the sound of an underutilised economy. We are a nation rich in creativity and ambition, constantly speaking about job creation and a brighter future, yet we overlook one of the most immediate opportunities before us: we only use our economy for half the day.

Lesotho, particularly Maseru's city centre, operates on what can be described as a sun-bound economy. When daylight fades, multi-million maloti investments, from shopping malls and office buildings to transport networks, lie idle.

At the same time, nearly half of our youth remain unemployed, confined to a system where economic activity is compressed into limited daytime hours. We are effectively investing in 24-hour infrastructure but operating it like small shops that close at dusk.

Every inactive hour represents lost productivity and missed opportunity.

While we rest, more efficient economies continue to produce, trade, and grow. We are starving in the middle of a feast simply because we are too afraid or too broke to keep the lights on after five o'clock.

From an economic perspective, our current daylight model is inefficient and could do literally twice as better. If

a heavily relied upon retail outlet such as Shoprite or a local spaza shop expands from an 8-hour operation to a 24-hour cycle, then said business theoretically requires three shifts of workers instead of one.

This is not merely about creating jobs, it is about doubling the demand for labour without needing to lay a single new brick. It is about utility maximisation to combat unemployment.

When we speak of the nightlife, we often limit ourselves to thinking of clubs and entertainment or healthcare and fuel stations. But the real goldmine lies in various other places. Logistics and distribution which can be done by moving heavy freight and restocking to the night hours and in turn eliminating the congestion of Maseru's daytime traffic, saving millions in fuel and time.

But even simpler than that is our food and manufacturing production. Right

now, bakeries, workshops, and processing plants are clogged with daytime bustle. By moving production to the night, we clear the floor. We ensure that when the sun rises, the bread is already baked, the clothes are already finished, and the shelves are already stocked. We stop competing for space during the day and start delivering results while the city sleeps.

The primary argument against a 24-hour economy is safety. It is a harsh truth that our nights are currently governed by fear and crime. However, this is a management failure, not an inherent limitation. By implementing a night-watch certification which channels the energy of unemployed young men into a disciplined, scholarly, and physical security workforce, we turn the source of the danger into the source of the solution.

It is also argued that current labour laws, including requirements for night-

shift allowances and complex working-hour compliance, also make 24-hour operations too expensive for small businesses to survive. It appears that the bureaucratic overhead of changing shift patterns will damage the same entrepreneurs we need to encourage.

Ultimately, Lesotho faces a choice. We can continue waiting for large-scale investments to transform the economy, or we can make better use of what we already have. A 24-hour economy is not a silver bullet, but it offers a practical pathway to increase productivity, expand employment, and unlock dormant potential.

The night should no longer be viewed simply as a time of inactivity. It is an untapped resource. Unlocking it requires not just policy shifts, but a change in mindset, one that recognises time itself as a critical economic asset.



# The involvement of the clergy in politics: A dual perspective on Lesotho's political landscape

**Theko Tlebere**

In Lesotho, the clergy's involvement in politics is an established reality; the pressing inquiry is whether such engagement fortifies or distorts the national political landscape. As a predominantly Christian nation, the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) has historically functioned as a public advocate, with churches playing a crucial role in conflict mediation. Consequently, the clergy cannot remain apolitical. However, the pulpit can become problematic when it transitions into a partisan platform. Hence, clergy involvement in politics is good for Lesotho only when it adheres to moral, constitutional, and non-partisan principles; it becomes detrimental when characterised by partisanship, self-interest, or coercion.

The Biblical readings do not advocate for showing faith in silence within the public sphere. Prophetic figures routinely confronted rulers regarding injustices. For instance, Nathan admonished King David for his transgressions against Uriah and Bathsheba, Elijah challenged Ahab concerning Naboth's vineyard, and John the Baptist publicly denounced Herod's immoral conduct. While these actions may not align with contemporary party politics, they were unequivocally public, moral, and political in nature. They underscore the obligation of religious leaders to voice concerns when power becomes unjust. The Biblical narrative supports prophetic engagement, particularly in matters pertaining to justice, truth, corruption, violence, and the treatment of the impoverished. Simultaneously, Jesus' teaching to "render unto Caesar" serves as a reminder that not every political office is the domain of the church, nor is every cleric called to assume governance roles.

This distinction bears particular significance in Lesotho. Churches are not peripheral entities; they play an integral role in civic education, conflict resolution, and the promotion of national unity. Furthermore, churches have a substantial presence in education and healthcare sectors. Consequently, clergy are intimately connected to the everyday

challenges faced by Basotho, including poverty, governance in schools, healthcare delivery, family disintegration, youth unemployment, and public morality. When a priest, pastor, or bishop addresses pressing issues such as hunger, corruption, abuse of office, or failing public services, this should not be viewed as "interference," but rather as a response to genuine societal suffering.

Lesotho's historical context illustrates that clerical involvement can yield positive outcomes when directed toward peace building rather than power acquisition. Research and external assessments have highlighted the Christian Council of Lesotho's role in mediating political conflicts and electoral disputes, particularly during periods of heightened tension between the government and opposition factions. I remember very well the era of Bishop Phillip Mokuku of the Anglican Church. Basotho still uphold the churches involvement even up to today. This example is just a tip of an iceberg, but it represents a model of constructive political involvement: one that does not seek to seize state power or endorse a singular political party, but rather aims to stabilise the democratic landscape. In the context of Lesotho's fragile political environment, such interventions should be welcomed.

However, complications emerge when clergy transition from moral advocates to partisan mobilisers. Recently, Basotho were torn into pieces of reports controversy surrounding a political party



**Theko Tlebere**

established by local preachers. Regardless of the merits of its formation, this scenario raises significant concerns: when clergy become direct competitors for political power, they risk fracturing congregations, misappropriating spiritual authority, and pressuring believers to conflate allegiance to God with loyalty to a political entity. In such instances, church members may feel reluctant to dissent from

a pastor's political views, not due to the pastor's superior argumentation, but because of the sacred role the pastor occupies in their lives. Alternatively, some may start to publicly rebuke the pastors' views as it has erupted today in Lesotho. This dynamic poses risks to both democracy and the reputation of Church.

The Bible cautions against such role conflation. Romans 13 advocates for respect toward governing authorities but does not exempt rulers from moral scrutiny. Similarly, Acts 5:29 asserts that believers must prioritise obedience to God over human authorities when such authorities act unjustly. Collectively, these texts suggest a necessary equilibrium: clergy should neither idolise the state nor aspire to become a sacred substitute for it. Their essential political role encompasses the formation of conscience, the promotion of justice, the advocacy for peace, the exposure of wrongdoing, and the protection of the vulnerable, not the transformation of the altar into a campaign venue.

For us in Lesotho, this implies that clergy involvement should be endorsed when they promote peace during elections, denounce corruption, uphold

constitutionalism, advocate for national reforms, condemn political violence, and align with citizens confronting poverty, abuse, or governmental neglect. It should also be embraced when churches engage in civic education and foster responsible voting, while eschewing violence. In these capacities, clergy enhance democracy by elevating the ethical standards of political engagement, reminding leaders that public office is a form of stewardship rather than ownership.

Conversely, clergy involvement should be discouraged if it devolves into endorsing political parties from the pulpit or elsewhere, exercising selective silence on misconduct by political allies, or employing scripture to demand unquestioning loyalty to politicians. It should also be opposed when clergy pursue political office without clearly delineating their pastoral authority from partisan activities. A priest or Bishop possesses considerable moral influence; if that influence is co-opted into electoral machinery, the church risks compromising its credibility as an inclusive space for all believers, regardless of their political affiliations. In such a scenario, religion transforms from a moral compass into just another faction within Lesotho's already complex political arena, thereby undermining national cohesion.

I want to close it here by saying, the involvement of the clergy in politics can be beneficial or detrimental for Lesotho's political landscape. It is advantageous when clergy serve as moral voices, mediators, peace builders, and advocates for justice. Conversely, it is detrimental when they become partisan actors, political entrepreneurs, or spiritual enforcers. Lesotho does not require a mute church, yet neither does it need a politicised pulpit. What is essential is clergy who can articulate truth to power without aspiring to wield power themselves. This represents both the biblical ideal and the democratic aspiration. Ultimately, the most constructive role for clergy in Lesotho's political sphere is not to govern the state, but to remind the state of its limitations and accountability. The Future is NOW!



Kingdom of Lesotho  
Ministry of Education and Training

**Expression of Interest for short term Consultancy of Finance Officers (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) Finance Officers** 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 finance officer to support project financial, accounting management and reporting.

**Qualification and Experience:**

Interested candidates must have:

- a) Educational qualifications:** at least Diploma in Accounting/Business or CAT Stage or CIPFA-Diploma from a recognized University or Professional Institution respectively, bachelor's degree/General Accounting Stage will be an added advantage.  
**b) Work Experience:** Be familiar with Government of Lesotho and donor funded projects Financial Management and must have at least successfully 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 [nthabi.hleoheng86@gmail.com](mailto:nthabi.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 **May 05th, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. (local time)**.

Submissions must be clearly titled (including on the submission envelope where applicable): **"Expression of Interest for Finance Officer"**



Kingdom of Lesotho



**Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)  
for the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintenance (DBFOM)  
of a Strategic Fuel Storage Facility**

Date: **27th March 2026**

EOI Number/Ref number: [PF/EOI/2025/2026-02]

**1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Government of Lesotho is seeking expression of interest from accomplished construction companies to undertake the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintenance, Testing and Commissioning responsibilities for a 30-day strategic fuel storage facility at Maqhaka in Berea, Lesotho. This project is critical to ensuring security of fuel supply.

The facility encompasses eleven bulk storage tanks, along with loading and offloading pumps, valve chambers, fire systems, control systems, effluent handling systems, truck loading and offloading gantries, administrative, security, MCC building complexes and access road.

The eleven (11) bulk storage tanks are of the following capacities:

- Four (4) 2730m<sup>3</sup> tanks for the storage of petrol (ULP 93&95)
- Four (4) 3650m<sup>3</sup> tanks for the storage of diesel (50ppm)
- Three (3) 930m<sup>3</sup> tanks for the storage of illuminated paraffin (IP)

Complete the Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Commission for the Strategic Fuel Storage Facility in accordance with internationally accepted standards (e.g. SANS) as well as relevant international standards (ISO, API, IEC etc.) to ensure sufficient operation;

**2. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The services required under this assignment include:

- Complete the Strategic Fuel Storage Facility, testing and commissioning in accordance with internationally accepted and relevant standards to ensure sufficient operation;
- Detail the ownership representation ensuring involvement of the State
- iii) Provide a detailed financing structure including the funding sources, a clear risk sharing plan and allocation among project stakeholders
- Demonstrate expertise on procurement of petroleum products for the state
- Elaborate how petroleum products will be procured without alienating existing players and avoiding the creation of monopolies
- Propose how other interested groups may participate
- Propose how products will be procured from the international market
- Propose the operating and maintenance model

The Ministry of Energy invites suitably qualified construction companies to submit an expression of interest. The companies may form joint ventures to enhance their chances of qualification.

**3. EOI SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The following should be included in the submission:

- Company Overview or Company Profile;
- A track record of the company demonstrating experience in large-scale DBFOM projects, ideally within the energy

sector (e.g contract);

- A client reference list of at least three (3) clients that similar work has been implemented for;
- Project organogram illustrating the roles of each team member,
- CV and qualifications of each proposed team member;
- Demonstrate financial stability and ability to secure project financing;
- Past 5 year's audited financial statements;
- Company registration documents, Valid Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC) and a comfort letter from a reputable bank.
- Description of the Company's quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Additional Certifications/procedures applicable to perform the services

**4. SUBMISSION DETAILS**

Expression of interest must be submitted by email to the address below by Monday, the 8th June 2026, at 12:00 hrs Central African Time (CAT) and clearly titled "EOI for DBFOM for Maqhaka Strategic Fuel Storage facility".

Attention:

Mr. Teboho Moloantoa  
Petroleum Fund  
LCCI Building  
Orpen Road  
Maseru, Lesotho

Submission Address: [supplier@petroleum.org.ls](mailto:supplier@petroleum.org.ls)

Attention: **Late submissions will not be considered.**

**5. EOI EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Expression of Interest Evaluation Criteria		Points
<b>A.</b>	<b>Relevant DBFOM Experience</b>	15
<b>B.</b>	<b>Technical Qualification and Personnel</b>	20
<b>C.</b>	<b>Ownership Model and financing structure</b>	10
<b>D.</b>	<b>Quality assurance, HSSE Systems and compliance with standards</b>	10
<b>E.</b>	<b>Financial Capacity</b>	20
<b>F.</b>	<b>Local Participation &amp; Capacity Building</b>	10
<b>G.</b>	<b>Procurement and sales/trading model</b>	15

**6. DISCLAIMER**

This EOI is issued for information-gathering and shortlisting purposes only and does not constitute an invitation to tender. The Government of Lesotho reserves the right to accept or reject any EOI, to annul the process, or to amend the scope without incurring any liability.



JIFAD  
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SADPII

21st April 2026

To whom it may concern,

### NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR SEAKA AND TSIKOANE

This letter serves to inform all bidders who have expressed their interest (EOI) for Seaka and Tsikoane irrigation scheme which was advertised on 6th February 2026 that the procurement has been cancelled. Bidders who have submitted are kindly requested collect their documents at the SADP II offices starting from Wednesday, 22 April 2026, up until Thursday, 30 April 2026.

Please note that the collection will strictly be from 2:00pm until 4:00pm on all the stated days.

Bidders are advised to adhere to the mentioned dates and times, as no documents will be issued outside this schedule.

We want to thank you for expressing your interest and we humbly request you to compete in the upcoming/next procurement.

For any further clarification, please contact the SADP II Procurement Office.

Telephone- 22312578

Thank you.



DIRECTORATE ON CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC OFFENCES

### Invitation for Bids (IFB): PROVISION OF SECURITY SERVICES

Tender No.: DCEO/PROC/2026/2027-1

1. Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) has received financing from the Government of Lesotho and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the Provision of Security Services. The Directorate now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders clearly marked "Bid for Provision of Security Services."

2. Bidding will be conducted through Open National Competitive Tendering procedures as specified in the Public Procurement Act 2023 and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Act mentioned.

3. The services to be procured are as follows:

Item	Description	Quantity	Specifications
1	Security Guard	3	Unarmed security guards at DCEO Headquarters during the day
2	Security Guard	2	Armed with firearm security guards at DCEO Headquarters during the night
3	Security Guard	2	Unarmed security guards at Maseru Tourist Information and Crafts Centre (DCEO Offices) during the day
4	Security Guard	1	Armed with firearm security guard at Maseru Tourist Information and Crafts Centre (DCEO Offices) during the night
5	Security Guard	1	Armed with firearm security guard at DCEO Post Office Building
6	Security Guard	1	Unarmed security guard at DCEO North Regional office Butha-Buthe during the day
7	Security Guard	1	Armed security guard at DCEO North Regional office Butha-Buthe during the night
8	Security Guard	1	Unarmed security guard at DCEO South Regional office Mophale's Hoek during the day

9	Security Guard	1	Armed security guard at DCEO South Regional office Mophale's Hoek during the night
10	Security Guard	1	Unarmed security guard at DCEO house (Masowe 1) during the day
11	Security Guard	1	Armed security guard at DCEO house (Masowe 1) during the night
12	Security Guard	1	Unarmed security guard at DCEO house (Motho) during the day
13	Security Guard	1	Armed security guard at DCEO house (Motho) during the night

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the DCEO Procurement Unit during office hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Friday at the address given under paragraph 6 below.

5. A complete set of bidding document in English may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of LSL2, 000.00 (Two Thousand Maloti only). The method of payment shall be cash, payable to the DCEO Finance Office. Bids must be delivered to the address indicated under paragraph 6 below on or before 26th May 2026 at 10:00 a.m. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of bidders' designated representatives who may choose to attend at the address indicated below on the same date (26th May 2026) at 10:05 a.m.

6. All bids must be deposited in the tender box situated at the address below:

Ground Floor,  
Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences,  
Old Parliament Road,  
Opposite Police Headquarters,  
P.O. Box 16060,  
Maseru, 100,  
Lesotho.

For enquiries:

Tel: (+266) 2221 9200

Email: [tmathias@dceo.org.ls](mailto:tmathias@dceo.org.ls)

Attention: Tsele Mathias (Mr.)



Kingdom of Lesotho

### Specific Procurement Notice

#### Request for Bids Small Works (Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

**Employer:** Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN)  
**Project:** Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II)  
**Contract title:** Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme  
**Country:** Kingdom of Lesotho  
**Loan No. /Credit No. / Grant No.:** P165228  
**RFB No:** LS-MAFS-547907-CW-RFB  
**Issued on:** 21st April 2026

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) under Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the (SADP II) and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme. "For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing."

- The Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme (Lot 1) construction period-6months, location: Quthing and Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme construction (Lot 2) period-6months, location: Leribe.
- Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers 6th Edition February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Bids will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation process set out in the bidding documents. The following weightings shall apply for Rated Criteria (including technical and non-price factors): 60% and for Bid cost: 40%. The weightings are applicable for each lot.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from SADP II, e-mail: [procurement@sadpii.org.ls](mailto:procurement@sadpii.org.ls) and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours at the address given at the end of this RFB.
- Bidders are eligible to bid for both lots but only one (1) bidder can be allocated/ awarded one (1)

irrigation scheme (lot) at a time.

- Bids must be delivered to the address at the end of this RFB on or before 1400 hours on 26th May 2026. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below at SADP II boardroom, 1430 hours on 26th May 2026. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening. Additionally, the outer envelope should be marked "do not open" and should clearly indicate the Lot being submitted as follows:
  - Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme - Lot 1
  - Design and Build for Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme- Lot 2
- All Bids must be accompanied by the following:
  - Bid Security of LSL 300,000.00 for Seaka (Lot 1) and / Bid Security of LSL 260,000.00 for Tsikoane (Lot 2) and
  - Local Labor Method Statement for both lots.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Procurement Office  
Moshoeshoe II Livestock  
P.O Box 24  
Maseru 100  
Lesotho

telephone number: +266 22312578

email address: [procurement@sadpii.org.ls](mailto:procurement@sadpii.org.ls)

web site address: Procurement – SADP II or <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

1. Substitute "contracts" where Bids are called concurrently for multiple contracts. Add a new para. 3 and renumber paras 3-8 as follows: "Bidders may Bid for one or several contracts, as further defined in the Bidding Document. Bidders wishing to offer discounts in case they are awarded more than one contract will be allowed to do so, provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid."  
2. Insert if applicable: "This contract will be jointly financed by [insert name of cofinancing agency]."

Bidding process will be governed by the World Bank's Procurement Regulations"  
3. A brief description of the type(s) of works should be provided, including, location, quantities, construction period, application of margin of preference and other information necessary to enable potential Bidders to decide whether or not to respond to the Request for Bids. Bidding Document may require Bidders to have specific experience or capabilities; such qualification requirements should also be included in this paragraph.

4. If electronic procurement will be used, insert link or web site address and any additional relevant information, as appropriate  
5. The office for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document and that for Bid submission may or may not be the same.  
6. Substitute the address for Bid submission if it is different from address for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document.

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Selimo Thabane

# Selimo Thabane to rock MTN Bushfire festival

**Chris Theko**

Lesotho's vibrant musical ingenuity will be displayed on the continental platform as acclaimed artist Selimo Thabane is scheduled to perform at the globally renowned MTN Bushfire Festival 2026 in eSwatini.

The highly anticipated festival will take place from 29 to 31 May 2026 at the iconic House On Fire in the scenic Malkerns Valley, drawing thousands of music lovers, creatives and cultural enthusiasts from across Africa and beyond.

Widely regarded as one of Africa's leading multicultural gatherings, MTN Bushfire continues to uphold its reputation

for diversity and social consciousness.

This year's edition, held under the theme "Juncture of Hum," will bring together artists from over 20 countries, reinforcing its Pan-African ethos and global appeal.

Thabane's inclusion marks a significant moment for Lesotho's creative sector. Known for pioneering Manga Jazz, a genre that blends traditional Basotho rhythms with contemporary jazz influences, the artist has built a reputation for storytelling that is deeply rooted in culture while remaining globally resonant.

Performing primarily in Sesotho, Thabane's music carries strong elements of heritage, spirituality and identity. His participation is expected to showcase Lesotho's artistic depth while contributing meaningfully to the festival's narrative of cultural exchange and unity.

"This is a dream come true and a proud moment for me. I am super excited about this moment as it signifies growth," Thabane said.

Organisers have indicated that the festival is on track to sell out for the 14th consecutive year, with premium Golden Lounge tickets already fully booked.

However, a limited number of Main Arena and children's tickets remain available online.

MTN Bushfire is not only known for its music but also for its immersive experience, featuring a multidisciplinary programme that includes theatre, dance, poetry, film and interactive installations across six stages.

Beyond entertainment, the festival continues to position itself as a platform for dialogue, activism and social change. The 2026 theme, Juncture of Hum, symbolises the convergence of voices, cultures and ideas at a moment of shared transformation.

Organisers say the theme reflects how collective creativity can inspire meaningful impact beyond the festival grounds, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future.

MTN Bushfire has grown into a cultural movement that celebrates African identity while connecting it to global artistic expressions. With various accommodation options ranging from on-site camping to nearby lodges, the event attracts a diverse audience seeking both entertainment and cultural enrichment.

The introduction of a dedicated festival app and enhanced connectivity solutions is also expected to improve the overall attendee experience, allowing festivalgoers to engage, plan and share moments in real time.

# Pitso Ramakhula embodies growth and identity in new offering

**Chris Theko**

Acclaimed local artist Pitso Ramakhula offered fans and music enthusiasts a deeply reflective and personal experience during a listening session held at Cafe What? on 18 April.

The event centered around his latest project, Matla a Pina a title that loses translates to The Power of Music and lived up to its name through both sound and substance.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Ramakhula emphasised that the project is rooted in personal evolution and human growth. "Change is the only constant," he explained.

"We are forever evolving, whether we are aware of it or not. When opportunities to step into new spaces come, we shouldn't limit ourselves. That is how we grow as human beings." This philosophy is woven throughout Matla

a Pina, with Ramakhula encouraging listeners to embrace transformation and live fully, without self-imposed boundaries. For him, music is more than entertainment, it is a liberating force.

"Music liberates the soul. It frees us from fear, from tension, and reconnects us with who we truly are," he said.

The new project also marks a notable shift in Ramakhula's artistic direction. Comparing it to his earlier work, he described his debut as a period of exploration, largely self-produced and experimental.

In contrast, Matla a Pina reflects a more refined and collaborative process. Working with a network of trusted creatives, Ramakhula leaned into a more structured production approach, allowing for richer soundscapes and deeper musical layering.

This evolution is also evident in his delivery. Known for his lyrical and rap-driven style, Ramakhula now embraces more melody and

vocal expression.

"I am singing more than I used to. It is about simplifying the message and delivering it in a way that people can truly feel."

Despite this sonic evolution, Ramakhula remains firmly grounded in his Sesotho identity. He highlighted the importance of language, storytelling, and cultural memory in shaping his music.

Through Matla a Pina, he seeks to present these elements in a more accessible and emotionally resonant way, simplifying complex ideas while preserving their depth.

"Our language and culture carry meaning. We need to remind ourselves who we are and why we are here."

In an unconventional move, Ramakhula has initially limited access to the project through select platforms, a decision he said is temporary but intentional.

He expressed concerns about the sustainability of digital streaming for artists, pointing



Pitso Ramakhula

to long-standing challenges around royalties and income generation.

"For years, artists have struggled to make a living from their work. This approach is about creating value and taking responsibility for what we produce."

Ultimately, Matla a Pina is more than just an album, it is a statement of intent. Through it, Ramakhula challenges listeners to reflect, evolve, and find meaning in their journeys.

# Allegro breaks new ground with latest concert

## Refiloe Molise

Music lovers in Maseru will be in for a magical night when NthetheSekoli, known by Allegro Africa takes centre stage at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre on June 27, 2026.

Dubbed Allegro Africa in Concert, the event is set to redefine Lesotho's entertainment landscape by blending the high-energy world of DJ culture with the sophistication of live musical performance.

Headlining the show, which will also feature a diverse lineup of local talent, including Mookho Moqhali, Morena Sway and Victor Rapitse among others, Allegro will deliver a specially curated set featuring a string quartet, a four-piece live band, percussion and multiple vocalists.

He described this ambitious production as the first of its kind in the country. And to maintain a vibrant atmosphere throughout the evening, DJ Khebza and DJ Fivo will entertain guests in the foyer during performance intervals.

"A DJ performing with a live band in itself is already something that has never been seen before here. But now we are adding a four-piece band, a string quartet and vocalists all at the same time. That is an experience that has never been done," he said.

He explained that the idea evolved over time as he experimented with incorporating vocalists into his performances, before being further developed in collaboration with event organiser Rethabile Hlalele, who introduced

the string quartet element.

"The Allegro Africa concert has been a concept that I have had since the days of Zagro DJs where I wanted us to be joined with a live band on stage. That is when the whole idea changed to say, let us actually make it a night of elegance and create a full experience out of it," he said.

The event is also designed to offer a full experience across the entire venue, as guests will be welcomed into a lively foyer space with music, food and drinks, as well as opportunities to socialise and network, before moving into the main auditorium for the headline performances.

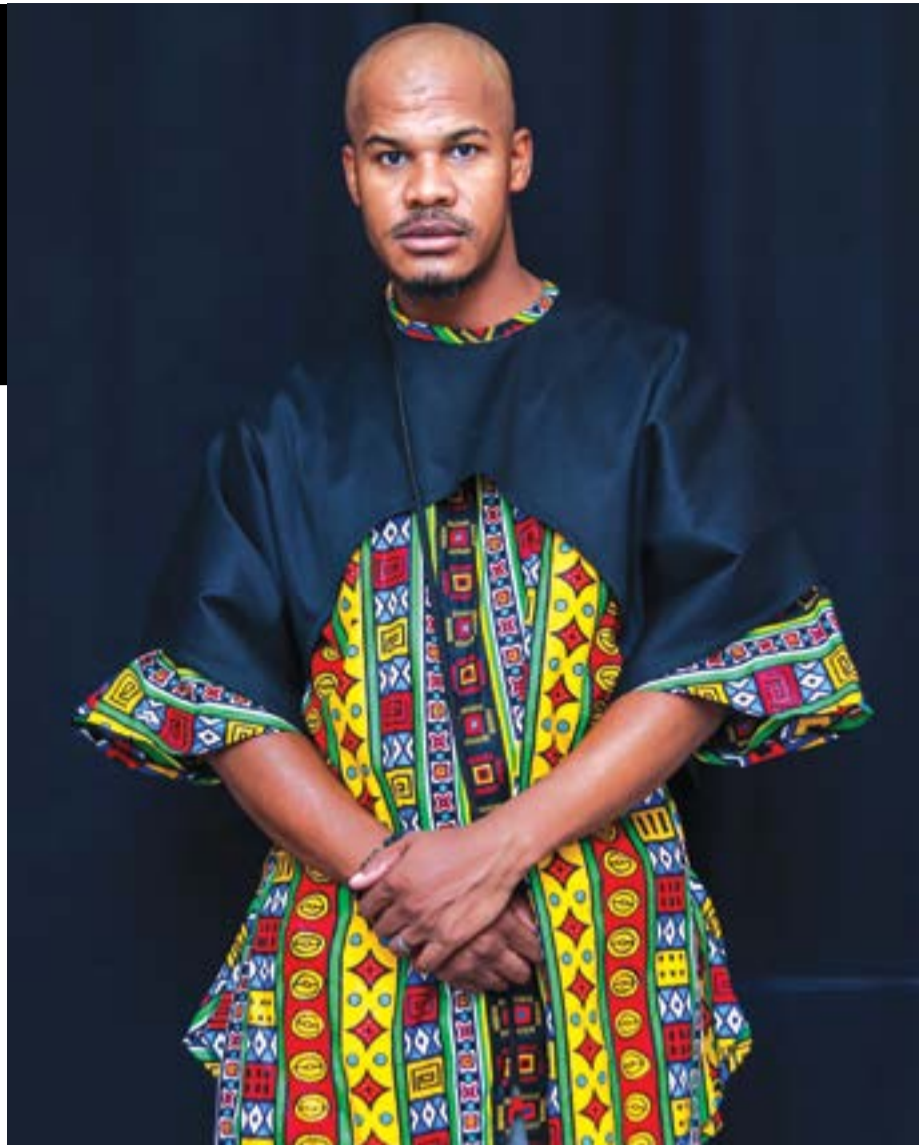
"My vision is mostly in the eyes of my audience. People will be able to enjoy music, take pictures, connect with others and fully immerse themselves in the experience."

The event will also include interactive features such as a photo booth, allowing attendees to capture and share their experiences on social media.

Tickets for the event are priced at M500 and will be available at Pick n Pay stores and online via TicketBox. Organisers have encouraged early booking, with flexible payment options introduced to make the event accessible to a wider audience.

"My target audience is everyone. We want people from all walks of life to come and experience this. Everyone should be part of it and be able to tell the story."

Beyond entertainment, Allegro said the concert aims to inspire growth and creativity



Nthethe Sekoli, known as Allegro Africa

within Lesotho's music industry, which he believes needs renewed energy and motivation.

"I am not doing it to be called the first to do it, but to spark inspiration in the industry. We need to challenge ourselves to do better, to create more and to inspire the next generation of artists."

He also highlighted the importance of showcasing local talent and fostering nation-

al pride through production.

"This is purely Basotho, from the music to the instrumentalists, the organisers and the artists. It is a celebration of what we can achieve as a country," he said.

While there have been discussions about making the concert a recurring event, he noted that the immediate focus is on delivering a memorable debut.

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# Moshoeshoe's day horseracing magic

## Kananelo Mokhele

A fusion of sporting excellence and glamorous fashion recently came alive as the Moshoeshoe's Day Horse Race took centre stage at the Peka Race Course.

Sponsored by the Ramela Foundation, the annual spectacle has rapidly grown into one of the country's most vibrant cultural and sporting highlights as it attracted crowds from across Lesotho and beyond.

Among notable prominent figures in attendance were King Letsie III, Prime Minister Samuel Matekane, and Bishop David Ramela, of Ramela Foundation among others.

Held as part of Moshoeshoe's Day celebrations, the event honours the enduring legacy of King Moshoeshoe I, while showcasing the deep-rooted connection between Basotho people and horses.

Although only introduced in recent years, the Peka Horse Race has quickly established itself as a major attraction, attracting riders from across Lesotho and neighbouring countries.

The event not only promotes tourism and unity but also contributes to local economic activity, with vendors, spectators and cultural enthusiasts gathering in large numbers.

This year's edition stood out for its blend of glamour, tradition and inclusivity, with increasing participation from women riders, reflecting a progressive shift in the sport. Beyond competition, the race continues to serve as a celebration of Basotho identity and pride.

Among the standout participants were three horses from Qacha's Nek, Thethankosi, Lesupatsela and Lechaena, competing in the second edition of the Ramela Foundation

Moshoeshoe's Day Horse Race.

Lechaena delivered a commendable performance, securing third place in Race No. 6 and finishing fifth in Race No. 7.

Lesupatsela also impressed by clinching fourth position in Race No. 5, marking a significant milestone for the team.

Speaking in an interview, horse owner Mr. MotlatsiPheku described the results as a breakthrough moment.

"For us, this is a huge win. With the right investment, especially in experienced jockeys, we believe we can reach position one," he said.



Mr. Pheku emphasised the importance of technical expertise in racing, particularly the critical role of a strong start.

"We really have to invest in our jockeys because they should understand the concept of horse departure, which gives each horse an opportunity to be number one," he added.

He further noted that the team's steady improvement is encouraging, especially as this marks their first notable success at the prestigious event.

# Ramakongoana climbs global ranks

## Refiloe Molise

Long-distance star Tebello Ramakongoana continues to show remarkable growth on the global stage after delivering a significantly improved performance at the recent Boston Marathon.

The Qacha's Nek native not only bettered his personal best but also climbed higher up the elite rankings compared to his 2025 outing.

Ramakongoana finished sixth in the 130th edition of the prestigious race, clocking an exceptional 2:04:18, with a major improvement from eighth-place finish in Boston last year. This progress shows a runner who is steadily refining his craft and closing the gap on the world's best.

The oldest annual marathon globally dating back to 1897, the Boston Marathon hosted in the Massachusetts, United States (US), is widely regarded as one of the most technically demanding races due to its undulating course and tactical nature.

Heading into this year's race, Ramakongoana was already viewed as a promising contender following his strong debut. However, this latest performance has elevated him further, confirming his place among elite marathoners and signaling his growing maturity in handling high-stakes competitions beyond the African circuit.

According to his coach, James McKirdy, the race strategy was carefully executed to maximise performance without being drawn into the tactical surges of competitors.

"Our plan was to focus on some of the best runners we knew would run smart races, while avoiding the temptation to follow every pace change, we wanted Te-

bello to stay connected to the lead pack but not reveal too much too early." He said.

He noted that a crucial phase of the race came between the 23km and 25km marks, where positioning becomes vital ahead of Boston's famously challenging hills.

"At that point, we needed him in the right position to compete effectively through the hills. From there, it was about executing his own race," he said.

McKirdy praised Ramakongoana's discipline and consistency, attributing his rapid rise to a strong foundation of simple but essential habits.

"He does the basics exceptionally well he eats well, sleeps well, and trains within his capacity. This result shows what is possible when preparation meets opportunity, we knew we had a chance to deliver the best marathon of his life, and we accomplished that mission," he said.

Beyond this single race, Ramakongoana's steady ascent has been building over several seasons. The Olympian represented Lesotho at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (held in 2021), where he gained invaluable experience competing against the world's finest distance runners.

Since then, he has consistently lowered his times across major international marathons, emerging as one of the most exciting long-distance prospects from Southern Africa.

His breakthrough performances in global races, including strong showings in Asia and now North America, reflect a runner who is no longer confined to continental success but is actively asserting Lesotho's presence in world athletics.

Traditionally known for producing resilient high-altitude runners, Lesotho is now seeing one of its athletes push into elite global conversations, a space long dominated by East African runners.

Reflecting on the race, Ramakongoana expressed gratitude to those who supported him throughout his journey.

"I would like to thank the Boston Marathon organisers for the opportunity to compete against the world's best athletes. To my coach James McKirdy, the fans who lined the streets of Boston, and all Basotho who supported me from home this achievement is for the whole nation," he said.

He emphasised the difficulty of the course and the significance of his accomplishment.

"Placing sixth with a personal best of 2:04:18 on this course is not easy. This shows that nothing is impossible."

Ramakongoana also acknowledged the role of his family and sponsors, including Xtep, the Lesotho National Olympic Committee, and Precision Fuel and Hydration, for their unwavering support.

What stands out most from this year's Boston performance is not just the time or position, but the clear evidence of development. Improving by over two minutes at elite marathon level is a significant leap, particularly on a course as demanding as Boston.

Moving from eighth to sixth place further illustrates sharper tactical awareness and increased competitiveness in deeper, more



Tebello Ramakongoana races along Boylston Street in Boston, where he finished 6th and shattered the Lesotho marathon record with a time of 20418.

experienced fields.

For his country, Ramakongoana's rise carries broader significance. His performances are helping to extend the country's reputation in long-distance running beyond regional and continental boundaries, placing the national flag firmly on the global athletics map.



# Newsday *...pacing standards*

# Sports

24 April - 30 April 2026

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## Mamello Rakotsoane and Refiloe Molise

Football fever is set to grip the nation this Saturday as all roads lead to the Bocheletsane Stadium in Mantšonyane, where the giants of the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) will battle it out for the coveted M400 000 prize in the People's Cup finals.

Financially backed to the tune of M1.1 million by Sam Matekane Foundation and Econet Telecom Lesotho, the tournament not only provides financial incentives but also promotes grassroots football and youth empowerment.

Defending champions Bantu, alongside Lioli, Matlama and Lijabatho, have secured their places in the final stages after topping the public voting charts.

The draw, conducted last week, has set up a thrilling day of football action, beginning with the semi-finals in the morning.

Lioli, who amassed the highest number of votes at 162 122 will open proceedings against Lijabatho at 09:00 hours. This will be followed by a blockbuster clash between Bantu and Matlama at 11:30 hours.

The winners of these two encounters will then meet in the final at 15:00 hours to determine the 2026 People's Cup champions.

This year's tournament returns to its original four-team format after last year's expansion to eight teams failed to attract the expected level of public participation. Matlama finished second in the voting with 156 038 votes, followed by Bantu with 150 231, while

# All roads lead to Mantšonyane



Lijabatho secured the fourth spot with 139 118 votes.

The stakes are high for all four teams, each with its own motivation. For Lijabatho, the

tournament presents a golden opportunity to secure their first-ever major trophy in the topflight.

Such a victory would validate the club's

ambitious investments in players and the appointment of head coach James Madidilane. Having only gained promotion to the elite league six years ago, lifting the trophy would mark a historic achievement.

Bantu, on the other hand will be determined to defend their title. However, their ambitions stretch beyond the People's Cup as they remain firmly in contention for the league championship. Balancing both competitions will be a test of depth and resilience for 'A MatšoMatebele'.

Matlama face a similar challenge, with their semi-final clash against Bantu effectively serving as a knockout between two title contenders. For either side, failure to progress could mean missing out on one of their last realistic chances to secure silverware this season despite their title race.

Meanwhile, Lioli comes to the tournament with confidence as they will be looking to settle their score against their rivals.



Lesotho national team player Tšepiso Chaoana following his recent professional breakthrough in south Africa

## Refiloe Molise

The rise of cricket prospect Tšepiso Chaoana reflects a gradual expansion of opportunities for Basotho cricketers beyond the country's borders.

Chaoana's journey into cricket began in 2015 while he was a Form 1 student at Hlotse High School. Introduced to the sport by his brother, he developed an early interest under the guidance of coach and captain Tšeliso Mohapi.

At the time, cricket was not offered at primary school level, making high school his first meaningful exposure to the game.

# Bowling his way beyond the borders

"I joined cricket because of my brother. That was when I started learning and understanding the sport," Chaoana recalled.

A decade later, that introduction has translated into a significant career step. Chaoana has secured a contract with Etwatwa Cricket Club in South Africa, where he plays as a bowling all-rounder.

His move comes in a competitive environment, with limited opportunities for non-South African players to break into club structures.

"It really means a lot because it opens more opportunities at higher levels and helps grow my game," he says.

His path into South Africa's club circuit required persistence. While based in Bethlehem, he approached coaches Sello Mabuya and Lehloholo Mosekili in search of training and exposure.

Initially hesitant, the coaches later recog-

nised his potential after observing him in action and assisted in securing a trial opportunity in Benoni, Gauteng.

Within a week of trials, Chaoana was advised to prepare for the next phase, an indication that he had made a strong impression.

At Etwatwa Cricket Club, his performances continued to attract attention. With the support of coach Mbulelo Beya, he earned an opportunity to train and compete with Eastern Storm, a side competing in South Africa's national B-division.

After featuring in four trial matches, he moved closer to securing another contract. Despite these milestones, the journey has not been without challenges. Financial constraints remain a major obstacle, particularly the lack of consistent sponsorship.

"I had to depend on a lot of people and the association," he explained.

Over the past five years, Chaoana has gained experience across different competitive set-

tings in South Africa. He has taken part in various tournaments and contributed to teams in areas such as Ficksburg.

Regular interaction with experienced coaches has helped refine his technique and deepen his understanding of the game.

While he notes that the fundamentals of cricket remain similar in Lesotho and South Africa, he highlights differences in infrastructure and match exposure.

"The facilities are much better and there is more game time."

Adapting to a new environment has also required discipline. Adjusting to different coaching approaches, team dynamics and playing strategies has tested both his technical and mental resilience.

Chaoana views his progress as part of a broader narrative for cricket development in Lesotho. He hopes his journey will encourage young players to pursue the sport more seriously.

"It is a big moment and an example to youngsters that there are opportunities in the sport if you work hard," he said.

Looking ahead, his ambitions remain focused on growth within the game. He aims to compete in higher-level leagues, build a sustainable cricket career and eventually contribute to the development of the sport at home.

For now, his focus is on improving performance and making the most of current opportunities.

"It is not always easy, especially when facing challenges, but discipline is key. As my coaches always say, 'trust the process.'"



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