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DCEO fights to revive M1.7 billion corruption case against Tšolo



Temeki Tšolo

Thoboloko Nfšonyane

In a development that could significantly affect former Minister Temeki Tšolo, the Court of Appeal this week sharply questioned the handling of a High Court ruling that imposed a permanent stay of prosecution in a high-profile corruption case against him.

The Appeal Court judges, including Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane, poked holes in the High Court judgment and grilled lawyers from both the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) and the defence during proceedings this week.

In August last year, High Court Judge Tšelisio Mokoko ordered a permanent stay of the corruption case, citing the DCEO's repeated lack of readiness to proceed with the trial.

Judge Mokoko criticised the anti-corruption body for failing to prosecute the matter on two separate occasions – the week starting 21 October 2024 and the week starting 18 August 2025. He noted that the prosecution had all the necessary resources at its disposal yet failed to secure witnesses or properly inform the court of its difficulties.

The judge was particularly scathing about the conduct of lead prosecutor Advocate Jay Naidoo SC, pointing out that the South African-based senior counsel was in Lesotho the previous Thursday but failed to notify the court or appear for the scheduled hearings.

The court also highlighted that Advocate

Naidoo had not subpoenaed key witnesses for the hearing set for 18 to 22 August 2025.

Delivering the ruling, Judge Mokoko said the prosecution could not be allowed to drag the accused through prolonged court proceedings, causing him unnecessary time and expense, without a valid justification.

"The court finds that the Crown failed to prosecute the matter on two occasions... The Crown had all resources at its disposal," Judge Mokoko ruled at the time.

The DCEO has since petitioned the Court of Appeal to review and set aside the High Court's permanent stay, arguing that the ruling was erroneous.

During this week's hearing, Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane questioned the validity of using the absence of witnesses as a reason to stay a case permanently.

"It is not a good reason for a judge to say he cannot proceed with a case because the witnesses are not present. You deal with the witness who is there; there might be good reasons why others are not coming," the Chief Justice remarked.

He added that courts ought to be slow in granting permanent stays of prosecution, emphasising the need for matters to be dealt with on their merits.

The case centres on allegations that in 2018, while serving as a minister in former Prime Minister Motsoahae Thabane's administration,

Tšolo signed a controversial supply contract on behalf of the Government of Lesotho with German-based company Fraser Solar GMBH without Cabinet approval.

The contract, valued at approximately M700 million, involved the supply of 350,000 solar lanterns, 40,000 solar water heating units (to replace electric geysers), and 1.5 million LED lights.

The government eventually rejected the deal and opted instead for the Chinese-funded solar power project at Ramarothole in Mafeteng district. Phase I of that project, which generates about 30 megawatts, was commissioned in 2023.

Fraser Solar is reportedly demanding around €50 million (approximately M1 billion) in compensation from the Lesotho government for alleged breach of contract.

Tšolo faces several charges, including fraud, forgery, obstruction of justice, and acting on superior orders.

In the Appeal Court this week, Advocate Jay Naidoo SC explained that he was in Lesotho on the relevant dates but had not been briefed on the Tšolo matter at the time, as the DCEO had just appointed a new Director-General. He said he was only instructed to handle other DCEO cases.

DCEO lawyer Advocate Mojalefa Shakhane told the court that he and defence counsel Advocate Molefi Masoabi had agreed on a

postponement. However, Advocate Masoabi distanced himself from that claim, stating that while Advocate Shakhane had suggested it, he advised that a formal application should be made to the court.

The High Court had stressed that any postponement must be properly justified, noting that agreements between the Crown and defence lawyers are not binding on the court.

Section 278 of the Speedy Court Trials Act, 2002, was also referenced, which requires trials to proceed speedily and mandates that lawyers engaged in a matter must be present in court unless the court is informed otherwise.

The Court of Appeal is expected to deliver its judgment on May 15, 2026. The ruling will be crucial in determining whether the corruption case against former minister, Tšolo, can proceed or remains permanently stayed.

Following the High Court ruling last year, the DCEO's Public Relations Officer, 'Matlhokomelo Senoko, said the Directorate was "not satisfied" with the decision and would exhaust all legal avenues to challenge it.

Matlanyane denies involvement in dismissal of health PS



Minister of Finance Dr Rets'elisitsoe Matlanyane

Ntsoaki Motaung

The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Rets'elisitsoe Matlanyane, has dismissed claims that she was responsible for the removal of the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Health.

"I am currently in a meeting and unable to speak at length, but all these things that are being mentioned are not true," Matlanyane said. The Office of the Government Spokesperson announced the termination of 'Maneo Moliehi Ntene's employment contract as Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Health.

In a public notice issued on Thursday, the government stated that Deputy Principal Secretary 'Matšoanelo Monyobi will serve as Acting Principal Secretary until a substantive appointment is made. The statement thanked

Ntene for her service but provided no reasons for her dismissal.

Despite the official notice's neutral tone, internal sources within the Ministry of Health allege that Ntene's departure resulted from a fallout with the Minister of Finance.

Sources claim the tension arose from disputes over procurement decisions.

One allegation centres on a tender for the construction of a new cancer hospital, where a company reportedly linked to the Minister of Finance failed to secure the contract after being disqualified for lacking technical capacity, a decision sources say Ntene supported.

Another point of contention involved pressure on the Ministry of Health to proceed with the construction of clinics at Qalabane in Mafeteng District and Qabane in Mohale's Hoek District, even though the projects initially lacked a clear budget allocation. Ntene is said to have resisted on grounds of fiscal responsibility.

In an interview with Uncensored News, Ntene confirmed she had been questioned about progress on the Qabane and Qalabane clinics.

"On the 26th, I received a call from the PS (Finance) asking me how far I was with the Qabane and Qalabane clinics," she said.

When asked why she connected the matter to her dismissal, Ntene said she suspects it is because the clinics are located in Mafeteng, specifically in Qalabane, which falls within the constituency of the Minister of Finance.

"We were given the budgets for those clinics in the 2025/2026 financial year without a proper plan. We delayed starting them because studies still had to be conducted to determine feasibility. We were unable to proceed at the time. It was only this year that we managed to start the procurement process," she explained.

Ntene said she was attending a family meeting when this publication contacted her for comment.

In June 2025, the Ministry of Health invited qualified consulting firms or consortia to submit technical and financial proposals for feasibility studies on four rural health facilities: the construction of a new health centre at Senqunyane in Berea District, a new health centre at Ketane in Mohale's Hoek District, the upgrad-

ing of an existing health post to a health centre at Qabane in Mohale's Hoek District, and the upgrading of an existing health post to a filter clinic at Qalabane in Mafeteng District.

The ministry stated that the feasibility studies were intended to inform infrastructure investments supporting Lesotho's national health development goals, improve access to primary health care, and contribute to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

When presenting the mid-term budget statement to Parliament for the 2025/2026 fiscal year, Dr Matlanyane said health sector investments were progressing well.

"Government is advancing the construction of Qalabane Filter Clinic and Qabane Health Centre. The tender process is complete, and site handover is expected in December 2025, marking the start of physical implementation," she said.

Insiders further suggest that the Minister's alleged inability to influence tender processes at the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) contributed to Ntene being viewed as an obstacle.

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Lesotho gets M214.5 million debt relief

...As China cancels two interest-free loans

Thoboloko Nfšonyane

Following the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit held in September 2024 in Beijing, where China announced the cancellation of interest-free loans to developing countries, the People's Republic of China has written off Lesotho's RMB 89.976 million, equivalent to about M214.5 million.

The announcement came this week during the signing of the Waiver of Two Interest-Free Loans between the government of Lesotho and China, a ceremony attended by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, and the Chinese Ambassador, Yang Xiaokun.

Lesotho had taken two interest-free loans: one in 2011 for the Maintenance and Renovation Project of the Manthabiseng Convention Centre and another in 2012 for the JUNCAO (mushroom) Cultivation and Technical Cooperation Project. Both loans were due for repayment by the end of December 2024, but the government had not yet settled them.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Yang highlighted that the signing reflects China's long-standing principles in its cooperation with Africa. "China has always respected the sovereignty and independent choice of African countries and never interferes in their internal affairs. Our cooperation is guided by sincerity and good faith, with the sole purpose of supporting Africa's development. At the same time, China is committed to ensuring that our cooperation responds to the real needs and priorities of African partners, with particular emphasis on strengthening local capacity for sustainable growth," he said.

Dr Matlanyane described the signing as both



timely and significant, reflecting the accomplishments of the long-standing friendship between the two nations.

She welcomed the gesture, noting that it provides important relief to Lesotho's public debt portfolio and contributes positively to debt management and fiscal consolidation efforts. She emphasised that the government remains committed to ensuring that public debt is sustainable, transparent, and aligned with the country's development priorities.

"We regard this loan waiver not merely as a financial transaction, but as a gesture of partnership and trust. It underscores China's continued commitment to supporting Lesotho's development goals and reinforces the principles of South-South

cooperation," Dr Matlanyane said. She further assured that the relief will be well-managed, demonstrating Lesotho's commitment to prudent fiscal management.

Lesotho's reliance on external debt, particularly from China, has been a recurring concern.

In April last year, Newsday reported that Lesotho's debt continued to climb despite the country running fiscal surpluses, and indicated that the nation was more indebted to China than to any other creditor, citing the World Bank's economic analysis.

The publication noted that according to the Lesotho Economic Update, titled "Transforming Fiscal Policy into an Engine of Inclusive Growth," the public debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 55.1 percent in the 2023/2024 financial year to an estimated

59 percent in 2024/2025, as the government kept borrowing both locally and abroad.

Although most of the external debt was concessional, the World Bank warned it was "still vulnerable to exchange-rate risk." External debt made up about 80 percent of the country's total debt, and one creditor, in particular, stood out: China. "China is Lesotho's primary non-Paris Club bilateral creditor and accounts for 70 percent of the country's bilateral debt," the report noted, underscoring the kingdom's growing reliance on Beijing's purse strings.

On 18 February 2026, while tabling the budget speech, Dr. Matlanyane announced a new fiscal rule introducing a limit on public debt at 60 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). The move was welcomed by some, who viewed it as a government-imposed constraint to make debt servicing easier. She stated that Lesotho's total government debt stock as of the end of January in the 2025/2026 financial year amounted to M22.7 billion (50 percent of GDP), a decline of M667.2 million from M23.4 billion at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year.

This reflected a three percent reduction in debt stock, with the debt-to-GDP ratio falling from 54.3 percent to 50 percent.

"The composition of public debt also shifted during the period, with the share of domestic and external debt moving from 15.4 and 84.6 percent to 16.9 and 83.1 percent respectively," she said. The external debt portfolio remained mostly concessional, at a share of 88.4 percent, despite the country graduating from an IDA low-income to a lower-middle-income country, which presented the nation with harder, higher costs of borrowing from international financial markets.

"The country's debt risk rating remains unchanged from the 2024/2025 fiscal year, at a moderate level of debt distress with limited space to absorb shocks," she added.

The 2025/2026 annual borrowing plan report highlighted that the government had a financing gap of M7,528.2 million, which was to be covered through grants and debt.

"Historically, it has been proven that there is generally poor implementation of government-financed projects, usually leading to positions of surpluses from planned deficits," the report read.

Meanwhile, during the budget presentation for the current 2026/2027 financial year, the Minister indicated that funds will only be disbursed for projects ready to be implemented.

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Lehokela App launched to strengthen policing and community safety

Seabata Mahao

The Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has officially launched the Lehokela Application alongside a series of strategic policing and ICT initiatives aimed at enhancing crime prevention and community safety.

The launch, held on Wednesday at the Police Training College (PTC) in Maseru, was hailed by stakeholders as a significant milestone in advancing community-driven violence prevention and sustainable peace in Lesotho.

The Lehokela Application is an innovative digital platform co-developed by LMPS in partnership with the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL).

According to an official statement issued on Wednesday, the app allows community members and Community Policing Committees (CPCs) to report incidents of violence and crime in real time using mobile technology.

Users can submit reports through text, images, audio, and location-sharing features, a development expected to improve communication between communities and the police while enabling faster and more coordinated responses.

"It also strengthens accountability and supports data-driven policing," the statement said, highlighting a shift toward inclusive, technology-enabled law enforcement.

Stakeholders noted that the system is particularly designed to respond to evolving security challenges, including gender-based violence and other forms of community-level crime.

In addition to the app, the launch event showcased key institutional frameworks guiding the modernisation of policing in Lesotho.

These include the Five-Year Strategic Plan for LMPS, a Digital Transformation Strategy, a Digital Policy Framework, and a Community Policing Sub-Strategic Plan.

The frameworks were developed with technical support from UNDP and are aligned with national development priorities, with a focus on prevention, accountability, and strengthening citizen-state relations.

Under the ICT Enablement Initiative, police stations across the country will be equipped with digital infrastructure, including desktop computers, to improve case monitoring, coordination of responses, and timely support to victims.

The programme forms part of broader efforts to address persistent challenges such as gender-based violence, theft, and community unrest. By strengthening communication channels and empowering communities to actively participate in peacebuilding, authorities aim to foster safer and more resilient communities.

Expected outcomes of the initiative include improved communication between communities and the police, faster response times to incidents, enhanced victim support services, strengthened trust between citizens and law enforcement, and the establishment of a centralized digital system for tracking crime and violence.

"Sustainability remains a core pillar of the initiative," the statement added. "The digital tools and systems introduced will be managed by LMPS, with ongoing capacity-building support to ensure long-term effectiveness, while community ownership will be reinforced through active involvement of CPCs."

Lesotho faces mounting bill for treatment in SA



Dr Lucy Mapota - Credit: Pascalinah Kabi

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho's continued reliance on cross-border medical referrals is placing growing financial and operational pressure on South Africa's healthcare system, particularly in the Free State province.

Director of Clinical Services in Lesotho's Ministry of Health, Dr. Lucy Mapota, has acknowledged that the government owes South Africa for medical services provided to Basotho patients.

While she could not confirm the exact amount, Mapota said Lesotho consistently carries debt related to cross-border medical bills due to the daily referral of patients.

"I believe South Africa is referring to a consolidated debt after adding all invoices, and this likely dates back several years," she said.

She attributed the recurring debt to

systemic financial constraints, including delays in accessing funds and the structure of government disbursements, which are released in phases. She said this makes it difficult to fully settle outstanding balances.

"There are times when payments cannot be processed because the financial year has ended," Mapota explained, adding that even when funds are budgeted, continuous referrals make it nearly impossible for Lesotho to reach a point where it owes nothing.

She explained that most patients referred to South Africa are cancer cases, and this has prompted government efforts to establish a local cancer treatment facility.

Mapota said plans are also underway to develop a medical school to train health professionals domestically, although low salaries remain a challenge in retaining

doctors.

The issue is not new. In January 2025, Newsday reported that South African hospitals were meeting revenue targets partly through payments made by Lesotho for referred patients.

At the time, during the groundbreaking ceremony for Lesotho's first cancer centre, the then Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Health, 'Maneo Moliehi Ntene, highlighted the financial strain.

"Our country's funds are being eroded through cancer treatment in South Africa," Ntene said. "Some hospitals even acknowledge that Lesotho contributes significantly to their revenue targets."

She noted that treatment costs have risen sharply, from approximately M145,000 per patient in 2015 to M220,000 by 2023. In some cases, payments were made for patients who had died before receiving treatment.

Ntene was fired this week.

South African media reported this week that the Free State healthcare system is struggling under the growing burden of patients from Lesotho.

Free State Health spokesperson Mondli Mvambi said the influx of patients, both referred and self-referred, is placing significant strain on facilities, particularly in border areas.

The most affected regions include the Thabo Mofutsanyane district, impacting towns such as Ladybrand, Ficksburg, Fouriesburg, Clarens and QwaQwa.

Mvambi said cross-border movement by job seekers and tourists further increases demand for services ranging from primary to specialised care. These cases are captured under existing healthcare agreements between the two governments.

Reports indicate that Lesotho owes the Free State Department of Health approximately R145 million for services rendered, mainly at Pelonomi Hospital and Universitas Academic Hospital.

These facilities regularly receive referrals from Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital for specialised treatment, particularly in oncology and trauma care.

Mvambi confirmed that the arrangement between the two governments has been in place for years, with mechanisms to recover the debt in order to sustain healthcare service delivery.

The financial strain comes amid ongoing concerns about infrastructure challenges, surgical backlogs, and limited capacity within Free State hospitals, raising questions about the long-term sustainability of the current cross-border healthcare model.

Over M2 billion investment plan for women and girls

Ntsoaki Motaung

The Government of Lesotho is preparing to unveil a groundbreaking economic roadmap that positions investments in women and girls as the nation's most profitable financial strategy, according to the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency (UNFPA) Lesotho.

The investment case shows that by allocating \$173.3 million (approximately M2.85 billion) to health, education, and protection programs for women and girls by 2030, Lesotho could unlock \$1,041 million (about M17.1 billion) in economic returns.

In a press release this week, UNFPA described this as a benefit-cost ratio of more than \$6.50 (M106.86) for every dollar (M16.44) spent, surpassing the returns of most traditional infrastructure projects.

At the core of the strategy is the understanding that Lesotho's economic future is inseparable from the well-being and safety of its female population. High maternal mortality and widespread gender-based violence continue to cre-

ate substantial economic drains.

"With a maternal mortality rate of 530 per 100,000 live births and 36 percent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence, the loss of human capital is immense," UNFPA said. "These are not just tragedies; they are economic bottlenecks that constrain the workforce and strain the healthcare system."

The data-driven report, supported by the joint United Nations Regional Programme 2gether 4 SRHR, argues that the proposed investment is a crucial first step to prevent these losses.

By scaling up high-impact interventions, such as emergency obstetric care, long-acting contraceptives, and programs to end child marriage, the government expects to prevent 344,800 unintended pregnancies and save over 15,900 lives by 2030.

The roadmap links women's health directly to economic participation. When women are healthy and able to plan their families, they are more likely to join the labour market and contribute to GDP growth.

UNFPA noted that extending interventions to end child marriage through 2050 could increase the return on investment to \$7.40 per dollar spent.

The plan also addresses the heavy economic burden of gender-based violence and early marriage. Currently, 16 percent of girls in Lesotho marry before 18, often cutting their education short.

Investing in social protection and keeping girls in school helps cultivate a more skilled and productive workforce, while preventing an estimated 49,000 cases of gender-based violence, reducing legal, medical, and productivity costs.

The press release highlighted that the investment case is aligned with Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan II, signalling a shift toward sustainable domestic financing rather than reliance solely on international aid.

UNFPA emphasised that the roadmap re-frames health and social services not as expenses, but as vital capital investments with measurable economic and social returns.



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Newsday

Business

'Let us not be afraid of money'

Refiloe Molise

Government officials, financial experts and industry leaders have called on Basotho to strengthen their financial literacy and adopt smarter money management practices during the launch of the Money Month Lesotho Campaign 2026 in Mafeteng on Thursday.

Held under the theme "Smart Money Talks," the campaign was officially launched at the Patsa Centre by Central Bank of Lesotho First Deputy Governor, Lehlomela Mohapi, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the banking sector, insurance firms, microfinance institutions and mobile money service providers.

The initiative brings together key players in the financial sector to promote financial inclusion, responsible money management and practical financial knowledge among communities.

In his keynote address, Mohapi noted that the campaign, which began in 2013, has now entered its 13th year. He said it continues to rotate across districts, with Mafeteng becoming the ninth host, while Beraa is expected to host next year.

He stressed that while money plays a central role in people's lives, many still lack the knowledge to manage it effectively. He said the campaign's theme encourages open conversations about finances and informed decision-making.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, Mohapi described it as a turning point that exposed the importance of financial preparedness.

"When COVID-19 started, people were mainly

concerned about two things, how to survive and how to sustain their livelihoods. Both of these depend on money," he said.

He added that the crisis revealed the need for

improved financial planning, savings and a better understanding of financial tools such as insurance.

"As families, we must know how much money we have and plan accordingly. We should avoid situations where families fight over insurance money after the loss of a loved one, as this often leads to divisions," he said.

Mohapi said the presence of financial institutions in Mafeteng was aimed at equipping Basotho with the knowledge and tools needed to manage their finances effectively.

"We are here to show people how important money is, how to save it and how to use it properly. All the institutions you see here are here to help.



Staff Reporter

The government's revenue from dividends dropped sharply during the 2022/23 financial year, adding to mounting concerns over the performance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the loss of potential income essential for public service delivery.

According to the latest audit report on Lesotho's consolidated financial statements, the government received just M151.06 million in dividends from four out of 17 enterprises, marking a steep 42 per cent decline compared to the previous year.

The government had received M259.26 million from five enterprises during the 2021/22 financial year. Dividends are profits declared by enterprises where the government has shareholding.

"The government received dividends with a total amount of M151.06 million from four enterprises, representing a 42% decrease as compared to the previous year," said Auditor General Mathabo Makenete.

The audit projects a worrying picture of declining returns from public investments, with only a handful of state-linked entities contributing to the national fiscus despite government holding stakes in a wide range of companies.

The state-linked companies that paid dividends are Letšeng diamond mine, in which the government holds a 30 per cent shareholding, contributing M122.56 million; Standard Lesotho Bank (9.6%) which paid M23.16 million; AON/Minet (5%) which paid M462,000; and Maluti Mountain Breweries (4.75%) which paid M3.88 million.

The companies flagged for failing to pay divi-

dends include Avani hotels, Kao mine, Liqhobong mine, Mothae mine, Econet Telecom Lesotho and Lesotho Flour Mills among others.

"Thirteen enterprises have not declared dividends and eleven of those enterprises have not declared for five years from 2018/2019 to 2022/2023. The non-declaration of dividends by the enterprises indicates that government money invested in these enterprises is held without returns. Table 11 shows the trend for three years," Makenete continued.

Addressing the issue of SOE financial performances was among the priority actions identified by Prime Minister Samuel Matekane in his 2022 inauguration speech. He said within 30 days his administration would prepare a report on all companies in which government has shares, outlining which entities are paying dividends and which are not, and why.

He also pledged to develop a reporting plan for all SOEs within the same timeframe and make it public.

The audit report warned that the trend effec-

tively means public funds invested in these entities are yielding no financial return, placing additional strain on the national budget.

"The (Finance) Minister should strengthen measures or policies to attain returns from government investments," Makenete recommended.

Economic analysts believe that the situation reflects deeper structural inefficiencies within Lesotho's SOEs, many of which rely heavily on government subventions while failing to generate

This is not a scam it is about equipping Basotho with knowledge," he emphasised.

He also highlighted the need to build trust between financial institutions and the public, noting that misinformation and lack of understanding often discourage people from using formal financial services.

"We want to build trust among Basotho and help them understand how money works in all its forms. Money has the ability to grow, but it only grows where it is well managed," he said.

Mohapi further urged parents to introduce financial education to children at an early age to build a financially responsible generation.

"Let us not be afraid of money, and let us teach our children to understand it from an early age," he said.

He concluded by reaffirming the Central Bank's vision of ensuring that every Mosotho approaches money with knowledge and confidence.

Also addressing the gathering, Acting Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Maseeiso Lekholoane, underscored the importance of financial education in driving economic empowerment and national development.

"Today we are talking about money, yet not everyone is comfortable discussing it. The most important thing is to make financial plans and ensure that those plans are implemented," she said.

Lekholoane said while many people set financial goals, the main challenge lies in execution and consistency. She added that institutions like the Central Bank play a critical role in regulating financial service providers.

Quoting the Sesotho proverb "Sechaba se senang tsebo sea timela," she urged Basotho to actively seek financial knowledge and utilise available services.

"We encourage people to visit these institutions, ask questions and learn. We are leaving knowledge behind, and we hope the people of Mafeteng will use it to improve their lives," she said.

The event also provided a platform for the public to engage directly with financial institutions and learn about products such as savings accounts, insurance and mobile money services.

Participants received practical guidance on budgeting, saving, investing and avoiding financial scams, reinforcing the campaign's goal of promoting responsible financial behaviour across the country.

SOEs under fire as dividend payouts shrink

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sustainable profits.

In some cases, governance challenges, weak oversight and limited commercial orientation have further undermined their ability to deliver returns.

They further argued that urgent reforms are needed to improve the financial performance of SOEs. These may include tightening corporate governance frameworks, enforcing performance contracts for management and reviewing the viability of persistently underperforming entities.

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Notice in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of the Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024; ESTATE LATE Makampo Rakete
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Notice hereby given in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the administrator of the deceased's estate within (30) days of this publication.

The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder
ADDRESS Ha-Bosofo Maseru
CELL NO(+226) 59775005

NAME: Molelekeng
Rakepe
ADMINISTRATOR

NOTICE

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

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

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

Notice of Change of Company Name

Notice is hereby made to inform the public that BISHIVE (PTY) LTD(of registration number 98196) has decided to change its name to BIZHIVE (PTY) LTD.

Anyone with an objection to this change may lodge their concerns with the registrar of companies at One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre

Ministry of Trade & Industry

P.O. Box 747, Kingsway, Maseru

Telephone: 22310893 or directly contact the director of the company Mr Tumelo at 68758875



Newsday Health

New menstrual health model aims to keep girls in school



Ntsoaki Motaung

A new menstrual health model aimed at keeping girls in school and restoring their dignity was the focus of discussions at a capacity-building workshop held this week.

Speaking at the workshop, Maseretse Ratia emphasised that the need for a comprehensive menstrual health approach in Lesotho is

grounded in the fundamental human dignity of women and girls.

Ratai noted that persistent gaps in knowledge and communication have created what she described as a “cycle of suffering,” where many girls are unable to openly discuss menstruation, even with their mothers.

She explained that this silence, coupled with

limited biology education that often excludes practical menstrual health management, fosters shame and frustration among young girls.

She warned that without a clear strategic framework and effective policy implementation, systemic challenges, such as inadequate sanitation facilities in schools, will continue to keep girls at home and disrupt their education.

She further revealed that the model was inspired by a young girl who showcased hand-made reusable sanitary pads at an international youth event. This initiative sparked a partnership between the Ministry of Gender and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), aimed at supporting local innovation and addressing menstrual poverty.

Acting Director of Gender, Mapuleng Secheche, said the initiative seeks to transform lives holistically by addressing broader sexual and reproductive health issues.

Secheche stressed that the programme goes beyond the distribution of sanitary products, focusing instead on empowering women with knowledge and skills to educate others within their communities.

Providing a broader perspective, UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti highlighted that at least 10 percent of girls drop out of school due to menstruation, a figure he described as conservative.

Mosoti noted that the situation is even more severe for girls from disadvantaged back-

grounds and those living with disabilities.

He argued that even a single girl dropping out is unacceptable, as it limits future potential, including that of future national leaders. He commended the government’s efforts to tackle stigma and called on society to ensure that girls have access to both menstrual products and accurate information.

Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana, described the programme as a critical intervention to restore dignity and eliminate barriers to opportunity.

Lesaoana expressed concern over period poverty, noting that the lack of basic sanitary products contributes to cumulative educational setbacks and, in some cases, exposes girls to risky behaviours.

While acknowledging delays in the rollout of the pilot programme, the minister called for urgency and accountability. He emphasised that menstrual health must be treated as a national priority, ensuring access to both disposable and reusable products for all girls in need.

Meanwhile, UNFPA has procured 109,000 sanitary pads and 250 related products to support approximately 8,000 adolescent girls aged 10 to 18, both in and out of school.

The pilot programme will run from November 2025 to March 2027 in Mokhotlong, Mafeteng and Maseru, after which the Government of Lesotho is expected to assume full implementation in the following fiscal year.

Ntsoaki Motaung

As the global community marked World Health Day 2026 on April 7, the spotlight turned to Africa as a hotspot for emerging and re-emerging diseases, with experts warning that the continent faces a convergence of escalating health threats.

Despite notable scientific progress, global health leaders say Africa remains at a critical juncture, grappling with a complex mix of persistent diseases, climate-related risks, and systemic inequalities that continue to strain health systems.

This year’s theme, “Together for health: Stand with science,” coincided with discussions around the One Health Summit 2026 held in Lyon. The summit underscored a growing consensus that human, animal, and environmental health are deeply interconnected, a relationship increasingly threatened by zoonotic diseases, food insecurity, and antimicrobial resistance.

In a statement, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Mohamed Janabi, acknowledged that while science has helped transform HIV into a manageable condition and contributed to reductions in maternal mortality, the region’s health systems remain under significant pressure.

“Our region faces a complex web of challenges, persistent diseases, emerging health threats, and strained health systems,” Janabi said, stressing that the One Health approach, coordinating efforts across human, animal, and environmental sectors, is no longer op-

tional, but essential.

During a recent webinar organised by REMAPSEN and Galien Africa, experts highlighted Africa’s unique vulnerability to these overlapping crises.

Prof. Awa Marie Coll Seck called for urgent, multidisciplinary action to address the continent’s health challenges at their root.

While technological innovation offers hope, access remains a major barrier. Diene Keita noted that tools such as portable ultrasound devices and self-administered contraceptives could significantly improve outcomes, yet gaps in women’s health continue to undermine progress.

“Women spend 25 percent more time in poor health than men,” Keita said, adding that nearly 260,000 women die each year from preventable pregnancy-related complications. She argued that closing this gap could unlock up to \$1 trillion annually by 2040, but pointed out that only 7 percent of global research focuses on conditions unique to women.

The push for “African-led science” also emerged as a key theme. Prof. Issakha Diallo emphasised the need for local innovation, regulatory autonomy, and investment in human capital.

“Local technologies would provide better solutions for the continent,” Diallo said, underscoring the importance of developing home-grown expertise to respond effectively to modern health crises.

Meanwhile, Prof. Salome Bukachi highlighted the importance of community inclusion,

Africa at crossroads as World Health Day highlights rising disease threats



WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Mohamed Janabi

invoking the principle “Nothing for us without us.” She warned that without meaningful public participation, even the most advanced scientific interventions risk failing at the implementation stage.

The WHO has called on African governments to increase domestic investment in research and innovation, describing it as a critical pillar for strengthening health security across the continent.

Editorial comment: Rare axe falls in Matekane administration

The abrupt dismissal of Principal Secretary (PS) 'Maneo Moliehi Ntene from the Ministry of Health marks a rare and significant rupture in Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane's administration.

For an executive that has largely been characterised by continuity among senior technocrats and a reluctance to wield the axe publicly, this unceremonious termination, confirmed by the office of the government spokesperson and announced with immediate effect, has understandably sparked widespread speculation and quiet unease across the public service and political corridors.

The official notice was characteristically terse, offering no explanation for the decision. Deputy Principal Secretary, 'Matšoanelo Monyobi, has been appointed to act in the role in the interim. However, as is often the case in such matters, the silence from the government has only amplified questions.

What exactly prompted this move against a senior official who had served through turbulent periods in one of Lesotho's most critical and chronically troubled ministries?

Reliable reports point to a culmination of issues surfacing during Ntene's recent engagements with parliamentary oversight bodies, particularly the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Allegations of irregularities in staff recruitment, especially at facilities linked to Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH), appear to have featured prominently.

In one notable admission before a joint parliamentary portfolio committee, Ntene reportedly acknowledged that 394 positions had been filled without corresponding budget provision, with a heavy concentration at Maseru District Hospital. This created a salary shortfall estimated at around M52 million, exacerbating fiscal strain in an already overstretched health sector.

The Ministry of Health, under her watch, has faced persistent crises: disputes over hospital governance and funding models post the termination of the Netcare-linked public-private partnership, questions around procurement compliance, staff management challenges, and broader concerns about value for money in health spending. While some of these predated her tenure, accountability ultimately rests with the administrative head.

The PAC's scrutiny appears to have brought these matters into sharp public and political focus, creating conditions where continued leadership became untenable.

Context of rarity in Matekane's administration

That this firing stands out as unusual is not mere perception. Since assuming office, the Matekane-led RFP coalition government has projected an image of stability and restraint in handling senior civil servants, even amid earlier legal battles with groups of Principal Secretaries in 2023. Many observers interpreted this approach as a deliberate departure from the more frequent reshuffles and dismissals seen under previous administrations, aimed at fostering institutional memory, professionalism, and investor confidence in a country still navigating fragile coalitions and economic pressures.

In that light, Ntene's exit signals a potential shift: a willingness to act decisively when oversight mechanisms expose serious lapses, even if it risks internal ripples.

Insiders have hinted at deeper undercurrents, including possible tensions within the coalition. Reports suggest the Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoboroane (leader of the Movement for Economic Change), may not have been consulted prior to the decision, raising questions about coordination at the political-administrative interface. Some sources have framed the ouster within a broader "internal scuffle" simmering around major health financing deals, including a recent US\$2.6 billion health agreement endorsed by Parliament. Whether these elements reflect mere procedural friction or something more substantive remains unclear in the absence of official detail.

Implications for governance and health sector

For ordinary Basotho, the deeper significance lies less in the personal fortunes of one Principal Secretary and more in what this episode reveals about governance standards. The health sector is not just another ministry; it is the frontline for life-and-death services in a nation battling high disease burdens, infrastructure deficits, and human resource shortages. Unbudgeted recruitment, fiscal overruns, and unresolved questions around hospital operating models directly affect service delivery, staff morale, and public trust. If parliamentary committees are to serve as effective accountability instruments, their findings must carry consequences—otherwise, oversight risks becoming performative.

At the same time, abrupt dismissals without transparent process can undermine morale across the civil service. Principal Secretaries are expected to provide continuity and technical expertise amid political transitions. When removals appear tied to political or coalition dynamics rather than clear evidence of misconduct or incapacity, they risk politicising the administrative core. The government owes citizens, and the public service, a fuller accounting, not to rehabilitate reputations, but to demonstrate that decisions of this magnitude are driven by evidence, due process, and the national interest rather than expediency or factional score-settling.

Prime Minister Matekane's administration came into office promising cleaner, more disciplined governance. This rare exercise of executive authority over a senior health official can be read as an attempt to uphold that pledge in the face of mounting parliamentary pressure. Yet its effectiveness will depend on what follows: a substantive appointment based on merit, accelerated reforms to address the fiscal and structural weaknesses in health financing, and a commitment to greater transparency in explaining high-level personnel changes.

In the end, the question on many lips, "What could Ntene have done?" – is less about one individual and more about systemic expectations. Public office, especially at the helm of a ministry as vital as Health, demands rigorous stewardship of scarce resources and unwavering accountability.

If this dismissal reinforces that principle without descending into arbitrary purges, it could strengthen rather than rattle the administration. If it merely papers over deeper coalition fault lines or fails to yield tangible improvements in health outcomes, public cynicism will only deepen.

The nation will be watching closely, not just who replaces Ntene, but whether this marks the beginning of a more robust accountability culture or remains an isolated exception in an otherwise steady ship of state. Lesotho's health challenges are too grave, and public resources too limited, for anything less than decisive, evidence-based leadership.



No Comment



Dr. Tseliso Moroke

Common Concern

How the country moves

Counting Without Change

We are yet to be counted, yet even before the numbers are confirmed, we already know the story they will tell.

We are told that a census is a powerful national instrument. That it equips those entrusted with the budget of this country with the information and knowledge necessary to plan effectively, allocate resources equitably, and improve service delivery. It is meant to reveal population densities, identify pockets of need, and guide the distribution of developmental projects. In theory, it is a tool to create jobs, reduce inequality, and eradicate poverty.

However, one must ask: will it truly achieve that?

For years, we have relied on population projections ranging from 2 million to 2.2 million people. We are, by any measure, a small nation. A country of this size should be agile in governance, precise in planning, and deliberate in execution. It should be easier to manage resources, easier to target interventions, and easier to uplift communities. Yet the reality we face stands in stark contrast.

We are engulfed in persistent poverty. Unemployment continues to rise at alarming levels, particularly among the youth. Inequality remains deeply entrenched. The question is unavoidable: how does a small nation struggle so profoundly to meet the basic needs of its people?

It cannot be that we lack data. It cannot be that we do not understand where the problems lie.

Even with the resources at our disposal, particularly something as strategic and valuable as water, this country should long have transitioned into a thriving economy. Water alone presents opportunities for industrial development, energy generation, regional trade, and job creation. It is a natural endowment that many nations would

leverage to transform their economic fortunes. Yet we have failed to fully harness it.

This brings us to an uncomfortable but necessary truth: a census, in itself, will not solve our problems.

We will not wake up to a transformed economy simply because new numbers have been collected. We will not suddenly feel the impact of budgets that are informed by the realities of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Data does not automatically translate into action, and information alone does not guarantee change.

The problem lies within the system.

Our budgeting framework is rigid and largely unresponsive. It is not malleable to the evolving needs of the country, nor is it sufficiently adaptive to both domestic and global developments. Instead, it appears structured to maintain the status quo. Serving the interests of a narrow elite rather than the broader population.

This rigidity is evident in how we respond, or fail to respond, to global dynamics. The geopolitical tensions affecting global oil and fuel prices were not unforeseen. They were present long before the budget was tabled and appropriated. Yet, despite having ample time to anticipate and adjust, we proceeded without meaningful safeguards against volatility. This is not merely an oversight; it is a failure of foresight and intent.

As a result, there is little to no tangible return on investment from public spending for the ordinary Mosotho. The economically active population, along with the most vulnerable, has been conditioned, directly and indirectly, to rely heavily on government for survival. However, the same system that encourages this dependency does not empower citizens with the tools, opportunities, or environment needed to become self-sufficient. Instead of enabling productivity and

enterprise, it perpetuates stagnation.

At the same time, there is a growing perception that public resources disproportionately benefit politically connected individuals.

Whether acknowledged or not, this perception erodes public trust and weakens the social contract. When citizens believe that budgets serve a select few rather than the nation as a whole, disengagement and disillusionment inevitably follow.

But perhaps the most critical issue is one we seldom confront: the erosion of our collective agency.

What happened to our ability to organise ourselves as a people? What happened to community-driven development, where citizens actively participated in shaping their own economic and social outcomes?

Budgeting, by its very nature, should be consultative. It should be inclusive and participatory, reflecting the voices, needs, and aspirations of the people. Yet increasingly, it feels distant, centralised, technocratic, and detached from lived realities.

We are, in effect, denying ourselves the authority we inherently possess over our own resources.

Public money must serve the public good. It must be directed toward initiatives that stimulate economic activity, create sustainable employment, reduce inequality, and meaningfully address poverty. This requires not only better data, but better governance, stronger accountability, and a genuine commitment to transformation.

Until we fundamentally rethink how this country moves, how it plans, how it allocates, and how it prioritizes, no census, no matter how accurate, will alter our trajectory.

Counting people is important.

But changing their lives is what truly matters.



Why Basotho deserve a plan that outlasts any politician

Kananelo Boloetse

Some people have been asking me what I will be doing now that I am no longer part of the MISA Lesotho leadership. I actually appreciate the question because it shows that those asking believe I am capable of more than just going to work every day and doing nothing else. Honestly, that would be a terrible waste of both my time and my abilities. So I will be doing something meaningful.

Last year, in April, we launched the Youth Dialogues on Economic Independence. We travelled across districts like Maseru, Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Berea, Leribe, and Qacha's Nek, meeting young people and giving them a platform to freely share their thoughts on how Lesotho can achieve real economic independence. The idea was simple but ambitious: to listen to the youth, take their views seriously, and turn them into a Youth Charter that we would launch as part of our independence celebrations in October this year. But as we continued, it became clear that we should aim even higher. What we were hearing was not a short list of complaints or temporary demands. It was a longing for something deeper and more lasting. Young people were not just asking for a few jobs or a small loan. They were asking for a different kind of country altogether.

That is why this should not just be a charter for now. It should be a long-term vision for Lesotho, reaching all the way to 2066, when our country will celebrate one hundred years of independence. The document must outline what must be done in the next forty years to ensure that the political independence we gained in 1966 grows into true economic independence, as well as independence in education, health, infrastructure, and opportunity. For too long, we have celebrated the flag and the anthem while remaining dependent on others for food, for jobs, for capital, and even for our own sense of possibility. Agenda 2066 is the bridge between the freedom we were given and the freedom we must build for ourselves.

Why is such a long-term plan so essential, especially now? The answer lies in the painful lesson of the past sixty years. Without a clear, shared, and enduring destination of their own making, the people of Lesotho have been forced to run after politicians who rise and fall with every election, every coalition collapse, and every wave of disappointment. These politicians arrive with smooth tongues and colourful manifestos, promising factories that

never open, roads that never reach the villages, and jobs that never materialise. They invoke the name of Morena Moshoeshoe the Great and speak of Basotho dignity, yet they govern through patronage, corruption, and short-term survival rather than long-term vision. And why do they succeed, cycle after cycle? Because the people do not have a fixed plan of their own. When you do not know exactly what you want, any charismatic liar can point in any direction and call it leadership. But when you have a forty-year plan written by you, debated by you, and owned by you, politicians no longer lead you. They serve you. They are judged not by their speeches but by their measurable progress toward your chosen horizon. That is the end of running after liars.

This Agenda 2066 must be revolutionary, transformative, and radical. For this country to truly move forward, it cannot be handled with gloves. A gentle plan gets ignored when the next crisis arrives. A cautious plan gets rewritten by every new minister. A vague plan becomes a playground for empty promises. What we need instead is a plan that is specific, binding, and defended by the people themselves. Imagine if every district, every university, and every trade union has debated Agenda 2066 and made it their own. Imagine if political parties must publish annual scorecards showing how their actions have advanced or hindered the plan. Then, when a politician stands before a crowd and lies, promising a factory that will never come, the people will no longer cheer or wait. They will ask, calmly and firmly, where is that factory in our forty-year plan? Show us the milestone. Show us the budget. Show us the timeline. Otherwise, step aside. That is not anger. That is the quiet power of a people who know exactly what they want.

Importantly, this Agenda 2066 must also incorporate the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063. For Agenda 2063 to truly become a reality, it is essential for member states to localise its goals and ambitions. This means aligning Lesotho's own long-term plans with the broader vision of Africa's development, so that we contribute meaningfully to continental progress while addressing our unique national challenges. Lesotho cannot afford to be a passive observer of Africa's rise. When the continent builds high-speed rail networks, we must be connected. When the African Continental Free Trade Area

expands, we must have goods to sell. That requires foresight, not last-minute scrambling. By grounding our national plan in the continental vision, we declare that Lesotho is not a small country to be ignored. We are a nation with a plan that fits into Africa's transformation.

To make sure every voice is heard, we are now planning to visit the remaining districts, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Botha-Bothe, and Quthing. We will listen to young people across the entire country, include their ideas, finalise the document, and launch it in October as part of the independence celebrations. This is what we are calling Agenda 2066, a plan created by us, for us, without interference from politics, religion, or other interests. No political party owns it. No church blesses it exclusively. No foreign donor directs it. It belongs to the young people of Lesotho, and through them, to all Basotho who refuse to spend

another sixty years wandering after liars.

After the launch, our work will continue. We want to do everything we can to ensure that this vision is realised, not just celebrated and forgotten. That means building citizen assemblies, training local monitors, using community radio and social media to track progress, and holding every elected official accountable to the milestones of Agenda 2066. And when Lesotho celebrates one hundred years of independence, I want to be proud knowing that I played a part in creating the Lesotho we all deserve, a country that is stronger, fairer, and economically free. More than that, I want every young person who sat with us in a hall in Mokhotlong or Qacha's Nek to feel that same pride, because they did not wait for a saviour. They built a plan. They refused to waste their time or their talents. And because of that, they finally stopped running.



Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Education and Training

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

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

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

The three components of the project are:

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

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

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

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

Objective:

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

Qualification and Experience:

Interested candidates must have:

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

Procurement and Supply or related field.

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

Selection Criteria:

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

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 with a copy to ntshabi.hleoheng86@gmail.com.**

Submission:

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

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

"Expression of Interest for Procurement Record Keeper"



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



Investing in rural people

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Consulting Firms)

LESOTHO

WOOLAND MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.
2. The policy is accessible at www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy.
3. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>.
4. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/privacy>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The shortlisting criteria are:

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

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

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

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

Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project

Attn: Procurement and Contracts Manager

P.O. Box 24

Department of Livestock Services

Old Airport Road, Moshoeshoe II

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LESOTHO COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT (LESOTHO HORTICULTURAL INCUBATION & TRAINING CENTRE)

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR INCUBATION OF LESOTHO DECIDUOUS FRUIT FARMERS

The Government of Lesotho, through the World Bank financed Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project, is supporting the establishment of Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre (LHITC), located at Mahobong in Leribe district, with the objective of scaling and replicating existing deciduous fruit commercial orchards and attracting new investments into the horticulture sector. The pilot farms established under the first and second World Bank financed Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification projects (PSCEDP) have successfully demonstrated the commercial potential to produce deciduous fruits in Lesotho for both the domestic and export markets, and there is already significant interest from investors in commercial horticulture. However, these investments can only be realized with a coordinated effort to address land administration challenges including the availability of land parcels of adequate size for commercial scale production and adopting a transparent leasing system to achieve a credible land ownership. There is also a need for coordinated infrastructure investments in irrigation, electricity, roads, packhouses, phytosanitary inspection systems and grading, and private-public partnerships to deliver effective training and skills, and impactful extension services. It is against this background that the Government of Lesotho has established the Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre.

The LHITC is in an existing facility which is owned by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and it is adjacent to the two existing pilot commercial farms. The Centre is operated in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

The objective of LHITC is to provide support for scaling commercial horticulture farming in Lesotho, building on the experience of the current pilot commercial farms and addressing gaps in the value chain, access to suitable land, infrastructure, extension services, skills, finance, and markets while promoting climate smart agricultural practices.

The LHITC is currently incubating the first cohort of 7 deciduous fruit farmers.

The CAFI Project Management Unit, now invites farmers and companies to indicate their interest to participate in the second cohort of the full horticultural incubation program of deciduous fruit. Interested farmers should provide information demonstrating that they meet eligibility criteria below.

The selection criteria will be based on the following key requirements:

Applicants (individual farmers or registered companies) must have:

1. Access to suitable land minimum of **3 ha** and maximum of **5 ha** owned or rented for a period of at least 30 years if rented, **with a proof of land ownership documents in the name of**

the farmer or registered entity. The required acceptable documents are Form Cs, Leases, or subleases (if the land is rented). The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition must confirm the land size in hectares.

2. The site must be close to a reliable source of quality irrigation water that will provide adequate water to irrigate an orchard of **3ha to 5ha** depending on availability of site.
3. Access road linking the site with the main road and should be in a good condition and not longer than 2 km.
4. The orchard site must be less than 0.5 km to electricity supply or other sustainable sources of power for irrigation and other functions of the orchard.
5. The company must have a formally registered entity for the application process.
6. The registered company must submit a CV of the Managing Director of the entity.
 - Experience in commercial farming will be an added advantage.
 - Suitable sites that are located within 50 km radius from LHITC at Mahobong, in Leribe district will be prioritized.

Format of EOI submissions

The applicants should include at least the following information in their submissions to enable objective assessment of the expressions of interest:

- Entity information including name, address, cell phone, working e-mail, website (if any), names of a Project Manager (if different from applicant).
- Certified copies of land ownership documents.
- Proof of hectareage from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.
- Description of the location of the site where the orchard is intended to be established.

Further information and suitability maps can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 16h30 local time].

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled **"Incubation of Lesotho Deciduous Fruit Farmers"** to the address below in person or by e-mail on or before **April 16, 2026, at 16h00**. E-mail submissions should be sent to tmohejane@cafi.org.ls with a copy to nleutsoa@cafi.org.ls and Itsoinyane@cafi.org.ls

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SADPII

Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP II) Matching Grant Programme

4th Round Call for Applications

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

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

Eligible investments include:

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

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

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

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

and technical reports. Eligible service providers include a wide range of specialists such as private sector technical specialists and business consultants, traders, associations, NGOs and on-going international-funded projects and programs present in Lesotho, as well as university and college faculty, and public extension and research staff outside of normal working hours. Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security are not eligible to work as Service Providers. Service Providers will need to show that they have successfully completed a training program on the preparation and technical and financial analysis of investment projects approved by the PMU or the MGC.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Chris Theko

A 27-year-old Lesotho filmmaker and creative director, Khotso Maphathe, is putting Lesotho's storytelling on the global map after securing a Vision & Voice Award at the Alma Film Festival held in the Dominican Republic.

Maphathe was recognised for his compelling project, *Threads, Beats and Legends: Sesotho Alive*, a film that captures the spirit of a new generation of Basotho youth dedicated to preserving and reimagining Sesotho culture through music, fashion, visual arts, and storytelling.

Reacting to the win, Maphathe described the moment as both personal and symbolic for Lesotho's creative sector.

"This award is not just about me, it's about the stories we carry as Basotho. It shows that our culture, our identity, and our voices matter on a global stage."

The award marks a significant milestone not only for Maphathe but also for Lesotho's growing creative industry, as local narratives continue to find resonance on international platforms.

A product of the CAFI Entrepreneurship Hub's second cohort, Maphathe represents a rising wave of young creatives leveraging innovation and cultural identity to tell authentic African stories.

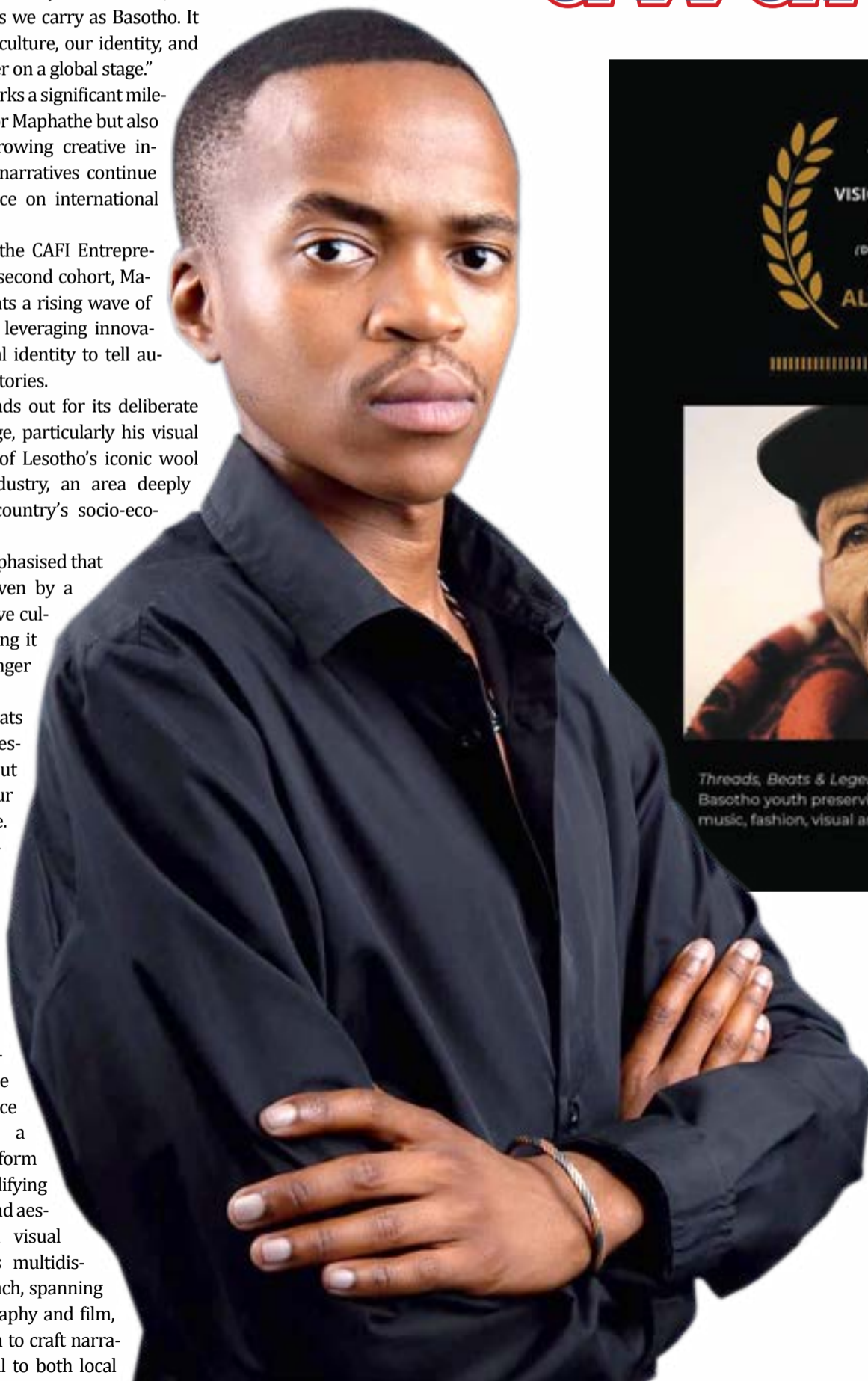
His work stands out for its deliberate focus on heritage, particularly his visual documentation of Lesotho's iconic wool and mohair industry, an area deeply rooted in the country's socio-economic fabric.

Maphathe emphasised that his work is driven by a desire to preserve culture while making it relevant to younger generations.

"*Threads, Beats and Legends: Sesotho Alive* is about showing that our culture is alive. It's not something of the past, it's something we are living, shaping, and taking into the future."

Beyond filmmaking, Maphathe is the founder of Space Agency Africa, a creative platform aimed at amplifying African voices and aesthetics through visual storytelling. His multidisciplinary approach, spanning fine art photography and film, has enabled him to craft narratives that appeal to both local and global audiences.

Mosotho filmmaker wins international award



Maphathe



Threads, Beats & Legends: Sesotho Alive follows a new generation of Basotho youth preserving and reimagining Sesotho heritage through music, fashion, visual arts, film, and storytelling.

He also highlighted the importance of platforms that support young creatives in Lesotho.

"There is so much untapped talent in Lesotho. What we need are more spaces, more support, and more belief in young creatives to tell our own stories."

His recognition at the Alma Film Festival underscores the increasing visibility of African creatives on the world stage and highlights the importance of platforms that nurture young talent.

It also signals a shift in how African stories are being consumed, moving from the margins to mainstream global discourse.

For Lesotho, Maphathe's achievement is a moment of pride and a reminder of the untapped potential within the country's creative sector.

Meet Themba Kao: The new sensation in visual arts

Fusi Hlaoli

Emerging multidisciplinary artist Themba Kao is steadily making his mark in the creative space through work that blends emotion, identity, and cultural storytelling.

Born and raised in Hlotse, Leribe, and now based in Maseru, Kao represents a rising wave of young artists using visual art to express both personal and shared experiences.

He completed a Diploma in Graphics Design at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in 2023, a period he credits with shaping his artistic direction. However, his journey into art began much earlier.

"I began creating art at a very young age, probably around 8 or 9, sketching cars or family members without really knowing what I was doing," he recalls.

What started as simple curiosity gradually developed into a passion that followed him through his school years, where he practiced by drawing characters from comics and children's books.

His artistic path became clearer during his time at university, where he was introduced to digital illustration. The experience pushed him to take his craft more seriously, especially after sharing his work online and receiving encouraging feedback.

Kao's work explores themes of black history, culture, and identity, celebrating both individuality and excellence. Drawing inspiration from personal experiences, books, poetry, and music, he transforms a range of emotions into compelling visual narratives.

"I want people to see themselves in the work," he said, emphasising his desire to create art that connects with audiences on a personal level.

In 2022, he expanded into painting. Although his early attempts were not perfect, he remained commit-

ted to improving his skills, gradually building confidence and refining his artistic voice.

In April 2025, Kao launched The Portrait Art Exhibition, an initiative he hopes to establish as an annual event in Lesotho. The exhibition is designed to encourage interaction, allowing audiences to interpret artworks before hearing the artist's own perspective.

"It serves as a space where I showcase my work and invite audiences to interpret each piece before hearing my own perspective," he explains, adding that the goal is to create dialogue through art.

Themba will be hosting The Portrait Art Exhibition from 02 May to 16 May this year at Cafe What? where he will showcase stories, emotions, and meanings captured in every brushstroke. The event is expected to bring together art lovers while offering a deeper look into his creative process.

Each portrait carries a different story, with some drawn from his personal experiences and others inspired by everyday life.

"Many of the stories are things people can personally relate to," he noted.

Beyond the exhibition, Kao views his work as a source of motivation for both himself and others. He continues to push forward despite challenges within the art industry, while also inspiring emerging creatives.

Looking ahead, he is currently working on a deeply personal exhibition series that reflects his journey and sources of inspiration.

"This body of work will explore what drives me in life and the themes that continue to shape my art," he said.

He is also preparing for collaborating with an as yet unnamed South African brand at the start of summer.



Themba Kao

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Chris Theko

Boitumelo Rabale, the celebrated midfielder for South African Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies and Lesotho's woman's national team Mehalalitoe, has taken a bold step beyond the pitch with the launch of the Boitumelo Rabale Foundation, an initiative aimed at transforming the lives of young women and girls across Lesotho.

Widely regarded as one of Lesotho's most accomplished female footballers, Rabale has built a reputation not only for her technical brilliance and composure on the ball, but also for her leadership and resilience.

Her journey, from local football structures in Qoaling on the outskirts of Maseru city to competing at the highest level in South Africa, has made her a role model for aspiring athletes back home. Now, she is channeling that influence into a cause close to her heart.

Speaking on the launch Rabale shared her passion for giving back to her community: "Football changed my life," Rabale said.

"It gave me opportunities I never imagined possible growing up in Qoaling. Through this foundation, I want to make sure that young girls in Lesotho can also dream, believe, and access those same opportunities, regardless of where they come from."

The foundation is co-founded by Chris Bullock, former Director of Football at Kick4Life and current Deputy Secretary General of Lesotho Football Association. His extensive experience in football development and social impact initiatives is expected to play a key role in shaping the foundation's programs and outreach.

At its core, the Boitumelo Rabale Foundation is built on a powerful vision to use football as a vehicle for social change. The organisation aims to create safe, inclusive spaces where young women can develop not only their sporting talent, but also critical life skills.

Beyond the game itself, the foundation is

Rabale Foundation to advance empowerment of young girls



Two-time CAF Champions League winner. Now she's building something bigger than silverware. The Boitumelo Rabale Foundation is live

set to address a range of pressing social challenges affecting young women in Lesotho. These include gender-based violence (GBV), limited access to education, health awareness, and youth unemployment.

"This is more than football. It's about creating pathways, building confidence and tackling real societal issues that affect young women in Lesotho every day. Sport has a unique ability to bring people together and open doors," said Bullock.

"But for many girls in Lesotho, those doors are still closed. This foundation is about breaking barriers, on and off the field, and creating pathways to opportunity, dignity, and independence."

Through mentorship programs, football clinics, community outreach, and partnerships with schools and local organisations, the foundation plans to reach underserved communities across the country.

There are also plans to integrate educational support and health awareness campaigns into its programming, ensuring a holistic approach to empowerment.

Rabale's initiative comes at a critical time when conversations around women's empowerment and gender equality are gaining momentum globally and locally. In Lesotho, where many young women still face systemic challenges, such interventions are seen as vital in driving long-term change.

For Rabale, however, the mission is deeply personal.

"I have seen the challenges that girls face every day, some of them are forced to give up their dreams too soon," she said.

"If we can use football to keep them in school, build their confidence, and show them that they matter, then we are already changing lives."

As she continues to shine on the continental stage with Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies, Rabale is proving that her impact extends far beyond football. With the launch of her foundation, she is not only cementing her legacy as a sporting icon, but also as a champion for social change.



Ramela Foundation Founder, Bishop David Thakadu Ramela addressing the media during the official launch of the Moshoeshoe's Day Horse Race

Refiloe Molise & Mamello Rakotsoane

The Ramela Foundation will host the Moshoeshoe's Day horse race in Peka on April 18, with organisers outlining ambitious plans to boost tourism, create jobs and stimulate economic growth through the high-profile sporting event.

Speaking during a media briefing this week, Ramela Foundation founder Bishop David Thakadu Ramela said the initiative builds on the success of last year's edition and aims to elevate horse racing in Lesotho to international standards comparable to events such as the Durban July in South Africa.

Ramela said Basotho's deep-rooted love for horses makes the event a natural cultural attraction, stressing that the initiative is focused on national development rather than personal gain.

"This is not about me, but about Basotho. We want to grow our economy, promote tourism and create opportunities for our people," he said.

He revealed that the foundation has invested more than M2.5 million into this year's event, with prize money increasing from M500,000 in 2025 to M600,000.

President of the Equestrian Association of Lesotho (EAL), Elliot Lehora, said the race has already drawn international interest, with 15 horses from outside the country registered to compete.

Lehora noted that the prize money now aligns with regional standards in countries such as South Africa and Botswana, describing the initiative as a milestone for the sport in Lesotho.

"We are grateful for this support because it is something that has never happened at this level in the country," he said.

He added that the association is also promoting inclusivity by encouraging the participation of women riders.

"We now have women riders in Maseru, and we want them to be part of this growing industry," he said.

Event organiser Puseletso Makhakhe said the race will combine sport, culture, entertain-

Moshoeshoe's Day horse race returns bigger

ment and business, positioning it as a comprehensive national showcase.

"The event is not only about horse racing. It is also about tourism, culture and business, where Basotho will have opportunities to sell their products and benefit economically," she said.

Makhakhe said the programme will feature multiple race categories, a fashion show by students from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT), and performances by local artists including Citizen LS, Matsela Monyane and Sannere.

She outlined the ticket structure, with VVIP tickets priced at M2,500 per person, including food and premium services, while a table for 10 costs M25,000. VIP tickets cost M1,500, with a table priced at M15,000. Exhibition space for businesses is available at M5,000, while food stalls are offered at M500 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Ramela Foundation representative Sello Hatang said hosting the event costs close to M3 million, with the foundation currently covering most of the expenses due to limited sponsorship.

"We are calling on more sponsors to come

on board so that we can grow this event into a world-class standard," he said.

Hatang added that the race is expected to gain wider regional exposure through advertising on platforms such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation and local radio stations.

In his closing remarks, Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, Motlatsi Maqelepo described the event as a key step in transforming Lesotho's sports and tourism sectors.

"This event celebrates Basotho identity, culture and unity. It is a tourism product that will attract visitors and stimulate local economies," he said.

Maqelepo also called for stronger collaboration between government and the private sector and announced plans to develop sports infrastructure, including the construction of proper race tracks in future.

He urged Basotho to support the initiative, describing it as a source of national pride and an opportunity to showcase Lesotho on the international stage.

The Moshoeshoe's Day horse race is expected to attract both local and international spectators, positioning Peka as an emerging hub for cultural and sporting tourism.



Refiloe Molise

Mzamane Football Club (FC) have won the A Division League northern stream with a match to spare, securing automatic promotion back to the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) after spending the 2025/26 season in the lower division.

The Mokhotlong-based club's return marks a swift comeback, having played just one season down in the A Division League.

After playing 17 games, Mzamane have amassed an unassailable 32 points with nine wins, five draws and three losses with a game to play. Second-placed Bua Sono FC have 27 points from 17 games.

Reflecting on their impressive promotion, Mzamane's spokesperson Mohlalefi Kokoropo described the achievement as a major milestone.

"Being back in the premier league is one of the best things to have happened to us since 2024. It was not easy when we dropped to the A Division, but that experience made the team stronger and more dedicated," he said.

He explained that the 2025 setback helped the team to rebuild with renewed focus and determination, which ultimately led to their success this season.

"It was a difficult period for the club, but it taught us a lot. The players came back more committed and hungrier to succeed," he said.

Kokoropo credited the club's consistency and hard work throughout the season as the key factors behind their titelwinning campaign.

"What made the team stand out this season is their hard work and unity. It was not easy, but the players stayed focused and worked together from start to finish," he said.

Mzamane's strong performances saw them dominate the northern stream and secure the title before the end of the season, underlining their determination to return to elite football.

Kokoropo said promotion back to the premier league was always part of their plan.

"We expected to return because of the effort we put in. From the beginning, we believed we would make it back and that belief carried us through the

Mzamane back in the big time



Mzamane FC. squad

season," he said.

Despite their success, Kokoropo revealed that the club faced significant challenges, particularly financial difficulties and lack of sponsorship.

"We are facing challenges such as lack of sponsorship and financial problems. We also need to improve our field, which is another concern for us," he said.

He appealed to potential sponsors to support the

club as they prepare for the demands of Premier League football.

"We are still open to sponsors. With proper support, we can grow and compete at a higher level," he added.

Kokoropo emphasised that discipline and teamwork played a crucial role in their success, highlighting the players'

commitment both on and off the field.

"Discipline and teamwork are very important in achieving success. The players were always ready to train and showed that they truly wanted promotion," he said.

He also praised the collective effort of the squad, choosing not to single out individual players.

"This was a team effort. Every player contributed and that is why we achieved this success," he said.

As the club prepares for life in the Premier League, Kokoropo said the team has already intensified training to ensure they are ready for the higher level of competition.

"We are training hard and the players are showing dedication. We know the Premier League is more competitive, so we are preparing ourselves," he said.

He added that the club's goal is not just to participate, but to compete strongly in the topflight.

"Our aim is to perform well and prove that we belong in the Premier League," he said.

Kokoropo concluded by thanking the club's supporters for their unwavering support throughout the season.

"To our supporters, we truly appreciate your love and support. Without you, we would not be where we are today. Please continue supporting the team," he said.

Lijabatho held by LDF as title race intensifies

Kananelo Mokhele

Log leaders Lijabatho FC remain at the summit of the Vodacom Premier League despite being held to a 1-1 draw by LDF FC in a tightly contested encounter on Wednesday this week.

The result moves Lijabatho to 52 points after 25 matches, preserving a slim lead over second-placed Lifofane FC on 49 points. LDF, meanwhile, stay seventh with 43 points as the campaign enters a decisive phase.

Both sides showed attacking intent from the outset in a match that lived up to expectations. LDF broke the deadlock in the 33rd minute through Mokilane Mokete, handing the visitors a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Lijabatho responded strongly after the break, dominating possession and applying sustained pressure. Their persistence paid off in the 62nd minute when Tšotleho Jane found the equaliser to bring the home side level.

Despite late efforts from both teams to claim maximum points, neither could find a winner, and the match ended in a share of the spoils.

The draw comes at a crucial stage of the season, with the title race tightening among the top contenders. Bantu FC and Matlama FC are also in close pursuit, both sitting on 48 points.

Speaking after the match, Lijabatho's head coach James Madidilane remained optimistic.

"I still believe this is not a bad result. While we always aim for maximum points given our position and the number of games remaining, a draw is better than a loss at this stage.

"We struggled in the first 20 minutes and lacked cohesion in defence, but we improved as the game went on. We will take the point and now shift our focus to the next match."

LDF's head coach Malefetsane Pheko also reflected on the performance, pointing to areas that



...mance, though there were moments where we lost concentration, and that's something we will go back and improve on." Attention now turns to a crucial round of fixtures, headlined by a top-of-the-table clash between Lijabatho and Lifofane, which could significantly shape the direction

need improvement.

"Despite the draw, the performance was satisfactory. The main area we need to improve is maintaining concentration throughout the game. My team came into the match fully determined to defeat Lijabatho FC, but the draw has had an impact on our standing.

"Overall, I am pleased with the players' perfor-

of the 2025/26 Vodacom Premier League title race.

Upcoming fixtures

Saturday, 11 April 2026

Majantja FC v Linare FC - 10:00, Setsoto Stadium

Lifofane FC v Lijabatho FC - 12:30, Setsoto Stadium

Matlama FC v Lioli FC - 15:00, Setsoto Stadium

Manonyane FC v Bantu FC - 17:30, Setsoto Stadium

Sunday, 12 April 2026

Liphakoe FC v Members FC - 13:00, Ratjomose

LMPS FC v LDF FC - 15:00, PTC Grounds

LU FC v Machokha FC - 15:30, Ratjomose

LCS FC v Maroala FC - 15:30, LCS Grounds



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