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Pressure mounts for LHWP treaty review

Staff Reporter

Lesotho's water sector has pledged to fast-track a review of the 1986 Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Treaty, a commitment underscored by a damning Ombudsman investigation that found the 40-year-old agreement has failed to protect communities displaced by the multi-billion-maloti Polihali Dam.

The fast-tracking pledge is one of eleven resolutions adopted at a three-day retreat of the country's top water institutions in Mohale's Hoek, attended throughout by the Minister of Natural Resources. But it lands months after Ombudsman Advocate Tlotliso Polaki tabled a 50-page report calling for a comprehensive review of the Treaty, after site visits and testimony from Mokhotlong district residents affected by Phase II construction.

Polaki's investigation, published in May, documented collapsed and cracked homes in villages including Masakong and Ha Tlhakola, some linked to tunnel blasting. One resident told investigators her house began cracking in 2023 during construction and collapsed entirely in November 2024. The LHDA told the Ombudsman 48 damaged houses had since been repaired.

The report also recorded respiratory complaints from dust in Tsekong village and described blasting noise as consistently unbearable for nearby residents, prompting a recommendation for sound barriers around affected villages.

Most damning were the compensation figures. As of December 2025, Phase I compensation arrears stood at roughly M142.2 million, with a further M473 million in future compensation costs still owed. Phase II arrears totalled about M6.8 million, with M25 million more projected.

The Ombudsman found that complaints dating as far back as 2012, including 69 community thickets and fuel-tree areas cleared for dam construction, remain unresolved, with the LHDA saying the money is being held in its custody.

The investigation concluded that while the LHDA generally meets procedural requirements such as holding meetings and making some payments, it struggles to ensure that affected communities' living standards genuinely hold up over time. It singled out the Treaty's core protection, that displaced people be left "not inferior to that obtaining at the time of first disturbance," as too low a bar for a multi-billion-dollar project, arguing affected communities should instead share directly in its wealth. Residents interviewed also argued the 50-year compensation window should run for life, to protect future generations.

The Ombudsman's recommendations, filed under the report's section on legislative and regulatory reform, call for the Treaty to be reviewed "in all aspects" and for the government to issue overdue secondary regulations under the LHDA Order of 1986 within twelve months.

The Treaty was signed in 1986 to transfer water from the Senqu/Orange River to South Africa's Gauteng province in exchange for royalties and hydropower for Lesotho. It was supposed to be re-examined roughly 15 years in, around 2001, but that review never happened. Government only confirmed plans to undertake it last year, with Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane telling Parliament that renegotiating parts of the deal was necessary to secure better terms for Lesotho. Talks between the two countries were reported to be getting under way around April this year.

The Mohale's Hoek retreat, held at the Mount Maluti Hotel, brought together the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, the Water and Sewerage Company, the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority, the Department of Water Affairs, the Department of Rural Water Supply, the Office of the Commissioner of Water, the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project, the Lesotho Lowlands Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, the Lesotho Lowlands Water Supply Scheme Unit, and ReNOKA.

It produced eleven resolutions:

1. Cut non-revenue water losses to the internationally acceptable level of 25 percent by 2029, through digitisation of services.
2. Improve institutional collaboration and orderly infrastructure handovers, effective immediately.
3. Reactivate dormant water assets and dredge dams that have fallen out of use.
4. Mobilise sustainable financing and more private-sector investment.
5. Strengthen procurement planning, execution and budget utilisation.
6. Accelerate the enactment of long-delayed water sector legislation.
7. Expand water access to communities that still lack it.
8. 8. Ensure communities affected by water projects are fairly compensated.
9. **Fast-track the review of the LHWP Treaty.**
10. Protect water catchments and build climate resilience.
11. Improve how the sector reports, communicates and builds its own skills.

Presenting the outcomes, Mohlomi Moleko said the retreat had "set a proper platform to inform the development and implementation of the Water Compact," which the sector must finalise by the end of September to benefit from government's reallocation process.

The Ministry says the resolutions will be built into the sector's 2026/27 priority interventions and 2027/28 strategic plan, with an implementation roadmap and accountability mechanisms to track follow-through.

The two developments now sit side by side: an independent Ombudsman investigation documenting a decade of unresolved compensation claims, damaged homes and disrupted livelihoods in the highlands, and a sector-wide commitment from the very institutions responsible for the project to fast-track the Treaty that governs it.

Whether resolution nine translates into the kind of overhaul Polaki's report demands, rather than another round of procedural compliance without substantive change for affected communities, will be the measure of whether this review succeeds where the one due in 2001 never materialised.

LHWP is a bi-national scheme between Lesotho and South Africa, established under a 1986 Treaty. It transfers water from the Senqu/Orange River system in Lesotho's highlands to South Africa's Gauteng province, the country's economic and mining heartland, while generating hydroelectric power.

In exchange for the water, South Africa pays Lesotho royalties that form a significant share of state revenue outside of taxation. It is Africa's largest water transfer scheme.

The project is being built in phases. Phase I, completed in 2003 and inaugurated in 2004, delivered the Katse Dam and the Mohale Dam along with their transfer tunnels and the 'Muela hydropower station, the infrastructure that established the scheme's basic water-transfer and power-generation capacity.

Phase II is currently under construction and centres on the Polihali Dam in Mokhotlong district, downstream of the confluence of the Senqu and Khubelu rivers, along with a roughly 38-kilometre transfer tunnel linking the new Polihali reservoir to the existing Katse reservoir. As of recent progress updates, the Polihali Dam was over 40 percent complete and the transfer tunnel over 50 percent complete, alongside advanced infrastructure such as bridges and access roads. Water delivery and hydropower generation under Phase II are expected to come online in the near term, with project close-out targeted for the 2028/29 financial year.

Both phases have been accompanied by recurring disputes over compensation, resettlement and environmental impacts in the highlands communities living closest to the dams, friction that has fed directly into recent calls, including from the Ombudsman, for the governing 1986 Treaty to be reviewed.

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Nearly 500,000 Basotho face food insecurity

Unemployment soars and malnutrition cripples a generation of children

World Food Programme appealing for approximately M130 million

Staff Reporter

Nearly half a million people in Lesotho are projected to face acute food insecurity, prompting the World Food Programme (WFP) to appeal for US$8 million (about M130.6 million) to sustain its operations over the next six months.

In its July 2026 Country Brief, the WFP said 492,284 people are expected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity, classified as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above, while US$8 million is needed between July and December 2026 to respond to growing humanitarian needs.

The United Nations (UN) agency said the food security situation continues to deteriorate because of multiple economic and climate-related pressures.

"According to the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee presentation of 06 July 2026, food insecurity remains a challenge with 492,284 people projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)," the report, originally published on July 31, stated.

It attributed the crisis to rising food prices, unemployment, currency volatility and declining household purchasing power.

"High food prices, limited employment opportunities, currency volatility, and declining household purchasing power continue to constrain access to food. Lesotho is also highly vulnerable to climate change, with erratic rainfall and extreme temperatures reducing agricultural production, depleting household food stocks, and threatening livestock livelihoods," the report said.

The WFP also warned that malnutrition remains a serious concern in the country.

According to the report, 36 percent of children aged between two and five years are stunted, while deficiencies in iron and vitamin A affect 70 percent of children under five.

The report further noted that Lesotho is grappling with two national emergencies – youth unemployment, which remains in force until June 2027, and the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak, which is effective until March 2027. It says unemployment has risen to 30.1 percent, with young people accounting for 39 percent of all unemployed people.

"Unemployment remains critically high at 30.1 percent, up from 22.5 percent in 2024, with youth accounting for 39 percent of all unemployed people. At the same time, the FMD outbreak is having far-reaching impacts beyond the livestock sector, affecting livelihoods, food security, trade, economic growth, and broader national development," the report read.

Despite the worsening outlook, the WFP said it continues to support the government through food security, nutrition, climate resilience and disaster preparedness programmes.

"WFP remains a key food security partner to the Government, strengthening national systems and providing technical assistance to improve the Government's capacity to manage and implement national programmes," the report stated.

The agency added that it is working with the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMA) to strengthen preparedness ahead of the anticipated El Niño, with the aim of improving the country's readiness for climate-related shocks.

QMMH meat tender linked to MEC treasurer questioned

Ntsoaki Motaung

A meat supply company allegedly owned by the treasurer of a ruling coalition party came under fire Thursday during a Public Accounts Committee interrogation of Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital staff, with lawmakers questioning whether political connections influenced the awarding of a multi-million maloti tender.

Farm Fresh, operating from the Mafeteng District and allegedly owned by Retšelisitsoe Khomari, who is also Treasurer for the Movement for Economic Change (MEC) party, was awarded the contract to supply meat to the hospital over Nala Butchery, which evaluators acknowledged was more qualified.

MEC is part of the ruling coalition government and is led by Selibe Mochoboroane, who served as Minister of Health from 2022 until this year, when he was shuffled to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The PAC investigation revealed that Farm Fresh signed a bill amounting to M9,114,708.00.

Dr. Tšeliso Moroke, Member of Parliament for Matala and a PAC member, alleged that the decision to award the tender was based on political affiliations.

Moroke questioned procurement manager 'Masekoati Motšetšero about whether there had been complaints from butchery owners about the hospital's procurement practices. She confirmed that an association of butcheries had approached the hospital, complaining that the hospital was using companies outside their association.

Motšetšero explained that the Ministry of Health, through the Principal Secretary's office, handled the matter by requiring all companies to submit documentation for inclusion in the hospital's database. An open tender was then issued where all companies could apply.

Moroke noted that the committee found it had been resolved that butchery owners would be included on a rotational basis. However, to the surprise of butchery owners, Farm Fresh was no longer rotated to give other companies a chance.

When asked if she knew Khomari was an MEC party member, Motšetšero said she did not know.

The evaluation was conducted by Lebeko Ntoi, 'Makatleho Lefu, Mosiane Motlatla, and 'Makoena Velaphi. Velaphi told the PAC that during the evaluation process, her senior, Relebohile Poulo, took over, so she does not know how the final decision was made.

Motšetšero said she had assigned Poulo to help, not to take over. When asked if she thought the evaluation process was done correctly, she said yes, because she received the evaluation report with recommendations and scores. However, when pressed on whether she received instructions to ensure Farm Fresh got the contract, she said she could not answer the question publicly.

Ntoi said he was surprised by some of the decisions, as they differed from how the evaluation team worked. He said Poulo instructed that Nala Butchery should be disqualified because they did not stamp some certificates, even though Nala had met all other requirements. He added that Farm Fresh had no vehicle for transporting meat, so he felt they did not qualify.

Mosiane Motlatla, Infection Control Coordinator at QMMH, confirmed that Nala was more qualified than other companies after inspecting the shortlisted businesses.

'Mathato Lefu, Catering Supervisor at QMMH, said they inspected five companies, Farm Fresh, Nala Butchery, Koeneng, Meant and Deli, and recalled that Nala Butchery was the most qualified among them.

Soldiers convicted of triple murder in Mohale Dam horror incident

Lekhetho Makhanya

The Lesotho Defence Force's (LDF) Sergeant Lekhooa Moepi and Private Tieho Tikiso were, on Monday this week, convicted for the 2017 murder of three civilians, who were abducted, tortured to death and dumped into Mohale Dam by the army on May 16, 2017.

The two soldiers, however, await mitigation before they are sentenced. The High Court has since set August 28, for their mitigation and eventual sentencing.

At the center of this trial are three suspected Famo music gangsters, Likhoele Noko, Molise Pakela and Khothatso Makibinyane, who allegedly abducted, strangled and disposed of in the Mohale Dam to conceal their death by members of the Military Intelligence (MI).

The soldiers were retaliating after two of their own were shot at the Maseru border gate, leaving one dead and another hospitalised.

According to the evidence in court, the investigation into the case led the police to MI officers, prompting requests for their cooperation with the police investigation.

On September 21, 2017, Military Police brought in Captain Mahlehle Moeletsi and Sergeant Moepi for questioning.

The following day, Moepi was escorted to the Maseru Magistrate's Court to give a confession. What followed was a harrowing disclosure of how the victims met their tragic end.

A Military Intelligence team was, concurrently, tasked with investigating the matter while police detained suspects. Some of the suspects were released, while others were led to court.

Another group of soldiers, including Captain Moeletsi and Warrant Officer Liphapang Sefako, was assigned to re-arrest the suspects who were freed by the police.

On April 18, 2017, Moepi, along with Sefako and another soldier, received orders to follow two suspects who had boarded a 4+1 taxi. They intercepted the taxi and apprehended the suspects.

The group was also instructed to follow a bus carrying additional suspects. Upon stopping the bus at Lekokoaneng, Warrant Officer Sefako boarded and identified a suspect who resisted arrest, the court heard. The man was forcibly removed and taken into custody of the army.

Moepi, in his confession, recounted how the suspects were transported to Setibing, near the military base. Upon arrival, the suspects were allegedly ordered to be executed.

He admitted that he suggested suffocating the suspects instead of using firearms to avoid drawing attention. However, when he hesitated, Moeletsi and Sefako allegedly threatened him with death if he did not comply.

In a gruesome turn of events, Moepi described how plastic bags were used to suffocate the suspects to death. Their lifeless bodies were then weighted with stones and transported to Mohale Dam, where they were dumped.


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Opposition accuses public of anomie with damaging consequences

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Leaders of opposition parties have come out this week strongly accusing the members of the public of anomie they claimed have displayed in the face of failure to uphold good governance and respect of the democratic institutions by the sitting government.

The leaders accuse Ntsokoane Matekane's led government for stinging violation of democratic processes and the institutions that are supposed to uphold it. They have levelled broad accusations chief amongst them the government's continued contemptuous treatment of the court orders.

The leaders of majority of opposition parties including the Democratic Congress (DC), All Basotho Convention (ABC), Basotho National Party (BNP), Basotho Action Party (BAP), Mpulule Political Summit (MPS), United Africans Transformation (UAT) and Popular Front for Democracy (PFD).

The government's indifference towards rule of law and good governance which are tenants of healthy democracy, these leaders have wondered why there is an "overwhelming silence" from the civil society organisations (CSOs). They suggested that everyone is "captured" as they point to failure to "make noise" at government's unbecoming conduct.

They have also frowned at the Law Society of Lesotho for "silence" over the continued contempt of court orders.

To this effect they have vowed to withdraw from the reforms processes including all processes and meetings aimed at discussing their involvement in the reforms.

They have also written the letter to the Chairperson of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) ahead of its Summit slated for 17th August in Durban, South Africa. In their collective letter penned by the leader of Opposition, Mathibeli Mokhothu the opposition parties seek the SADC intervention as the overseer of the reforms in the country. But prior to making a correspondence to the regional bloc they wrote to the Prime Minister.

They complain about what they call the "growing and deeply concerning pattern of non-compliance with judicial decisions" and had cited some cases where the government had failed to abide by the court's decisions. Those include that of the Ombudsman wherein the Constitutional Court (ConCourt) ordered that she should return to the office and resume her duties while her matter is being heard by the court.

The other case relates to the ConCourt's case involving the former Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) whom the court reinstated but was later removed from position. They have also mentioned the case of the suspended Revenue Service Lesotho (RSL) 'Mathabo Mokoko whom the Labour Court had reinstated pending the finalization of her case but remains outside work.

The letter further highlighted the decided case of the Court of Appeal being the apex court in the country where it ordered the reinstatement of 77 members of the National Security Service (NSS) but to date they have not been reinstated.

ABC leader Nkaku Kabi said they are committed to the reforms but the government is not.

"This government of the rich is for the rogue elements," he said.

Advocate Lekhetho Rakuane said the Ombudsman's case is "rock of offence" as it directly affected by the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. The Act proposes for the establishment of the authority which will monitor laws proposed and also facilitate the recruitment of the positions of the institutions that are creatures of the constitution.

He noted that the authority were to be established in three months but the government has been slow to seeing to its establishment. Long time MP and former Minister said where the government has interest it invokes the provisions of the 10th Amendment but where it does not it uses old laws.

At this rate, the PFD leader also expressed fear that the country might not even get to elections in early 2028 as the 11th parliament term is expected to end in November 2027. He said unless something happens, the country is in "deep trouble".

On the other hand, MPS leader, Remaketse Sehlabaka hinted at mounting a motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister.

On the third of this month, the leader of Opposition also wrote the PM letter where he raised concern over the "continued non-compliance" with court orders. "This issue has reached a point where it threatens the very constitutional order upon which our democracy is founded and fundamentally undermines the legitimacy of the ongoing national reforms process. The Opposition remains fully committed to constitutional democracy, the rule of law, judicial independence and meaningful national dialogue. Indeed, these principles are the very foundation upon which the national reforms process was conceived.

"However, meaningful constitutional reform cannot occur while government itself appears unwilling to comply with the Constitution and the lawful decisions of our courts. As Head of Government, Your Right Honourable bears the ultimate constitutional responsibility for ensuring that all organs of the Executive respect and implement decisions of the Judiciary. The doctrine of separation of powers requires every branch of Government to respect the constitutional role of others," reads the strong worded letter of Mokhohu to Matekane.

Meanwhile, yesterday the Press Attaché in the PM's office Thapelo Mabote confirmed to this publication that the PM had not responded to the Leader of Opposition's letter.

While the 10th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in August 2025 the government has only this week convened the multi-stakeholder dialogue for its operationalization. Twelve months later, the government is only acting on reforms.

This move coincidentally comes as the SADC Summit is drawing near. In the Summit the government is expected to table the report on the progress of the reforms and update the Heads of State and Government.

Last year the government celebrated that Lesotho is out of the SADC's Troika's agenda. Mofomobe said they have written to the SADC to bring back Lesotho to the watch list of SADC.

He asked why the public and youth does not march against the government. When women are being purged from their offices but there is silence about what they are being subjected to by government.

"You are afraid, tomorrow it will be your child," he said.

Opposition Members

Opposition seeks SADC intervention

Staff Reporter

The Opposition has formally requested the intervention of the Southern African Development Community over what it describes as a "systemic pattern" of executive non-compliance with court orders that threatens constitutional governance and the credibility of Lesotho's SADC-supported national reforms process.

In a letter dated 3 August addressed to SADC Chairperson, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Opposition Leader Mathibeli Mokhothu detailed multiple instances where the government has failed to implement binding judicial decisions, including cases involving the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Ombudsman, Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL), the National Security Service (NSS), and other public bodies.

"Viewed individually, each matter raises serious constitutional concerns. Viewed collectively, however, they reveal what appears to be a systemic pattern of executive non-compliance with judicial authority," Mokhothu wrote.

"Such conduct undermines the supremacy of the Constitution, weakens the doctrine of separation of powers, erodes public confidence in democratic institutions and threatens the integrity of constitutional governance."

The letter, co-signed by leaders of the All Basotho Convention (ABC), Basotho National Party (BNP), Basotho Action Party (BAP), Mpulule Political Summit, United Africans Transformation (UAT) and Popular Front for Democracy (PFD), comes as the government prepares to report on reforms progress at the SADC Summit scheduled for 17 August in Durban.

Among the cases cited:

- The Constitutional Court's September 2025 ruling declaring the suspension of Director of Public Prosecutions Adv. Hlalefang Motinyane unlawful and ordering her reinstatement, an order that opposition says remains unimplemented
- The Labour Court's December 2025 order reinstating Commissioner General of Revenue Services Lesotho Advocate 'Mathabo Mokoko, which remains unimplemented
- The Court of Appeal's November 2025 declaring expulsion of 77 National Security Service officers unlawful,
- The Ombudsman, whom the High Court ordered to return to office while her matter is heard, but who remains barred
- Labour Court orders concerning salary adjustments for Lesotho Correctional Service members and remuneration for subordinate chiefs that have experienced prolonged delays
- The July 2026 Labour Court order in 'Mating Mahooana's case, which was reportedly ignored

"The reforms process cannot succeed where constitutional principles are honoured only in theory and not in practice," Mokhothu wrote. "Compliance with court orders is not merely a legal obligation but is the practical demonstration of Government's commitment to constitutional democracy."

The Opposition has demanded that government immediately implement all outstanding court orders, direct all public authorities to comply with judicial decisions, establish a mechanism for monitoring compliance, and publicly reaffirm its commitment to constitutionalism.

The letter warns that unless there is demonstrable compliance, the Opposition "is unable to continue participating in reform-related meetings and engagements," effectively withdrawing from the SADC-facilitated national reforms process.

"We therefore respectfully request SADC, as guarantor and facilitator of Lesotho's national reforms process, to engage with the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho on this matter as a matter of urgency," Mokhothu wrote.

"We further request SADC to impress upon the Government that compliance with court orders is fundamental to the credibility, legitimacy and success of the reforms process and to the preservation of constitutional democracy in Lesotho."

OAG unveils ambitious roadmap to strengthen oversight

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) has unveiled an ambitious five-year strategic plan aimed at strengthening its institutional performance, improving audit quality and expanding its oversight of public finances.

The Strategic Plan 2026–2031 sets out a roadmap for sharpening execution, improving efficiency and aligning resources to deliver measurable outcomes while positioning the institution to respond to emerging governance and technological challenges.

Launching the strategy this week, Auditor-General 'Mathabo Makenete said the plan would guide the institution's growth and ensure staff are equipped with the skills and tools needed to keep pace with evolving trends.

The OAG is constitutionally mandated to audit public finances and hold the executive accountable. Following recent constitutional reforms, the office now reports directly to Parliament rather than the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, reinforcing its institutional independence.

Makenete said the office's vision is to become "a supreme audit institution that empowers citizens through transparent oversight and promotes a culture of public accountability."

The strategy is built around four strategic priorities: strengthening the OAG's financial independence; improving audit coverage and impact; enhancing audit quality and value; and cultivating institutional, organisational and professional excellence.

To fully implement the plan, the OAG estimates it will require M339 million over the next five years. However, the institution is already facing a funding shortfall of more than M100 million, which it hopes to bridge through government support and assistance from development partners.

Officials said a substantial portion of the budget will be directed towards infrastructure development, including the construction of the OAG's own headquarters.

The office currently operates from government premises but plans to relocate to purpose-built facilities designed to support its growing operational and technological needs.

Makenete said the new offices would be equipped with modern, state-of-the-art systems, including secure facilities for housing servers and other critical information technology infrastructure.

Deputy Auditor-General Paul Letlela said technology will play a central role in improving the institution's effectiveness.

"We will focus heavily on technology so that we can respond effectively to today's challenges," Letlela said.

He added that operating from independent premises would enhance the institution's autonomy and enable it to manage its operations more efficiently.

On plans to decentralise services, Makenete said establishing regional offices is not an immediate priority.

She said the institution must first strengthen its operations in Maseru before expanding elsewhere, adding that decentralisation is likely to remain a long-term objective that could take at least another decade to achieve.

Makenete noted that local councils also require regular audits, meaning any future expansion will depend on the availability of both financial resources and skilled personnel.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC) member Dr Tšeliso Moroke welcomed the strategy, describing it as a commitment to strengthening accountability and improving governance.

"The strategy is a promise to the people that public institutions will continue to evolve, improve and respond to the demands of a changing governance landscape," Moroke said.

"The Office of the Auditor-General occupies a unique and indispensable position within our constitutional democracy. It serves as a guardian of public financial accountability, ensuring that public funds are spent lawfully, efficiently, effectively and for the benefit of our citizens."

Moroke said effective parliamentary oversight was essential to ensuring audit reports translated into meaningful reforms.

"Effective parliamentary oversight transforms audit findings from reports on shelves into meaningful reforms that improve governance and service delivery," he said.

He stressed that recommendations contained in audit reports should not simply be acknowledged but should be actively monitored to ensure the relevant institutions implement corrective measures.

India, Lesotho hold 6th joint commission meeting in New Delhi

Seabata Mahao

India and Lesotho reviewed their full range of bilateral ties during the sixth meeting of the Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation (JBCC), held in New Delhi on July 30, 2026.

The meeting was co-chaired by Janesh Kain, Joint Secretary (East & Southern Africa) from India's Ministry of External Affairs, and Thabang P. Lekhela, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations.

Discussions covered trade and economic ties, development cooperation, skilling and capacity building, as well as collaboration in regional and multilateral forums.

The Lesotho delegation also met with Sudhakar Dalela, Secretary (ER) at the Ministry of External Affairs, on July 31, and held separate talks with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and the Department of Commerce to explore ways to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Both countries reaffirmed their close ties rooted in a shared commitment to South-South cooperation. The next JBCC meeting is scheduled to take place in Maseru in 2027.

The joint statement was released in New Delhi on Wednesday this week.

Vodacom powers Maseru tourism

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Lesotho has strengthened its investment in the country's tourism and creative economy by becoming the latest corporate partner in the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation's (LTDC) Re Bontše Lesotho campaign.

The telecommunications company has adopted Maseru District as part of a nationwide initiative aimed at promoting the Kingdom's tourism potential through digital storytelling.

The announcement, made at a press conference in Maseru on Wednesday, completes the campaign's corporate adoption phase, with Maseru becoming the tenth and final district to secure private sector backing.

The Re Bontše Lesotho initiative is designed to position young Basotho as digital tourism ambassadors by pairing corporate sponsors with content creators selected to represent each of the country's ten districts.

Through authentic storytelling, the creators will document Lesotho's landscapes, cultural heritage, cuisine, history and lesser-known tourism attractions for audiences at home and abroad.

The partnership aligns the company with a broader national agenda that seeks to leverage digital connectivity, youth innovation and tourism to stimulate economic growth.

MohaleRalebitso, Vodacom Lesotho Chief Executive Officer said selecting Maseru carried both strategic and symbolic significance because the district serves as the country's principal gateway and reflects much of Lesotho's national identity.

"Maseru is where many visitors first encounter Lesotho and it carries much of our country's history, culture and national identity," Ralebitso said.

"As digital platforms increasingly shape how destinations are seen and experienced, we are proud to help young Basotho use connectivity to tell Lesotho's story with confidence and pride."

He added that the initiative complements Vodacom Lesotho's commitment to inclusive economic development by supporting youth employment, entrepreneurship and national pride.

"Through Re Bontše Lesotho, we are supporting young creators, promoting national pride and helping to position tourism as a source of jobs, enterprise and opportunity for Basotho," he said.

Speaking during the unveiling, LTDC Head of Strategic Marketing, PhomoloLebotsa, said the campaign demonstrated the corporation's conviction that stronger collaboration between government, business and the country's youth could unlock Lesotho's tourism potential.

"Lesotho's story must be told by Basotho, with authenticity, pride and ambition," Lebotsa said.

"Through the creativity and digital confidence of young people, we are opening a new window for the world to discover the beauty, heritage and character of every district."

Lebotsa explained that the six-month pilot programme would create a richer digital archive of Lesotho's tourism assets while providing emerging content creators with practical opportunities to develop their skills and professional profiles.

Tourism has increasingly emerged as one of the sectors identified to diversify Lesotho's economy beyond traditional industries such as textiles and agriculture. Industry stakeholders argue that stronger digital marketing and locally produced tourism content could improve the country's visibility in highly competitive international tourism markets.

LTDC Acting Chief Executive Officer Mamello Morojele described Vodacom Lesotho's participation as a milestone for the campaign, noting that Maseru's adoption concludes the nationwide corporate partnership drive.

"We are delighted to welcome Vodacom Lesotho to this national campaign," Morojele said.

"Maseru brings together so much of what defines Lesotho—our history, culture, enterprise, creativity and possibility. Through Re Bontše Lesotho, we are empowering Basotho to tell our country's story with pride, depth and global relevance."

Morojele revealed that the campaign attracted hundreds of submissions from aspiring content creators across the country. Following a competitive selection process, participants underwent professional digital content creation training facilitated by Limkokwing University of Creative Technology before ten finalists were selected to represent their respective districts.

She thanked Vodacom Lesotho for adopting Maseru after other corporate partners had selected the remaining districts, saying the partnership appeared "meant to be".

"Today is more than the adoption of a content creator for Maseru district; it marks the beginning of a movement that empowers Basotho to tell the story of their own country," Morojele said.

She explained that the Re Bontše Lesotho campaign, loosely translated as "Show Off Lesotho," was established to inspire young Basotho to showcase the country's breathtaking scenery, hidden attractions, cultural heritage and unique tourism experiences through authentic digital storytelling.

Recognising the initiative's potential, LTDC sought strategic partnerships with the private sector to support content creators representing each district.

"Today we proudly celebrate Vodacom Lesotho as the official sponsor of the Re Bontše Lesotho content creator programme for Maseru district," Morojele said.

"This partnership demonstrates the power of collaboration between the state-owned enterprise and the private sector in creating opportunities, strengthening local talent and empowering Lesotho's tourism industry."

She added that the ten selected content creators would serve as digital ambassadors responsible for showcasing Lesotho's culture, adventure tourism, heritage, people and spectacular landscapes.

"As we often say, when Basotho tell the story of Lesotho, the world listens differently," Morojele said.

She noted that Maseru offers an ideal starting point for the campaign because of its blend of history, culture, commerce, cuisine, vibrant markets and tourism attractions.

Treaty milestone inspires LHDA's 40,000-tree legacy

Seabata Mahao

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has marked the 40th anniversary of the landmark treaty that gave birth to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) by launching an ambitious campaign to plant 40,000 trees across its project areas, reinforcing its commitment to environmental sustainability and community development.

The "40,000 Trees for 40 Years" initiative was launched at Ha-Molapo in Butha-Buthe on July 31, commemorating four decades since Lesotho and South Africa signed the bilateral treaty that established one of Africa's largest water infrastructure projects.

Rather than limiting the anniversary to ceremonial celebrations, LHDA has chosen to leave a lasting environmental legacy through a campaign that will see fruit trees, fuelwood species and other suitable indigenous trees planted across Butha-Buthe, Katse, Mohale and Polihali.

The programme is expected to strengthen the country's water catchments, improve household food security and create income-generating opportunities for communities living around the project's infrastructure.

Speaking on behalf of LHDA, Public Relations Manager Mpho Brown said the campaign was designed to ensure the authority's 40th anniversary leaves a lasting impact beyond the celebrations.

LHDA marks 40 Years with 40,000-Tree Campaign to boost communities and environmental sustainability

"The success of this campaign will not be measured simply by the number of seedlings planted, but by how many survive, are cared for by communities and continue to provide environmental and household benefits for generations," Brown said.

He said the initiative reflects the vision that guided the signing of the LHWP Treaty four decades ago.

"When the treaty establishing the LHWP was signed 40 years ago, LHDA committed itself to making a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of Basotho living in project areas. This programme contributes to that vision by improving livelihoods while strengthening environmental conservation," he said.

Brown added that promoting a healthy and sustainable environment remains central to the authority's mission of improving the quality of life for Basotho.

The launch was attended by senior government officials, including Minister of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation Thabo Mofosi, ministry officials, conservation partners and community representatives.

Mofosi commended LHDA for using its anniversary to invest in environmental protection and rural livelihoods instead of merely celebrating the milestone.

He noted that the first 500 fruit trees planted at Ha-Molapo would improve household nutrition while creating opportunities for families to earn income through fruit production, preservation and sales.

"Environmental protection is fundamental to the sustainability of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project," Mofosi said.

"LHDA's work of collecting and storing water for both Lesotho and South Africa contributes significantly to our economy, but we can only continue to have sufficient water in our dams if we protect our environment."

He further encouraged communities to rehabilitate degraded land and plant pasture grass alongside trees to strengthen soil conservation and protect vital water catchments.

The initiative also highlights the growing importance of environmental conservation to Lesotho's economy. Healthy catchments help reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and safeguard the long-term performance of the country's multi-billion-maloti water infrastructure, while fruit trees provide households with additional sources of food and income.

District Forestry Coordinator Lineo Basi welcomed LHDA's continued partnership with the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, saying the collaboration has become instrumental in advancing conservation efforts in Butha-Buthe.

She stressed the importance of developing long-term management plans to ensure the newly planted trees are protected and continue delivering benefits as they mature.

Representing the Ha-Molapo Community Council, Poloko Mashaile welcomed the programme as an important investment in community livelihoods, but cautioned that water shortages could threaten the survival of the trees.

He urged residents to take ownership of the initiative by protecting the trees and supporting development programmes introduced in their communities.

Brown also acknowledged the technical support provided by the Ministry of Forestry and Environment and thanked the Ministry of Natural Resources, LHDA's line ministry, for its continued support of the authority's programmes and 40th anniversary commemorations.

The Butha-Buthe launch marks the first phase of the campaign, with tree-planting activities set to continue in Katse, Mohale and Polihali over the coming months until the target of 40,000 trees is reached.

How education took Thikhoi from Ha-Bene to the US

Higherlife Foundation send-off of five students to USA

Seabata Mahao

In the quiet village of Ha-Bene in Leribe, few could have imagined that a young girl with big dreams would one day earn a scholarship to study in the United States (US).

Today, 20-year-old Thikhoi Constance Molapo is preparing to begin a new chapter at Colby College, where she will pursue a double major in Neuroscience and Business through a scholarship supported by Higherlife Foundation Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho.

Her story is a testament to the transformative power of education, mentorship and strategic investment in young people. It also serves as an important lesson for Basotho youth that excellence, determination and service to others can open doors far beyond the country's borders.

Speaking to Newsday, Molapo reflected on a journey that began at Holy Family High School in Leribe, where she completed her secondary education from Grade 8 to Grade 11.

"After finishing school, one of my teachers, MusiweMbemi, introduced me to the Higherlife Foundation through a leadership boot camp in 2022," she recalled.

"He told me about a programme for brilliant students who wanted to make a difference in their communities."

Following a rigorous selection process, Molapo earned a place in the Higherlife Foundation programme after achieving outstanding academic results that met the scholarship's eligibility requirements.

In 2023, she left Lesotho for the first time to attend STAR Leadership Academy in Zimbabwe.

"That was the first time I had ever travelled outside Lesotho. Growing up in a small village in Leribe, I had never imagined I would one day study in different countries."

At STAR Leadership Academy, Molapo completed a one-year leadership and entrepreneurship programme designed to prepare scholars for higher education while instilling values of servant leadership, innovation and community development.

The programme exposed students to continental development frameworks, including the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, encouraging them to use their education to solve Africa's most pressing challenges.

She later enrolled at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa in Eswatini, where she completed the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

However, Molapo's journey extended far beyond the classroom. Driven by a passion for innovation and entrepreneurship, she represented Lesotho in numerous international competitions.

While studying in Zimbabwe, she participated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ideas Challenge in Lesotho. With travel support provided by Higherlife Foundation, she returned home to compete and secured second place.

The achievement opened additional opportunities, including participation in YouthConnekt Africa activities in Kenya through UNDP.

Later that same year, she travelled to China, where she excelled in a science and technology competition.

"I ranked first in the technology advancement category with a project in science and technology," she explained.

She also won the African Science Buskers Southern African regional competition, receiving approximately US$100,000 in start-up capital to develop her business idea. Higherlife Foundation assisted with registration costs that enabled her participation.

While studying in Eswatini, Molapo continued building her entrepreneurial portfolio, winning first prize in a Southern African entrepreneurship competition organised through the Allan Gray entrepreneurial network.

She believes none of these achievements would have been possible without the educational opportunities created by Higherlife Foundation.

"They didn't simply pay school fees. They created bridges that exposed me to opportunities I would never have known existed. Every achievement built upon the previous one because someone believed in my potential."

Earlier this year, before departing for university, Molapo spent three months in Malaysia conducting research on solar-powered vehicles aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and advancing sustainable transport technologies.

This month, she embarks on perhaps her biggest journey yet, studying in the United States.

She plans to complete a double major in Neuroscience and Business before pursuing a master's degree in neuroscience and eventually a doctorate.

"My goal is to spend about seven years in higher education so that I can return with knowledge and skills that will make a meaningful contribution to Lesotho," she said.

Molapo was among five outstanding Basotho scholars officially bid farewell during a send-off ceremony held in Maseru on Wednesday, attended by the Minister of Education and Training, Professor Ntoi Rapapa.

The ceremony celebrated five students who will pursue undergraduate studies at leading American universities in fields including Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Economics, Finance, Neuroscience and Business.

Since 2011, Higherlife Foundation Lesotho, supported by Econet Telecom Lesotho, has invested more than M100 million in scholarships and educational support programmes, benefiting over 2,000 Basotho learners. The programme has enabled students to study in countries including the United States, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lebanon and Eswatini, producing 19 graduates from American universities.

Speaking on behalf of the scholars, ThembezileMochesane thanked Higherlife Foundation and Econet Telecom Lesotho for believing in the dreams of young Basotho.

"Your support is more than financial assistance; it is a powerful vote of confidence in our dreams and in the future of young Basotho," she said. "We commit ourselves to representing Lesotho with pride and using the knowledge we gain to contribute meaningfully to our country."

ETL Chief Executive Officer Dennis Plaatjies described the occasion as evidence that sustained investment in education produces long-term national benefits.

"Our investment has always been guided by a simple belief: when we expand access to opportunity, we expand the possibilities of an entire nation," Plaatjies said.

He reminded the scholars that while they would study thousands of kilometres away, they carried with them the hopes of the Basotho nation.

"Go and learn. Go and grow. Build friendships that span continents. Never forget where you come from. Return home not only with degrees, but with ideas, innovation and leadership that will help shape the Lesotho we all dream of."

Minister Rapapa commended Econet Telecom Lesotho and Higherlife Foundation Lesotho for complementing government's efforts to improve access to quality education.

"Education remains central to Lesotho's social and economic transformation," he said. "Partnerships between government and the private sector strengthen our country's future skills base and expand opportunities for young Basotho."

Molapo's ambition is to use neuroscience, business and entrepreneurship to improve healthcare, empower communities and inspire the next generation of Basotho innovators.

Her story demonstrates that talent exists in every corner of Lesotho—from remote villages to urban centres. With determination, mentorship and access to opportunity, young Basotho can compete on the global stage while remaining committed to serving their country.

Other beneficiaries of the scholarships include: ThembezileMochesane – Case Western Reserve University ThembezileMochesane, 20, from Maseru, will study Biomedical Engineering at Case Western Reserve University. A former student of Soofia International School and Waterford Kamhlaba, she is passionate about developing medical technologies that improve healthcare access and patient outcomes in Lesotho and across Africa. She hopes to return home after her studies and contribute to strengthening the country's healthcare sector.

KatlehoMpemi – Yale University KatlehoMpemi, 18, will study Chemical Engineering at Yale University. A former student of Leribe English Medium High School, STAR Leadership Academy and the African Leadership Academy, he has distinguished himself through academic excellence, leadership and service. He hopes to use science and engineering to turn Lesotho's natural resources into value-added products, industries and employment opportunities.

Kamohelo Mphirime – Northwestern University Kamohelo Mphirime, 21, from SehlabengsaThuathe in Berea, will pursue a double major in Industrial Engineering and Economics at Northwestern University. A former student of Leqele High School, STAR Leadership Academy and Waterford Kamhlaba, he is passionate about mathematics, problem-solving and innovation. He hopes to use engineering, economics and data-driven decision making to modernise industries, improve productivity and contribute to Lesotho's long-term economic development.

Nthabiseng Lebele – Bucknell University Nthabiseng Lebele, 20, from Ha Leqele in Maseru, will study Finance at Bucknell University. A former Lesotho High School student who achieved 40 points in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, she is passionate about business and entrepreneurship. She hopes to apply her financial knowledge to support investment-ready businesses and contribute to Lesotho's economic growth.

Global aid cuts disrupt HIV response

...as Lesotho emerges among success stories

Ntsoaki Motaung

Severe reductions in international aid have dealt a major blow to the global fight against HIV/AIDS, forcing the closure of health facilities, threatening thousands of healthcare jobs and reversing years of progress in HIV prevention across sub-Saharan Africa.

The funding crisis dominated discussions at the 26th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2026), where researchers, public health experts and community advocates assessed the impact of the cuts and explored ways to build more sustainable, country-led HIV responses.

Evidence presented at the conference showed that abrupt changes to United States foreign assistance policies in early 2025 triggered unprecedented disruptions to HIV programmes worldwide.

The multi-country PEPFAR Pulse study, which surveyed 166 implementing partners across 46 countries, found that funding and policy changes resulted in the closure of more than 1,700 clinics and service delivery sites, mainly in eastern and southern Africa.

A separate review of 21 studies found that South Africa lost more than 8,000 PEPFAR-supported health workers, while nearly 16,700 healthcare positions were placed at risk in Zimbabwe.

The funding cuts also severely affected HIV prevention services. Across central, eastern, southern and western Africa, new enrolments for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) declined by between 31 and 64 percent, voluntary medical male circumcisions fell by 65 to 88 percent, and condom distribution dropped by more than half.

Nigeria experienced some of the steepest declines. Prevention services for key populations fell by 50.5 percent, HIV self-testing decreased by 70.2 percent, and PrEP initiations among vulnerable groups dropped by 83 percent within a single quarter in 2025.

Community-based organisations were among the hardest hit, with many losing funding and being forced to scale back or suspend services for populations most vulnerable to HIV.

Reports released during the conference also highlighted a major shift in global HIV financing.

A joint report by KFF and UNAIDS found that donor government funding for HIV programmes declined by 25 percent in 2025, while overall external financing for low- and middle-income countries fell by 18 percent.

Although domestic investment increased by four percent during the same period and now accounts for nearly 60 percent of global HIV funding, experts warned that it is still insufficient to offset the sharp decline in international support.

Addressing delegates, UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima said countries could no longer rely on foreign aid alone.

"The era of relying on international aid is over," she said.

Byanyima called on international financial institutions to support debt restructuring so that developing countries can invest more in health, education and other essential public services.

Despite the financial pressures, several high-burden countries have continued to make significant progress in expanding access to life-saving HIV treatment.

A special UNAIDS report presented at AIDS 2026 identified Lesotho as one of only 11 countries worldwide to achieve the 95-95-95 HIV targets by 2025. The targets mean that 95 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 95 percent of those diagnosed are receiving antiretroviral therapy, and 95 percent of those on treatment have achieved viral suppression.

The report also found that Lesotho has reduced annual new HIV infections by more than 78 percent since 2010, putting the country on track to achieve the global target of a 90 percent reduction by 2030.

High rates of viral suppression have also significantly reduced the risk of HIV transmission, demonstrating that sustained national investment and strong treatment programmes can preserve public health gains even amid global funding shocks.

As the global HIV response moves towards the 2030 target of ending AIDS as a public health threat, delegates at AIDS 2026 stressed that success will depend on stronger domestic financing, protection of human rights and increased support for community-led organisations that remain at the forefront of the HIV response.

AIDS Conference

QMMH procurement under spotlight

Ntsoaki Motaung

Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital's (QMMH) procurement processes have come under intense scrutiny as Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) investigates allegations of political interference, favouritism and possible conflicts of interest within the hospital's procurement department.

The investigation has raised questions about the independence of the procurement unit, the frequent use of Limited Competitive Bidding, and whether procurement decisions have been made in a transparent and competitive manner.

PAC member Dr Tšeliso Moroke questioned the structure and operations of the procurement unit, alleging that it is vulnerable to political influence.

Moroke said the committee was concerned that the lack of independence within the unit could be affecting both recruitment and procurement decisions.

"This is why every Mosotho now knows that they do not have equal chances like others to get employed at QMMH," he said.

He added that similar concerns applied to tenders, where the use of Limited Competitive Bidding could restrict competition and create opportunities for contracts to be awarded to preferred companies.

"This procurement unit is not independent. There is so much political interference, just as we see in the hiring of staff," Moroke said.

"We want to understand why it is so easy for the unit to use Limited Competitive Bidding, which gives them a chance to award tenders to their friends."

The committee has requested a list of all companies awarded contracts by QMMH, particularly those selected through Limited Competitive Bidding, to determine whether the process has been abused.

Moroke also told the committee that it had received information suggesting that some hospital employees may have benefited from contracts awarded by the institution.

He cited the case of former QMMH Administration Manager Mothusi Rabale, who was dismissed after a disciplinary inquiry found him guilty of misconduct relating to a conflict of interest involving the procurement of vehicle hire services.

Testifying before the committee, QMMH Procurement Manager 'Masekoati Motšetšero said she joined the hospital in 2021 after being transferred from the Ministry of Health headquarters to assist with the transition following the termination of the government's partnership with the Tšepong Consortium.

She said that although she was initially brought in to support the transition process, she continued serving as Procurement Manager without undergoing a competitive recruitment process.

Motšetšero further revealed that QMMH does not have a procurement policy, resulting in uncertainty over reporting structures.

She said she had reported to different officials, including the Managing Director and former Ministry of Health Principal Secretary 'Maneo Ntene.

PAC members questioned the arrangement, noting that the Public Procurement Act, 2023 requires a Procurement Manager to report directly to the Chief Accounting Officer.

Motšetšero told the committee that QMMH frequently uses Limited Competitive Bidding due to poor procurement planning, particularly by the maintenance department.

She explained that urgent requests are often submitted at short notice, leaving procurement officials with limited time to follow open competitive processes.

However, PAC members warned that excessive reliance on Limited Competitive Bidding could undermine transparency, reduce competition and increase the risk of unfair contract awards.

The committee has ordered Motšetšero to provide a full list of companies awarded tenders through the method to assess whether the process has been used appropriately.

Motšetšero also outlined changes in the composition of the hospital's procurement committee.

She said the committee was initially chaired by Rabale, with members including Dr Kasanji Ngoie, 'Mamofokeng Phatela, 'Mabaholo Kikime and Selialia Kori.

Following changes in membership, Phatela was replaced by 'Maitumeleng Mpotjoane, while Nthati Lebona later became chairperson after being appointed by the Principal Secretary.

The current procurement committee is chaired by QMMH Managing Director 'Makhoase Ranyali and includes Dr Kasanji Ngoie, Moleboheng Tau, Nthati Lebona and Thenjiwe Dlangamandla.

The PAC investigation is continuing

Dr Theko Tlebere

NMDS needs both Political will and a culture of repayment: A response to the appeal by Basotho students

When I read the heartfelt letter written by a Mosotho student to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I could not simply scroll past it. As a beneficiary of the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) loan bursary, I know that behind every bursary application is a young person carrying the hopes of an entire family. The letter is not another complaint from impatient students; it is the cry of a generation that did everything Lesotho asked of it. They studied hard, passed their examinations and secured admission to tertiary institutions, only to discover that merit alone cannot open the door when funding is unavailable. Behind applications marked "pending," limited bursary quotas and repeated journeys to Maseru are "shattered dreams", anxious parents and communities waiting for their future teachers, nurses, engineers and doctors. This appeal should trouble the conscience of every NMDS beneficiary and policymaker, because when a qualified Mosotho child is denied education, Lesotho is not merely disappointing one student, it is postponing its own development.

I write as a beneficiary of NMDS and as someone whose academic journey has reinforced my belief that education is one of Lesotho's most powerful instruments of national development. In my earlier article, 'A Scholarship Policy That Must Benefit a Mosotho Child', I argued that the gap between admission and sponsorship has become a major source of exclusion. I called for a policy that combines academic merit with social justice, so that children from poor and vulnerable households are not locked out merely because the bursary quota has been exhausted. The latest student appeal confirms that the problem remains urgent. However, expanding access will require us to look beyond annual allocations and examine the entire life cycle of the Loan Bursary Fund.

A revolving fund cannot be understood only at the point where money is disbursed. Its sustainability depends on a continuous chain: students receive loans, complete their studies, find employment, repay what is due, and those repayments help finance the next generation. When one link breaks, pressure builds at the point of entry. The long queues and disappointed applicants we see today are therefore not simply products of decisions made by current NMDS staff. They reflect weaknesses accumulated across the whole system, outdated rules, incomplete beneficiary records, weak debt collection, inadequate digital services, limited budget growth and insufficient coordination across government.

The first responsibility rests with government. Political will must be translated into a clear, multi-year commitment to increase the number of loan bursaries in line with the growing number of qualified students, national skills shortages and the capacity of tertiary institutions. Quotas should not be adjusted only when public frustration reaches crisis level. Government should publish an annual financing framework showing projected secondary-school completions, priority skills, the number of continuing students, the number of new awards, the cost per programme and expected loan recoveries. This would allow Parliament, families and institutions to understand the choices being made and would make the quota a planning instrument rather than an unexplained barrier.

The policy that can disadvantage a current applicant because a parent or guarantor has an outstanding NMDS loan also requires fundamental reconsideration. Repayment obligations must be enforced, but justice is not served by transferring a parent's default to a child who was not party to the original borrowing decision. A young Mosotho who has worked hard and qualified for admission should not inherit educational exclusion as a family debt. The more equitable response is to assess the student on merit and financial need, while placing the repayment obligation directly on the person who benefited from the earlier loan. Government's own service requirements show how an updated loan statement and proof of payment can influence access to further sponsorship; this should not become an intergenerational penalty.

The second responsibility is rigorous and intelligent debt collection. It is difficult to justify weak recovery among people already employed by the state. The Ministry of Health headquarters, for example, is only a short distance from NMDS. Yet physical proximity is less important than administrative coordination. NMDS should be able to obtain lawful, regularly updated staff records from every ministry, match them against its beneficiary database, identify those who are repaying, those who have completed repayment and those who are employed but not servicing their loans, and then implement authorised payroll deductions with proper notice and a transparent dispute process. The same exercise should extend to teachers, security agencies, local authorities, parastatals and, through appropriate agreements, major private employers.

This is primarily a data-governance and inter-agency coordination exercise, not a project that must wait for a large new budget. The Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Finance, Revenue Services Lesotho and NMDS should establish a secure matching protocol based on national identification numbers, employment status and loan-account records. Data protection, verification and an appeals mechanism are essential, because no employee should suffer a deduction based on an incorrect match. But administrative safeguards must not become an excuse for inaction. Waiting until a beneficiary retires, resigns, or voluntarily visits NMDS means that money intended to revolve is kept outside the fund for years while another qualified student is turned away.

Debt collection must also be convenient. NMDS should not expect my uncle's daughter in Ha Khohlopo, or any beneficiary in Thaba-Tseka, Ha Lebetla in Butha-Buthe or Qacha's Nek, to travel to Maseru merely to ask for a balance or begin repayment. Every borrower should be able to retrieve a statement online or by mobile phone, confirm the amount due, choose an affordable repayment plan and pay through banks, mobile money or stop-order deduction. Automated receipts and updated balances should follow each payment. I don't think NMDS needs a lot of budget to achieve this because government systems are already attached to districts civil servants records. District service points and a responsive helpline should support those without reliable internet access. A modern repayment system would reduce queues, lower transaction costs and make compliance easier than avoidance.

Basotho beneficiaries must equally accept their social responsibility. An NMDS loan bursary is public support, but it is also a promise between generations. Those of us who benefited cannot demand wider access for today's students while ignoring our own repayment obligations. Parents and graduates who are employed should request their statements, correct any discrepancies and begin servicing their loans. Where income is low or employment is unstable, NMDS should offer income-sensitive instalments and hardship arrangements rather than demanding unrealistic lump sums. Firm recovery and humane repayment terms are not opposites; together they create a credible system.

Improved recoveries alone will not replace the need for greater public investment. Tertiary education is expensive, unemployment delays repayment and Lesotho's human-capital needs are larger than the receipts of a revolving fund can meet. Government must therefore combine increased and predictable budget allocations with disciplined recovery, needs-based selection and stronger cost control. Each year, NMDS should publicly report how much was allocated, how many students were funded, how much debt was collectible, how much was recovered and how recovered funds increased the following intake. Demonstrating this link would help the budget controller and Parliament see that additional funding will be managed responsibly.

The student's appeal to the Prime Minister is ultimately a call for a renewed social contract. Government must show political will by expanding opportunities, modernising the law, and coordinating its institutions. Beneficiaries must show social will by repaying according to their means. NMDS must connect both sides through accurate data, accessible services, fair enforcement, and transparent reporting. If we treat bursaries only as expenditure, quotas will always appear to be the final word. If we manage them as a national investment and a functioning revolving fund, every repayment becomes part of another student's admission letter.

The young people writing on social media are not asking for favours. They are asking their country to make good on the promise that effort, ability, and need will be met with opportunity. Their frustration should move us beyond blame and towards reform. The solution is neither government funding without accountability nor debt collection without compassion. It is a balanced system in which the state invests, beneficiaries repay, institutions cooperate, and the next Mosotho child is not left behind.

The Future is NOW!

Student appeals for urgent funding to study in India

Good Morning Ms. Matheka and the Seahlolo team. My name is Mokhali Khohlooa, a Mosotho student who has just received provisional admission to study B.Tech Agricultural Engineering at Khalsa College of Engineering & Technology in Punjab, India.

I am reaching out to Seahlolo specifically because I have followed your reporting on Lesotho's agricultural crisis — and I believe I can be part of the solution. But I need your help.

The hard truth: Lesotho has only 25 agricultural engineers. The SADC Engineering Capacity Report confirms this. In a country where agriculture supports 80 percent of households and employs 31 percent of our workforce, we have only 25 people trained to design irrigation, repair machinery, and build climate-resilient infrastructure. Your own pages have documented the consequences: late seed delivery, broken tractors, and a ministry struggling to transition farmers from subsistence to commercial farming because of critical staff shortages.

I want to become the 26th.

Why India? Because your January 2025 edition — "Strengthening Lesotho's Agriculture: Lessons from India's Success Story" — showed me the path. You wrote about India's irrigation expertise, drone-based crop monitoring, soil-testing labs, and climate-resilient varieties. You urged stronger ties with India through the ITEC program. I am living that vision. I have been admitted to study in India's agricultural heartland.

What I have: Khalsa College has given me a partial scholarship covering 100% of my hostel and food for all 4 years, plus reduced tuition of 2,475/year.

What I lack: A gap of roughly 10,450 over 4 years. Most urgently, a 500 registration fee due on 10 August 2026 — that is in 5 days. Without it, my admission is cancelled.

What I am asking Seahlolo:

1. Gap funding or sponsorship brokerage — If Seahlolo or your Farmers Pitso Awards network has any capacity to help bridge my registration fee urgently, and ideally my first-year tuition, I am ready to commit to returning and serving Lesotho's agricultural sector after graduation.
2. Amplify my story — Publish or share my journey with your readers, sponsors, and partners in the Ministry of Agriculture, CAFI, SADP II, and the private sector. One agribusiness owner who reads Seahlolo could change everything.
3. Connect me — If you have contacts at the Indian High Commission, ITEC program coordinators, or development partners funding agricultural education, I am asking for an introduction.

I am not asking for a handout. I am asking for an investment in Lesotho's food security. I have attached my provisional admission letter for verification.

I know your time is valuable and this is urgent. I would be deeply grateful for even a brief reply or guidance.

Thank you for "growing together."
Mokhali Khohlooa

FARMERS PITSO AGRICULTURAL & EXCELLENCE AWARDS EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition Overview

The Farmers Pitso Agricultural Exhibition is a national agricultural marketplace running alongside the Farmers Pitso Agricultural & Excellence Awards. The exhibition is open to the public through a single Entry/Exit via the Deal N Drive entrance, while the Awards Ceremony inside the Manthabiseng Convention Centre is reserved for ticket holders.

The Exhibition Experience

The exhibition is built around two anchor experiences and a central public activation area:
- **Anchor 1: Jandrell Mechanisation Experience** – Official Mechanisation Partner and exhibition centrepiece.
- **Anchor 2: Royal Nutrition Village** – Supporting His Majesty King Letsie III's Nutrition Agenda.
- **Farmers Square** – Central activation space for announcements, demonstrations, interviews, lucky draws, performances and sponsor activations.
- **Agribusiness Village** - Home to seed companies, fertiliser suppliers, animal health, financial institutions, ICT providers, insurers, government agencies and agribusiness service providers

Exhibition Participation Packages

The existing pricing structure remains unchanged. The update focuses on strengthening the identity of each exhibition section rather than introducing new pricing categories.

1.Royal Nutrition Village

Showcases nutrition, food systems, agro-processing, value addition and healthy diets in support of His Majesty's Nutrition Agenda.

PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Small Gazebo Stall	3m x 3m ($9m^2$)	M600
Standard Stall	6m X 3m ($18m^2$)	M1,800
Premium Corner Stall	6m X 6m ($36m^2$)	M3,500

2.Jandrell Mechanisation Experience & Innovation Village

Centred around the Jandrell Mechanisation Experience, this village hosts innovation, irrigation, machinery, tools and technology. Jandrell's centrepiece activation is reserved exclusively for the Official Mechanisation Partner. Surrounding spaces remain available under the published packages.

PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Machinery Display Bay	6m x 6m ($36m^2$)	M1,200
Large Equipment Stall	9m X 9m ($81m^2$)	M3,500
Premium Marquee Showcase	12m X 12m ($36m^2$)	M7,500

3.Agribusiness Village

Home to seed companies, fertiliser suppliers, animal health, financial institutions, ICT providers, insurers, government agencies and agribusiness service providers.

PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Small Farmer Stall	3m x 3m ($9m^2$)	M600
Standard agribusiness stall	6m X 3m ($18m^2$)	M1,200
Premium Pavillion Space	6m X 6m ($36m^2$)	M2,500

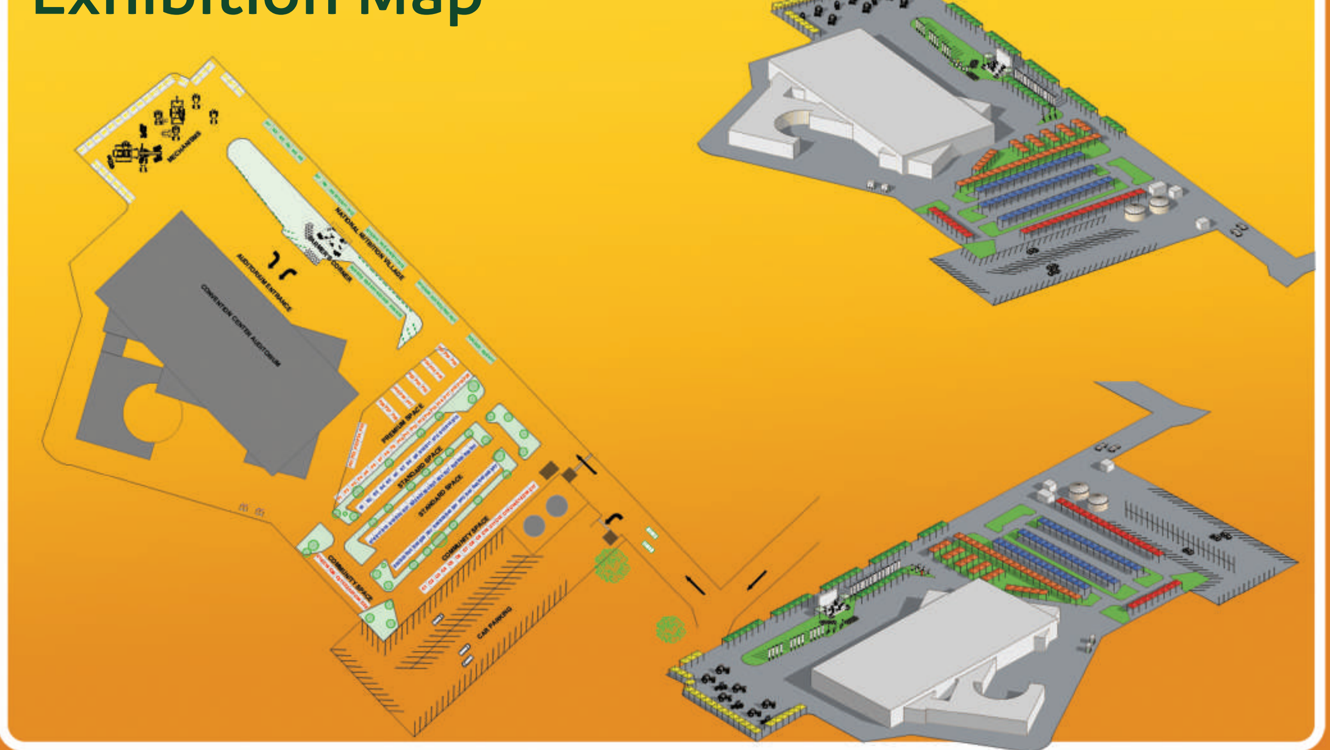
4.Farmers Square

Farmers Square is not an exhibition package. It is the exhibition's central activation space where MC announcements, lucky draws, media interviews, cultural performances, school performances, product launches and live demonstrations take place throughout the event.

What Every Exhibitor Receives

1. Exhibition space allocation.
2. Branding visibility within exhibition grounds.
3. Access to farmers, agribusinesses, financiers, & policymakers
4. Inclusion in event marketing and publicity
5. Opportunity for product demonstrations & activations
6. Networking opportunities during the two-day event.

Exhibition Map



11TH & 12TH SEPT. 2026

Apply Using the Link:

https://seahlolo.co.ls/home/farmers-pitso-awards-2026-exhibition-portal/

5092 0676

Government of Lesotho

COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

MSME RESILIENCE BUILDING AND PREPAREDNESS SUPPORT

BACKGROUND

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase access to business support services and financial products targeted at Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth.

Under Subcomponent 1.3, *Strengthening the Resilience of MSMEs to Climatic Shocks and Disasters*, the CAFI Project provides targeted support to enhance the preparedness and resilience of MSMEs against climate-induced shocks and disasters.

The support aims to strengthen business continuity by reducing the vulnerability of MSMEs to climate-related risks and disasters, protecting productive assets, improving operational resilience, and promoting sustainable enterprise growth. The Government of Lesotho, through the CAFI Project, therefore invites eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to apply for Resilience Building and Preparedness Support. Successful applicants will receive assistance designed to strengthen their capacity to prepare for and withstand climate-induced shocks and disasters.

Eligibility criteria

Enterprises that meet the following eligibility criteria can apply:

- Enterprise must be a formal entity registered with relevant authorities.
- Enterprise must be located in an area where shock/s are likely to occur.
- Enterprises must clearly demonstrate how the expected shock/s are likely to affect their business operations.
- Enterprises must have valid tax clearance, indicating good standing with their tax obligations.
- The enterprises must provide financial statements.
- Enterprises must provide three (3) quotations from three (3) reputable suppliers.

The application forms must be accompanied by the following documents:

- Proof of business registration.
- Business identification certificates, where applicable.
- Up-to-date tax clearance certificate.
- Three quotations from three (3) reputable suppliers.

Note: A list of predefined equipment and minor works that are supported by CAFI is available on the following CAFI website: https://www.cafi.org.ls

Application Process

Application forms can be accessed on the following CAFI website https://www.cafi.org.ls

Submission

Complete Application Forms must be e-sent to procurement@cafi.org.ls with a copy to mmokone@cafi.org.ls as a single attachment.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 17h00 local time].

Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
House No. 252, Maseru West
Corner Kingsway and Tona-Kholo Road
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 22 315 100

Government of Lesotho

COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

KHOELEHETSO EA LIKOPO

TŠEHETSO EA LIKHOEBO TSE NYANE, TSE MAHARENG LE TSE NTSENG LI THUTHUOA MALEBANA LE BOITŠEMATLELO LE BOITOKISETSO KHAHLANONG LE PHETOHO EA LEHOLIMO

Selelekela

’Muso oa Lesotho o fumane tšehetso ea chelete ho tsoa Bankeng e Kholo ea Lefatše ho phethahatsa morero o tšehetsang likhoebo tse ikemetseng (CAFI Project). Sepheo sa morero ona ke ho ho eketsa litšebeletso tsa ntšetsopele ea likhoebo le lihlahisoa tsa lichelete bakeng sa likhoebo, haholo-holo likhoebo tsa basali le bacha.

Tlasa Karoloana ea 1.3, e shebaneng le ho matlafatsa Boitšematlelo ba Likhoebo tse Nyane, tse Mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthuoa khahlanong le Litlamorao tsa Phetoho ea boemo ba Leholimo le Likoluoa, Morero oa CAFI o fana ka tšehetso e khethehileng ho thusa likhoebo ho ntlafatsa boitokisetso le boitšematlelo ba tsona khahlanong le maemo a ka bakoang ke litla-morao tsa phetoho ea leholimo.

Tšehetso ena e reretsoe ho ntlafatsa kholo ea likhoebo tse nyane, tse mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthuoa ka ho li sireletsa le thepa ea tsona khahlanong le litla-morao tsa maemo a mabe a leholimo, le ho li tšehetsa hore li tsoelepele ho hoeba le maemong ao li anngoeng ke phetoho ea boemo ba leholimo.

’Muso oa Lesotho ka morero oa CAFI o mema likhoebo tse nyane, tse mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthuoa ho etsa likopo tsa tšehetso ea ho matlafatsa boitšematlelo le boitokisetso ba tsona khahlanong le litla-morao tsa maemo a ka bakoang ke phetoho ea leholimo. Likhoebo tse tla atleha li tla thusoa ka thepa e tla li sireletsa khahlanong le phetoho ea leholimo.

Lintlha tse lebelletsoeng ho hlaha kahara likopo

Likhoebo tse tla etsa likopo li lebelletsoe ho ba le tse latelang:

- E be khoebo e ngolisitsoeng ka molao le litsi tse amehang.
- E be khoebo e fumanehang sebakeng seo tlokotsi e ka hlahang.
- Khoebo e joalo e lebelletsoe ho hlakisa hantle hore na e ka angoa ke tlokotsi ea mofuta ofe, le hore na tlokotsi e joalo e ka ama khoebo joang.
- E be khoebo e nang le lengolo la khafa le ntseng le le nakong (valid tax clearance certificate).
- Khoebo e joalo e lebelletsoe ho fana ka tlaleho ea tsamaiso ea lichelete.
- Khoebo e lebelletsoe ho fana ka likhakanyo tsa thepa eo e kopang ho thusoa ka eona ho tsoa likhoebong tse tharo tse fapaneng (3 quotations).

Lenane la thepa le mesebetsi e menyane e tšehetsoang ke CAFI ka tlasa morero ona le fumaneha leqhepeng le latelang la marangrang a CAFI: https://www.cafi.org.ls

Mokhoa oa ho kenya likopo

Liforomo tsa likopo li ea fumaneha leqhepeng la marangrang a CAFI . Liforomo tsa likopo tse tlatsitsoeng le litokomane li ka romelloa ka marangrang ho procurement@cafi.org.ls e be kopi e romelloa ho mmokone@cafi.org.ls

Lintlha tse ling li ka fumaneha atereseng e ka tlase nakong ea lihora tsa mosebetsi [08:00 ho isa ho 17:00]

Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
House No. 252, Maseru West
Corner Kingsway and Tona-Kholo Road
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 22 315 100

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, LESOTHO

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Employment Opening – Senior Project Management Specialist (Foreign Assistance Coordinator) (**All Interested Applicants**)

The U.S. Embassy in Lesotho is seeking a qualified individual for the position of **Senior Project Management Specialist (Foreign Assistance Coordinator).**

Basic function of the position

The Senior Project Management Specialist (Foreign Assistance Coordinator) is an expert in health and foreign assistance and serves as a resource in strategic planning, program and activity design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Department of State (State) Foreign Assistance program and component projects and activities, particularly the U.S.-Lesotho Health Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the response to HIV/AIDS. The job holder engages in the administration and management of DoS assistance programs through various foreign assistance mechanisms, to ensure that U.S. Government (USG) project objectives are achieved in accordance with financial, timing, and regulatory requirements with direction from the America First Global Health Strategy. The position serves as a designated or alternate representative of the USG for the oversight and management of all implementing mechanisms and activities (e.g. Contracting/Grants/Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/GOR/AOR), Alternate COR/GOR/AOR and/or Activity Manager). The primary product of this position is the successful implementation of Department of State Foreign Assistance Programs projects and activities, including the U.S.-Lesotho Health MOU.

The position is in the U.S. Embassy Maseru's Political and Economic Section, which oversees State Foreign Assistance Programs in Lesotho and is supervised by the Political and Economic Section Head and Deputy Chief of Mission through the Foreign Assistance Officer lead. The position supervises a team of local staff supporting the Foreign Assistance Office through the Foreign Assistance Officer lead and engages at a senior level with government and civil society officials.

For more information, please view the full details on the internet at: https://ls.usembassy.gov/jobs/

Human Resources Office
U.S. Embassy Maseru
Tel: 22-312666
Ls.usembassy.gov

OPENING DATE: August 5, 2026
CLOSING DATE: August 19, 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN NATIONAL COMPETITIVE TENDERING

3 August 2026

Tender For Supply and Delivery of Metrology Equipment - MTIBD/26-27/01

1. The *Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development* has been allocated/received funds *from Government of Lesotho* to be used for the acquisition of *Metrology Equipment*.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national *competitive bidding* method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all national bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from *9:00 am to 4:00 pm*.
5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b) and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *M1000.00*. The method of payment will be *cash*.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before *10:00 am on the 7 September 2026*. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of M20, 000.00. Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 7 December 2026. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at 10.00 am on the 7 September 2026
7. There *shall not be* a pre – bid meeting.
8. (a) Documents may be inspected at: Procurement Unit Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, 2nd Floor, Old LNDC Office Block Maseru Lesotho. Contact person is Head of Procurement Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development email address ghoase.morakabi@gov.ls

   (b) Documents will be issued from: Procurement Unit Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, 2nd Floor, Old LNDC Office Block Maseru Lesotho.

   (c) Bids must be delivered to: Procurement Unit Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, 2nd Floor, Old LNDC Office Block Maseru Lesotho.

   (d) Address of bid opening: Ministry's Main Boardroom, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, 2nd Floor, Old LNDC Office Block Maseru Lesotho.

9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	3 August 2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	Not applicable
c. Bid closing date	7 September 2026
d. Evaluation process	14 September 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	17 September 2026
f. Contract signature	30 September 2026

WORLD BANK GROUP IFAD Investing in rural people JICA SADPII

Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP II)

Matching Grant Programme

Call for Applications

Background:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) has received financial support from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) under the supervision of Internation Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). The financial support will be managed by the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) under Matching Grants Programme (MGP) to support investment by commodity-based producer groups and agri-businesses for agriculture-related businesses to support access to markets by formally or informally linking producers to value chain actors through vertical alliance building.

Priorities:

Grant Financing:

Two grant windows are available to applicants:

i. qualifying supported commodity-based producer groups for investments up to LSL1,000,000.00
ii. agri-businesses in win-win partnerships with groups for investments of up to LSL1,500,000.00

Eligible Applicants:

The commodity-based producer groups and/or agri-business activities operating in all ten districts of Lesotho are eligible for grants. Eligible applicants include a) qualifying commodity-based producer groups; b) agribusiness firms willing to make investments that demonstrate win-win partnership with commodity groups. The commodity-based producer groups with women in leadership roles within the group and have a quota of at least 40% youth and at least 50% women will receive priority for grant support. Government Employees are not eligible. Commodity groups and agri-businesses should be registered with Law Office and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development. The land on which the operations will be conducted should be registered in the name of the enterprise (commodity group, agri-business, etc.). Investment support should will be on production and post-harvest equipment.

Beneficiary contribution:

In all cases, successful applicants will be required to make a co-finance contribution in cash to engender ownership and demonstrate commitment. Co-finance cash contributions for the commodity-based producer groups grants for registered associations and cooperatives will be 20% of the funds requested. Agri-business grants for registered agriculture-oriented and privately-owned enterprises, associations and cooperatives will require a 30% co-finance contribution. In both cases, 100% of such contribution MUST BE available before SADP II disburses funds to beneficiaries.

The participation and contribution from different partners should be confirmed by written agreement reached between the principal applicant, the service provider (World Vision International, Lesotho) and/or other partners. In the application, the lead firm must clearly identify and mention the commodity group that it will be working with to implement the grant. The number of group members to benefit from the grant should be clearly outlined and disparaged by sex, age and other parameters

Eligible Expenditures under Grant:

Eligible expenditures shall relate to long term capital assets relevant to the activity. This include costs associated with the purchase and installation of equipment for production, harvesting, post-harvest handling, processing, preservation, storage, grading, packaging etc., the construction of necessary buildings storage, processing, marketing; the purchase and installation pumps, boreholes, tanks etc; product development; alignment with national and international food and safety standards; and marketing campaigns.

Non-Eligible Expenditures under Grant:

The following items would not be covered by 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) land surveys; 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 with a hazardous impact on the environment. Each proposal should have an environmental social impact assessment and safeguards management plan as part of its design

Applications should be submitted in four copies (one original plus three photocopies) and delivered by hand at the office of the MGP Secretariat in the District Agricultural Office (DAO) in the 10 districts of Lesotho. Applications submitted after deadline will not be accepted.

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, submitted to the MGC for approval of financial and technical review and finally field verifications will be conducted. The list of successful applicants will be published through public posting at the MGP Secretariat's office. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed by letter, and their original project documents could be returned to them on request.

Application Documentation:

The official application will be managed by World Vision International, Lesotho, in all the 10 districts.

Deadline and Place for Submission of Applications:

The deadline for submission of applications is on or before **August 26, 2026, at 1630hrs**.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

STATEMENT ON THE TERMINATION OF THE FIXED-TERM CONTRACT OF THE PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Council of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) wishes to inform the University community and all stakeholders that the fixed-term contract of Associate Professor, Kananelo Mosito, the suspended Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC), has been terminated. This decision has been taken with a view to safeguard the institution's governance and stability.

Termination of the Fixed-Term Contract
At its meeting held yesterday, 2 August 2026, the Council of the NUL terminated the fixed term contract of the suspended Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Associate Professor Kananelo Mosito. This decision takes effect today, 03 August, 2026 as Council has dispensed with the required notice period. It is worth-noting that this decision relates to his fixed-term contract only. It does not affect his currently dormant permanent and pensionable contract as a member of the teaching and research staff cohort in the Faculty of Law.

This action was not taken lightly. It was informed by the clear recognition that the effective functioning of the University demands a unified, undisputed, and lawful governance architecture and a cohesive executive leadership. The Council, as the supreme governing body of the University, determined that recent conduct of the suspended PVC has fundamentally impaired the trust and confidence essential to the senior executive management. The decision was necessitated by the need to restore institutional stability, preserve the integrity of governance structures, and ensure the uninterrupted delivery of the University's overall mandate of teaching, learning, research, and community development.

The Authority of Council
Section 10(1) of the National University of Lesotho Act, 1992 (as amended), vests the governance and strategic direction of the University in the Council. This authority is not discretionary. It is the constitutional foundation upon which the NUL's institutional architecture is anchored.

The Council has a fiduciary duty to protect the University's interests. The Council is tasked to ensure that the affairs of the University are conducted in accordance with the law and the University's governing instruments. In fulfilling this duty, the Council remains the sole body vested with the authority to make executive appointments, recognize leadership, and determine the governance framework of the University.
No officer or employee, however senior, possesses the authority to create their own mandate, unilaterally assume executive office, or require University officials to recognize such self-declared authority.

Such conduct does not only destabilize the University, but it also has the net effect of creating multiple and contested centers of power. The assumption of executive powers by an individual without the lawful recognition of Council is invalid and without legal effect.

A Message to the University Community
We understand that recent events may have caused uncertainty and concern. We wish to reassure all staff, students, and stakeholders that the University remains fully operational. Our commitment to academic excellence and institutional integrity is unwavering. The Council and Management are focused on maintaining a stable and conducive environment for teaching, learning, research and community development.

It is imperative that all employees and officers of the University understand that a situation of self-help—where an employee purports to be the judge, jury and executor of their own legal rights is both untenable and undesirable. No staff or officer of the University shall declare themselves to hold an office on their own accord. Such situations are neither permissible nor recognised within the normative and institutional framework of NUL. The law provides established and agreed processes, including mediation, arbitration, and judicial relief, for resolving employment disputes. Unilateral declarations and executive directives issued in defiance of Council's authority are fundamentally incompatible with the duties and obligations expected of any employee, particularly senior officers.

Conduct and Employee Obligations
All employees are reminded that their contracts of employment require fidelity to the University. They require respect for lawful authority. They require adherence to agreed dispute-resolution mechanisms. The University will not tolerate conduct that seeks to bypass its lawful structures, undermine its governance, or threaten the stability of the institution. Such actions are inconsistent with the employment relationship and will not be countenanced.

The Council is determined to protect not only its own authority but the very integrity of the University's governance system. We remain committed to the rule of law, due process, and the principles of fairness. We call upon all members of the University community to continue their work in a spirit of cooperation, professionalism, and respect for the institutional structures that serve us all.

Conclusion
The National University of Lesotho is a proud institution with a distinguished history dating back to 1945. Last year NUL proudly commemorated its 80th Anniversary reaffirming its status as the premier higher education institution in the country. Its future depends on the collective commitment of all its members to uphold its values and respect its lawful governance. The Council remains resolute in its duty to lead the University through this transitional period and to ensure that it emerges stronger, more cohesive and more stable.

We thank the University community and all stakeholders for their patience, understanding, and continued dedication.

Issued by:
Council of the National University of Lesotho
Date: 03 August, 2026

Office of the Registrar | National University of Lesotho | P.O. Roma 180. Lesotho. | Tel: +266 22340601 |
Direct: +266 22340264 | Email: info@nul.ls | Website: www.nul.ls | Facebook: national.university.lesotho | X: @nul_roma

LAA LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

The Land Administration Authority (the Authority) seeks applications from qualified, competent and highly motivated individuals to fill the following position within the organisation. The position is based in Maseru. It requires good spoken and written Sesotho and English. A competitive and market-related remuneration package including noncontributory benefits is offered. Brief description of each position is provided below.

Director Cadastral Survey Services (1)

Job Scope:
The incumbent has overall responsibility to provide strategic leadership and regulatory oversight of cadastral surveying and spatial data infrastructure within the Land Administration Authority (LAA). The Director Cadastral Survey Services is responsible for regulating professional cadastral surveying practice within LAA by ensuring the availability of official maps and overseeing the development and maintenance of the national spatial data infrastructure in accordance with the Land Administration Authority Act 2010, the Land Act 2010, and the Land Survey Act 1980 and Regulations of 1982. The Director Cadastral Survey Services ensures that cadastral surveys and geospatial information are produced and maintained to a high professional, legal, and technical standard within LAA.

Key Result Areas (KRAs)
- Provision of sound policy advice on cadastral surveying, mapping, and spatial data infrastructure.
- Delivery of effective and efficient cadastral survey regulatory services to government, the surveying profession, customers and the public.
- Effective planning, resourcing, monitoring, and implementation of survey and mapping programs and projects.
- Leadership and development of a motivated, capable, professional and disciplined team.
- Preparation and maintenance of official notices, publications, directives, and guidelines relating to cadastral surveying.
- Effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure compliance with cadastral survey and spatial data policies.
- Active participation in the strategic management and direction of the Authority

Qualifications

Education
- Diploma in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying)
- BSc in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying
- MSc in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying) will be an added advantage.

Experience
- An applicant with Diploma in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying) must have a minimum of ten (10) years of progressively responsible experience in cadastral surveying, mapping, or geospatial management.
- Whilst an applicant with BSc in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying) must have minimum of Seven (7) years of progressively responsible experience in cadastral surveying, mapping, or geospatial management.
- Whilst an applicant with MSc in Land Surveying or Geomatics (Specializing in Land Surveying) must have minimum of Five (5) years of progressively responsible experience in cadastral surveying, mapping, or geospatial management
- Experience should include managerial responsibilities.
- Experience working with government agencies, regulatory bodies, or public institutions will be an advantage.
- Extensive knowledge of cadastral surveying principles and practices.
- Knowledge of spatial data infrastructure and geospatial data management.
- Understanding of mapping standards and surveying legislation.
- Familiarity with modern surveying technologies, GIS, and geospatial information systems
- Expert knowledge of surveying methods and equipment, geospatial technologies, and mapping systems.

Key Competencies
- Strategic leadership and planning
- Ability to develop strategies, policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks.
- Strong analytical, planning, and problem-solving abilities.
- Excellent communication and stakeholder engagement skills including at senior levels.
- High level of integrity, professionalism, and ethical judgment.
- Ability to prepare clear high-level reports, directives, and technical documentation.
- Excellent report writing
- Financial, equipment and human resources Management.

Submission of Applications

All applications must include a fully completed and signed CadastralLAA Employment Application Form, application letter, certified copies of Educational Certificates and Professional Qualifications; and a Curriculum Vitae with the names and contact details for three referees. LAA Employment Application Form, may be downloaded from the Authority's website www.laa.org.ls.

Requests for further information and completed application forms may be emailed to jobs@laa.org.ls, for the attention of The Director General and Chief Executive Officer, Land Administration Authority. Envelopes containing the application, or email subject line, should clearly state the position applied for.

Applications must be received on or before Monday 31st August 2026. All shortlisted applicants will be informed as to the status of their applications (please provide an email address for this purpose). Applicants who do not hear from the Authority by Friday 18th September 2026 may assume that their applications have not been successful.

Road Fund

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (CONSULTANCY SERVICES)

ASSIGNMENT TITLE: ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURING
REFERENCE NUMBER: RF/2026/C1

Background:
The Road Fund is a statutory organisation established to fulfil its mandate of collecting road user charges and disbursing these funds to support road maintenance, rehabilitation and road safety initiatives throughout Lesotho. As part of its commitment to improving organisational effectiveness, service delivery, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability, the organisation seeks to undertake a comprehensive organisational review and restructuring exercise.

The review is intended to ensure that the organisational structure aligns with the organisation's operational requirements, legislative framework, technological advancements, and industry best practices. The exercise will also assess the adequacy of existing staffing levels, reporting structures, governance arrangements, and functional responsibilities to ensure optimal performance.

Road Fund now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the required Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (brochures including the name of the country in which the firm is registered; experience of projects related to the assignment, including brief descriptions of most recent relevant assignments showing location, client, costs and staff involved, etc.).

Purpose of the assignment:
The purpose of this consultancy is to undertake a comprehensive organisational review and develop a fit-for-purpose organisational structure that enhances operational efficiency, improves accountability and promotes sustainable growth.

Objectives:

- Review the current organisational structure and assess its effectiveness;
- Determine whether current staffing levels are adequate;
- Review reporting lines, spans of control, and governance arrangements;
- Assess job roles and functional responsibilities;
- Identify duplication of functions, inefficiencies, and operational gaps;
- Recommend an optimal organisational structure;
- Develop an implementation roadmap for the restructuring process;
- Recommend appropriate change management interventions.

Short-listing Criteria
The shortlisting criteria are: (i) quality of submission, (ii) core business and years in business, (iii) experience of the firm on similar assignments (relevant experience); (iv) technical and managerial capability of the firm; (v) Reference letters on similar assignments from at least 5 clients (vi) firm's experience working in the SADC region, preferably Lesotho; and (vii) for international firms, potential association with local consulting firms.
The margin of preference shall be applied during evaluation.

Duration of the assignment:
The period of engagement is **Twelve (12) to Sixteen (16) Weeks.**
Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for this assignment can be obtained at the Road Fund website: www.roadfund.org.ls

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

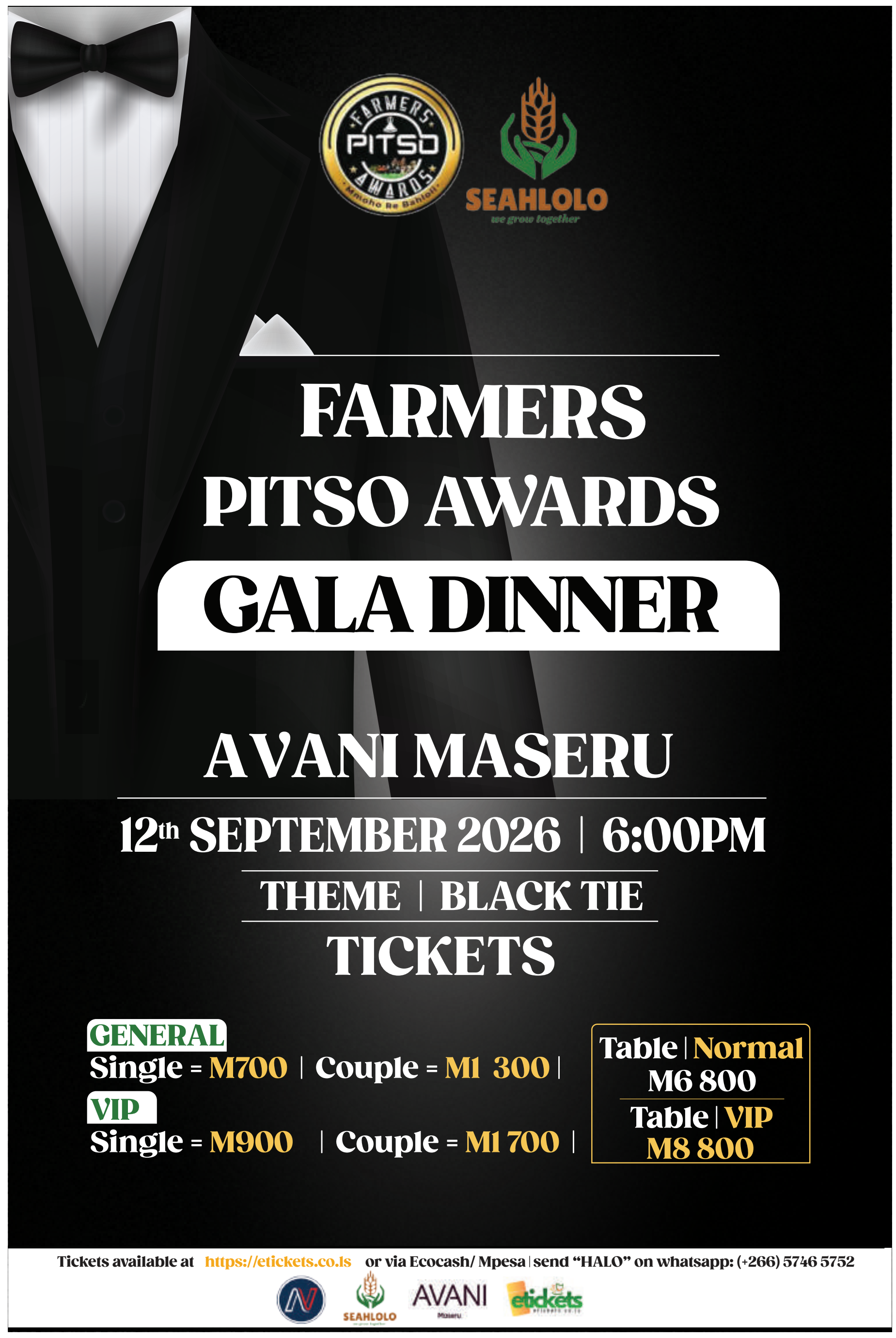
The Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08:00 hrs to 16:30 hrs local time] or on this email address: procurement@roadfund.org.ls

Submission:
Expressions of interest clearly marked "**Consultancy Services for Organisational Review and Restructuring**" should be submitted to the following Email: procurement@roadfund.org.ls Or hand deliver to Road Fund Offices located at Former Department of Rural Roads Building, Cnr Senate and Moshoeshoe Roads, Industrial Area, Maseru on or before **Thursday 27 August 2026 at 16:00 hrs.**

Disclaimer:
The Road Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, or to cancel this procurement process at any time if the circumstances so require.


FARMERS
PITSO
AWARDS
AGRICULTURE & EXCELLENCE
'MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE
SATURDAY
FARMERS
AWARD
CEREMONY
TICKET
M200
PLUS A
FREE
M100
FOOD
COUPON
PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS
12 SEPTEMBER 2026


FARMERS
PITSO AWARDS
GALA DINNER
AVANI MASERU
12th SEPTEMBER 2026 | 6:00PM
THEME | BLACK TIE
TICKETS
GENERAL
Single = M700 | Couple = M1 300 |
VIP
Single = M900 | Couple = M1 700 |
Table | Normal
M6 800
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AFRIMA, Lesotho Music Awards seal partnership to grow local music industry

Staff Reporter

The All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) and the Lesotho Music Awards (LMA) have signed a landmark three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening Lesotho's music industry and creating greater opportunities for Basotho artists on the continental stage.

The agreement officially recognises the Lesotho Music Awards as AFRIMA's collaborating country partner and regional liaison in Lesotho, positioning the country to play a more active role within Africa's creative and cultural industries.

The partnership will focus on promoting African music and cultural exchange through artist development, talent discovery, institutional collaboration, knowledge sharing, industry networking and advocacy. It also seeks to strengthen cooperation between government, the private sector, media organisations and stakeholders in the music industry.

Under the agreement, the Lesotho Music Awards will promote AFRIMA initiatives, facilitate industry engagement within Lesotho, encourage greater participation by Basotho artists in AFRIMA programmes and coordinate AFRIMA-related activities in the country.

In return, AFRIMA will provide official recognition to the Lesotho Music Awards, support promotional activities, collaborate on programmes and maintain ongoing institutional engagement.

A key component of the partnership is the introduction of a collaborative framework for selected Lesotho Music Awards categories supported by AFRIMA. Under this arrangement, AFRIMA will participate in mutually agreed adjudication and verification processes aimed at strengthening fairness, transparency, accountability, integrity and international credibility, while respecting the independence of all other LMA award categories.

Lesotho Music Awards Founder and Executive Director, Malibe Mahao, described the agreement as a milestone for the country's creative sector.

"This partnership represents a defining moment for the music industry in Lesotho. Working alongside AFRIMA allows us to connect Basotho artists with one of Africa's most respected music institutions while strengthening our own commitment to developing a sustainable and internationally competitive creative industry. Together, we are creating new pathways for talent, investment, collaboration and continental recognition," Mahao said.

AFRIMA Chief Experience Officer, Adenrele Niyi, said the organisation's vision extends beyond hosting an annual awards ceremony.

"At AFRIMA, our vision, driven by our seven core pillars—Music Awards, Music Festivals, The AFRIMA Kreative Academy (TAKA), Music Business Hub, Talent Discovery and Promotion, Advisory and Policy Debates, and CSR and Advocacy, has always gone beyond an awards ceremony. We are building Africa's leading music ecosystem that discovers talent, creates opportunities, connects cultures and takes African music to the world," Niyi said.

He added that the partnership with the Lesotho Music Awards marked another important step in expanding opportunities for African creatives and deepening collaboration across the continent.

The agreement is expected to increase Lesotho's visibility within Africa's music industry while providing local artists with greater access to continental networks, professional development opportunities and international recognition.

A call for free education and economic reform in Lesotho

Originally published on LinkedIn on 22 November 2024. It is republished amid renewed public debate following allegations that the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) is refusing to sponsor some students because their parents have outstanding loan obligations.

Kananelo Boloetse

In the Post newspaper of Thursday, 21 November 2024, Finance Minister Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane announced that the government would soon engage private companies to collect debts owed to the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS).

This decision follows her admission that the ministry has been struggling to recover these funds from the hundreds of thousands of Basotho who benefited from the NMDS funding programme.

While the minister's intentions are undoubtedly rooted in addressing fiscal challenges, it is crucial to revisit her own insights from her tenure as Governor of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL).

In the November 2012 Economic Review, titled The Economic Impact of Youth Unemployment in Lesotho, the bank made some sobering observations that remain relevant today.

The review highlighted the alarming youth unemployment rate, estimated at 38 percent in 2010 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It further noted that of the 7,500 university and college graduates entering the labour market each year, half failed to secure employment. Even among those employed, many were relegated to subsistence agriculture or other low-paying jobs.

The CBL emphasised the profound implications of this youth unemployment for government finances.

It specifically pointed out that beneficiaries of NMDS study loans cannot reasonably be expected to repay these loans without sustainable employment.

The lack of repayments limits future funding for study loans and diverts government resources from development projects and other critical initiatives.

The review also underscored the broader economic and social consequences of youth unemployment, including reduced tax revenues, increased government borrowing, and slower economic development. Moreover, it warned of the social instability that accompanies high youth unemployment, linking it to rising crime and the potential for civil unrest.

Fourteen years later, the profound challenges identified by the CBL have not only persisted but, in many respects, have been exacerbated. While it is indisputable that not all NMDS beneficiaries are unemployed or subsisting on paltry wages, the unvarnished truth is that the overwhelming majority remain unable to fulfill their repayment obligations.

Some people may contend that the repayment requirement is unequivocal, binding beneficiaries to reimburse their loans irrespective of their employment status or income. This argument, rooted in a literalist interpretation of the NMDS agreements, starkly disregards the socioeconomic realities confronting many Basotho graduates.

It also underscores a troubling lack of empathy for those grappling with economic precarity in a country burdened by systemic unemployment.

Rather than perpetuating a system that has demonstrably failed to achieve its objectives, it is imperative for Lesotho to reimagine the NMDS and assess whether its current structure aligns with contemporary national priorities.

The time is ripe for a paradigm shift. The government must contemplate the audacious yet equitable proposition of instituting free education at all levels, including tertiary education. Under this reformed framework, the NMDS could recalibrate its focus and channel resources exclusively toward funding specialised studies abroad or addressing niche educational needs.

Skeptics may hastily question the fiscal viability of universal free tertiary education. Yet, the stark reality is that Lesotho is already de facto providing free education under the guise of an inefficient loan system.

As the CBL astutely observed in 2012, the government extends study loans to nearly all Basotho admitted to tertiary institutions locally and abroad, yet only a minuscule percentage of these loans are ever repaid. By formalising what is already an unofficial reality, the government can eliminate the counterproductive burden of debt on graduates, allowing them to channel their energy toward meaningful contributions to the national economy.

Moreover, the funds required to finance this transformative initiative are not beyond reach. They merely require strategic reprioritisation and a commitment to fiscal discipline. For instance, the Lesotho Tribune recently revealed that billions of maloti are hemorrhaged annually in the mining sector due to non-compliance with regulatory frameworks.

Addressing these systemic inefficiencies could unlock substantial revenues, which could be redirected to underwrite free education. Dr. Matlanyane, as Minister of Finance, possesses both the expertise and the mandate to spearhead such reforms to ensure that the nation's resources are harnessed for equitable and impactful development.

The NMDS, in its present incarnation, is an anachronism—a vestige of an era that presumed the availability of robust employment opportunities for graduates. Today, that presumption rings hollow. Persisting with an antiquated and dysfunctional model will only entrench cycles of indebtedness and socioeconomic stagnation.

Instead, Lesotho must confront these systemic failings with bold, innovative solutions. By addressing inefficiencies, instituting free education, and fostering a climate of opportunity, the nation can emancipate its youth from the shackles of debt and empower them to become architects of sustainable economic growth.

This is a discourse that demands our collective attention. It transcends legalistic adherence to contractual minutiae and beckons us to embrace a higher ethos – one rooted in equity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the future of our nation. Let this be the moment when we, as Basotho, rise to meet the challenges of our time with vision, resolve, and a shared aspiration for progress.

DanceSport competition comes to town

Seabata Mahao

The Federation of DanceSport Lesotho (FEDALE) has officially announced the return of the prestigious Queen's Cup DanceSport Open Championships, with this year's edition scheduled for September 5, 2026, at Victory Hall in Maseru.

Sanctioned by the World DanceSport Federation, the championship has continued to cement its reputation as one of Southern Africa's premier dancesport competitions and is expected to attract some of the region's finest dancers.

Teams from Botswana, South Africa and eSwatini have already confirmed their participation, while organisers remain optimistic that additional countries will register before entries close.

The tournament's return marks another milestone in Lesotho's ongoing efforts to rebuild dancesport following the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Queen's Cup made a successful comeback in 2025 after a six-year absence, having last been staged in 2019 before global sporting activities were halted by the pandemic.

Like many sporting federations, FEDALE faced significant challenges in reviving the sport as local dancesport activities slowed considerably during the post-pandemic period. However, the successful revival of the Queen's Cup last year represented a major breakthrough in restoring the sport's profile both locally and internationally.

The 2025 edition attracted competitors from Botswana, South Africa, eSwatini, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe, reaffirming the tournament's standing as one of the region's leading dancesport events.

Speaking in an exclusive interview, FEDALE president NthejaneNthejane said registration remains open, with the federation expecting more countries from across Southern Africa to confirm their participation.

The Federation of DanceSport Lesotho (FEDALE) has officially announced the return of the prestigious Queen's Cup DanceSport Open Championships

"While Botswana, South Africa and eSwatini have already confirmed their participation, registration is still open and we are hopeful that more countries will come on board before the deadline," Nthejane said.

This year's championships will feature competition across a diverse range of dance disciplines. Athletes will compete in the traditional Latin and Ballroom categories alongside contemporary styles such as Amapiano, Hip Hop and Zumba. The uniquely Basotho Famo Dance will once again take centre stage as part of FEDALE's commitment to preserving and promoting the country's cultural heritage.

Beyond the competition, the 2026 Queen's Cup carries added significance as it will also form part of the celebrations marking the 50th birthday of Her Majesty Queen 'MasenateMohatoSeeiso, the patron of FEDALE.

Organisers believe the royal milestone will add a special ceremonial dimension to an event already regarded as the federation's flagship competition.

Despite the sponsorship challenges, FEDALE remains confident that the Queen's Cup will once again deliver a high-quality international spectacle while giving Basotho dancers invaluable exposure against elite regional competition.

Heroes' welcome for Commonwealth Games medalists

Athletes welcomed in Maseru after heroic

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's Commonwealth Games team returned home to a jubilant heroes' welcome on Tuesday after ending a 20-year medal drought with two historic bronze medals at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Thousands of Basotho lined the roads from the national border to Maseru before gathering at Makoanyane Square, where the athletes were officially welcomed home following one of the country's most successful Commonwealth Games campaigns in recent history.

The celebrations centred on boxers RapelangMaselela and Pooana Khoali, who each claimed bronze medals in their respective weight divisions. Their achievements not only restored Lesotho's place on the Commonwealth Games medal table but also marked a milestone for the country's sporting history.

Maselela, competing in the women's under-57kg category, became the first Mosotho woman ever to win a Commonwealth Games medal, a landmark achievement that has inspired celebration across the nation.

Lesotho was represented by 14 athletes competing in boxing and athletics during the Games, which concluded on 2 August in Glasgow, Scotland. While only boxing produced medals, the team's performance was widely praised as a major step forward for sport in the Mountain Kingdom.

Historic boxing campaign

Khoali's route to the podium was an impressive display of dominance. Fighting in the men's under-65kg division, he opened his campaign with a commanding 5-0 unanimous decision victory in the Round of 32 before repeating the same scoreline in the quarter-finals to book a place in the semi-finals. Although he was defeated 5-0 in the last four, boxing rules award bronze medals to losing semi-finalists, securing him a place on the podium.

Maselela enjoyed an equally memorable journey. After receiving a bye into the quarter-finals when her scheduled opponent was unable to compete, she defeated her quarter-final opponent by a 4-1 decision to reach the semi-finals. Her contest was stopped by the referee in the semi-final, resulting in defeat, but her place among the final four earned her a bronze medal.

'I want better than bronze'

Speaking during the welcome ceremony, an emotional Maselela said wearing the national colours on the international stage was one of the proudest moments of her life.

"It was a very proud moment. The nerves and anxiety were high but I was honoured. I went to represent Lesotho and said I would leave my hands there if I had to," she said.

The 57kg boxer described the medal as both a reward and a challenge.

"It is pressure and motivation. It tells me to go back and work harder for the next competition. Obviously I do not want bronze—I want better."

Maselela, who has only been boxing for three years, admitted she never imagined reaching such heights so quickly.

"I put in everything I have and when the selection was done it was a huge honour for me."

She added that being the last Lesotho boxer to compete gave her valuable time to recover from the long journey and regain her competition weight. With few opponents available locally in her weight division, she credited her coaches for arranging international bouts that prepared her for Glasgow.

"It was emotional for me. I was proud of myself and my country. My coaches worked hard to get me opponents outside the country."

Government hails national achievement

Minister of Sports, Arts, Culture and Tourism MputiMputi described the team's success as a proud moment for Lesotho, saying every athlete who qualified for the Games deserved recognition.

"I would like to thank our athletes for bringing victory to our country. After 20 years, Lesotho once again has Commonwealth Games medallists."

The Minister recalled watching one of the boxing contests in Glasgow where a Mosotho boxer knocked out an opponent, saying the performance moved him to tears.

"What these athletes have achieved is extraordinary. Their return is a day of celebration for all Basotho. Even those who did not win medals should know they are champions because qualifying for the Commonwealth Games is itself a remarkable achievement."

Inspiring the next generation

Member of Parliament Thabo Maretlane congratulated the team, saying the achievements would encourage young people to pursue sporting excellence.

"I congratulate these athletes for bringing great honour to Lesotho. It is especially encouraging that, for the first time, a woman has won a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games. This will inspire young girls across the country to pursue their sporting dreams."

In his keynote address, the Prime Minister, Samuel NtsoakoaneMatekane warmly welcomed Team Lesotho and congratulated the athletes on their outstanding achievements, particularly the historic bronze medals won at the Games.

He reaffirmed the Government of Lesotho's unwavering commitment to the development of Sport and pledged that the Government will continue to invest in and support the growth of sport across the country.

The Prime Minister also called upon the private sector, development partners and all stakeholders to join hands in supporting and investing in Sport, recognizing its power to inspire, unite and transform lives.

As a token of appreciation for their remarkable achievement, the Prime Minister announced a cash reward of M50,000 for each bronze medallist. This is in addition to the M20,000 performance incentives that will be awarded by the Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) Lesotho.

The reception marked a fitting celebration of Team Lesotho's dedication, resilience and historic success, while reaffirming the nation's commitment to empowering its athletes to achieve even greater success on the international stage.

Eyes on Los Angeles 2028

While celebrations filled Makoanyane Square, Team Lesotho has already shifted its focus to the future. Officials and athletes say preparations have begun for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, where they hope to build on the momentum created in Glasgow.

For a nation that had waited two decades to celebrate Commonwealth Games medallists, the achievements of RapelangMaselela and Pooana Khoali represent more than bronze medals. They have rekindled hope, inspired a new generation of athletes, and reminded Basotho that with determination and hard work, Lesotho can compete among the best on the international stage.

Matlama set tone for new season with Alliance Cup triumph

Seabata Mahao

Matlama FC have sent an early warning to their premier league rivals after lifting the 2026 Alliance Challenge Cup, with the victory reinforcing the momentum they built under coach Thabile Secker towards the end of last season.

Tse Putsoa defeated Linare 1-0 in the final at Setsoto Stadium on August 1 to claim their second Alliance Challenge Cup title, producing another disciplined display that reflected the steady improvement the side has shown since Secker took charge midway through last season.

The triumph not only earned Matlama the tournament's M100,000 winner-takes-all prize but also set the tone for a club intent on carrying its impressive finish to last season into the new campaign.

Lebohang Chocholo struck the decisive goal just a minute after the restart, finishing off a chance in the 46th minute to settle a closely contested final in which clear-cut opportunities were few.

Linare pushed for an equaliser, but Matlama's organised defence held firm to

Matlama set tone for new season with Alliance Cup triumph

preserve the slender advantage and secure another piece of silverware.

The victory also highlighted the progress made under Secker, whose arrival midway through last season transformed Matlama into one of the league's form teams. Their latest success suggests that strong finish was no temporary resurgence but the foundation of a side aiming to challenge for major honours this season.

Matlama reached the final after edging Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) 1-0 in the semi-finals through a Litšepe Marabe goal, while Linare booked their place by defeating rivals Lioli by the same scoreline.

The champions' dominance throughout the tournament was underlined by a clean sweep of the major individual awards.

Goalkeeper Leluma Mofoka was named Goalkeeper of the Tournament after another assured display in the final and collected M3,000.

Forwards Litšepe Marabe and Chocholo shared the Top Goal Scorer award, reflecting Matlama's attacking threat throughout the competition.

Midfielder Tsele Rankhasa was voted Player of the Tournament after a string of influential performances that helped drive Matlama to the title. He also received M3,000.

Matlama's haul of individual honours capped a commanding tournament in which they combined defensive solidity with clinical finishing, providing further evidence that the club is building into a formidable outfit ahead of the new season.

The Alliance Challenge Cup, now in its ninth edition, has grown into one of Lesotho's premier pre-season football competitions, bringing together some of the country's leading clubs in a winner-takes-all format.

Tournament organisers also retained the women's competition following its successful introduction last year, reaffirming their commitment to expanding opportunities for women's football in Lesotho.

Lifofane draw positives from Chiefs defeat

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Premier League (VPL) title hopefuls Lifofane FC have turned their full attention to the start of the 2026/27 domestic campaign after wrapping up their pre-season programme with a demanding test against South African giants Kaizer Chiefs' reserve side.

Despite suffering a 3-1 defeat in Sunday's international friendly, the VPL outfit believes the encounter provided exactly the type of challenge needed ahead of the new season, which kicks off on 22 August.

Lifofane will begin their campaign against Limkokwing University as they look to build on last season's impressive performances that currently see them occupying second place in the league standings.

The hosts made a dream start in front of an enthusiastic home crowd, with newly signed defender KhotsoMoleko making an immediate impact against his former club. The ex-Kaizer Chiefs senior player rose highest to head home the opening goal, handing Lifofane a deserved early advantage.

However, the South African visitors gradually found their rhythm and restored parity before the halftime break through Donay Jansen.

Kaizer Chiefs DDC returned from the interval with renewed purpose and increased intensity. KamogeloMalefo completed the turnaround by firing the visitors into the lead before Eliyahu Benjamin added a third goal to seal a convincing victory for the Glamour Boys' youthful side.

While the final scoreline favoured the visitors, the result was secondary to Lifofane's broader objective of evaluating

Lifofane Vs Chiefs

the squad before competitive football resumes. The technical team rotated players throughout the contest, using the match to assess combinations, fitness levels and tactical execution against quality opposition.

The performance offered several positives, particularly in the team's ability to retain possession and build attacks from the back. However, it also exposed areas requiring improvement, including clinical finishing, decision-making in the final third and maintaining consistency when facing high-intensity opponents.

Lifofane Public Relations and Communications Officer Teboho Ntoane said the club had achieved its primary objective despite the defeat.

"Our objective was to assess the team's readiness and use this match as part of our preparations for the upcoming league season. We achieved that objective," Ntoane said.

He added that the lessons learned would prove valuable as the technical team fine-tunes the squad before the season opener.

"The players and technical staff have learned important lessons from this match, and we will use those lessons to strengthen the team before the league campaign begins."

The friendly attracted a sizeable crowd, with local football supporters eager to welcome the Kaizer Chiefs delegation to Lesotho. Fans were particularly excited by the presence of first-team midfielder MduduziShabalala, who travelled with the squad and drew significant attention throughout the visit.

Among those in attendance was long-time Kaizer Chiefs supporter Thabo Thoabala, who described the occasion as a memorable experience but admitted disappointment with Lifofane's performance.

"It is disappointing to see a Vodacom Premier League club lose to a youth development side like Kaizer Chiefs DDC. I expected Lifofane to control the game, play with confidence and secure the victory," he said.

Despite his criticism, Thoabala acknowledged the importance of the fixture as part of Lifofane's preparations and expressed hope that clubs from Lesotho would continue raising their standards to compete consistently with South Africa's elite.

With pre-season now complete, Lifofane's focus shifts to the opening whistle of the new VPL season. Although Sunday's defeat exposed shortcomings that require attention, the club remains confident that the experience gained against one of South Africa's leading development academies will prove invaluable as they prepare to launch another ambitious domestic campaign.

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Lijabatho heads to Madagascar for CAF opener

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Premier League (VPL) champions Lijabatho FC will begin their maiden CAF Champions League campaign against Madagascar's CFFA after the two clubs were paired in the preliminary round draw conducted yesterday at the Confederation of African Football (CAF) headquarters in Cairo, Egypt.

The Morija-based side, which secured its first-ever league title during the 2025/26 season, will host or travel for the first leg over the weekend of September4–6, with the return fixture scheduled for September11–13.

CAF is expected to announce the venues and kick-off times in due course.

Lijabatho FC squad

The draw marks another historic milestone for Lijabatho, who will become the latest Lesotho club to compete in Africa's premier inter-club competition after earning qualification through their championship-winning domestic campaign.

The club faces a difficult assignment against the Madagascan outfit, but the tie also presents an opportunity to make an immediate statement on the continental stage and boost Lesotho's football profile.

Lijabatho qualified for the 2026/27 TotalEnergies CAF Champions League after clinching their maiden Vodacom Premier League title, capping a memorable campaign that saw the Morija outfit emerge as the country's new football champions.

Preparations are now expected to intensify ahead of the two-legged encounter as the club seeks to overcome its first continental hurdle and advance to the next round of the competition.

A positive result against CFFA would be a significant achievement for both the club and Lesotho football, which has struggled in recent years to make a lasting impact in CAF inter-club competitions.

With just weeks remaining before their continental debut, Lijabatho's technical team will now shift its focus to ensuring the squad is fully prepared for what promises to be one of the biggest fixtures in the club's history.

FNB invests in grassroots football development

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

FNB Lesotho has strengthened its support for grassroots football by donating soccer balls to football academies across the country as it concluded its **"Swipe, Tap and Win"** customer rewards campaign.

The initiative, run in partnership with Visa, was linked to the 2026 FIFA World Cup held in the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19. Besides rewarding customers, the campaign also sought to leave a lasting impact by supporting the development of young footballers.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, FNB Marketing Manager Lerato Mohale said the campaign produced 42 winners through weekly and monthly prize draws.

He said some winners received the equivalent of three months' salary, covering the period from July to September, while others walked away with grocery vouchers and paraffin. The winners included both private banking and business banking clients.

FNB Chief Marketing Officer Seema Tšotetsi said the bank wanted the campaign to leave behind tangible benefits beyond customer rewards.

He said the bank's intention is to contribute towards a better future for the country and its citizens. She added that investing in football academies will help build their future.

Strategic Business Development Manager Pontšo Khalane said the campaign was also designed to encourage customers to make greater use of their bank cards.

She said card payments are simple, convenient and can be used even when customers are travelling outside the country.

She said, "Our core purpose is to unleash talents and we help Lesotho create a core purpose."

Khalane said although the campaign has ended, customers will continue to enjoy the benefits associated with using their bank cards. As part of the campaign's legacy, the bank donated soccer balls to football academies to support youth development.

Receiving the donation on behalf of the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), Secretary-General Mokhosi Mohapi welcomed the initiative, saying investing in football academies would produce long-term results.

Mohapi challenged FNB to develop a five-year partnership plan that would allow progress to be measured over time.

"It is not for optics or newspaper pages, but we need to grow football," he said.

He also congratulated the beneficiary academies, saying the donated balls should be put to good use in developing future football talent.

The beneficiary academies were Santos FC, Emmanuel Youth Development Academy, FC Stoko Academy, Mabuthile Young Stars FC, FC The Boys Academy, PK Stars Ladies FC, Mabote Classic, Millennium Park Soccer Academy (MPSA) and Malimo FC Soccer Academy. Each academy received 15 soccer balls.

Speaking on behalf of the recipients, Bofihla 'Neko thanked FNB for investing in grassroots football.

"Let us accept these gifts with open hearts so that they bring change in our communities, so that we have a brighter future for Likuena," he said.