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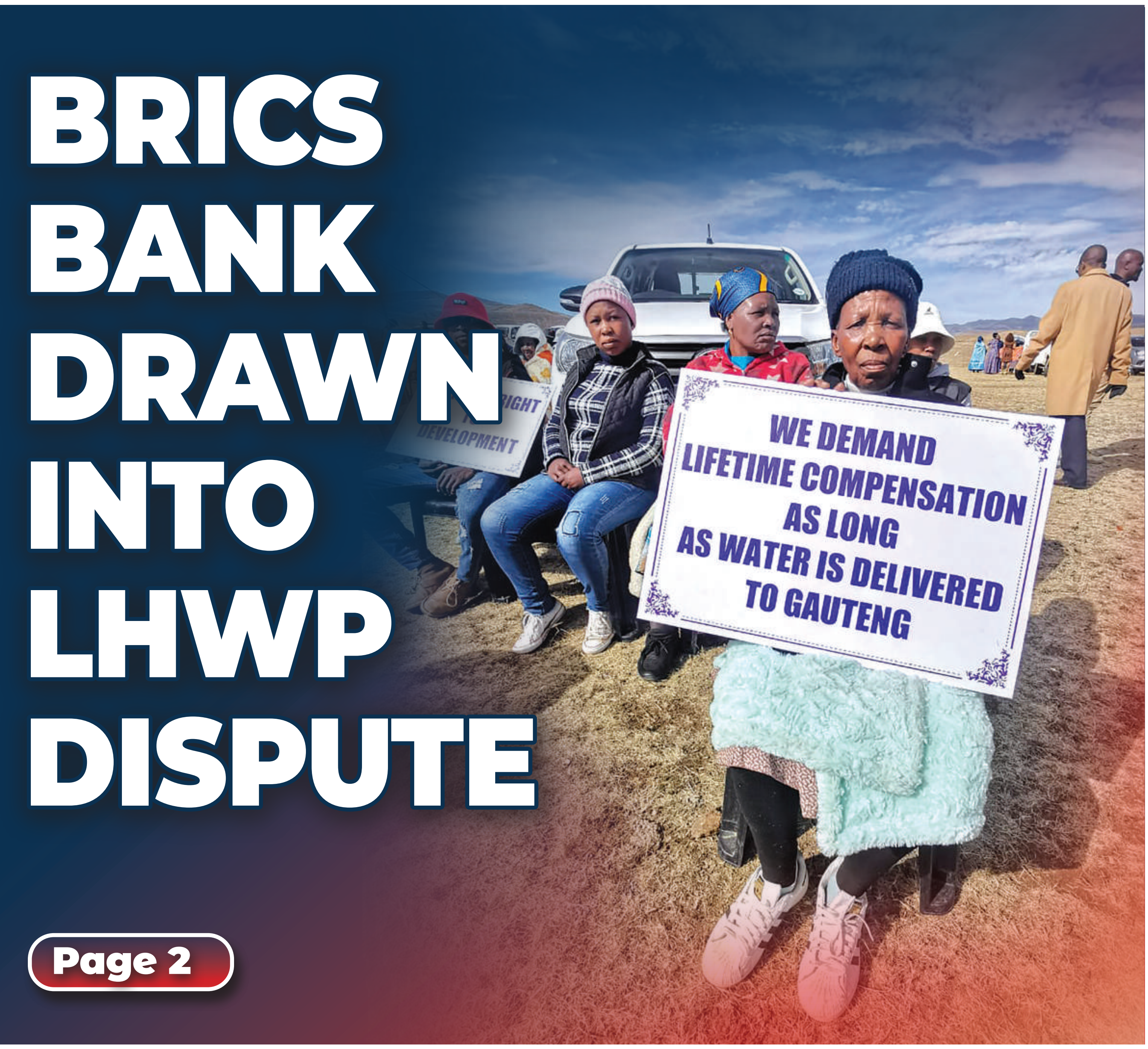
# BRICS BANK DRAWN INTO LHWP DISPUTE

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# BRICS bank drawn into LHWP dispute

**Lekhetho Makhanya**

Two civil society organisations have accused the New Development Bank (NDB), the Shanghai-based lender established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, of failing to adequately engage communities affected by the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

In a letter dated June 18, 2026, to NDB President Dilma Rousseff and the bank's board of directors, Accountability Counsel, an international nonprofit organisation, and Lesotho-based Seinoli Legal Centre said the bank had failed for two years to respond meaningfully to concerns raised by communities affected by the multibillion maloti project.

The organisations said the concerns include relocation, gender-based violence, labour conditions, environmental impacts and threats to livelihoods.

The dispute has drawn the NDB into a wider accountability debate surrounding LHWP Phase II, one of Lesotho's biggest infrastructure projects and a critical component of the country's long-standing water relationship with South Africa.

The LHWP is a binational project between Lesotho and South Africa established under a treaty signed by the two countries in 1986.

Its purpose is to harness water from Lesotho's highlands and transfer it to South Africa's Vaal River system, while using the water-transfer infrastructure to generate hydroelectric power for Lesotho.

The first phase was completed in 2003 and inaugurated in 2004.

It included the construction of Katse and Mohale dams, a network of tunnels and the Muela hydropower station. The project transformed Lesotho into a major water supplier to South Africa while creating a significant source of royalty revenue and electricity-generation infrastructure for the country.

The water is transferred from Lesotho through the system into the Vaal River system, which supplies Gauteng and other economically important parts of South Africa.

The New Development Bank itself describes the Vaal River basin as strategically important to South Africa, noting that Gauteng, Free State, North West and Mpumalanga together account for roughly 60 percent of South Africa's gross domestic product and 45 percent of its population.

Phase II of the LHWP is intended to significantly increase the volume of water transferred to South Africa.

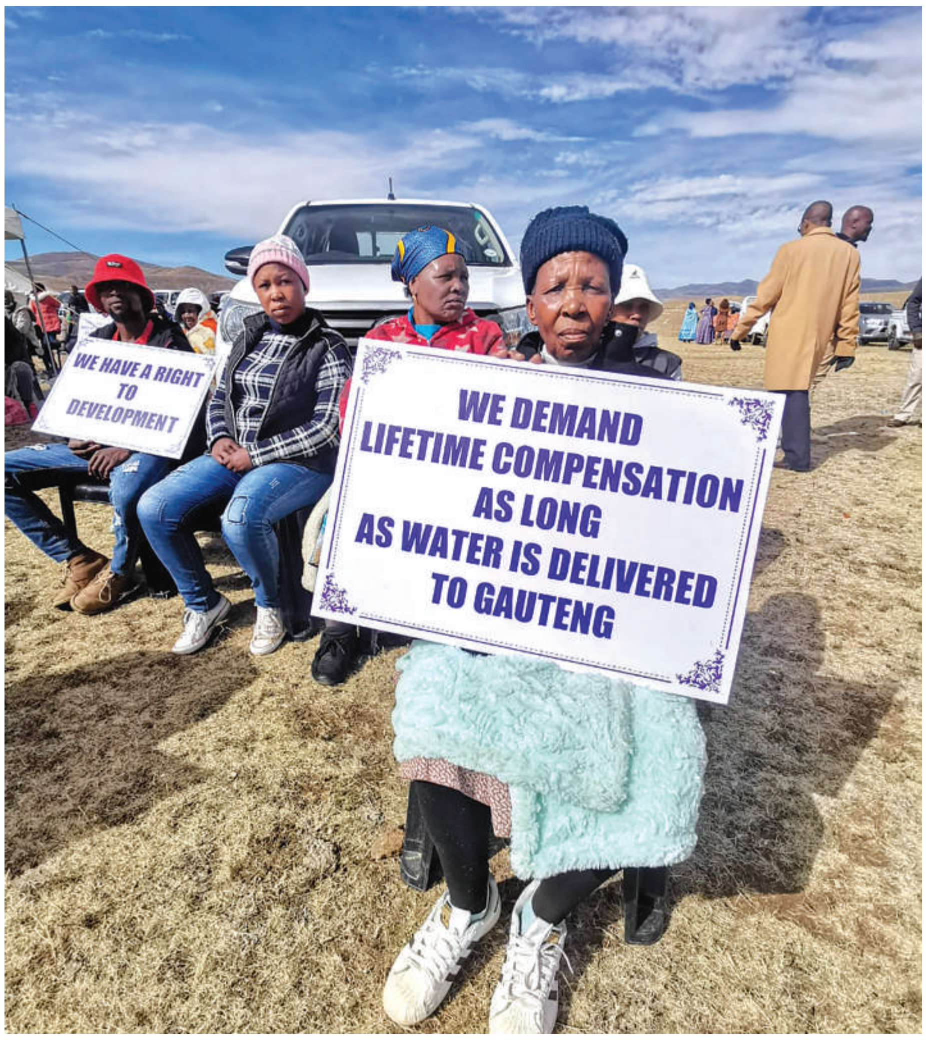
Its centrepiece is the Polihali Dam and reservoir in Mokhotlong, together with a roughly 38-kilometre transfer tunnel connecting the Polihali reservoir to the Katse reservoir.

The LHDA says the Polihali reservoir will have a storage capacity of about 2.325 billion cubic metres and a surface area of approximately 5,053 hectares when full.

The Polihali Dam will stand about 166 metres high, making it larger than the Mohale Dam constructed during Phase I.

Water from Polihali will flow by gravity through the transfer tunnel to Katse and then continue through the existing system towards South Africa.

According to the LHDA, the existing transfer rate of about 780 million cubic metres a year is expected to increase incrementally to approximately 1.27 billion cubic metres a year once Phase II is operational.




*Communities in Mokhotlong staged protests in 2023 over delayed compensation, lost land, and unfulfilled promises related to the Polihali Dam project under Phase II of the LHWP*

The project also includes significant associated infrastructure, including roads, bridges, electricity infrastructure, telecommunications, accommodation, quarries and other facilities required to support construction and operation.

Phase II also includes a hydropower component. The LHDA has said power generation from the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme is expected to begin in 2029, while water transfer is expected to commence in 2028.

Phase II is being financed through a consortium involving multilateral development banks and other lenders.

The NDB approved financing of R3.2 billion for the project in 2019. Its loan is to the South African TCTA, which is responsible for financing the project on the South African side, with the LHDA serving as the implementing agency in Lesotho.

The NDB's project documentation originally put the total cost of the project at about R31.8 billion, with NDB contributing R3.2 billion and the African Development Bank R1.3 billion, with the remainder expected from local lenders and other financing sources.

The project has since grown into a substantially larger undertaking in terms of overall construction expenditure, with major contracts for the Polihali Dam, transfer tunnel and associated infrastructure running into billions of maloti.

While the project promises increased water revenues, infrastructure and energy generation, its physical footprint has significant consequences for communities in the project area.

The LHDA acknowledges that approximately 5,000 hectares of land will be flooded by the Polihali reservoir.

The affected area includes homesteads, cultivation land, grazing land, trees and other natural resources, while access to some resources and facilities will also be disrupted.

The authority has established processes to register affected land and assets, determine compensation entitlements and establish relocation and livelihood-restoration preferences.

It has also prepared resettlement action plans for various components of the project.

It is this intersection between a project of national and regional strategic importance and its impact on communities that has become central to the dispute involving the NDB.

In their letter, the two groups, which describe themselves as civil society organisations supporting communities affected by the project, said they had been raising environmental and social concerns with the three lenders since 2024, including issues involving relocation, gender-based violence, labour conditions and threats to residents' livelihoods.

"We have been engaging with the consortium of financiers — including the African Development Bank, Development Bank of Southern Africa, and NDB — since 2024 regarding urgent environmental and social concerns raised by affected communities," the groups wrote in the letter, which was signed by Reitumetse Nkoti Mabula of the Seinoli Legal Centre.

In 2025, the groups said, they filed a complaint with the African Development Bank's Independent Recourse Mechanism, citing harm to livelihoods, the environment and relocation processes, and requested a formal dispute-resolution process. They also filed a complaint with the Development Bank of Southern Africa's Independent Grievance Mechanism.

But the New Development Bank, the groups said, has no comparable independent accountability mechanism of its own, so the African Development Bank's mechanism could not formally draw it into the complaint as a co-financier, leaving the bank, in the groups' words, "unaware of the issues and uninvolved in the process of remedial action."

The groups said they had tried repeatedly since August 2024 to engage the bank directly, including at its annual meeting in Cape Town and with its Africa Regional Center, its Independent Evaluation Department and its Environmental, Social and Governance Department. None of the attempts, they said, produced a meaningful response.

"This experience has brought to the fore how inaccessible NDB is for communities affected by its financing," the groups wrote. "The lack of a formal complaints channel creates a clear feedback and remedy gap."

The letter asked Rousseff and the board to direct the bank's relevant departments to open a dialogue with affected communities and to contact the African Development Bank's mechanism to help monitor the existing complaint and carry out any remedies that result.

The groups also said communities affected by the project had separately raised complaints through grievance channels run by the project itself, without resolution, evidence, they argued, that requiring only project-level mechanisms "does not guarantee access to justice or accountability."

Mosa Letsie, a program lawyer at the Seinoli Legal Centre, said in an interview that the organisation was still awaiting a response from Rousseff. Letsie said the groups had made "positive progress" in their engagement with the project's other financiers, but not with the New Development Bank.

On its website, the bank describes its mandate as having "strong mandate and potential to contribute to global growth and development."

Newsday ...pacing standards
(+266) 2231 4267/ 5945 8983

Carlton Centre
3rd Floor
Room 302
Kingsway
Maseru

PUBLISHER
Newsday Media (Pty) (Ltd)
Maseru

MANAGING EDITOR
Lerato Matheka
managingeditor@newsdayonline.co.ls

NEWS EDITOR
Kananelo Boloetse
editor@newsdayonline.co.ls

SUB EDITOR
Bereng Mpaki

NEWS ROOM
Ntsoaki Motaung
Seabata Mahao
Thoboloko Ntšonyane
Lekhetho Makhanya

CONTRIBUTORS
Theko Tlebere
Motsamai Mokotjo

PRODUCTION
Bataung Monaheng

VIDEOGRAPHER
Tumelo Taole

DISTRIBUTION
Lehlohonolo Mantsoe

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

WEBSITE
www.newsdayonline.co.ls

FACEBOOK
Newsday Newspaper LS
X
@LsNewsday

INSTAGRAM
Newsday Lesotho

PRINTER
Thabure Print Media

# Lesotho spends M1.2 billion on social assistance

## ...MPs push for tighter oversight

**Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

Lesotho spent M1.2 billion on social assistance in the last financial year, yet Members of Parliament (MPs) say the impact remains uneven and delivery systems need urgent strengthening.

Nearly a billion Maloti, more than 70 percent of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development's budget, goes to old-age pensions of M1,000 a month for citizens aged 70 and above.

Child grants reach about 38,000 households with quarterly payments of M750 to M1 050. Public assistance supports roughly 16,500 beneficiaries at M250 per household, the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children bursary covers 38,000 students, and the disability grant reaches 5,000 people at M1,050 quarterly.

About 9 percent of the ministry's budget is allocated to children's programmes.

These figures formed the backdrop to a UNICEF-convened dialogue with the Public Accounts Committee, the Social Cluster Portfolio Committee and parliamentary staff in Leribe on Thursday. Participants stressed that parliamentary oversight must improve to close coverage gaps, eliminate payments to ineligible households, and ensure timely, transparent and dignified delivery.

Lesotho's social assistance architecture has evolved over decades. Public Assistance, the oldest scheme, began in 1976 to support the most destitute. The Orphaned and Vulnerable Children bursary was introduced in 2000 to keep secondary-school children in education. The universal Old Age Pension was launched in 2004 to raise living standards and reduce poverty among the elderly. It has been fully financed by the government from the outset.

The Child Grants Programme started as a pilot in 2009 with European Union funding and UNICEF technical support, aiming to improve the living standards of orphans and vulnera-

ble children, reduce malnutrition, boost health outcomes and increase school enrolment. The government later assumed full financing and scaled it nationally.

The first National Social Protection Strategy (2014/15–2018/19), launched in 2015, set a vision of "a decent and dignified quality of life for all Basotho, free from poverty and hunger." It introduced a life-cycle approach. The current NSPS II (2021–2031) builds on that foundation, seeking to expand core programmes, improve coordination, strengthen shock-responsiveness and harmonise delivery systems, including the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA).

Despite these investments, challenges persist. Data show 77 percent of children aged 0–23 months are stunted. Officials warned that forecasted El Niño effects will hit poor households hardest. Transfer values have not kept pace with inflation, and fragmented information systems mean ministries often operate in isolation.

Social Cluster Portfolio Committee Chairperson Mokhothu Makhalanyane said social assistance is a moral and constitutional duty, not charity. "A promise on paper is not enough. That promise must be felt in the pocket on time, with dignity," he said. He questioned the tangible impact of the M1.2 billion spent and called for a single integrated data system, wider use of mobile and bank payments, and an end to beneficiaries travelling long distances at high cost to collect grants. "Efficiency is integrity in action. How do we digitise integrity? ... Lesotho is a caring nation. Botho is our part. Let no child sleep hungry because they did not receive their assistance."

Acting UNICEF Country Representative Dr Bob Muchabaiwa noted that Lesotho is unusual in the region because its core programmes are financed almost entirely from the national budget. He welcomed the NISSA upgrade but said cash values remain too low and shock-response financing too unpredictable. He urged MPs to secure adequate 2027/28 budget allocations for NISSA and the Management Information System for Social Assistance, scrutinise expenditure, collect citizen feedback and prioritise children, youth, persons with disabilities and vulnerable households. At minimum, transfers should cover a basic food basket.

Ministry officials said the country is midway through NSPS II. Core programmes are government-funded, with technical support from UNICEF, the European Union and the World Bank.

Maseru District Manager and Senior Social Welfare Officer Takatso Shale appealed for parliamentary support to harmonise grant values across programmes.

UN Resident Coordinator Taija Kontinen-Sharp described social protection as an investment in human capital that advances Sustainable Development Goals on poverty, health and inequality. She called on MPs to expedite the Children's Bill, advance digitisation and mobilise domestic resources as external budgets shrink.

PAC member Dr Tšeliso Moroke and Social Cluster member Remaketse Sehlabaka expressed frustration that the same problems have been raised for years with limited progress. PAC Chairperson 'Machabane Lemphane-Letsie suggested removing the Ministry of Social Development from direct payment of grants could resolve many operational difficulties.

Impact, she said, must be visible on the ground, not merely discussed.

# LMPS senior officers convicted in Khetheng's mysterious demise

**Lekhetho Makhanya**

A dark cloud that has hovered over the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) regarding the mysterious circumstances surrounding the murder of its young officer, Police Constable (PC) Mokalekale Khetheng, is clearing after the High Court convicted two senior officers this week.

On Monday, High Court Justice Charles Hungwe handed down judgment in the case of Superintendent Thabo Tšukulu and Senior Inspector Mothibeli Mofolo, both stationed at Hlotse Police Station in the Leribe district, where Tšukulu served as station commander.

PC Khetheng was alleged to have burned down the Mokhotlong District Police Commander's house and Pitso House in Leribe in 2016. He was arrested in Hlotse on arson charges on 26 March that year but was never seen alive again. Hlotse police authorities claimed he had escaped from custody under sketchy circumstances.

Khetheng's disappearance sparked national outrage. In August 2017, his remains were exhumed from Lepereng Cemetery in Maseru, confirming that he had been secretly buried and that his death had been concealed.

Police investigations focused on at least four officers stationed in Hlotse: Inspector Haleokoe Taasoana, Sub-Inspector Mabitle Matona, Senior Inspector Mofolo and Superintendent Tšukulu. They were charged with the murder of their colleague and with concealing his death, among other counts relating to the events of 26 March 2016.

*Judge Charles Hungwe*

Justice Hungwe found Senior Inspector Mofolo guilty of the main charge of murdering Khetheng. Superintendent Tšukulu was acquitted on the main murder charge but convicted on the alternative count of being an accessory after the fact — effectively obstructing justice by concealing Khetheng's death.

Both Mofolo and Tšukulu were also found guilty of perjury, attempted perjury and inducement to perjury for misleading the court and/or influencing other witnesses to give false evidence under oath.

The judge found no reasonable evidence establishing the participation of the other two co-accused, Inspector Haleokoe Taasoana and Sub-Inspector Mabitle Matona. Both were acquitted of all charges.

The four officers had initially been charged alongside former Police Commissioner Molahlehi Letsoepa, who fled the country in 2017 claiming that the administration of former Prime Minister Thomas Thabane wanted to assassinate him. Although he was later removed from the original charge sheet, Letsoepa was charged separately in February last year after returning from self-imposed exile. He is currently out on bail pending a separate trial.

They were also charged with the current Minister of Labour and Employment, Tšeliso Mokhosi, but the charges against him were dropped in July 2020. Mokhosi, who is also deputy leader of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), was subsequently turned into a state witness. He had served as Minister of Defence and National Security in the Pakalitha Mosisili-led coalition government between 2015 and 2017.During closing submissions, Crown Prosecutor Advocate Nthabeleng Nkoe argued that the evidence pointed to a carefully orchestrated murder carried out by the police officers acting in concert, followed by an elaborate cover-up.

"My Lord, the accused stand before this court charged with five counts, including the murder of PC Khetheng. PC Khetheng's death was not an accident. The evidence that the Crown has presented before this court shows that it was a premeditated murder," Adv Nkoe submitted.

She further argued that the accused attempted to conceal the crime by misleading Khetheng's family about his whereabouts and later giving false evidence during the habeas corpus proceedings.

"The accused pointed out the place of the incident and that was exactly where the corpse of PC Khetheng was found. Tšukulu was furthering the plans of the then Commissioner of Police Molahlehi Letsoepa and he recruited Mofolo and Matona, who in turn recruited Taasoane," she said.

The case is one of the high-profile killings that shocked the nation during the period of political instability between 2014 and 2017, when allegations of abuse of power within the country's security agencies were rife.

Justice Hungwe reserved sentencing pending mitigation by the defence. Defence counsel Advocates Karabo Mohau (KC) and Zwelakhe Mda (KC) agreed with the judge to schedule the mitigation hearing for 15 September. Justice Hungwe confirmed the date.

# Heavy rains slash Lesotho's 2026 cereal harvest by half

## ...Food insecurity set to worsen

**Staff Reporter**

Lesotho's 2026 cereal production is expected to plunge to about half the previous five-year average after heavy rains devastated the main season, leaving more households facing acute hunger in the coming months.

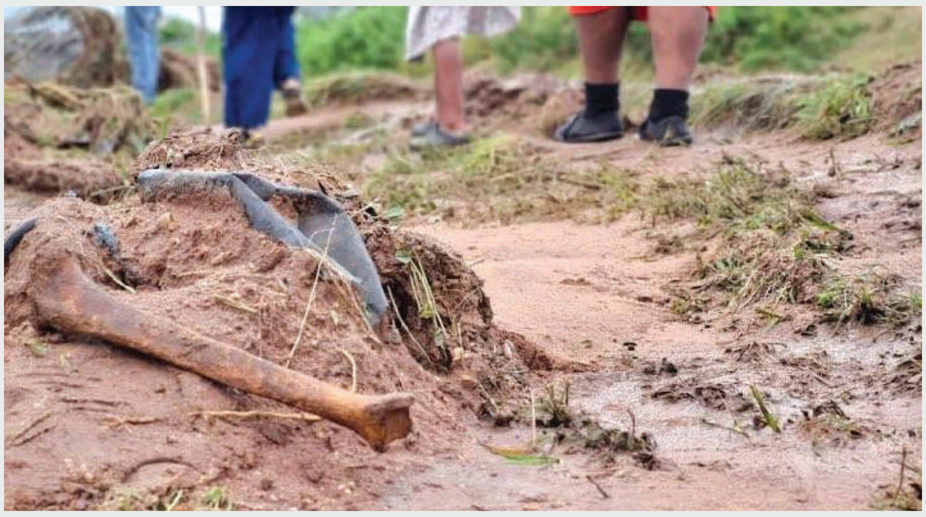
According to the latest FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) Country Brief released on 24 August 2026, preliminary estimates put total production of maize, sorghum and wheat at a below-average 42 000 tonnes. The sharp drop is driven mainly by a smaller maize harvest, the country's key food staple, caused by reductions in both planted area and yields.

"Periods of heavy rainfall in November 2025 as well as in February and April 2026… caused waterlogging stress and curbed yields," the FAO brief states. The impact was particularly severe in the key maize-producing district of Berea, where yields were assessed to be roughly half of last year's level. Sorghum production also fell markedly, while wheat, grown mainly in the winter months, is forecast at an average level.

Harvesting of the main season crops concluded in June. Final production figures are expected in October.

The reduced harvest is projected to push maize import requirements for the 2026/27 marketing year (April/March) to an above-average 130 000 tonnes. Lesotho remains structurally dependent on imports even in good years and relies heavily on well-established trade links with South Africa, its main grain supplier. FAO notes that the overall cereal supply outlook for 2026/27 remains favourable thanks to ample exportable surpluses in the region.

Despite the poor domestic harvest, food inflation has stayed low. Annual food inflation eased to just under 2 percent in June 2026, down sharply from 6.5 percent a year earlier, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. The bread and cereals sub-index, the largest component of the food basket, fell 6 percent year-on-year in June.



"The lower cereal prices largely reflect regional market dynamics rather than domestic production conditions," the FAO brief explains. As a net importer, Lesotho's domestic grain prices track those in South Africa, where wholesale prices have fallen sharply in 2026.

Meat prices, however, rose 8 percent in the year to June, driven by disease-related supply disruptions after foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks in South Africa in 2025 and in Lesotho in 2026.

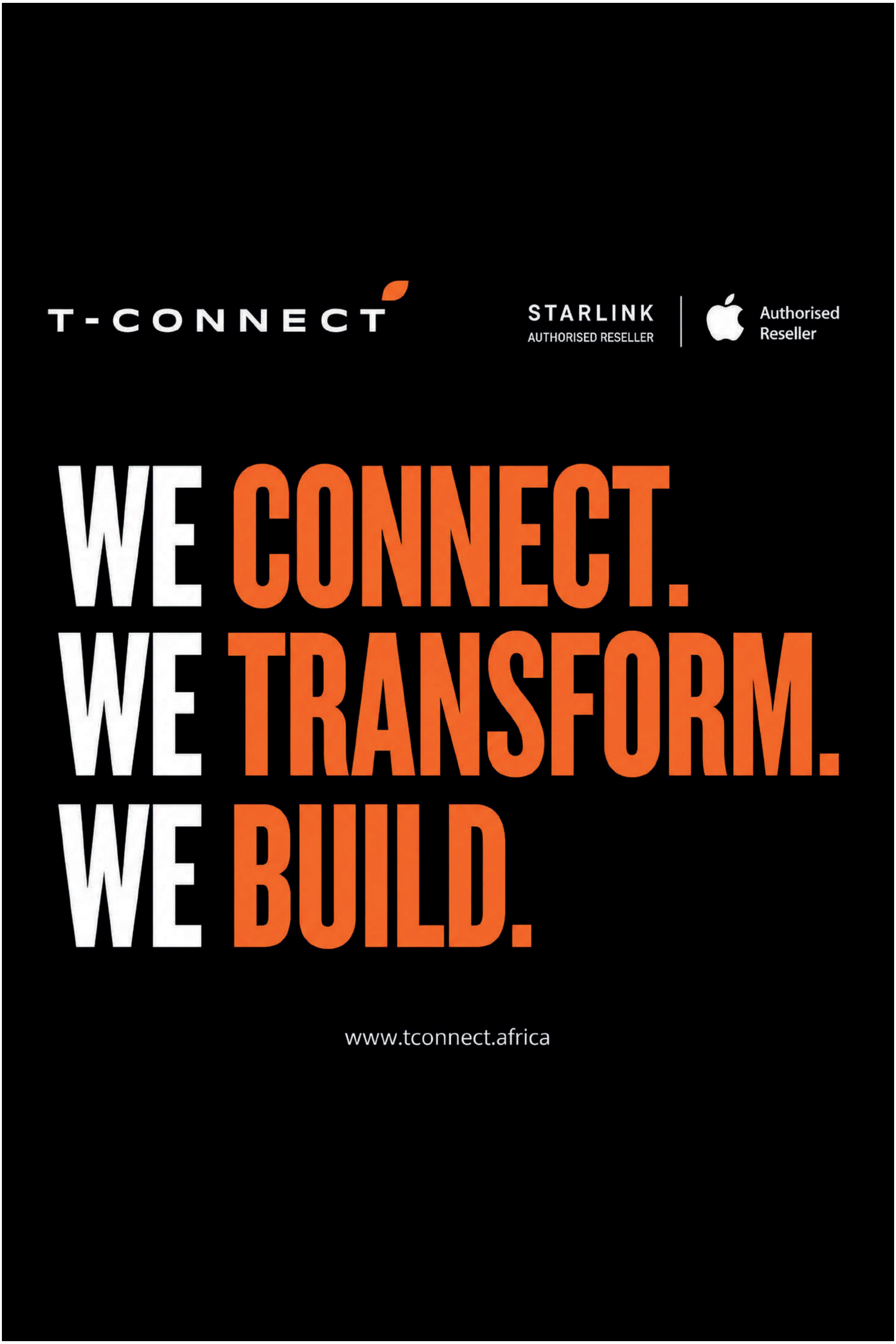
The poor harvest is already limiting any improvement in food security. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, released in August 2026, shows that about 234 000 people, 15 percent of the analysed population, are currently facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse levels of acute food insecurity.

That number is projected to rise to 311 000 people (20 percent) during the October 2026–March 2027 lean season.

"The expected deterioration reflects the combined effects of a below-average agricultural production, as well as reduced agricultural labour opportunities and household incomes," FAO states.

Looking ahead, forecast El Niño conditions raise the risk of a delayed onset of seasonal rains and below-average rainfall for the 2026/27 cropping season, which could further constrain cereal production in 2027 and reduce rural employment opportunities, increasing pressure on households' food access.

The findings underscore Lesotho's vulnerability to climate shocks and its heavy reliance on regional grain markets at a time when domestic production has taken a severe hit.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# Ntataise: Lesotho's promise to leave no child behind

***A national Training of Trainers workshop in Berea prepared Master Trainers to carry Teaching at the Right Level, known locally as Ntataise, into 300 primary schools, helping learners in Grades 3 to 5 build the foundational literacy and numeracy skills they need to succeed.***


**Ntsoaki Motaung**

BEREA — Inside a bright training room in Berea, a circle of District Resource Teachers and Inspectors lean forward as a facilitator holds up simple letter cards and number charts.

One by one, participants take turns role-playing a learner struggling to sound out words or solve a basic sum.

Others practise the quick one-on-one assessment, carefully noting what the "learner" can already do before gently guiding them into a flexible group.

"It is known that learners cannot grasp information at the same time when a teacher is teaching. Some lag behind while the teacher moves forward with those who understand," said Lehlaka Mohapi, a Schools Inspector from Quthing, reflecting on the morning's practical exercise.

For years, this has been the reality in many of Lesotho's classrooms. Now, a new government-led programme is working to change that story.

Through the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UNICEF, and technical assistance from TaRL Africa, Lesotho is rolling out Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) – known here as "Ntataise," Sesotho for "lead me by the hand." The goal is to make sure no child is left behind.

Ntataise is a national commitment to meet every learner where they are, and guide them towards their full potential. According to Mohapi, the programme focuses on children in Grades 3, 4 and 5, to strengthen their foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

The need is urgent. A World Bank learning poverty estimate cited in the programme's documentation puts the scale of the challenge in stark terms. An estimated 97 percent of children in Lesotho are unable to read and understand a simple, age-appropriate text by the age of ten.

Under the traditional approach of moving through the curriculum at the same pace for an entire class, many learners are left behind. Mohapi said Ntataise is changing that by making sure each child gets help at the right time and in the right way.

NTATAISE AT A GLANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| **What it is** | Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), known in Lesotho as "Ntataise" — Sesotho for "lead me by the hand" |
| **Led by** | Ministry of Education and Training, with support from the Global Partnership for Education and UNICEF, and technical assistance from TaRL Africa |
| **Who it's for** | Learners in Grades 3, 4 and 5, to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy |
| **Reach** | 300 primary schools across all ten districts |
| **Teacher training** | 600 teachers — two from every participating school — to be trained by newly qualified Master Trainers |
| **Timeline** | Two implementation cycles, running from May 2026 to December 2027 |
| **The challenge** | An estimated 97% of 10-year-olds in Lesotho cannot read and understand a simple, age-appropriate text (World Bank learning poverty estimate) |

At the heart of TaRL is a simple but powerful idea that teaching should meet the learner at their current level, not their grade. Teachers use quick assessment tools to find out what each child can do, group learners according to their current skills, and support them with activities matched to their needs. Progress is checked regularly, and learners move between groups as they improve.

"We are taught about grouping them according to their challenges. Those who cannot read letters, those struggling with words, and those who struggle with reading a paragraph, so that a teacher can assist them separately from those who already understand," Mohapi explained.

The goal is for learners to move up from one group to the next, step by step, until they catch up with their peers and can keep pace with the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education and Training, together with GPE, UNICEF and TaRL Africa, recently held a national Training of Trainers workshop in Berea to launch this approach.

District Resource Teachers and Inspectors from across the country gathered to become Master Trainers and mentors, joined by representatives of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and the Lesotho College of Education (LCE), to strengthen the link between TaRL, the national curriculum and teacher development.

These Master Trainers will now train 600 teachers — two from each of the 300 participating primary schools — who will carry Ntataise into classrooms across all ten districts. Implementation is expected to roll out in two cycles between May 2026 and December 2027, woven into Lesotho's existing education structures under government leadership.

According to UNICEF, TaRL does not replace Lesotho's national curriculum, permanently label learners, or separate them by ability. Grouping is flexible, and groups change as children progress.

'Maliteboho Lehloba, a District Resource

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# Ntataise: Lesotho's promise to leave no child behind

FROM PAGE 6

Teacher from Leribe, explained how the approach will work on the ground. "When we get to the schools, we assess Grade 3, 4 and 5 learners using the tools provided. We are also expected to use locally and readily available materials while passing the knowledge on to other teachers," she said.

She said TaRL sessions will run for 80 minutes, four days a week, focusing on one subject each day. After two weeks, learners are reassessed to track their progress, and teachers adjust their support accordingly.

Parents and communities also have a role to play, Lehloba said. "TaRL is also going to help parents easily monitor their children's progress. We appeal to parents to encourage their children by always checking on their progress at school." She also urged schools and teachers to welcome the programme: "It is when they have welcomed us that even the learners will accept us, and we will get the results we want."

Bhekilizwe Maphosa, Programme Management and Partnerships Coordinator for TaRL Africa, explained that TaRL is an evidence-based approach that began in India and is now used in more than 18 African countries. "The methodology aims to reach learners at their right level, to equip them with good foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and to ensure that they do not fall behind in their learning," he said.

Unlike traditional teaching, which groups children mainly by age or grade, Maphosa said TaRL groups learners according to their current skills. Classrooms become more interactive, with teachers using hands-on activities and locally made learning materials.

The design of the Ntataise programme, Maphosa said, was shaped by experts from Lesotho's own education sector, including language specialists and curriculum developers to ensure the materials and methods fit the local context and languages, especially Sesotho, and support the national curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to use resources easily found in their communities, such as cards, flip charts and number cards, to make lessons lively and practical.

"Quality is key. Teachers are trained to assess each learner one-on-one and to use data to track every child's progress. This means children move from one group to the next only when they are truly ready, not just because of their age or grade," Maphosa explained. Regular reviews and data collection, he added, allow teachers and trainers to learn what works, improve their methods and share successes and challenges as the programme develops.

TaRL, he said, is more than a set of lessons or a new teaching method. It is a promise from government and partners like UNICEF that every child in Lesotho deserves the chance to succeed in school.

"We have been trained on how to do assessments to see who is left behind, find their problem and help them from there."

— Lehlaka Mohapi, Schools Inspector, Quthing

For Mohapi and many others at the workshop, the programme is personal. "We have been trained on how to do assessments to see who is left behind, find their problem and help them from there. This will be a continuous exercise, because as trainers we are expected to go back to our districts and train teachers, to make sure no learner is left behind," he said.

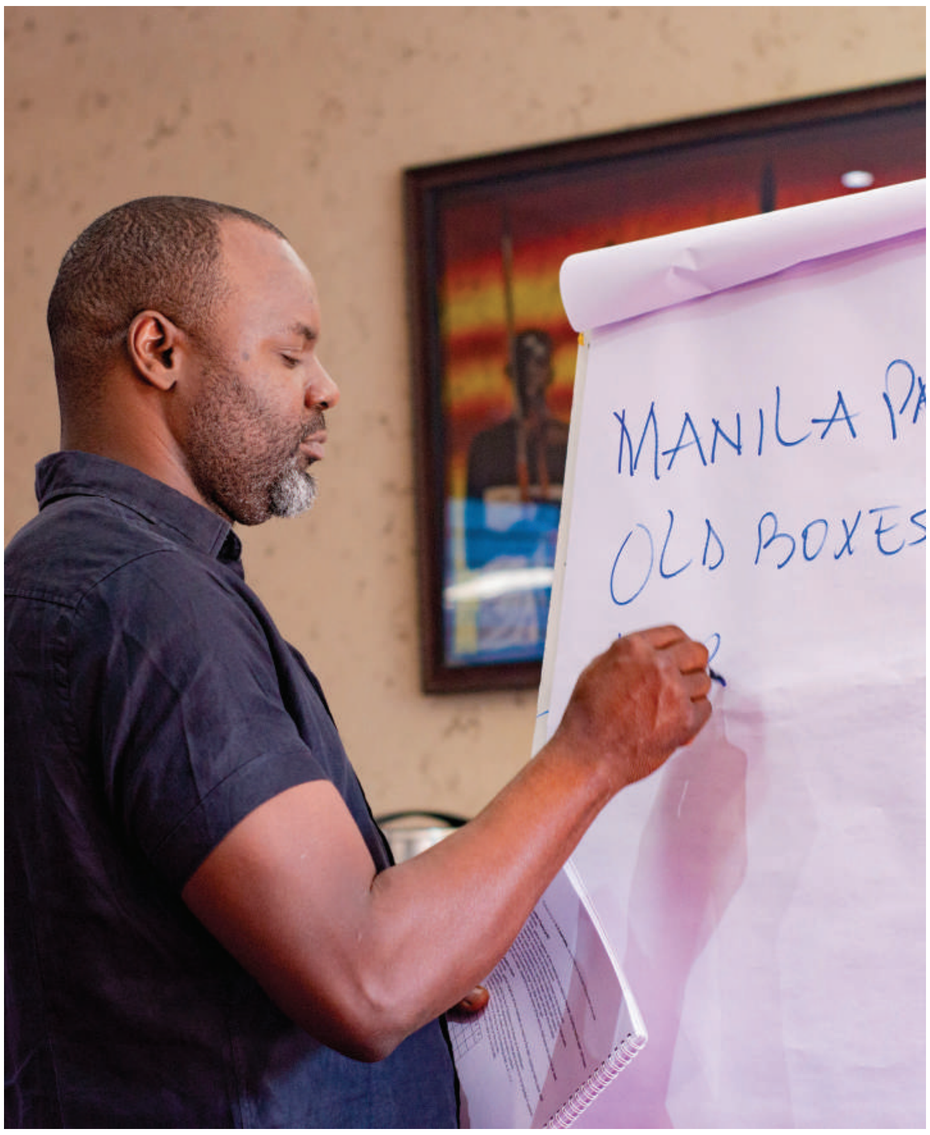
He hopes that, with Ntataise, children across Lesotho will build strong reading, writing and mathematics skills in the early grades. "This will not only help them succeed in school but will give them the foundation they need for life. As more teachers are trained and more schools join the programme, Lesotho is taking big steps towards a future where every child is supported, no matter where they start," he said.

**We have been trained on how to do assessments to see who is left behind, find their problem and help them from there.**

*— Lehlaka Mohapi, Schools Inspector, Quthing*

Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Education and Training, Ratšiu Majara, said tackling learning poverty in Lesotho means looking beyond the grade a child is in. "If we are to tackle learning poverty in Lesotho, we must ensure that every child develops the foundational skills needed to progress through school and reach their full potential. This requires us to look beyond the grade a child is in and understand what they can do," Majara said.

Teaching at the Right Level, he said, will make it possible to meet children at their current level of learning, provide targeted support, and help those who have fallen behind to catch up. "By strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, we will give every learner a fair opportunity to succeed in school and beyond," he said.



"By strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, we will give every learner a fair opportunity to succeed in school and beyond."

— Ratšiu Majara, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education and Training

Deputy Representative for UNICEF Lesotho, Sara Skovgaard, said she is excited to see Teaching at the Right Level being introduced in Lesotho, adding that evidence from other countries shows the approach can deliver meaningful improvements in learning outcomes.

"Its success in Lesotho will depend on teachers and school leaders embracing the methodology and applying it consistently in the classroom. This presents an important opportunity to learn what works in the Lesotho context, and to build an approach that can benefit many more children across the country," she said.

# Lesotho's SOE policy vacuum laid bare

Bereng Mpaki

Lesotho's hosting of the inaugural Africa State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) Corporate Governance Summit this week has thrown the country's own unresolved public-enterprise problems into sharp focus, chief among them being the long-delayed approval of a comprehensive national SOE policy.

The two-day gathering in Maseru, themed "Corporate Governance as a Tool for Transforming African SOEs into Global Competitors," drew government officials, SOE executives, governance experts and policymakers from across the continent to examine how public enterprises can shift from fiscal burdens to productive national assets.

The summit, led by the ICS Africa Group teaming up with regional and local stakeholders such as the Institute of Directors of Lesotho among others, provided more than an opportunity for Lesotho to benchmark against its nine African peers, but also a timely reminder of the amount of work still required to put the country's own SOE agenda in order.

The country runs a sprawling SOE landscape with no comprehensive national policy setting out why the state should own particular enterprises, how they should be governed, what performance is expected of them, or when government should exit if they no longer serve their purpose.

Instead, Lesotho relies on a patchwork of separate statutes establishing individual public enterprises, a fragmented legal and governance environment that has already seen key parastatals collapse or slide into serious financial distress through poor governance.

**A trail of collapsed and struggling enterprises**

At the summit, Robert Likhang, Managing Partner at HLB RL, chairman of the Mohlomi Code of Governance and a member of the Institute of Directors of Lesotho, pointed to Lesotho Bank, Lesotho Airways Corporation, Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation, Basotho Cannery and, more recently, Loti Brick as casualties of poor governance.

He also flagged the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and Lesotho Flour Mills as critical enterprises still operating under strain, while the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) appears to be recovering from its own period of severe difficulty.

The absence of a robust governance system shows up starkly in dividend performance. According to the audit of government's consolidated financial statements for 2022/23, only 4 of 17 SOEs declared and paid dividends, totalling M151 million, reflecting a massive 42 percent decline on the previous year, when government received M259.26 million from five enterprises.

**Ministers concede the gaps run deep**

Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane told the summit that Lesotho and the rest of the continent can no longer treat SOE failures as isolated corporate problems when the underlying weaknesses run far deeper, into the policy rationale for state ownership, the quality of boards, accountability and financial discipline.

"What we are dealing with is no longer abstract principle of the boardroom, it starts in our everyday lives and we must live it if we are to succeed as a human race. If you are not able to govern your family or the smallest unit that you come from, you cannot govern institutions or countries," Dr Matlanyane said.

"As governments, we have to define clear mandates for these institutions, establish measurable performance targets and expectations, and appoint competent persons on their boards. Those boards are expected to recruit the best teams to deliver, and carry on all their responsibilities with accountability."

**What Zambia did, and Lesotho hasn't**

Zambia offers a case study in what Lesotho has yet to attempt. Leya Ngoma, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Governance Expert at the Industrial Development Corporation (Zambia), told the summit that Zambia's first step was establishing a national SOE policy backed by consolidated legislation.

That policy work has since translated into law. In March this year, Zambia enacted the State-Owned Enterprises Act, 2026, creating a Government Investment Department and providing for the incorporation, ownership and governance of SOEs, alongside transparency, accountability and public-interest obligations.

The Act separates shareholder, board and management responsibilities, and sets out performance monitoring, performance contracts, restructuring, recapitalisation and dividend policy.

Lesotho's own policy gap is not a new discovery. The World Bank has previously recommended an SOE policy clarifying the rationale for state ownership, identifying strategic sectors, setting out an action plan for government's ownership vision, and defining how the state should exercise that ownership, alongside an SOE Act and divestment of underperforming enterprises. The recommendation has sat on the reform agenda ever since, while SOEs continue operating under a scatter of separate laws.

Fiscal risks are already materializing: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been pressing the same point. In its 2025 Article IV Consultation, the IMF warned that Lesotho's large government footprint and SOE sector are contributing to fiscal risk, singling out financial distress at LEC as a threat to government finances and calling for a broader reform strategy reflected in a national SOE policy.

"Fiscal risk management must remain a priority. Most recently, financial distress at the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) has heightened fiscal risks. While measures to address governance concerns at LEC have been adopted, a broader reform strategy should be developed swiftly and reflected in a much-needed policy on state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The continued publication of an annual fiscal risk statement is critical and should transparently assess exposures from SOEs, public-private partnerships, arrears, and contingent liabilities."

The IMF argues a robust SOE policy framework is critical to improving governance, fostering competition and attracting private investment, and has recommended strengthening the regulatory framework for establishing, operating and overseeing SOEs, alongside a strategy for gradually privatising non-performing enterprises.

It has also warned that transfers and contingent liabilities from SOEs have already materialised as fiscal risks, not a future possibility, but a present one.

The cost of policy inertia extends beyond company balance sheets. When a public enterprise fails, government absorbs unpaid obligations, employee liabilities, deteriorating infrastructure and lost investment. When one survives only through repeated bailouts, scarce public resources are diverted from education, healthcare and infrastructure.

**"The time for talking is over"**

Keynote speaker Deputy Prime Minister Nthomeng Majara captured the summit's underlying frustration when she argued that the continent had reached a point where discussion had to give way to implementation.

"The time for talking is over, and action must now urgently begin to save the SOEs in Africa to advance its economic development rather than just to suck its resources without an output," she said.

Majara said African governments could not continue watching enterprises drain national treasuries indefinitely, and called instead for practical models built on financial resilience, operational excellence and social responsibility.

Her proposed "Pragmatic Way," combining private-sector agility and commercial discipline with public accountability and national purpose, offers a middle path between indefinite state ownership and outright privatisation.

Nkareng Letsie, the Institute of Directors of Lesotho deputy vice chairperson put it directly:

"We expect governments to legislate wisely. Governance frameworks must be backed by law, not left to the goodwill of individual boards. We need regulatory frameworks that set clear expectations for how institutions are governed, and that hold directors accountable when those expectations are not met."

WASCO chief executive officer Lebohang Makara echoed the concern from the operational side, warning that a country can have all the best corporate governance tools, but without political will, "nothing will come to fruition."

**A policy question still unanswered**

Lesotho has had corporate governance discussions before, reform programmes before, policy proposals before. What has been missing is the political will to convert them into binding institutional arrangements.

At its core, the missing policy should answer the question: why does the state own this enterprise? If the answer is strategic, public-service delivery or market failure, government should be able to demonstrate the expected social and economic return.

If the answer no longer holds, the enterprise should be restructured, merged, privatised or closed, a discipline that could prevent enterprises from persisting without clear mandates, performance targets or exit strategies.

This would force the government to become a more disciplined shareholder. It cannot act simultaneously as policymaker, regulator, shareholder and, in some cases, customer, while expecting SOEs to operate commercially without conflicts of interest.

Majara's call to professionalise the state as a shareholder and separate ownership oversight from day-to-day management, built around governance, professional state ownership, depoliticised boards and long-term social value, speaks directly to this gap.

Lesotho should use the momentum from the summit to push the national SOE policy to the top of the reform agenda, at the highest political level, as Matlanyane suggested when she said Lesotho had "pitched it very high at the Prime Minister's office." From there, government needs to move toward a consolidated SOE legal framework that gives the policy teeth.

# Construction expo widens scope

**Seabata Mahao**

The Roads Directorate is set to host the second edition of its annual Construction EXPO, Exhibition and Conference from October 14 to 16, 2026, at Maseru Club, with this year's event significantly widening its scope beyond roads to cover buildings, bridges, dams, tunnels and housing.

The expansion marks a major shift from the inaugural 2025 edition, which focused primarily on road construction and infrastructure. The three-day event is expected to bring together key players across Lesotho's broader construction sector, including government institutions, contractors, consultants, financiers, insurers, suppliers, manufacturers, researchers and academic institutions.

The 2025 EXPO attracted 31 companies and 28 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) involved in road construction and infrastructure. Participants included construction firms, materials suppliers, technical institutions, insurance companies, paramedic service providers, signage suppliers, and mechanical and electrical accessories providers.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, Roads Directorate Director-General Teboho Mokhoane confirmed that this year's EXPO would move beyond its original road-focused mandate to embrace a wider range of infrastructure types namely buildings, bridges, dams, tunnels and housing, reflecting the broader needs of the country's construction industry.

Mokhoane said the expansion comes at a time when the construction industry is facing rising material costs, reduced access to natural resources and tightening budgets, making innovation and alternative construction methods increasingly important.

"We can no longer rely solely on conventional materials and traditional methods when the availability of those materials is shrinking," he said.

**Director General of Roads Directorate, Teboho Mokhoane**

He said the industry should explore alternatives such as soil stabilisation, alternative binders, recycled materials, geosynthetics and modified bituminous products.

However, Mokhoane cautioned against adopting technologies simply because they had proved successful in other countries.

"Every material and technology we bring into Lesotho's construction industry must prove itself technically sound, economically viable and environmentally sustainable under our own conditions; our climate, our geology, our traffic, our terrain," he said.

He said local research and testing would therefore be critical in determining which technologies could be successfully adopted in the country.

According to Mokhoane, the Roads Directorate intends to work with universities, research institutions, consultants and industry players to establish evidence on the performance, durability, cost, constructability, environmental impact and long-term maintenance requirements of new construction solutions.

By broadening its focus to include buildings, dams, tunnels and housing alongside roads, the EXPO is expected to provide contractors and consultants working across these new categories with access to new materials, equipment, technologies and construction methods that could help reduce costs and improve productivity.

"For public bodies, it provides an opportunity to strengthen our shared approach to material selection, specifications, testing and design," Mokhoane said.

He added that the adoption of suitable local alternatives could reduce Lesotho's dependence on imported construction materials while retaining more economic value within the country.

Such a shift, he said, could create opportunities for local manufacturers, suppliers, SMMEs and skilled professionals.

The use of locally available and recycled materials could also contribute to more sustainable construction by reducing transportation distances and making productive use of local and marginal materials.

Mokhoane stressed that addressing the challenges facing the construction industry would require collaboration across the sector.

"The EXPO is designed as a platform for collaboration, a space where industry can bring solutions to government and where government can bring its challenges to industry," he said.

Beyond the three-day exhibition, the Roads Directorate wants discussions and demonstrations at the EXPO to translate into tangible projects, including research partnerships, pilot projects and practical implementation.

Mokhoane said promising technologies should progress through a structured process before being adopted on a wider scale.

"Promising technologies should move from the exhibition stand to the laboratory, from the laboratory to pilot projects and finally into practical use once they have proven themselves," he said.

He urged technology providers and manufacturers to showcase credible and tested solutions, while encouraging contractors and consultants to participate in trials and demonstrations.

Academic and research institutions, he said, should strengthen collaboration with industry, while government ministries and parastatals should share their experiences and lessons.

"Our objective is not simply to construct more. It is to construct better: more durable, more cost-effective and more sustainable," Mokhoane said.

He said the success of the 2026 Construction EXPO would not be measured simply by the number of exhibitors or visitors, but by the partnerships established, technologies tested and innovations ultimately adopted across Lesotho's infrastructure sector, now spanning a far wider range of project types than the previous edition.

# EcoSure upgrades funeral cover package

**Seabata Mahao**

SasaiEconet Financial Services (SEFS) has launched an enhanced EcoSure Funeral Plan, introducing a set of new benefits designed to give Basotho families more comprehensive and affordable financial protection during bereavement.

The upgraded plan expands on the standard funeral cover by adding accidental death benefits, wider family and dependant coverage, and, for the first time, a repatriation benefit for Basotho living abroad, all accessible through a single premium.

Speaking at the launch, SEFS General Manager Moeketsi Mafereka said the enhanced product was designed to respond to the changing needs of modern families while promoting greater financial inclusion.

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the launch of the enhanced EcoSure Funeral Plan, a product that reflects our commitment to providing practical, affordable, and meaningful financial protection for Basotho families," Mafereka said.

He said the loss of a loved one often placed families under significant emotional and financial pressure, making accessible funeral protection an important financial planning tool.

"During such times, families should be focused on supporting one another and honouring the life of the departed, not worrying about financial challenges," he said.


**EcoSure Family Cover launch**

The key upgrade to the EcoSure Family Cover is the expanded scope of protection now available under a single premium. Previously limited in scope, the plan now allows a policyholder to cover themselves, a spouse or partner, and up to five children on one policy.

Policyholders can also extend cover to additional dependants, including parents, relatives and other loved ones, a significant broadening of who can be protected under one plan.

"We believe this is a significant step forward in making funeral cover more accessible and cost-effective," Mafereka said.

He added that the single-premium structure was intended to provide greater value to households at a time when consumers were increasingly looking for affordable financial products.

Among the most notable additions is the introduction of Accidental Cover, a new benefit that provides extra financial support in cases where death results from an accident. This adds an additional layer of protection on top of standard funeral cover, strengthening the plan's overall value.

Mafereka said the additional benefit strengthened the level of financial security available to families faced with unexpected circumstances.

In a further expansion of the plan, EcoSure has introduced Diaspora Repatriation Cover, a benefit specifically targeting Basotho living, working or studying outside Lesotho.

This is a new addition to the product line-up, addressing a gap for families dealing with the financial and logistical challenges of bringing a loved one's remains home from abroad.

"We understand how important it is for families to bring their loved ones home during times of loss. This benefit helps ease the financial and logistical burden associated with repatriation," Mafereka said.

Alongside the new benefits, EcoSure has retained and reinforced its digital-first approach: registration and premium payments continue to be done entirely via cellphone, through EcoCash and Airtime, keeping the enhanced plan accessible regardless of where policyholders are based.

Mafereka said the digital approach was aimed at making the product convenient and accessible to Basotho, regardless of where they live.

He described the enhanced funeral plan as more than an insurance product, saying it represented a commitment to providing families with dignity, support and financial protection during difficult times.

"As we continue our journey of innovation and financial inclusion, we remain committed to developing solutions that are relevant, affordable, and accessible to every Mosotho," he said.

Mafereka said the launch marked an opportunity for families to plan ahead and protect their loved ones against the financial consequences of bereavement.

"Today, we are not simply launching a product. We are providing families with an opportunity to secure their future, protect their loved ones, and gain peace of mind knowing that they have a trusted partner standing beside them," he said.

He thanked EcoSure customers, partners, stakeholders and staff for their contribution to the launch and urged Basotho families to consider funeral protection as part of their financial planning.

"To all Basotho families, we say: Protect what matters most. Protect your family with EcoSure," Mafereka said.

# New study to tackle rising antimicrobial resistance

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a bold move to confront the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Ministry of Environment and Forestry, in partnership with the AMR National Learning Committee and the Ministry of Health, will launch a pioneering baseline study to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to antimicrobial use among One Health professionals and the general public.

Earlier this week, senior officials and researchers outlined the country's proactive efforts to tackle AMR, a problem that undermines not only clinical health but also animal health, agriculture, environmental protection and national development.

"Antimicrobial resistance is not a challenge that can be addressed by one profession, one institution, or even one ministry," said Matšeliso Machake, Senior Legal Officer, speaking on behalf of the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

Machake expressed gratitude to all stakeholders for their tireless commitment and partnership in strengthening Lesotho's response to AMR.

The meeting aimed to introduce and sensitise stakeholders to the upcoming study, which will examine how antimicrobials are understood, accessed, used and reported within the One Health framework.

The research will also explore the factors that influence antimicrobial use and management.

AMR's danger lies in its ability to render vital medicines ineffective against infections in both humans and animals. "This is not only a clinical issue," Machake emphasised. "It has implications for public health, animal health, food production, agriculture, environmental protection, health security and national development."

Lesotho's National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (2021–2026) already embraces the One Health approach, calling for coordinated action across sectors.

According to Machake, the study's findings will feed into this plan, supporting evidence-based interventions and helping ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into future AMR policies.

"One Health recognises that human health, animal health and environmental health are interconnected," she noted. "The way antimicrobials are prescribed and used in hospitals, clinics and communities can influence resistance in humans. Their use in animals can contribute to the emergence and spread of resistant organisms, while environmental pathways, such as wastewater, healthcare waste, agricultural runoff and inappropriate disposal, can further propagate antimicrobial resistance."

*Nteboheng Tjobe Maina, National Focal Point for AMR and a pharmacist with the Ministry of Health at inception meeting of AMR resistance knowledge, attitudes and practices baseline study*

Nteboheng Tjobe Maina, National Focal Point for AMR and a pharmacist with the Ministry of Health, outlined the meeting's objectives – to reaffirm AMR as a national priority; to situate the upcoming knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study within the broader action plan; to align stakeholders across human, animal and environmental health sectors; and to ensure that the data gathered informs national decisions.

Maina highlighted how antimicrobial medicines, which are crucial for treating common conditions such as HIV-related infections, wound infections and sexually transmitted diseases, are becoming less effective due to resistance.

"AMR is not just a problem for human and animal health, but also for the environment sector," she said, pointing to the ease with which resistant organisms can spread across people, animals, food and the environment.

Lead researcher Molungoa Sello, Senior Lecturer at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), explained the importance of the baseline KAP study. He said the research aims to generate local data that will inform policy and practice by identifying existing knowledge gaps and the factors that influence antimicrobial use and resistance.

Sello stressed the need to understand not only what people know, but also their attitudes and the barriers to best practice, in order to design interventions that can change behaviour and reduce resistance.

The urgency of Lesotho's efforts is underscored by alarming global trends. According to the 2025 Global Antibiotic Resistance Surveillance Report, participation in AMR surveillance has increased worldwide, but major gaps remain, particularly in Africa. Lesotho is among the ten countries most affected by AMR, with more than 2,800 deaths linked to drug-resistant infections in 2019.

AMR was also a topic of concern at the recent International AIDS Society (IAS) summit in Rio de Janeiro, where researchers reported a troubling rise in HIV drug resistance across sub-Saharan Africa, including Lesotho.

Findings from the Ndovu Study reveal that resistance to dolutegravir (DTG), a key HIV treatment, is emerging in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Lesotho.

"While nearly nine in ten people on DTG respond well and achieve viral suppression, a proportion fail to suppress the virus, often due to inconsistent medication use," explained Dr Loice Ombajo, principal investigator of the study.

For those with drug-resistant HIV, treatment options become limited and more costly, and the risk of mother-to-child and partner transmission rises.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged countries to implement standardised surveillance of HIV drug resistance to track trends and guide treatment decisions. However, resource limitations mean that regular resistance testing remains a challenge in many African countries.

Lesotho's new baseline study represents a critical step in generating the local evidence needed to guide effective interventions and uphold the country's commitment to the One Health approach.

"We request the support of all relevant ministries, institutions, professionals and communities to ensure coordinated implementation of this study," said Machake.

# Lesotho steps up Ebola readiness as regional threat grows

Ntsoaki Motaung

As Ebola continues to spread in Central and East Africa, Lesotho's health authorities and international partners are intensifying efforts to ensure the country is prepared for any potential outbreak.

Recently, the District Medical Officer for Leribe and AVoHC-Surge Responder under case management, Dr Pusetso Topo, joined Lesotho's district management teams and representatives from key ministries, including Health, Agriculture, and the Disaster Management Authority, at a workshop aimed at strengthening the country's District Rapid Response Teams (DRRTs).

According to Dr Topo, the intensive workshops, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), sought to equip Lesotho to coordinate a swift and unified response to public health emergencies such as Ebola.

"Disease does not know borders," Dr Topo stressed, pointing to the deteriorating situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Ebola cases continue to rise.

"There is a possibility the disease could reach Lesotho. We must have strategies ready to respond effectively if that happens."

He explained that the workshops form part of a national campaign to refresh and expand the skills of rapid response teams, particularly those trained during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sessions combine presentations, scenario-based learning and simulation exercises. They also address cultural considerations, recognising that community acceptance is essential for an effective response.

"In the past, lack of understanding and improper community engagement created barriers," Dr Topo noted.

*Participants at the training of District Rapid Response Team*

He said a recent rapid assessment by the Ministry of Health found Lesotho at moderate risk for Ebola, despite its distance from the epicentre. The country's links through regional migration, the Basotho diaspora and international travel mean a pathogen such as Ebola could arrive within hours.

"We do not want history to repeat itself, as happened with Covid-19, when readiness came too late," Dr Topo warned.

Public Health Nurse 'Matumello Kali Mokuku, who took part in the workshops, highlighted the value of ongoing training and teamwork.

"I was first trained around 2021–2022, and this week has been a vital reminder that we must work together as a rapid response team, even as we welcome new members. We were reminded how an outbreak is identified, the procedures to follow, how to engage communities, and the correct use of data," she said.

Mokuku stressed that the refresher sessions build confidence and clarity among the multidisciplinary teams. "Yes, I am confident that the team we have can overcome diseases. We now know how to coordinate and who does what."

The WHO has declared the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak in the DRC (and previously in Uganda) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The Bundibugyo strain, which currently has no approved vaccine or specific treatment, causes severe haemorrhagic fever. Symptoms include unexplained bleeding, intense fatigue, vomiting, diarrhoea and muscle pain.

The virus jumps from infected wildlife to humans and then spreads rapidly through direct contact with bodily fluids or contaminated surfaces.

At the World Health Assembly in 2026, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reported early figures of 30 confirmed cases in the DRC's Ituri province, with further spread to Uganda that included fatal cases in Kampala. He expressed concern about rising suspected cases, urban outbreaks, deaths among healthcare workers and significant regional population movement, all factors that could accelerate cross-border transmission.

The outbreak has since expanded substantially in the DRC, while Uganda has declared its outbreak over.

Public health specialist, nurse educator and PhD candidate Molumaela Lepeli warned in May against complacency.

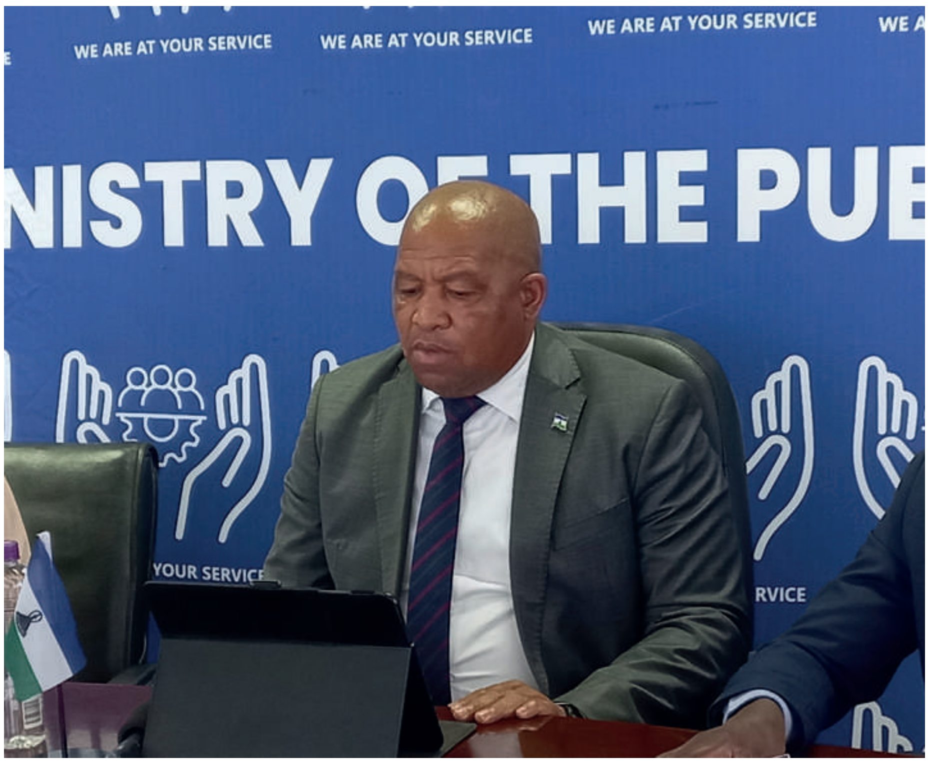
"The belief that Lesotho is immune to the crisis is a dangerous illusion," he said. "Our peace and stability make us attractive to migrants and refugees. With Basotho living and travelling worldwide, the risk of importation is real."

Lepeli urged the Ministry of Health to implement continuous surveillance at all ports of entry, strengthen district coordination, hold regular emergency meetings, provide refresher training for healthcare workers, and ensure social mobilisation through community leaders. He also called for the isolation of suspected cases and secure transport for medical samples.

"Preparation is not optional, it is a matter of national survival," Lepeli insisted, echoing the broader call from the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which has activated its Incident Management Support Team for a coordinated continental response.

With the WHO and Africa CDC urging neighbouring nations to enhance surveillance and readiness, Lesotho's health leaders say the time to act is now, before the virus crosses the border.

# Lesotho sets stage for 45th AAPAM Conference




**Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

Lesotho will host the 45th Annual Roundtable Conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) in Maseru from 8 to 11 December 2026.

AAPAM, established in 1971 with roots dating to 1962, is the continent's leading professional body bringing together public-sector practitioners, academics, policymakers and governance experts to strengthen public administration and management across Africa. The association works to promote excellence, professionalism and the exchange of practical solutions aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The conference will be held under the theme "From Ambition to Impact: Reimagining Public Administration for the Realisation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs Towards the Africa We Want."

Discussions are expected to focus on translating continental development commitments into tangible results through public-service modernisation, institutional accountability, youth participation, digital innovation, sustainable financing and the restoration of public trust.

This will be the second time Lesotho hosts the event, having previously done so in the early 2000s. Delegates, including experts, researchers and civil servants from across Africa's 54 countries, are expected to attend. Registration costs US$600 (approximately M9 600), while members of the Lesotho Association of Public Administration and Management (LAPAM) will pay half, US$300 (about M4 800).

The conference will be officiated by Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane. Ahead of the main event, a national marathon will be held to raise public awareness.

Minister of the Public Service Moeketsi Motšoane said government intends to make the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) autonomous and to strengthen collaboration with LAPAM.

"You will agree with me that there is an urgent need to change the way we conduct our business when implementing the country's plans, including those for the continent. There is also a need to ensure transparency in the nation we serve," Motšoane said.

He invited all stakeholders to take full advantage of the conference.

Public service is one of the seven thematic areas identified for reform and professionalisation in Lesotho. The Principal Secretary noted that a performance management system is already in place, though it currently applies only to principal secretaries. The system will gradually be extended to other senior officers, including directors, until every civil servant is covered.

The minister acknowledged ongoing challenges of fraud, corruption and bribery in the civil service, some of which have been exposed by parliamentary committees. Last month, officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs were arrested and charged with corruption and bribery. Home Affairs Minister Voeswa Tsheka said some of the officers had been suspended and would face disciplinary proceedings.

"We should not think that corruption will end in a day. These things take time, but slowly and surely, we will make progress. This conference will be helpful because it will inspire us to take action. The Ministry will also benefit from the knowledge and experience of other countries," Motšoane said.

LIPAM, established in 1967 and operating under the Ministry of the Public Service, provides training, research and consultancy to build the capacity of public officers. LAPAM serves as the national professional association advancing ethical governance and improved service delivery. Hosting the AAPAM conference is expected to reinforce these domestic reform efforts while positioning Lesotho as an active contributor to continental public administration discourse.

# Disability advocates push back against GBV

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

For years, people with disabilities in Lesotho have endured violence in silence. Now, thanks to the work of advocates such as Refiloehape Sesinyi, their voices are finally being heard.

Sesinyi, Gender Officer for the Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD), said that for the first time, people with disabilities have been included in a major study on gender-based violence (GBV).

"Our community is very happy," she said. "It shows that our advocacy has worked."

The 2025 Gender-Based Violence Indicators Study, led by Gender Links Lesotho and the Bureau of Statistics, brings both encouraging findings and hard truths. It shows some progress in the fight against GBV in Lesotho, yet significant challenges remain, particularly for people with disabilities.

The study revealed that people with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience gender-based violence than those without disabilities. Many face sexual assault, and reporting these crimes is often difficult.

"Persons with disabilities are mostly taken advantage of," Sesinyi said. "One of the reasons is that they struggle to report their cases."

Sesinyi also highlighted inconsistencies in Lesotho's laws. The Disability Act affirms that people with disabilities have sexual and reproductive rights. However, other legislation, including the Sexual Offences Act and the Counter Domestic Violence Act, treats sexual activity involving a person with a disability as a criminal offence.

"The country must fix this," she insisted. "People with disabilities must be protected by the law, but they must also be able to enjoy their rights."

Thirteen years ago, a study found that 86 percent of Basotho women had experienced some form of GBV in their lifetime. Progress has since been made. The proportion of women facing intimate partner violence has fallen from 62 percent in 2013 to 45.7 percent in 2025. Fewer people now believe that wives must always obey their husbands.

Legal protections have also improved. The Counter Domestic Violence Act of 2022 covers many forms of abuse, including emotional, economic and technology-facilitated violence. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus, with 43 female members, continues to push for greater accountability on GBV in parliament.

Yet, as Pitso Lesaoana, Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development, noted: "Progress is not the same as sufficiency." Many survivors still do not report abuse, and shelters for victims remain concentrated in Maseru.

Lesaoana pointed out that only 12.1 percent of adults in Lesotho are even aware that the new law exists.

"These are not abstract failures," he said. "They are real problems experienced by women and men every day."

The 2025 study further shows that women with disabilities face higher rates of violence. About half have experienced intimate partner violence, compared with 44.6 percent of women without disabilities. Services such as shelters and psychosocial support often fail to reach these women, especially outside the capital.

LGBTQI+ survivors and transgender people also face elevated risks and are frequently excluded from support systems.

Sesinyi emphasised that while inclusion of people with disabilities in the study is a positive step, much more is required. "We must make sure that persons with disabilities are not left behind in any plan to fight GBV," she said.

At the launch of the 2025 study, the European Union's Head of Delegation, H.E. Mette Sunnergren, stressed the need for decisive action. Laws alone are not enough, she said.

"Prevention, protection, prosecution, and survivor support must go hand in hand."

Sunnergren also announced that the EU is supporting Lesotho's efforts with more than EUR 8.45 million, focusing on youth, human rights and the fight against GBV.

The study offers clear recommendations. The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development has committed to making family court rules public, expanding shelters beyond Maseru, and investing more in survivor support. Systems will be put in place to monitor delivery of these commitments, with civil society and parliament providing oversight.

As Lesaoana put it: "No ministry can end GBV alone. But every ministry has a responsibility, and this report, for the first time, says clearly what that responsibility is, and by when it should be done."


*The Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana*

# Farmers Pitso Agriculture & Excellence Awards 2026 Categories

## 1.Primary Farming Excellence Categories

These categories form the foundation of the awards and recognise excellence in core agricultural production. They celebrate farmers who demonstrate productivity, innovation, resilience and leadership within crop and livestock farming.

### CATEGORIES

### Crop Production

- Smallholder Farmer of the Year
- Commercial Farmer of the Year
- Emerging Farmer of the Year
- Young Farmer of the Year
- Woman Farmer of the Year
- Best Horticulture Producer
- Best Grain Producer
- Best Organic Farmer
- Climate-Smart Farmer of the Year
- Conservation Agriculture Champion
- Best Potato Producer of the Year

### Livestock

- Best Broiler Farmer
- Best Layer Farmer
- Best Free-Range Poultry Farmer
- Best Dairy Cattle Farmer
- Best Dairy Goat Farmer
- Best Wool Producer
- Best Mohair Producer
- Best Horse Breeding & Performance Farmer
- Best Pig Producer
- Best Aquaculture/Fish Farmer
- Animal Health Champion
- Best Bee-Keeper
- Best Rabbit Breeder/farmer

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## 2. Innovation & Agribusiness Categories

This segment recognises businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators contributing to agricultural transformation. It positions agriculture as an economic driver and encourages investment, technology adoption, and value addition.

### CATEGORIES

- Agribusiness of the Year
- Agri-Tech Innovation Award
- Best Agro-Processing Enterprise
- Best Agricultural Start-Up
- Best Agricultural Cooperative
- Best Agri-Finance Support Institution
- Best Market Access Initiative
- Best Export-Oriented Agricultural Business

02

## 3. Youth, Women & Inclusion Categories

These categories ensure the awards are socially inclusive and developmental. They highlight the contribution of women, youth, schools, and marginalised groups in strengthening food systems and rural livelihoods.

### CATEGORIES

- Rural Youth Agripreneur of the Year
- Women in Agriculture Leadership Award
- Best Youth-Led Agribusiness
- Disability Inclusion in Agriculture Award
- Community Food Security Champion
- Best School Garden Initiative
- University/College Agricultural Innovation Award

03

## 4. Sustainability & Climate Categories

These awards recognise individuals and organisations implementing environmentally responsible and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

### CATEGORIES

- Climate Resilience Award
- Water Conservation Champion
- Sustainable Land Management Award
- Indigenous Seed Preservation Award
- Renewable Energy in Agriculture Award
- Regenerative Farming Award
- Environmental Stewardship Award

04

## 5. Media, Advocacy & Knowledge Sharing Categories

Agriculture cannot grow without communication, awareness, and information sharing. This segment recognises journalists, content creators, researchers, and educators advancing agricultural discourse.

### CATEGORIES

- Best Agriculture Radio Programme
- Best Agriculture TV/Digital Content Creator
- Best Agriculture Newspaper
- Agricultural Photography Award
- Agricultural Storytelling Award
- Best Agriculture Influencer of the Year
- Best Research & Extension Excellence Award

05

## 6. Community & National Impact Categories

These categories celebrate individuals, institutions, and communities making a lasting contribution to national development, food security, and agricultural leadership.

### CATEGORIES

- District Agricultural Excellence Award
- Community Farming Initiative of the Year
- Food Security Champion
- Agricultural Mentor of the Year
- Agricultural Leadership Award
- Traditional Leadership in Agriculture Award

06

**Nominate or apply here:**

https://seahlolo.co.ls/farmers-pitso-agriculture-excellence-awards-2026/

**KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

# Request for quotation

1. The Principal Secretary, through Ministry of Education and Training (Early Childhood Care and Development) ECCD, hereby invites interested and qualified service providers to prove service to distribute materials for reception classes in Berea, Maseru, Qacha's nek, Thaba Tseka and Mokhotlong in the Months of September and October 2026.

Interested and qualified serve providers are to present their vehicles that meet the required specifications for inspection and the inspection will be conducted as follows:

**Date** : **02 September 2026**
**Time** : **10:00 AM**
**Venue** : **Ministry of Education and Training (Education Facilities Unit) EFU**
**NB** : **Please bring mandatory vehicle and business documents along**

| VECHLE TYPE | NUMBER OF VEHICLES REQUIRED | VEHICLE MODELE | DURATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| SINGLE CAB | 15 | 4 ×4 | 10 DAYS |

All prospective service providers must ensure that vehicles presented for inspection comply with the following requirements:

- Valid A/B permit
- Valid Vehicle Insurance Certificate
- Jack, wheels – spanner and 2 triangles
- Certificate of Registration/Blue Card
- Copy of valid ID/Driver's Licence/Passport
- Canopy /Canvas (Not tonneau cover)

For clarifications, please contact Itumeleng Qhobosheane on ituqhobosheane@gmail.com or Malillo Litabe on malillolitabe@gmail.com

# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

## Consultancy Services for Design of Liberation Clothing Factory Extension

## PROJECT REFERENCE: LNDC-EOI-PDM-2026-09

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Consultancy Services for Design of Liberation Clothing Factory Extension, Tikoe Industrial Area, Maseru

2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local Individual Consultants** for provision of the above said services.

3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.

4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 7(f) from **14th August 2026** between **08:30am and 16:30pm.**

5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English *language* ***is available free of charge*** *in* ***soft copy*** *by emailing* procurement@lndc.org.ls

6. Late bids shall be rejected.

7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| (a) Issue of Request for Bids | 14 August 2026 |
| (b) Pre-bid meeting | 25 August 2026 @ 10:00 am |
| (c) Bid closing date | 08 September 2026 @ 10:00 am |
| (d) Evaluation process | 14-18 September 2026 |
| (e) Display and communication of Shortlisting | (Within 5 working days from Procurement Committee award) |
| (f) Address | LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area |

# NOTICE OF INVITATION TO TENDER

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF TIKOE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

## PROJECT REFERENCE: LNDC-PDM-2026-08

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Operations and maintenance of Tikoe Wastewater treatment plant.

2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said services.

3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.

4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 7(h) from the **14th August 2026** between **08:30am and 16:30pm.**

5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English *language is* ***available free of charge*** *in* ***soft copy*** *by emailing* procurement@lndc.org.ls.

6. Late bids shall be rejected.

7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| (a) Issue of Request for Bids | 14 August 2026 |
| (b) Pre-bid meeting | 26 August 2026 @ 10:00 am) |
| (c) Bid closing date | 24 September 2026 @ 10:00 am) |
| (d) Public Opening | 24 September 2026 @ 10:15 am) |
| (e) Evaluation process | 28 September- 02 October 2026) |
| (f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice | (Within 5 working days from Procurement Committee award) |
| (g) Contract signature | (After expiry of at least 5 working days from display of the Notice of Tender Results. |
| (h) Address | LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area |

ROLL REGENERATION OF LANDSCAPES AND LIVELIHOODS

# IInvitation for Bids

Maseru, Lesotho
20 AUGUST 2026

Re: **Procurement of Food Processing Equipment (Can Fruits) - Ref No: LSO-2000002340-0230-G-NCB**

The *Government of Lesotho* has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) *and OPEC Fund for International Development* (OFID) and intends to apply a part of the proceeds of the financing to this purchase. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with *Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods*.

1. The *Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods* includes rehabilitation of sixteen identified landscapes in Lesotho and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the rural areas, within a period of eight years.
2. **This invitation for bids (IFB) follows the general procurement notice that appeared in Lesotho Times newspaper on the 23 April 2026, Public eye newspapers on 24 April 2026 and Informative Newspaper on the 29 April 2026.**
3. The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the P**rocurement of food Processing Equipment (Can Fruits)**. More details on these goods and related services are provided in the schedule of requirements in this bidding document.
4. This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the bidding document, eligible entities may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the procurement.
5. 5. Bidding will be conducted using the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** method, the evaluation procedure for which is described in this bidding document, in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook which is provided at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The NCB process, as described, will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.
6. Please note that a pre-bid conference **will not be** held as described in the bid data sheet (BDS), Section III of the bidding document.
7. Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall download the bidding document from the following website: www.rollproject.gov.ls and complete the registration form available on the website

***Attn: Procurement Manager ROLL Project***
***Ministry of Environment & Forestry***
***Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281 Maseru 100***
***Lesotho***
***Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203***
***E-mail:*** *procurement.roll@gov.ls and copy to morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls*

8. Bids must be delivered to the address and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than 10:00 local time on the 05 October 2026.
9. Bidders shall be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance and will be returned unopened at the written request and cost of the bidder. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security or bid-securing declaration (as required) in the manner and amount specified in the bid data sheet.
10. Please note that electronic bids shall not be accepted.

Yours sincerely,
**Procurement Manager**
**Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project Ministry of Environment and Forestry**
**Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281 Maseru 100**
**Lesotho**
**Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 58757203**
**E-mail:** procurement.roll@gov.ls

Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials To Support Vulnerable HHS-LSO-2000002340-0241-G-NCB

IFAD Investing in rural people   OPEC FUND   gef

# Notice

**DECLARATION OF CUT-OFF DATE FOR ELIGIBILITY TO RESETTLEMENT ENTITLEMENTS IN THE POLIHALI SITE RESERVOIR INUNDATION AREA UNDER PHASE II OF THE LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT**

## 1. Preamble

This Notification confirms the declaration by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), of a Cut-Off Date for eligibility to resettlement entitlements for households to be relocated within the Polihali Reservoir Inundation Area under Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The Cut-Off Date is declared in accordance with the provisions of the LHWP Phase II Compensation Policy (July 2022).

## 2. Effective Date and Scope

The Cut-Off Date to resettlement entitlements will come into effect on the following dates for households that are part of the resettlement programme from the following village areas:

1. ***Cut-Off Date: 21 August 2026 for the following villages:***
   a. Ha Jobere (Seate Community Council)
   b. Kheseng and Tsekong (Mphokojoane Community Council)
1. ***2. Cut-Off Date: 04 September 2026 for the following villages:***
   a. Koung Ha Phohla and Sekokong (Mphokojoane Community Council)
   b. Ha Sekantši (Menoaneng Community Council)

## 3. Implementation

The declaration of the Cut-Off Date is based on the registration of all private assets in the Polihali Reservoir Inundation Area, such as fields, trees, homestead plots, homestead structures (dwellings, buildings, other structures) and other homestead assets. The asset registration was undertaken by LHDA together with asset owners and representatives from the communities and local authorities. Asset registration forms were prepared for all affected assets and verified by the owners, local authorities and LHDA. The asset registration included taking photos of the assets and gathering supporting documentation such as identification documents and Chief's ownership confirmation letters. A census of all affected owners was also conducted to determine eligibility for compensation and resettlement entitlements.

The resettlement programme in the Polihali Reservoir Inundation Area will commence shortly, which requires the declaration of this Cut-Off Date to determine the final eligibility to resettlement entitlements. The Cut-Off Date takes account of the following:

***a. Structures (dwellings, buildings, other structures) that were recorded and verified during the asset registration exercise from 2018 to 2020;***
***b. Incomplete structures that were registered and that have subsequently been completed at the time of the relevant Cut-Off Dates for the respective villages referred to in Section 2;***
***c. Alterations to structures that we recorded and verified after the asset registration exercise from 2018 to 2020; and***
***d. New structures that have been constructed at the time of the relevant Cut-Off Dates for the respective villages referred to in Section 2.***

***Compensation options (e.g., replacement housing constructed by the Project or the owner; continued use by the owner and therefore no compensation or replacement) will be agreed with each household.***

**Please Note:** New structures that are constructed after the Cut-Off Dates for the respective villages referred to in Section 2 will NOT be considered in the determination of resettlement entitlements. Similarly, any further construction to partially completed structures after the Cut-Off Dates for the respective villages referred to in Section 2 will NOT be considered in the determination of resettlement entitlements.

Owners with registered fields in the Polihali Reservoir Inundation Area that will be affected by reservoir impoundment may continue using their fields until formal notification of acquisition is issued by LHDA and compensation is paid.

## 4. Further Information

**For further information please contact the Polihali Operations Branch Public Relations Unit by telephone: (+266) 2224 6300 or email: mohlotsanep@lhda.org.ls or masihlehol@lhda.org.ls.**

Notice by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority - LHDA

Lerotholi Polytechnic
Moshoeshoe Road, Maseru, Lesotho

## INVITATION TO TENDER

### SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF AIR CONDITIONERS AT LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC

1. Introduction and Background
Lerotholi Polytechnic (hereinafter referred to as "the Polytechnic" or "LP") is a public technical and vocational education and training institution located in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho. The Polytechnic provides technical, vocational, and continuing education programmes across multiple schools and administrative departments.

The Polytechnic invites eligible qualified and experienced vendors to submit sealed bids for the **Supply, Delivery and Installation of 19 Air Conditioners** at Lerotholi Polytechnic main campus Maseru. Interested bidders may request bidding documents from the Procurement Office at a non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Maloti Only** (LSL 500.00), by email to procurement@lp.ac.ls with the Proof of Payment attached as PDF. Tenders will be issued on email ONLY, no hard copies will be issued. The document must be accompanied by 5% of the bid price.

2. **Scope of Works**
The successful bidder shall be responsible for:
- Supply of air-conditioning units in accordance with the required specifications as follows:
  - ► 32000BTU*12
  - ► 24000BTU*6
  - ► 12000BTU*1
- Delivery to Lerotholi Polytechnic Main Campus UNIPOD Building;
- Installation, testing and commissioning of the units;
- Provision of all necessary installation materials and accessories;
- Electrical connections associated with the installation;
- Demonstration and handover of the installed systems; and
- Provision of warranties, manuals, remote controls and relevant documentations

Additional requirements and instructions are as specified in the tender document.

3. Bid submissions must meet all the conditions indicated below, failure to comply with conditions 3.1 (a), 3.1 (b), 3.1 (e) and 3.1(h) will lead to disqualification:

3.1 General terms and conditions
a) Valid Tax Clearance Certificate.
b) Valid Traders Licence.
c) VAT registration certificate (where applicable).
d) Company Profile.
e) The submission shall include three (3) references where similar assignment(s) were undertaken and should specify full names of client companies, the contact person(s), their email addresses and telephone numbers. All references will be contacted for further information on those assignments.
f) Lesotho laws SHALL be applicable.
g) Late submissions shall not be accepted.
h) Compulsory site visit will be conducted on Tuesday 14 September 2026 at 10:00 am. Bidders will assemble at UNIPOD building next to the main gate for registration.

Interested bidders should make payments at the following:
- MPesa: **14096; Pay Merchant & Fees, Pay School Fees, Ref: Company Name**
- Ecocash: **52629; Pay Merchant; Pay Fees; Ref: Company Name**
- **Banking Details:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Account Number: | **9080003510146** |
| Account Type: | **Business Current Account** |
| Account Name: | **Lerotholi Polytechnic** |
| Branch Name and Code: | **City; 060667** |
| Swift Code: | **SBICLSMX** |
| Bank Name: | **Standard Lesotho Bank** |

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours; 0800hrs-1700hrs:
Procurement Office
Lerotholi Polytechnic
P.O. Box 16
Maseru
Email: procurement@lp.ac.ls
Tel: 22324402

Completed tender documents **(1 original and 4 copies)** in sealed envelopes bearing no identification of the tenderer, clearly marked **"Tender No: LP/ADM/06/2026 Supply, delivery and installation of Air conditioners"** as per instructions in the tender documents and addressed to:
THE PROCUREMENT MANAGER
LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC
P.O. BOX 16
MASERU

ATTENTION Procurement Manager,
must be deposited in the Tender Box situated in Administration II Foyer, on or before Friday 18 September 2026 at 12:30p.m. Tenders will be opened same day at 14:00hrs at the Administration I Block Conference room, in the presence of the Tenderers or their representatives who choose to attend.
LP reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole or part without giving reasons for its decision.

LNDC
Lesotho National Development Corporation
Together We Build Sustainable Industry

## INVITATION TO TENDER

### Supply and Delivery of Laptops and Accessories

### Procurement Reference: LNDC-CS-2026-10

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds for the supply and delivery of 42 laptops and accompanying accessories, divided into Lot 1 (17 laptops) and Lot 2 (25 laptops).

2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said services.

3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.

4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in the Table below, at Item 7(h) from the **21st August 2026** between **08:30am and 16:30pm.**

5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English *language is* ***available free of charge*** *in* ***soft copy*** *by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls*

6. Late bids shall be rejected.

7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| (a) Issue of Request for Bids | 21 August 2026 |
| (b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting | 01 September 2026 @ 10:00 am |
| (c) Bid closing date | 17 September 2026 @ 10:00 am |
| (d) Public Opening | 17 September 2026 @ 10:15 am |
| (e) Evaluation process | 22 September- 30 September 2026 |
| (f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice | 14 October 2026 |
| (g) Contract Signature | 01 November 2026 |
| (h) Address | LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area |

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**.

# Maseru in for regional star power treat in Spring Jump Off

Staff Reporter

Maseru is bracing for another major entertainment takeover as the annual Spring Jump Off returns to Lesotho on 5 September 2026, bringing a blend of South African heavyweights, Basotho talent and a packed programme of build-up activities.

The fifth Lesotho edition of the festival will be staged at the Manthabiseng Convention Centre in Maseru, with organisers expecting more than 10 000 revellers for the daytime spectacle.

The festival traces its roots to South Africa, where veteran DJ duo Vetkuk and Mahoota established Spring Jump Off as a major spring entertainment fixture. When it crossed into Lesotho in 2022, organisers described the Kingdom as the festival's first branch country after 12 years of hosting in South Africa.

The move was intended to grow the brand beyond South Africa while using entertainment as a platform to promote tourism and develop local talent. Four years later, the Lesotho edition has become a fixture on the local entertainment calendar.

This year's headline attraction includes South African amapiano star Scotts Maphuma, rapper Emtee and high-energy performer LeeMcKrazy, alongside the festival's resident architects, Vetkuk and Mahoota. Their appearance continues the event's formula of combining established South African names with Basotho performers.

The festival has also increasingly become a platform for local artists. Previous editions have featured Basotho acts alongside major South African performers, with organisers maintaining that exposure to established regional musicians can create opportunities for collaborations and career growth.

A notable addition this year is South African podcaster and emerging artist Sino Ndofaya, who will co-host the event while broadcasting from the venue through the popular Open Chats Podcast. Organiser Vetkuk said the partnership is designed to extend the festival's reach beyond the physical audience and give emerging performers greater exposure.

The build-up to the main event is also becoming as important as the festival itself. Spring Jump Off's Lesotho programme has historically incorporated activations, social responsibility initiatives and tourism-related activities rather than relying solely on the main concert.

Past initiatives have included school-shoe and blanket donations, while this year's partnership with the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has included opportunities for young entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products through a dedicated youth market. The organisers have also used the festival to create opportunities for local creatives, with previous editions producing collaborations between Basotho artists and South African stars.

Mavele and Tash, for instance, subsequently entered the studio with Vetkuk and Mahoota, while Sannere collaborated with Kabza De Small. The wider Spring Jump Off partnership network in Lesotho has previously included LNDC, Vodacom Lesotho, Channel O, Coca-Cola Lesotho, the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), Maluti Mountain Brewery and Cream Agency.

The new Sino Ndofaya arrangement is best described as a media and content partnership rather than a commercial sponsorship. With tickets being sold through M-Pesa and Ticketbox, and the main show set for September 5 at Manthabiseng Convention Centre, Spring Jump Off 2026 is shaping up not simply as another music concert, but as an increasingly established regional entertainment platform connecting Lesotho's creative economy to the wider Southern African music market.

Scotts Maphuma

# Vodacom Lesotho to host Mocha-O-Chele Fest in celebration of 30-year milestone

Staff Reporter

Vodacom Lesotho (VCL) is set to bring Maseru to life on September 19, this year as it hosts the highly anticipated Mocha-O-Chele Fest at the Maseru Club grounds.

The outdoor event forms a major pillar of the telecommunications giant's ongoing 30th-anniversary celebrations, which kicked off earlier this year in April.

Commemorating three decades of pioneering mobile connectivity and digital growth across Lesotho, Vodacom describes the festival as a vibrant, community-first gathering rooted in music, connection, joy, and shared national pride.

Designed as an inclusive event for families, young people, and music lovers across the country, the Mocha-O-Chele Fest promises a festive atmosphere featuring local entertainment and interactive experiences.

The phrase "Mocha-O-Chele" literally translates to continuously or non-stop, and idiomatically refers to uninterrupted, continuous, and ongoing activity.

"Mocha-O-Chele" holds a iconic place in Vodacom Lesotho's 30-year history. Early in the telecom giant's journey, the company launched the popular Mocha-O-Chele airtime scratch cards and airtime bundles, which represented seamless, endless communication.

In everyday conversation, "Mocha-O-Chele" went from being Vodacom's original flagship prepaid plan to a generic trademark for the company itself.

For their 30-year milestone, Vodacom Lesotho is directly bringing back that heritage. They even brought back the iconic M30 Blue Airtime Voucher, the exact paper scratch card that defined the early Mocha-O-Chele era in the late 1990s and 2000s.

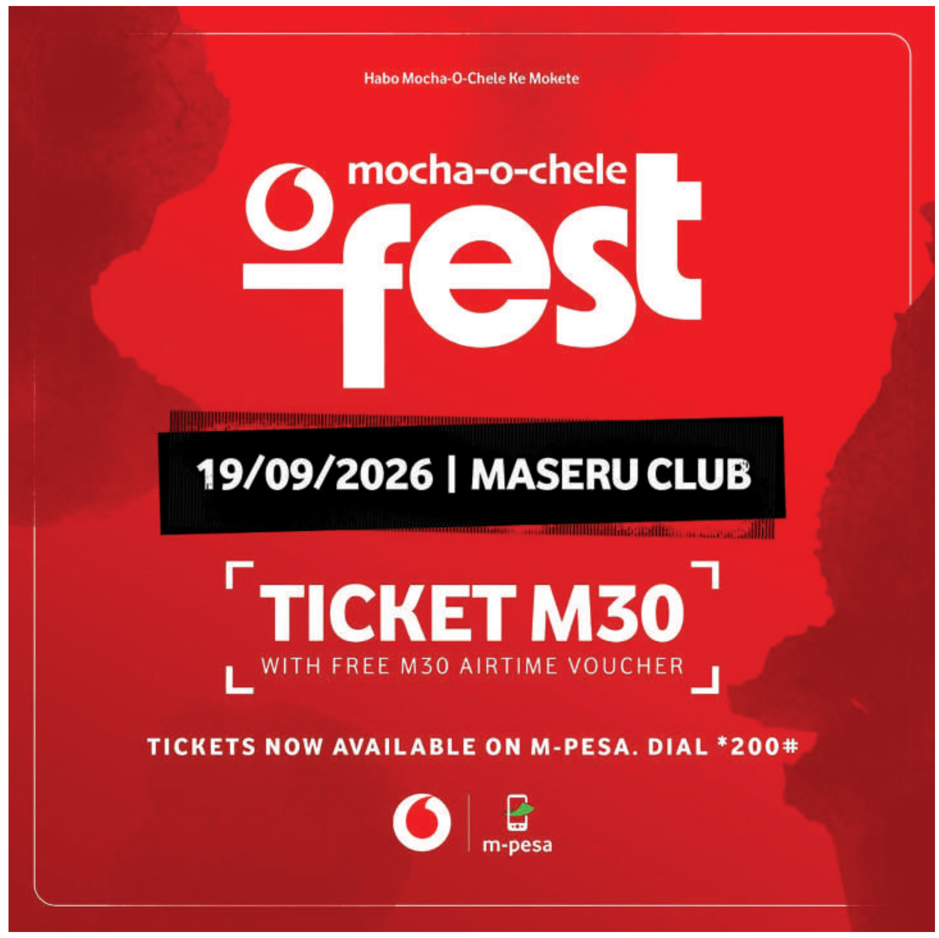
Because the name is so deeply ingrained as just voice airtime, Vodacom's official theme for the 30th year is "Beyond Mocha-O-Chele". It acknowledges where they started, the airtime provider everyone knew and named, while showing how they have grown into a digital and financial powerhouse through M-Pesa, data networks, and corporate enterprise solutions.

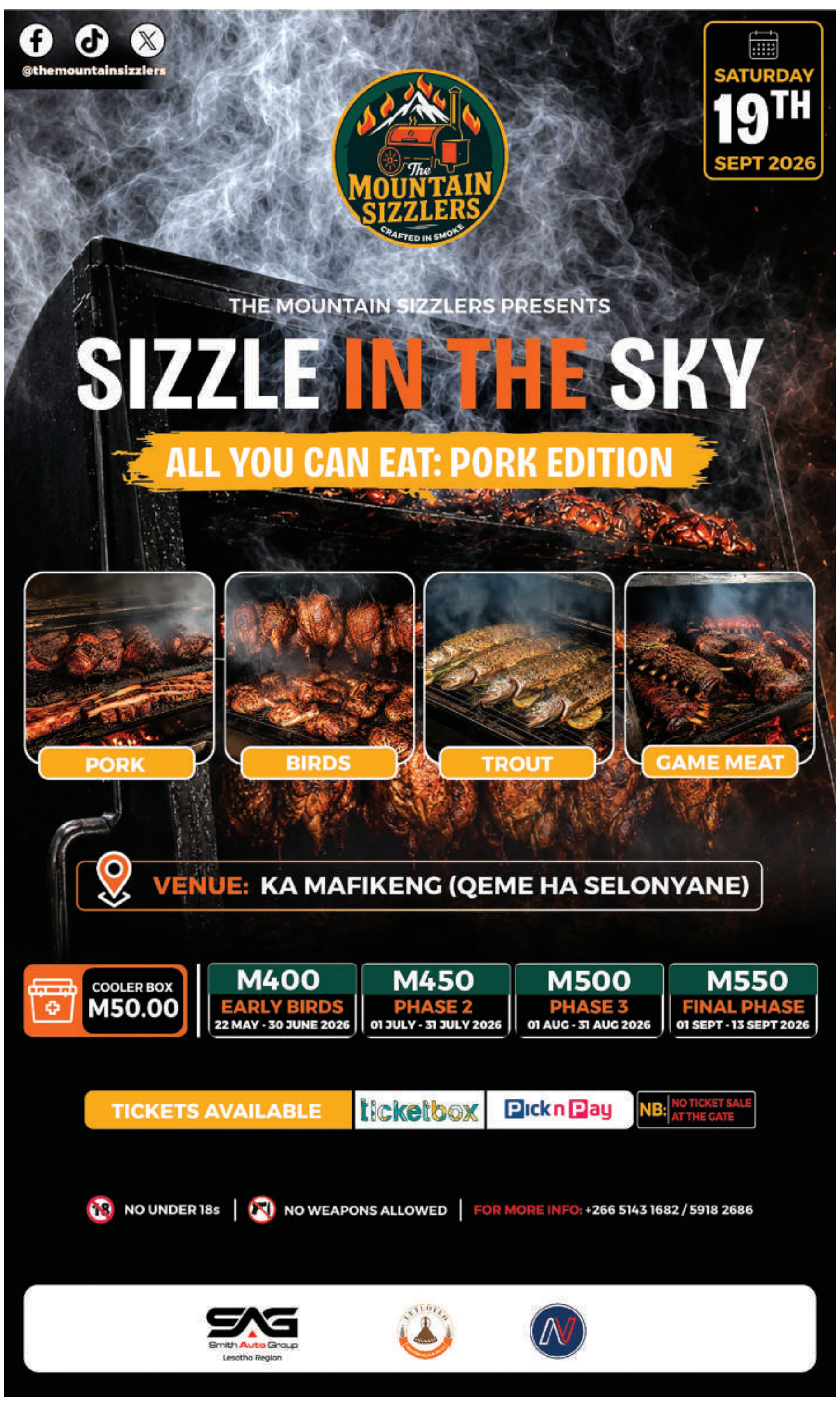
The choice of venue carries a nostalgic significance for followers of Lesotho's music scene.

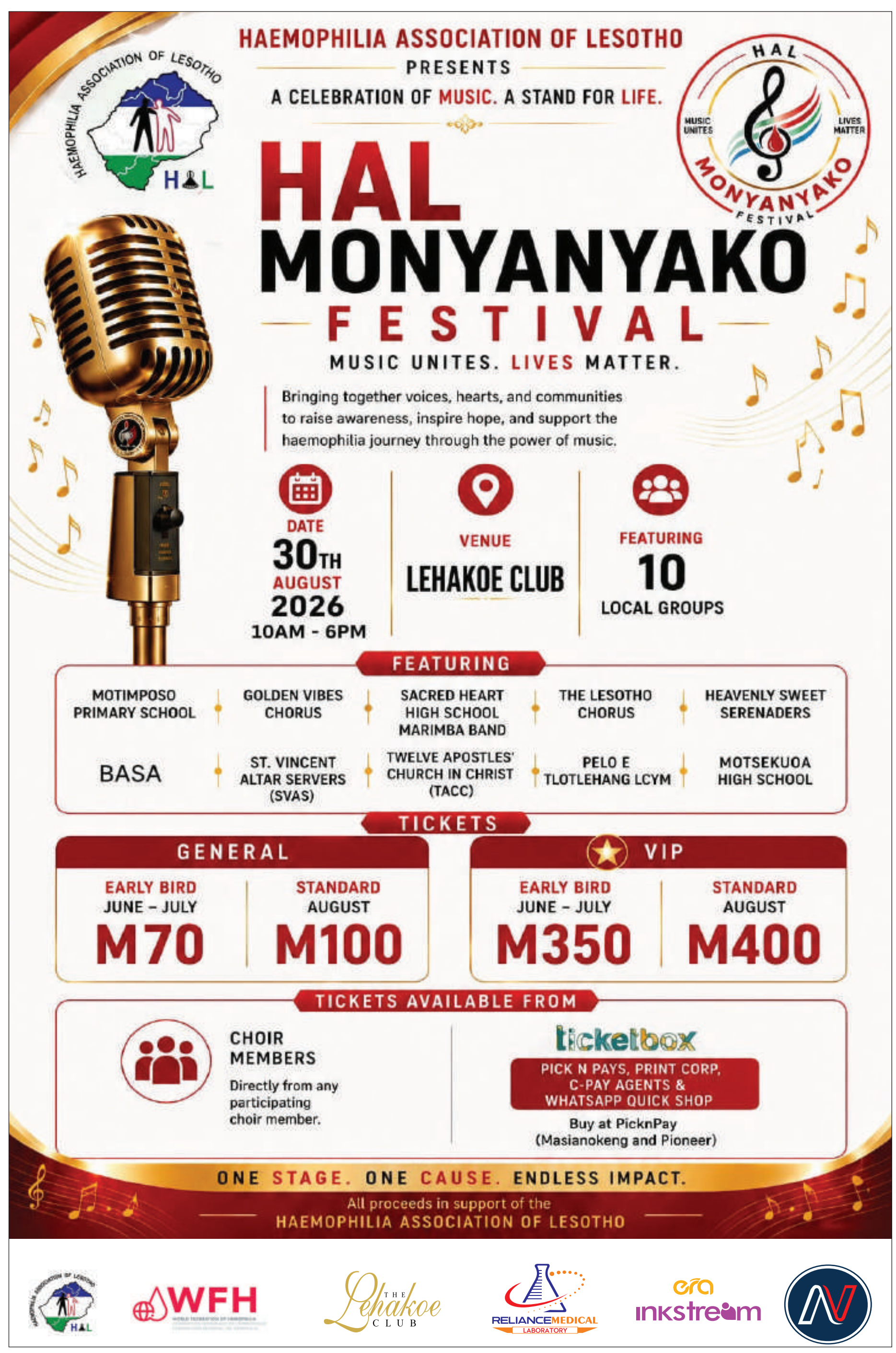
The Maseru Club grounds hold a foundational place in Lesotho's modern entertainment history. It is where Vodacom launched the legendary Summa Fever concert, an event series that revolutionised live music, festival culture, and corporate-sponsored entertainment in the country.

Summa Fever started as a groundbreaking open-air gathering at Maseru Club. It gave local Basotho artists a massive platform alongside major regional headliners and became the annual ritual for welcoming the festive season.

As the brand grew, attendance exploded far past what the Maseru Club grounds could comfortably hold. The demand was so overwhelming that Vodacom Lesotho relocated the festival to Setsoto Stadium to accommodate tens of thousands of music lovers, cementing Summa Fever as the largest annual music festival in Lesotho's history.



# Those who feed the nation deserve national recognition

Theko Tlebere

When Basotho gather at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre on 11 and 12 September 2026 for the Farmers Pitso Agricultural and Excellence Awards, they will be doing more than presenting trophies. They will be making an important statement about the kind of economy Lesotho wants to build and the people it considers central to national development. For generations, farmers have carried the burden of feeding families, sustaining rural communities and preserving agricultural knowledge. Yet farming is too often discussed only when harvests fail, food prices rise, livestock diseases spread, or the country experiences drought. Successful farmers rarely receive the same public attention given to politicians, entertainers, and other prominent personalities.

The Farmers Pitso Awards provide an opportunity to change this narrative. They remind us that those who feed the nation also deserve to be seen, respected, and celebrated. According to Seahlolo, Farmers Pitso started in Maseru in 2019 as a platform through which farmers could meet and exchange ideas. It has since expanded to several districts and developed around public gatherings, field visits, exhibitions, and awards. Under a three-year arrangement covering 2026–2028, Newsday Media now manages the awards, with Seahlolo responsible for organising and developing the platform. The stated ambition is to establish Lesotho's most influential agricultural recognition platform.

The programme scheduled for 11 September will focus on schools, students, agricultural exhibitions and knowledge-sharing. The principal awards ceremony and gala dinner will follow on 12 September. This combination is significant because it brings recognition, agricultural education, business exposure and intergenerational learning into one national platform. Agricultural awards may appear ceremonial, but recognition has real developmental value. It identifies practical models of success that other farmers can study and reproduce. When a vegetable producer, poultry farmer, wool and mohair producer, livestock breeder or agricultural processor is publicly recognised, the award tells the country that farming can be a serious profession and commercially viable enterprise. It helps replace the damaging perception that agriculture is an occupation reserved for the poor, the elderly or those who have failed to find salaried employment.

For young Basotho, visible agricultural success is particularly important. Young people cannot be expected to choose agriculture when they mainly encounter stories about crop failure, poor markets, livestock theft and unpaid loans. They must also see farmers who use technology, employ workers, enter formal markets, add value to agricultural products and build profitable enterprises. Recognition creates role models. A young person who sees a farmer from a village similar to his or her own succeeding is more likely to believe that farming is achievable. The distance between ambition and possibility becomes smaller. Awards can also improve the commercial visibility of farmers. A credible award provides an independent signal of discipline, productivity and innovation. This can help a farmer attract customers, retailers, financial institutions, development partners and suppliers. The trophy itself may not transform the farm, but the reputation, relationships and opportunities created around it can.

I really hate to make examples from our neighbour due the current deplorable treatment Basotho are experiencing, but nonetheless, South Africa offers useful evidence of how agricultural awards can form part of a broader farmer-development system. The Grain SA Farmer Development Programme, for example, recognises farmers at different stages: subsistence farmers, smallholders, potential commercial farmers and new-era commercial producers. This is an important design feature. It acknowledges that agricultural excellence cannot be measured by farm size alone. A farmer producing exceptionally from five hectares may demonstrate as much innovation and discipline as a commercial producer managing thousands of hectares.

At its 2024 awards, Grain SA recognised Petrus Ranko Tsotetsi as New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year, Alfred Gondo as Potential Commercial Farmer of the Year, Jim Besabakhe Masemola as Smallholder Farmer of the Year and Mhlangenqaba Mkizwana as Subsistence Farmer of the Year. Grain SA explains that its development programme is intended to bridge the gap between subsistence and commercial farming by addressing technical and business constraints. It also reports that participating farmers have progressed from yields of approximately two tonnes per hectare to as much as eight tonnes per hectare.

The longer-term stories are even more instructive. William Matasane, a former waiter who became a farmer, was named Grain SA Emerging Farmer of the Year in 2010. His son later completed a Bachelor of Agriculture degree and prepared to join the family farming enterprise. Koos Mthimkulu, the 2011 winner, also developed a farming operation that passed to the next generation, with his son later becoming a finalist in the same farmer-of-the-year competition. These are not merely stories about individuals receiving trophies. They demonstrate how recognition, mentorship and organised farmer support can build intergenerational agricultural enterprises.

There is also the example of Jeremia Makhosini Mathebula. He began farming in 2009 with 12 cattle and approximately 40 hectares of arable land. By 2018, he had become Grain SA's New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year and received a tractor as part of the award. In the same competition, subsistence farmer Jenette Thembi Shoba was recognised after applying skills obtained through a Grain SA study group and producing 7.5 tonnes of maize from one hectare. South Africa's women-in-agriculture awards provide another important lesson. Mponeng Lentoro, named Top Entrepreneur in the commercial category in 2014, reportedly used her winnings to plant 25 hectares of irrigated white maize and purchase a vehicle for farm operations. Ivy Nokwanele Mzamo invested part of her award in machinery, expanded citrus production and entered additional export markets.

These farmers should inspire young Basotho, but their stories also teach a deeper lesson: awards work best when they are connected to farmer development, mentorship, finance, equipment, markets and technical assistance. They amplify success when they form part of an agricultural support system.

Lesotho does not lack agricultural talent. What it has often lacked is a sufficiently strong national platform for making that talent visible. Seahlolo has documented farmers such as Lepeli Moeketsi, who moved from lost yields towards climate-resilient production; Beleme Lebajoa, who has built a reputation in Merino sheep and ram breeding; Mateboho Thotanyane of Premier Farm; and Mamafole Rakuba of Foles Evergreen Farm, whose enterprise supplies vegetables to schools, supermarkets and street vendors throughout the year. It has also reported on Village Fresh Veggies and Meat, an enterprise that grew from cultivating vegetables on borrowed land into a diversified agribusiness producing vegetables, grains and meat. Greenek Pty Ltd, founded by Mamohase Rasekhethe, represents another story of resilience and growth in poultry farming. Such enterprises are not simply private businesses. They are living laboratories of local development.

The awards have also begun recognising schools involved in agriculture. In 2025, Seahlolo awarded M10,000 towards gardening equipment, with Qhomane High School taking first position, followed by Mohale's Hoek High School and Ratsoeu High School. This is a valuable intervention because agricultural transformation cannot begin only when young people are searching for employment. Interest, knowledge and entrepreneurship must be cultivated while learners are still at school. A learner who manages a school garden can begin to understand production planning, soil management, nutrition, record-keeping, teamwork and marketing. That learner may later become a horticultural producer, agricultural scientist, veterinarian, food processor or agribusiness entrepreneur.

The Farmers Pitso Awards will have their greatest effect if they are treated as the beginning of a development process rather than its conclusion. First, winners should become agricultural ambassadors who participate in school visits, farmer exchanges, public demonstrations and mentorship programmes. Their knowledge should not remain on their farms. Second, every winning enterprise should be documented. Basotho need practical case studies explaining how the farmer started, the mistakes made, methods adopted, markets accessed, jobs created and obstacles overcome. This would turn individual recognition into national learning. Third, sponsors should attach meaningful development opportunities to the awards. These might include equipment, production inputs, insurance, business-development services, training, market contracts and concessional finance. A trophy brings pride, but productive assets and reliable markets help a farmer expand.

Fourth, the awards should recognise the entire agricultural value chain. Lesotho needs excellent producers, but it also needs seed suppliers, extension officers, processors, transporters, veterinary professionals, researchers, agricultural journalists, exporters and technology innovators. Fifth, judging should remain transparent and evidence-based. Productivity, environmental sustainability, employment creation, innovation, food safety, financial record-keeping and community contribution should form part of the assessment. Credibility is the most important asset of any national award.

Finally, the event should be used to build a permanent network of finalists and previous winners. An organised Farmers Pitso alumni network could mentor new entrants, undertake joint marketing, share machinery, negotiate with suppliers and provide government with practical policy advice. Awards cannot substitute for a functioning agricultural policy environment. Farmers still require affordable inputs, irrigation, extension services, animal-health protection, agricultural finance, crop and livestock insurance, storage facilities and dependable markets.

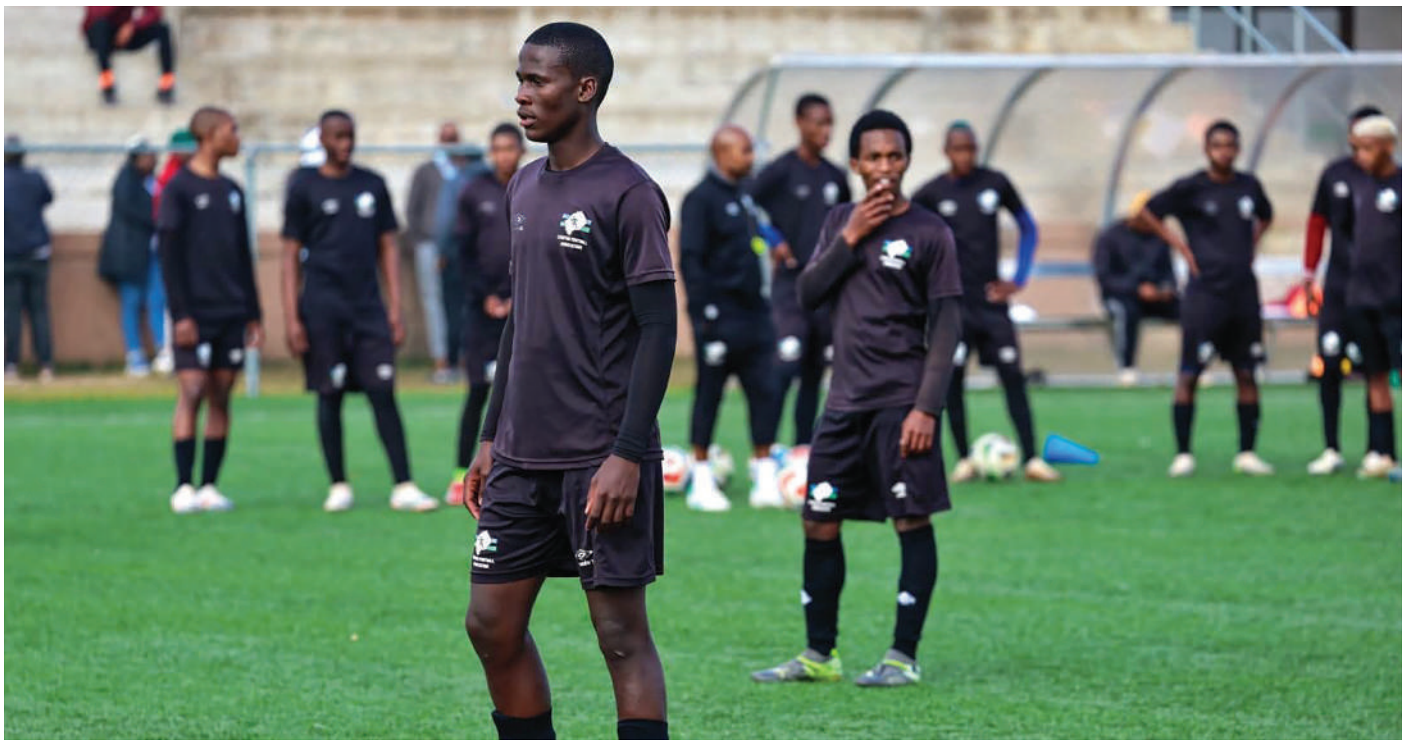
Celebrating a farmer at a gala while leaving that farmer without access to water, veterinary services or a market would reduce recognition to symbolism. The public celebration must therefore strengthen the national demand for practical support. However, policy support without recognition is also incomplete. Development is driven not only by budgets and institutions, but also by social attitudes. A society invests in what it respects. If Lesotho wants young people to enter agriculture, it must present farming as a profession associated with knowledge, innovation, dignity and national service.

The Farmers Pitso Awards can help create that cultural transformation. They can make excellence visible, transform successful farmers into national teachers and demonstrate that agriculture is not a remnant of Lesotho's past. It is central to the country's future. When Basotho farmers walk onto the stage in September, they should not be viewed simply as competition winners. They should be recognised as entrepreneurs, employers, innovators, custodians of the land and defenders of national food security. The Future is NOW!

# Lesotho seek return to former heights in Mauritius

COSAFA

***Lesotho's Under-20 side have excelled in the past, qualifying for the African Youth Championship in 2011 and reaching the final of the COSAFA Under-20 competition in 2017.***



They are a team that is always packed with potential but will want to make up for poor outings in their last three appearances at the regional competition, when they lost seven of their nine matches and conceded 27 goals in the procesas.

They will head to the TotalEnergies CAF U20 Africa Cup of Nations | COSAFA Qualifier Mauritius 2026 from September 18-27 believing they can produce a much-improved display.

They have been drawn in a tough Group B, though, alongside South Africa, Angola and Eswatini, a tricky pool that will certainly test them.

The top side in each group advances to the semi-finals, along with the best-placed runner-up, and the two finalists will qualify for the CAF U20 AFCON next year.

Lesotho have certainly proved competitive down the years and will be eager to do so again. They narrowly missed out on the knockout stages at the 2016 COSAFA Under-20 Championships after two wins and a loss in the pool phase left them second in their group.

But they did much better in 2017, topping Group C and beating East African guest nation Uganda in the semi-finals before narrowly going down 2-1 to South Africa in the decider.

They found the going tougher in 2018, when they managed just a point from their three games after losses to Zimbabwe and Botswana, having opened with a draw against Angola.

It was the same story in 2019 as losses to Madagascar (3-0) and South Africa (4-0) came either side of a 2-2 draw with Mauritius.

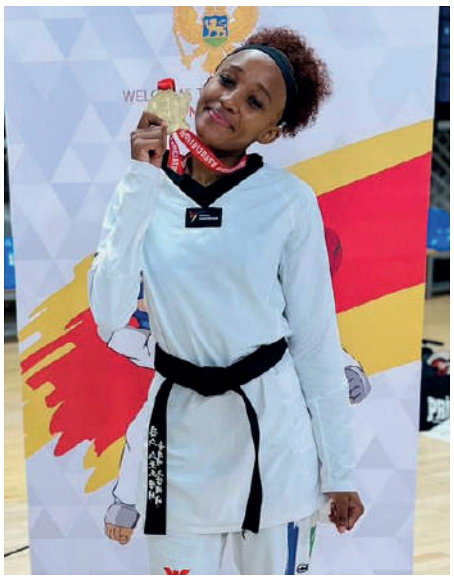
Lesotho have reached the COSAFA Under-20 final on three occasions, finishing runners-up in 1990, 2005 and 2017. They lost the 2005 decider 1-0 to Madagascar and have also finished third twice, in 1995 and 1999, and fourth in 2003.

They are a nation that has often punched above its weight and also reached the quarter-finals of the African Under-20 Championship in 1989, to go with group-stage exits in 2005 and 2011.

***LESOTHO COSAFA UNDER-20 CHAMPIONSHIP FINISHES SINCE 1999***

***1999*** – Third
***2000*** – Quarterfinals
***2001*** – Group stages
***2002*** – Group stages
***2003*** – Fourth
***2004*** – Group stages
***2005*** – Runners-up
***2006*** – Group stages
***2007*** – Group stages
***2008*** – Group stages
***2009*** – Group stages
***2010*** – Group stages
***2011*** – Group stages
***2013*** – Group stages
***2016*** – Group stages
***2017*** – Runners-up
***2018*** – Group stages
***2019*** – Group stages
***2020*** – Group stages
***2022*** – Group stages
***2024*** – Group Stages

# Tau's departure to SA exposes cracks in Lesotho's talent retention, says SAAYE



*Michelle Tau*

The Southern Africa Alliance on Youth Employment (SAAYE) Lesotho Chapter has broken its silence on the departure of Olympic taekwondo star Michelle Tau, stating that her move to South Africa should not be viewed as a betrayal but as a "national reflection" on why Lesotho continues to lose its brightest sporting talents.

In a press release issued on Thursday, SAAYE acknowledged Tau's autonomy and respected her decision, but posed a critical question to the Government Secretary (GS): "What conditions made leaving a reasonable option?"

Tau, who is ranked third globally in the 46kg category and is regarded as Africa's top taekwondo athlete, has relocated her sporting career from the Lesotho Taekwondo Association to a South African base.

SAAYE noted that while the Lesotho National Olympic Committee invested more than M700,000 in Tau's development since 2022, funding training camps in Spain, Israel, Togo, and Benin, the exodus highlights a deeper crisis.

"That investment should be recognized and celebrated. The question before us, however, is: what happens after investment produces excellence?" the statement reads. "How does Lesotho ensure that the talent it develops is retained, supported, and given an opportunity to flourish?"

The organisation also referenced unresolved parliamentary questions regarding a promised M50,000 Olympic award. According to the September 2025 Order Paper, only part of the amount had been paid to Tau by the fifth month of the financial year.

"We do not claim that payment issues caused her departure; rather, these facts invite reflection on the trust relationship between athletes and institutions. We wish to know: who was held accountable for this unfulfilled commitment?" SAAYE asked.

The statement also urged the public to view Tau not as a "flag or medal," but as a human being with ambitions, pressures, and a finite career.

**'If Michelle can do it, perhaps I can do it too'**

SAAYE further warned of the psychological impact on young Basotho who looked up to Tau.

"Imagine a young Basotho athlete watching Michelle Tau reach the Olympics. She sees someone from her own country and thinks: 'If Michelle can do it, perhaps I can do it too.' Now imagine that child watching the athlete she admired leave the national sporting system. The child is likely to conclude that: 'Perhaps Lesotho is where I will begin, but not where I can ultimately flourish,'" the statement read.

The alliance called on Prime Minister Sam Matekane to respond to a series of questions regarding elite athlete welfare, including who holds ultimate responsibility for athletes' development, how financial commitments are honoured, and what strategies exist to retain talent through the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic cycle and beyond.

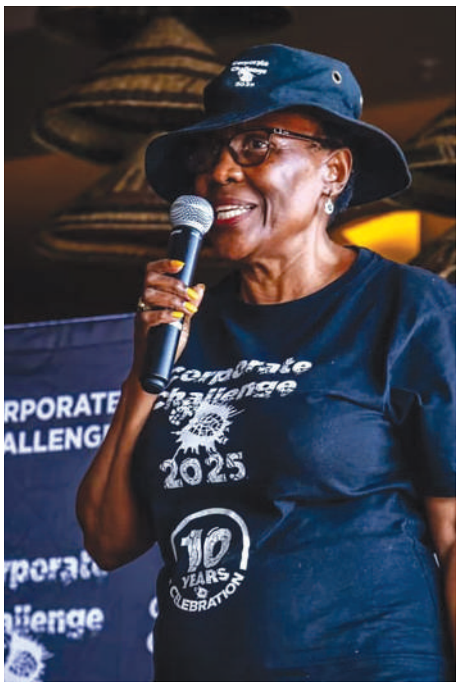
"Lesotho should not measure its success only by the number of talented people it produces, but also by how many it retains, develops, and enables to flourish," SAAYE concluded.

SAAYE's Sport cluster, in consultation with its health cluster, cautioned against judging Tau without understanding her environment. The group framed the situation through the lens of a "psychological contract", the unwritten expectations between an athlete and their country.

"Patriotism becomes a psychological burden when young people are expected to sacrifice dignity or professional development to prove loyalty," the statement added.

The organisation has invited the government to use Tau's experience as a turning point for policy reform, ensuring that the next generation of sporting heroes will want, and be able, to stay and represent Lesotho.

# Tougher obstacles and thrills as Corporate Challenge enters 2nd decade




*Liopelo Events Co-Founder, 'Mamphono Khaketla.*

**Seabata Mahao**

Liopelo Events has officially launched the 11th edition of the Corporate Challenge, with this year's race set for 2 October 2026, at Maseru Mall.

As the popular corporate wellness and team-building event enters its second decade, organisers say participants can expect a tougher and more engaging competition, with additional obstacles introduced and several existing challenges upgraded.

Speaking at the launch, Liopelo Events representative 'Mamphono Khaketla said preparations had already gained momentum as organisers work to make the 11th edition the biggest and most memorable yet.

"The countdown to the 11th edition of Corporate Challenge, Lesotho's premier team-building event, has begun. We are pleased to share exciting highlights and opportunities for participation and partnership," Khaketla said.

The Corporate Challenge brings together employees, colleagues, friends, professionals and members of the public for a day of physical activity, teamwork and entertainment. Organisers say the event has also evolved into an important networking platform for companies across Lesotho.

Participants will tackle an obstacle course featuring 25 different challenges, including the mud crawl, tyre run and monkey bars. Teams consist of five members and can be all-male, all-female or mixed. Companies may enter as many teams as they wish, while individuals can also form teams with friends, family, colleagues or neighbours.

The registration fee is M4,000 per team, with entries closing on Tuesday, September 15, 2026. Organisers are hoping to surpass last year's participation record, when one company entered 10 teams.

To reduce logistical delays on race day, team registration will open a day earlier, on October 1, allowing participating companies to complete registration and collect their team numbers ahead of the main event. On October 2, registration will officially open at 07:00, with the race starting at 08:00. Companies are encouraged to indicate their preferred activity times to help organisers coordinate teams more efficiently. The final teams are expected to complete the course at around 15:00, followed by the prize-giving ceremony.

This year's Corporate Challenge carries added significance as Lesotho celebrates its 60th Independence Anniversary. Khaketla said organisers have invited the Prime Minister to serve as guest of honour, following last year's participation by Their Majesties the King and Queen, who performed the ceremonial start.

A VIP marquee will also be available for CEOs of sponsoring companies and other invited guests, offering a space for relaxation, networking and celebration. Access costs M5,000 for six people.

For the first time, the Corporate Challenge will conclude with an official after-party, responding to strong demand from previous participants and taking advantage of the event's proximity to the Independence holiday. The celebration will feature live music and a renowned DJ, running until 22:00. Participants with energy left after the main festivities can then continue celebrating at News Cafe, which has offered its facility for an extended after-party.

Organisers are also discouraging companies from bringing their own food to the event, and are instead encouraging participants to make use of special food and beverage packages being arranged with shops at Maseru Mall.

Maseru Mall remains the main sponsor and host of the Corporate Challenge, with a long list of returning partners supporting the event. They include PCfm, Lerato Group, Lesotho Flour Mills, Healthy by Choice, JC Decaux, Value Tyres, Newsday, Dew Drops, Lentsoe la Basotho, MTS Enterprise, Lesotho Times, H2O Shared Water, MM Building and Construction, The Mail, CATS Productions, M&A Security, Black Note, 357FM, Public Eye, Misfit Gym, The Saturday Times, Lesotho Today, Red Cross, Print Corp, Data Deal, Vitality Health, Sky 266, Lancers Inn and Bokamoso FM.

The new sponsors joining this year's event include Mpilo Boutique Hotel, News Cafe, Guardrisk Insurance Brokers, Mountain View Spur, La Pearl Essentials and Wellness Spa, C Zone Massage and Beauty Spa, and Root-Out Recyclers.

Khaketla said companies could support the event by registering teams, sponsoring the event or individual prizes such as trophies and medals, or selecting one of the available cash sponsorship packages.

With registration already open, organisers are now calling on corporates, individuals and potential sponsors to come on board ahead of the September 15 deadline.

"Let us make this 11th edition of the Corporate Challenge the biggest and most memorable yet," Khaketla said.

# Raffle boost for sports uplifting

**Seabata Mahao**

Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC) has launched the National Sports Raffle Draw Initiative, a new funding model aimed at creating sustainable financial support for sports development while giving Basotho an opportunity to win cash and other prizes.

Launched last week at Avani Lesotho under the slogan "Play Smart, Win Big," the initiative is expected to provide funding for athletes, coaches, sporting organisations and sports infrastructure through a citizen-driven model.

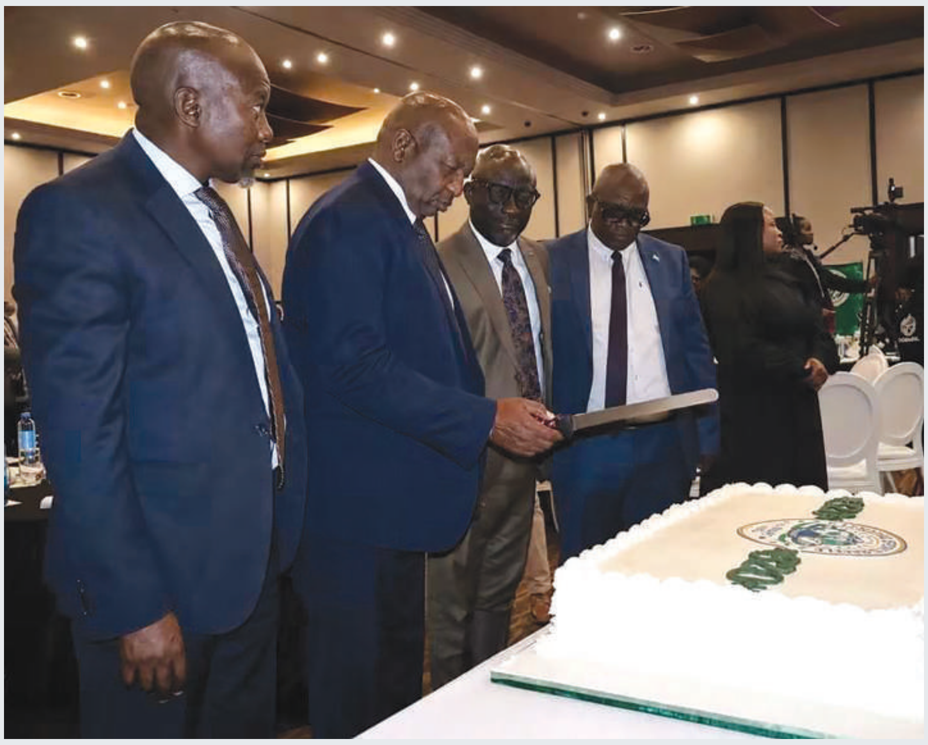
According to the LSRC, participants stand a chance to win exciting prizes, including weekly cash rewards, with major draws scheduled to take place every Friday.

The commission has partnered with Imajin and Fusion Lesotho (IFL), which will design, implement and manage the raffle.

Participation in the raffle has been designed to be accessible to members of the public. Basotho can enter through the official LSRC website, download the Lesotho Sports Raffle application from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, or dial *320# and follow the instructions using any network in Lesotho.

Speaking at the launch, LSRC President Baba Malephane said the idea of establishing a national sports raffle had been in existence for more than two decades but had never been implemented.

"The idea has been there for over 20 years. The people who came up with it are no longer alive, but the governments of the time did not buy into it," Malephane said.



*LSRC Sports Raffle ceremony*

He thanked the current government for allowing the initiative to finally become a reality.

Malephane said funds generated through the raffle would be directed towards sports infrastructure, athlete development, administration and coaching.

He expressed confidence that the initiative would help address the financial challenges that have limited the country's sporting potential.

"It has been proven that we have talent, but we have lacked resources – both infrastructure and finances. In the next two to three years, we will see more medals and trophies coming into the country because we will have the resources," he said.

Imajin and Fusion Lesotho Chief Executive Officer Arnold Asante said the initiative was developed around the idea of combining people's desire to win with the need to finance sports development.

"Our question was simple: how can we create a sustainable source of revenue for sports development by harnessing something that people already understand and already participate in?" Asante said.

He said the raffle would allow ordinary Basotho to compete for meaningful prizes while contributing to the growth of sport in the country.

Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture MputiMputi said the initiative had come at an important time as Lesotho celebrates its 60th Independence anniversary.

He said government viewed sport as an important tool for youth development, healthy lifestyles, talent development, employment, social cohesion and national pride.

"To achieve all this, we need partnerships and innovative ways of broadening the resources available to our athletes, coaches, sporting organisations and communities," Mputi said.

He called on Basotho, the private sector and other stakeholders to support the National Sports Raffle.

Prime Minister Sam Matekane said the initiative would provide another avenue for the country to invest in the talent, aspirations and future of Basotho through sport.

He said sport had grown beyond competition and recreation to become an industry capable of creating employment, supporting businesses and contributing to economic development.

"It fosters discipline, resilience, leadership and teamwork, strengthens communities and promotes a culture of peace," Matekane said.

The Prime Minister encouraged Basotho to support the initiative and allow the sporting fraternity to take a leading role in driving its success.

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**Lungile Maseela**

# LeFA partners with Radisol to commercialise football

The Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) has signed a strategic partnership with Radisol Global Investments to drive the commercialisation and long-term sustainability of football in the country.

Announced on Wednesday, the deal appoints Radisol as LeFA's commercial development and investment partner. The focus will be on attracting sponsorships, investment and strategic alliances across the football ecosystem.

The partnership aims to move Lesotho football beyond traditional sponsorship models by creating sustainable revenue streams around competitions, media rights, digital content, infrastructure, women's football, youth development and related opportunities.

LeFA President Ntate Lijane Nthunya said football holds significant potential for both social and economic development.

"Football in Lesotho possesses enormous potential, not only as a sport but as an important social and economic platform," Nthunya said. He added that the partnership would strengthen the commercial foundations of the game and help attract new partners and resources.

A core element of the collaboration will be identifying and packaging LeFA's commercial assets into structured opportunities for corporate partners and investors. These include competition and tournament sponsorships, broadcasting and media rights, corporate hospitality, licensing and merchandising, digital platforms, infrastructure development, grassroots programmes, women's football and community initiatives.

Radisol founder and president Sol Motsepe described football as more than a sporting product."Football is an economic ecosystem, a media platform, a youth-development mechanism, a community asset and a powerful commercial property," Motsepe said.

He stressed that Radisol will not interfere in the administration of the game. LeFA will retain full responsibility for governance, regulation and administration."LeFA will continue to lead, govern, regulate and administer football. Radisol will bring commercial expertise, investment thinking, corporate relationships and strategic market development," he said.

Motsepe said the partnership seeks to move away from simply asking companies to sponsor football. Instead, it will develop football properties that deliver measurable value to businesses while generating funds that can be reinvested in the sport's development.


Radisol Managing Director Puleng Magape said the company would work with LeFA to map the distinct audiences and commercial value of each football property.

"The commercial opportunity lies in understanding that every football property has a different audience, purpose and value proposition," Magape said. Partnerships will be built around shared interests between football and the private sector.

The programme will start with commercial asset mapping, followed by sponsorship and partnership development, investment promotion, corporate engagement, media and content creation, and sustainable revenue generation.

Both organisations emphasised that the ultimate objective remains football development. Nthunya said increased commercial income should strengthen competitions, support player and coach development, advance women's and youth football, and improve infrastructure.

The partnership will also seek to deepen Lesotho football's connections with regional and international markets.Motsepe said Radisol's ambition is to help build a football ecosystem that benefits future generations of players, clubs, coaches, administrators and supporters.

"Lesotho has a football story worth telling and a football asset worth developing," he said.

The two organisations will now proceed with commercial asset identification, market development, stakeholder engagement and investment promotion, with further commercial initiatives expected to be announced as they are finalised.