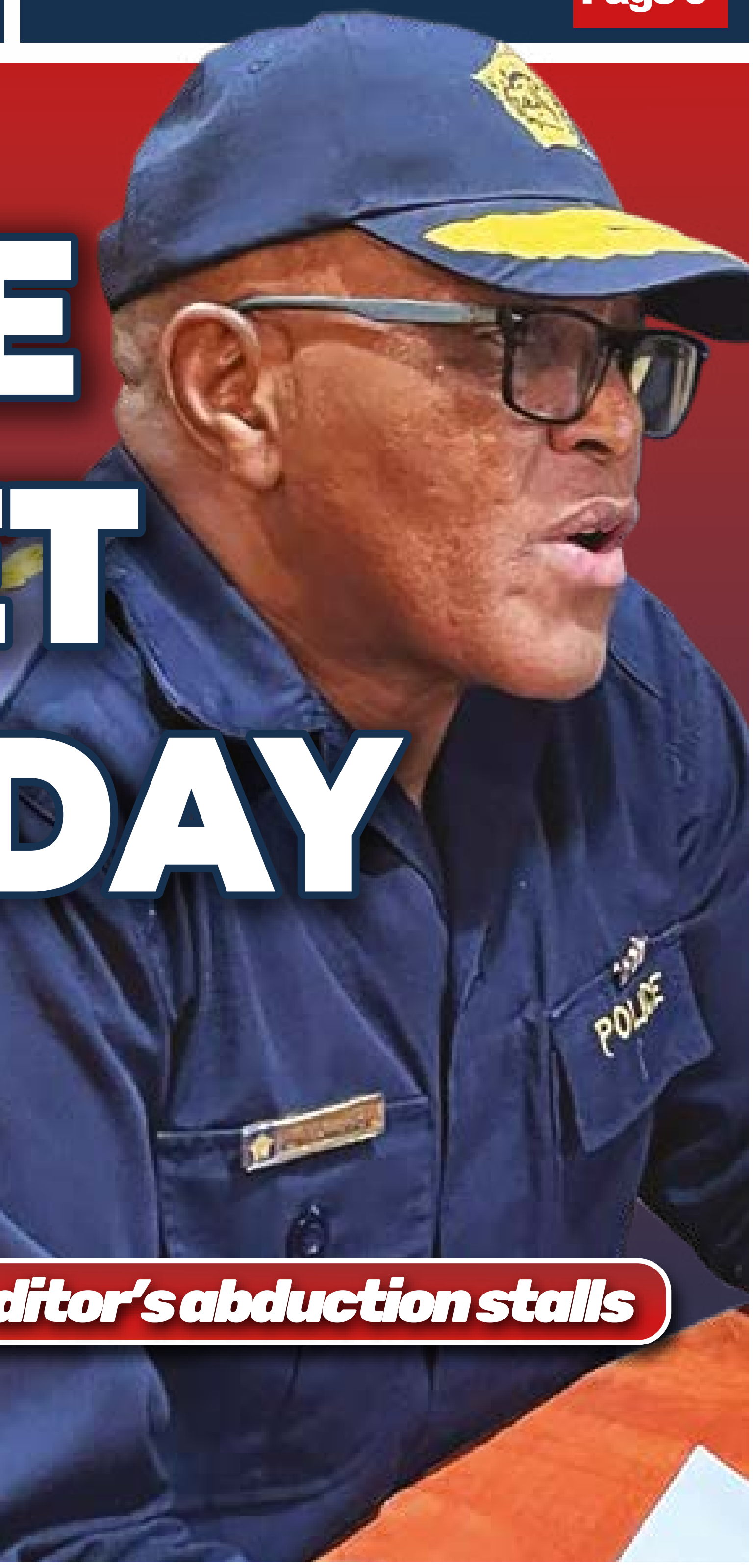
Newsday
...pacing standards

11 September - 17 September 2026 | www.newsdayonline.co.ls | Vol 08 No 30 | M 6.00

NEWS
New hospital incinerator sparks hope, not closure
Page 4

News
Battle for radio station control revived
Page 9

POLICE TARGET NEWSDAY



...as investigation into editor's abduction stalls

Page 2

Police target Newsday

...as investigation into editor's abduction stalls

Staff Reporter

Police investigating the abduction and torture of Newsday News Editor Kananelo Boloetse say they cannot make progress in the case because the journalist himself is unreachable to answer questions they say are critical to the investigation.

Chief of Police Advocate Borotho Matsoso told a press conference on Thursday that Boloetse's phone rings and remains unanswered, and that police have been unable to reach him since he gave an initial statement describing his ordeal. Matsoso said that statement leaves key gaps that only Boloetse can fill.

"[To the journalists] ask your brother to come forward. We are prepared to protect Boloetse. MISA, you must ask Boloetse to show himself. We cannot resolve this case while he remains in hiding," Matsoso said, adding that what the Boloetse had provided is insufficient for them to get to the bottom of the matter.

Newsday can confirm, however, that Boloetse has communicated with police on more than one occasion since his initial report, and has made it clear that he is willing to cooperate with the investigation.

Boloetse has told police that it is his life that remains in danger, and that he is prepared to answer whatever questions investigations may have. He has even offered police a practical alternative to a physical meeting: they can send him their questions, and he will either record his responses or provide written answers, whichever format investigators prefer.

Despite this offer, Newsday understands that police insisted on a physical meeting with Boloetse.

The Chief of Police also took aim at Newsday for what he described as its refusal to disclose where Boloetse is currently sheltering, suggesting the paper could be obstructing the investigation by keeping him hidden.

Police said they have also struggled to verify claims from Boloetse's neighbours about a suspicious vehicle seen near his home before the abduction, telling reporters they were unable to locate the neighbours Newsday had spoken to.

On the question of who owns the silver Toyota Starlet, registration A 887 BBC, that residents say repeatedly drove past and parked opposite Boloetse's house in Katlehong on the day of the attack, Matsoso said that inquiry is still ongoing.

Following his abduction, Boloetse reported the incident to police on Sunday, and officers visited his home to begin their investigation. Since then, however, police say the trail has gone cold without further input from him directly.

A case that has shaken the nation

The police's account of a stalled investigation comes against the backdrop of an outpouring of condemnation from government, civil society and the media fraternity, all demanding swift justice for Boloetse, a well-known journalist and human rights activist.

Boloetse was snatched from his home in Katlehong, Maseru, at around 7 p.m. on Saturday, 5 September, by three unidentified men. According to accounts from Newsday and international press freedom groups, the men bound and gagged him, forced him into a vehicle, and interrogated him at length about his journalism and his human rights work before assaulting him.

He was later dumped, badly hurt, in the Thaba-Bosiu area, roughly 24 kilometres outside Maseru, with his attackers warning him that going public about the attack could cost him his life. After coming to, Boloetse managed to make his way to a nearby road, where a passing Sprinter driver found him and helped him reach safety.

Photographs published after the attack showed visible injuries across his back, which Boloetse said came from the beating he suffered. Neighbours told Newsday that the suspicious Toyota Starlet had been circling the street and parked opposite his home for hours before the abduction, feeding suspicion that he had been under surveillance.

Some residents have speculated about a possible link to a state security agency, though Newsday has stressed these claims remain unverified and has urged police to trace the vehicle's ownership and movements.

Communications Minister leads government response

Among the most prominent responses came from Communications Minister Nthati Moorosi, who visited Newsday's offices on Monday to condemn the attack in person and to reassure the newsroom of government support.

Moorosi pledged to use her influence to ensure that those responsible for Boloetse's abduction and torture are brought to justice. She also praised his courage in speaking out about the attack despite his abductors' warning that they would return to finish the job if he did.

Her visit was described as a source of reassurance for Boloetse's colleagues, who have continued running the newsroom while he recovers away from public view.

Press freedom groups condemn 'tactical terror'

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Lesotho, which Boloetse once chaired, issued some of the strongest language yet. Acting National Director Nicole Tau called the attack "an act of tactical terror, a calculated assault on press freedom, and a direct attempt to force self-censorship upon the media fraternity in Lesotho."

Tau warned that the violence marked "a dangerous regression into a state of lawlessness" that threatens the country's constitutional democracy, describing the attack as "entirely foreign to the spirit of Basotho diplomacy" and an attempt to replace legal accountability with intimidation.

She said normalising such attacks would send "a chilling warning shot across the entire journalism industry," a message MISA Lesotho "refuses to accept." She also commended Boloetse's composure under what she called "extreme duress," telling his attackers they had "fundamentally miscalculated."

The International Press Institute (IPI) also condemned the abduction, calling on Lesotho's authorities to carry out a swift and thorough investigation and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

In a letter to the Prime Minister Samuel Matekane, Amnesty International raised serious concern for Boloetse's continued safety, noting that the men who attacked him appeared to know where he lived and had likely monitored his movements beforehand, leaving him at risk of being targeted again.

The letter urged authorities to guarantee an independent and impartial probe and to ensure journalists and rights defenders can work without fear of reprisal.

Civil society joins the call for accountability

Youth activist movement Bacha ShutDown described Boloetse as "our member, our colleague in the struggle," warning that attacks on people for their voice, journalism or activism "cannot be normalized." The group said it was troubled by the signal the attack sends to young Basotho involved in public life and offered its solidarity, declaring: "Today, Bacha ShutDown stands with you."

Advocates for Supremacy of the Constitution – Section 2, the organisation Boloetse leads, pointed to the timing of the attack, noting its recent public-interest work, including a legal challenge against an electricity tariff increase, scrutiny of the Road Transport Board's fare-setting powers, questions over the National Manpower Development Secretariat's handling of scholarships, and pressure on the Ministry of Education over learners barred from class or exams due to unpaid fees.

While careful not to assign blame without evidence, Section 2 said it was "deeply concerning" that its leader had allegedly been targeted, and insisted the circumstances "raise serious questions that must be thoroughly investigated."

The Men's Equity and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Network (MESNET) was more direct, calling the attackers "a bunch of cowards" who are "afraid of accountability" and "afraid of responsibility." The group said anyone who disagreed with Boloetse's work should respond with evidence rather than violence.

Newsday: "This is bigger than Newsday"

Newsday Managing Director and Managing Editor Lerato Peggy Matheka said the attack appeared aimed at intimidating the wider newsroom, not just Boloetse personally. She pointed out that his phone and valuables were left untouched while his attackers focused only on questioning him about his journalism and rights work.

"This was not a robbery. The message was clear: he was being punished for his work," she said.

Matheka said the fact that Boloetse was taken from his own home by people who appeared to know exactly where he lived means Newsday cannot guarantee his safety if he returns home. She said the organisation lacks the resources to provide secure housing or relocation and has appealed to international human rights and press freedom bodies for urgent protection assistance.

"He narrowly survived once; we cannot gamble with his life," she said.

She linked the attack to a recent cyberattack that disrupted Newsday's website and email following its investigative reporting, as well as to Section 2's ongoing push for accountability over education financing, describing what she called a pattern of "escalating pressure against journalists and human rights defenders working on matters of public interest."

Newsday has called on government to publicly condemn the attack and guarantee the safety of Boloetse, his family and its staff, and has urged civil society, legal bodies and media organisations around the world to unite behind demands for accountability. "If violence becomes the price of asking questions, then press freedom exists only on paper," Matheka said.

A troubling pattern

Boloetse's ordeal adds to a press freedom record in Lesotho that already draws close international scrutiny. Reporters Without Borders currently ranks Lesotho 89th out of 180 countries on its global press freedom index, citing frequent attacks on journalists and a media sector that lacks independence.

International watchdogs have stepped in before when Lesotho journalists have come under attack. When radio presenter Ralikonelo Joki was shot dead outside a Maseru radio station in 2023, the Committee to Protect Journalists demanded a credible investigation, with Boloetse himself, then MISA Lesotho's chairperson, telling CPJ he believed the killing was tied to Joki's reporting.

The International Federation of Journalists condemned that killing as "a senseless act." Amnesty International has also intervened repeatedly in past Lesotho press-freedom cases, including the 2016 shooting of Lesotho Times editor Lloyd Mutungamiri and 2024 threats against Lesotho Tribune's Phafane Nkotsi.

That history suggests Boloetse's case, involving one of the region's most recognisable press freedom advocates, is unlikely to fade from view.

For now, the pressure remains domestic but unusually unified, government, civil society, unions and Boloetse's own newsroom all pushing for one outcome: for police to trace the suspicious vehicle, identify who ordered the attack, and ensure Lesotho does not add another unsolved case to a growing list of violence against its journalists.

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
RISING SUN PRINTERS

AGOA extension lifeline for Lesotho garment industry

SeabataMahao

Lesotho's textile and apparel sector, which is regarded as the country's largest private employer has been handed fresh certainty after the United States (US) extended the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by two years, preserving duty-free access to the American market until 31 December 2028.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development (MTIBD) confirmed this week that the extension took effect after US President Donald Trump signed H.R. 6500, the AGOA Extension Act, into law on 2 September 2026.

As the Ministry noted in its statement, that expiry, on 24 July 2026, restored duty-free treatment for Lesotho's textiles, apparel and fisheries products even before this latest, more durable AGOA extension was signed into law.

"As per the Ministry`s communication in August 2026, since the expiry of the Section 122 tariff lines on 24th July 2026, exports from Lesotho can enter the United States market duty free and under current dispensations this will continue until December 2028," the ministry said in a statement.

"Effectively this implies that textiles and apparel and Fisheries products that are exported from Lesotho enjoy duty free access to the United States market until 2028," it added.

The ministry said the two-year window is not the end goal. The Ministry has confirmed it will continue engaging Washington directly, and through the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), in pursuit of deeper trade integration and, ultimately permanent, rather than periodically renewed, market access for Lesotho's exports.

The timing for Lesotho could not have been more critical as the textile sector, had already been battered earlier this year by US tariffs that peaked at 50 percent in April before being lowered to 15 percent in July, hitting an industry that had built its competitiveness on duty-free AGOA access.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had warned that the tariff shock threatened roughly 30,000 jobs, mostly held by women, in a sector where garments account for about 80 percent of Lesotho's exports to the US.

Some relief had already arrived in late July, when a separate, unrelated set of emergency tariffs lapsed. Those tariffs had been imposed in February 2026 under a balance-of-payments provision of US trade law after the Supreme Court struck down the administration's original "reciprocal" tariff programme, and expired automatically after Congress declined to extend the underlying authority.

As the Ministry noted in its statement, that expiry, on 24 July 2026, restored duty-free treatment for Lesotho's textiles, apparel and fisheries products even before this latest, more durable AGOA extension was signed into law.

Government officials had spent much of the year warning of the stakes involved. Former Trade Minister Mokhethi Shelile previously told parliament that a lapse in AGOA would expose Lesotho's exports to combined Most Favoured Nation and reciprocal tariffs exceeding 30 percent, warning that eleven textile factories and around 12,000 direct jobs were at risk, with ripple effects reaching truck drivers, taxi operators, landlords and domestic workers.

Trade unions echoed those concerns throughout the year, with hundreds of workers marching in Maseru in recent months to press government and Washington for a resolution.

AGOA, first enacted in 2000, has for 25 years allowed 32 eligible sub-Saharan African countries to export more than 1,800 products duty-free to the US, alongside more than 5,000 additional goods covered by the Generalised System of Preferences.

The AGOA Extension Act, sponsored by US Representative Jason Smith of Missouri, also preserves key apparel provisions, including the regional apparel and third-country fabric rules, through 2028, a detail with particular significance for Lesotho, whose garment factories rely on imported fabric to assemble clothing for export.

Regional peers have welcomed the same extension. Kenya's government, for instance, has said the additional window gives its manufacturers room to expand into new product categories rather than relying solely on apparel.

New hospital incinerator sparks hope, not closure

Ntsoaki Motaung and Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Construction of a new bio waste incinerator has been completed at Lepereng in Sankatana, offering Maseru District Hospital a long-awaited solution to its mounting medical waste problem.

The development comes after Newsday reported that dangerous medical waste was piling up at the hospital, sparking public concern. The Chairman of the Social Cluster Portfolio Committee, Mokhothu Makhalanyane, confirmed the new incinerator's completion.

The move follows a separate intervention on August 19, 2026, when the Global Fund donated 10 vehicles to the Ministry of Health to help transport medical waste from hospitals across Lesotho.

Behind the hospital's mortuary, piles of used bandages, syringes, needles, placentas and other potentially infectious bio waste had been accumulating for months, drawing growing concern from members of the public and scrutiny from various media houses over an issue that could no longer be hidden from passersby.

Hospital spokesperson Kekeletso Motanyane acknowledged the incinerator's absence had been a problem, saying collections were being made at least three times a day but that the sheer volume of medical and bio waste generated daily meant it kept piling up regardless.

She told this publication that in the meantime, waste had been transported to other hospitals with working incinerators, including Scott Hospital in Morija and St Joseph's Hospital in Roma, and at times as far as Quthing, to be burned.

Despite the new incinerator, questions remain over whether the intervention goes far enough. Molumaela Lepeli, a public health specialist, nurse educator and PhD candidate, does not believe that supplying waste-carrying vehicles alone is a real solution to the broader medical waste crisis.

He argued the donors of the vehicles should instead have invested in building incinerators at all government-owned district hospitals.

He explained; "This is because most hospitals do not have working incinerators, and those that are working are not fully functional or properly serviced. Instead of the 10 cars, they could have provided incinerators and mini-incinerators to the clinics. Without incinerators the problem of medical waste will still continue."

Lepeli further believes that diesel consumption will increase, costing the government even more money than they would save if there were no waste being transported.

Motanyane echoed similar concerns about the strain of transporting waste between facilities.

"Even in cases where waste from other hospitals is taken to another hospital because their incinerator is not working, the diesel consumption at the hospital receiving the waste will increase, resulting in a financial burden.

"We all know it will become the problem of the affected hospital, because in government, no money can be diverted from one institution to the next," Motanyane said.

She pointed out that when one hospital's incinerator is not working and its waste is taken elsewhere, the receiving incinerator becomes overworked, causing it to underperform and eventually break down as its capacity is stretched.

"It is not only the incinerator that will be overworked, but also the staff of such a hospital," "They will need to keep up with the extra pile of waste they have to burn," Lepeli added.

The wider problem is not unique to Maseru. Lepeli further noted that Botha Bothe Hospital has struggled with medical waste and water issues for a long time.

"That is why I am saying that instead of so many cars, an incinerator could have been provided for hospitals like Botha Bothe. The hospital has an old incinerator that always has issues and has become a problem," he said.

He also revealed that Motebang Hospital's incinerator broke down despite being new.

"It was still new when it broke down. This is because the person who operated it was not trained on how to use it properly. They were not trained because there were no funds for training. Besides that, it broke down because it already faced a large backlog of accumulated waste, so it was overworked," he explained.

Lepeli stressed that most government hospital incinerators need to be replaced.

"If they are replaced, a lot of money will be saved, unlike at the moment where a lot of it goes to repairing them because they keep breaking down. Especially because specialists for such work are sourced from other countries at high cost. If we have new incinerators, we will only need to service them for a long time and save money."

He added; "Operators also need training on minor servicing of the incinerators to avoid calling a specialist every time there is a small problem."

Beyond Maseru's new incinerator, this paper's investigation established that the Ministry of Health has no immediate plans to build further incinerators elsewhere. Even for the current 2026/2027 financial year, no provision has been made for one.

'Mateboho Mosebekoa, the Public Relations Officer of the Ministry of Health, previously could not say when or why hospitals lacking incinerators had gone without one, instead questioning how bio waste had been disposed of since the hospitals handover to the government by the People's Republic of China in June 2024.

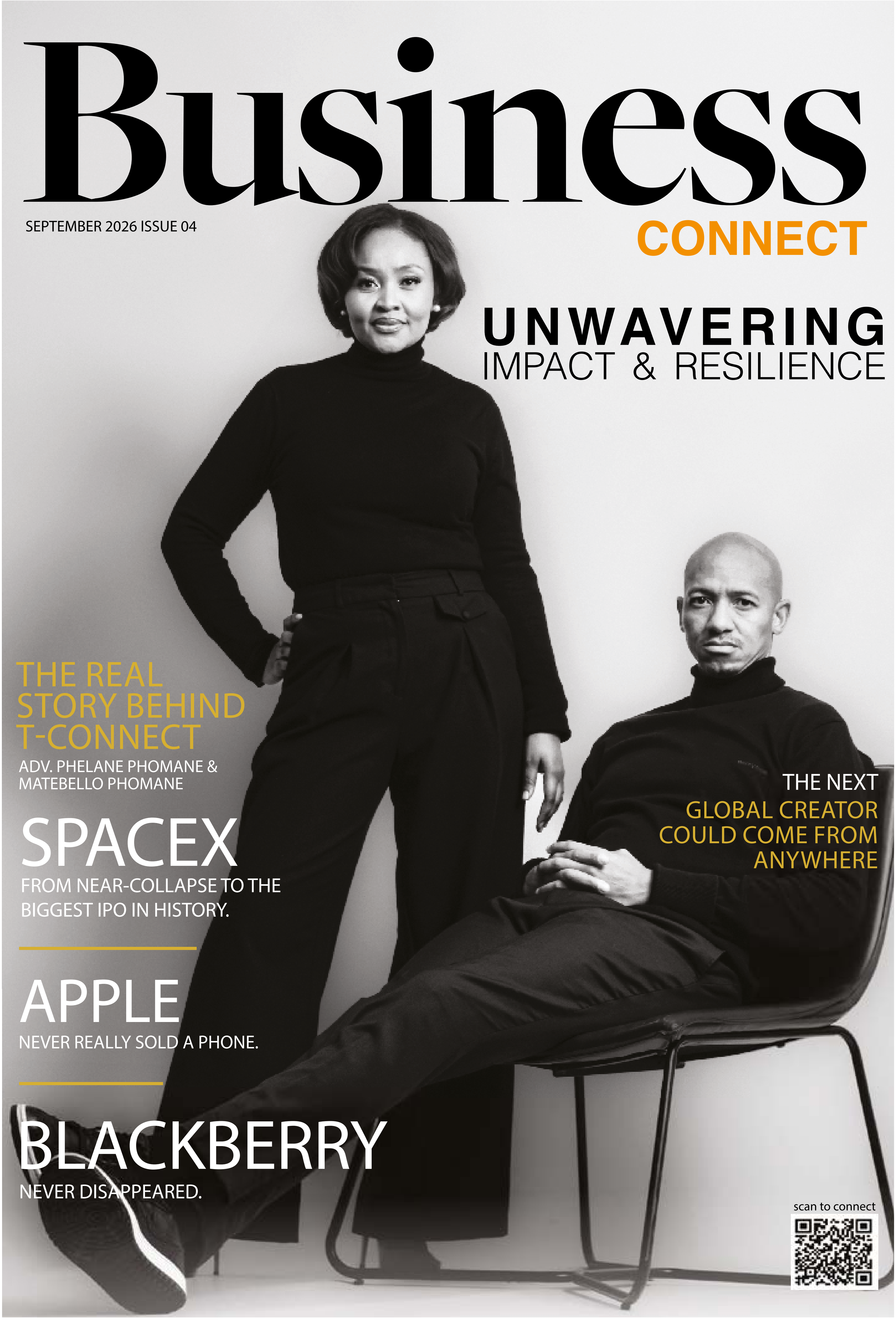
Minister of Health 'Mamokete Ntšekhe also could not commit to a timeline for building further incinerators but acknowledged it remains a concern. She previously said the Ministry is planning to engage development partners to request assistance with incinerator construction.

Meanwhile, a separate investigation by the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Health found broader problems in how healthcare waste is managed nationally. Environmental Health Inspectors, tasked with ensuring hospitals follow disposal rules, face significant challenges: there are too few inspectors, and those in the field lack adequate protective gloves, boots and masks.

Many inspectors and waste pickers risk injury from needles and other sharp items that are often carelessly discarded at dumpsites.

The investigation traced the problem back to hospitals themselves, where staff sometimes fail to place needles and hazardous waste in the correct containers, a gap worsened by insufficient training and unclear rules at the local level.

Some hospital workers, the investigation found, do not know how to separate dangerous waste from ordinary waste, making safe disposal even harder. While regulations for handling medical waste exist, compliance is inconsistent and penalties for violations are rarely enforced.


Business
SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE 04
CONNECT
UNWAVERING
IMPACT & RESILIENCE
THE REAL
STORY BEHIND
T-CONNECT
ADV. PHELANE PHOMANE &
MATEBELLO PHOMANE
SPACEX
FROM NEAR-COLLAPSE TO THE
BIGGEST IPO IN HISTORY.
APPLE
NEVER REALLY SOLD A PHONE.
BLACKBERRY
NEVER DISAPPEARED.
THE NEXT
GLOBAL CREATOR
COULD COME FROM
ANYWHERE
scan to connect

CAFI-backed firm scales up to hire 150 more

SeabataMahao

What began in 2019 as a small apparel business with four machines and two employees has grown into a major employment-generating enterprise, with Tranquil Textiles (Pty) Ltd launching a second factory expected to create an additional 150 jobs.

The recent launch of the second factory in Maputsoe Industrial Area marked a significant milestone for the company and highlighted the impact of targeted entrepreneurship support, business incubation and access to finance.

The expansion was witnessed by the Minister of Trade, the Competitive and Financial Inclusion Project (CAFI) Managing Director and strategic partners, including the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), Lesotho PostBank and the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC).

Tranquil Textiles is among enterprises supported through the Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility (LEHSFF), where it completed a six-month incubation programme under Cohort 3.

The company entered the programme with a workforce of 14 employees but, following incubation and additional support, grew to employ 96 people at its first factory.

Further support under the Lesotho Enterprise Assistance Programme (LEAP) enabled the company to pursue its vision of establishing a second factory.

The new facility is expected to employ about 150 additional workers and accommodate 80 new machines, significantly increasing the company's production capacity and enabling it to pursue larger local and international orders.

Tranquil Apparel founder, Clement Molupe, attributed the company's transformation to targeted support from government-backed initiatives, beginning with business incubation through BEDCO, followed by support from CAFI and financial assistance from Lesotho PostBank.

"I am grateful for the help I got from the government of Lesotho and the guidance I got from government-backed initiatives like BEDCO and CAFI because they helped me grow from nothing into a sustainable business," Molupe said last Thursday.

He recalled that when he began his entrepreneurial journey in 2019, the business was operating on a very small scale.

"I started my business back in 2019 with about four machines and two employees, which later grew to four people. To begin my journey of success, I was first incubated into BEDCO, which helped us to go through to CAFI, which helped me build my first factory," he said.

Molupe said that when Tranquil Apparel entered the CAFI programme, it was still a micro-enterprise with limited machinery and fewer than four employees.

"When I was first incubated into the programme, I was just a businessman with less than four employees and a few machinery inputs," he said.

According to Molupe, CAFI's support helped the company increase production through training, capacity building and machinery purchases.

Tranquil Textiles (Pty) Ltd launching a second factory

"CAFI helped us produce on a higher scale through capacity building and machinery purchases to grow the business, which now employs about 90 people working on local and international apparel orders," he said.

He said the support extended beyond machinery and equipment, providing the company with improved business systems, market opportunities and the confidence to pursue larger contracts.

"I am very grateful for the opportunities granted to me through CAFI and the growth I acquired while in the programme and after it," he said.

The first Tranquil Apparel factory in Maputsoe currently operates full shifts, producing garments for both the domestic market and international buyers.

Molupe said the company's journey of growth continued when Lesotho PostBank provided financial assistance to support the construction of the second factory.

"Our journey did not end there as PostBank Lesotho later came through to build our dream into something bigger, giving us financial assistance to open our second factory site again in Maputsoe," he said.

The entrepreneur said his ambition was to grow the company's workforce beyond 200 employees and contribute meaningfully to reducing unemployment in the country.

"Our dream for this was to hire about 200 employees by the end of the year and through the second factory opening that dream will be attained and more," he said.

For Molupe, however, the expansion represents more than the growth of a successful business.

"My dream is to contribute to the economy of the country positively and to the livelihoods of many Basotho," he said.

Lesotho PostBank Managing Director, Mokhachane Mopeli, said the bank was proud to support an entrepreneur whose vision was centred on creating employment opportunities for Basotho.

"I am happy that our bank was able to make a dream come true for a Mosotho man whose dream was to create employment for Basotho," Mopeli said.

He described unemployment as one of the country's most pressing challenges and said financial institutions had an important role to play in supporting businesses capable of creating sustainable jobs.

"The unemployment rate in the country is everybody's pandemic and if one person has a dream of hiring people, it is only fulfilling for the bank to be able to help such a person," he said.

Mopeli said PostBank was increasingly shifting its focus towards supporting businesses and transforming the lives of Basotho through enterprise development.

"The bank was made to help Basotho earn a living through our services. We as the bank are shifting to transforming the lives of Basotho and their businesses. Through Tranquil factory, Basotho will be able to earn some employment and make a living," he said.

CAFI Director, ChabaMokuku, said the project's mandate went beyond providing training and capacity building, with a strong focus on facilitating sustainable employment through the private sector.

"Our mandate is to make sure that we create employment not only from government but from private companies like Tranquil," Mokuku said.

He said sustainable employment growth required an enabling environment in which entrepreneurs and small businesses could access the support required to grow and scale their operations.

"Employment is not only supposed to be government. It should also come from independent businesses and the government creating an allowing space for businesses to grow," he said.

BEDCO Director, Tšepang Tlali, said Tranquil Apparel's journey demonstrated the potential of combining business incubation, access to finance and market opportunities.

From a modest operation employing only two people in 2019, the enterprise has developed into a fully-fledged apparel manufacturer employing around 90 people at its first factory, with the second facility expected to push employment beyond 200.

The planned installation of 80 additional machines is also expected to strengthen the company's capacity to meet larger orders, expand exports and continue supplying the local market.

Tranquil Textiles' growth from a small business with a handful of machines to two factories demonstrates what can be achieved when entrepreneurs receive targeted and sustained support.

The company's expansion also highlights the potential benefits of collaboration between government programmes, enterprise development institutions and financial institutions in helping small businesses overcome barriers to growth.

Ntsoaki Motaung

Gaps in HIV care persist for children and adolescents

Newly released 2026 global HIV estimates show that children and adolescents continue to face significant challenges in the fight against HIV, as international funding declines and disruptions to health services increase risks for the most vulnerable.

According to the latest figures from UNICEF and UNAIDS, an estimated 2.27 million children and adolescents aged 0–19 were living with HIV globally in 2025.

During that year alone, roughly 240,000 children and adolescents acquired HIV, and 74,000 died from AIDS-related causes, a toll UNICEF says reflects persistent, preventable gaps in testing and treatment rather than a lack of available tools to close them.

The youngest children remain particularly at risk. For those aged 0–14, around 1.26 million were living with HIV in 2025, with roughly 93,000 newly infected and 61,000 dying from AIDS-related causes during the year.

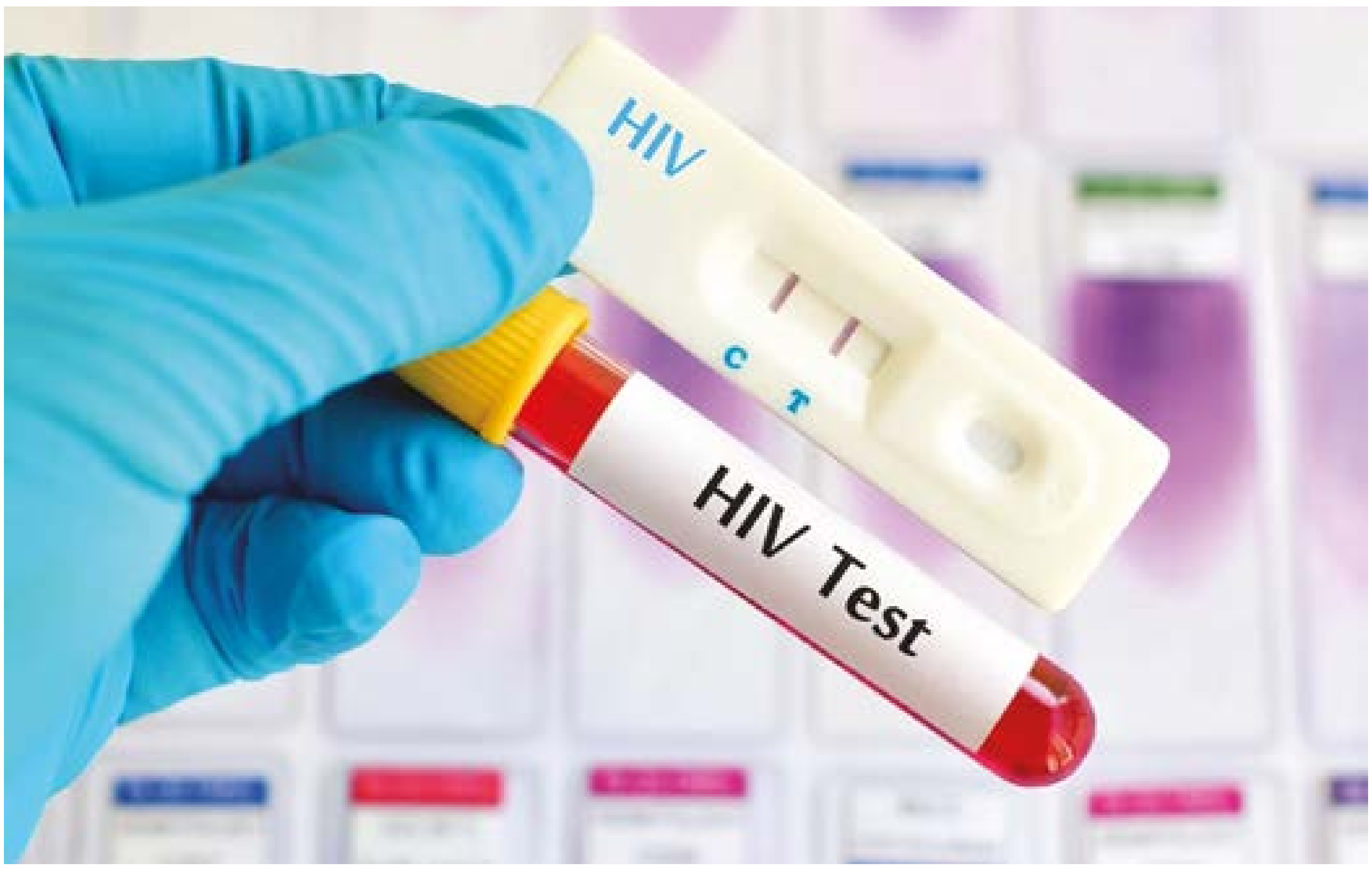
Translated into daily terms, this amounts to about 255 children acquiring HIV and 167 dying from AIDS-related causes every day, figures that continue to alarm global health officials. Nearly 87 percent of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the region hardest hit by the epidemic.

Treatment and diagnosis gaps remain wide, and notably worse for children than for adults. Only 65 percent of children aged 0–14 living with HIV knew their status in 2025, and just 55 percent were receiving antiretroviral therapy.

By comparison, 89 percent of adults living with HIV know their status, and 79 percent are on treatment. Viral suppression, meaning the virus is under control and unlikely to be transmitted, was achieved by only 47 percent of children living with HIV, underscoring how far behind children lag in benefiting from the tools that have transformed HIV from a death sentence into a manageable condition for many adults.

These global findings were detailed in UNAIDS' Special Report for AIDS 2026, released at the International AIDS Conference in Rio de Janeiro. The report warns that cuts in international funding and disruptions to essential services threaten to unravel recent progress, with children and adolescents, who already face the widest gaps in diagnosis and treatment, likely to be hit hardest if health systems lose resources or focus.

Research presented at the same conference found that the number of children receiving HIV treatment is now declining at a rate that cannot be explained by earlier successes in preventing mother-to-child transmission, raising concern that funding cuts are affecting how many children are being enrolled in, and retained on, treatment.



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

Lesotho continues to be heavily affected by HIV among children. According to the UNAIDS 2026 estimates, an estimated 6,400 children aged 0–14 were living with HIV in Lesotho in 2025, with fewer than 500 new infections and fewer than 500 AIDS-related deaths recorded among this age group during the year.

While these numbers represent a decline from previous years, they confirm that HIV remains a significant burden for the country's youngest citizens, many of whom still face barriers to diagnosis, treatment and viral suppression.

The findings come against a backdrop of funding uncertainty for Lesotho's HIV response. The country has historically relied heavily on the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which has contributed close to $1 billion toward the national response since its inception, making it the single largest external supporter of Lesotho's fight against HIV.

That support was thrown into disarray in January 2025, when a US foreign aid freeze disrupted treatment and prevention programmes nationwide, before a waiver later restored funding for core treatment services, though prevention programmes, including condom distribution and voluntary medical male circumcision, remained affected for longer.

Health officials have warned that any further disruption could reverse gains that have brought Lesotho close to international HIV targets for adults, while leaving children, who were already lagging furthest behind even more exposed.

Based on the 2026 data, experts are calling for urgent action in four key areas: eliminating vertical transmission by preventing mothers from passing HIV to their children and accelerating progress toward eliminating HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B from birth; closing treatment gaps through earlier diagnosis, better paediatric treatment and stronger continuity of care; preventing new infections among adolescents, with particular focus on adolescent girls and expanded access to prevention and sexual and reproductive health services; and protecting progress by using reliable, timely data to identify gaps as soon as they emerge and ensure scarce resources go where they are needed most.

As João Pedro Azevedo, UNICEF's Chief Statistician, and Anurita Bains, UNICEF's Associate Director for HIV/AIDS, have emphasised, strong data systems and high-quality information remain essential for tracking progress, identifying gaps, and ensuring that limited resources reach those who need them most, a message that carries particular weight for a country like Lesotho, still navigating both a persistent paediatric HIV burden and an uncertain funding landscape.

Fighting Youth Unemployment with One Hand, Blocking Opportunity with the Other

By: Dr. Theko Tlebere

Lesotho's decision to retain thirty seven (37) police officers who are on leave pending retirement has generated an important public debate. It is a debate that should not be reduced to a simplistic confrontation between experienced police officers and unemployed young people. The country needs institutional memory, experienced commanders, and competent mentors. Equally, however, a government that has declared youth unemployment a national disaster cannot afford to make employment decisions that create the public perception that opportunities are being preserved for those already inside the system while thousands outside it continue waiting at the gates.

Today I want to talk to the policy that the government of Lesotho, must confront with urgency. The statistics presented by the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) provide a legitimate institutional justification for concern. The police service has experienced substantial losses through retirement, death, resignation, and dismissal. Since 2022, according to figures presented by senior police management, the service has lost 474 officers. The current police-to-population ratio has reportedly deteriorated to approximately one police officer for 551 citizens. The Chief of Police has further argued that the service requires approximately 9,000 to 10,000 officers and that even the recruitment of 500 new officers will not immediately close the existing staffing gap.

These figures should not be ignored. But neither should another figure: thirty eight percent (38%) youth unemployment. Lesotho declared the socio-economic effects of high youth unemployment and job losses a national state of disaster, with the declaration running until June 2027. This was an extraordinary policy decision, and rightly so. A government that respects itself and its people does not declare a national disaster merely to issue statements of concern. Such a declaration must fundamentally influence how government institutions make decisions about public employment, recruitment, succession, and the distribution of opportunities.

This is where the retention of officers approaching or already entering retirement requires greater policy sensitivity. The issue is not that the 37 officers should necessarily be sent home. The issue is whether government has designed their retention in a manner that creates opportunity beneath them rather than congestion below them. A modern human-resource system should never treat experience and youth as competing alternatives. The most effective institutional model is one of structured succession: senior professionals transfer institutional knowledge while junior professionals rise through the ranks, and new entrants enter the system.

The danger in Lesotho is that the public may interpret the current arrangement differently. For a young police officer waiting for promotion, the extension of a senior officer's contract may appear to mean another three or five years of waiting. For a graduate or unemployed young Mosotho from Ha Khohlopo hoping to join the police service, it may appear that government is extending employment for those already employed while telling young people to remain patient. I am certain that my uncle's thinking even if he is from Ha Khohlopo, having watched government declare unemployment a national disaster, the symbolism is potentially damaging. And symbolism matters in public policy. Governments do not govern statistics alone. They govern expectations of its people.

The LMPS has indicated that many of the officers being retained occupy managerial positions and that their continued presence is intended to support mentoring, supervision and succession planning. This is potentially a reasonable justification. However, succession planning should mean preparing successors, not indefinitely retaining incumbents because successors have not been prepared. This distinction is fundamental. Government should therefore insist that every retained officer must be attached to a clearly identified succession plan. If an officer's experience is genuinely indispensable, government should ask: Who is being prepared to replace that officer, and by what date? Retention without succession becomes institutional stagnation. Retention with succession becomes capacity development. The 37 officers should therefore not simply receive renewed contracts. Their contracts should be transformed into structured transition contracts. Each retained officer should have explicit responsibilities for mentoring, skills transfer and preparing junior officers to assume greater responsibilities.

This would achieve three objectives simultaneously. First, it would preserve institutional memory. Second, it would accelerate the promotion of capable junior officers. Third, it would ensure that the eventual departure of senior officers does not create another institutional crisis. The government should also avoid presenting the recruitment of 500 police officers as though it automatically resolves the political and economic concerns surrounding youth unemployment. The recruitment of 500 officers is undoubtedly welcome and necessary, particularly given the staffing shortages identified by LMPS. However, government must understand that these opportunities carry enormous social and political significance.

When nearly four out of every ten young people seeking work cannot find employment, public-sector recruitment becomes more than a human-resources exercise. It becomes part of the country's social contract. The government itself has acknowledged the scale of this crisis. Approximately 145,087 young Basotho were reported as unemployed within the 15–35 age group, while youth unemployment was estimated at about 38.9% with young women facing even higher unemployment. In such an environment, recruitment into the police service must be transparent, credible and demonstrably merit-based. There should be no ambiguity regarding recruitment criteria. No perception that positions are reserved through political connections. No unexplained delays. No process that leaves young Basotho believing that employment in public institutions depends more on access to influential individuals than competence and qualification.

Indeed, the recruitment of 500 officers should be integrated into a broader Youth Employment and Security Sector Strategy. Government should recruit young people, but it should also develop career pathways for them. It should identify technical specializations within the police service, cyber crime, forensic investigation, intelligence analysis, financial crime, digital evidence, community policing and crime data analysis, and deliberately recruit and train young Basotho for the policing needs of the twenty-first century. That would turn recruitment from an emergency response into national capacity building.

The most important warning, however, is political. Youth unemployment is not merely an economic statistic. Prolonged unemployment produces frustration, exclusion and a growing belief that institutions are not designed for ordinary citizens. When young people repeatedly see opportunities postponed, when recruitment appears inaccessible and when those already employed appear to retain positions indefinitely, the danger is not simply economic disappointment. It is the erosion of trust. A country with large unemployed youth population cannot afford policies that appear indifferent to generational exclusion. Governments elsewhere have repeatedly learned that economic frustration, when combined with perceptions of unfairness and political exclusion, can rapidly become social unrest.

This is why our government must call the ministry and the police service to order, not because retaining experienced officers is inherently wrong, but because the government must ensure that retention does not become exclusion. Lesotho cannot declare youth unemployment a national disaster with one hand and, with the other, create systems that appear to delay the entry and advancement of young people. The proper approach is balance. Retain experience where genuinely necessary. But attach every retention contract to succession. Promote qualified junior officers. Recruit transparently. Expand opportunities for young Basotho. Transfer skills deliberately. Publish recruitment timelines and criteria. And ensure that every decision made by a public institution reflects the seriousness of the unemployment emergency declared by the government itself.

The Chief of Police may be correct that Lesotho needs experienced officers. But Lesotho also needs to remember something equally important: a police service cannot secure the future of a nation if its employment policies contribute to the hopelessness of the generation that constitutes that future. The recruitment of 500 officers is therefore an opportunity for the new Minister of Police to demonstrate a different approach, one that respects experience without sacrificing renewal, protects institutional capacity without blocking promotion, and recognizes that, in a country confronting approximately 38% youth unemployment, every public employment decision carries consequences far beyond the institution making it.

The message to government is clear: Youth unemployment has been declared a national disaster. Government policy must now behave as though we are indeed in an unemployment disaster. The Future is NOW!

Ombudsman office in limbo

Thato Sibolla

When the Ombudsman is locked out, it is not the Ombudsman alone who suffers. The ordinary Mosotho loses an avenue of justice, Parliament loses an important watchdog, and constitutional democracy is weakened.

The fundamental questions are therefore: Who is holding the Executive accountable? Who is protecting the Ombudsman institution? And where is Parliament?

The Ombudsman Crisis is a Constitutional Crisis:

- Executive overreach: The Executive appears to be interfering with an independent constitutional accountability institution. The Ombudsman's Office is not a department of the Ministry of Law and Justice and should not be subject to ministerial direction or control.
- Weakening of accountability: The Ombudsman exists to hold government accountable. If the Executive can prevent the Ombudsman from functioning, the very institution designed to scrutinise executive power is being weakened.
- Justice denied to Basotho: The Ombudsman's absence has direct consequences for ordinary citizens. Investigators can investigate and prepare reports, but only the Ombudsman has the authority to determine complaints and decide the institutional way forward. There is no Deputy Ombudsman with equivalent powers to fill the gap. This means complaints and investigations requiring determination cannot be fully concluded.
- A deliberate institutional vacuum: The Office has effectively been operating without its Ombudsman for about three months. If judgment comes in November or December, the vacuum could extend to five or six months. The question is: why should Basotho be denied access to administrative justice while the constitutional dispute is pending?
- Parliament's silence: The Ombudsman is an important part of Parliament's accountability architecture; a watchdog over the Executive. Yet Parliament has remained largely silent while its watchdog is prevented from functioning. Why is Parliament not defending the independence of an institution that serves the public and Parliament itself? Why babipetsanefela and keeping mum??? Something is horribly wrong here!
- Rule of law: Where there is a court order protecting the functioning of the Ombudsman, compliance should not depend on further litigation. The issue is bigger than contempt proceeding; it concerns whether government respects binding judicial decisions and constitutional limits on executive power.
- International concern: This should no longer be treated merely as a dispute concerning one officeholder. It is an institutional-independence issue that warrants attention from Ombudsman institutions internationally and other regional and international human-rights bodies.

Battle for radio station control revived

Lekhetho Makhanya

In a move that revives memories of a long-running battle over management of People's Choice FM (PCFM), contender Mohau Thakaso has written to the police this week to inquire about progress in dragging Standard Lesotho Bank into the dispute.

Thakaso, also known affectionately as Mr White Horse, a pseudonym drawn from the political party he founded and leads, the White Horse Party, remains resolute that the disputed radio station belongs to him.

He argues his opponents, Hubbard Monaheng, Motlatsi Majara, Kholu Qhobela, Liteboho Nkuebe, Falla Lisanyane, Refiloe Mohlotsane, Khauta Mpeqa and Advocate Salemane Phafane, fraudulently acquired authority to manage his company's affairs, including managing its finances held with Standard Lesotho Bank.

He alleges the bank failed to comply with a December 2009 court order that endorsed him as the main authority over PCFM's business, as opposed to his opponents.

His weapon is that court order, dated 16 December, 2009, and endorsed by the late Justice 'Maseshophe Hlajoane in the High Court.

In correspondence addressed to Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Superintendent Mafatle, Head of the Fraud Unit at Police Headquarters, Thakaso writes: "Dear Sir, I opened a criminal and company capture case at LMPS RCI/81/10/25 against Standard Lesotho Bank and seven others on 25th October, 2025."

The case has not seen the light of day in court so far, he says, adding: "I want to humbly request you to charge the bank and these people, as I am expecting from LMPS, a professional service."

The delay in prosecuting the case, Thakaso argues, "is unacceptable in that the suspects are comfortable and looting the company funds." He alleges that Superintendent Mafatle investigated the case and has in his possession "proof that indeed the account was opened in defiance of a court order."

He continues, "May I remind you Sir (Supt. Mafatle), that the court ruled in favour of People's Choice Broadcasting Studios (trading as PCFM) but Standard Lesotho Bank opened an account in the name of same company despite being prohibited to do so by the court order CIV/APP/511/09."

The correspondence was copied to the Chief of Police, Advocate Borotho Matsoso, and the Minister of Home Affairs and Police, Voeswa Tsheka. Contacted for comment, Supt. Mafatle said he was not

Mohau Thakaso

authorised to speak to the media about police business.

The 2009 court order Thakaso relies on states: "It is hereby ordered that: 1. Respondent (Standard Lesotho Bank) is directed and ordered to allow lawful signatories of the First Applicant (People's Choice Broadcasting Studios) as reflected in its resolution dated 3rd July, 2008, to transact in respect of First Applicant Bank Account No. 0140033811601 held with the respondent."

That resolution named Thakaso, Motlatsi Majara and Teboho Mothae as the lawful signatories to PCFM's bank account, contrary to the position held by his opponents.

The order further directed the bank "to expunge or cause to be expunged from records any specimen of signatures other than signature of signatories reflected (Thakaso, Majara and Mothae), authorised by First Applicant (PCFM)," and restrained it "from releasing or causing to be released, funds by anybody except lawful signatories as reflected in the First Applicant's resolution dated 3rd July 2008."

The bank was also "retrained and interdicted from interfering with First Applicant's bank account No. 014oo3381601 without Applicant's confirmation and authority," and ordered to bear the costs of the lawsuit.

Contacted for reaction, Standard Lesotho Bank's Marketing Manager for Public Relations, Communications and Sponsorship, Manyathela Kheleli, said he was out of office, "and there is an internal process that I have to run in office before I can speak with the media."

The underlying resolution, dated 3 July, 2008, reads: "at a meeting of the Board of Directors of People's Choice Broadcasting Studios (Pty) Ltd, at the office of PCFM, it was resolved that the following persons be added as signatories to the company accounts held at Standard Lesotho Bank": Mohau Thakaso, Motlatsi Majara and Teboho Mothae.

It further states that "Mr Thakaso will sign all cheques with anyone of the other signatories (Majara or Mothae)," while Hubbard Monaheng, Kholu Qhobela and Mamalang Molatseli were removed as signatories. The resolution was signed by Thakaso, Majara and Mothae themselves.

The crux of the conflict at PCFM appears to lie in disputed shareholding, as shown in minutes of a board meeting held on June 27, 2008. Thakaso confirmed to Newsday this week that he had invited all managers who regarded themselves as either "directors or shareholders" at PCFM to clarify issues surrounding the company's shareholding and its present state.

Present at that meeting were Thakaso, Mothae, Majara and Monaheng, though Monaheng left soon after Thakaso told him he was the one who had called the meeting, having first questioned the agenda and Mothae's presence. Lisanyane, Mpeqa and Mohlotsane also attended, while Nkuebe apologised and was absent.

According to the minutes, Thakaso told those present that at the Law Office where PCFM was legally registered, the listed shareholders appeared to be Qhobela, Lisanyane, Mohlotsane, Nkuebe, Mpeqa and Wrenjos.

Request for Bids

(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Name of Project: Department of Mining and Geoscience
Contract Title: **DMG, Security services, 2026-2027**

RFB Reference No.: DMG/S/GOL3/2026-2027

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources has received financing from the Government of Lesotho (GOL) toward the cost of the Security services and intends to apply the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **DMG, Security Services, 2026-2027**
2. **The Ministry of Natural Resources** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders of Security Services to submit tenders for **DMG, Security Services 2026-2027**
3. Bidding will be conducted through Open National competitive Tender as specified in Public Procurement Act of 2023 and Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may inspect the Bidding document during office hours; **09:00** hours to **16:00** hours at the **Department of Mines and Geology offices, located at LNDC Block C Level 5**
5. The bidding documents in **English, will be collected from Department of Mines and Geology Administration LNDC Block C Level 5, Maseru from Monday 7th September 2026 to, at the non-refundable fee of M500.00**. Payment shall be made to Accounts Office DMG Maseru, **Bidders must produce the receipt obtained from accounts office to procurement Unit in order to receive the bidding documents.**
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2nd, October, 2026, at 10:00 am. And the opening will be at 10.15a.m. Electronic Bidding **will not** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below:

Procurement Unit
Tender Box
Bokamoso Business Suit
Opposite Old Prison Headquarters and Center for accounting studies.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security of M5, 000.00** in the form of a Bank Guarantee.

A Compulsory Pre-tender meeting shall be held on **22th September, 2026 at 10:00 am** at the DMG Maseru opposite Police Headquarters.

8. All questions and clarifications relating to this tender should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Old Christie House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

WITHDRAWAL AND RE-ADVERTISEMENT: DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Reference is made to the vacancy advertisement for the position of **Director Corporate Services**, published on media platforms from 23 July 2026.

The Lesotho Public Procurement Authority (LPPA) **hereby notifies** the public that the advertised position is **withdrawn with immediate effect**, and the **corrected position profile will be re-advertised** in due course.

The LPPA regrets any inconvenience this may cause to applicants who have already submitted applications and wishes to thank all candidates for their interest in the Authority. Applicants who wish to be considered are encouraged to re-apply once the corrected position is re-advertised.

LNDC

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

LNDC

INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Office Furniture

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-11

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **office furniture.**

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

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 Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 2026** between **08:30am and 16:30pm.**

5. 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	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area

LNDC

INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Promotional Material

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-12

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **Promotional Material**

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

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 Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 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	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area

LNDC

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SECURITY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE PROVISION OF AD-HOC SECURITY SERVICES

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-13

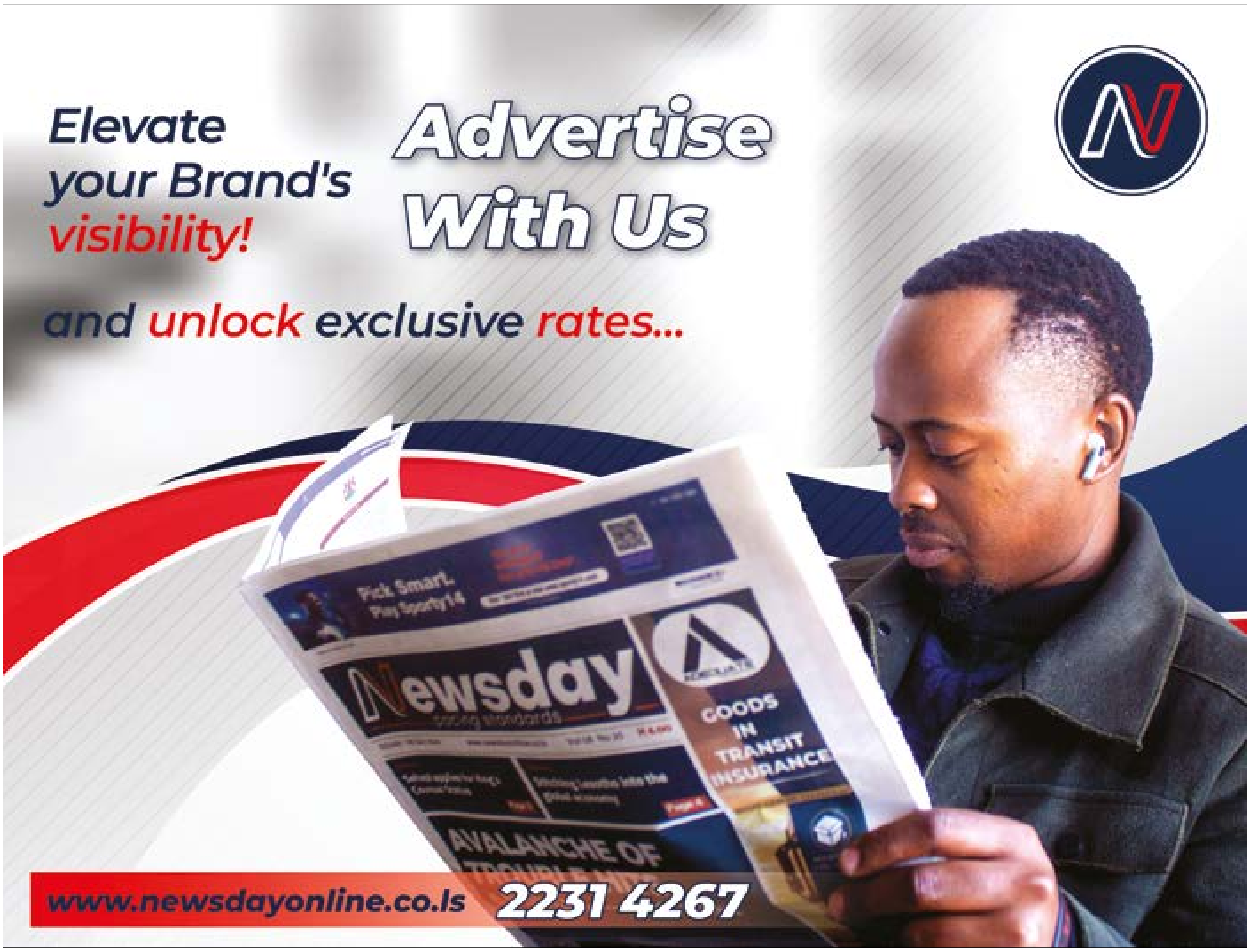
1. **Background and Objective:** The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) intends to prequalify competent security service providers for the provision of reliable and responsive security services on an ad-hoc, on-call basis at its properties and designated locations in Lesotho. Interested providers must demonstrate professional competence, integrity, qualified personnel, adequate resources, regulatory compliance, and the capacity to deliver quality services.

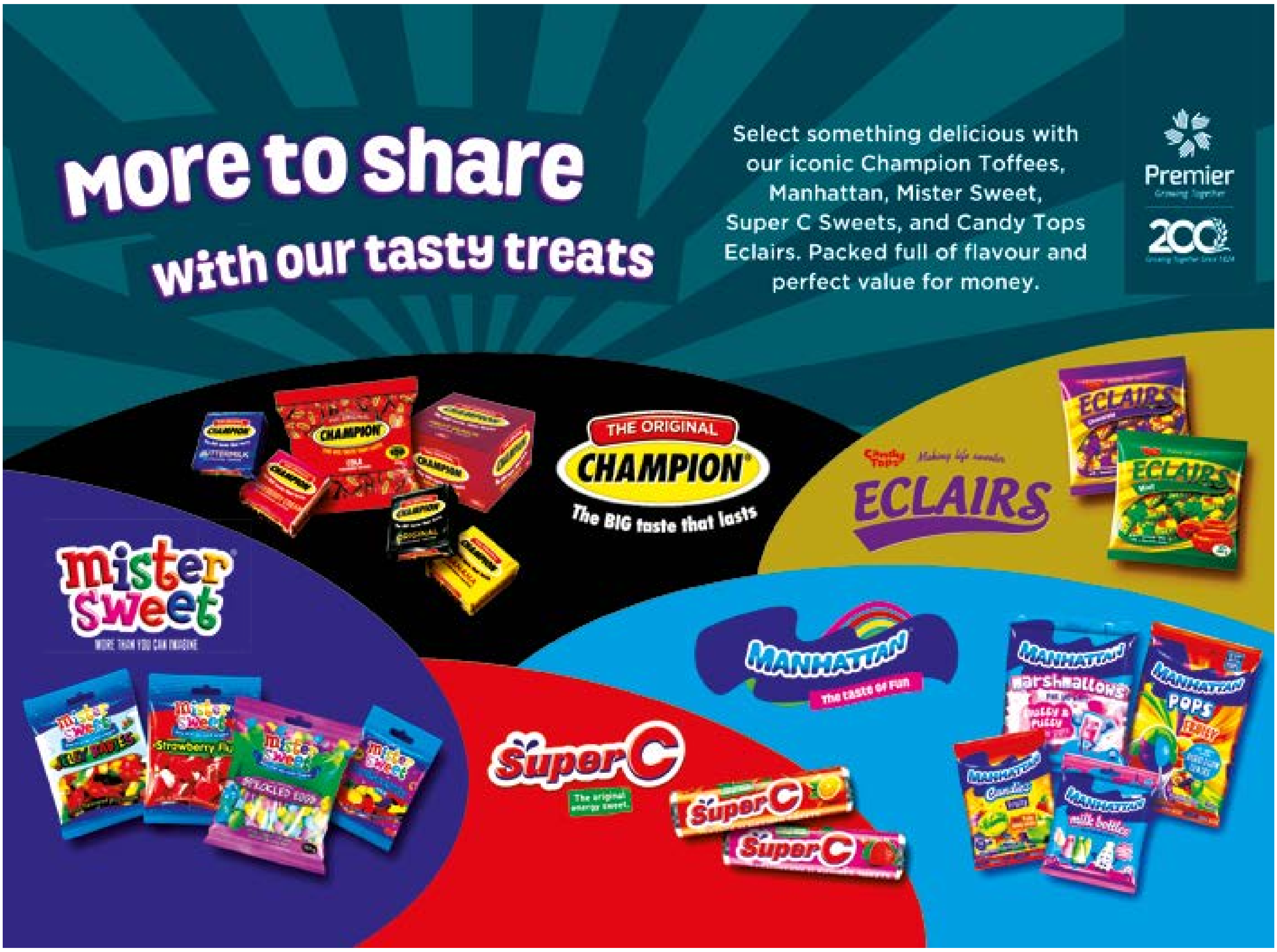
2. Bidding and bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Lesotho Public Procurement Act, 2023, and its Regulations.

3. **The Properties:** The LNDC intends to enter into an Open Framework Agreement for the provision of security services on an ad-hoc basis across selected LNDC properties in Lesotho. Interested locally registered security service providers may express interest in providing services at one or more of the properties, as detailed in the Expression of Interest (EOI) document.

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

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for EOI	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	09 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	16 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	16 September 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	17-18 September 2026
(f) Commencement	1st October 2026
(g) Address for submission	LNDC Development House, Block A, Level 1 Reception Area, Tender Box
(h) Email to request a detailed tender document	Procurement@lndc.org.ls


Elevate
your Brand's
visibility!
Advertise
With Us
and unlock exclusive rates...
www.newsdayonline.co.ls
2231 4267


More to share
with our tasty treats
Select something delicious with our iconic Champion Toffees, Manhattan, Mister Sweet, Super C Sweets, and Candy Tops Eclairs. Packed full of flavour and perfect value for money.
Premier
200
THE ORIGINAL
CHAMPION
The BIG taste that lasts
ECLAIRS
mister sweet
MANHATTAN
the taste of fun
Super C
The original energy sweet

Mixing public and private: LNDC's new push for project finance

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

In a move that highlights the importance of partnerships in mobilising investment, the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has recently resolved to embark on blended finance to build a stronger and more sustainable economy.

During a one-day forum held at Avani Lesotho on 28 August 2026, LNDC explored practical mechanisms for mobilising capital for Lesotho's industrial transformation. The Corporation has since announced that the forum resolved to embark on blended finance in an effort to implement its Letsema Strategy 2026–2031, which is expected to transform the industrial sector.

Blended finance, as the concept is understood internationally, refers to the strategic use of public sources of capital to attract private investment in developing countries, blending capital such as official development assistance or development-finance funding with private capital.

Public money in such arrangements is typically offered on concessional terms, more attractive than prevailing market conditions, and used to reduce risk on investment projects so that additional private capital can be mobilised.

This is because private capital flowing to developing countries is often constrained by investors' unfavourable perceptions of risk, ranging from currency and credit risk to political, regulatory and technical risks.

According to the LNDC Chief Executive Officer Thabo Khasipe, "the strategy recognises that industrial development cannot be achieved by government alone, but requires collaboration among diversified stakeholders including public and private sectors, as well as some development partners.

"The Blended Finance Forum is a direct, practical expression of this mandate. Lesotho has money available within its financial sector, including banks, insurance companies, and pension funds. However, many local projects are not yet prepared well enough to attract investment," he said.

Blended finance, Khasipe said, would unlock additional investment by using limited public and development funding as "bait to catch more investment" and magnify its overall impact.

Under the traditional financing model, Khasipe explained that the public sector bears most or all of the risk.

"For instance , when the Minister of Finance allocates M100 million for the construction of a road, the Government is exposed to 100% of the project risk. Whereas, under a blended-finance model, the risk is shared among the participating funders, with the public sector absorbing some of the initial losses in order to protect commercial private capital," Khasipe said.

He added, this risk-sharing mechanism can attract greater private-sector investment and support broader economic growth.

Khasipe also said Lesotho needs to be crisscrossed by a modern highway network, similar to that of Eswatini. He referred to the proposed 170 km road linking Lesotho to South Africa's N3 to Durban, arguing that the country should have direct access to the Port of Durban.

He said this strategic link would improve the transportation of Lesotho's products to international markets and buyers, particularly through the proposed Trans-Maloti project, which is expected to be constructed in the Highlands.

"We have the advantage of proximity, but we are squandering it. We travel 170 km in the wrong direction, which costs us in terms of travel time and results in unnecessary fuel expenditure," Khasipe said.

The fund is intended to make it easier for private-sector businesses to access finance. However, only business proposals that meet the fund's investment criteria will be considered. Each proposal will be assessed by an investment committee comprising representatives of the institutions that contribute to the fund.

The committee will evaluate the financing needs of each business, including whether it requires working or growth capital; patient capital, which allows the business more time to generate returns and repay the funding; or equity investment, where the fund takes an ownership stake in the business.

Only businesses considered commercially viable and capable of generating sustainable returns will qualify for funding.

In his keynote speech, Dr Farzam Kamalabadi, founder and president of Future Trends Group, drew on the example of the People's Republic of China, which transformed its economy through market-oriented reforms, industrialisation, infrastructure development and large-scale investment.

China expanded its productive capacity, attracted foreign direct investment and built globally competitive industries, lifting millions of people out of poverty.

The lesson to be drawn, he showed, was that economic transformation requires a clear national strategy, strong institutions, private-sector participation and sustained investment in productive sectors.

Dr Kamalabadi is Botswana's Presidential Envoy for International Relations and Economic Development, supporting that country's ambition to become a high-income and globally competitive economy. He has advised governments and national economic or energy institutions in several countries, including China, Oman and Kuwait.

Dr Stephen Lehlomela, the King's Advisor on Energy, explained that His Majesty King Letsie III's Just Energy Transition Platform is a strategic vehicle for attracting blended finance to infrastructure development.

The platform aims to improve economic development and social well-being for the Basotho people by making better use of Lesotho's natural resources, including water, sunlight and wind.

Lesotho's efforts to develop its water and renewable energy resources began as early as the 1950s. However, progress has been held back by geopolitical challenges, dependence on bilateral agreements, limited access to regional electricity markets and low levels of private-sector participation in the energy sector.

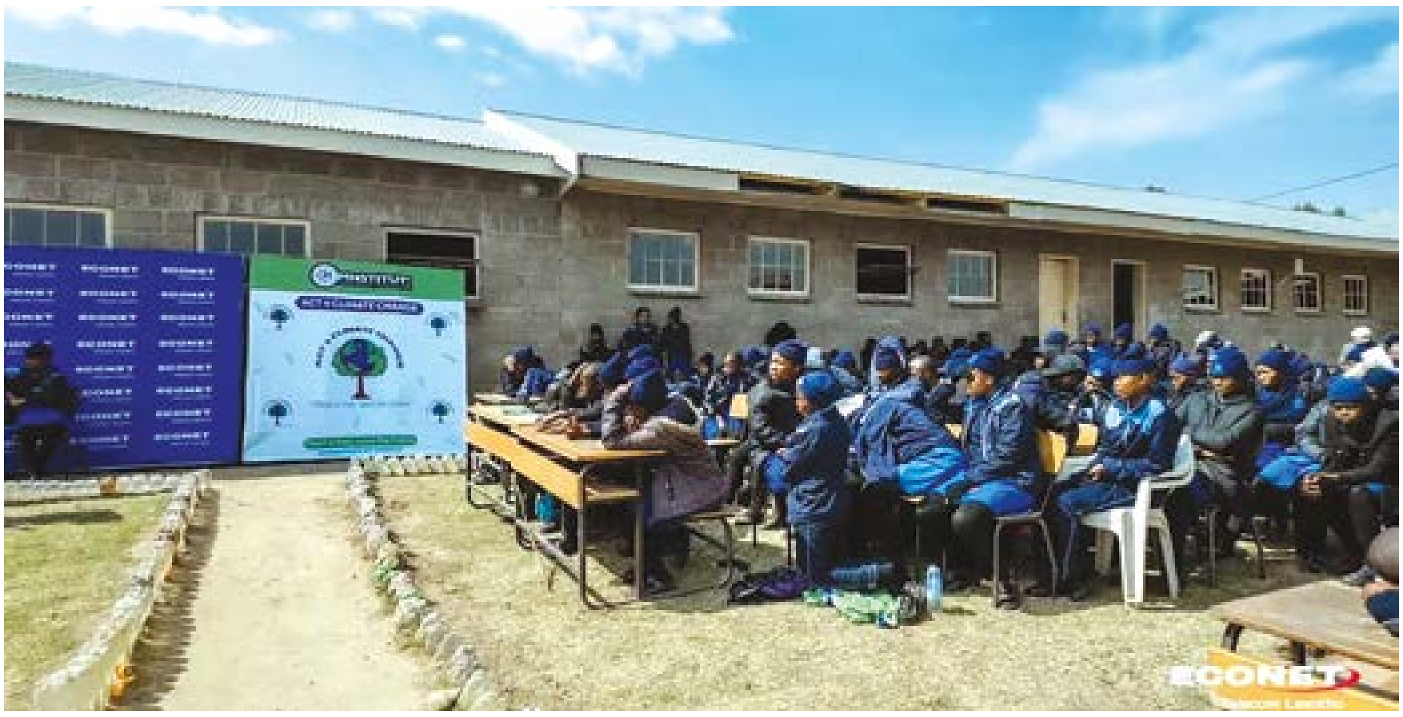
Other major challenges include limits on government borrowing and the lack of a suitable financing and governance model. Such a model would need to clearly separate: long-term strategic infrastructure finance; short-term government budget requirements; and electricity tariffs that reflect the real cost of supply.

The LNDC chairperson Palesa Matobako said Lesotho has strong ambitions, but lacks the resources needed to turn them into reality. She said blended finance is well suited to addressing this challenge.

She explained: "Our challenge is economic transformation, and our response must therefore be collective. This financing model will help unlock Lesotho's potential to transform its economy. It is precisely the kind of economic ecosystem that Lesotho requires. The ultimate test is whether we can move from conversations to transactions."

Econet, GEM Institute, UNESCO deepen climate action

Seabata Mahao



Growing a greener and more sustainable future, one tree at a time

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has joined forces with GEM Institute and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to launch the 2026 ACT 4 Climate Change Fruit-UP School Drive, extending a five-year collaboration that has positioned climate education and environmental action at the centre of school life across Lesotho.

This year's drive will see more than 500 fruit trees planted at 14 schools across six districts, building on a model that has turned schools into centres for environmental education, climate resilience and skills development, a direct result of the sustained cooperation between ETL, GEM Institute and UNESCO.

The three organisations launched this year's programme at Qhomane LECSA High School in Ha-Mofoka, Koro-Koro, reaffirming a partnership that has steadily grown in scale and ambition since its inception in 2021.

Speaking on behalf of ETL, Public Relations Specialist Retšelisitsoe Nkhahle said the company's role in the partnership reflects a broader sense of corporate responsibility to the country.

"At Econet, we strongly believe that the role of a responsible corporate citizen goes beyond providing connectivity. We also have a responsibility to contribute meaningfully towards the communities we serve and the future we want to see for Lesotho," Nkhahle said.

He said the Fruit-UP programme was designed to extend climate change education beyond the classroom, giving learners a hands-on role in environmental conservation while creating long-term resources for schools and surrounding communities.

Since the collaboration began in 2021, ETL and GEM Institute have jointly planted 3,397 fruit trees and reached 54 schools across all 10 districts of Lesotho, directly engaging more than 3,000 learners in practical climate action, figures that underscore the scale the partnership has achieved over five years.

Representing GEM Institute, Tšepang Khau thanked ETL for its continued partnership and its contribution to the programme's growing impact in schools across the country.

"Today we plant trees, take responsibility and act against climate change, one tree at a time. Since 2021, GEM Institute's ACT 4 Climate Change Programme has been educating young people and building environmental and entrepreneurial skills," Khau said.

GEM Institute also used the occasion to highlight its ambition to promote greater recognition of indigenous plants as sources of health solutions, innovation and economic opportunity, while thanking UNESCO, ETL, participating schools, teachers and learners for their joint contribution to building a greener and more sustainable Lesotho.

Representing UNESCO, Mankopane Nkhono reaffirmed the organisation's continued backing of GEM Institute's climate change initiatives, noting that UNESCO has supported the programme since it began in 2021, one of the three pillars sustaining the partnership's longevity.

Nkhono said the initiative has become an important platform for engaging young people, particularly learners, in developing environmental awareness and responsibility, while also nurturing entrepreneurial skills that empower learners to become active participants in addressing the effects of climate change.

Welcoming the programme to the school, Qhomane LECSA High School Principal Nkherepe David Mopeli expressed appreciation to ETL, GEM Institute and UNESCO for extending the initiative to the institution. The school received 50 apple and peach trees, which will be planted and maintained by the school community.

The 2026 Fruit-UP School Drive builds on five years of collaboration between the three partners, with this year's edition placing greater emphasis on climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and practical skills development among young people, a reflection of how the partnership has matured in both reach and focus since 2021.

Nkhahle urged learners to take ownership of the trees beyond the launch, encouraging them to regard the initiative as a personal contribution to Lesotho's environmental future.

Ngatane first in as Kick4Life-Wrexham deal takes off

Seabata Mahao

Kabelo Ngatane, 21, is set to make history as the first young person from Kick4Life's programmes to take up a scholarship opportunity in the United Kingdom when he travels to Wales on September 18.

Ngatane will begin his studies at Wrexham University following a landmark partnership between Kick4Life FC, Wrexham University and the Wrexham AFC Foundation, announced at a press conference held at Kick4Life on Wednesday.

The scholarship arrangement, which began in 2025, will provide two young people from Kick4Life's programmes with fully funded tuition to study in Wrexham.

Ngatane will pursue a Foundation Degree in Football and Community Development at Wrexham University while gaining practical experience through a placement with the Wrexham AFC Foundation.

The scholarship is the latest step in a much broader relationship between Kick4Life and Wrexham AFC, the historic Welsh club now co-owned by actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney and made famous internationally by the Welcome to Wrexham documentary series.

The two clubs formally launched a "club twinning" partnership in March 2024, aimed at fostering cooperation between community-focused football organisations in Europe and Africa.

That partnership has since grown to include coaching exchanges, joint promotion of women's football, and the co-development of a "Football for Good" curriculum covering health, education, social inclusion and employability, with an ambition to reach 3,000 vulnerable children and young people across both communities over three years.

The initiative has drawn additional backing from the Generation Amazing Foundation and support from the British High Commission in Lesotho.

The club-to-club partnership itself builds on a much older bond: a national twinning between Wales and Lesotho dating back to 1984, born out of a meeting in Wrexham and rooted in similarities between the two nations in size, landscape, bilingualism and cultural heritage.

The addition of Wrexham University and the Wrexham AFC Foundation to the partnership in 2025 marked a further expansion of those ties, opening new pathways for young Basotho to access international education and professional development.

For the 21-year-old Ngatane, the opportunity represents another major milestone in a journey that started more than a decade ago. He joined the Kick4Life Academy in 2013 at the age of eight and progressed through the organisation's football, academic and life-skills programmes, emerging as both a talented footballer and a promising student. He earned national team call-ups at Under-17 and Under-20 level and captained Lesotho's Under-17 national team.

His achievements off the field have been equally impressive. In 2023, Ngatane was recognised among the top seven excelling students in the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE), underlining his ability to excel both academically and athletically.

His move to Wales will now bring together two passions that have defined his development, football and his desire to use sport to create positive change in his community. Through the Foundation Degree, Ngatane will gain knowledge and practical experience in football coaching, leadership, community engagement and the use of sport as a vehicle for social change.

His placement with the Wrexham AFC Foundation will complement his academic studies by exposing him to a professional community football environment where he can put his knowledge into practice. For Ngatane, however, the scholarship is about far more than obtaining a qualification.

"This opportunity means everything to me. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that is going to change the trajectory of my life forever," he said.

He said his experiences at Kick4Life had shaped his belief in football's ability to transform communities.

"I joined Kick4Life when I was eight years old, and I have since witnessed countless lives being changed through football. That inspired me to want to use football to change my life and the lives of others."

Ngatane believes his studies will equip him to contribute to the same kind of transformation he witnessed growing up within the Kick4Life community.

21-year-old Kabelo Ngatane will become the first young person from Kick4Life programmes to take up a fully funded scholarship opportunity at Wrexham University in Wales

"Football has always been more than a sport to me. It has always been a powerful tool for community development and social change, especially growing up in the Kick4Life community."

He added that he had seen first-hand how football could give young people hope while creating pathways into education and employment.

For Kick4Life, Ngatane's selection is particularly significant because his story mirrors the organisation's long-term approach to youth development. His journey from an eight-year-old Academy participant to a youth international, outstanding student and now international scholarship recipient demonstrates the potential that can be unlocked when young people are supported consistently across football, education and life skills.

Kick4Life Country Director Motlatsi Nkhahle said Ngatane's story represented more than an individual achievement.

"Kabelo's story is very significant to Kick4Life in the sense that it represents the continuation and strengthening of our partnership with Wrexham AFC Foundation, which we established in 2024."

Nkhahle said the addition of Wrexham University had strengthened the partnership's shared mission of using sport as a force for good.

"Kabelo is an embodiment of the relationship between Wrexham AFC and Kick4Life and our shared commitment to using football as a vehicle for social change," he said.

The opportunity also demonstrates the growing role of football as a pathway to opportunities beyond competitive sport. In Wrexham, Ngatane will gain an internationally recognised qualification, practical experience and exposure to a different football and community-development environment, experience that could prove valuable as he charts his future.

For a youngster who first walked into the Kick4Life Academy at eight, the journey has come full circle in remarkable fashion.

From kicking a football in Lesotho as a child to preparing to study and work in Wales, Ngatane now carries with him more than a decade of experience, education and development.

His next challenge is no longer simply to succeed on the football field, but to use the lessons football has taught him to make an impact far beyond it.

New SRAL committee prioritises support, professional growth for journalists

Seabata Mahao

The newly elected leadership of the Sports Reporters Association of Lesotho (SRAL) said its three-year term will focus on giving sports journalists greater support and more opportunities to sharpen their professional skills, as the association looks to raise the standard of sports reporting in the country.

Radio presenter and sports photojournalist Thabo 'Mthibo' Rakhomo was elected President of SRAL for the 2026–2029 term following the association's elective Annual General Meeting (AGM), held in Maseru last Friday.

The elective conference, hosted at Green Lake Guest House and sponsored by Alliance Insurance Group, brought together members of the sports journalism fraternity to elect a new executive committee. The AGM saw a smooth transition of power from the outgoing committee to the incoming leadership, marking the start of a new term.

Speaking in an interview with the Agency following his election, Rakhomo outlined a leadership agenda centred on capacity building, saying his committee would work to ensure sports reporters receive the support and opportunities needed to grow professionally in a fast-changing media environment.

"I am humbled and honoured to be entrusted with this responsibility. It is not just about being elected; it is about serving the sports journalism fraternity and making sure that we address the challenges faced by sports reporters," he said.

Rakhomo said one of his key priorities would be promoting unity among sports journalists while strengthening collaboration between SRAL and relevant stakeholders within the sporting fraternity.

He stressed the importance of capacity building, noting that the rapidly changing media environment requires journalists to continuously develop and adapt their skills.

The new Sports Reporter's Association of Lesotho (SRAL)'s Executive Committee

To that end, Rakhomo said SRAL would seek to create platforms where sports journalists could share experiences, discuss challenges and collectively explore ways of improving sports coverage in Lesotho.

"We have a responsibility to work as a team. The success of SRAL will depend on the commitment of all its members and our ability to work together for the betterment of sports journalism," he said.

He called on members of the association to rally behind the new executive committee as it embarks on its mandate for the next three years.

The new SRAL Executive Committee comprises Thabo Rakhomo as President, Thabo Mokobocho as Vice-President, Reitumetse Mabaleha as Secretary General, Palesa Rakhomo as Vice Secretary General, Relebohile Makosholo as Treasurer and Kekeletso Lesoetsa as Public Relations Officer. Other committee members are Seabata Mahao, Tiisetso Makhasane and Thokozile Mohaeka.

The committee's focus on professional development was echoed by the AGM's sponsor. Alliance Insurance Group, which backed the elective meeting, said its support was rooted in recognition of the role sports journalists play in growing the sporting industry.

Speaking on behalf of the company, Public Relations Officer Limakatso Mokobocho said Alliance Insurance Group believes sport has the power to unite communities and inspire young people, while the media plays a crucial role in ensuring that sporting achievements, challenges and developments receive the attention they deserve.

"Our decision to sponsor this AGM is informed by our belief in the importance of sports and the role played by journalists in promoting and developing the sporting industry. Sports journalists are an important link between athletes, sporting organisations and the public," she said.

She said the company was committed to supporting initiatives that contribute to the growth and development of sport and other sectors that positively impact communities.

"As Alliance Insurance Group, we believe in supporting initiatives that contribute to the development of our communities. Sport is an important part of society, and we appreciate the contribution made by journalists in telling the stories of athletes and promoting sporting activities across the country," Mokobocho said.

She congratulated the newly elected SRAL executive committee and encouraged its members to work together to strengthen the association and promote professionalism in sports journalism.

"We congratulate the newly elected executive committee and wish them success during their term of office. We hope they will work together in unity and commitment to advance the interests of sports journalists and contribute towards improving the standard of sports reporting in Lesotho," she said.

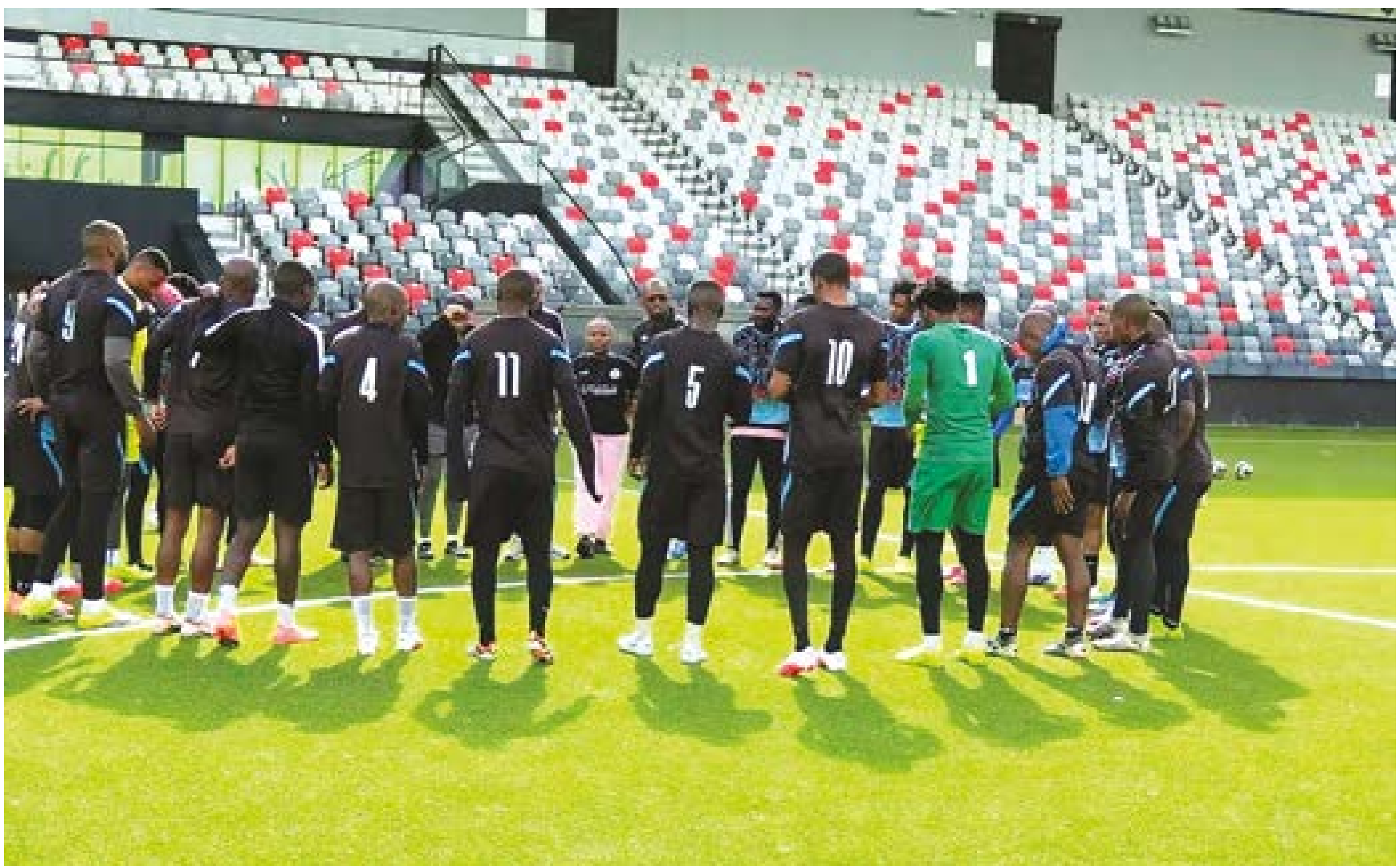
Mokobocho further encouraged the new leadership to prioritise unity, professional development and collaboration with stakeholders, saying these would be key to the association's growth and long-term sustainability.

She added that Alliance Insurance Group hopes its support for the elective AGM will help strengthen SRAL and create more opportunities for sports journalists to develop their skills and contribute meaningfully to the growth of sport in Lesotho.

The newly elected committee will serve from 2026 to 2029, with expectations high that the incoming leadership will build a united and stronger sports journalism fraternity while advocating for professional development and improved standards of sports reporting across the country.

Newsday ...pacing standards
Sports
11 September - 17 September 2026
ISSN: 2453-5311

Lijabatho hunt for CAF comeback



Lijabatho FC squad in training

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Premier League (VPL) champions Lijabatho FC will be targeting a strong finish to their CAF Champions League preliminary round campaign when they take on Madagascar's CFFA in the second leg on 12 September 2026.

The crucial return match will be played at Dobsonville Stadium in South Africa, where Lijabatho will be seeking to overturn a two-goal deficit following their 2–0 defeat to CFFA in the first leg last week.

That first-leg tie was itself played away from Madagascar, at the Côte d'Or sports complex in Mauritius, after CFFA, like Lijabatho, were unable to host the match at home due to the absence of a CAF-approved stadium in their country.

The two sides are meeting in the first preliminary round of Africa's premier club competition, with a place in the Second Preliminary Round at stake.

A total of 61 clubs entered this season's CAF Champions League, with defending champions Mamelodi Sundowns, Tunisia's Espérance de Tunis and Morocco's RS Berkane among the elite sides exempted from the opening rounds altogether.

Lijabatho's opponents, formally known as the Centre de Formation de Football d'Andoharanofotsy (CFFA), enter the tie as reigning double champions of Madagascar, having won the domestic title in both 2022 and 2026.

The Malagasy side reinforced their squad ahead of the continental campaign, bringing in six new players, and are coached by Franck Rajaonarisamba, who has said his team will not underestimate Lijabatho given how rapidly football in Lesotho is developing.

By contrast, Lijabatho are a relatively young club based in Morija having convincingly won their first premier league title during the 2025/26 VPL season.

Lijabatho will be under pressure to produce a convincing performance and score at least twice to stand a chance of progressing in the competition. Both Lesotho and Madagascar have been affected by the lack of CAF-approved stadiums capable of hosting international matches, forcing both CFFA and Lijabatho to play their "home" continental fixtures at neutral venues outside their own countries this campaign.

The second leg at Dobsonville Stadium presents Lijabatho with an opportunity to fight back and keep their continental ambitions alive.

Lijabatho Head Coach Kabelo Malapane said the team's recent matches had provided valuable match fitness, particularly for players who needed more competitive minutes.

"The two matches we played gave us game fitness, especially Majantja. They gave us a good test. The intensity was very good. We kept a clean sheet against them and also created good scoring opportunities, although we did not score," Malapane explained.

The coach's remarks indicate that Lijabatho have used their recent matches to prepare for the intensity and demands of continental football. Although the side failed to find the back of the net in those encounters, Malapane was encouraged by their ability to create scoring opportunities and maintain defensive discipline.

The Lesotho champions will now be hoping that their improved match fitness and preparations translate into goals when they face CFFA in what promises to be a decisive encounter.

The winner of the two-legged tie between Lijabatho and CFFA will advance to the Second Preliminary Round, where they will face the winner of the clash between Botswana's Gaborone United and Tanzania's Young Africans. That round is scheduled to be played over two legs from October 16 to 18, with return fixtures from October 23 to 25, after which the 16 surviving clubs in the competition will progress to the lucrative group stage.

Even should Lijabatho's continental journey end this weekend, CAF has committed to providing every club eliminated during the Preliminary Rounds with USD 100,000 in financial support to help offset travel and logistical costs — part of the confederation's broader push to ease the financial burden of continental competition for smaller federations like Lesotho's.

Lijabatho's progression would represent an important achievement and provide another opportunity to showcase Lesotho football on the continental stage. However, they first face the difficult task of overturning the 2–0 first-leg deficit when they meet CFFA at Dobsonville Stadium on Saturday, September 12.