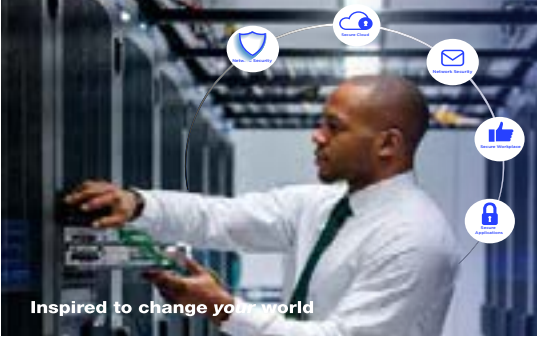


| 66 100 100

Powered by

FORTINET + CLOUDFLARE

Secure. Connect. Accelerate.

One partnership. Complete cyber resilience

email: econetbusiness@etl.co.ls to apply today

Ts & Cs Apply

ECONET Telecom Lesotho

Newsday

...pacing standards

23 October - 29 October 2026 | www.newsdayonline.co.ls | Volume 8, Issue 36 | M 6.00

NEWS

JSC adds three candidates to High Court shortlist for vacancies

Page 6

NEWS

Fresh HIV challenge emerges

Page 17

OPPOSITION PLOTS NEXT MOVE FOR PM GRILLING



Page 2

ADEQUATE RISK SOLUTIONS

GOODS IN TRANSIT INSURANCE

WHAT CAN BE COVERED?

ACCIDENTAL LOSS / DAMAGE

FIRE / EXPLOSION

COLLISION / OVERTURNING

THEFT / HIJACKING

63595519 / 59508180

info@adequate.co.ls

Sekhametsi Place Ground Floor

Terms & Conditions Apply

Elevate your farming game with Lesotho's ONLY Agriculture Publication.

Get Local Wisdom, Global Vision:

*Seamlessly blend traditional Lesotho farming practices with cutting-edge global trends. Simply **join our WhatsApp community** and **Follow our socials** for your daily information and interaction.*

SEAHLOLO

www.seahlolo.co.ls

Opposition plots next move for PM grilling

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Seething opposition legislators are weighing their options after their latest attempt to compel Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane to face questions in the National Assembly collapsed on Tuesday this week in a bitter dispute over parliamentary procedure.

Since the 2022 general election that ushered in his administration, Matekane has never answered questions in the House as the Standing Orders governing parliamentary business provide.

The opposition now accuses Speaker Tlohang Sekhamane of shielding him from scrutiny by allegedly deliberately misinterpreting the rules on questions to the Prime Minister.

Prof Nqosa Mahao, a former minister in the Matekane-led administration, took a swipe at the Prime Minister, saying he "lacked confidence" and that his fellow MPs also lack confidence in him.

Mahao said they would challenge the "so-called ruling" by Deputy Speaker Tšepang Tšita-Mosena, who had allowed questions to be forwarded to the Prime Minister before his appearance in the House for the question session.

He accused the presiding officers of acting as "goalkeepers" for decisions that could not be justified, saying this compromised the proper running of the House.

"We will discuss what the way forward is from here," Prof Mahao said.

Machesetsa Mofomobe, an MP and leader of the Basotho National Party (BNP), hinted during the fiery session that the opposition could ask the courts to intervene in the matter, which he insists Sekhamane has not handled well.

The row followed the withdrawal of questions by MPs Remaketse Sehlabaka and Dr Mahali Phamotse this week over a disputed procedure, which prevented the much-anticipated session with Matekane from going ahead. While Sehlabaka was given an opportunity to ask his questions by the Speaker, he instead sought clarification on the procedure.

In a letter read in the House by the Speaker, Sehlabaka said he "anticipated" that members of the government side would rise on points of order to surreptitiously prevent the Prime Minister from answering questions until his allocated 25 minutes had elapsed.

On the requirement to submit questions to the Prime Minister before his appearance in the House, Speaker Sekhamane said the procedure was based on a ruling by her deputy, which he could not reverse. He maintained that the ruling remained in force because it had not been challenged.

Sekhamane also referred legislators to decisions made during the 10th Parliament concerning questions directed to the Prime Minister.

The Speaker explained that the requirement to submit questions in advance was intended to give the Prime Minister sufficient time to study them and prepare accurate responses. He argued that asking him questions without prior notice could undermine his ability to provide correct answers, as he would be hearing them for the first time in the House.

He said the questions had therefore been forwarded to the Prime Minister to allow him time to consider them and prepare his responses. The dispute comes against the backdrop of earlier efforts to formalise the Prime Minister's question time in Parliament.



Opposition members holding a press conference following PM's collapsed questions and answer session this week

On 3 May 2023, Motlatsi Maqelepo, now Minister of Trade, moved a motion proposing amendments to Standing Order 27, which governs questions to the Prime Minister.

Among other changes, Maqelepo proposed that the session be held on the first Tuesday of every month and that the time allocated for it be extended from 25 minutes to one hour. The motion, however, failed after the government side voted against it.

Maqelepo also proposed requiring political parties to submit their questions, together with the names of the MPs who would ask them, to the Clerk of the National Assembly at least five clear days before the scheduled session.

On Tuesday opposition MPs argued that the Prime Minister should not have been sent questions in advance. Instead, they said, the Clerk should have been given the names of members who had registered to ask him questions.

Sekhamane told the House that Matekane, who made a rare appearance in the House on Tuesday, was "ready" to answer the questions but that the members had withdrawn them.

A day before the Prime Minister was due to appear, Leader of the Opposition Mathibeli Mokhothu, who also leads the Democratic Congress (DC), wrote to the Speaker asking him to explain how questions to the Prime Minister should be handled. His letter framed the dispute as two procedural questions.

"The matter raises two distinct procedural questions: (a) Whether Standing Order 27(3) requires political parties to submit the actual questions intended for the Right Honourable the Prime Minister in advance, or only the names of the Members who intend to ask them. (b) Whether Standing Order 27 establishes a distinct procedure for questions to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister without prior notice, or whether such questions must additionally satisfy the requirements of Standing Order 24(4)," reads Mokhothu's letter.

According to Standing Order 27(1), the Business Committee determines one Tuesday of each month for questions to the Prime Minister without prior notice.

Standing Order 27(3) reads: "Political parties shall in writing, and under the signature of the chief whip or leader of that party in the National Assembly, submit the names of members who will ask questions to the Clerk not earlier than five clear days before the day determined by the Business Committee for questions to the Prime Minister without notice."

Mokhothu accused Sekhamane of "shielding" the Prime Minister by "subverting" the provisions of the Standing Orders, saying the Speaker's handling of the matter had undermined confidence in Matekane's accountability.

He said the Prime Minister was the pinnacle of accountability and should account for national issues, particularly in Parliament. He also took a swipe at Matekane for announcing policies in the "streets" instead of in the House, where he would be challenged and scrutinised.

"The Standing Order says we should write the names, but you have seen how the Speaker misdirected himself and even said we know the procedure to challenge his decision," Mokhothu fumed.

He added that if the matter were put to a vote, the government side would use its majority to "abuse" its numbers and outvote the opposition.

"The nation of Basotho should know that Sam Matekane is the first Prime Minister who refuses to answer the questions in the House [National Assembly]," Mokhothu said.

He said Matekane lacked confidence, as did "his followers", describing the situation as a "huge embarrassment". He accused government-side members of pandering to Matekane because they were interested in "tenders".

Sehlabaka, who also leads the Mpulule Political Summit (MPS), said Parliament could not be a House that obeyed the rules "when it is convenient". He said nothing obliged Matekane to answer every question on the spot, since he could defer a response and conduct research. However, he said the "fearful" leader lacked the confidence to respond.

"We are working to ensure that things go per the dictates of the law. There is something bad happening in this country that there is a saying that all along they were flouting laws. That's hogwash," he said.

Tefo Mapesala, leader of the Basotho Patriotic Party (BPP), called it shameful that the Speaker would deliberately disregard the rules governing the House, saying he had turned into a "goalkeeper" protecting the Prime Minister.

"It is disgusting. You cannot deliberately misguide yourself," he said.

The confrontation is the latest chapter in a long-running complaint. In November 2025, Mahao, now leader of the Basotho Action Party, said Matekane had completed three years as Prime Minister without ever addressing Parliament.

Sehlabaka had filed a notice of motion in May 2026 seeking to compel the Prime Minister to appear. Sekhamane was a founding member of Matekane's Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) party before his election as Speaker.

The government has pointed to other avenues of accountability. Questions directed at the Prime Minister's portfolio are answered by the minister in his office. In July, Matekane committed to making the Leadership Forum and National Accountability Summit an annual platform for dialogue between the government and the public.

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
Refiloe Molise

CONTRIBUTORS
Theko Tlebere
Motsamai Mokotjo

PRODUCTION
Bataung Monaheng

PHOTOGRAPHER
Khosi Matheka

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
First Print

Judge Mahase's bid to recuse foreign judges collapses

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Constitutional Court has dismissed an application by suspended judge 'Maseforo Mahase to have three foreign judges recused from her case, dealing her a significant blow.

Judge Mahase had asked the court to remove Judge Boissie Henry Mbha, Judge Kamaga Ivy Chatha and Judge Latifa A. Mansour, three judges from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region who have been brought in to hear her case. Her application cited them in their personal capacities.

In the application, Judge Mahase was the applicant, while Judge Mbha, Judge Chatha, Judge Mansoor and the Attorney-General were the first to fourth respondents respectively.

She sought an order, among others, that the three judges be "...recused from hearing, presiding over, or participating in any manner whatsoever...", citing reasonable apprehension of bias.

She argued that a fair-minded and properly informed observer, aware of the facts, would conclude that there was a possibility "that the respondents cannot bring an impartial mind to bear on the adjudication of the main application".

The Constitutional Court did not find in her favour and ordered her to pay costs on the punitive attorney-and-client scale.

The judgment states: " A judge is under a constitutional duty to sit in matters assigned to them and must not recuse themselves simply because a litigant adopts an adversarial stance.

"By structurally citing us judges in a personal capacity, the applicant [Judge Mahase] attempted to build a legal trap to force the scenario forbidden...."

It continues: "In our view, her sudden swing to personal citation in the current motion exposes a deliberate intent to manufacture a conflict of interest ,manipulate the judicial schedule, and force this Court into an unwarranted recusal. Under both South African and Lesotho civil jurisprudence, such tactical moves represent the highest form of vexatious litigation.

"This in our view justifies punishing this conduct through an exemplary, punitive costs order. To this end, it is worth mentioning that a court's power to award punitive costs is rooted in its inherent jurisdiction to prevent the subversion of its own mechanism," reads the judgment.

The strongly worded judgment also referred to an earlier case in which Judge Mahase sought the recusal of a panel of then judges Tšeliso Monapathi, Semapo Peete and Kekeletso Moahloli. It states: "The primary indicator of the applicant's bad faith is her own past litigation history.

In Madam Justice 'Maseforo Mahase and Others v Lebohang Hlaele and Another, the application explicitly requested that the panel consisting of Monapathi J, Peete J, and Moahloli J, alongside the remaining judges of the Lesotho High Court Bench, recuse themselves so that foreign judges could be appointed.

"In those papers, the litigants dealt directly with institutional dynamics, raising arguments around "collegiality," "close working relationships" and administrative friction between the Head of the Judiciary and junior judges."

The court said it appreciated the rules governing judicial citation but was struck by her "total departure" from the established baseline in this case, "by structurally dragging our private persona" into the record. It added that courts have consistently penalised litigants who abuse procedural rules for "ulterior, strategic motives".

The ruling said Judge Mahase had violated Section 118(2) of the Constitution, which protects the judiciary from external interference.

The court further ordered her to bear the costs of the postponement sine die (indefinitely) made on 29 May 2026. It said the postponement resulted from what it called the "sudden" and "unexpected" issue of the recusal of the entire bench.

"This turn of events was wholly at the instance of the applicant. The applicant must accordingly bear the costs of the postponement for that day," reads the judgment.

Judge Mahase has been embroiled in a legal battle since 2025, when she was suspended from work. On 7 November 2025, High Court Registrar Advocate Mathato Sekoai issued a circular announcing that she had been suspended from the High Court bench with effect from 4 November.



Judge 'Maseforo Mahase

She faces serious allegations, including claims that she assigned herself cases in which she had an interest and failed to deliver judgments within the 90-day period set out in High Court rules made by the Chief Justice in 2023. The allegations have raised concerns about whether her conduct may have compromised her professional standing.

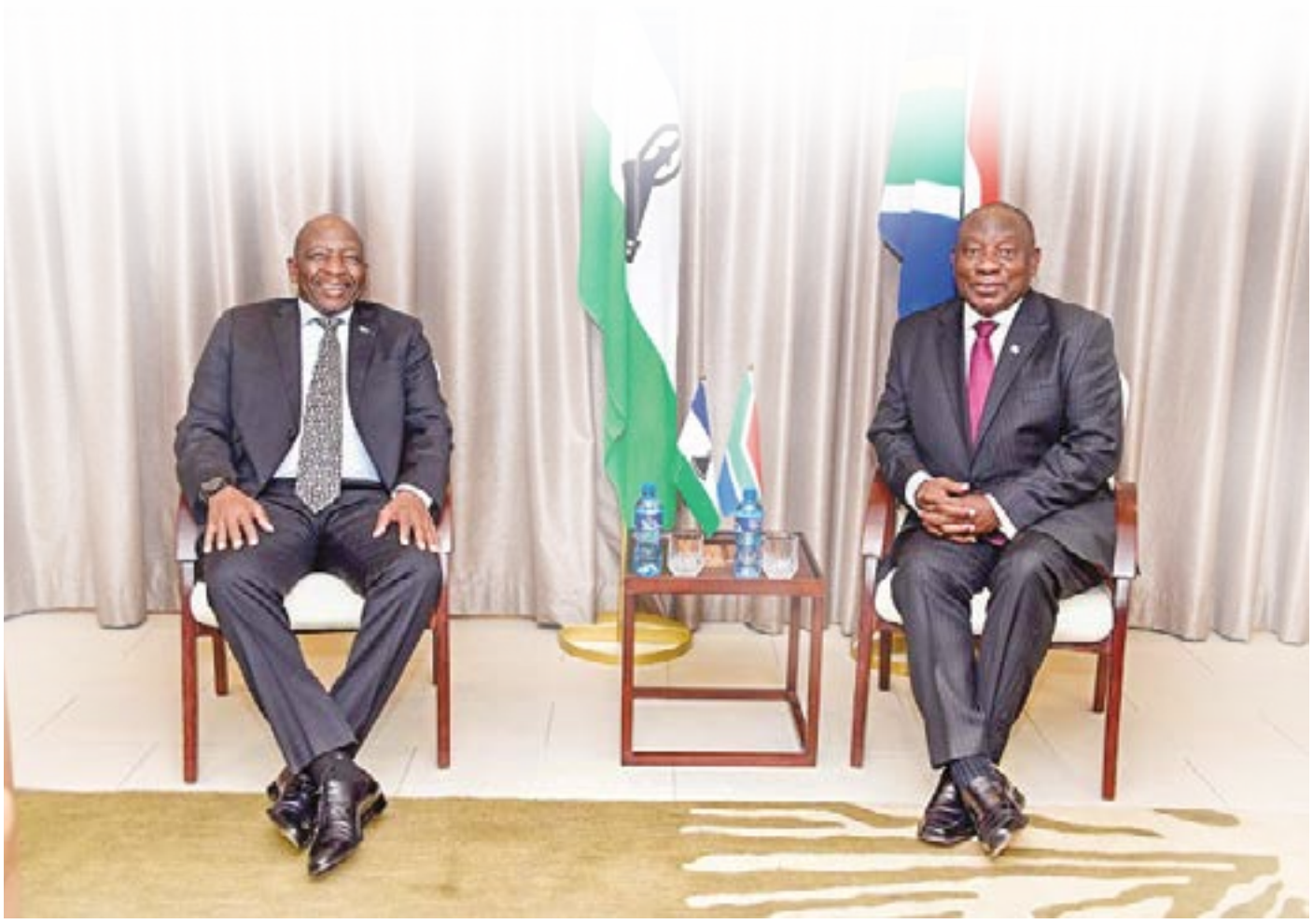
She has also fought in the courts to have her suspension reversed and sought an interdiction against the tribunal expected to investigate her alleged misconduct.

Last year, Acting High Court Judge Sekake Malebanye removed her case from the roll of urgent matters, pointing to her failure to file the urgent application for interdiction.



Lesotho ends 19-year wait for SADC leadership

Thoboloko Ntšonyane



Lesotho, long a fixture on the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) security agenda, has been elected incoming chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

The milestone shows how far the country has travelled politically since it last held the role in 2003/2004, although it later chaired the main SADC Summit in 2006/2007.

The decision was taken at an Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government, held virtually. The SADC Secretariat announced it on Wednesday this week.

"The Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was held virtually on 21 October 2026 under the Chairpersonship of His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa.

"Among the key decisions taken, Summit elected the Right Honourable Mr. Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, as the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation," reads the SADC statement.

Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane will effectively be the Chairperson. He completes the body's leadership Troika after the appointment was deferred at the bloc's August summit this year.

He joins current chairperson King Mswati III of Eswatini and outgoing chair Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, the Malawian President.

The Troika is a rotating leadership structure made up of the Organ's current, incoming and outgoing chairs. It provides political direction and continuity on regional peace and security issues, and its chair, supported by the Secretariat, mediates in countries where there are disputes.

The Organ also promotes peace, stability, democracy and good governance, and coordinates SADC cooperation on political, defence and security matters, including efforts to address conflict and instability in member states.

In August, this publication reported that the nomination had been deferred. Foreign Affairs and International Relations Minister Limpho Tau then told this publication that Lesotho had formally applied for the post, writing to the SADC Secretariat on 4 March 2026 to declare its intention.

The Secretariat acknowledged the letter on 12 March 2026. Angola had also announced its interest in the position.

Lesotho last chaired the SADC bloc in 2006/2007 under then Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili. In 2014, at the Summit held at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, then Prime Minister Thomas Thabane was elected deputy chair of the Organ.

That same year, the country slid into crisis. On 30 August 2014, an attempted coup d'état saw the army seize the Maseru police station and broadcast stations, and Thabane fled to South Africa. SADC intervened with mediation and a facilitator, and later with oversight measures as instability persisted.

This included the 2015 killing of former army commander Maaparankoe Mahao by his juniors at Mokema, on the outskirts of Maseru. Reforms were then proposed for Lesotho, resulting in seven thematic areas aimed at professionalising institutions and promoting peace and political stability.

The national reforms process began in 2016 after SADC stepped in to help Lesotho address recurring instability, including the 2014 attempted coup and a series of politically motivated killings. That year, SADC described its engagement as helping Lesotho achieve lasting peace and security. It was regional monitoring and assistance, not a formal suspension.

The route was not smooth. In 2022 the courts unanimously nullified an earlier version of the Tenth Amendment because Parliament had not followed the procedures the Constitution sets for different types of amendment.

The turning point came in August 2025. At the 45th Summit, SADC removed Lesotho from the Organ Troika's agenda, citing positive progress in the country's political and security situation. Leaders commended the passage and enactment of the Tenth Amendment as a significant milestone towards near-finalisation of the national reforms process.

They also applauded the Panel of Elders, the Mediation Reference Group and the people of Lesotho for their commitment to consolidating peace and security. The amendment added provisions on affirmative action and public interest to the chapter on fundamental human rights.

Little more than a year later, a country that was once the subject of regional mediation has been chosen to help lead it. For a nation that spent more than a decade as a standing item on the Organ's agenda, the shift from oversight to leadership is perhaps the clearest sign yet of the distance travelled since the turbulence of 2014 and 2015.

This also means that, as Lesotho assumes the Troika chairmanship, the country will host some of the Organ's meetings. For many years, Lesotho has travelled across the SADC region to attend meetings hosted by countries whose leaders chair the Troika and the SADC bloc.

The Prime Minister's Office called the 2025 decision a landmark achievement that brought hope and new energy to finalising the remaining reforms. Government commentary at the time said the decision restored Lesotho's full stature as an equal partner within SADC.

The picture is not without dissent. After the 2025 decision, some opposition figures and civil society groups criticised it and prepared a legal challenge to the Tenth Amendment. In 2026, opposition parties petitioned SADC alleging that the government was defying court orders, and called for Lesotho to be returned to the Troika agenda.

Supporters of the reforms point out that SADC itself described the process as nearing completion, which leaves work still to be done. The chairmanship will test how far Lesotho has come. Leading the Organ means mediating other countries' disputes, which calls for the credibility that comes from having dealt with one's own.

"Summit further urged Member States to strengthen regional disaster preparedness, enhance anticipatory action and improve coordination in responding to emerging humanitarian risks across the region in anticipation of the cascading impacts of 2026/2027 El Niño and Cyclone Season in Southern Africa," further reads the SADC statement.

T-CONNECT

STARLINK
AUTHORISED RESELLER

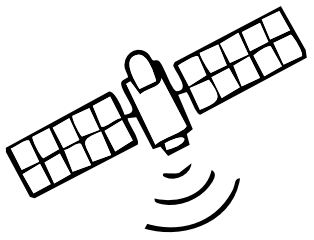
STARLINK

Internet from space. Delivered to you.

Starlink uses a network of satellites high above the Earth to bring fast, reliable internet directly to your location even where there is no fibre, no mobile signal, and no cables.

HOW IT WORKS

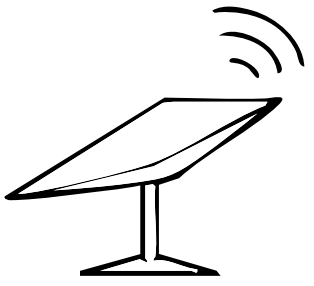
01



Satellites in space

Thousands of satellites orbit about 550 km above the Earth, providing fast, low-latency internet.

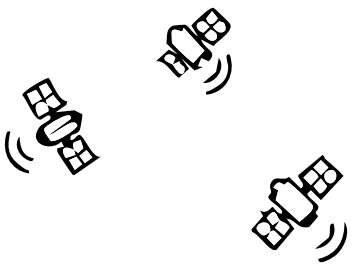
02



Your Starlink dish connects automatically

The dish tracks the nearest satellite and switches seamlessly as they move across the sky - no manual adjustments needed.

03



Satellites pass

The signal to each other Many satellites are linked by lasers in space, keeping the connection fast and reliable.

04



Internet reaches

Your devices and business The signal is sent to a ground station and then to your business, so you can work, communicate and grow without interruptions.

POWERED BY STARLINK.
DELIVERED BY T-CONNECT.

www.tconnect.africa | connect@tconnect.africa | +266 5901 6704

JSC adds three candidates to High Court shortlist for vacancies

Lekhetho Makhanya

The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) has issued an amended list of potential High Court judges this week, adding three applicants to the race for places on the bench.

The JSC announced on Monday that Tumisang Mosotho, Khasiane Ramathe and Teboho Thoso had been added to the list of applicants. They join the 12 applicants and five nominees published by the JSC last month, bringing the total number of candidates to 20.

The Commission has also announced eight vacancies for Puisne Judges of the High Court of Lesotho, as the judiciary continues to grapple with a shortage of judges and a persistent backlog of cases.

The JSC is the constitutional body responsible for the appointment, promotion, discipline and removal of judicial officers across the country.

It said the resolution to include Mosotho, Ramathe and Thoso "follows their request to be considered for inclusion in the list of Applicants/Nominees published under JSC Circular No.01 of 2026".

By the closing date for applications, the three had submitted all forms and supporting documents "except the "Application/ Nomination" forms."

After careful consideration, the Commission concluded "that substantial compliance had been proven because the questionnaire for Applicants/Nominees and background check authorisation forms were duly submitted".

The Commission has invited members of the public, the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), legal practitioners, the Law Society of Lesotho, the Attorney General, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Faculty of Law at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) to submit written objections to the candidacy of any nominee or applicant on or before 26 October 2026.

The Commission undertakes to only "consider information that is relevant, credible and capable of verification".

Where adverse information is received, the JSC says the candidate concerned will be given "reasonable opportunity" to respond before any decision affecting his or her candidature is made. The Commission may disregard comments that are "anonymous, malicious, frivolous, vexatious or unsupported by credible evidence," reads the circular endorsed by JSC Secretary Advocate Pontšo Phafoli.

The eight successful candidates will be appointed across the three divisions of the High Court. Five will serve in the Main Division in Maseru, two in the Northern Division in Leribe and one in the Southern Division in Mohale's Hoek. Once appointed and sworn in, the judges are expected to strengthen the judiciary's capacity and help the courts hear and decide pending cases more quickly.

Judges perform the core judicial function of exercising the judicial power vested in the courts of Lesotho. The Constitution provides that "judicial power shall vest in the courts of Lesotho" and that the courts shall include the Court of Appeal and the High Court, among others.

Members of the public and institutions may nominate potential candidates for the vacancies, and once the names are published, they may also lodge objections for the JSC to consider. Since 2021, candidates for judicial posts have been required to apply and undergo public interviews as part of a competitive appointment process. Previously, the JSC would recommend candidates to His Majesty the King for appointment to the bench.

There are currently 13 substantive judges serving on the High Court, including Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane. The others are Justices Molefi Makara, Moroke Mokhesi, Polo Banyane, Realeboha Mathaba, Fumane Khabo, 'Maliepollo Makhetha, 'Makampong Mokhoro, 'Mafelile Ralebese, Moneuoa Kopo, Tšeliso Mokoko, 'Mabatšoeneng Hlaele and Itumeleng Shale. Justice 'Maseforo Mahase remains suspended and is engaged in a protracted legal battle over her position.

To address the case backlog and shortage of judges, Chief Justice Sakoane appointed five legal practitioners and judicial officers in September 2025 to serve in an acting capacity. They are Advocate Tsebang Putsoane, Senior Resident Magistrate Palesa Rantara, Senior Resident Magistrate 'Manapo Motebele, Advocate Tšooana Lesaoana and Sekake Malebanye KC.

At the opening of the judicial year earlier this year, Sakoane stressed the importance of judicial independence, saying: "Judicial independence and accountability are non-negotiable." He said judges must be able to determine cases free from political pressure, economic influence and popular sentiment.

Reporting on the performance of the courts last year, he said the High Court Main Division registered 1,474 cases, with 563 in allocation and 1,090 completed. The Labour Appeal Court registered 47 cases, with 31 allocated and 33 completed. The Commercial Division registered 612 cases, with 112 allocated and 718 completed, while the Northern Division registered 525 cases, with 84 in allocation and 293 completed. Across the courts covered in the report, 2,704 cases were registered, 810 were in allocation and 2,139 were completed.

Sakoane said the efficiency of the courts should be measured by their ability to handle cases within a reasonable time without compromising fairness or the quality of justice.

"Cases that are managed well take relatively shorter time to dispose of," he said, adding that the time taken to deliver rulings and judgments is an important indicator of effective or ineffective case management.

Raising the bar on ending violence against children

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has renewed its promise to protect children from violence, both in schools and online. This comes as the country prepares for the Second Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, which will be held in Manila, Philippines, in November 2026.

At a special meeting on Thursday, government leaders, civil society, and international partners gathered to review the progress made since Lesotho's first pledge at the 2024 conference in Bogotá, Colombia, and to endorse a new national pledge for the next two years.

Building on progress

Deputy Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, Thae Makhele, opened the meeting by reflecting, "Last year, we were given the instruction by the Right Honourable Prime Minister to start with a pledge. We are going to give feedback and progress on that effort."

He highlighted achievements in supporting parents, creating safer schools, and improving services for children. "We did implement the Lesotho First National Pledge to End Violence Against Children. We are also going to highlight achievements in parenting and caregiver support, creating safe school environments, and improving prevention, response, and support services for our children," he said.

Achievements in child protection

Director of Child Protection, Mookho Motheo Lekhanya, shared detailed progress, "We have developed the second edition of the Parenting Booklet and distributed it nationwide. Over 10,000 caregivers were reached with practical guidance on positive parenting."

She added that new services, like the Minimal Service Package for mental health support, had been introduced and that child protection teams were trained in all districts.

She explained the importance of targeting areas where children are often left alone when parents work in South Africa. "We intentionally targeted those areas for positive parenting so that we strengthen our positive parenting and guide parents what they can do before seeking to go to South Africa and leaving children alone," she emphasised. She also praised the involvement of the Royal Family and community in promoting positive discipline.



Leaders and partners unite to renew Lesotho's commitment to end violence against children at the endorsement of the country's second global pledge,

On safer schools, Lekhanya reported, "School-related violence guidelines were adopted to strengthen school safety. 49,413 learners in 300 primary schools were reached through child protection interventions. Over 300 teachers were trained on mental health and psychosocial support."

Safe schools and new challenges

Minister of Education and Training, Ntoi Rapapa, stressed the importance of safe schools, "A school cannot fulfill its purpose as a sanctuary of growth and enlightenment if it is unsafe for the children. Across the globe, millions of children continue to face physical, psychological, and gender-based violence in their places of learning. When a child fears for their safety, learning stops," he said.

He outlined five key actions under the Safe to Learn commitment, including stronger policies, teacher training, working with parents, investing in safe infrastructure, and using evidence to improve. "Every child has the right to have an environment where they feel safe, respected, and protected," Rapapa stated.

Principal Secretary for Education and Training, Ratsiu Majara, echoed this, saying, "The investment that we make for trained teachers, for classrooms, for materials, all these efforts cannot lead to any peace if the children are not safe. For learning to take place, learners must be safe."

New national pledge

The Prime Minister, Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane, announced Lesotho's new pledge, "The government commits to endorse and implement a national Safe to Learn action plan to strengthen violence prevention, reporting, and response mechanisms in schools, expand child protection systems, and ensure all learning is safe, inclusive, and violence-free."

He said the government will also develop a National Child Online Protection Framework, ensuring children are safe when using digital technologies: "This will be supported by coordinated action across relevant ministries and stakeholders, and will address the major risks and opportunities associated with artificial intelligence."

International support

UN Resident Coordinator, Taija Kontinen-Sharp, praised Lesotho's leadership, "Today's endorsement of the Progress Report on Ending Violence Against Children is more than a reporting milestone. It is an opportunity to confront the gaps that remain and reaffirm our shared responsibility." She stressed that, "Endorsement must be a starting point for stronger delivery and accountability, not an end in itself."

Kontinen-Sharp also pointed out the importance of protecting children online, saying, "Risks in the digital environment add urgency to our shared responsibility to prevent harm and ensure that children can seek help safely."

The way forward

Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana, summed up the meeting, "It is our ministry's aspiration to see every child in Lesotho grow up in a happy, safe, protective, and inclusive environment. As we prepare to attend the second global conference, we invite all our partners to continue working with us until we achieve our shared goal of ending violence against children."

Continuing the conversation

Newsday has consistently highlighted the need for safe and supportive environments for children. In an earlier story, "No child should fear school" (link), we reported on the importance of making schools safe places for all children. This latest meeting shows that Lesotho's leaders, together with partners and communities, remain committed to making sure every child can learn, grow, and thrive without fear.

Rural women call for greater awareness of their rights

Refiloe Molise

Rural women in Lesotho continue to struggle to exercise their rights because of limited access to information, awareness campaigns and support services, Hope for Rural Women Assembly (HRWA) Lesotho has said.

The organisation raised the concerns on Wednesday at the State Library, during commemorations of International Day of Rural Women. Women from different districts gathered to discuss issues affecting their lives, share personal experiences and showcase traditional foods and indigenous seeds.

Discussions focused on gender equality, land and property ownership, access to resources and the need to ensure that rural women understand the laws meant to protect them.

HRWA Lesotho General Secretary 'Mamalefetsane Phakoe said many rural women lacked sufficient information about their rights because awareness campaigns and educational programmes were often concentrated in urban areas.

As a result, she said, women in rural communities were sometimes unaware of the legal protections available to them and did not know where to seek help when faced with problems. Some were also unfamiliar with improvements in laws designed to protect them, leaving them vulnerable to having their rights compromised.

Phakoe said rural women often had few opportunities to access information or speak to people who could guide them. She also highlighted the lack of safe homes where women in difficult circumstances could seek protection and support.

She stressed the importance of taking awareness campaigns beyond towns and into rural communities so that women learn about their rights and the support services available to them.

Phakoe also pointed to the organisation's commemoration of International Day of the Girl Child in Leribe, which was held there because of concerns about underage marriage in the district. She said the need for continued community education was clear, so that women and girls understand their rights and are better equipped to seek protection when those rights are threatened.

The consequences of limited knowledge about gender equality were illustrated by Manteboheleng Kheo, who described how a lack of awareness had shaped her understanding of property ownership within her marriage.

Kheo said she bought a cow but registered it in her husband's name because she believed that, as his wife, she was expected to place her property under his ownership. She later realised the decision had left her with little control over the animal, since her husband could decide what to do with it, including selling it.

"I bought a cow and registered it in my husband's name. As a result, it became his property and he could do whatever he wanted with it, while I had no control over it," Kheo explained.

She said she had made the decision without understanding her rights and would have registered the cow in her own name had she known she could.

Her experience reflected the concerns raised at the gathering about the importance of educating rural women on gender equality and their rights within households and communities.

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, T'sepang 'Matlohonolofatso T'sita Mosena, called for practical action on the challenges raised, saying discussions should lead to tangible progress.

Mosena said she had intended to spend the entire day with the participants but could not because of another meeting. She stressed, however, that such gatherings should go beyond talk to ensure that the concerns raised are addressed.

She recognised the important role rural women play in sustaining the country through food production and protecting local food systems, saying their contribution deserved greater recognition. She also emphasised the need for cooperation between the government and Parliament so that issues affecting rural women reach the relevant institutions and receive attention.

"We need to see progress," she said, urging that the concerns raised by rural women translate into meaningful change.

Mosena added that rural women should be recognised not only on a day dedicated to them but through continued efforts to acknowledge their contribution to society and address the challenges they face.

Alongside the discussions, participants showcased traditional foods and indigenous seeds as part of efforts to preserve Lesotho's cultural heritage and promote food security.

The exhibition was held under the theme: Our food, our tradition, respect it. Our seed, our culture, we will protect it. Participants were encouraged to bring traditional seeds, particularly sesiu, to highlight the importance of indigenous crops and the preservation of local agricultural practices.

The showcase demonstrated the role rural women play in maintaining traditional food systems and contributing to the country's food supply.

The commemoration also coincided with preparations to mark World Food Day on 16 October, which draws attention to food security and the contribution of rural communities to food production.



Leather, car seats and hope

- ***Trade minister tours Lesotho's unlikely manufacturers***

Refiloe Molise

Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development Motlatsi Maqelepo this week toured three factories that have broken away from the garment and textile products that dominate Lesotho's manufacturing sector, offering a glimpse of how the country could widen its narrow industrial base and become more resilient to external shocks.

The factories are Adient Lesotho, which makes automotive seating and trim components, including seat covers for Ford vehicles; Zeri Leather, which produces a range of leather bags; and Beesdam, another producer of car seat covers.

Together, they demonstrate that Lesotho's manufacturing activity is more varied than is often assumed, and that local industries can contribute to economic growth through production, investment and exports.

For a sector heavily reliant on garments, such diversification is a source of hope that the more products Lesotho makes and sells, the less exposed it is when demand, trade conditions or policy shifts hit a single industry.

Maqelepo said the visits were meant to give the government first-hand insight into factory operations and help identify where practical interventions could support industrial growth.

He made the remarks on Wednesday during a ministerial factory tour in Ha Tikoe and Ha Thetsane, Maseru, where he met factory management to assess operations, progress and challenges facing the sector.

"Our ministry has been entrusted by the government with the responsibility of driving industrialisation. As a ministry, we have realised that industries play a huge part in growing Lesotho's economy," he said.



Ministerial tour to Thetsane industrial area

He added that direct engagement with manufacturers would help the government better understand their concerns and work with them to find solutions.

"Today, the ministry, together with its stakeholders, decided to tour our factories to take a peek at the progress, challenges faced by factories and how the government can work hand in hand with the factories to grow the industry," Maqelepo said.

One of the major challenges identified during the tour was a shortage of skilled workers. Maqelepo stressed the need to build a workforce with the technical skills industries require, noting that closing the skills gap would take cooperation among the government, manufacturers and other stakeholders.

Skilled workers are important for maintaining productivity, improving the quality of locally made products and keeping factories competitive in regional and international markets. This matters all the more for newer, more technical industries such as automotive components, where quality standards are demanding.

The tour also highlighted the sector's contribution to employment and exports, particularly through its links with industries in neighbouring South Africa.

Maqelepo reiterated that the ministry remained committed to creating a conducive environment for businesses to operate, attract investment and expand. He called for closer cooperation between government and the manufacturing sector to tackle industry challenges, improve productivity and create sustainable jobs for Basotho, stressing that factories must be able to grow and keep creating employment.

The tour forms part of the ministry's efforts to promote industrial development, expand exports and advance inclusive economic growth through closer engagement with the private sector.

Addressing skills shortages, strengthening partnerships and supporting local manufacturers will be key to improving the sector's competitiveness, broadening its product range and expanding employment opportunities as Lesotho continues to pursue industrialisation.

Four days of hi-tech gadgets, robotics and AI



ETL's Acting General Manager - Marketing Communications and Customer Experience, Puleng 'Mathabo Masoabi

Seabata Mahao

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) is set to host the fourth edition of the Econet Expo from October 27 to 30 at Maseru Mall, bringing together technology brands, businesses, innovators and the public to explore emerging digital solutions under the theme, "Think AI. Think Econet."

The four-day event comes after ETL was recognised by global connectivity intelligence company Ookla as Lesotho's Fastest Mobile Network for the first half of 2026, a milestone the company attributes to its continued investment in network infrastructure, digital innovation and customer experience.

This year's expo will feature the official launch of Apple's iPhone 18, alongside exhibitions by international and local technology partners. Visitors will also have an opportunity to experience robotics, virtual reality, gaming, smart home solutions, artificial intelligence (AI) applications and pre-loved devices, with giveaways planned throughout the event.

Speaking ahead of the expo, ETL's acting General Manager for Marketing Communications and Customer Experience, Puleng Masoabi, said the event reflects the company's ambition to position Lesotho for an AI-powered future through improved connectivity and greater access to digital technologies.

"Our recent recognition by Ookla as Lesotho's Fastest Mobile Network is a testament to our continued investment in building the digital infrastructure that our country needs. However, connectivity is only part of the equation," Masoabi said.

She added that the company aims to move beyond providing fast and reliable connectivity to helping Basotho participate meaningfully in the digital economy.

"We have made a deliberate decision to be at the forefront of artificial intelligence adoption in Lesotho, ensuring that these technologies are not merely global trends we observe, but practical solutions that our people can access and benefit from," she said.

A key feature of the company's digital strategy is EcoAI, Econet's artificial intelligence platform, which supports both English and Sesotho. The platform provides access to AI-powered tools, with payments available through airtime and EcoCash.

Masoabi said EcoAI is intended to address barriers that prevent people from accessing AI technologies, particularly affordability, language and accessibility.

"Through EcoAI, ETL is taking practical steps to remove barriers to artificial intelligence, particularly affordability, language and accessibility. We want a student in Mokhotlong, an entrepreneur in Mafeteng or a business owner in Maseru to have the opportunity to harness AI to learn, innovate and become more productive," she said.

She said the company envisions a digital future in which technology creates opportunities for people regardless of their background or geographical location.

Beyond product exhibitions, the Econet Expo will host discussions on the practical application of AI in Lesotho, financial technology (FinTech), digital transformation and the role of technology in addressing socioeconomic challenges.

The discussions are expected to explore how digital solutions can contribute to tackling youth unemployment and strengthening digital skills development, particularly among young people seeking opportunities in the evolving digital economy.

Masoabi encouraged schools, entrepreneurs, businesses and members of the public to attend the expo, saying the event would provide an opportunity to discover technologies that can support learning, innovation and business growth.

"We want young Basotho to see themselves as future innovators and creators of technology, while enabling businesses to discover solutions that enhance efficiency and competitiveness," she said.

"The Econet Expo is about bringing those possibilities to life and demonstrating that the future of technology is already within our reach," Masoabi concluded.

NOTICE OF LOST LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given that I intend to apply for a certified copy of a registered Title Deed/Lease to immovable property registered Under No 14324-284 on the 14th/11/2013 in Favour of SELIBENG JOSEPHINE LEKENA in respect of every right or interest on and to the building(s) and other developments, express or implied in certain Plot No. 14324-284 situated at HA PAKI MAZENOD MASERU DISTRICT on Plan No 14324

As held by the chief Surveyor.

All persons having objection to the issue of the said copy are requested to lodge such in writing to the Land Registrar within three weeks from the last publication of the notice.

APPLICANT'S NAME & ADDRESS	MASERU	ADDRESS:	LEROTHOLI ROAD
MAKANANELO MALISE	LESOTHO	LAND REGISTRAR	P.O.BOX 11856
HA MATALA	CONTACT NUMBERS: 5892 3415	LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY	MASERU 100

NOTICE OF LOST LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given that I intend to apply for a certified copy of the registered title deed/ to the immovable property registered.

Under no 1428-1313 on 27/11/2013 in favor of NTLAMA ABARAHAM SHOKHOE in respect of every right or interest on and to the building (s) and other developments express or implied in a certain plot No.

1428-133 situated at Ha Tsosane, Maseru Urban Area on plot No. 14283

As held by the Chief Surveyor.

All persons who object to the issue of the said copy are requested to lodge their objection in writing with the land registrar within three weeks of the last publication of the notice.

ADDRESS:	**APPLICANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS**	Lerotholi Road	MASERU 100
Land Registrar	KHOPOLO SHOKHOE	P.O. Box 11856	
Land Admin Authority	HA TS'OSANE, MASERU	Maseru 100	CONTACT NUMBERS: 56873306

NOTICE !! NOTICE!!

Notice in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of the Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024;

ESTATE LATE PETER TEBOHO VAN-TONDER E 897/2026

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and the Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024, calling on all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the administrator of the deceased's estate within thirty (30) days of this publication.

The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder;

ADDRESS: Ha Faso
P.O Box 1326
Maseru 100

CELL NO. (+266) 594747/62555519
NAME: Moeketsi Van-Tonder
ADMINSTRATOR

Lesotho left behind with projected growth of just 0.8% against the region's 4.5% average in 2027

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's economy is set to lose momentum every year through 2027, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projecting growth will slide from 1.5 percent in 2025 to 1.1 percent in 2026 and 0.8 percent in 2027, a steady decline that points to a prolonged period of weak performance marked by falling household incomes, limited job creation and subdued private-sector activity.

The projections, contained in the IMF's Regional Economic Outlook Update for Sub-Saharan Africa, show a weakening trajectory at a time when the country faces mounting pressure to create sustainable employment, strengthen domestic production and improve living standards.

The outlook contrasts sharply with the broader Sub-Saharan African region, which is projected to grow by 4.5 percent in both 2026 and 2027. By 2027, Lesotho's expected growth will be only a fraction of the regional pace.

The IMF warned that although the region had demonstrated resilience to global economic shocks, growth prospects differed significantly between countries, with economies less dependent on natural resources facing slower growth.

It also cautioned that rising inflation, high debt-servicing costs, limited foreign reserves and declining foreign aid were leaving many African countries with little room to absorb further economic shocks.

"Risks remain decidedly tilted to the downside," the IMF stated, citing possible energy supply disruptions, sovereign repricing, further aid reductions and severe weather events, particularly El Niño.

The fund called for continued fiscal adjustment, targeted support for vulnerable households, protection of productive investment and policies that encourage private-sector growth.

For Lesotho, these concerns come amid persistent structural weaknesses, including limited domestic manufacturing capacity, dependence on imported goods and vulnerability to developments in South Africa, its major trading partner.

The slowdown is already visible in household spending and business activity, with consumers facing pressure from reduced income opportunities while firms contend with weak demand.

Household consumption, a key driver of economic growth, depends largely on employment income and remittances. However, job losses, limited opportunities for new employment and disruptions to remittance flows, particularly from South Africa since March, have weakened households' ability to spend.

Without stronger purchasing power, businesses have fewer incentives to expand production, invest in new operations or employ additional workers.

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) has also raised concerns about weakening domestic economic activity.

In August, its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) reported that the moderate economic rebound recorded earlier in the year had been short-lived, with recent indicators pointing to subdued demand in the transport and manufacturing subsectors.

The bank further noted that private-sector credit growth remained subdued, suggesting that households and businesses continued to borrow cautiously despite relatively stable financial conditions.

Credit growth is an important indicator of economic confidence because businesses often borrow to finance expansion, while households use credit to support consumption.

When borrowing and investment remain weak, the economy risks entering a cycle of low demand, limited business expansion and slow job creation.



Although government expenditure remains an important source of economic activity, concerns persist over the extent to which public spending stimulates domestic production and supports Basotho-owned businesses.

Much of the government's procurement goes towards goods and services sourced from outside the country, particularly South Africa, because Lesotho has a limited manufacturing base.

This means a significant share of money spent within the country flows back into foreign economies through imports, limiting the multiplier effect of public expenditure on local businesses, employment and production.

Concerns have also been raised that government procurement tends to favour larger companies, potentially restricting opportunities for smaller domestic enterprises to participate in major contracts.

While government spending can stimulate demand, it cannot sustainably replace private-sector investment, competitive local industries and a stronger domestic productive base.

Economic growth ultimately depends on the ability of businesses to produce goods and services, create jobs and generate income that circulates within the country. The challenge, therefore, is to build industries around sectors in which Lesotho has a competitive advantage and can develop sustainable employment opportunities

The clothing and textile industry, an important source of formal employment and export earnings, faces uncertainty linked to United States trade policies, tariffs introduced under President Donald Trump and questions surrounding the future of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides eligible African countries with preferential access to the US market.

The industry also faces stiff competition from countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as Asian producers, including Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the downturn in the diamond market has added pressure to an economy already struggling to diversify its sources of export earnings.

These challenges expose Lesotho's vulnerability to external markets and underline the consequences of having a narrow productive base. With limited manufacturing capacity and significant dependence on imported goods, the country faces difficulties in generating sufficient export revenue to support broader economic development.

Monetary policy developments have added another dimension to the gloomy outlook. The CBL recently increased the Central Bank Rate, also known as the repo rate, by 25 basis points to 7.00 percent per annum. The bank said the adjustment was necessary to maintain the country's exchange-rate peg, safeguard international reserves and preserve macroeconomic stability.

The increase came amid mounting inflation risks, with domestic inflation beginning to edge upwards, driven mainly by higher transport costs, although food price pressures remained relatively contained.

The MPC also revised its medium-term inflation outlook marginally upwards, warning that risks remained tilted towards higher inflation.

Among the risks identified were persistently elevated oil prices, the possible withdrawal of fuel levy relief measures, weather-related disruptions to food supplies and the potential for rising costs to trigger higher wages and broader price increases.

For a country heavily dependent on imported fuel and food, external price shocks can quickly affect household budgets, transport costs and business operating expenses.

The IMF similarly warned that median inflation across Sub-Saharan Africa was projected to rise from 3.4 percent in 2025 to 4.3 percent in 2026 and 5.0 percent in 2027. It urged governments to contain persistent inflation while protecting vulnerable households and maintaining investment that supports future growth.

The scale of competition for limited employment opportunities was illustrated recently when the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) received more than 25,000 applications for just 500 police constable positions.

The figures highlight the intense pressure facing young people seeking formal employment in a country where economic growth remains weak. Although the number of applications does not establish the national unemployment rate, it demonstrates the high demand for a limited number of public-sector jobs.

The challenge extends beyond recruitment into government institutions. Sustainable employment requires an expanding private sector, stronger local industries and investment capable of creating jobs beyond the public service.

Lesotho's economic difficulties predate the current administration, having persisted through successive governments and been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, the IMF's downward trajectory raises questions about whether enough is being done to address the structural weaknesses that continue to constrain growth under Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane's administration.

The central challenge is not simply to increase government expenditure but to ensure that economic activity generates more income, supports local enterprises and creates sustainable employment.

A stronger recovery would require policies that encourage domestic production, widen access to government procurement for Basotho businesses, attract productive investment and strengthen industries capable of competing in regional and international markets.

The IMF has emphasised that protecting productive investment and enabling private-sector growth are essential to making economies more resilient to future shocks and improving long-term living standards.

Flatten the hill: Dr Myres presses MPs on palliative care

Ntsoaki Motaung



A large crowd gathered recently to mark Breast Cancer Awareness and World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2026 under the theme "Pain Management: An Essential Part of Palliative Care."

Survivors, health professionals, leaders and community members came together to raise awareness and push for better care for people living with serious illness.

Dr Paul Myres, Chairman of Starlight Oasis of Hope Hospice, gave a moving address. He reminded those present that everyone faces difficulties, and that all of us will one day face illness or loss.

"Many people in this country with long-term illness are suffering physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They are not getting the support that they need. It does not have to be that way," said Myres.

He had two clear requests for parliamentarians. First, he urged lawmakers to make palliative care a core part of the country's health system, not an extra service only for those who can afford it.

He explained that in countries where governments support, fund and promote palliative care, people with life-limiting illness can live with dignity and less pain. Second, he called on leaders to act now, instead of waiting until they or their loved ones fall ill.

"Let us now work to improve the prospects of those who have life-limiting illness at this moment and those in the future," he said.

Myres stressed that palliative care helps people live as fully as possible, even when a cure is not possible. He added that it also supports families, not only patients.

He thanked everyone for taking part in the awareness walk and spoke about the daily struggle faced by people with cancer or other serious illness:

"For many people, climbing a hill is a daily struggle. We want to help flatten that hill."

Member of Parliament Makhalanyane Mokhothu, who is Chairperson of the Chairpersons of the National Assembly Portfolio Committees, spoke about the major challenge that non-communicable diseases such as cancer pose for the country.

He pointed to a lack of equipment and trained staff, for example for endoscopy, which makes early detection and treatment difficult. He called for better planning and investment to improve care and reduce unnecessary suffering.

'Mamokete Ntšekhe, the Minister of Health said the walk from the Ministry of Health to the National Assembly symbolised the country's shared commitment to a more compassionate Lesotho, where everyone receives care with dignity and respect.

She said breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in Lesotho, after cervical cancer. However, she noted that early detection and proper treatment can save lives. She encouraged everyone to learn the warning signs and to seek medical help if they notice any changes.

The Minister also challenged the media to fight misinformation. She urged men and boys to support women, and reminded everyone that breast cancer can affect anyone.

Speaking directly to cancer survivors, she expressed deep respect for their courage and resilience.

"Your experiences remind us that with support, appropriate care, and collaboration, hope still remains," she said.

She added that healthcare is not only about treating disease, but also about relieving suffering and protecting human dignity. She called for palliative care to be recognised as essential for improving the quality of life of people living with serious illness and for supporting their families.

AHF urges government to expedite HIV/AIDS fight

Ntsoaki Motaung

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Lesotho is calling on the government to step up its efforts to fight HIV/AIDS. This call comes during AHF's Global Month of Action, which is focusing on the worldwide HIV/AIDS response.

AHF says the government must renew its political commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS. The group wants leaders to focus on making HIV/AIDS a top priority, increase access to prevention, testing, and treatment, and make sure people stay in care.

They also stress the importance of "Treatment as Prevention" (TasP), which means that people who are on treatment and have undetectable levels of the virus cannot pass it on to others.

According to AHF, recent UNAIDS data shows that out of almost 33.9 million people living with HIV worldwide, more than 8.1 million are not virally suppressed.

Countries like Lesotho, Cambodia, Eswatini, and Rwanda have done well, but big countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, and even the United States have large numbers of people who are not virally suppressed. For example, South Africa has about 1.75 million people with HIV who can still spread the virus.

In Lesotho, a new national report found a worrying gap in treatment for children aged 0–14 years. The report also says fewer children are achieving viral suppression, and there is a need to improve how children stick to their treatment, monitor their health, and continue getting care. Certain areas, like Quthing, Butha-Buthe, and Mohale's Hoek, have lower treatment rates than other districts.

"People living with HIV can live long, healthy lives with effective treatment, and once virally suppressed, they cannot pass on the virus through sex. But that only works if the medicines and services are in place and accessible without interruption," said Dr. Patrick Kanyema, Acting Country Program Manager for AHF Lesotho.

He added, "History has shown that epidemics are shaped not only by medical interventions but also by political will backed by action. The fight against HIV/AIDS will ultimately be won or lost based on our ability to control new infections and close treatment gaps."

AHF's Month of Action involves programs and partners in over 50 countries. Their main message is clear: not acting will cost lives. They urge governments, civil society, communities, and businesses to act now. "Silence = Death and Treatment = Life. The time to act is now," the statement says.

AHF is the world's largest HIV/AIDS healthcare organization, helping more than 3.3 million people in 50 countries. In January 2025, AHF received the MLK, Jr Social Justice Award for its leadership in social justice. For more information, visit the AHF website.

University adds voice to mental health awareness

Seabata Mahao

Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) has urged students to speak openly about their struggles and to seek help without fear of judgement. The university also called for greater awareness of mental health and suicide prevention among young people.

The call was made at a mental health awareness event organised by the university's Department of Student Affairs under the theme 'Let's Talk, Let's Heal, Let's Grow'.

The event aimed to break the stigma around mental health, encourage people to seek help and create a supportive space where students can discuss their challenges and find assistance.



It brought together students, university staff, health experts and mental health advocates. They discussed issues affecting young people, including depression, anxiety, suicide prevention, substance-use disorders, LGBTQI+ challenges, stigma, recovery and available support services.

LUCT Registrar 'Mateboho Moorosi said mental health awareness is important in academic institutions. She noted that emotional and psychological well-being plays a major role in students' academic performance and personal development. She said students face many pressures that can affect their mental health, so they need understanding, guidance and support from those around them.

Moorosi also stressed that lecturers have a responsibility to notice when students may be struggling and to help them find appropriate support.

Student Services Assistant Tefo Mosala, speaking on behalf of the Student Services Department (SSD), said mental health needs attention from both educational institutions and society. He said mental health challenges affect people of all ages and backgrounds, and he called for greater understanding and support for those facing difficulties.

"We want to make everyone aware that mental health issues do not affect adults only; they affect everyone, including children. Therefore, we want to make sure that we understand people, help them cope and support them in managing their problems," Mosala said.

Mental health advocates also shared personal stories of struggling with their well-being. They encouraged students to admit when they need help and to reach out to people they trust, rather than suffer in silence.

One of the speakers, Tebello Machaba of Unlocking Love, led an interactive session. It encouraged students to reflect on their mental well-being and identify the challenges affecting their lives. She urged students to put their well-being first and to ask for help when they need it.

"Take care of yourselves, be selfish, always think about yourself, not other people. Seek help if needed," she advised.

The discussions gave students a chance to share their experiences and learn from others. They also showed that mental health challenges should not be a source of shame.

Student Tšeliso Khama said the event was more than an ordinary day because it dealt with an issue that matters deeply to young people. He thanked the organisers for the chance to hear other people's experiences. He said their stories offered reassurance to students facing similar difficulties.

LUCT Director of Academics Dr Lelingoana Lerotholi closed the event on behalf of the institution. He thanked the participants and everyone who contributed. He said the discussions provided valuable information that attendees could use in their daily lives and share with their families and communities.

"A good thing is that we have heard this information from the experts who are also the victims. Therefore, we are taking home important information that we will share with our children," he said.

The event coincided with World Mental Health Day, observed every year on October 10 to raise awareness of mental health challenges and promote access to care and support.

The World Health Organization (WHO) chose the theme "Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change". It stresses the importance of listening to people who have experienced mental health challenges and including their views in mental health policies and services.

The American Psychiatric Association Foundation also stressed the importance of psychological well-being with its message that "There is no health without mental health."

The LUCT event showed the need for universities to offer supportive environments where students can discuss their struggles and get guidance without fear of discrimination or judgement. It also showed that mental well-being is an essential part of student support, academic success and personal development.

New UN tool tracks El Niño threat to children

Ntsoaki Motaung

As the world prepares to face one of the strongest El Niño climate events on record, international health agencies and frontline experts are sounding the alarm.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNICEF, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have jointly launched a first-of-its-kind monitoring framework to track the escalating health threats that extreme heat and climate disruptions pose to pregnant women, newborns, and children.

The timing is critical. Molumaela Lepeli, a nurse educator, public health specialist, and PhD candidate, had warned that the upcoming climate shocks will trigger silent suffering across vulnerable communities, particularly in low- and middle-income regions like eastern and southern Africa.



Molumaela Lepeli, a nurse educator, public health specialist, and PhD candidate (2)

"El Niño is not just a weather event," Lepeli insists. "It is a test of survival for mothers and their children."

El Niño is known for causing above-average sea temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, triggering a ripple effect of droughts, heatwaves, floods, and storms worldwide.

Lepeli describes a looming daily reality where young children gasp for breath in stifling heat and mothers walk hours under a scorching sun searching for water and food.

"Children are not just small. Their bodies are still growing. They eat and drink more for their body size, their immune systems are not fully developed, and their lungs work harder," Lepeli explains. When air is thick with dust or smoke from wildfires, or when water is unsafe, children fall sick easily.

Studies underscore these fears, exposure to extreme heat is linked to a 26 percent increase in the odds of preterm birth, and infants under one year old experienced 389 percent more heatwave days in 2024 compared to the baseline period between 1986 and 2005.

Globally, an estimated 1.5 billion children are exposed to increasingly frequent and severe heatwaves.

Furthermore, a major new study published in Nature Communications reveals that when mothers are exposed to El Niño-like conditions during and before pregnancy, the risk of their children dying before the age of five rises dramatically by up to 48 percent compared to normal years.

As temperatures soar and crops fail, eastern and southern Africa face a severe surge in malnutrition. "When crops fail, there is not enough food. Children start losing weight, and some never recover. Their growth can be stunted for life," Lepeli warns.

He said expectant mothers face compounding dangers. Pregnancy is a physiological stress test, and dehydration can set in quickly when mothers must walk miles in the heat to reach a clinic or find food. Unbearable heat and caregiving duties often cause women to skip antenatal visits, leading to home births without trained midwives and dangerously delayed emergency care.

Lepeli warned that, the crisis extends beyond physical health. Water scarcity and contamination pave the way for outbreaks of cholera, diarrhea, and malaria, while families under economic stress may experience rises in gender-based violence and child marriages as desperate measures to reduce household burdens.

To combat these intersecting crises, the new UN framework provides governments with a concrete tool, a unified set of priority indicators across four key domains to track and respond to climate-health impacts including, Routine Monitoring of MNCH: Tracking facility-based metrics such as preterm births, outpatient attendance, pregnancy hypertension, late stillbirths, low birth weight (<2500 g), under-five facility mortality, and primary school attendance.

Public Health and Surveillance: Monitoring mortality rates and emergency room visits disaggregated by age and sex.

Climate and Health Integration: Ensuring ministries of health include maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) in climate task forces, vulnerability assessments, early warning distribution, and health worker training.

Heat Exposure Data: Utilizing baseline measures including air temperature, the Heat Index, the Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI), and Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT).

As Dr Pascale Allotey, Director of WHO's Department of Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, emphasizes, "What health systems do not count, they cannot respond to. By tracking outcomes such as preterm birth, child deaths and illnesses, and health-facility visits alongside heat exposure, countries can identify potential impacts and take action."

WHO notes that El Niño acts as a risk modifier, amplifying dangers wherever climate anomalies coincide with weak health systems, low population immunity, and poor access to care.

Echoing these findings, Lepeli calls for immediate, proactive intervention, including robust early warning systems, reinforced health infrastructure, secure access to clean water, and community-level support for women and children.

"We must act before the next disaster stellar strikes," Lepeli urges. "Every child's life, every mother's health, should matter. El Niño's impact is not inevitable; it is a call to action."

23 October - 29 October 2026

Stakeholders press LHDA on compensation, grazing land and local opportunity as water project turns 40

Thoboloko Nťšonyane and Seabata Mahao

Communities affected by the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) have used the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA)'s annual stakeholder conference to call for changes to compensation arrangements, stronger environmental protection, greater transparency in procurement and better support for the people who live alongside the project's dams, roads and reservoirs.

The LHDA at 40 Stakeholder Conference is being held at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre in Maseru from 21 to 23 October under the theme "Co-creating the Next Chapter". Over the three days, residents, business owners and civil society representatives put their grievances directly to LHDA officials and board members. The officials in turn explained why some arrangements are the way they are and what the authority says it is doing about outstanding claims.

Forty years, and unfinished business

The conference comes as the LHDA marks four decades of implementing the binational project, which sells water to South Africa and generates hydropower for Lesotho. Phase II is designed to raise the water supplied from 780 million cubic metres a year to more than 1.27 billion.

The project is reported to be 56.7% complete, with R24 billion of the R53 billion allocated spent and the 38 km transfer tunnel 58% complete. The Polihali dam itself passed the 50% mark in July and is on track for impoundment in the 2027/28 rainy season.

That progress sits alongside a growing record of unresolved complaints. A report by the Ombudsman, Adv Polaki, found that by 31 December 2025 compensation arrears under Phase I exceeded M142 million, while Phase II arrears stood at about M6.7 million.

The report followed a call from His Majesty King Letsie III for the LHDA to compensate affected communities effectively, noting that some people affected during the first phase more than 30 years ago were still waiting. It is against this backdrop that stakeholders took the floor.

Compensation: duration, form and fairness

The most persistent grievance was compensation. Boeang Khatleli, a resident of Mokhotlong near Polihali Dam, called for legal reforms, saying that the authority's response to complaints was always the same.

"Every time we mention compensation, the Project (LHDA) refers us to the law," he said.

Khatleli objected to compensation being paid for 50 years, arguing that future generations should also be compensated, and asked for the arrangement to be reviewed. The 50-year period comes from the LHDA's 2017 Compensation Policy, amended in 2022, which provides for annual cash payments, while residents have argued for a lifetime or 99-year entitlement.

Lenka Thamae of Survivors of Lesotho Dams (SOLD) made the same case, proposing compensation for 99 years or for the lifetime of those affected. He added that people relocated to Thetsane should be treated like everyone else, and that affected communities should receive funds relating to natural resources.

Tšepo Mosala, from Khokhoba in Katse, raised a different problem on the form the compensation takes. He said grazing land in the area had been substantially affected, and that compensation had been paid in money, but "animals don't eat money". Livestock, he said, now had a smaller area of mountain pasture available to them.

A further concern was the lump-sum payment. A speaker identified only as Tumelo said some people become overwhelmed when they receive compensation in one payment, and that prospective recipients should be better prepared to use the funding sustainably.

The LHDA says it already does this. Before compensation is disbursed, it holds discussions with recipients and prepares them, and invites experts to advise on how to sustain their livelihoods.





Panelists at LHDA stakeholders conference

LHDA board member Dr Taelo Letšela offered the authority's explanation of the rates. He said they are adjusted annually using consumer index tools to keep pace with inflation, and that there had been calls for them to be revised upwards. The board, he added, was examining the assumptions and underlying factors that shape public perceptions of the compensation policy. He also said that, because of the late timing, the number of affected communities was now limited.

The reasoning behind the 50-year period has been put forward before. The LHDA has previously said it would compensate for 50 years at market rates in line with statutory requirements. It has also argued that lump-sum community payments to individuals proved unaccountable under Phase I, and that it now holds communal compensation in trust for projects such as clinics and schools.

Claims that are still open

On the second day, the LHDA's Divisional Manager for Social Development and Environment (SDE), Ntaoleng Mochaba, acknowledged that outstanding claims from Phases I and II remain. She said the authority is working with District Administrators, Principal Chiefs, Area Chiefs and, where necessary, the Master of the High Court to resolve disputes so that affected individuals and communities are paid.

"There are different groups within the communities that might have property that were affected and did not get their rights in compensation," Mochaba said, acknowledging that the process had not always been completed within the required timeframes.

She explained that the authority is guided by national laws, compensation policies, international standards and agreements governing the rights of communities affected by major development projects. It also relies on the guidelines of its funders, whom she identified as the NTB and the AFTB.

Mochaba pointed to two causes of delay: disputes over family leases, and missing documents, including national identity documents, which have complicated the processing of some claims. She said the Authority had received 410 compensation claims referred by the Ombudsman, of which 359 had been resolved, leaving 51 outstanding. It had also received approximately 779 individual complaints, 329 of which had been addressed. The two sets of figures reflect different categories of claims.

Two groups, she said, are still waiting for payment. They are people whose property was damaged during road construction in the Makokobane area between 2002 and 2005, and communities in Masalang affected during the pre-construction phase. She assured them the Authority was already working on the matters and that compensation would be provided in due course.

Pastures, penalties and the environment

Environmental protection was the second major theme. Khatleli warned that the project would fail if the environment was not protected. He said a problem persisted in Motšeremeli, Mokhotlong, where the area remained closed, which he attributed to the laws. Protection efforts, he argued, must take residents into account. Even when communities are relocated, he said, their animals can die of starvation if the environment is not properly cared for.

The penalties for straying livestock also drew criticism, but from opposite directions. Khatleli said the M4.00 penalty for grazing in marked areas was too low to deter trespassing and should be revised. Mosala said the M500 penalty owners pay when animals stray onto protected land and graze there was high and unaffordable for many people, and also called for a review.

Letšela said the project had taken away pasture and that the aim was to restore it to its original state so animals could graze, adding that environmental restoration had multiple objectives. He acknowledged, however, that preventing environmental deterioration was not simple. Reducing animal numbers so they do not overwhelm the environment might seem an appealing solution, he said, but it could lead some people to increase their herds once they realised others were reducing theirs.

Who gets the contracts?

Business owners and economic development specialists raised concerns about inclusion. Mafoka Mofihli of Botho University identified three challenges, the first being the lack of inclusive procurement. He said there was little transparency in LHDA procurement affecting residents of Mokhotlong, and that some businesses struggled to have their services considered. He alleged there appeared to be "favouritism", with some businesses repeatedly being selected.

Mofihli also turned some of the criticism back on communities, saying communities around the project were not working together to raise their concerns, which made it harder to persuade the authority to respond. He encouraged them to approach the LHDA as a team and present the goods and services they offer. He called on the LHDA to produce a report showing what it had procured locally, what had been purchased and why particular suppliers were chosen.

Lebusa Leteke raised related concerns about differences in income from work opportunities, and said businesses lacked information about how contracts could affect them or how to position themselves to benefit. He called for roadshows to communicate opportunities, a database of job skills overseen by the LHDA, and close LHDA oversight of the MSKC so local businesses benefit. He also urged the authority to follow up with beneficiaries of project-sponsored training, including by helping them partner with institutions that could assist in marketing their products.

Conference reports do not record a direct LHDA reply to the favouritism allegation. For context, the project has reportedly spent a further R218.2 million with Lesotho-based suppliers and subcontractors. By the end of April 2026, the Polihali dam construction programme had employed 2,709 people. Those figures do not address the question of how contracts are awarded, which is what the speakers asked about.

LHDA Chief Executive Tente Tente said the conference exists so that stakeholders can raise such issues. When the authority revived it in 2024, he said, the intention was clear.

"When we revived this conference in 2024, our intention was clear, to create a platform where we could listen to stakeholders, shape our development programmes together and, most importantly, give stakeholders an opportunity to hold us accountable," Tente said.

Legacy projects and the parks left behind

Several speakers said earlier investments had not endured. Mofihli raised concerns about legacy projects that had become "white elephants", citing roads that had become inaccessible and were hampering tourism opportunities. He said the LHDA should have a programme setting out how it will help communities around its projects, including training in skills such as operating boats, and proposed that royalties of at least 1 per cent be used to build and maintain legacy projects.

Velaphe Seqhibi, who lives in Katse and is also affected by the project, said the 'Muela parks, including Liphofung and Tšehlanyane, appeared to have lost value. He attributed this to their handover to government and to the responsible entities not taking care of them, which he said had compromised tourism and cost the country revenue. He asked the LHDA to ensure the parks were properly used and managed, and to develop business plans if problems persisted. Participants went further, calling on the LHDA to reclaim the parks it had handed to government.

Seqhibi also said trading at Polihali was difficult. The LHDA runs an innovation hub where it trains people to produce pigs and grow morogho, he said, but heavy competition has pushed some producers to sell at reduced prices.

The LHDA says it partners with communities in project areas to improve livelihoods, sharing profits on a 70:30 basis, with 70 per cent going to the community and 30 per cent to the authority. The initiative has enabled farmers to cultivate on a larger scale.

Water for communities beyond the pipes

Water access was the other grievance to surface, and the LHDA has responded with plans. Thamae pointed out that some villages continue to experience shortages of drinking water, and said he hoped collaboration between the authority and communities would help address this.

Reentseng Molapo, the LHDA's Divisional Manager for Development and Operations, said communities around Katse, 'Muela and Mohale already benefit from clean water sourced from LHDA reservoirs, and that the authority was conducting a study into how communities farther from the existing facilities could also benefit. Mochaba added that approximately 20 villages in the Mohale area and 17 villages in 'Muela are expected to benefit from integrated water system maintenance.

Why change is slow, according to the authority

Asked about the delay in reviewing the treaty, Letšela said it was "not technically accurate" to say that the LHDA had not reviewed its treaty. The treaty between Lesotho and South Africa, he said, provides for a review every 12 years. The review should have taken place around 2022 or 2023, he said, but did not happen because elections were held in the country. He added that the Phase II treaty had also addressed some of the issues raised. He described the board as one of the measures intended to ensure implementation, and noted that the structure had previously consisted of senior public servants.

LHDA Board Chairperson Peete Molapo asked stakeholders to view the project as a whole, not only through the experience of affected communities, because it is a national and binational project. The nation should not shy away from identifying challenges, he said, but because the project is binational, some things do not move as quickly as stakeholders wish.

"It is a must to cooperate," he stressed.

Molapo called on everyone to take care of the project and urged stakeholders to connect with one another in line with their roles and relationship to it.

Mochaba said the project had brought roads, infrastructure and electricity and improved the lives of affected communities, but acknowledged that challenges remain. She called on all stakeholders to follow up on the recommendations they had agreed to, and stressed that the LHDA was responsible for ensuring affected communities were not worse off.

"We need to share the success of the project for Lesotho and Basotho. It is important that the recommendations from this engagement find expression," she said.

From dialogue to delivery

In his keynote address, Minister of Natural Resources Mohlomi Moleko said the anniversary was a chance to reflect on the Authority's achievements over four decades while identifying areas that need improvement. He described the LHDA as having grown from an ambitious vision into one of Africa's significant water and infrastructure development institutions, and credited the governments of Lesotho and South Africa, communities, development partners, contractors, consultants, civil society and the private sector.

"The purpose of this conference is therefore not only to celebrate what has been accomplished but also to create a platform for honest reflection and forward-looking discussions," he said.

He stressed that the participation of affected communities was essential if development projects were to respond to their needs.

"Sustainable development can only be achieved when those affected by development are active participants in shaping its outcomes," Moleko said.

The conference ended with a pledge. The stakeholders signed a commitment to "honest dialogue, shared responsibility, practical collaboration and transparent monitoring".

Whether the pledge becomes practice will be measured by the same yardsticks the speakers raised. These include whether the 51 outstanding Ombudsman-referred claims are settled, whether the 50-year compensation period is reviewed, whether villages beyond the reservoirs get clean water, and whether local businesses and herders see the benefits of a project they have lived beside for forty years.





INSTITUTE OF DIRECTORS OF LESOTHO

BETTER DIRECTORS. BETTER BOARDS. A STRONGER LESOTHO.

THEME

Lesotho's Progressive Mohlomi Code and King V Principles for enhanced perfomance

GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE 2026

2 IN 1 EVENT

GOVERNANCE MASTER CLASS | GOVERNANCE AWARDS GALA

Insights. Leadership. Recognition.

A premier platform for learning, networking and celebrating excellence in governance.

PROF MERVYN KING

Global Governance Icon

Renowned for his work in corporate governance and sustainable value, Prof King has influenced boards and organisations worldwide through his research and leadership.

26 NOVEMBER 2026
AVANI LESOTHO HOTEL
MASERU

TICKETS FROM

M2,000	M2,500
MEMBER	NON-MEMBER

TABLE OF 10	TABLE OF 10
CORPORATE (MEMBERS)	CORPORATE (NON-MEMBERS)
M20,000	M25,000



MS MAZVI GUNI

Corporate Governance Leader & Board Chair

With over 30 years' experience across the public and private sectors, Mazvi has held senior roles in the UK, Lesotho's natural resources sector, Central Bank and Letšeng Diamonds. She contributed to the Mohlomi Code and is a founding member of IoD Lesotho.



MR ROBERT LIKHANG

Governance & Strategy Specialist

A seasoned governance and strategy professional, Robert brings extensive experience in board leadership, risk management, organisational transformation and sustainable growth.



MS CAROLYNN CHALMERS

Governance Expert & Board Advisor

A globally recognised governancethought leader, Carolynn brings deep expertise in board effectiveness, leadership and sustainable valuecreation.

Reserve your seat today

Phone: (+266) 5325 6707 | 2232 3646

E-Mail: ketsi@iodlesotho.org.ls

Website: www.iodlesotho.org.ls

GOVERNANCE MASTER CLASS
09:00–15:00

GOVERNANCE AWARDS GALA
18:00 – 21:00

KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
PROCUREMENT UNIT
P.O. BOX 47, MASERU 100

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

23 October 2026

Remove Security/Diamond Mesh fence, Trees and Replace Fence with All Steel Hot-Dipped Galvanized Commercial Palisade Fencing to Cover **302M Long**-OCB No: GOL W001/2026/2027

1. The Ministry of Education and Training has been allocated/received funds from the SSU-Revolving Fund to be used for the acquisition of Removal of Security/Diamond Mesh Fence, Trees and Replacement of Fence with Steel Hot Dipped Galvanized Commercial Palisade Fencing to Cover 302M Long.
2. The Entity Invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Works.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the Open National Bidding Method contained in the Public Procurement Act 2023 and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 8(a) from **08:00AM to 16:30 hrs.**
5. The Bidding Document in English may be purchased **at no cost** by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **10:00hrs 18th December 2026**. All bids must be accompanied by a **bid security** of **(M5000.00)** or a bid securing declaration. Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 90 days (26/02/27). Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **10:30hrs** on the **18th December 2026**.
7. There shall be pre-bid meeting 10:00hrs EFU Building on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a) Documents may be inspected at: Ministry of Education and Training Procurement Unit, Education Facility Unit, Constitution Road, Maseru
   (b) Documents will be issued from: Ministry of Education and Training Procurement Unit, Education Facility Unit, Constitution Road, Maseru
   (c) Bids must be delivered to: The Ministry of Education and Training Inspectorate Building, Room 404
   (d) Address of bid opening: Ministry of Education and Training Inspectorate Building, Room 404
9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid Notice	30th October 2026
b. Pre bid meeting	04th November 2026
c. Bid Closing date	18th December 2026
d. Evaluation process	28th December 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	12th January 2027
f. Contract signature	16th February 2027

Signature
Name
Position of Authorised Official

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

18th October 2026

Supply and delivery of school furniture for 45 primary schools
Procurement reference No: LS –MOET-001-2026/2027-RFB

1. The ***Ministry of Education and Training*** has been allocated funds from the Government to be used for the acquisition of school furniture.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the o**pen national bidding method** contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **8:30hrs to 4:30hrs.**
5. The Bidding document in English may be obtained by interested bidders to the address below at 8(b) **at no cost.**
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before ***10:00hrs on the 16th NOVEMBER 2026***. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **M 10,000.00** from the bank or a bid securing declaration. Bid securities must be valid until **(16th JANUARY 2027**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **10:30hrs** the address below at 8(d) at **10:30hrs** on the **16th NOVEMBER 2026**
7. There shall be a pre – bid meeting at ***EFU building, opposite NCDC next Lerotholi Polytechnic Fokothi*** at **10:00hrs** on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a) Procurement Unit, Education Facility Unit, Ministry of Education and Training
   P.O. Box 1279 Maseru 100
   (b) **Documents will be issued from:** Ministry of Education and Training, Procurement Unit, EFU Building next to Fokothi opposite NCDC
   (c) **Bids must be delivered to**: Ministry of Education and Training Room 404 Inspectorate Building
   (d) **Address of bid Opening:** Procurement Committee, Ministry of Education and Training headquarters, Inspectorate Building room 404
9. 9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	16th October, 2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	23rd October, 2026
c. Bid closing date	16th November, 2026
d. Evaluation process	18 to 23rd November, 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	4th December 2026
f. Contract signature	21st December 2026

Signature:
Name:
Position of Authorised Official:

WORLD BANK GROUP IFAD Investing in rural people JICA SADPII

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Review of the National Agriculture Subsidy Policy
(Individual Consultants)

LESOTHO
SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT POJECT (SADP II)

Assignment Title: Engagement of an Individual consultant to Conduct Review of the National Agriculture Subsidy Policy
Reference No. (as per procurement plan): **LSO-2000002563-0079-CS-ICS**

The Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services provided by an individual consultant as part of the post to review Subsidy policy.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II). The consulting services ("the services") include the review Subsidy policy

This request for expressions of interest (REOI) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on the IFAD website on 17/07/2026, on UNDB on 17/07/2026, on SADP II website on 23/07/2026 and on local newspapers.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations . The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. By entering in this document, you certify to have read, understood, and agreed to be bound by the Privacy Policy of IFAD.

Interested consultants shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition under Small Holder Agriculture Project (SADPII) now invites eligible

Individual consultants ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services in the form of a curriculum vitae (CV). A consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection (ICS) method set out in IFAD' Project Procurement Handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/projectprocurement. Interviews will not be conducted as part of the selection process.

The shortlisting criteria are:

1) Education: Master's degree in Agricultural Economics, Economics, Public Policy, Development Economics, or related fields. PhD in the above will be an added advantage.

2) Experience and Skills:

a. Minimum 10 years of experience in agricultural policy research and consultancy.
b. Proven 5 years' expertise in fiscal policy, public finance management and agricultural marketing systems.
c. Demonstrated 5 years' experience in evaluating Government programmes.
d. 5 years' experience at Managerial level in the Agricultural and rural development sector
e. Strong analytical, report writing, stakeholder engagement and communication skills.
f. Familiarity with Lesotho's agricultural landscape is highly desirable or similar contexts.

For each assignment, the consultant should provide:

- Client name;
- Project title;
- Country;
- Contract value;
- Duration;
- Scope of work;
- Client contact details for reference.
- Skills Requirements

Interested consultants can find the Terms of References (ToRs) available on the following link https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/ or they can be requested via email at procurement@sadpii.org.ls and send it to the address indicated below.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below procurement@sadpii.org.ls no later than 9/10/2026 1500 hours UTC+2.The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by 16/10/2026 1500hrs UTC+2.

Expressions of interest in the form of curriculum vitae (CV), certified qualifications and cover letter must be hand delivered in a written form to the address below (in person) or sent via email to procurement@sadpii.org.ls by 19th October 2026 at 1500 hours.

Procurement Office
Attn: Procurement Specialist a.i
Livestock Services Moshoeshoe II
P.O. Box 24, Maseru, Lesotho
Tel: +266 22312578
E-mail: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

The Qualification and Evaluation criteria is as follows

Item	Criteria	Points
A.	**General experience**	**30**
1.	General experience: Minimum 10 years of experience in agricultural policy research and consultancy.	30
B.	**Qualification and experience**	**70**
1.	**QUALIFICATION**: Master's Degree Agricultural Economics, Economics, Public Policy, Development Economics, or related fields.	25
2.	5 years' expertise in fiscal policy, public finance management and agricultural marketing systems.	10
3.	5 years' experience at Managerial level in the Agricultural and rural development sector	10
4.	Knowledge of the agricultural sector in Lesotho or similar contexts.	5
5.	Strong analytical and report-writing skills.	10
6.	5 years' Experience working with Government programmes	10
	Total Points	**100**
	Minimum points required to pass	**70 points**

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

NOTICE OF SALE – RESIDENTIAL VILLA IN MASERU WEST

The European Union is selling its former staff accommodation in Maseru West and inviting individuals or entities interested in buying this property to submit an offer. The property is a residential villa of 472 m² on a 5 738 m² plot of land situated at 215 Tona-Kholo Road Maseru West.

The deadline to submit an offer is on 12 November 2026 at 23.59, local time.

Further information concerning the sales' conditions and visits to the property can be found on the following EU Delegation's webpage: https://link.europa.eu/fngbdfnm

NOTICE OF SALE – RESIDENTIAL VILLA IN MASERU WEST

The European Union is selling its former staff accommodation in Maseru West and inviting individuals or entities interested in buying this property to submit an offer. The property is a residential villa of 264 m² on a 4 642 m² plot of land situated at 216 Tona-Kholo Road Maseru West.

The deadline to submit an offer is on 12 November 2026 at 23.59, local time.

Further information concerning the sales' conditions and visits to the property can be found on the following EU Delegation's webpage: https://link.europa.eu/KpHmqq

Government of Lesotho

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NO: 3 OF 2026/2027 (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

A CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST- INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho (GoL), through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), is committed to building a skilled, knowledgeable, and adaptable human resource base that can drive sustainable national development, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life for all Basotho. Human Resources Development (HRD) is central to achieving the targets set out in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is against this background that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning seeks an individual consultant to develop a National Human Resource Development Policy.

A complete set of bidding documents in English will be available to interested bidders for collection at Planning Procurement Unit office number **124** during office hours (between 8:00 am until 4:30 pm).

Bids must be deposited on or before **27th October 2026** at **12:00HRS** in the tender box situated at Government Complex Phase 2 at Development Planning 2nd floor. Bids arriving after the closing date time shall be rejected. Tenders will be opened in the presence of bidders or representatives at **14: 30** hours on the same day.

Clarification requests and bid submissions should be addressed to:

Secretary Procurement Committee
Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
Development Planning Africa House
P.O. Box 630
Maseru 100.
Tel no. 22 317433

Tender Timetable for the expression of interest

Activity	Dates
ITT Issued	***1st October 2026***
Clarifications dates	***1st – 21st October 2026***
Deadline for obtaining Tender Document	***21st October 2026***
ITT Close	***27th October 2026 at 12:00 noon***
Tender opening	***27th October 2026 at 14:30 hours***
Evaluation dates	***2nd – 6th November 2026***

To obtain the Expression of Interest (EOI), interested and eligible individuals should request the EOI document from thato.pokola@gov.ls. The request should include: Name of Applicant, telephone numbers and email address.

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

Ministry of Education and Training

02-October 2026

Supply and Delivery of Printing Material- GOL/PRNT/TARL 26/27

1. The **Ministry of Education and Training** has been allocated/received funds from the government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of **Printing Material**.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **8;00AM to 16:00 hrs** .
5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased at no cost by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
6. Bids must be **delivered** to the address below at 8(c) at **10:00hrs** on the 13th November 2026 .All bids must be accompanied by a **bid security of (M5000.00)** or a bid securing declaration..Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 90 days **(11/02/27).**Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at 1**0:30hrs** on the **13th November 2026.**
7. There shall be a pre – bid meeting at **10:00hrs EFU Building** on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a)Documents may be inspected at:Ministry of Education and Training,Procurement Unit EFU Building next to Fokothi,opposite NCDC.
   (b) Documents will be issued from:Ministry of Education and Training EFU Building next to Fokothi opposite NCDC.
   (c) Bids must be **delivered to:**Ministry of Education and Training headquaters ,Inspectorate Building room 404 .
   (d) **Address of bid openin**g: Procurement committee Ministry of Education and Training headquaters ,Inspectorate Building room 404.
9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	02th 0ctober 2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	Tuesday 13th 0ctober 2026
c. Bid closing date	13th November 2026
d. Evaluation process	30 November 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	30 November 2026
f. Contract signature	10 December 2026

Signature:
Name:
Position of Authorised Official:

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

Ministry of Education and Training

02-October 2026

Supply and Delivery of Science Chemicals and Equipment- OCB No: GOL/SCIENCE FUND 26/27

1. **The Ministry of Education and Training** has been allocated/received funds from the government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of Science chemicals and equipment.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **8;00AM to 16:00 hrs** .
5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased at **no cost** by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
6. Bids must be **delivered** to the address below at 8(c) at **14:00hrs on the 13th November 2026** .All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **(M5000.00)** or a bid securing declaration.. Bid securities or bid securing declarations must be valid until 90 days **(11/02/27)**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be **opened** in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **10:30hrs** on the **13th November 2026**.
7. There shall be a pre – bid meeting at 10:00hrs **EFU Building** on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
8. (a)Documents may be inspected at:Ministry of Education and Training,Procurement Unit EFU Building next to Fokothi,opposite NCDC.
   (b) Documents will be issued from:Ministry of Education and Training EFU Building next to Fokothi opposite NCDC.
   (c) Bids must be **delivered** to:Ministry of Education and Training headquaters ,Inspectorate Building room 404 .
   (d) **Address of bid opening**: Procurement committee Ministry of Education and Training headquaters ,Inspectorate Building room 404.
9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	02th 0ctober 2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	Tuesday 13th 0ctober 2026
c. Bid closing date	13th November 2026
d. Evaluation process	30 November 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	30 November 2026
f. Contract signature	10 December 2026

Signature:
Name:
Position of Authorised Official:

Fresh HIV challenge emerges

Ntsoaki Motaung

A study from Lesotho has found worrying signs that HIV can quickly become resistant to dolutegravir, one of the main medicines used to treat the virus in Africa.

This discovery comes from the Viral Load Cohort North East Lesotho (VICONEL) project, which follows the health of people on HIV treatment across three districts in Lesotho.

The findings were presented at the 14th National Health Research Symposium which was held in October under the theme "Advancing Universal Health Coverage".

Dolutegravir, often known as DTG, is now a cornerstone for HIV treatment in many African countries. It is usually very effective and is used by thousands of people.

However, the new research shows that resistance to this important medicine can develop much sooner than doctors previously thought.

The study, led by Dr. Blaise Lukau and Dr. Lipontšo Motaboli, looked at 26,919 people who had started taking dolutegravir by April 2026. Out of these, 745 met the criteria for genetic sequencing, and researchers were able to successfully complete testing for 304 participants.

Among those tested, 24 people, almost 8 percent, had developed resistance to dolutegravir. This means the medicine was no longer working as it should to control the virus.

Even more concerning, resistance was found in 9 out of 96 people who met the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of "virological failure." This is a situation where the virus is not controlled by treatment and can multiply. The rate of resistance in this group was nearly 9.4 percent.

The study also found that some people developed resistance within two years of starting treatment with dolutegravir. In fact, in two cases, resistance appeared within just nine months. This is much earlier than experts expected.

Current rules recommend testing for resistance only in certain situations, such as when someone has been on the medicine for two years, or when their viral load, a measure of the amount of virus in the blood, reaches a certain level. The researchers warn that these guidelines may miss many cases of early resistance.

"If we only use the current WHO rules for testing, we would have missed 50 cases," said Motaboli.

"If we only look at people with prior HIV treatment, we would have missed three cases. And if we only test after two years on dolutegravir, we would have missed eight cases."

The findings suggest a need to rethink these guidelines. The researchers say that testing should not be limited only to people who have been on dolutegravir for a long time or those who meet strict viral load rules.

They believe that expanding testing to more people, especially those showing early signs of treatment failure, could help find resistance sooner and improve care.

However, expanding testing would mean more people need to be screened, which could require extra resources for health programs. The researchers say this is a challenge that health leaders in Lesotho and other countries must consider.

While the study only looked at people whose samples could be tested, the results still highlight a real risk. The researchers call for urgent action to update testing guidelines, so that HIV treatment stays effective for everyone who needs it in Lesotho and beyond.

Meanwhile, during the International AIDS Society (IAS) summit in Rio de Janeiro, researchers reported a troubling rise in HIV drug resistance across sub-Saharan Africa, including Lesotho.

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

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

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

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

Alarm over telecoms vandalism sounded

Staff Reporter

Vodacom Lesotho has called for a coordinated national response to escalating vandalism of telecommunications infrastructure, warning that the attacks are disrupting essential services, increasing operating costs and threatening efforts to expand connectivity across the country.

In a statement issued this week, the mobile network operator said a series of incidents at its network sites involved the deliberate destruction of critical infrastructure, including the cutting of power and communications cables, damage to electrical systems, tampering with equipment cabinets and destruction of assets needed to keep telecommunications services operational.

The company warned that the attacks go beyond damage to its property, affecting communities and institutions that rely on reliable connectivity for emergency communications, digital learning, business operations and mobile financial services.

Health facilities, law-enforcement agencies and other public institutions also depend on telecommunications infrastructure to deliver essential services.

"These incidents are not victimless crimes," said Tšepo Ntaopane, Vodacom Lesotho's Head of External Affairs and Regulatory.

"When a network site is vandalised, entire communities lose access to essential communications. Families are unable to make urgent calls, businesses are disrupted, learners lose access to educational resources and people requiring emergency assistance struggle to connect. Those responsible are not simply damaging equipment. They are interrupting services that our people depend on every day."

The company said it deploys technical teams and contingency measures to restore affected services as quickly as possible following incidents. However, repairing and replacing damaged infrastructure requires substantial financial resources, specialist expertise and time.

These costs, it said, divert investment from network expansion, service improvements and community-development initiatives.

The vandalism also carries wider economic and social consequences, including service outages, lost revenue and higher operating costs. It further slows efforts to extend connectivity to Basotho in underserved communities, where reliable telecommunications services are increasingly important for accessing information, financial services and economic opportunities.

Vodacom's concerns highlight the wider implications of infrastructure vandalism in a country where mobile connectivity supports an expanding range of economic and social activities. Damage to a single network site can leave customers without services while technical teams work to repair the affected equipment and restore connections.

The company has urged communities living near telecommunications sites to help protect the infrastructure by reporting suspicious activity, discouraging interference with network facilities and alerting local authorities to signs of damage or attempted theft.

It has also appealed to scrap-metal dealers, recyclers and members of the public to reject the purchase and trade of cables, batteries, solar equipment and other items suspected of being stolen from telecommunications or electricity infrastructure.

The appeal targets not only those who allegedly damage or steal equipment but also the potential market for stolen materials, which can create an incentive for further attacks.

Ntaopane said resources spent repeatedly replacing vandalised infrastructure could instead be used to improve network coverage and service delivery.

"We cannot continue investing in replacing infrastructure damaged by criminal acts when those same resources could be used to expand coverage, improve services and connect more Basotho to the opportunities of the digital economy. Protecting telecommunications infrastructure protects communities, businesses and the country's future," he added.

Vodacom Lesotho said it was working closely with law-enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to strengthen security around affected sites and support ongoing investigations into the incidents.

The company's call for a coordinated national response places the protection of telecommunications infrastructure as a shared responsibility involving communities, authorities, businesses and the public, amid concerns that continued vandalism could undermine investment in the country's digital connectivity.

‘Anyone Can Wear a Crown, but the Idea Is to Leave Lesotho Better’

A little over a month after being crowned Miss Lesotho, Reitumetse Makara (RM) is already looking beyond the glamour of the title, with a vision centred on mental health advocacy, youth empowerment and representing Lesotho on the international stage.

Makara succeeds Refiloe Makoae, who was crowned in 2024 and continued to hold the title through 2025, when no new Miss Lesotho was crowned. During her extended reign, Makoae also represented Lesotho at Miss Cosmo 2025, inspiring the next queen to pursue her own pageant journey.

For Makara, the crown represents more than personal achievement. Having studied psychology, she hopes to use her platform to address mental health stigma, create safe spaces for people struggling with mental health challenges and bridge the gap between mental health awareness and Basotho culture.

Newsday Arts writer Chris Theko (CT), set down with the the new Miss Lesotho in this interview, as she reflects on her coronation, following in Makoae’s footsteps, the responsibilities of the crown and the legacy she hopes to leave behind.

CT: It has been a little over a month since you were crowned Miss Lesotho. Looking back, how would you describe that moment?

RM: A month later, the moment still feels unreal. I witnessed my dream come true in real time, and living it has been nothing short of amazing.

CT: When your name was announced as the winner, what was the first thought that went through your mind?

RM: “I made it.” There was a lot going through my head at that time, so many emotions, but the one thought that stayed with me and stood out the most was the fact that I had made it.

CT: Becoming Miss Lesotho comes with a lot of excitement, but also expectations. What has been the biggest adjustment for you since taking on the title?

RM: When I competed for the title, I knew there would be responsibilities that came with winning. Now that I have won, I have realised that I do not just carry a title; I carry the responsibility of representing what a Mosotho girl is and can be.

This has made me more intentional with my platform, my time and my energy. It is a responsibility I intend to carry with grace and pride.

CT: You are taking over from Refiloe Makoae, who had an unusually long reign after there was no crowning in 2025. Does following someone who held the title for that long add any pressure?

RM: The honest answer is that, yes, there is some pressure, but also inspiration. Refiloe carried the crown for so long with so much grace, and I imagine it required incredible dedication and resilience.

Her reign was what inspired me to finally seize the opportunity to chase my dream. She kept the legacy alive, allowing me to step into the foundation she laid and carry it forward.

CT: Refiloe also represented Lesotho at Miss Cosmo 2025. How closely did you follow her journey, and what did you learn from watching her represent the country internationally?

RM: As I mentioned, Refiloe was the

CONTINUE TO PAGE 19





...FROM PAGE 18

‘Anyone Can Wear a Crown, but the Idea Is to Leave Lesotho Better’

final push that led me to pursue the crown. Watching her represent our country was incredible. You could almost see and feel just how much love and pride she carried for Lesotho.

She told Lesotho’s story beautifully. She taught me that authenticity carries a lot of weight internationally. It is not just about the walks and the glamour, but about allowing your country’s story to be told through you.

CT: Do you see yourself continuing any of the work or initiatives started during Refiloe’s reign, or do you want to establish a completely different identity as Miss Lesotho?

RM: I have the utmost respect for Refiloe’s work during her reign. She cemented her place in the legacy of Miss Lesotho and what the brand represents, and I believe it is important to honour the foundation laid by every queen.

I also believe that each queen is chosen for a specific purpose and a specific season. My story, purpose, journey and passion have led me to mental health. It is a pressing issue affecting so many of our people, and one that must finally be addressed and acknowledged.

I will always celebrate and support the work of those who came before me, but I would also like my reign to have its own heartbeat.

CT: Every Miss Lesotho eventually has to answer the question: What does the crown actually mean to you?

RM: I could answer by saying it means everything, which it truly does. But this crown means permission, responsibility and representation.

Permission to be seen and to be a symbol of what it means to be a young Mosotho girl. The responsibility to carry the crown with dignity, not just for myself but for every young woman who dares to have a dream. It is a promise to serve and leave a lasting legacy of change and empowerment.

And then there is representation: representing who we are as a people and what we stand for.

CT: Beyond the glamour, what do you believe is the responsibility of Miss Lesotho?

RM: Miss Lesotho’s job begins when the lights go off. Yes, the stage and the glamour are a huge part of it, but the real work begins afterwards.

As Miss Lesotho, my responsibilities are to preserve our culture, serve with the intention of creating real change, be a voice and stand for what I truly believe in.

Anyone can wear a crown; the idea, however, is to leave Lesotho a little better than when I first wore it.

CT: What issues or causes are particularly important to you, and how do you intend to use the Miss Lesotho platform to address them?

RM: The most important cause to me is mental health. Our country lacks resources when it comes to mental health, which was one of the main reasons I studied psychology.

I cannot practise just yet, and because I do not want to wait any longer for change, I believe this platform can be used effectively to break the silence.

One of the main reasons mental health is so stigmatised and misunderstood is that it is rarely spoken about. Once we start the conversation, we can learn what it truly means and build the bridges needed to educate people and integrate mental health information into our language and culture so that no one is left behind.

I want to create a safe space for anyone struggling with mental health and help educate people about everyday tools they can use without stigma or shame.

CT: Pageantry has changed significantly, particularly with social media giving contestants and titleholders a direct relationship with the public. How do you intend to use your digital platforms during your reign?

RM: Social media can be an extraordinary way to connect when used correctly. I would like to use my platform to be real, not perfect, but authentic.

I want it to reflect who I am and what I love. I want it to be a platform that educates, not just entertains. I would also like to use my page as a safe space where I can build a community.

I want to be seen, but also to be felt, and to build meaningful connections.

CT: There is often a lot of public scrutiny that comes with wearing a national crown. How prepared are you for criticism, expectations and the pressure that comes with being in the public eye?

RM: There is a saying that goes, “Heavy is the head that wears the crown.” I never quite understood it until now.

A title like this comes with its joys and positives, but it also comes with scrutiny. I came into Miss Lesotho with a clear purpose, and I have built a strong foundation. I believe that foundation is enough to drown out any noise.

Criticism is bound to come, but my focus is not on that; my focus will be on my intended purpose. I do not intend to be perfect, but I intend to be willing to serve, especially under pressure.

CT: What do you think people misunderstand most about beauty queens?

RM: I do think there is still a perception that it is all about beauty, walks and so on, when in reality, there is so much more that goes into it. Being a beauty queen comes with discipline and structure.

CT: Do you believe Miss Lesotho should primarily be a beauty title, or has the role evolved into something much bigger?

RM: No. In fact, if it were just about beauty, I believe the entire thing would end on the night of the crowning.

Miss Lesotho should be a platform that is used to create and seize opportunities. It should help bring positive change, nurture resilience and develop leadership. It should be a platform that helps women flourish in their endeavours.



CT: International representation is another major responsibility that comes with the title. Are there particular international pageants you hope to compete in, and what would representing Lesotho on that stage mean to you?

RM: One of the reasons I decided to join Miss Lesotho was to be able to represent our country internationally. I would love to follow in the footsteps of one of our previous queens and compete at Miss Cosmo.

To me, international representation means being seen, and not just competing. It is about carrying much more than myself; it is about carrying everything that my country represents.

It would mean telling the correct story about Lesotho: that it is a country with a rich and deep culture, a beautiful language and profound values. I do not just want to appear on the international stage; I want Lesotho to be remembered long after I leave it.

CT: What would you like to achieve during your reign that would make you look back at the end of the year and say, “I used this crown well”?

RM: The ultimate goal is to leave lasting and real change. Mental health advocacy is incredibly important to me, and it is what I would mainly like to focus on.

I would love for my country to finally address the crises that have been going on for so long but have somehow been sidelined, or at least not addressed in the way they should be.

I would love to use my degree and this platform to create safe spaces for mental health care and educate people, particularly young people, about mental health and what it truly means, because we cannot change a problem we do not understand.

I would love to build a bridge between our culture and mental health.

CT: Finally, what would you like to say to Basotho who supported you during the pageant and those who are now watching your journey as Miss Lesotho?

RM: The amount of support I have received throughout this journey has been incredibly humbling. I cannot express how grateful I am to everyone who has stood by me.

From my family, who encouraged me to start in the first place, to my friends, who believed in me immensely; my church members, who prayed for me; everyone who saw my videos and social media posts and decided to stand behind me; those who wrote encouraging comments and voted for me; my interviewers and mentors; and everyone who cheered for me as I walked the stage, all I can say is, from the bottom of my heart, Kea leboha.

Your support has been a source of strength. I hope to represent who we are by wearing this crown and carrying this title with dignity, pride and love.


Elevate your Brand's visibility!
Advertise With Us
and unlock exclusive rates...
Newsday
GOODS IN TRANSIT INSURANCE
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
SuperC
The original energy sweet.

Lesotho Wine Festival: A taste of the world in the heart of Lesotho

Staff Reporter

There is something special about an event that brings people together, introduces them to new experiences and leaves them with stories to tell long after the day is over.

On 10 October, Maseru Club became just that place as the 13th edition of the Lesotho Wine Festival brought together wine lovers, business people, local creatives and visitors from beyond Lesotho's borders for a day of wine and connection.

With around 140 wineries from outside the country, from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and 35 local crafters in attendance, the festival offered guests a taste of the world without having to leave the Mountain Kingdom.

From sampling different wines to browsing locally made crafts and enjoying some very good company, there was definitely something for everyone. And when the wine tasting made way for entertainment, the atmosphere carried on so well into the day.

Between Security personnel, waiters, bar staff, Kitchen and access people. Total of 700 tags given out.

But the Lesotho Wine Festival is about more than just wine. It is also about tourism and the many opportunities that come when people gather in one place to experience something different. Events like this encourage people to travel, explore new places and spend time in destinations they might not otherwise visit. They also bring visitors into contact with the people, and businesses and creativity that makes Lesotho a destination worth discovering.

For a country with so much to offer; the festival became the gateway to travelers to experience breathtaking mountain scenery and a culture so rich. The events that attract both local and international visitors play an important role in keeping Lesotho on the map. They create opportunities for visitors to experience the country beyond its famous landscapes, while contributing to the vibrancy of its hospitality and business sectors.

One of the festival's most beautiful contributions, however, is the space it creates for local crafters to share their work with a wider audience. Among the 35 local exhibitors was artist Ms. Kananelo Maphathe, who spoke warmly about what the festival has meant for her business said:

"What Lesotho Wine is doing for me and my fellow artists is one thing I am forever grateful for. My first exhibition with them was the previous year, and that's where I made my first biggest sale," she said.

Her story is a reminder that sometimes, all a talented person needs is the right platform and an audience willing to stop, look and appreciate what they have created. For local artists, the festival opens doors to customers they might not ordinarily reach, including international visitors who can take a piece of Lesotho's creativity home with them.

This is exactly how it was for another local crafter, Ido Beads; "as vendors, we enjoyed connecting with our clients, especially returning wine exhibitors from last year's event, who recognised the Ido Beads brand and visited our stall to purchase souvenirs and products," they shared.



For Paulo De Freitas, the Lesotho-born and bred entrepreneur who founded the event, creating these opportunities is central to his vision. One of his biggest goals is to give local crafters the greatest possible exposure for their businesses, allowing their work to reach more people and helping them connect with potential customers.

And while some guests came for the wine and others for the entertainment, the opportunity to build meaningful relationships was just as important. Local attendee Kuena Mokoena described the festival as a valuable platform not only for having fun and mingling, but also for creating networks that can contribute to one's growth as a businesswoman.

This is part of what makes events like the Lesotho Wine Festival so valuable. Business conversations happen over a glass of wine, new friendships are formed between strangers, and local entrepreneurs find themselves in rooms with people who could become their next customers or partners. Tourism, after all, is not only about where people go; it is also about what they experience, who they meet and what they take away from the journey.

The festival also demonstrates how events can bring together different parts of the tourism value chain. Wineries introduce their products to new audiences, local crafters showcase their talent, businesses build relationships, and visitors get another reason to spend time in Maseru. These experiences help create a lively destination offering that appeals to both residents and international travellers.

As the 13th edition drew over 1100 people together, it offered a glimpse of what tourism can look like when entertainment and local creativity share the same space. It was a celebration of good wine, certainly, but also of opportunity and the people who make events like this possible.

Because sometimes, the best way to experience a destination is not simply to see its mountains or take photographs of its beautiful scenery. Sometimes, it is to sit among its people, share a conversation, taste something new and leave with a little more appreciation for the place you have visited.

And in the heart of Lesotho, the Wine Festival continues to offer just that: a reason to gather, a reason to explore, and another reason for the world to experience the Kingdom In The Sky.

On his part, LTDC Public Relations Manager Molapo Matela, pointed out that the Wine Festival is positioning Lesotho as a preferred destination for wine lovers and wineries, whilst also contributing positively to the local economy. "Visitors stay in our accommodation facilities and buy food, which means money is being spent locally," he said.

However, Matela emphasized the need for greater involvement of tourism stakeholders, particularly tour guides and tour operators, who could work with the event organisers to develop additional activities that encourage visitors to stay longer and explore more of Lesotho breathtaking landscape and engage in fascinating activities.

He emphasised that the festival aligns with LTDC's mandate to promote Lesotho as a preferred tourism destination and attract more visitors to the country. He also commended the organisers for putting together an event of this magnitude.

Film festival poised to create space for dialogue, learning

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The annual European Union (EU) Film Festival is expected to bring Basotho audiences and filmmakers together with their European counterparts through cinema, creating space for dialogue, shared knowledge and the exchange of ideas.

This year's first screening will take place on 22 October 2026 at the Alliance Française de Maseru. It will feature a locally produced film by Pheello Makosholo, 'Ben Made It'.

Now in its fifth year, the festival is organised for the third time in partnership with the EU Delegation in Eswatini and Alliance Française.

The representative of the EU Delegation in Lesotho, Erika Pasquini, said the festival aims to foster cultural understanding and strengthen ties with Europe. All screenings will be free of charge.

The festival will bring international cinema to audiences across Lesotho, with screenings scheduled in Maseru, Roma and all 10 districts between 28 October and 18 November. Venues include Alliance Française de Maseru, the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Roma and Café What in Maseru. According to the organisers, communities across the country will also be able to watch films from 5 to 15 November.

The programme is a selection of European and African dramas, documentaries, comedies and animation. The films explore themes including identity, freedom of expression, social justice, women's empowerment, family relationships, resilience and environmental challenges.



From left Erika Pasquini (EU) and Elisabeth Douillet (Alliance Francaise de Maseru)

Pasquini said the festival seeks to bring different perspectives to audiences while creating opportunities for cultural exchange between European and African filmmakers and viewers. She added that it also aims to give local film producers a platform to connect with European embassies based in South Africa.

She said the organisers wanted to hear from people who could contribute to the development of cinema in Lesotho. "This is a space for dialogue and space for knowledge."

On her part, the director of Alliance Française de Maseru and Honorary Consul of France in Lesotho, Elisabeth Douillet, said engagements with local film producers had revealed their desire for greater connections and networking opportunities with experienced filmmakers in Europe.

The festival reportedly reached 300 viewers in 2022 and more than 3,000 last year. The organisers attributed this growth to a fruitful partnership with Alliance Française.

This year's edition will put the spotlight on Southern African storytelling and emerging Basotho filmmakers, with two special features aimed at celebrating local talent and encouraging creativity. Douillet said the festival's success depended on its visibility.

She added that some screenings would be followed by interactive sessions with writers and actors. On 6 November, Alliance Française will host a screening accompanied by a book launch. The book, which aims to promote knowledge, will be distributed across the country.

The festival will also include training sessions for schools. Last year, the initiative reached 18 schools, and the organisers hope to increase that number to 24 this year.

It will close on 18 November at Café What, where mobile filmmakers will be awarded prizes. The winners will receive filmmaking equipment, and the three winning films will be screened at the closing event.

We must stop applauding athletes and start investing in them

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's long-distance runners have repeatedly demonstrated that the country possesses the talent to compete with some of the continent's finest athletes. What remains in question is whether the government and private sector are prepared to invest in that talent with the seriousness and consistency it deserves.

From Tebello Ramakongoana and 'Neheng Khatala to Mokulubete Makatisi, Lebenya Nkoka, and Mabothile Lebopo, Lesotho has produced runners who have carried the national flag with distinction on the international stage.

They have achieved remarkable results despite the challenges of limited resources, inadequate facilities and insufficient institutional support. Their performances should force the country to confront an uncomfortable question: how much more could Lesotho achieve if athletics received the investment it needs to thrive?

The latest results from South Africa offer another compelling reason to act. Last Sunday, 'Neheng Khatala won the women's Hollywoodbets Johannesburg 10km race in 33 minutes and 40 seconds, beating South African runners Emma Brown and Irvette van Zyl.

On the same weekend, Tšepo Ramashamole finished second in the inaugural Nelson Mandela Marathon in Cape Town, clocking an impressive 2:15:24, just 10 seconds behind South African winner Arthur Jantjies. His compatriot Lebenya Nkoka also finished sixth in 2:18:31.

These were not isolated achievements. They were further evidence of the competitive quality of Lesotho's distance runners. Khatala's victory and Ramashamole's marathon performance showed that Basotho athletes can challenge established competitors on South African soil, where road running attracts strong fields and substantial corporate backing.

At home, Tšepo Mathibelle won the 42.2km AvaniFit Marathon in a time of 2:29:45, while his wife, 'Mathabo, finished second in the women's marathon. Mathibelle received M15,000 for his victory. These results underline the depth of distance-running talent available to Lesotho, but they also raise questions about the value the country places on sporting excellence.

A M15,000 first prize is welcome recognition, but the wider ambition should be to build a sporting environment in which athletes can earn sustainable livelihoods, prepare professionally and compete internationally without constantly worrying about how they will finance their next race.

The problem with Lesotho's approach to sporting achievement is that it too often begins at the finish line. An athlete wins a major race, breaks a record or represents the country at a global competition, and the authorities respond with financial rewards, public congratulations or promises of support.

While these gestures are appreciated, they cannot substitute for a functioning system that prepares athletes for success in the first place.

A cash reward comes after the hard work has been done. It does not pay for months of specialised training, quality running shoes, nutritious food, physiotherapy, medical assessments, coaching or travel to competitions. Nor does it guarantee that an athlete will have the resources to prepare adequately for the next challenge.

In May 2025, Ramakongoana was reportedly considering withdrawing from the Mountain Marathon after waiting months for promised prize money. He had won the inaugural race in October 2024 and was reportedly still owed M150,000.

Such an episode illustrates the danger of making promises without reliable systems for fulfilling them. A country cannot expect professional commitment from its athletes while treating its own commitments as optional.



Lesotho's Olympic marathon star Tebello Ramakongoana

Investment must begin with infrastructure and expertise

Lesotho needs to move beyond celebrating individual achievements and establish the foundations of a sustainable athletics industry.

The first priority should be proper training infrastructure. Athletes need accessible, safe and well-maintained tracks, gyms, recovery facilities and training centres. Such facilities should not be concentrated exclusively in Maseru. Districts and communities that have produced promising runners must also have opportunities to develop their talent.

Lesotho's mountainous terrain offers a natural advantage for endurance training, but geography alone cannot produce champions. Athletes still need structured programmes, professional supervision, medical support and opportunities to train under conditions that prepare them for elite competition.

The government, through the relevant sports authorities and the Federation of Athletics Lesotho (FAL), should develop a long-term national athletics strategy with measurable targets, a dedicated budget and transparent accountability mechanisms.

Such a strategy should identify emerging talent early, support promising junior athletes and create clear pathways from school competitions to national teams and professional racing.

Coaches and trainers are equally important. Natural ability may help a runner win a local race, but competing consistently at international level requires technical knowledge, disciplined preparation and careful management of an athlete's development.

Lesotho must therefore invest in coach education, sports science and specialist training. Qualified strength and conditioning coaches, physiotherapists, sports physicians and nutritionists should form part of a properly supported athletics ecosystem.

Nutrition, in particular, should not be treated as an afterthought. Distance running places enormous demands on the body. Athletes require appropriate diets, hydration, recovery and medical monitoring to sustain training loads and reduce the risk of injury.

Expecting runners to compete against well-supported international rivals while leaving them to figure out these essentials on their own is hardly a winning strategy.

The international standing of Ramakongoana offers a glimpse of what is possible. World Athletics records his marathon personal best at 2:04:18, achieved at the Boston Marathon in April 2026. That performance places a Mosotho athlete among the world's serious marathon competitors and should be regarded as an asset worth nurturing.

There is also a compelling economic argument for investing in athletics.

A properly developed sporting industry can create jobs for coaches, trainers, event organisers, medical professionals, nutritionists, sports journalists, photographers, equipment suppliers and hospitality businesses. It can generate demand for accommodation, transport, food services and tourism.

Road races can become important economic events, drawing participants and spectators from neighbouring countries and beyond. With professional organisation, reliable sponsorship and effective marketing, Lesotho could position selected races as attractive regional fixtures.

The country has already witnessed a proliferation of long-distance races in the years following the Covid-19 pandemic. Corporate participation in events such as the AvaniFit Marathon and other road races is encouraging. These events create platforms for healthy living, community engagement and brand visibility.

However, the next stage requires a shift from isolated sponsorship arrangements to coordinated investment. Corporates should consider pooling resources to strengthen the entire athletics calendar rather than competing to support individual events without a broader development framework.

A collective sponsorship model could improve prize money, event logistics, athlete welfare, marketing and the consistency of race organisation.

Better prizes would make a difference. The M15,000 earned by Mathibelle is a meaningful reward in the local context, but Lesotho should aspire to create a more competitive prize structure as the market develops.

Major South African road races demonstrate the potential of substantial sponsorship to raise the financial stakes for elite athletes. Lesotho's smaller economy means it may not immediately match the biggest events across the border, but that should inspire collaboration rather than resignation.

Government could support this effort through incentives for sports sponsorship, transparent grants, partnerships with local authorities and investment in facilities that can serve schools, clubs and communities.

Private companies, meanwhile, should look beyond the immediate publicity generated by presenting a cheque to a victorious athlete. Long-term sponsorship contracts, training bursaries, equipment provision and athlete welfare programmes can produce far greater value for both the athlete and the sponsor.

Why not make athletics a national priority?

Lesotho cannot realistically invest equally in every sporting code at every stage of its development. Resources are limited, and difficult choices must be made about where investment can produce the greatest returns.

Athletics deserves serious consideration because the country already possesses a proven competitive foundation, particularly in distance running. The achievements of Basotho runners in South Africa suggest that the country does not need to start from scratch. It needs to strengthen what is already working.

This is not an argument for abandoning football, basketball, netball or other sports. Rather, it is a call to recognise where focused investment could deliver particularly strong results. Athletics offers opportunities for individual athletes to progress through measurable performance standards and compete across a wide range of regional and international events.

Lesotho has already shown that its athletes can compete with runners from countries with strong distance-running traditions, including Kenya and Ethiopia. The challenge is to build a pipeline that produces more than a handful of exceptional individuals.

That means supporting school athletics, identifying talent in rural communities, improving coaching, funding international exposure and ensuring that promising athletes do not abandon the sport because they cannot afford to pursue it.

The government must provide leadership, but it cannot do everything alone. The private sector, sports federations, schools, local authorities and communities must become partners in a common national project.

Lesotho's runners have done their part. They have trained, travelled and competed, often with limited support, and returned with victories that have brought pride to the country.

The next generation should not have to overcome avoidable financial and structural obstacles merely to fulfil its potential. If Lesotho can produce champions under difficult circumstances, imagine what its runners could achieve with modern facilities, professional coaching, proper nutrition, reliable sponsorship and meaningful prize money.

The opportunity is before us. The talent is already here. What is missing is the collective determination to invest in it.

Lesotho must put its money where its applause is. The rewards could extend far beyond medals and finish-line photographs to a stronger sporting culture, new employment opportunities, healthier communities and a country increasingly recognised for excellence on the international stage.

Likatola eye Botswana's scalp

Seabata Mahao

The senior men's national rugby team, Likatola, are targeting a historic first victory over Botswana as they prepare for the 2026 BOLESWA Tri-Nations Tournament in eSwatini.

The team received a ceremonial send-off at the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) on Wednesday, October 21, ahead of the regional competition, which runs from October 24 to 31.

Sanctioned by Rugby Africa, the tournament will feature Lesotho, hosts eSwatini and Botswana, with Likatola opening their campaign against the hosts on October 24 before facing Botswana on October 28.

Coach Khauhelo Raphepeng has set his sights on winning the tournament and ending Botswana's dominance over Lesotho, as he continues to build a competitive national side.

"For me, it is always about winning the tournament. We will be out to win. We have never beaten Botswana, so this time we will be hoping to end their dominance and record our first win, as that is part of our mandate. Should we be successful, that will be a huge achievement," Raphepeng said.

Lesotho last faced Botswana in an international friendly in September 2024, suffering a 37-15 defeat away from home.

The upcoming tournament presents Raphepeng with another opportunity to assess his squad and measure the team's progress since his appointment in March 2025.

However, the coach acknowledged that limited competitive game time remains a major obstacle to the team's development, alongside efforts to establish a distinct playing identity.



Likatola prepare for the 2026 BOLESWA Tri-Nations Tournament in eSwatini

"On top of that, we continue to struggle with a lack of game time. We are also still trying to build our own playing identity and philosophy as a growing rugby nation," he said.

Raphepeng said the squad combines experienced players with emerging talent, although some players he had hoped to include were unavailable because of personal commitments.

"We are going to take a mixture of experienced and young players. I am happy with the group we have assembled, but, to be honest, there are some players we would have loved to have in the team who are unavailable due to personal commitments," he said.

Last year, Lesotho hosted the competition as a World Rugby-sanctioned Test Series. However, Botswana withdrew at the last minute for undisclosed reasons, leaving Lesotho and eSwatini to contest a single match, which the hosts won 34-12.

This year's tournament therefore offers Likatola an opportunity to compete against both regional rivals and pursue the title. The competition will conclude with a match between eSwatini and Botswana.

Likatola squad

Forwards: Mokone Chabana, Kabelo Chitja, Metsing Mahloane, Thabelo Mpeoa, Matabataba Fiee, Siyabonga Lekhorana, Keketso Sejake, Napo Mashapha, Motheo Mokhothu, Lehlohonolo Mohasi, Kananelo Molaoa, Paballo Shele, Tlali Nkuka and Joseth Singing.

Backline: Karabo Mphaki, Kabelo Lebina, Bokang Ncheke, Sekhola Phate, Bokang Tšiu, Kano Motau, Mokhoele Lehloenya, Tšolo Moletsane, Itebogheng Fanana and Hopolang Khutlang.

Charity cup kicks off a bigger game

Refiloe Molise

The Premier League Management Committee (PLMC), has in partnership with Maluti Mountain Cement (MMC), unveiled the Maluti Mountain Cement Charity Cup, an initiative aimed at supporting football development, uplifting communities and stimulating economic activity across Lesotho.

The unveiling ceremony was held on 20 October 2026, at Bambatha Ts'ita Sports Arena. It brought together football administrators, sports officials and other stakeholders to celebrate a partnership that seeks to strengthen the role of sport in national development.

Speaking at the ceremony, MMC Managing Director Lehlohonolo Lephema said the Charity Cup had evolved from the Berea Charity Cup into a broader initiative supporting sport and communities across the country's districts.

He explained that the vision extends beyond football, with a focus on creating opportunities for small businesses, including street vendors, while encouraging community participation and giving back to those in need.

"We want to make this a big charitable event to promote economic activity throughout the different districts and sectors, including small and street vendors," Lephema said.

He added that the tournament was also designed to support football clubs and give players a well-organised, competitive platform. He thanked attendees for their commitment to promoting sport and community development.

Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) President Lijane Nthunya welcomed the sponsorship as an important contribution to the development of football in the country.

Nthunya said tournaments are essential to raising the standard of the game, as they give coaches the chance to assess players and give players valuable match time.

He also welcomed the inclusion of individual awards, noting that recognising outstanding performances could motivate players, match officials and football leaders to improve their contribution.



The LeFA president further highlighted football's power to unite Basotho despite political and religious differences.

"Football brings together Basotho people and unites us," Nthunya said, calling on the corporate sector to follow MMC's example by investing in the sport.

He urged organisers and participating teams to learn from the challenges of the first two editions and deliver an improved event. Nthunya also appealed to players, supporters and other stakeholders to conduct themselves respectfully so that football remains welcoming to everyone.

President of the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), Baba Malephane, also praised MMC for its continued contribution to football and national development.

Malephane said meaningful partnerships are essential to the growth of sport, arguing that successful sponsorship depends not only on financial resources but also on cooperation, inclusion and shared commitment among stakeholders.

He described MMC as part of the football family, saying its investment demonstrated a willingness to support communities and help build the nation.

Malephane encouraged Basotho to support the tournament by buying tickets, even if they could not contribute directly to the charitable cause. Public participation, he said, would strengthen the partnership and encourage other businesses to invest in sports development.

The 2026 Maluti Mountain Cement Charity Cup will take place on Saturday, 21 November 2026, at Setsoto Stadium. The one-day tournament features four teams competing in two semi-finals, followed by the final later in the afternoon.

Lifofane FC will face Lijabatho FC in the opening semi-final at 10:00, followed by Matlama FC against Bantu FC at 12:30. The final is scheduled for 16:00.

The prize money is substantial. The winners will receive M125,000 and the runners-up M75,000, while each of the two losing semi-finalists will take home M50,000.

Individual awards will also recognise outstanding contributions. The Player of the Tournament will receive M5,000 and the Top Goalscorer M3,000, while match officials will share an award allocation of M3,000. The Man of the Match award is valued at M1,000.

The sponsorship reflects a shared commitment by MMC and the Lesotho Premier League to strengthen football, encourage corporate investment in sport and ensure that the benefits of sporting events extend beyond the field.

As preparations continue for the November tournament, organisers are expected to look to teams, supporters, businesses and the wider public to help make the Charity Cup a success.

Beyond the competition for silverware and prize money, the initiative seeks to show how sport can serve as a vehicle for charity, economic opportunity, social cohesion and national development in Lesotho.

Newsday ...pacing standards
Sports
23 October - 29 October 2026
ISSN: 2453-5311
9 772453 531004

Raffle winner to drive away in brand new car

Seabata Mahao

The Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), in partnership with Imajin and Fusion Lesotho, has unveiled a brand-new 2026 Chery Tiggo 4 Pro as the grand prize in the Lesotho Sports Raffle.

The vehicle was recently unveiled ahead of the grand draw scheduled for November 27, 2026, at Maseru Mall.

Now in its sixth week, the raffle was launched in August to mobilise sustainable funding for sports development while giving Basotho an opportunity to win cash and other prizes.

Participants stand a chance of winning weekly cash prizes of M5,000, M10,000, M15,000 and M60,000, while a vehicle is offered every 90 days. All registered players remain eligible for the vehicle draw, including those who have participated in previous draws without winning.

Speaking at the unveiling, Imajin and Fusion Lesotho chief executive officer Arnold Asante said the initiative was established to support the growth of sport in the country while rewarding participants.

"The Lesotho Sports Raffle is here to build the game; it is here to develop our sport," Asante said.

He said the unveiling fulfilled the promise made at the launch that a vehicle would be awarded every 90 days.

Asante expressed satisfaction with the response from Basotho but encouraged more people to participate, emphasising that the initiative would contribute towards sports development.

LSRC president Baba Malephane also thanked the public for supporting the raffle, describing it as a positive step towards improving the funding of sport in Lesotho.

He said the unveiling demonstrated the commission's commitment to ensuring the initiative was credible and delivered on its promises.



A brand-new 2026 Chery Tiggo 4 Pro grand prize in the Lesotho Sports Raffle

"This is a sign of how legitimate and serious we are about this initiative," Malephane said.

He emphasised that the raffle was intended to benefit the nation and the future of sport rather than individuals or the commission.

"This initiative is not for me or the LSRC, but for Basotho and the future of sport in this country," he said.

"We cannot always wait for the government to do things for us when we have the responsibility and the potential to bring about change on our own."

According to the LSRC, the raffle has so far awarded more than M500,000 in cash prizes.

Members of the public can participate through the official LSRC website, by downloading the Lesotho Sports Raffle application from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, or by dialling *320# and following the instructions on any mobile network in Lesotho.

The commission says the initiative is designed to establish a citizen-driven funding model that can provide sustainable resources for the development of sport in the country.

Matlama battle Lioli in a clash of opposites

Seabata Mahao

Matlama FC, fresh at the top of the Vodacom Premier League (VPL), meet a Lioli FC side that has drawn three matches in a row when the two heavyweights clash at Setsoto Stadium on Saturday at 15:30.

The contrast in form makes this one of the most intriguing editions of a fixture that has defined Lesotho football for decades. Matlama climbed to the summit after beating Linare 2-0.

Lioli, who last won before the international break last month, have not won since, and were held to a 1-1 draw by Manonyane FC last weekend.

Matlama coach Thabile Secker said after the Linare win that his side planned to test the opposition early and adjust as needed. "We had planned to attack them straight up as a way to also see their reaction so that we can implement our Plan B. The strategy worked for us as we secured two goals," he said.

Lioli will want to arrest a slide of dropped points that has left them chasing the pace in the 2026/27 title race. Matlama, though, know their position is far from secure. Lijabatho and Bantu are pressing hard behind them.

The weekend's other marquee tie comes on Sunday at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena, where Villa host Lijabatho at 13:00, followed by Bantu against Limkokwing at 15:30.

Lijabatho arrive in confident mood. The Morija-based side collected six points and scored five goals against two of Lesotho's leading clubs in four days, beating Matlama and then Bantu 2-1, with Lehlohonolo Fothoane scoring twice in that win. Villa, the newcomers, were beaten 3-0 by Lifofane last weekend.

Bantu will be desperate to bounce back from that defeat and keep pace with the leaders. At the other end of the table, LMPS have gone seven matches without a win and sit bottom with two points.

They face LDF at Ratjomose Ground on Saturday at 15:00, under caretaker coach Sheli Ramoseka, after the club dismissed head coach Masupha Letsie and his assistant, Mosito Matela. LDF, who beat Mzamane 2-0 last time out, have won only twice in their last seven matches.



Full weekend fixtures

Date	Match	Venue	Kick-off	Log positions
Sat	Machokha v Manonyane	Setsoto Stadium	13:00	[Machokha:] [Manonyane:]
Sat	Lioli v Matlama	Setsoto Stadium	15:30	[Lioli:] · Matlama: 1st
Sat	LDF v LMPS	Ratjomose Ground	15:00	[LDF:] · LMPS: bottom (2 pts)
Sat	LCS v Lifofane	LCS Ground	15:00	[LCS:] [Lifofane:]
Sat	Majantja v Mzamane	Sebatana Russel Technical Centre	15:00	[Majantja:] [Mzamane:]
Sun	Villa v Lijabatho	Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena	13:00	[Villa:] [Lijabatho:]
Sun	Bantu v Limkokwing	Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena	15:30	[Bantu:] [Limkokwing:]
Sun	Linare v Members	Saxophone Thejane Technical Centre	15:00	[Linare:] [Members:]


Elevate your Brand's visibility!
Advertise With Us
and unlock exclusive rates...
Newsday ...pacing standards
www.newsdayonline.co.ls