

# Lesotho Insights 2023/24

a comprehensive overview of business, development and economy



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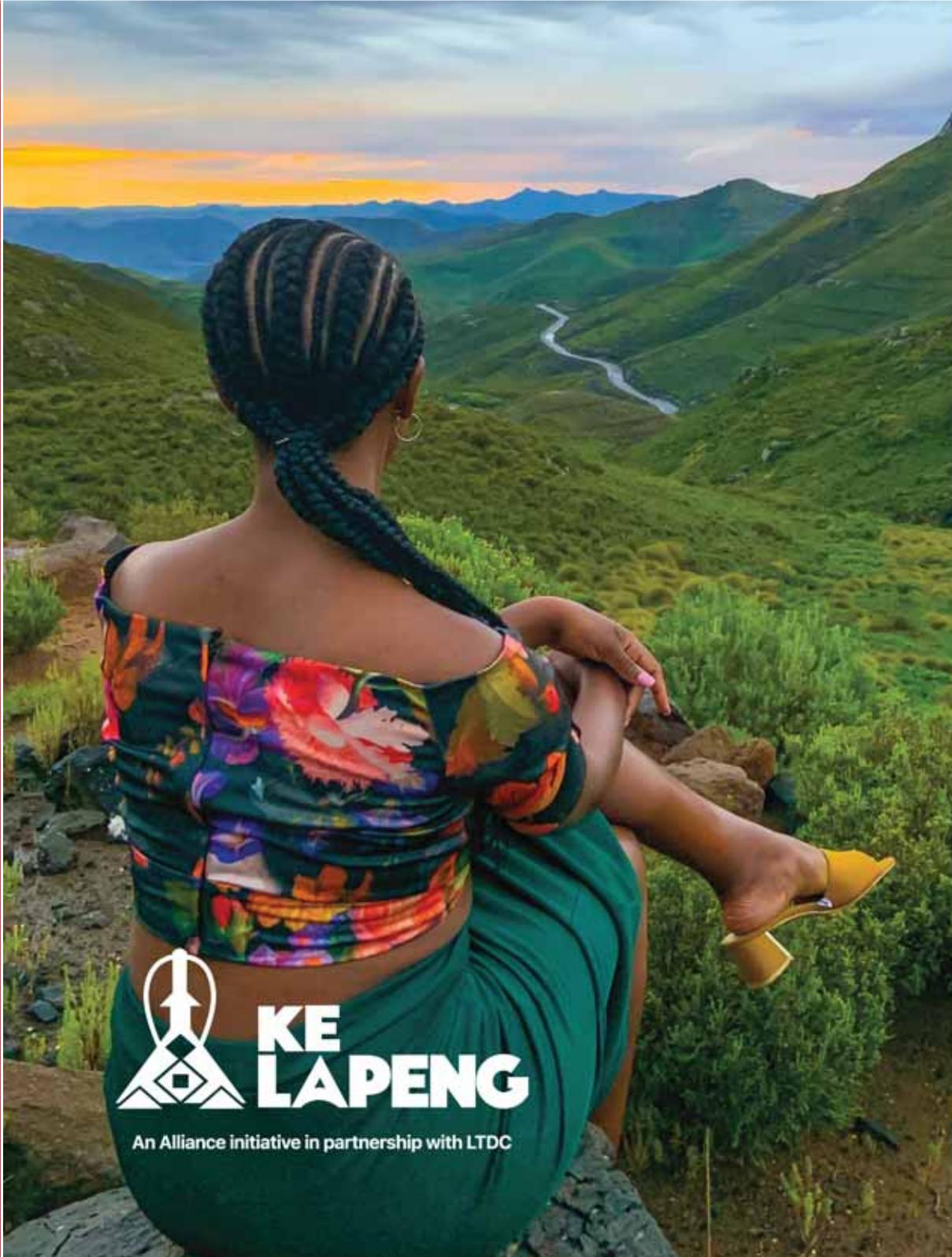
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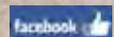
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# Table of Contents

Publishers' Note	3
Map of Lesotho	6
Foreword by Minister of Finance and Development Planning	7
Short History of Lesotho	8
Modern Political History	9
The Head of State – King Letsie III	11
Nedbank Advertorial	25
Metropolitan Lesotho Advertorial	28
Lesotho at a Glance – Infographic	30
King Letsie III Shares His Views on the Legacy of King Moshoeshoe I	33
The Life of Morena Moshoeshoe	37
Mohlomi, the Aristotle of Basotho and his Influence on Moshoeshoe	39
The Journey that Built a Nation	43
Aranda Advertorial	47
Moshoeshoe the Diplomat	49
Moshoeshoeism, Policies and the Influence of Mohlomi	53
Vodacom Advertorial	57
The Legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe	59
Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership	63
Makhoarane Precinct, the Melting Pot of Basotho Culture	65
Lesotho's Prospects on Trade	71
LNDC Advertorial	75
Phase II of Lesotho Highlands Water Project Roars to Life	79
Econet Advertorial	82
Lesotho Bursts into Solar Power	85
Lesotho National Health Policy	89
Road Fund Advertorial	92
Maseru Toyota Advertorial	94
The Inspiration Behind Moshoeshoe Walk	96
Tourism Events	101
Avani Advertorial	102
Alliance Advertorial	106
Lodgings and Treats	107
House of Linford Advertorial	109
Famo Music, A Genre Mined from the Belly of the Earth	113
Zecom Advertorial	116
Steve Rasehloho, A History Painter and Sculptor of Note	119





## Publisher's Note

*I am humbled to be publishing the fourth edition of Lesotho Insights™ - A Comprehensive Overview of Business, Development and Economy 2023-24. This is the Bicentennial edition that I promised our partners and readers, and I am ecstatic that the idea has finally come to fruition exactly as it was planned.*

The 2023/24 edition celebrates the 200 years of the formation of the Basotho nation by King Moshoeshoe I. This is a historical milestone that acknowledges the generational achievements of the Basotho nation which has been hailed by historians and scholars as one of the most successful African state south of the Zambezi River in the 1800s. In its quest to contribute to this important turning point in the evolution of the Basotho nation, **Lesotho Insights** 2023/24 edition is thus a souvenir edition featuring a section celebrating the Great King Moshoeshoe I, a visionary leader who had bold aspirations and one who has been regarded as the greatest politician of his era because of his deft diplomacy and commitment to peaceful coexistence with other clans.

That 2024 is the Bicentennial year is an extremely important milestone of our lifetime. We are celebrating the birth and journey of our nation from 1824 to date, but most importantly, we are celebrating the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I. As we relive the times of the father of our nation, this edition challenges us to discuss who we are and where we come from, so that we can introspect and set ourselves to conquer the future with renewed energy.

The slogan for the celebration is; *Birth, Reflection, Revival* as shown on the logo below.



I strongly believe that we have opened the debate and challenged ourselves to reflect on what it takes to be more patriotic. This debate is summed up in the theme and logo proposed by the Ministry of Culture. *The theme is; Celebrating the birth of the Basotho nation, Reflecting on the 200 years journey, Reviving core values, tradition and culture.*

I am highly indebted, first to His Majesty King Letsie III for giving me an opportunity to talk to him and present his thoughts about our past and the future of Basotho as a people. The interview is featured on page 33. My tribute also goes to the scholars and historians who have contributed to this section. These include among others Lesotho's first history Professor, Ntate LBBJ Machobane, the award-winning journalist, author, and political analyst, Max Du Preez, Professor Tefetso Mothibe, Kalosi Ramakhula, Tichere Ratokelo Nkoka, Stephen Gill and Mr. Sofonea Shale. These are eminent people in their own right and I need not mention their accolades and contribution to the narrative of the Kingdom.

However, to demonstrate the passion and commitment with which these contributors gave to the publication, I wish to single out Professor Machobane for a reason. As a retired and elderly historian, Professor Machobane was undeterred by his impaired sight and worked with me in crafting a beautiful article on the legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe. I am grateful to him and the rest of the contributors. Their work and opinions are timeless classics that I believe, truly make this edition a souvenir edition to be kept for future generations.

I also take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to Mr. Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho, a skilled painter with a special passion for the history of the Basotho nation. His paintings are not just a work of art, but they tell a story based on his love of our history. The details shown on each piece are inspired by research and detail. I was astonished when he shared the story behind the painting of the "Three Kings", which is our cover picture. This piece, which is a 250cm x 150cm, oil on canvas painting is not only beautiful and endowed with the Basotho heritage, it also has a well thought out story which I believe we should all appreciate. This has inspired me to write a small article about Steve and his art that you will find on page 118.

Otherwise, in terms of the content, you still have your

standard updates on the status of the economy and key aspects of Lesotho's growth trajectory. These are led by among others, Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project as well as the imminent start of the MCA Compact II.

We continue to grow year on year and we are pleased with our growth and how we have embraced digital distribution. I have had some very heart-warming stories of local and international readers on how they got hold of the copy and enjoyed it, however far and wide across the globe.

With the change of government following the 2022 General Elections came a new Minister of Finance, who was also eager to continue the journey with us. I thank our new Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane for her eagerness to contribute her foreword as a sitting Minister of Finance. Dr. Matlanyane is not new to Lesotho Insights but assumes a new role on a publication she has always supported.

Last, and by no means least, I wish to thank the team that is behind this book. I could not have made it without the top-drawer writers, designers, editors and the sales team that make **Lesotho Insights**. Thank you for your tenacity and perseverance against so many odds that are always stacked against us. With this, your sleepless nights have paid off. We have triumphed and we can only do it better as we grow from strength to strength.

To our advertisers, readers and supporters, we remain grateful for your unyielding support. It is by your efforts that **Lesotho Insights** is what it is today. The courage that you gave us when we started, right in the middle of the Covid-19 is a testament that you are with us. This is the fourth edition and now that we see a bright future, we commit to walking the journey with you.

Please enjoy the Bicentennial edition which I believe is for keeps. I wish you all a pleasurable reading.

**Manyathela Kheleli**  
Publishing Editor



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# Foreword by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning



*I am deeply privileged and honoured to have been appointed to serve in His Majesty's government as the Minister of Finance and Development Planning in the 11th Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho. This is an appointment that I do not take lightly, I have taken it with all my might and a commitment to serve. I am confident that despite the many odds that are confronting us as a nation, my passion, experience and the tenacity of the new government will guide me to direct the fiscal policy and monetary discipline that is required to change the dwindling fortunes of our country at these trying times.*

This honour that has been bestowed upon me by His Majesty has also afforded me the opportunity to write this foreword for **Lesotho Insights**. I am equally grateful and overjoyed. This is a truly patriotic publication which is indeed our ambassador to the international community. I have seen the previous editions of the book and it continues to inspire me with confidence that our own countrymen have also taken it upon themselves to augment the work that the government is doing to tell the story of Lesotho in the language of beauty, hope and opportunity. I therefore invite you to read through the book and enjoy well researched, analytic and thought provoking stories that educate and entertain. I have no doubt that once you finish reading, you will have been thoroughly exposed to the issues that shape our country's economic landscape.

I am even more gratified that this fourth edition, aptly called the 'Bicentennial Edition' has pioneered the discourse to celebrate the anniversary of the two hundred years of the formation of the Basotho nation. Even better, it features an interview with His Majesty, who gives a perspective of who we are as a nation and what he believes the future holds for our country. This edition is a fitting tribute to this great achievement in our lifetime. It affords us an opportunity to look back and reflect on the sacrifices that the great King Moshoeshoe I and our forefathers have made to preserve the jewel that we call Lesotho today. I believe it also challenges us to think differently about the future and the legacy that we want to leave for the next generations of this nation.

As we can all appreciate, my first budget speech which I presented in Parliament was the most difficult one for myself and for His Majesty's Government. This is because we come in as a new administration that has only landed to inherit government with a myriad of challenges. These

challenges are largely historical and even worse, they have mostly been exacerbated by the effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

On the other hand, fresh from the October 2022 elections, Basotho and our development partners have been looking forward to the 2023/24 budget with very high expectations to understand how we intend to change the fortunes of our country. For me, that was to be expected, and I suppose those expectations are legitimate. To that, I can only say we are indeed committed to change and to put our best foot forward to deliver on these expectations. These expectations are not only from our people, but also from the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, who does not mince his words about the state of our economy when we discuss the country's development agenda in Cabinet. As the old adage says, "Rome was not built in one day," I ask for your patience. We need to meticulously understand and assess the extent and magnitude of the challenges that we have on the fiscal discipline and other historical challenges that bedevil our growth trajectory. I have indicated this challenge in my maiden budget speech.

To affirm this commitment, the theme of the 2023/24 budget speech is "From Reconstruction and Recovery to Growth and Resilience." I believe this theme rightly sums up the policy direction that Cabinet has resolved to take for the current financial year. The overriding objective of this new government is to accelerate inclusive, employment generating and poverty reducing economic growth. It is therefore of utmost importance to recalibrate institutional settings, governance policies, expenditure and accountability frameworks to align with this policy direction.

Looking at the global and regional economic trends, the economic environment continues to be bullish.

Geopolitical tensions such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine are taking a toll on global economic growth, coupled with the intensity of climate change. Even worse, we are not yet out of the woods with COVID 19, save to say we have adapted to this new normal. Amid these volatile conditions, recent data released by the IMF has projected global growth to fall to 2.9 percent in 2023 before rising to 3.1 percent in 2024.

Lesotho has for the past years been experiencing economic contractions of about 1.7 percent on average and is only expected to grow up to 2.3 percent in 2023/24. Despite these challenges, we remain committed and pledge to serve His Majesty's Government and the people of Lesotho with compassion and understanding. We will do everything in our power to steer this ship to regain its balance, to increase its resilience and to set a strong base as a good launching pad for growth in the not-so-distant future.

I wish to conclude by conveying my gratitude to the Right Honourable, the Prime Minister for trusting me with the responsibility to serve my country as Minister of Finance and Development Planning. I am truly humbled and remain eternally grateful. Enjoy the read.

*Khotso Pula Nala!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Retšelisitsoe', written over a horizontal line.

**Hon. Dr. Retšelisitsoe Adelaide Matlanyane, MP**  
*Minister of Finance and Development Planning*

# Short History of Lesotho



**King Moshoeshoe I founded the Kingdom of Lesotho, originally known as Basutoland during the Lifaqane wars, a period of both instability and nation building, which took place in Southern Africa in the early 1800s. To create the Basotho Nation, Moshoeshoe united several clans and peoples, and forged agreements with other chiefs. In 1868, the nation was placed under England's (Now Great Britain) protection, from which it obtained independence on October 4, 1966. Lesotho is one of the last three constitutional monarchies on the African continent. The other two are eSwatini and Morocco.**

Lesotho is a mountainous country with a population slightly over 2,1 million people. The country's land mass covers around 30 355 square kilometres. With its lowest point at 1 400 metres above sea level, Lesotho has the highest lowest point in the world, and its highest peak, Thabana-Ntlenyana, is at 3 482 metres above sea level, the highest mountain in Southern Africa.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Completely hemmed in by South Africa on all sides, Lesotho is located near the southernmost point of the African continent. The Kingdom of Lesotho is one of only three nations in the world that are enclaves, along with San Marino and the Vatican in Italy.

Two-thirds of Lesotho's terrain is mountainous. The majestic mountains of Lesotho have given credence to the country's other moniker, the 'Switzerland of Africa'. The lowest elevation of Lesotho is at Morija at the confluence of Senqu and Makhaleng rivers at 1 400 metres. As some would put it, Lesotho is the country that is closest to heaven.

The topography of the country is divided into four distinct geographical regions with ascending latitude. The lowlands are in the Southwestern parts of the country along the Caledon River at an elevation between 1 400 and 1 800 metres above sea level. The foothills are in central Lesotho forming the border between lowlands and highlands, predominantly in the East with altitudes between 1 800 and 2 200 metres above sea level. There is also the Senqu River valley extending from Mohale's Hoek and Quthing in the South, to Mokhotlong in the Northeast with elevation ranging from 1 400m to 1 800m. The Eastern parts of the country are mainly the highlands forming the Drakensberg escarpment with altitudes ranging from 1 400 to 3 482 above sea level.

Vast wetlands in the Highlands of Lesotho are sources to many rivers in the region, including Senqu/Orange River, which is one of the longest rivers in Africa at the length of 2 200 kilometres. Senqu forms many boundaries in the region and empties into the Atlantic Ocean in Namibia.

Lesotho gets most of its rains in the summer, where temperatures are typically cool due to the country's altitude. The highlands of the Drakensberg endure mid-20 to lower-30 degree summer temperatures and sub-zero temperatures with snow in the winter. In fact, Lesotho is the coldest nation in Africa getting snow in its Highlands annually.

Largely because of its altitude, Lesotho has a temperate climate with hot summers and cold winters. The lowlands often reach 30 °C (86 °F) in the summer, while winter temperatures can go down to -7 °C (19.4 °F) and the highlands to -20 °C (-4.0 °F) at times.

Annual precipitation ranges from 600 millimetres (23.6 in) in lowland valleys to 1,200 millimetres (47.2 in) in northern and eastern escarpment sections. Most of the rain falls throughout between October and April. Winters are often dry between May and September. Snowfall is common in winter, although higher mountain peaks may experience snowfall occasionally all year-round. The annual variation in rainfall is quite irregular, resulting in occasional droughts during the dry season (May to September) and flooding during the rainy season (October to April).

## POLITICAL HISTORY OF LESOTHO Pre-Colonial History

The Lifaqane or Mfecane wars, which were brought on by King Shaka's expansion of the Zulu dominion, are thought to have sparked the formation of the Basotho as a nation in the 19th century by King Moshoeshoe I, the country's founding father. Moshoeshoe (born Lepoqo) was the eldest son of Mokhachane, a subordinate chief of the Mokoteli branch of the Bakuena tribe. He was born in Menkhoaneng in 1786. The founding father of the Basotho nation possessed leadership skills from an early age and had bold aspirations to become a great chief. He is regarded as the greatest politician of his era because of his deft diplomacy and commitment to peaceful coexistence with other clans during his rule.

In 1824, he led his people on the migration from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu which became a mountain fortress that defended his nation from the Lifaqane wars. At Thaba-Bosiu, Moshoeshoe formed the Basotho nation with splinter groups and

remnants of other tribes who sought refuge with his people. Chief among these included the Baphuthi of Moorosi, Makhoakhoa of Matela, the Batlokoa of Sekonyela and Bataung of Moletsane. These clans and other Nguni speaking tribes form the Basotho Nation that we know today.

The arrival of white settlers in the Cape, mainly the British and the Boers and their occupation of the African hinterland gave rise to many wars between these settlers and other indigenous people including Basotho. In 1833, King Moshoeshoe I welcomed the missionaries led by Eugene Casalis, who brought Christianity to his people and also served as advisors and mediators during his reign. Lesotho was eventually proclaimed a British protectorate on 15th April, 1868 at the request of King Moshoeshoe I to Queen Elizabeth. The British named the territory Basutoland. King Moshoeshoe I died on 11 March 1870 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Paramount Chief Letsie I. He left an indelible legacy as a warrior and a great statesman who built the Basotho nation.

After the Gun War in 1880 between the Cape Colonial Government and Basotho chiefs who defied the Cape Colony's disarmament policies, Basutoland was ruled directly from London through a Resident Commissioner posted in Maseru.

## Colonial History

From the 1860s, Basutoland became one of the most productive farming regions in Southern Africa, supplying food to the mining towns of Kimberly and Johannesburg. During the reign of Chief Seeiso Griffith, Basutoland was so affluent that it was able to present 24 Spitfire fighter planes to Britain during World War II. The country also became a hub for migrant labour who worked in the mines in South Africa, which still account for a sizable portion of the national economy today.

However, the colonial policies were not conducive for economic growth. Basotho did not like these policies and attempts to campaign for legislative policies started as early as 1907 with the Basutoland Progressive Association. In the years that followed, Basotho became more politicised, leading to the proclamation of Independence on 4 October 1966.



*Lesotho Parliament in session*

## Modern Political History

***Chief Sekhonyana 'Maseribane of the Basutoland National Party was Lesotho's first Prime Minister, albeit lasting only two months in 1965 before making way for his party's leader, Chief Leabua Jonathan, who reigned from 1965 to 1970. Jonathan lost elections in 1970 but refused to hand over control to the Basutoland Congress Party, which had won 36 seats compared to his BNP's 23. He declared a state of emergency and suspended the constitution from 1970 to 1986, when he was deposed by a military junta led by Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya.***

**T**he military government of Lekhanya signed the Lesotho Highlands Water Project treaty with South Africa which paved the way for the construction of Katse and Mohale dams. The dams supply water to South Africa. Major General Lekhanya's government also replaced the national flag formerly used by the BNP government and imposed order No.4, which banned political activities in Lesotho. Tensions also arose between the military administration

under Major General Lekhanya and the palace which led to the King being sent into exile to Britain, leaving his son, then Prince Mohato Bereng Seeiso, to ascend the throne in 1990. Lekhanya was forced to resign in 1991 by Colonel Elias Phisoane Ramaema in another bloodless military coup.

Ramaema's government, committed to returning the country to civilian governance, abolished Order No.4 and established the Constitutional Reform Commission, leading Lesotho to general elections in 1993, which resulted in a resounding victory for the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP).

The BCP government, led by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle went through tumultuous times leading to Prime Minister Mokhehle resigning from BCP to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy which took over government in June 1997. In 1998, the country held elections which were won by LCD, now led by Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, a protégé of Ntsu Mokhehle. Mosisili reigned for 14 years until he was defeated by a coalition of LCD, BNP and ABC in 2012, giving Thomas Motsoahae Thabane, the leader of All Basotho Convention, his first taste at the helm as Prime Minister.

The 2012 elections started a new era in Lesotho politics, which has been dominated by coalition governments. Coalition politics are the outcome of the Mixed Member Proportional system, in which 80 members of parliament are elected in first-past-the-post constituency elections and 40 are appointed to the National Assembly under a compensating proportional representation scheme. Political party members elected to parliament through proportional representation are now kingmakers in coalition government formation. This tendency is the result of major political parties' decreasing dominance as they fragment into minor groups. According to the current political environment, coalition governments will continue to dictate the formation of government in Lesotho for the foreseeable future.

On the flipside, the politics of coalitions have also been confronted with disagreements that have rendered governments unstable. This instability drove Lesotho to hold two elections in the space of three years (2012 and 2015). The last elections were held in June 2017, which were won by a coalition of ABC, Basotho National Party (BNP), Alliance of Democrats (AD) and Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL). The coalition elected Thabane as the Prime Minister of Lesotho until his resignation on 19 May 2020. The balance of power in parliament shifted the formation of the coalition government, which saw the AD being withdrawn in favour of DC. These changes led to the swearing-in of former Minister of Finance, Dr Moeketsi Majoro as the new Prime Minister of Lesotho and

Mathibeli Mokhothu as the Deputy Prime Minister. The coalition led by Dr Majoro has been unstable following a fallout within the ABC, which saw Majoro losing to Nkaku Kabi for the leadership position in the ruling party. This loss created an imbalance in cabinet, creating two centres of power that eventually stabilised, thereby allowing Dr Majoro to continue with his tenure.



***Mr. Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane, the new Prime Minister of Lesotho***

The country successfully went to the 2022 National Assembly elections in October 2022 with a record 65 political parties registered contesting the elections. The outcome of the elections gave rise to a coalition of three political parties, the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), the Alliance of Democrats (AD) and the Movement for Economic Change (MEC). The coalition is led by RFP, a newcomer in Lesotho's political landscape led by a businessman Mr. Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane. The party garnered 56 seats in the 120 member parliament, formed barely seven months before the general elections.

### HEADS OF GOVERNMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Sekhonyana 'Maseribane	1965
Chief Leabua Jonathan	1986 - 1986
Major General Metsing Lekhanya	1986 - 1991
Major General Phisoana Ramaema	1991 - 1993
Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle	1993 -1998
Dr. Pakalitha Mosisili	1998 - 2012
Dr. Motsoahae Thomas Thabane	2012 - 2015
Dr. Pakalitha Mosisili	2015 - 2017
Dr. Motsoahae Thomas Thabane	2017 - 2020
Dr. Moeketsi Majoro	May 2020 - Oct 2022
Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane	Oct 2022 to date

*The Royal family. Seated left His Majesty King Letsie II, seated right Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso. Standing from left, Her Royal Highness Princess Senate Mohato Seeiso, Crown Prince Lerotholi Seeiso and Her Royal Highness Princess 'Maseiso Mohato Seeiso*



# The Head of State - King Letsie III

***His Majesty King Letsie III is the Kingdom of Lesotho's Head of State. He was born Prince David Mohato Bereng Seeiso on July 17 1963. He took over the throne in 1996 as the first son of King Moshoeshoe II and Queen 'Mamohato Bereng Seeiso, following his father's untimely death.***

Prince Mohato received his elementary education at Iketseseng Private School in Maseru from 1968 to 1972, where he finished standard five. The following year, he travelled to the United Kingdom to study at Gilling Castle, a Roman Catholic school run by the order of St. Benedictine in Yorkshire, where he completed his primary education in 1976. The young prince proceeded to his father's alma mater, Ampleforth College in 1977, where he finished his secondary and high school studies in 1980. From 1980 to 1984 Prince Mohato came home to pursue his university education at the National University of Lesotho, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Law.

He returned to the United Kingdom in 1984 and completed a Diploma in English Legal Studies at the University of Bristol in 1986. He later enrolled at the University of Cambridge where he read Development Studies, completing in 1989. At the same time, he enrolled at Wye College of the University of London where he studied Agricultural Economics.

On December 16 1989, Prince Mohato was inaugurated as the Principal Chief of Matsieng (the Lesotho Royal Village). On November 12 1990, he was sworn in as King when the ruling Military Council exiled his father, King Moshoeshoe II. At this point, he was named King Letsie III after King Letsie I, the eldest son of King Moshoeshoe I. On January 25 1995, King Letsie III abdicated the throne, the same day His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II was reinstalled.

But following the tragic death of his father in a car accident, King Moshoeshoe II, on January 15 1996, King Letsie III was reinstalled as King and Head of State on February 7 1996. His coronation took place

on October 31 1997 in Maseru. His Majesty and the people of Lesotho celebrated the silver jubilee of the King's coronation on 31 October 2022.

On February 18 2000, King Letsie III married Miss Karabo Motšoeneng, who became Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso. Their Majesties have three children: Her Royal Highness Princess Senate (born October 7 2001), Her Royal Highness Princess 'Maseiso (born November 20 2004), and His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Lerotholi (born April 18 2007).

King Letsie III has a strong interest in agriculture. He spends most of his free time visiting his family's cattle posts in the mountains. He appreciates country life and devotes himself to arable farming and animal breeding. His Majesty is the Food and Agriculture Organisation's nutrition ambassador to the world.

Horse riding, squash, tennis, and rugby are among His Majesty's favourite sports. The King also loves music, particularly classical, avant-garde jazz and traditional music. King Letsie III celebrated his diamond jubilee on 17th July, 2023.

## The Royal Lineage

Moshoeshoe I	1824 - 1870
Letsie I	1870 - 1891
Lerotholi I	1891 - 1905
Letsie II	1905 - 1913
Griffith Lerotholi	1913 - 1939
Seeiso Griffith	1939 - 1940
'Mantšebo Seeiso	1940 - 1960
Moshoeshoe II	1960 - 1996*
Letsie III	1996 - to date



King Letsie III

# Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso

*Her Majesty the Queen, nee Karabo Motšoeneng was born on June 2 1976, at Maluti Adventist Hospital in Mapoteng, to Mr Thekiso and Mrs 'Makarabo Motšoeneng. She is the oldest of five children in her family.*

Queen 'Masenate enrolled at Machabeng International College in Maseru in 1990 and studied there until 1996, earning an International General Certificate for Secondary Education and an International Baccalaureate Diploma. She was chosen as a boarding prefect for the girls at Machabeng, and she also played for the school netball team. Miss Karabo Motšoeneng, at the time, also won a bronze medal in the Prince Mohato Awards, an exciting self-development programme for young people aged 14 to 25, which equips them with life skills to make a difference in themselves, their society, and the world.

In 1996, during her final year at Machabeng, she grabbed the attention of the Crown Prince, Mohato Bereng Seeiso and a courtship between them began. Her Majesty continued with her studies at the NUL where she enrolled for a Bachelor of Science Degree programme with the purpose of pursuing a career in pharmacy. Following the news of her engagement to His Majesty King Letsie III in October 1999, Her Majesty postponed further studies. On February 18 2000, they were married at a Royal Wedding ceremony attended by scores of dignitaries, including King Charles III of the United Kingdom.

Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso is the first common citizen to marry into the royal family in modern history. Her Majesty, as Queen Consort of the Kingdom of Lesotho, constitutionally shares His Majesty's social rank and status, and

she serves as Head of State when the King is abroad.

Her Majesty's royal duties and philanthropic activity have been heavily influenced by the Queen Mother, Queen 'Mamohato, Bereng Seeiso. The Queen and Queen Mother 'Mamohato became close, and the latter's death in 2003 left an indelible mark on the former.

Her Majesty graduated from Columbia University in New York, United States with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics in May 2011, despite juggling her Royal obligations, motherhood, and studies.

The queen is particularly fond of supporting disabled and underprivileged children and communities. She supports a number of organisations and charities, including the Lesotho Red Cross and Hlokomela Banana. In 2006, she resurrected the Queen's National Trust Fund, which was established in the 1980s by the Queen Mother, Queen 'Mamohato. Her Majesty raises funds for the majority of her charitable work, including participation in the annual Moshoeshoe Walk, which commemorates the historic 116 kilometre pilgrimage by Basotho led by the Great King Moshoeshoe from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu, where the Basotho nation was founded and fortified.

Her Majesty enjoys baking and going to the gym in her spare time.



# System of Government (Arms of State)

## Parliament

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy with a bi-cameral legislature made up of the Senate and National Assembly. The Upper House or Senate has 33 members, 22 of whom are Principal and Ward Chiefs representing the College of Chiefs, and 11 other members of the public nominated by the King on the Prime Minister's proposal. The Lower House has 120 seats, 80 of which are elected by first-past-the-post (FPTP) ballot and 40 by proportional representation. This system, which Lesotho implemented for the first time in 2002, is known as a Mixed Member Proportional system. The Prime Minister is chosen from the Lower House or National Assembly to lead the government.

The country also has a Local Government structure throughout the ten districts of the country divided into wards of approximately the same population, though their geographical area may differ immensely. The Local Government Councils are a mixture of elected members of the public and area Chiefs representing the traditional leadership structures.

## Judiciary

Lesotho's justice system is mixed in that the Constitution recognises both Roman-Dutch Law (blended with some English Common Law) and Sesotho Customary Law (also referred to as the Laws of Lerotholi). The Chief Justice of Lesotho is selected by the King on the advice of the Judicial Services Commission and heads the High Court of Lesotho. The Court of Appeal sits occasionally above the High Court to consider appeals against the High Court's decisions and verdicts. The Magistrates Courts, Regional Courts, and Local Courts are located beneath the High Court, which also has various specialised wings (such as the Commercial Court, Labour Court, Land Court, and so on). However, many of the village disputes at the village level are still settled at the Chief's kraal by the Chief assisted by village elders.

## The Executive

Section 87 of the Lesotho Constitution empowers the King to appoint a Prime Minister based on the advice of the Council of State. The Prime Minister is a Member of Parliament who commands a majority of the National Assembly's members. Once appointed, the Prime Minister advises the King on the appointment of ministers from the National Assembly and Senate, one of whom will serve as Deputy Prime Minister. The Cabinet is the Executive of Government and is in charge of government policies and state affairs. Parliament holds the Cabinet jointly accountable. His Majesty's Government's under the new administration led by Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane, the new Cabinet consists of 15 ministers and no Deputy Ministers, down from 28 Ministers and 10 Deputy Ministers. It is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to size the portfolios of his cabinet.



## The National Flag

The colours of the Lesotho national flag are Blue, White, and Green with a Black Basotho Hat on the White portion in the middle.

Blue represents the sky where the rain comes from, and white symbolises the peace that Basotho are renowned for. Green represents the land and its

fertility and the Black hat is the iconic symbol representing the Basotho people.



## The Coat of Arms

The Lesotho coat of arms features a Basotho shield emblazoned with a crocodile which is the clan totem of the royal family. Behind the shield are two crossed weapons, the spear and the knobkierie, which symbolise protection. The left and right are supported by the famous Basotho ponies which are a symbol of wealth and contentment in Basotho culture. The foreground is adorned with the national motto: Khotso, Pula, Nala, which means Peace, Rain, and Prosperity. The coat of Arms was adopted on 4 October 1968.

## National Motto

The national slogan is Khotso, Pula, Nala!, which translates to Peace, Rain, and Prosperity. During vast wars and conflicts, when the Basotho nation was established, Peace was necessary for the country's prosperity. Basotho believe that if there is peace, rain will fall. Bountiful rains mean a good harvest and enough of grass in the pastures, ensuring that people and animals are fed and prosper.

## National Anthem

The melody and the lyrics of the national anthem, "Lesōthō Fatše La Bo Ntata Rōna" has its roots in Europe. The melody was from a Swiss songbook from around 1823 composed by Ferdinand-Samuel Laur. Despite being from a Swiss songbook, the musical style is similar to that of anthems of other nations in the area in the "Eastern folk" style, perhaps indicating the melody was "Africanised" sometime after it was first introduced to the country. The lyrics were by a French missionary, François Coillard, a protégé of Eugene Casalis. Coillard grew up near the French-Swiss border, close to the area where Laur's songbook was released. It is believed that he may have known of the melody from there. The anthem first appeared in a collection of songs for high schools in 1869.

The anthem originally had five verses, but by the 20th century, only the first and last verses were used. Current lyrics were refined by a renowned Mosotho composer, Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa and the national anthem as we know it today was eventually adopted in 1967 by a royal decree, which was backdated to Independence Day, October 4, 1966.

## The Anthem

*Lesotho fatše la bo-ntata rona,  
Har'a mafatše le le tle ke lona,  
Ke moo re hlahileng,  
Ke moo re holileng,  
Rea le rata.*

*Molimo a k'u boloke Lesotho,  
U felise lintoa le matšoenyeho.  
Oho, fatše lena,  
La bo-ntata rona,  
Le be le khotso.*

# Lesotho Missions

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### VISION:

By 2025, Lesotho will be a peaceful, prosperous and globally competitive nation

### MISSION:

Promote and advance national interests internationally and protect Lesotho's sovereignty and territorial integrity

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*Consul General Vacant*

## Lesotho Consulate Klerksdorp

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*Consul Mr. Liranyane Thamae*

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**Email:** foreignaffairslesotho@gmail.com

**Office Hours:** Monday to Friday  
08:00 - 12:45 hrs  
14:00 - 16:30 hrs



**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations  
Honourable Lejone Mpotjoane**



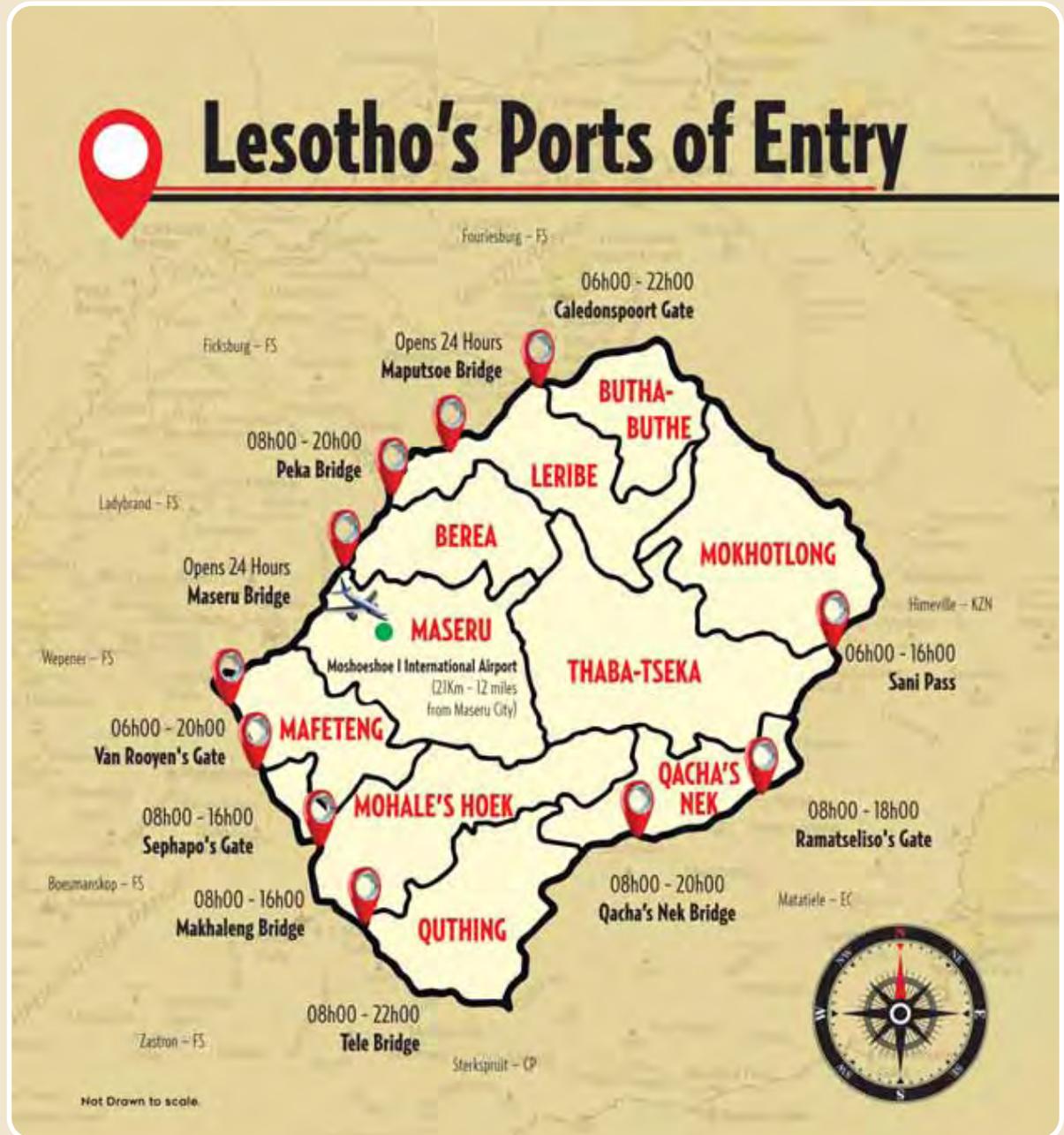


## Lesotho's Ports of Entry and Border Control

The majority of goods and visitors to Lesotho arrive by road. Eleven border posts give entry into Lesotho from South Africa, which is Lesotho's only neighbour. Because of the ruggedness of terrain in some parts of the Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek districts, 4x4 vehicles are advised for these parts. At all these ports, there are Lesotho officials responsible for Immigration, security, livestock and agricultural products control, Tourism and Customs officials.

### Lesotho Border Posts

Maseru	Ladybrand – F.S.	Open 24 hours
Qacha's Nek	Matatiele – E.C.	08h00 - 20h00
Maputsoe	Ficksburg – F.S.	Open 24 hours
Ramatseliso's Gate	Matatiele - E.C	08h00 - 18h00
Caledonspoort	Fouriesburg - F. S.	06h00 - 22h00
Peka Bridge	Gum Tree – F.S.	08h00 - 16h00
Tele Bridge	Sterkspruit – C.P.	08h00 - 22h00
Sephapho's Gate	Boesmanskop.	08h00 - 16h00
Van Rooyen's Gate	Wepener – F.S.	06h00 - 20h00
Makhaleng Bridge	Zastron – F.S.	08h00 - 16h00
Sani Pass	Himeville – Natal	08h00 - 16h00





Tele Bridge

### Customs Regulations

All goods brought into Lesotho are subject to Customs control and baggage may be subject to examination. Customs declarations are required upon arrival. False or incomplete declaration is an offence involving penalties, including forfeiture of any article.

### Duty Free

The following items and quantities to a total value not exceeding M500.00 per person are allowed under rebate duty:

- 2 litres of wine per person, 1 litre of spirits or other alcoholic beverages
- 200 cigarettes, 250 gm pipe tobacco, and 20 cigars.
- 50 ml perfume.

Any excess is charged import duty at a flat rate of 20%.

Visitors from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, are not permitted to bring liquor into Lesotho.

### Prohibited and Restricted Goods

Counterfeit coins or notes; dangerous weapons, including swords, cutlasses, bayonets, daggers, and knives with cutting edges of 30 cm or more in length (excluding such knives as are ordinarily used for domestic purposes, agriculture or the meat trade); blasphemous material; indecent or obscene works or articles of an inflammatory nature such as certain pamphlets or posters.

Customs Officers and members of the Police Force give the highest priority to drug detection and the legal penalties for drug trafficking are severe.

Domestic pets, livestock, seeds, bulbs, plants and trees may not be imported without payment of Customs and Sales Duty and are subject to quarantine restrictions.

Permits may be obtained from:

**The Principal Secretary,  
Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security,  
P.O. Box 24, Maseru 100. Lesotho**

### Lesotho Tax Regime

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) formerly Lesotho Revenue Authority, operates at all the borders for customs purposes. RSL, which became operational in January 2003, incorporates the functions of the old Income Tax, Customs and Excise and Sales Tax Departments. Specifically, the RSL is responsible for the administration of the following legislation.

The RSL was established to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of revenue collection and to provide an improved service to the public.

The RSL as a tax administration entity is required to maintain the highest standards of financial integrity and corporate governance. Despite operating outside the framework of the Civil Service, the Authority is fully accountable to Parliament.

## eTax Services for the Digital Age

As part of the rollout of our **Rea Aha Strategy**, the new look Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) (formerly Lesotho Revenue Authority) continues to invest on digital solutions in order to create seamless and hassle-free tax collection services for Clients. Digitized solutions for tax administration are anchored on our strategy outcome to achieve automatic compliance. The RSL has committed to a culture of continuous service improvement and to enhance service delivery through innovative solutions. As a service organization, our intention is to reduce the cost and time of compliance on the part of the Clients, whilst simultaneously improving our efficiency for a seamless and hassle-free service.

### E- Payments on Mpesa Platform

In our desire to enhance our Client user experience and more convenience for making payments, we have also introduced online payments for low-cost charges on M-pesa using the USSD platform. To pay taxes using M-Pesa, Clients can simply dial \*200# and follow the straightforward steps. Once the payment has been made, they can conveniently utilize the M-Pesa confirmation SMS as a receipt for future reference.

### E-Taxation

For filing of tax returns for both Value Added Tax (VAT) and Pay as You Earn (PAYE), we have developed the seamless e-Taxation system currently accessed through an email invitation. The system affords our Clients the flexibility and convenience of filing returns online. Clients have the opportunity to view their tax ledgers in real-time and are able to experience real-time tracking of their filing status and payments.

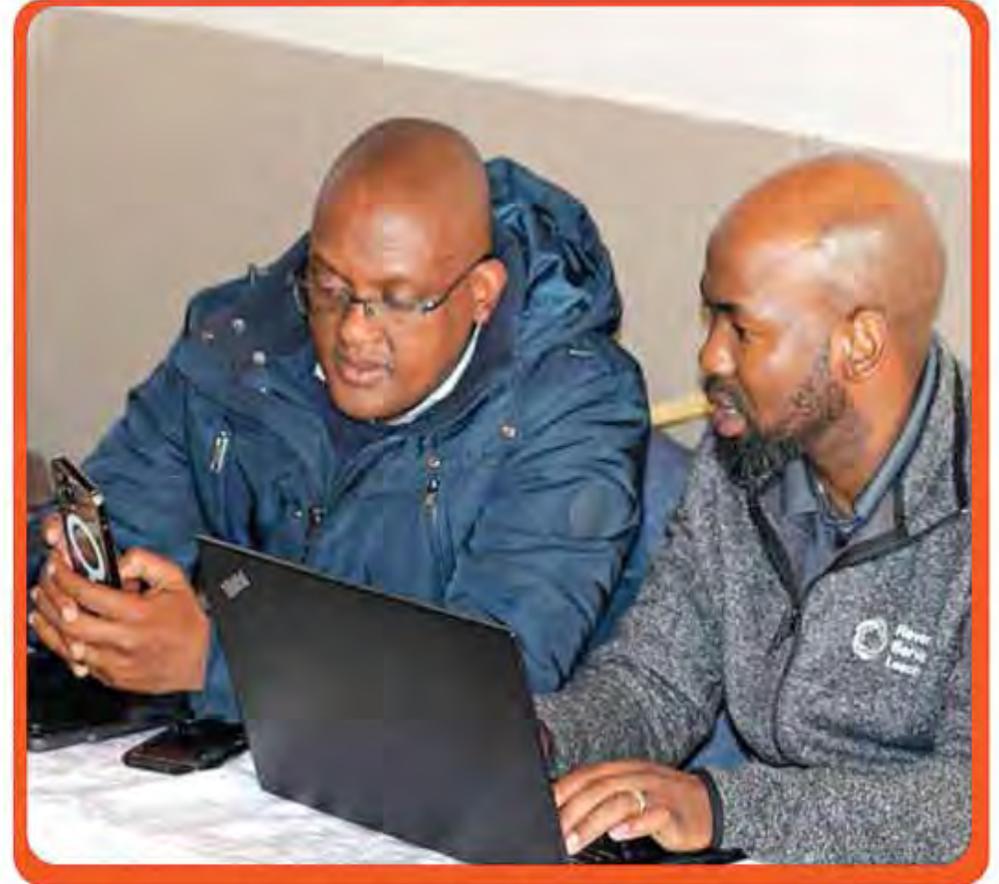
### E- Tariff

For the facilitation of seamless import and export transactions, we have introduced the E- Tariff, which is an electronic online platform that allows importers to determine which Customs duties, excise duties, anti-dumping duties and countervailing duties may apply to their goods on importation or exportation based on their tariff code. Once the tariff code and the country of origin of goods are fed into the system, it automatically generates the estimated amount of duties payable.



The E-Tariff portal accessible on the RSL website eliminates the need for traders to be at RSL premises to ask for tariff information as they can have access of tariffs online. It also significantly reduces the cost of waiting for the query to be solved, as the declaration will be green in terms of classification.

All these eTax services are available 24/7 and accessible on the RSL website, making it easy for Clients to have the flexibility and convenience of making payments and meeting their tax obligations from anywhere, at any time.



**The RSL intensified education and awareness workshops to heighten Clients' knowledge on ETaxation and EPayment platforms to help them navigate and manage their tax affairs**



For more information please call our call center on a toll-free number 80022009 or email [info@rsl.org.ls](mailto:info@rsl.org.ls).



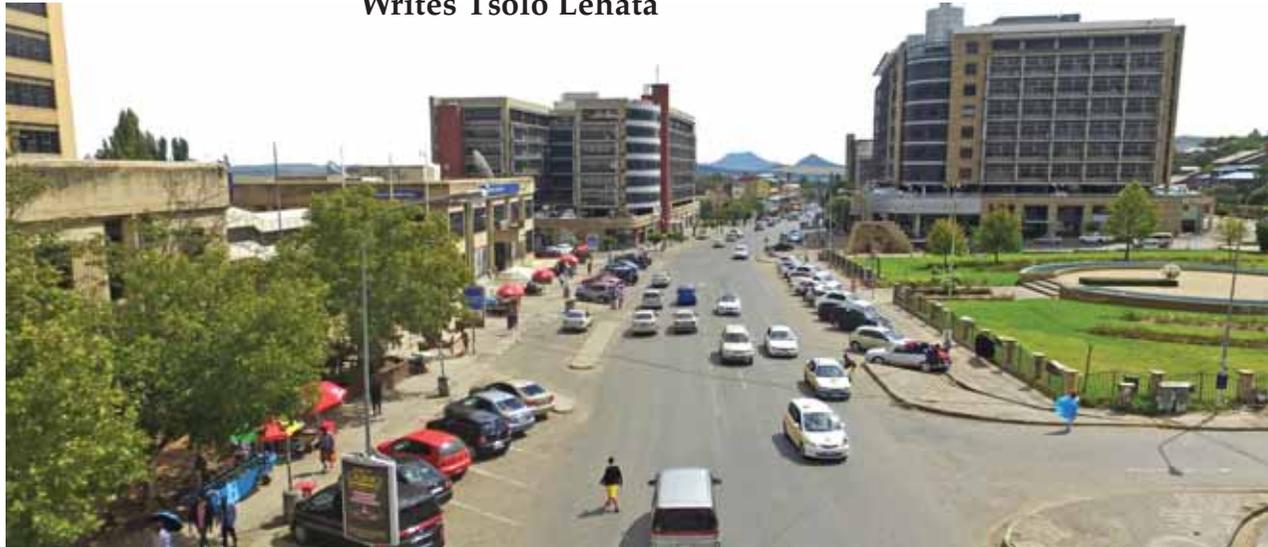
**Revenue Service Lesotho**



# Budget Speech 2022/23 Analysis

## From Reconstruction and Recovery to Growth and Resilience

Writes Tšolo Lehata



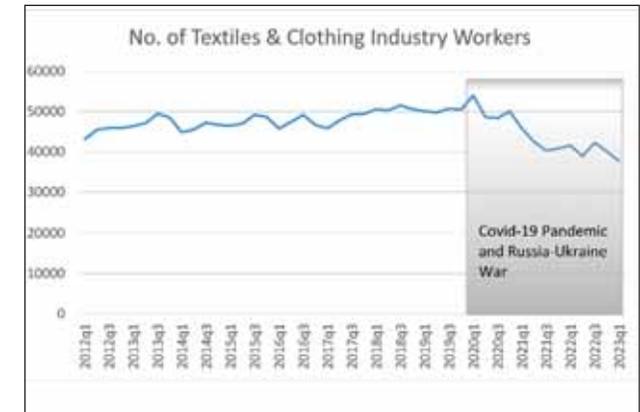
*The domestic economy is estimated to have continued on the post-pandemic recovery path in 2022/23 against headwinds coming from new shocks. As the economy was still reeling from the lingering effects of the pandemic, a new shock beset the global economy causing global supply chain disruptions in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Against this backdrop, Lesotho's economy is estimated to have slowed down to around 1.4 percent growth in 2022 according to a March 2023 Lesotho Economic Outlook (LEO) Update. At this level, the economy is underperforming, reflecting not only the recent shocks but underlying structural bottlenecks as well.*

Most of the estimated growth in 2022/23 is driven by construction activity related to the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP – Phase II) and associated positive spillovers into services industries. However, the Russia-Ukraine war shock negatively affected other key industries. The war started in February 2022 - as the Lesotho economy was finding its footing - and persisted through 2022/23 leading to the cost of living

crisis through increased food and energy prices. Ukraine, together with Russia are major exporters of grains while Russia is also a major exporter of oil; thus, the onset of the war caused supply disruptions for these commodities sending their prices sky-high. The supply chain disruptions compounded pre-existing challenges, sending some key industries off the cliff including the textiles and clothing industries.

The Clothing and Textile industry, which has been servicing the US and regional markets for over 30 years has failed to recover from the combination of the recent shocks. The industry continued to see significant job losses in 2022/23 due to low orders, particularly from the US market. The longer turnaround times and the shift to nearshoring by importers are just some of the challenges facing the industry. The industry has been the country's largest formal employer, making it crucial to many livelihoods. At its peak, it employs over 50 thousand people whereas currently, employment is just over 30 thousand employees according to the latest statistics from Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and CBL Quarterly Reviews.

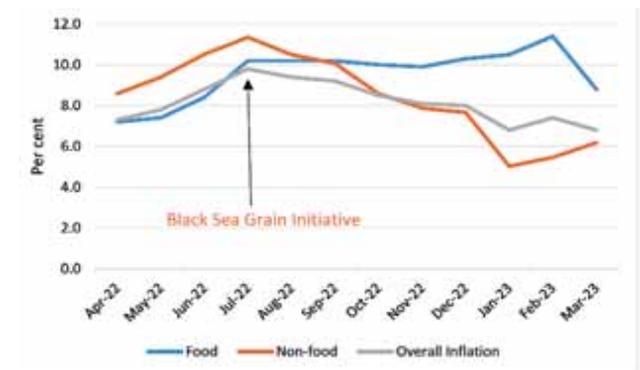
Figure 1: Textiles & Clothing Industry Employment



Source: Central Bank of Lesotho Quarterly Economic Reviews

The annual inflation rate surged to record highs in 2022/23 averaging 8.3 percent, the highest level recorded in fourteen years. The surge in inflation was due to high food and energy prices in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. Given that both countries are major suppliers of both grains and fuel, the war disrupted their supply thus sending their prices to rise sharply. Inflation started moderating somewhat after the introduction of the Black Sea Grain Initiative<sup>1</sup> which boosted grain supply.

Figure 2: Inflation



Selected CPI components, 12-month average

<sup>1</sup> The Initiative specifically allows for commercial food and fertilizer exports from three key Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea

Figure 3: Selected CPI components, 12-month average



Source: Bureau of Statistics, +estimates

The financial system was well capitalised and profitable in 2022/23. However, the increased level of inflation during the financial year led to the tightening of financial conditions as central banks hiked policy rates. The borrowing costs increased by 3.25 percentage points cumulatively between April 2022 and March 2023. As a result, credit extended to the private sector was particularly muted increasing by only 1.2 percent. The external sector position deteriorated, recording a deficit equivalent to 1.8 percent of GDP in 2022. The deterioration was due to the larger deficit in the trade account that outweighed surpluses in the income accounts. The level of reserves in months of import cover decreased to 4.3 percent in 2022 from 5 percent in the previous year.

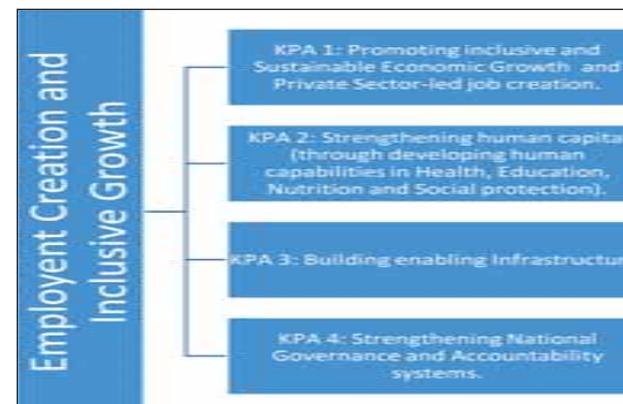
Within the government operations, total revenue collection was M16.3 billion; around 82.5 percent of the total revenue target approved from

2022/23 budget speech. Total expenditures recorded M17.7 billion which was lower than the M23 billion approved from the 2022/23 budget. This resulted in a financial gap equivalent to 1.3 percent of GDP which was financed through borrowing and drawing down of government savings. Consequently, total public stock increased by 0.9 percentage points to 58.9 percent of GDP in 2022/23. The underperformance in revenue collection reflects inefficiencies in passing some of the proposed revenue-enhancing measures. Such revenue collection underperformance risks further accumulation of areas to the detriment of the private sector. Underspending points to poor execution of the budget, particularly the capital budget, which delays the much-needed infrastructure development.

### Prospects and Growth Drivers

The domestic economy is expected to grow in the medium term, albeit at an unconvincing rate. The March 2022 LEO Update report and the IMF project that the economy will grow by a soft average growth of just over 2 percent between 2023 and 2025. While economic activity in the country remains muted overall, reflective of the scars of recent shocks, the projected growth depends almost entirely on construction activity related to the LHWP Phase II and the service sector. The report projects modest growth in the mining industry whilst manufacturing remains muted, reflective of the afore-discussed structural challenges facing the textiles and clothing industry. Prospects in the agricultural industry are bleak as El Nino is expected to return in 2023. According to a report by FAO's Global Information and Early Warning Systems, Southern Africa is one of the regions of particular concern given the existing high levels of food insecurity and that the expected drier conditions coincide with summer cropping.

Figure 3: GDP Growth Projections



Source: March 2023 Lesotho Economic Outlook Update, +estimate, \*projections

The projected growth in the medium-term will depend on a number of factors; including minimal delays to the LHWP II main works in 2023, improved public financial management, and passing of pending structural reforms. The continuation of the war in Ukraine, tightening of the financial conditions and failure to reduce arrears will stifle economic activity leading to lower than projected growth. As a result, there was great anticipation to see what the new government's maiden budget speech holds in response to the prevailing economic environment. The budget analysis follows in the next section.

### 2022/23 Budget Speech

The Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane delivered her maiden budget speech for the fiscal year 2023/24 on the 27th February 2023; themed *From Reconstruction and Recovery to Growth and Resilience*. The theme speaks to setting the foundation for the reconstruction and recovery of the economy, recognising the scars left by the recent shocks and the need for recovery while consolidating growth and building resilience to endure any future crises. The overriding objective is to accelerate inclusive, employment generating and poverty-reducing growth. The budget speech proposes to achieve this objective through a number of strategies including the 2023/24 Growth strategy, 2023/24 Fiscal Strategy, Arrears and Cash Management Strategy, and 2023/24 Revenue and Expenditure Strategies.

To unlock the much-needed growth, the 2023/24 Economic Growth Strategy focuses on reconstruction and recovery; acknowledging the existing damage. It also aims to enhance growth and build resilience through transforming the economy from a consumer-based economy to a producer and export-driven economy. Building resilience would put the country in a better position to adequately respond to shocks in the future; limiting the extent of losses. In contrast, the COVID-19 pandemic found the country unprepared, hence the economy lost around 5 years of development progress. Specific actions to be taken to achieve this objective include structural transformation and sizeable investment into productive sectors; building new infrastructure, strengthening governance and accountability, and leveraging innovative technology for efficiency.

In response to the mismanagement of the fiscus, which has led to revenue leakage, building up of arrears and poor credit ratings, the budget speech introduced the medium-term fiscal strategy. The fiscal strategy aims at reinforcing long-term fiscal sustainability and providing buffers to guard against shocks and imbalances. In order to improve macro-fiscal stability, the government plans to reduce reliance on volatile SACU receipts by mobilizing tax and non-tax revenues.

The development component of SACU revenue is to be geared towards capital spending and to create the development and stabilisation fund.

The creation of a development and stabilization fund would be a welcomed move as it could reduce fiscal volatility and macroeconomic instability. However, managing such a fund requires a strong institutional framework, which would have to be the starting point. Other key measures to be implemented to achieve macro-stability include reducing the high and unsustainable level of recurrent spending and reducing the high wage bill through public service restructuring.

The deficiencies in the public financial management framework have led to the government's creation and accumulation of arrears. This has not only undermined the credibility of the government but also risks business failures. To this end, the government has developed an Arrears and Cash Management Strategy. The arrears strategy includes a roadmap to clear existing stock. It aims to manage arrears and enhance expenditure controls by dealing with underlying causes of occurrence and build-up. On cash management, the government has established a Treasury Single Account which will enhance proper cash management and consolidate all government accounts.

In line with the overarching objective, the budget proposed to implement the following revenue and expenditure strategies in Table 1 below. The key risk to the proposed strategies is the slow passage of bills and the pushback from the industry players that causes delays in some instances. As such, the expected results may not be realized, leading to revenue underperformance and failure to implement some programs. Policy measures critical to the overriding objective of the 2023/24 budget should be prioritized given that they have a high potential to support growth if implemented.

Table 1: Policy interventions

Revenue Strategies	Expenditure Strategies
Income Tax Amendment Bill	Regular review of implementation plans and management accounts
Tax Administration Bill	Reduction of wasteful spending
Tax E-filing system	Payroll audits
VAT Fiscalization	Verification of good and services delivered by suppliers
Integrated Revenue Management System and Cashless Collection of Revenue	Introduction of e-procurement and centralized procurement
Diaspora Policy	Development of an independent procurement institution

### Budget allocations

The 2023/24 budget speech has a total revenue target estimate of M25.1 billion, which is around 27.4 percent above the previous budget. The increase in revenue target is mainly due to the expected 87 percent increase in SACU revenue. Tax and non-tax revenues are expected to increase modestly while grants fall.

Figure 5: Revenue by components



Figure 6: Expenditure by components



The proposed total expenditures for the 2023/24 fiscal year is M24.1 billion, which is higher than the 2022/23 proposal by 4.8 percent. Recurrent expenditure is proposed to be higher by 9.5 percent while capital expenditure is proposed lower by 6 percent. The capital budget seems to be sticky upwards, even during fiscal years when the government estimates budget surpluses. Cutting the capital budget is also contrary to the budget's plan to speed up infrastructure development.

### Fiscal Stance

The 2023/24 budget has a fiscal surplus of around 2.5 percent of GDP due to higher SACU revenue. If realised, it will enable the government to build up deposits with the banking sector. Despite the budgeted surplus, the government still intends to borrow from the domestic capital markets to develop the bond market and to invest in infrastructure. However, the budgeted surplus might be somewhat ambitious given that tax revenue could underperform. The likelihood of tax revenue underperformance is premised on the prevailing weak economic prospects and the possibility of some revenue strategies not being implemented in the current fiscal year as is often the case.

### The National Strategic Plan (NSDP)

The 2022/23 *Lesotho Insights* reported that the NSDP II, which was in its final year of implementation in 2022/23 had performed dismally following its performance assessment; notwithstanding the confluence of shocks that hit the economy towards the tail end of the plan. *Lesotho Insights* also noted some milestones made towards achieving the plan's objectives. The successor plan to the NSDP II is still under construction, and the NSDP II is meant to remain the economic development blueprint in the meantime. The key performance areas are still relevant (see Figure 6 below), hence the 2023/24 budget reemphasised the same areas as priorities. Nonetheless, a new plan is required, which should reflect new challenges and opportunities that should be leveraged to finally set the country on a sustainable and resilient growth trajectory.



Figure 6: NSDP Strategic Goals



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# Nedbank Lesotho

Nedbank Lesotho Limited is a subsidiary of the Nedbank Group, a South African banking group that is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The Nedbank Group consists of different clusters. Nedbank Lesotho Limited falls under the Nedbank Africa Regions (NAR). The Nedbank Lesotho head office is located at 115-117 Corner Griffith Hill and Kingsway Street, Maseru, Lesotho. The bank currently operates 11 branches, located at Kingsway Street, Pioneer Mall, Maseru Mall, Masianokeng Lifestyle Centre, Roma, TY, Maputsoe, Hlotse, Butha-Buthe, Mafeteng, and Mphahlele.



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As part of a brand that recently achieved 135 years of trading, the Lesotho operation celebrates 25 years of excellence in servicing a wide range of clients including the public sector, corporate entities, NGOs, commercial businesses, small medium enterprises, sole traders, individuals, and other client types. We have expertly delivered financial solutions which have shaped some of the most iconic economic landmarks in the country over the years. These include, in recent times, the development of properties such as the Pioneer Mall, Vodacom Park, Masianokeng Lifestyle Centre, and lots more. We pride ourselves in providing world-class banking solutions

Our corporate and investment banking solutions are suitable for global standard trading requirements. Our team of experts will structure cutting edge financing and investing solutions, in line with our belief as a business that money well managed will have a positive impact on any entity's objectives. These are all in addition to co-hosting the annual Post-Budget Speech Gala Dinner in partnership with Revenue Services Lesotho

## Our client promise

Our client promise is anchored on relevant solutions, we solve banking problems for people right from infancy across different stages and profiles. Products include Kholiso savings, Bacha students account, Bothebelele, Private banking, and loads more as can be seen on [www.nedbank.co.ls](http://www.nedbank.co.ls). In 2022, we unveiled a mobile money wallet, termed the Nedbank Mobi Money wallet, this product addresses the government's call for financial inclusion, while also offering unmatched convenience for businesses and individuals who may need to share funds electronically with unbanked recipients.

#SeeMoneyDifferently



see money differently

Nedbank Lesotho Limited Reg No 192/191. Authorised financial institution and credit provider.

f in X

NEDBANK



## Corporate Social Responsibility

As a responsible corporate citizen, we have pledged support for several noble courses including the Hlokomela Bana Foundation, a sanitary towel drive initiative that seeks to restore and retain dignity for school-going age girls who ordinarily fail to attend school consistently because they lack the appropriate sanitary towels. We are also a patron of the Limomonane Trust whose core mandate is to counter the effects of climate change by planting more trees around Lesotho. These two key projects speak are testament of our commitment to the sustainable development goals (SDGs).



We caringly play our part in making Lesotho a better place

Nedbank Lesotho also recognises the value of good partnerships and that of investing in activity based platforms. We are the proud sponsor of the Nedbank Mohokare Golf Classic, the Nedbank B and Nedbank Championship in the Lesotho A-Division Soccer league, cycling and other sporting codes. Some of the events we have collaborated with in recent pasts are the Lesotho Gin & Trout Festival, and the Econet Baduza Beer Bands & Brands.



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# We understand your needs.

And we want to help you identify your next step.

Together we can



LIFE | HEALTH | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS

#WeArePartners

Metropolitan Lesotho is a subsidiary of Momentum Metropolitan Holdings, a registered and authorised financial services provider

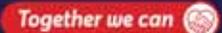


**Ms. Mamello Phomane**  
Managing Director

## METROPOLITAN REVELS IN 55 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH BASOTHO



[www.metropolitan.co.za](http://www.metropolitan.co.za)



#WeArePartners

Over the past 55 years, Metropolitan Lesotho has gone through different phases of development, but one thing has remained constant; the company has been relentless in providing Basotho with financial solutions to manage their financial risks.

From being a branch of the African Homes Trust from South Africa, to being a branch of the Metropolitan Life South Africa providing life insurance services, to acquiring Momentum Lesotho to becoming an independent entity that also offers health insurances services, the company's journey continues. In its growth trajectory, Metropolitan has recently added an asset management business to its growing portfolio.

"Our purpose as a business is to provide sound financial advice and seamless life event solutions," says Mamello Phomane, Metropolitan Lesotho's Managing Director.

"We want to be able to solve problems that Basotho have in dealing with inadequate financial provisions, where they have financial insecurities."

The company aspires to be a trusted financial partner for Basotho looking after their interests.

"Ultimately we exist to enable the dignity of our clients, but at the end of the day when our clients are enabled, we will be able to enable economic transformation of the society."

Metropolitan Lesotho's product range now includes funeral, life, health, pensions, investments and asset management services for both individual and corporate entities.

"We now have the health business, where we offer medical aid products for corporates and individuals. We recently launched an interesting health product called Health4Me, where we are targeting lower income earners to be able to access medical aid," Ms. Phomane continues.

"We have been the leading a life insurer in the industry for a long time, and we are still around 55 years later, still growing and offering Basotho solutions to deal with life uncertainties and to manage risk.

The asset management business to our portfolio is meant to support Metropolitan's quest of enabling improved money circulation in the economy given emerging economic trends. One of these is the promulgation of the Pension Funds Act, 2019, which mandates pension fund administrators to invest a minimum of 30 percent locally to promote domestic investment and hence economic development.



Kudakwashe Mudzengi CA (SA) -  
CEO Africa - Momentum  
Metropolitan Holdings Limited

"We want to be at the forefront of enabling local investment to be more robust and have more players, better products and solutions."

Apart from providing financial solutions to Basotho, Metropolitan Lesotho has been a strong partner in education and sports development in the country.



National University of Lesotho students at the Awarding Ceremony



Machabeng College students at the Awarding Ceremony

Metropolitan Lesotho is one of the major financial partners of the National University of Lesotho's (NUL) now famed innovation hub.

The company has also collaborated with NUL to introduce an insurance qualification titled Certificate of Proficiency in Insurance. The program was developed under the NUL – Metropolitan Professional Research Chair. The qualification was developed as part of the fit and proper

requirements for insurance intermediaries in Lesotho.

Basotho wishing to get the qualification had to go to Zimbabwe to obtain it. The six-month training programme had the first intake in 2023.

"One of the company's major milestones is its investment towards supporting the education sector. Education is an important area for us to support, because it is one way of driving economic transformation in the country."

The company is also known for sponsoring different sporting activities in the country including football, where it has been one of the sponsors of the annual Independence Cup competition for the premier league clubs.



Bantu Player at the Vodacom Premier League

Metropolitan is a regular sponsor of Lesotho Volleyball Association and Lesotho Netball Association in the country.

The company is also one of the sponsors of the

Hlokomela Banana initiative led by Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso. The initiative enables the girl child to go to school, which is in line with Metropolitan's values.

Going forward, the company plans to continue coming up with new final products to better respond to emerging market needs.

"We have been a product-led business, but our future is very innovative and empowering, because ultimately we want to cater for the entire wellness of an individual.

"We want to be able to provide integrated solutions so that as an individual we see you as a full individual who can have medical aid, life insurance, investment requirements, and we also want to empower individuals to be able to do things by themselves."

Metropolitan will continue to digitize its systems in order to increase the convenience at which clients access its services.

"We are also doing quite a lot in terms of digitization of our services in order to make it easy for our clients to process their services. We want our clients to apply for a medical aid from where they are sitting without having to travel to the office." Ms. Phomane said.



Metropolitan Staff



# Lesotho at a Glance – Key



## GENERAL



**Population**  
2,332,354  
(Projection based on 2016 Census)



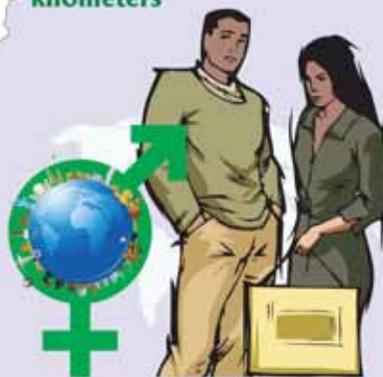
**Area**  
30,355  
Square  
kilometers



**Official Languages**  
2



**Literacy Rate**  
81%



**Global Gender Gap Index**  
0.702  
(Rank 82 out of 153 countries)



## ECONOMY



**Gross Domestic Product**  
\$2.553 Billion, rank 169  
out of 196 countries



**GDP Per Capita**  
\$1,208



**Average GDP Growth Rate**  
1.0%



**Average Inflation Rate**  
8.3%

**Consumer Price Index**  
106 (since June 2023)  
5.55%



**Human Development Index**  
0,514  
Rank 162  
out of 189  
countries



**Ease of doing Business Index**  
Rank: 122/190 Countries  
DB Score: 59.4

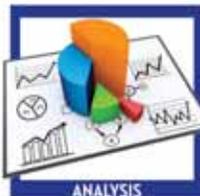
# Facts and indicators 2023/24



EXPENSE



INCOME



ANALYSIS



BUDGET

**Government Budget as a Percentage of GDP**  
52.87%



**Visa Openness Index**  
0,302 Rank out of 37  
Africa Countries



**Corruption Perception Index**  
Rank: 99/180 countries  
Score: 38/100



**International Credit Rating**  
B Stable  
Fitch Rating



**Unemployment Rate**  
18%



**Sovereign Debt as Percentage of GDP**  
51% at  
M19.6 Billion



## HEALTH



**Life Expectancy**  
55.22 years



**Maternal Mortality**  
554 per 100,000  
Births

**Doctor to Population Ratio**  
0.9 per 10,000



**HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate**  
15-49 years  
20.9%



**Nurse to Population Ratio**  
10.2 per 10,000



SOURCES: World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lesotho/overview>, WHO, Human Development Report 2021 LINDP Country Programme Document (2019-2023), [countryeconomy.com](http://countryeconomy.com), Transparency International, Bureau of Statistics: [www.bos.gov.ls](http://www.bos.gov.ls)



*The Three Kings is a 250 cm x 150 cm oil on canvas painting by Steve Mashoathe Rasehloho. He was inspired to depict Lesotho's great kings, past and present dressed in royal regalia inside his own idea of a palace. The palace is adorned with a painting of Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso on the left pillar and the Queen Mother, 'Mamohato Bereng Seeiso on the right, together with her grandchildren, Their Royal Highness, Princess Senate and Princess 'Maseeiso.*



*The history of the Basotho nation recognises the exodus of the nation from Menkhoaneng to Thaba Bosiu by the great King Moshoeshoe I and his people in 1824 as the turning point in history that marks the formation and the fortification of the Basotho nation that we know today. In a story with a strong semblance of the biblical story of Moses who led the Israelites to 'the promised land,' Moshoeshoe led his people to Thaba Bosiu, the mountain fortress that laid the foundation of modern-day Lesotho.*

*Today, Basotho speak with pride and celebrate the vision of King Moshoeshoe and his great legacy that earned us a sovereign state that Lesotho is today. In an interview with His Majesty King Letsie III, the reigning King of the Basotho Nation and ninth-generation heir of the royal lineage from his great grandfather, Peete of the Ba-Mokoteli dynasty, shares his views about the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I and how that legacy has stood the test of time in the last two hundred years and the future of Lesotho in a family of nations.*

## King Letsie III shares his views on the Legacy of King Moshoeshoe I and the meaning of the Bicentennial Anniversary today

Writes Manyathela Kheleli

When King Letsie III looks back at the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I, the founder of the Basotho nation, he gets the conviction that the greatest legacy that the founding father of the Basotho nation left us is the country, Lesotho, which Basotho must cherish and value. Lesotho is a country that was forged under difficult circumstances, he says, citing conditions of war and strife such as lifaqane wars. Subsequent to that, His Majesty says King Moshoeshoe also had to fight off enemies from the West, particularly the Afrikaners, who unfortunately captured a huge chunk of his territory. But through his political and diplomatic skills and the courage of his people, he managed to create and come out with a country that we now proudly call our own.

"It is not every African nation in this part of the world that has the privilege of having a country that they can call their own like Basotho. We have our neighbours, the Ngunis, the Zulus, Amakhosa. They all have their territories, but they are now a part of the bigger Republic of South Africa. But for Basotho, because of Morena Moshoeshoe's skills, we have this valuable legacy that we call Lesotho. For me, that is the biggest legacy that we can say King Moshoeshoe left us," the King said in an interview with *Lesotho Insights*.

His Majesty also firmly holds the view that the Great King Moshoeshoe was a visionary leader. He believes that the epicenter of Moshoeshoe's governance principles was the ideal of peace, where he is often quoted saying "*Khotso ke khaitsele ea ka*." Loosely translated to imply that he valued peace so much that he viewed it as a sister he so dearly loved.

Based on those firmly held principles, King Letsie III infers that King Moshoeshoe's vision for the Basotho Nation was that Basotho should be a people of peace, and that Lesotho should be a peaceful country based on the principles of reconciliation, charity and forgiveness.

He also said that he believes that King Moshoeshoe I aspired to build a nation in which all his subjects were reconciled with each other, and where we all helped each other through difficult times. "This is what I would deduce from his philosophy of governance, and I believe King Moshoeshoe wished for his nation to be a prosperous country that can stand on its own," he added.

Looking back, His Majesty recognises that the role of the King has evolved over the last two hundred years and is now in stark contrast with the role that King Moshoeshoe played in his era. "In those early days, he was the executive monarchy and had the ultimate political authority over his people and the land. But that changed when Lesotho became a British Protectorate. The King then became a Paramount Chief because there could only be one King or Queen who sat in the United Kingdom."

During the Victorian era, the paramount chief was a formal title created by the British Empire as a substitute for 'king' in order to create a distinction in the protocol of the British Empire. At the time when Lesotho was afforded protection by Britain, the political and executive powers were taken from the traditional system and shared between the Paramount Chief and the office of the High Commissioner and Resident Commissioner. The

nature and role of Lesotho's Monarchy maintained this arrangement throughout British rule until 1966 when the country regained independence.

With the new independence constitution that was modelled on the Westminster system of governance common in most former colonies of the British Empire, the Lesotho Monarchy became a Constitutional Monarchy similar to that of England in many ways. Key changes were that the Paramount Chief assumed the title of 'His Majesty the King' and Head of State, which title officially embodies the country in its unity as a legitimate and sovereign state. The role of the King is largely a ceremonial figurehead. The executive and political powers were then confined within the jurisdiction of the legislative arm of the government headed by the prime minister, who is the head of government. This status quo has continued to prevail even after the 1993 review of the constitution until today.

Looking into the future, His Majesty contends that it is difficult to predict what the future holds for Basotho in the next hundred years, considering the prevailing political, social and economic challenges. He was, however, happy to share his hopes and aspirations for his nation. "My hope and wish is that Lesotho in a hundred years will still be a sovereign country. Lesotho will still be a country at peace with itself and its neighbour, and will still be a country playing its rightful role in the family of nations in the region, in the continent and globally." His hope is that in a century, Lesotho will be a prosperous country through fully harnessing the resources at its disposal.



*His Majesty King Letsie III exchanges pleasantries with the publishing editor of Lesotho Insights at Matsieng royal homestead*

While Lesotho's resources may seem too little, he argues that a lot of other countries have made it with even less. His Majesty also affirmed that one of Lesotho's greatest resource was her people and that if the country invested in the development of its human capital, it can achieve prosperity. "I also believe that one of our most valuable natural resource is the abundant water that we see flowing daily in our rivers." The country must therefore exploit this water in a sustainable manner to drive prosperity, citing examples such as using the water to create sources of energy and also using it to drive agriculture.

It is highly probable that in the next century, diamond deposits will have run out, but water would still be abundant and can therefore be used to catalyse economic growth and prosperity. "I think we should have unity of purpose as a nation, be a stable country and be at peace with ourselves so that we can work together and pull together in one direction. This is my hope for the future and where I believe we will be in the next hundred years," he said.

Basotho should be proud of their identity amidst the many challenges such as poverty and unemployment. Basotho in the diaspora and at home should be proud of their heritage and continue to contribute meaningfully towards developing the country in whatever way they can. "But what is important for all Basotho is unity. Unity of purpose, to remember who we are and where we come from. To remember the founding principles that our founding father, King Moshoeshoe I bequeathed us, which are the principles of peace, reconciliation, charity and kindness to one another," his Majesty added.

In conclusion, the King said he strongly believed that if Basotho recaptured King Moshoeshoe's principles wherever they are and bring them into their daily lives, the country could easily transform its fortunes and become a proud nation in a century.



*The construction of Moshoeshoe's European style house at the top of Thaba-Bosiu built by David Webber and Robert Murphy in 1839*



*It was customary for boys to go for initiation in their teens during Moshoeshoe's time.  
(copyright: Moroka Pula Productions)*

# The Life of Morena Moshoeshoe

Writes Ratokelo Nkoka

*The Life of the Great King Moshoeshoe I, born Lepoqo is a fascinating one. His father, Mokhachane was the chief of the small Bamokoleli clan numbering around 4 000 at the time. His mother was Kholu, the daughter of Ntsukunyane of the Bafokeng clan. Lepoqo was born like any other ordinary boy at Menkhoaneng in the north of modern-day Lesotho. He tended sheep and goats as a young boy, but later became larger than life to be a great statesman and the unifier. The story of his life is a full circle of the once ruthless man to an extraordinary chief and visionary who, despite all the odds, was able to build a people we call Basotho today. We celebrate the life of a legend and a forefather who was like no other. A visionary who was head and shoulders above his peers.*

*He rested, leaving behind a uniquely placed kingdom ordained by God, while many kingdoms of his contemporaries had vanished from the face of the Earth. Moshoeshoe had listened to the word of the prophet and implemented the word of the prophet, and the word of the prophet became a kingdom.*

*When he died on 11 March 1870 at the age of 84, King Moshoeshoe I had left behind a nation he founded and ruled for almost half a century. He had built a nation made up of many tribes that he left under the protection of the British government. Despite the many odds, he left a legacy that is called Lesotho today. One of the few nations that still enjoys its sovereignty in Southern Africa.*

*As a testament to his bravery, wisdom and tenacity, the Kingdom of Lesotho today is an independent country surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. However, free and democratic today, the borders of the two countries still remain a mirror that reflects the voracity of white domination and the resilience of Basotho led by King Moshoeshoe I in Southern Africa at the time.*

Lepoqo was born in 1786 at Menkhoaneng in Leribe into a polygamous family of Mokhachane. Mokhachane had many wives and some of them were Kholu, Mabela, 'Mamopedi and 'Malelosa. Kholu begot 'Matšoeunyane, Lepoqo (Moshoeshoe), Makhabane, Posholi and 'Mantoetsi. 'Mamohale begot Mohale and Mpepuoa. 'Mamopeli begot Mopeli while 'Malelosa begot Lelosa and Tšiamé.

Moshoeshoe's birth name was Lepoqo, which means dispute. It is said that there was a commotion in his father's village when he was born. A witch was caught in the village and historians can only predict that the commotion was about the witch who had brought an evil spell to the village. Nothing seemed strange about this situation, even today, it is still common for parents to name their children after the events of the day in which they were born.

Lepoqo grew up like other boys, looking after his father's sheep and goats. When the time came, he underwent initiation school in 1804 with his peers, Makoanyane, Matekane, Shakhane and Toloane among others. He was groomed like other boys to take up his responsibilities in the society. At initiation, he was given the name of Letlama (the binder), his destiny was to bring together and bind or unite those people "who were falling apart" or whose tendencies were to live off into a multitude of groups when he was born.

Lepoqo graduated from the initiation school and began to assert his authority as a young man. He developed in him, a restless and uncompromising character, one which demanded absolute obedience from boys of his age and even those older than him. He forced others into submission, and he engendered fear in his people as a way of commanding or extracting respect from them. This basic flow in his orientation caused him to be blind to the fact that true respect cannot come from coercion, but through persuasion.

Lepoqo, operating on his "principle" of extracting obedience, also fought those who would not conform to his way of doing things. He is said to have gone to the extent of killing five men at different times, the last one for milking his favorite cow without his permission. He was such a ferocious fighter that nobody dared to stop him whenever he victimised his subjects. The villagers in the neighborhood and villages adjacent to Lepoqo's family were convinced that he was seriously sick and needed medicine to be healed. It was only Lepoqo's grandfather, Peete whom he sometimes listened to. Therefore, Mokhachane asked Peete to make Lepoqo see the wisdom of consulting a herbalist and seer, Mohlomi, to "confirm" that which Lepoqo was longing for.

Peete succeeded in persuading Lepoqo to consult Mohlomi, a renowned healer, prophet and a wise man. In 1806 Peete took Lepoqo to Mohlomi specifically so that Mohlomi could give him medicine to drive away the evil that was in him. When Mohlomi met Lepoqo for the first time, he looked straight into his eyes and kept quiet. He then went close to Lepoqo and rubbed his forehead against his and said; someday, in all probability, thou shall be called to govern men. When thou shall sit in judgment let their decision be just. The law knows no one as a poor man.

By this act of rubbing his forehead against that of Lepoqo, Mohlomi blessed him. Again, as a prophet, he told Lepoqo what was in store for him. This prophecy came as a shock to Peete, for, on the contrary, Peete did not expect a person of Mohlomi's



*Moshoeshoe in battle regalia.*  
(copyright Moroka Pula Productions)

stature and reputation to see any potential in Lepoqo, a young man whose errant behavior was far from praiseworthy. Peete had expected that Mohlomi would reprimand his grandson for what he had done, and that his grandson would be subjected to drinking a concoction of medicine to "reclaim him" or bring him to his senses. Still taken aback, Peete heard Mohlomi telling Lepoqo that the only true medicine was his own heart. In his book *Moshoeshoe 1 profile: Se Moshoeshoe* Ntsu Mokhehle captures this moment by saying "There is no herb, no medicine and no form of talism my son, which can be used that the king who judges the poor without truth, his throne will be established forever. This indeed became true of Moshoeshoe's kingdom. The word of the prophet was fulfilled

The word was spoken to a man who, because of his obedience to the guidance of Mohlomi was anointed to found and lead Basotho, God's people. When Moshoeshoe applied these teachings of the prophet, God never forsook him. God gave him protection, power and wisdom throughout his life. Lepoqo even professed, "*U ka nketsang ha e ahe motse Thesele, motse ho ahoa oa morapeli.*" Loosely translated to say aggression does not build a nation, but rather the serenity and humility of the supplicant.

Surprisingly, Lepoqo was receptive to Mohlomi's teaching. No doubt he had experienced some self-doubt with regard to his violence towards others. Mohlomi strongly warned Lepoqo that a ruler avoids revolt and assassination and he sees to the needs of the aged, the crippled, the widows, orphans and the society as a whole. As a follow up of this worrying, Mohlomi advised Lepoqo to choose peace rather than war; not to listen to the words or use the medicine of the evil doctors; and to judge quarrels fairly. He encouraged him to marry many wives to establish alliances with many and different heads of families for the sake of peace and unity.

With these judicious words, Mohlomi was attesting to King Solomon's words of wisdom that the king who judged the poor without truth, his throne will be established forever (*Proverbs 29:14*). This indeed became true Moshoeshoe's kingdom. The word of the prophet was fulfilled. The word was spoken to a man who became of his obedience to its guiding principle, was anointed to found and lead the Basotho. God's people. When Moshoeshoe applied these teachings of the prophet, God never forsook him. God gave him protection, power and wisdom throughout his life.

At this point, Mohlomi presented Lepoqo with an earring as a sign of power, a shield and knobkerrie for protection and an ox for the wealth of his kingdom. He was now a firm believer in honest listening and genuine consultation. Doing unto others, what one wants done unto them, and knowing more about the will and the power of God.

Having rejoined his father's people, Lepoqo

maintained a low profile and was rather subdued at the beginning. He sat in the chief's court with his elders listening to the councilor's deliberations. But given his ambitions, he also started to accumulate wealth, without which, he would not have followers. On one occasion, he raided the cattle of Ramonaheng and defeated him. In keeping with the tradition of self-praise after combat, Moshoeshoe referred to himself as "*Moshoeshoe oa ha Rakali Lebeola, ea neng a beole Ramonaheng Litelu,*" likening himself to the sound of the razor that makes the 'shoe...shoe' sound as he cut Ramonaheng's beard. Lepoqo now came to be known as Moshoeshoe. His new name earned popularity and remained with him until his death.

Later, Moshoeshoe established himself and took over the reins of the Ba-Mokoteli tribe in the early 1820s. He took his people from the Menkhoaneng valley and settled at the top of Botha-Bothe mountain using it as a defence mechanism. He explained that the warriors were going to hurl rocks from the top of the mountain down onto the enemy when attacked, in addition to using their traditional weapons. With the growing insecurity, the tactic paid off.

This insecurity was the result of forces unleashed far away in northern Natal by Shaka where new kingdoms were being amalgamated, and others dispersed with a domino effect of upheaval as one group attacked the next until much of the region was destabilised. This process overflowed onto the Highveld and into the Mohokare River valley. This was the time of Lifaqane wars. The Hlubi attacked Batlokoa, who in return, attacked Moshoeshoe and his followers. During the battle with Batlokoa in 1823, Moshoeshoe was to hold his own on Botha-Bothe Mountain, but the situation was still unacceptable. The imperative of finding a safer mountain fortress was no longer in doubt. This led to him taking his people to Thaba-Bosiu, where he lived successfully and ruled his people for over 50 years.

In his life, Moshoeshoe had an estimated 140 wives. These included those that he married, those that

were captured (*basali ba thebe*), and others who were his servants. He married his first wife, Mabela, the daughter of the Bafokeng Chief, Seephepe in 1810. Mabela was given the name of 'Mamohato and bore him four sons, Letsie, Molapo, Masupha and Majara as well as a daughter, Mathe. One of his wives, 'Mantsane had measles, a disease not known at the time. It is said that 'Mantsane committed suicide at Thaba-Bosiu by jumping off a cliff. She was the first person to be given a Christian funeral, leaving behind a young child, Ntsane. Her son would later become one of the pioneers in the establishment of the then Basuto Mounted Police on 11 October 1872.

Among his many wives was 'Masekhonyana, who was the first to convert to Christianity. She was christened Rachel. The other was 'Mamosebetsi, who was captured during the war with Shekeshe. 'Mamosebetsi was the queen of the Basia tribe. Both women divorced Moshoeshoe due to their Christian beliefs. It is also said that most of Moshoeshoe's children born after 1833 did not go for initiation. These included Majara, Nehemia Sekhonyana, Ntsane and John Tlali to name a few. These boys were given Western education by the missionaries. They went on to help Moshoeshoe on issues of governance and coordinated his affairs with the Cape Colonial government and were also instrumental in translating for him during meetings with white settlers.

At the age of 84, Moshoeshoe retired. Sick and exhausted, he handed over the scepter of power to his eldest son, Letsie, then 57 on 18 January 1870. On 11 March the same year, the great King Moshoeshoe retired to his ancestors, he died of natural causes and old age. It is also reported that at the time of his death, he had a fever. On his deathbed was his son Sofonea, his priest Mareka Nchakala and the daughter of a missionary, Adel Ellenberger.

Never baptised, Moshoeshoe was laid to rest at Thaba-Bosiu on 12 March 1870. He rested leaving behind a uniquely placed kingdom ordained by God, while many kingdoms of his contemporaries had vanished from the face of the earth. The greatest legacy that he left is the nation and country that we call we call Lesotho today.



**Mr. Ratokelo Elisha Nkoka** started his career as a teacher after obtaining the Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) at the then National Teachers Training College

(NTTC) in Maseru from 1980 until 2003.

In 1986, he obtained the ACP qualification from the College of Preceptors in the United Kingdom, followed by a Diploma in Political Science obtained from Baskerutfolke School in Norway in 1987. He later read for a Diploma in Religious Education at the University of Birmingham in 1992, a B.Ed Honours in Education Management and Leadership at the University of Free State and a Master of Arts at the National University of Lesotho, (NUL).

In 2003, Mr. Nkoka joined the civil service in the Ministry of Communications Science and Technology, where he joined the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS) as programmes manager at Radio Lesotho. In 2007, he was promoted to become the new Director of Language Development and Culture. In his illustrious career, he has researched extensively on the history of Lesotho and the culture of the Basotho people, particularly during research work for his Television programme, Tseba ka Lesotho. He is an avid supporter of heritage projects in the country and a staunch advocate of the preservation of the Sesotho language and culture.

Mr. Nkoka has also served as Consul General for the Lesotho High Commission office stationed in Durban, South Africa.

# Mohlomi, the Aristotle of Basotho and his Influence on Moshoeshoe

Writes Max du Preez

MAX DU PREEZ tells the story of an extraordinary philosopher from the pre-colonial era and argues that he deserves his place among the other great thinkers of humankind.

I SUSPECT most of us share the dominant global view that there are only three philosophical traditions in history: European, Chinese and Indian.



Morena Mohlomi, the soothsayer and tutor of Moshoeshoe 1.  
(copyright: Moroka Pula Productions)

*Communities such as the pre-colonial Africans, Native Americans and Polynesians did invent proverbs, tell stories and create myths, but they did not have a philosophical tradition, or certainly nothing worth including in any comparative study of philosophy. Or such is the widely held belief.*

*What did all these communities have in common? They did not read or write. How this came to be is an interesting question that has nothing to do with intellectual inferiority, but we cannot dwell on it now.*

*Does this mean, though, that people who did not have a culture where profound thoughts about the meaning of life, the essence of truth, and about good and evil were written down and preserved, never had these thoughts? Surely not.*

## Remarkable Mohlomi

Once thought pre-colonial Africa hadn't produced anything deeper than cute anecdotes and proverbs that could be put on a Hallmark card or a meme.

That was until about 15 years ago when I did research for a documentary film and came across a remarkable philosopher in the central parts of our country by the name of Mohlomi.

I call him the Aristotle of Clocolan and want to make the case that he should be recognised as a full-fledged philosopher in the international tradition. He never met a single European or anyone other than fellow Africans from Southern Africa.

**Please keep an open mind and walk with me through his story.**

Mohlomi was the great-grandson of the king of the Bakoena, Monaheng, who led his people in the fertile Mohokare Valley (now known as the Caledon Valley, between Lesotho and the Free State) in the 1600s. Mohlomi was born around 1720 and was given his name — which means "The Builder" — by Monaheng himself.

## The Dream

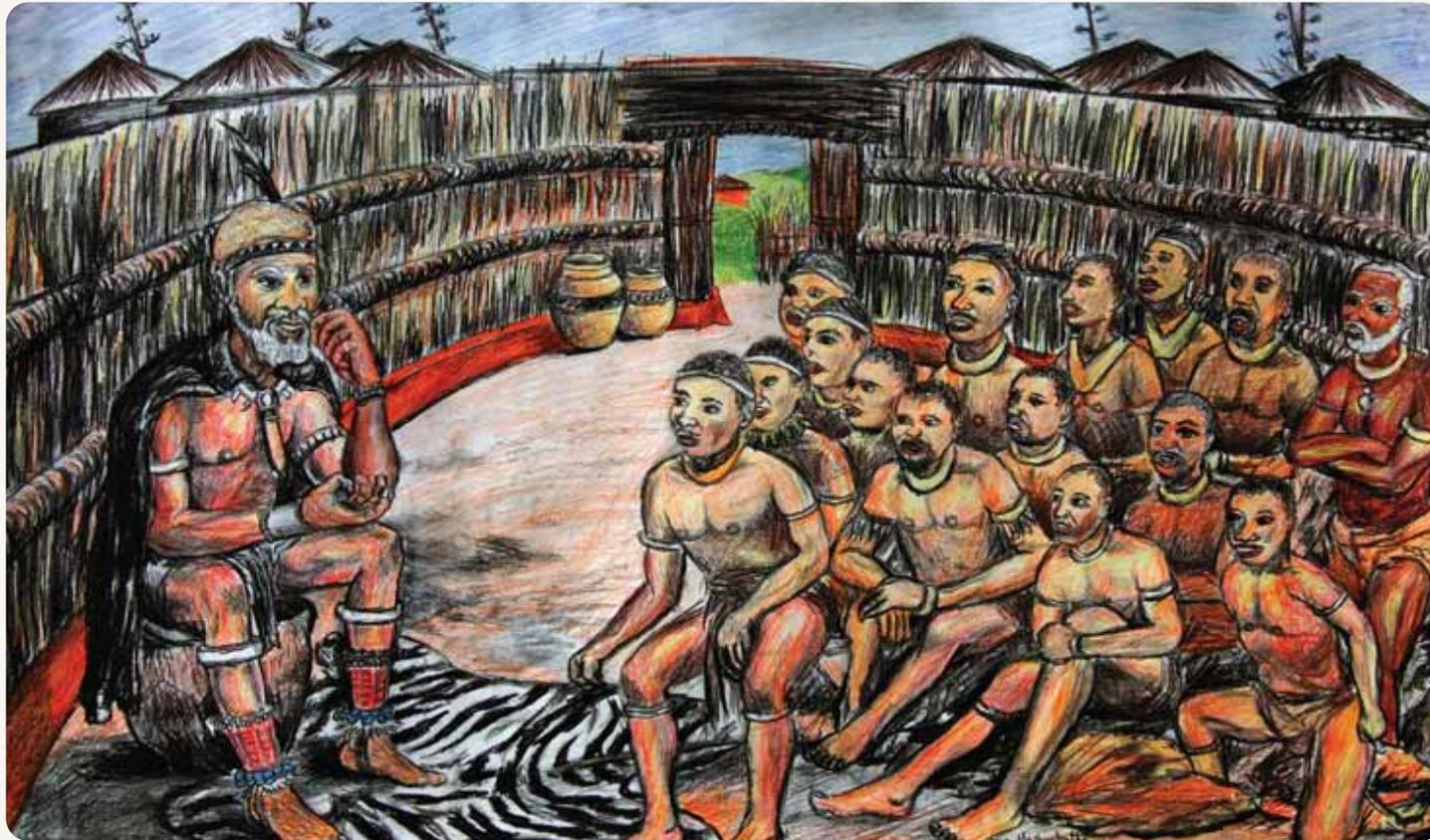
The first thing that the elders in Lesotho's highlands — those who still know about him — say about Mohlomi is that he had a wonderful dream while sleeping in his initiation hut as a 14 or 15-year-old. They say it was not an ordinary dream, a *toro* in Sesotho, but a *pono*, a kind of psychic connection with the ancestral spirits.

Mohlomi recounted that it was dark and stormy that night when suddenly a bright light shone. An eagle came in through the roof of his hut and carried him to the highest peaks above the clouds, where he was welcomed by a crowd of souls of his ancestors. An old man spoke to him and told him he had been chosen to become a great leader; therefore, they had summoned him to give him advice on how to live and lead his people.

There are various versions of what these lessons were, and they have been passed down in oral history among the older Basotho of the Eastern Free State and Lesotho. They all agree that Mohlomi was urged to be a man of love and peace, to have empathy and patience with everyone, even those who opposed him; to be just and see everyone as his brothers and sisters; and to show special care for children, women and the elderly.

We have no way of knowing for sure whether Mohlomi really had this strange dream. It is equally possible that as a young man, he tried to explain his vision to his people through a parable or a story to give it more gravitas, or created a set of symbolic narratives they could understand. The story is still told more than two centuries after his death.

He was still very young when he became a chief in the area of present-day Clocolan and Marquard in the eastern Free State. He was popular and respected, but he was very different from any other leader of his time.



*Mohlomi engaging in one of his many philosophical conversations at his courtyard. (copyright: Moroka Pula Publications)*

While it was customary for a leader to build a strong army, he disbanded his fighting units and urged the men to engage in agriculture and be better husbands to their wives and fathers to their children. Mohlomi also gave away much of his own power to his advisers. This was radical behaviour in his society of the time.

According to oral history, he was an ascetic with iron self-control. He was very fit and ate little. He never drank alcohol nor smoked tobacco nor dagga (marijuana) like most men of his time — in fact, he was

somewhat unpopular because he warned against the use of dagga and alcohol.

### Philosophical Questions

Every old Mosotho I have spoken to over the years about Mohlomi remembers that their grandmothers and grandfathers told them how much he loved to have long, philosophical conversations with other wise individuals. He tried to answer the big questions: Where does the universe begin and end? What is the essence of life, and how was it created? How do we truly know what is true and what is false, what

is good and what is evil? What is a soul, and how does it differ from a brain?

Mohlomi believed there was one creator of everything and that souls were immortal. His philosophies and thoughts had much in common with Eastern thinking and the law of karma.

A person's conscience, Mohlomi preached, rather than the pressure of the community or norms imposed by others, should be their only guide. Fate will be your friend if you treat other people, especially the weak and unfortunate, with compassion and gen-

erosity. People can learn a lot from the past and from each other, but no one can escape the responsibility of their own thoughts and actions and blame circumstances or culture.

These are just glimpses of Mohlomi's philosophy that have survived through oral retelling for more than two centuries. One can only imagine how much more complex his thinking actually was.

Mohlomi lived in the same era as the great Western philosophers Montesquieu, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. I suspect that if they had not written down their thoughts, we would hardly be aware of them today, and they might be remembered only by a few bumper sticker sayings. Conversely, if Mohlomi could write and his books had been preserved, he might have been just as famous as his contemporaries today.

### His Legacy

A philosopher is a product of his or her environment and a thought leader not only for the future but for the community and times in which he or she lives. For Mohlomi, this environment involved the abuse of power by kings and chiefs, bloody conflicts between tribes and clans, witchcraft, superstition, the abuse of alcohol and dagga, and the vulnerable position of women and children in the second half of the 18th century.

Most of Mohlomi's proverbs that have become part of Basotho morality had to do with these issues. "A knobkerrie is worth more when used to grind grain than when used to kill people on the battlefield" was one. Another, more poetic, was: "Peace is my sister", a sister being someone in a vulnerable position in society who should be protected and cherished.

"The law does not know poverty," was directed at chiefs. It was Mohlomi who started the practice — which still survives in rural Lesotho — that you should greet a stranger with an open palm and the exclamation "Khotso!" (peace).



*The ailing Mohlomi in his hut. He still continued to advise his subjects. (copyright: Moroka Pula Publications)*

But his most famous saying, almost a call for a democratic order, was: "A leader is a leader by the grace/consent of his people." (A Chief is a Chief by the Grace of His People is the title of an obscure e-book I wrote years ago about Mohlomi, published by Tafelberg.)

Ah, you start to wonder how I know so much about a man who died before he could meet any European settler and who probably wasn't even aware that writing systems existed. Am I just swallowing the oral history as truth?

### Sources and evidence

There were indeed Europeans who wrote about Mohlomi. The first was Eugène Casalis, a French missionary who lived among the Basotho from 1833, shortly after Mohlomi's death, and whose many writings are preserved in French archives. He wrote that Mohlomi was a "chief of great benevolence" whose name was invoked during crises. When the Basotho prayed, Casalis wrote, they addressed the Creator, Molimo, through Mohlomi.

The Swiss missionary David Frédéric Ellenberger made a significant contribution to South African historiography as a historian. In his book *History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern*, he wrote that Mohlomi was born with "greatness" and was famous far beyond his own environment for his wisdom and preaching of peace and love.

"He was a teacher of people, and his teachings had a wide impact in humanising all the Basotho tribes. He created trust between people and between people

and chiefs, and people honoured him with one voice for his wisdom and love."

There are two other written sources that can be consulted about Mohlomi. One is by Joseph Orpen, an Irishman who became a member of the Free State Volksraad and later served as a liaison between the Basotho and the colonial governments. The other is Ntsu Mokhehle, a former prime minister of Lesotho who spoke to a large number of people in the 1950s, asking what their parents and ancestors had told them about Mohlomi.

I have spent many hours talking to elderly people in Lesotho and the eastern Free State about their knowledge of Mohlomi, and have relied on conversations with academics such as the leading Basotho historian, Professor LBBJ Machobane.

My education and experience are not those of a historian, but of a journalist, a seeker of truth. My years of research on pre-colonial and early colonial Basotho have taught me that you need to apply as many filters to gain a good understanding when reading the early missionaries and colonial historians as you do with oral history.

**But let's continue with Mohlomi's story.**

### On foot

He did the unusual thing of entrusting his clan to his council members and travelling throughout the entire subcontinent to spread his message of peace and love and to learn from other cultures.

With only a calabash of water and a walking stick, and accompanied by a few unarmed young men, he walked as far as present-day KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Botswana, and probably the southern part of Zimbabwe. He undertook several such journeys and was sometimes away for more than a year at a time.

He is said to have been received everywhere with open arms, also because he was a skilled herbalist. He analysed the different communities to understand why some were prosperous and others were not, and supposedly learned all the languages of the regions he visited. He also entered into symbolic marriages with numerous young women in these communities as a gesture of peace and interdependence.

When he was in his seventies and too old to venture on such long journeys, he settled permanently at his kraal, Ngoliloe, near present-day Clocolan (then Hlohloane), and established a school for aspiring chiefs in the area — a leadership academy.

### Mohlomism

And this brings me to my strongest argument that Mohlomi was not just a wise old dude but indeed a philosopher. One of his star students became the greatest and most influential king of the Basotho and consistently proclaimed that he practised Mohlomism. Therefore, we can see Mohlomi's philosophy being applied in practice.

This student was Moshoeshoe, whose potential and leadership qualities Mohlomi immediately recognised. He spent a lot of time with him, and when Moshoeshoe "graduated", Mohlomi gave him one of his earrings as a symbol of authority and a knobkerrie as a symbol of power

According to oral history, he rubbed his forehead against Moshoeshoe's and said he transferred all his wisdom and insights to the young man, who would have to lead his people through difficult times.

A year or so before his death in 1815, Mohlomi warned that he saw a large, red cloud approaching that would engulf his people. The devastating Lifaqane, two decades of massive social and political upheaval in the eastern and central parts of South Africa, began just a few years after his death.

People believed Mohlomi could see the future and received messages from God, but the truth is probably that through his travels and insights, he recognised the early signs of instability in neighbouring regions.

### Moshoeshoe, a Unique Leader

Moshoeshoe assumed the leadership of the Bamakoteli in 1820, 13 years before his first encounter with Europeans in the person of Casalis. His first 47 years were entirely influenced by his own people and experiences.

The moment the initial violence of the Lifaqane reached his people, Moshoeshoe demonstrated that he was an entirely different kind of leader from his contemporaries — Shaka, Mzilikazi, Mpangazitha, Manthatisi and others. They all participated fervently in the bloody orgy but Moshoeshoe led his people to a nearly impenetrable flat mountain called Thaba-Bosiu and declared that he would not engage in wars. His fortress was attacked many times, including by Mzilikazi, the British, and the Free Staters. They all had to retreat, and none of them advanced to the top of the mountain.

He invited people fleeing from the warring hordes to join his people, regardless of whether they were Zulus, Tswanas, Korannas, Khoi-Khoi, or San/Bushmen. Everyone was allowed to speak their own language and practice their traditions. His herds grew, and there was a good sorghum harvest every year. Thaba Bosiu became a beacon of peace and stability in a sea of bloodshed and famine.

In the mid-1800s, he began to refer to his people as the Basotho. Shaka shaped the Zulu nation through power and subjugation, but Moshoeshoe formed his own people through persuasion, protection, prosperity and stability. There can be little doubt that the chaos and destruction of the Lifaqane would have spread to the rest of the land if it hadn't been for his stabilising role, and our history would have unfolded quite differently.

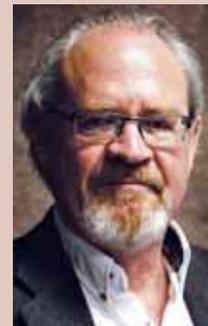
In everything Moshoeshoe did, Mohlomi's philosophy was evident. He didn't make decisions without his khotla, a meeting of senior men, and critical decisions were made through a pitso, a meeting of all subjects. He encouraged his people to voice their opinions and even disagree with him openly. In short, King Moshoeshoe was an exceptional leader with a clear vision, which he consistently stated was based on that of Mohlomi.

### Less of a Philosopher

The evidence is therefore on the table. We know that Mohlomi was a deep and unconventional thinker.

Fragments of what he said and believed are still available to us, revealing profound insights and a sharp intellect that surpassed the everyday existence of a group of illiterate farmers.

And we have evidence, this time not just through oral tradition, that the man he trained as a leader and who followed his philosophy became one of Africa's great figures, a kind of Nelson Mandela of the 19th century. If you ask me, Moshoeshoe, Rousseau, Voltaire and Kant could have sat around a table for days, delving into the deeper questions of human existence. Only, Mohlomi knew nothing about reading and writing. Does that make him less of a philosopher?



**Max du Preez** is a veteran journalist, author, and political analyst. After graduating in Political Science from Stellenbosch University, Max worked as a journalist, covering South African and regional politics. He was the political correspondent for the Financial Mail, Sunday Times, and Business Day. In 1989, he was the founder/editor of the first anti-apartheid Afrikaans-language newspaper, Vrye Weekblad, which was revived as an online publication earlier this year. He was the producer/presenter of pioneering SABC programmes such as the Truth Commission Special Report and Special Assignment when he worked at the SABC between 1994 and 2000. Du Preez is the author of 13 books on South African history and politics. His latest, *A Rumour of Spring – South Africa After Twenty Years of Democracy*, won the coveted Alan Paton Prize for Non-fiction in 2014. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Free State in 2017 and by Stellenbosch University in 2018. Du Preez is also Extraordinary Professor in the School of Communication at North-West University, and a Fellow in the Centre for Leadership Ethics in Africa at the University of Fort Hare.

Among his many awards is the Pringle Prize from the National Union of Journalists in 1990; the Louis M Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism from the Niemann Fellows at Harvard University in 1991; the Award for Outstanding Journalism from the Foreign Correspondents Association in 1996; the Yale Globalist International Journalist of 2006; and the Nat Nakasa Award for Courageous Journalism from the SA National Editors' Forum in 2008.

Max has researched widely about the history of Mohlomi and King Moshoeshoe and presented many lectures on the topic. He is also widely acclaimed for his thought provoking speech during the graduation ceremony of Masters and PHD students at the University of Free State in 2018. The speech can be accessed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNxxLOaAzTQ>

Source: *University of Free State*

# The Journey that built a Nation - Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu

Writes Professor Tefetso Mothibe

*In 2024, Lesotho will celebrate two hundred years since its founding by Morena Moshoeshoe I. It is an important year as it marks the bicentenary of the existence of the Basotho state and nation, marked by the exodus of Moshoeshoe and his followers from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu. This historic relocation to Thaba-Bosiu is the turning point in the formation of the Basotho Nation. It is even more important because we acknowledge, appreciate, recognise and promote the positive and constructive role played by Morena Moshoeshoe I, a humane and intelligent man and a skillful and far-sighted patriot who despite serious odds, managed to build the Basotho nation in the midst of chaos and warfare.*

*It is said that Moshoeshoe and his people arrived in the late afternoon near conical Qiloane hill and it took them a long time to negotiate their way up the mountain. In the morning when they retraced their steps, they realised that the mountain was not as high as it had appeared during the night. They remarked that 'Ke thaba ha e le bosiu' which explains how the mountain fortress got its name in the short form, Thaba-Bosiu. Thaba-Bosiu was and still is, the citadel of Basotho. Moshoeshoe himself called the mountain his mother and the mother of all his people. It was the Promised Land for Basotho.*

**B**orn in 1786, Moshoeshoe was a member of a minor chiefly family of the Bakoena lineage and his parents, Mokhachane and Kholu, named him Lepoqo (Dispute). He later earned the

name of Moshoeshoe as a result of his bravery and success as a cattle raider. Moshoeshoe seems to have harboured an ambition for greatness and was determined to achieve this by means that included violence, instilling fear in others, intolerance and impatience with the tardy execution of his orders. Indeed, so intolerant was the young Lepoqo that he is reported to have on one occasion killed five of his followers – some for the small offence of milking his favourite cow and others for the slow implementation of his orders. However, a meeting with and teachings of Morena Mohlomi, the son of Monyane, who was a doctor, traveller, sage, philosopher and mystic changed all this. Mohlomi is said to have advised Moshoeshoe that the best way to achieve his ambition of becoming Morena was to behave in a humane and intelligent way. He is reported to have said to Moshoeshoe, “Someday, in all probability, thou wilt be called to govern men. When thou shalt sit in judgment, let thy decisions be just. The law knows no one as a poor man.” Mohlomi emphasized the value of peaceful negotiations and fairness in dealing with other people. He was reported to have loved the saying, “it pays better to fight the corn than to whet the spear.”

Like all other young men of his era, the time came for Moshoeshoe to leave his parents' house to establish his own homestead. As the first son of a minor chief, in his case, this included founding his own village with his followers away from his father's village of Menkhoaneng. In readiness for this, he began to gather around him a core group of followers made up of his age-mates and added to it groups such as Bafokeng of Ntsukunyane, Bafokeng

of Ramohau and influential individuals like his maternal uncle Rats'iu. There were at least two ways, by which Moshoeshoe brought other chiefdoms and lineages under his chiefdom. He used the policy of “subordination and cooption, “and direct attacks and defeat of those who opposed him. Such was the fate of Basia of Shekeshe and Bafokeng of Makara.

Around 1820, Matiwane of AmaNgwane attacked some chiefdoms in Lesotho. These attacks awakened Moshoeshoe to the fact that he needed a safer place to safeguard and expand his young chiefdom. Then, at the age of about 34, he, together with his followers, moved away from his birthplace of Menkhoaneng to Botha-Bothe Mountain. There he adopted a new policy of striking alliances with other chiefs to enlarge and safeguard his chiefdom. One such alliance was that between Moshoeshoe and Lethole, chief of Makhoakhoa where, according to Thompson, under this alliance “each ruler would remain autonomous but cooperate against aggressors and in doing so, they would act under the leadership of Moshoeshoe.” This strategy of alliances would be pursued by Moshoeshoe in the 1840s and the 1850s when he struck alliances with Moletsane of Bataung and Moorosi of Baphuthi while the Batlokoa were subjugated in the 1850s.

The intensity of the Lifaqane, violent upheavals that unleashed a train of refugee-chiefdoms attacking and fleeing from one another, of the 1820s led to the destruction of food, lives and property. The Botha-Bothe Mountain proved not to be such a secure fortress and constant attacks on it, especially the three months 'siege by Sekonyela of the Batlokoa assisted by his uncle and Nkhahle of the other main branch of Batlokoa, led Moshoeshoe to look for a safer place where he could settle with his followers. He is reported to have sent his half-brother, Mohale to inspect the land south that he learnt had not been so badly devastated by wars which contained a mountain which would make an excellent fortress. Mohale had returned and confirmed that he had indeed found a defensible mountain.

Around June or July 1824, mid-winter and bitterly cold, Moshoeshoe and his now large following, (though difficult to estimate its number), including their livestock and portable possessions, is reported to have taken an important decision to move to Thaba-Bosiu. It is also reported that the trip took seventy miles on foot and three nights to complete through a mountainous country infested with cannibals. On the second day of the trip as they climbed the Lipetu pass, old people, pregnant women and young children who were moving slowly and were last of the group, were attacked by a band of cannibals led by Rakotsoane. In this attack, some of the women and children, including Moshoeshoe's grandfather, Peete, were killed and eaten while the majority were rescued by Moshoeshoe's warriors. Instead of ordering the killing of these cannibals when Rakotsoane confessed to the crime upon being caught, Moshoeshoe not only strongly opposed his advisors who wanted them killed for such a heinous crime but had an ox slaughtered and purification medicines prepared and applied on the cannibals' tummies to cleanse them of the sacrilege of eating human flesh and as he would say, to preserve these symbols of his grandfather's burial. Moshoeshoe went further to present the cannibals with *mafisa* cattle and land to grow crops, decreeing that they should permanently give up cannibalism.

As soon as they reached the mountain that was recommended by Mohale, Moshoeshoe is reported to have placed men to guard the approximately six passes and did what was necessary to protect his people from human enemies and malignant spirits. “Stones were smeared with medicine from his lenaka, (a horn, preferably a rhinoceros horn, containing a potion composed of a mixture of vegetable and animal materials and human flesh), were driven into the ground at the tops of the passes and on the sites he selected for his lekhotla, his cattle kraal, and his personal hut.” The pass next to his village became known as the Khubelu, the Red Pass, because of the red dolerite in its bed.

*Moshoeshoe's subjects on the journey to Thaba Bosiu. Women, the elderly and children trailing behind were ambushed and eaten by the cannibals, including his grandfather, Peete. (Painting by Steve Raschloho)*





*Manthatsi of Batlokoa was another chief who invaded Moshoeshoe at Menkhoaneng*

Thaba-Bosiu provided a much better fortress than Botha-Bothe did. It proved to be an excellent defensive position, with steep sides and only six natural passes to the top. In addition, the Basotho defensive fortifications and their rolling boulders down upon invaders prevented any enemy from ever capturing the plateau. The eight natural springs allowed Moshoeshoe and his followers to survive long sieges. African and European invaders such as Amangwane of Mpangazitha in the 1820s and 1830s and the Boer Louis Wepener in the 1860s, who was the only enemy ever to reach the top of the mountain, were unable to capture the plateau. Legend has it also that Thaba-Bosiu which literally translates as Mountain at Night explains why the invaders were unable to capture it because it grew at night.

For his protected position on top of Thaba-Bosiu, Moshoeshoe employed political and socio-economic strategies to build his nation. Politically, he continued and refined his strategies of cooptation and military subjugation of other chiefdoms. Examples are that in 1825, his half-brother, Mohale, forced Baphuthi to submit to Moshoeshoe's authority after they lost almost all their cattle to the Abathembu. In the 1820s, Bataung became subjects of Moshoeshoe after he placed his other half-brother, Mopeli, over them. In 1853 after years of rivalry and struggle for supremacy in the Mohokare valley, Moshoeshoe himself attacked, defeated and subjugated Sekonyela and his Batlokoa under his rule.

Apart from political strategies, Moshoeshoe also used economic and social strategies to build the Basotho nation. Central to the forging and consolidation of his rule and the emergence of the

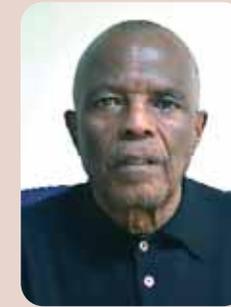
Basotho state was his control over the herds of cattle which were raided from neighbouring chiefdoms and their distribution through a patronage system of mafisa. By 1839, Moshoeshoe had distributed most of his estimated 20000 herds of cattle as mafisa. The provision of mafisa created a social as well as economic dependency in the form of a patron-client relationship. This dependency in turn had political implications between a chief and his subjects because the 'beneficiary' was expected to owe allegiance to his chief. This meant that the stability of chiefdom and the size of a chief's following depended on the number of his herds and how well he used these to create patron-client relationships.

Marriage was another important instrument in the nation-building process. Moshoeshoe married many wives from the families of different chiefs and allies and in the process bore many children. Through his many daughters, he was able to acquire a lot of cattle from the custom of bohali (bridewealth) which he in turn used as mafisa. In 1833 Casalis thought that Moshoeshoe had thirty wives.

By 1833 Moshoeshoe's chiefdom was the largest and most powerful in the Mohokare valley, and as early as 1834, Moshoeshoe was recognised by the British at the Cape as the "...sovereign ruler of his nation and a leader of remarkable talent." At the same time (1833), the missionaries estimated that the kingdom of Lesotho had about 25 000 followers most of whom were survivors of lifaqane. Thaba-Bosiu was the capital and was estimated to have about 2 000 people on and around the mountain. This was the pre-eminent settlement where Mokhachane, Moshoeshoe, his wives, children, some of his matona (ministers), bahlanka (clientship), herbalists, rainmakers, diviners, praise-singers, town criers, personal attendants and herdsmen lived. Moshoeshoe ruled this core area directly with the help of Masopha, his third son in the first house of 'Mamohato, his first wife.

During the remaining 46 years of Moshoeshoe's life since 1824, Thaba-Bosiu became not only the political center of Basotho nation but the center of

organised resistance to European encroachment and invasion. European invaders, the British in 1852, and the Boers of the Orange Free State (1858-1868) had no more success in storming Moshoeshoe's mountain. During a siege of Thaba-Bosiu on the 15 August 1865, the Boer leader, Louis Wepener made it to the top of Khubelu Pass only to be struck down by a bullet. Wepener is the only enemy ever to reach the top of the mountain, and for this reason, he has remained linked to it as Khubelu Pass is also known as Wepener's Pass.



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He is the 6th Vice Chancellor of the NUL and also the founding Director of the Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership which was established in 2018. He has a wide and long experience in Higher Education as Head of Department, Dean of the Faculty, Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor and a member of the university Councils of NUL and Copperbelt University, Zambia. He has also served as a Board member of the International Association of Universities and UNESCO Executive Board.

# Aranda



# Kobo ke bophelo

*The blanket is life*

Aranda Textile Mills has been the unmatched name brand in blanket products since the early 1950s. The company is a fourth-generation, family owned and operated business with a strong manufacturing history in traditional woollen blankets, shawls, décor and fashion throws, as well as renowned quality bed blankets. Proprietors, the Magni family, have been active in the manufacture of textiles since the 1890's, and exported their goods all over the world from their factory in Prato, Italy before relocating to South Africa after World War II.



Today the factory space covers eleven acres and is based on the West Rand of Johannesburg. It has operated from the same location in Randfontein since its inception. In 1981, Aranda opened its own yarn spinning plant in KwaZulu Natal, making it a fully vertical textile mill.

Over the years, Aranda has adapted to changing market trends and technologies, ensuring its continued success and relevance. Through investments in state-of-the-art machinery and processes, the company has enhanced its manufacturing capabilities and maintained a competitive edge. Aranda Textile Mills has also prioritized product development, sustainability and ethical business practices. The company's success can be attributed to its skilled workforce, strong leadership, and a customer-centric approach. Aranda has a reputation for delivering products of exceptional quality and value, which has earned the trust and loyalty of its consumers.

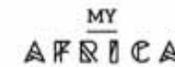
The company turns 70 years old in 2023 and it is constantly growing and evolving within a dynamic South African political and economic landscape. To this day, the company constantly strives to provide world-class products and services to the continent's biggest retailers and is one of the primary suppliers of high-quality blankets and throws to the African continent.

Aranda Textile Mills acquired the rights to produce the Basotho Heritage Blankets such as the Victoria England, Seanamarena, Sefate and Morena in 1992. Thereafter many more designs within the brand followed suit. To date, the company remains committed to upholding its legacy while embracing innovation and adapting to evolving market demands.



Through initiatives such as the Young Basotho Designers Collection, a programme aimed at empowering young designers of Basotho origin, to showcase their blanket designs and tell Basotho tales through the medium of the blanket. Aranda continues to be a leading name in the blanket manufacturing industry and ensures a promising future.

We are proud supporters of the legacy of the great King Moshoeshe I and the heritage of the Basotho nation. We join Basotho in celebrating the two hundred years of the formation of one of the greatest nations in southern Africa. Hala halala Ma-apara kobo a matle!





*Basotho warriors in battle with the Boers at Rafutho Pass, led by Louw Wepener on 15 August 1865. Wepener was shot by Basotho regiments and died on the spot. (painting by Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho)*

# Moshoeshoe the Diplomat. His Reign and 19th Century Politics During Lifaqane Wars.

By Professor LBBJ Machobane Scribe – Manyathela Kheleli

*History tells the story of King Moshoeshoe I as one of the greatest leaders of his time in the 19th century that Africa has ever produced, He is widely acclaimed as the founding father of the Basotho nation as we know it today. He is the epitome of African diplomacy. Moshoeshoe was a charismatic, brave and wise king who survived many challenges and managed to protect his people and territory that we call Lesotho today. He was a deft politician with unparalleled foresight that was the envy of his peers. Moshoeshoe I is the only ruler in the region that was never defeated by the white settlers in Southern Africa during the 1800s, which is the reason why Basotho remain one of the few nations in Southern Africa that still enjoys its territory and sovereignty in the family of nations.*

*Moshoeshoe was like any other chief in the 1820s. He followed the norms and practices common with chiefs during the time. What characterised a chief in that era was for him to be known as a fierce fighter and to be strict, so that he could command and earn following from his people. In keeping with the chiefs at the time, Moshoeshoe was no different. He was also an equally ruthless man similar to his peers. Just like Shaka of the Zulu kingdom, who wreaked havoc in Southern Africa with his orchestration of the Lifaqane wars, he would kill when he was angry. Oral traditions reveal that Moshoeshoe, at different stages of his early life, killed those who delayed carrying out his orders. At one time, he even killed some men he accused of milking his favourite cows.*

Before we delve into Moshoeshoe and his greatness, it is important to trace his origins, how he assumed power and how he rose among the Bamokoteli tribe. In the Basotho culture of the day, succession for chieftainship was not automatic. Whereas customary law dictated that succession was based on primogenitary inheritance, there were instances where merit superseded primogeniture. Such included cases where the rightful prince was an imbecile or the younger siblings proved themselves with superior military prowess. This was the case with his father, Mokhachane, also known as Libenyane. Mokhachane ascended the throne of the Bamokoteli dynasty from his brother, Libe. It is said that Libe lost the following of his people because he was extremely arrogant and wanted to be cajoled, which could have led to a rift between them, leading to Mokhachane eventually winning the hearts to be installed as the chief.

Moshoeshoe, (then Lepoqo), easily succeeded his father because of his early signs of wisdom, leadership and bravery demonstrated among his peers. One of his greatest supporters was Makoanyane, the son of Nt'seke of the Nguni extract. They both went to initiation together and made a pact that Lepoqo would be the king of his people. Makoanyane later became the general commander of Moshoeshoe's warriors

Recognising his intelligence at a tender age, Moshoeshoe's grandfather, Peete or Motšoane sent him to Mohlomi to refine his leadership. Mohlomi the seer, was already a renowned philosopher and advisor with a mission of peace. He tutored Moshoeshoe at Ngoliloe, the present-day Clocolan.

This is where Moshoeshoe underwent a lot of transformation that formed the foundation of his exceptional leadership qualities, which eventually enabled him to build a formidable nation.

It is said that Mohlomi used to take Moshoeshoe to the hills of Ngoliloe at dawn to witness the village waking up at sunrise. This was done to inspire Moshoeshoe to see the tranquility that prevailed with his subjects and the responsibility that lay ahead of him to protect and give them a livelihood. Mohlomi instilled the principles of peace and negotiation over war in Moshoeshoe's mind. He also tamed his ruthless disposition and instilled in him the values of charity and diplomacy. This transformation was the turning point that would elevate Moshoeshoe into a great statesman, whose exemplary legacy continues to transcend generations as we know today.

Oral traditions reveal that when Moshoeshoe "graduated" from the teachings of his mentor, he rubbed his forehead against Moshoeshoe's and by that action, Mohlomi said he had transferred all wisdom to him. Mohlomi gave him one of his earrings as a symbol of authority and a knobkerrie as a symbol of power. He also presented him with a headband and a knife carrier on his neck. The other chief who was tutored by Mohlomi, but did not graduate to be like Moshoeshoe, was Sebetoane who later tracked and settled in Barotseland in Zambia and parts of Zimbabwe.

Moshoeshoe's rule was founded on the principles he learnt from Mohlomi. His rule was exemplary, and his intelligence was way above other chiefs and peers at the time. There are three main characteristics that defined Moshoeshoe's rule. First, Moshoeshoe in many instances, preferred peace instead of war. Secondly, he was a calculating and clever diplomat. He had a peculiar foresight to correctly read situations and almost always chose options that were able to save his people. Moshoeshoe was also an astute administrator whose pulse was in the soul of his people.



*Francois Maeder's drawing of 'Nau Joshua Makoanyane. Moshoeshoe's boyhood friend, initiation mate and head of Moshoeshoe's regiments. (courtesy of Morija Museum and Archives)*

In the promotion of peace over war, Professor Machobane compares the approach of Shaka and Moshoeshoe to that of Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X in African American struggles in the United States. Both sets of leaders had a common enemy and they were both thinkers faced with the problem of white supremacy. They had to do their best to save their nations, but their approaches were different. In the case of Martin Luther and Malcolm X, Luther believed in achieving equality by using non-violence and promoting justice among all races. On the other hand, Malcolm X approached the same enemy from a context tainted by indignation, resentment and the desire for separation. By the same token, Shaka fought in defence of his nation except that he was harsher. He was a violent king who believed in violence as a solution to the challenges of the day.

In contrast, Moshoeshoe opted for peace and peaceful means to resolve conflict. He did however, go to war when he had very few options. Moshoeshoe recognised Shaka's disposition towards war and even exploited it to set Shaka against his enemies. At the time, Shaka was a famous war strategist in Southern Africa, who had perfected his art of war, *impi*. He instigated Lifaqane, the period of intense political conflicts and migration in the 1820s. At the height of these



*A painting of Moshoeshoe and Eugene Casalis, his advisor in a meeting with Sir George Cathcart (copyright Morola Pula Productions)*

wars, Moshoeshoe pre-empted Shaka's attacks against him. To fend off the imminent wars, Moshoeshoe took advantage of Matiwane who had broken away from Shaka. He is said to have proclaimed to Shaka that he was his vassal and that Matiwane was troubling him. By extension, Moshoeshoe was effectively setting up Matiwane against Shaka, and based on their history, Shaka did invade Matiwane and defeated him. Peace prevailed between Basotho and the Zulu. Shaka's successor, Dingane even spent a month at Thaba Bosiu discussing issues of mutual interest with Moshoeshoe at the time.

Moshoeshoe would also periodically give Shaka '*masiba a li mpshhe*' - ostrich feathers to avoid war with him and to express his allegiance. Ostrich feathers were used by historians in a play of metaphor because the feathers were actually a gift of beautiful women for his hospitality. He knew that Shaka liked the company of women, not wives.

During the exodus of his people from Menkhoaneng to Thaba Bosiu in 1824, a travel party that was trailing behind, mostly comprised of women, the elderly and children including his grandfather, Peete was ambushed by cannibals led by Rakotsoane. In this incident, Peete was eaten by the cannibals. Moshoeshoe sent his warriors to rescue his subjects and capture the cannibals. He did not counterintuitively kill the people who maimed and ate his grandfather. Instead, he performed a ritual to hit their bellies with the waste from the rumen of a cow, *mosoang*. At a symbolic level, the rumen waste was the acknowledgment of his grandfather's grave that was now inside the stomachs of living beings. He then gave Rakotsoane's cannibals some cattle and grains, then integrated them with his people.

During the late 1830s and into the 1840s, Moshoeshoe began to encounter a new enemy, the white man. First, it was the Boer Afrikaners who left the Cape Colony coming further inland in search of better land and to avoid conflict with the British. The second was the British government itself in the Cape. Many wars ensued at the time, predominantly because of disputes over land. Despite capturing most of his land with guns, Moshoeshoe was never captured at the impregnable Thaba Bosiu mountain fortress. The closest the Boers ever got was in 1865, during the gath-

ing wars where the Boer commander, Louis Wepener was killed trying to reach the summit of Thaba Bosiu.

The most famous war that Moshoeshoe fought was with the British in 1852 where the British were led by Sir George Cathcart, the governor of the Cape Colony in a dispute where Moshoeshoe could not honour the order to deliver 10 000 head of cattle and 1 000 horses as punishment for undertaking cattle raids. Cathcart had assembled the largest British army in Southern Africa at the time. His army was made of 2 500 men from the Cape Mounted Rifles and the 12th Royal Lancers. Cathcart's army was also armed with two 12-pounder howitzers and rocket tubes.

On 19 December 1852, Cathcart and his men crossed the Caledon River divided into three forces for a confrontation against Basotho horsemen armed with old muskets, assegais and knobkerries at Berea plateau. The British suffered heavy losses and were eventually forced to retreat with about 4,000 herd of cattle recovered. The Governor of the Cape Colony was actually defeated in the war, but Moshoeshoe aware that he was fighting the Queen of England, did not gloat. He forbade his people from composing war songs to celebrate their victory. Instead, with his deft diplomacy, wrote a letter that said;

*Your Excellency, this day you have fought against my people and taken much cattle. As the object for which you have come to have compensation for the Boers, I beg you will be satisfied with what you have taken. I entreat peace from you. You have shown your power, you have chastised me. Let it be enough. I pray you and let me no longer be considered an enemy of the Queen. I will try all I can to keep my people in order in the future.*

The letter was written by one of his educated sons, Nehemia Sekhonyana. The letter was received at noon with Cathcart's in full retreat and his ego bruised, to which he responded by praising Moshoeshoe for his consideration and also expressed his satisfaction that the cattle they have taken are enough to cover the fine.

On leadership and administration of the affairs of his people, Moshoeshoe was extremely fond of public gatherings, Lipitso. He held these to report on the state of affairs of his nation. He also used public gath-

ings to discuss major issues of the day and to seek the advice of his subjects and his councillors, even though he had the final word. The most famous pitso ever held was in 1862 which was even attended by ambassadors from Amazulu and Amapondo tribes, Sek'huk'huni of Bapeli and other chiefs from as far as the present-day Zimbabwe. The main subject of discussion at this pitso was the discussion on the terms and modalities of getting the British to intercede in the encroachment of Afrikaners in the region. In keeping with Moshoeshoe's remarkable foresight, this pitso can also be deemed to be the earliest proposal towards the formation of the present-day SADC. It demonstrates that Lesotho was the center of gravity for Southern African politics.

Public gatherings were held throughout Moshoeshoe's time until only in 1903 during Lerotholi's rule, who had been advised by the British colonial rule that pitsos have grown too big. The British replaced pitsos with the formation of the Basotho National Council composed mostly of chiefs.

The ailing Moshoeshoe later in his late 80s eventually got the British to annex Basutoland as a protectorate on 12 March 1868. At the time, he was restricted from buying modern weapons and ammunition, and he knew annexation was the only way to protect his people, especially from the Boers. It is important to note that Moshoeshoe wanted his land and people to become a British protectorate, not a colony. This position was also supported by the British High Commissioner at the time, Sir Phillip Edmond Wodehouse.

Moshoeshoe died on 11 March 1870 at the age of 84. He was succeeded by his son, Paramount Chief Letsie I. At the time of his death, he led a nation of about 150,000 people. He remains one of the most visionary leaders to have come out of the African continent in the 19th century. He was the only king who was never completely defeated or killed by the encroaching whites in Southern Africa, not because of his fierceness, but largely through his diplomacy. In keeping with his wisdom, he was also never baptized, despite living with the missionaries for 37 years. His greatest legacy that remains to this date is the country called the Kingdom of Lesotho today with its territory completely surrounded by her only neighbour, South Africa.

*Endnote: This article has been written using the transcription method. The informant, Professor LBBJ Machobane at the time of compiling this information has impaired sight due to illness but the wealth and depth of information at his disposal has warranted that we explore this avenue to bring this story to life.*



**Professor Lehloholo Burns Banda Jiane (LBBJ) Machobane** is a decorated scholar, historian and published author with extensive research work under his belt. He studied History and English Literature at

Lehigh University in the US in 1974 and also acquired a PhD in African Constitutional History from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

He has also taught history at his alma mater, Lehigh University and Jackson State University between 1972 and 1975. Professor Machobane came back to Lesotho in 1976 and taught history at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) specializing in African and Afro-American history. In 1995 he was the Associate Professor in the Department of History and became the first Mosotho Professor in History in 2004.

Professor Machobane has also served as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at NUL, and later Pro-Vice Chancellor between 1980 and 1988. He has also served in government as the Minister of Education between 1988 and 1990. His books include *Government in Change* (1990), *King's Knights* (2001), and *Essays on Religion and Culture Among Basotho* (2001). He is in the process of publishing another book, *Lipolelo tsa Ntate ka Motho*. He won the NUL 50th Anniversary Award and the Lesotho Haeso Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.



*King Moshoeshe meets King Moroka near Thaba-Nchu (copyright Morola Pula Productions)*

# Moshoeshoeism, Policies and the Influence of Mohlomi on Moshoeshoe's Brand of Leadership

Writes Kalosi Bantu Ramakhula (D.O.A.H)

*The 20th of December 1852 is probably the most important day in the history of the Basotho nation. On this day the Basotho army defeated the largest army the Imperial United Kingdom had ever fielded in Southern Africa at the time. In what Casalis describes as "perhaps the most conventional war ever fought in South Africa", the Basotho regiments defeated the mighty British." In this era, the army of Lesotho was, in shape and tactics, simply the best in Southern Africa. This fact is corroborated by Lieutenant General Sir George Cathcart, who after the battle of Berea commented thus; "They did very well, they are as good as Cossacks, and I have had a lot to do with Cossacks". The Russian Cossacks are, in military science circles, considered the best horse regiments in the world.*

*On the evening of the same day as the Basotho celebrated their victory over the greatest fighting force in the world, Generalissimo Moshoeshoe summoned his national council to discuss the way forward. The outcome of that meeting was a letter to the Commander of the British force, General Cathcart. The contents of the letter included; granting cessation of hostilities, declaring the British victors in that war and the request for Britain to look at the Basotho nation as a loyal ally, not an enemy. Dr Martin Moloantoa Lelimo declares this letter; "the most diplomatic letter ever to be penned in Africa."*

*This meeting Morena Moshoeshoe had with his councillors, and the letter it produced speaks to the level of intellectual perspicacity prevalent among the Basotho. The Basotho Council was aware that the British Empire possessed far more power than the Basotho and that if their pride was hurt the British could mobilise an army larger than the whole population of Lesotho.*

I start this presentation with this date because within 24 hours of that day, two very important things happened that portray the astuteness of the Basotho nation physically, (shown by their ability to defeat such a great force on the field) and intellectually (the diplomatic letter that was so well

crafted that General Cathcart's crestfallen ego was restored...and that letter ensured that the British never attacked Lesotho directly ever again.) So deep was the impression the conduct of the Basotho had on the British that back in the Cape, Lieutenant General Sir Cathcart passed a decree



*Moshoeshoe's mentor, Mohlomi (copyright Moroka Pula Productions)*

prohibiting any agitation against Lesotho.

In 1852 Moshoeshoe's state was at its zenith. Kings and Chiefs of different ranks came to Thaba Bosiu to pay homage to the Chief of the Mountain. In His Book "Survival in two worlds Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786-1870", Leonard Thompson declares that; "Thaba Bosiu was the centre of Pan African Political activity." At this time King Moshoeshoe was the most successful Chief anywhere in the region. The Basotho were one of the wealthiest nations in South Africa, only second to the Cape.

For many years the Basotho nation would continue to weather political and military storms that included 10 years of military campaigns by the Boer Republics against the Basotho, the intention of which was to conquer Moshoeshoe's people. The Basotho remained indomitable. This is the reason why today there is a country in the heart of the South Africa Republic called Lesotho. An island in the ocean of colonial domination for indeed even one of the mightiest African tribes, the Zulu, had been completely overrun and conquered. This is attributable to King

Moshoeshoe's leadership style and the national ideology of the Basotho nation ... *SeMoshoeshoe*.

The topic to be discussed in this article is Moshoeshoeism; policies and the influence of Mohlomi on Moshoeshoe's brand of leadership. What is *SeMoshoeshoe*? And how was it cultivated? What was it that shaped King Moshoeshoe's leadership style?

## The story behind the Philosophy

Moshoeshoe was born in Menkhoaneng in present day Leribe district of Lesotho. As a young man he craved to be a great chief. So great was his desire that he is said to have killed no less than 5 agemates of his, just because they did not accord him enough respect. Seeing this trait in his grandson, Peete, Moshoeshoe's paternal grandfather took him to a great doctor and seer Mohlomi. This Mohlomi was not only a doctor, but he was also a great philosopher who travelled most of Southern Africa curing people and preaching living in love and in peace. Wherever he visited, it is said, people from around that place would flock to where he was to listen to him. And stories he had.

## Malomi'-a-Matsie

This Mohlomi was a Mokoena by birth, a son of one Monyane a man of no significance and worse, a bearer of such unbecoming character that the young Mohlomi's childhood was a thorny one. Mohlomi's grandmother was the one who compensated for all his father's ills. Mohlomi refers to his grandmother as the light that set him on the path of goodness. It was this grand dame who gave Mohlomi his first lessons on the efficacy of herbs. But as for his spirituality, it was the heaven itself that summoned him. Mohlomi tells a story of when he was the initiation school when he got a glimpse of the spiritual realm. He was asleep when he saw the roof of the hut he was in opening up and then a being he could not describe carried him through the open roof to a place up above the clouds. There in heaven, he met many people he knew who had died. It was there where he was advised to go rule people as if they were all his brothers and sisters. It was this experience that turned Mohlomi into the sage and ruler he became.

Mohlomi's full name was Mohlomi-oo-Matsie. Loosely translated, this name means the one who establishes villages, or founder of villages. It would sound like this name he gave to himself at *Lebollong* (the initiation school) and his whole life would be a manifestation of its meaning. He was an establisher of villages. Mohlomi was not a Chief by birth, not even of the Bamonaheng who were his people. The sceptre of leadership slid into his capable hands due to a series of misfortunes that befell the rightful heirs to the throne of Bamonaheng including his father's untimely death.



*Moshoeshoe dictating a letter to Eugene Casalis*  
(copyright Moroka Pula Productions)



*Moshoeshoe welcomes religion at Thaba Bosiu in 1853.* (painting by Steve Mashaobathe Rasehloho)

It was during Mohlomi's rule that the Bamonaheng became a huge chiefdom that attracted many citizens due to his warm leadership. Though he was a great traveller, his villages seem to have held together even grown, his long spells of absence notwithstanding.

### The Meeting

The first time Moshoeshoe met Mohlomi was in Ngoliloe (present day Clocolan district), Moshoeshoe had been taken there by his grandfather Peete. The old timer had taken his grandson to Mohlomi

with the intention to have him cured of his "anger issues." But in their very first encounter Mohlomi is said to have recognised in Moshoeshoe a very powerful leadership energy. Moshoeshoe is said to have remained with Mohlomi who tutored him in matters of leadership. There are indications that Mohlomi was actually running a Political Academy which was attended by among others; Morena Sebetoane of the Bafokeng ba Patsa, who later founded the Kololo/Borotse Kingdom in Zambia and Morena Moletsane of the Bataung.

## Mohlomi the originator of SeMoshoeshoe

Most of the lectures Mohlomi administered to Moshoeshoe are said to have happened at dawn. These lectures were conducted on a hill overlooking Ngoliloe, Mohlomi's village. There, Mohlomi used daybreak and the hill as a metaphor of life, that the example of the hill that overlooked the rapidly changing time as dawn transformed the night sky into a glorious morning. From the hilltop Mohlomi would have Moshoeshoe observe the village as it started on a new day.

Below are the five most important tenets of leadership that Mohlomi gave to Moshoeshoe:

1. **"Setlhare se sehoho sa puso ke pelo."** The first one was a direct answer to Moshoeshoe's plea. The young Moshoeshoe had confessed to Mohlomi his great desire to become a great Chief. He had besought Mohlomi to give him medicine that would render him thus.

Mohlomi told Moshoeshoe that if he wanted to be a great chief, he would have to learn to love those he wished to rule. "Setlhare se sehoho sa puso ke pelo, pholoana ea Kali." This is the first tenet of SeMoshoeshoe; deep and genuine love for one's nation is the fundamental element of good leadership. This would translate into personally seeing to the basic welfare of the people one ruled. King Moshoeshoe was not only a man of court. It is said that he loved children very much, so much that it was not unusual to find him playing with them 'mantloane and other children's games.

2. **"U ba tsebe hore u tle u tsebe ho ba busa."** Know them so that you may be able to rule over them. On his travels to the sources of Malibatšo river with King Moshoeshoe in 1840, (Missionary Excursion into the Blue Mountains) one thing that fascinated Thomas Arbouset was how when meeting people even from the remotest villages, Moshoeshoe was able to make out who they were. Even if he did not know the particular person talking to him then, he knew his lineage.

Mohlomi had embossed in Moshoeshoe's heart that it was important to know the people he ruled, to know their strengths and their weaknesses, to know their aspirations and what they dreaded or loathed. It was for this reason that Moshoeshoe made sure that all felt free to talk their minds at khotla.

3. **U ba nyalle hore u tle u tsebe ho amana le bona** Marry from them and marry for them so that you may relate with them in blood. Wherever Mohlomi went, he made sure to marry someone from that place. Even though he did not always bring all his wives home, those wives he left behind remained his wives, and the children begotten out of those marriages were regarded as his children. In more cases than not, these maidens he married would be princesses or daughters of influential men in that community. This is one of the things that ensured that Mohlomi was safe wherever he went because he was a relative of many people.

But it did not end there. Mohlomi also advised Moshoeshoe to marry for his subjects who did not have the means to marry. Moshoeshoe would pay Mahali for a young man to get his maiden, but the children born out of that marriage became his. In Sesotho culture, a child belongs to he who paid mahali (dowry). "Ngaana ke oa Khomo". This way, Moshoeshoe was not only loved by many, he was also a relative and father of many. Because of this, he commanded loyalty at many levels.

Though polygamy was a common practice among the Basotho, Mohlomi taught Moshoeshoe to use it as a deliberate act of building affinity with his people and with the leaders of other nations. It was through these marriages that Moshoeshoe was able to cement his diplomatic relations with "blood".

4. **U se ee ka tšobotsi ha u ahlola khotla/ Toka ho sera le motsoalle.** Justice to friend and foe alike. "When you make judgments at court, ensure that you administer

judgments without favour. Nothing holds a community together than an administrative institution that is deemed credible by the people it serves." "Your judgments must seek to be restorative to those aggrieved and not condemning to the perpetrator." Moshoeshoe adhered to this tenet strongly. Because of this, Basotho had complete faith in their judicial system.

5. **U tsebe litsela tsa baholo ba hau, u hlomphe Molimo le Balimo ba chaba sa heno kamehla.** "Know where you come from. Know from whom you come. Learn from the good ways of your ancestry. Know thyself thoroughly." Though he invited and supported the work of his Christian Missionaries among his people, Moshoeshoe himself was never converted. Not only that, he encouraged all his senior chiefs never to convert to a foreign religion. This he held on to until he was on his deathbed. And here he has a telling conversation with the daughter of his friend Adelle Mabile .... She is begging Moshoeshoe to convert to Christianity before he dies so that his soul may be saved. To which plea Moshoeshoe answers; "My ancestors have served me so well in my lifetime, it would be foolhardy for me to forsake them when I am about to join them."

This is not only about religion and spirituality. The system of child upbringing in Lesotho ensured that the Basotho knew their history, traditions and culture very well. This ensured societal harmony.

In the political history of the foundation of the Basotho nation, its successes and resilience, where Mohlomi was the blueprint, Moshoeshoe was the execution. Of all the students of Mohlomi's school of Political Science, Moshoeshoe was the most successful. This is because he executed what he had learnt from Mohlomi to the letter. It was his gift of leadership that ensured that these important nation building traits were practiced among his subjects and the result was a nation so successful it was the envy of all the neighbouring states.

The Lesotho of today is a far cry from the Lesotho of King Moshoeshoe and his peers. Where the Moshoeshoean Lesotho was a wealthy nation at peace with itself, our Lesotho is a beggar state afflicted by poverty and internal strife. As we march towards the national Bicentennial in 2024, we all have to put our hands together to search for these very important tenets enshrined in *SeMoshoeshoe* to reclaim our glory as a nation, together.



**Kalosi Ramakhula**  
*Defender of African Heritage (D.O.A.H.)* is the Senior Producer at Moroka Pula Heritage Productions. He is both a filmmaker and a historian, with a particular interest in Lesotho and Free State where

he has demonstrated his passion for research as a heritage enthusiast. He has lectured extensively on Moshoeshoe and the Basotho heritage, both in Lesotho and South Africa.

Mr. Ramakhula has experience in the theatre and film/TV production spans well over 20 years. As a freelancing scriptwriter, he has written a number of TV Dramas that have been flighted on SABC TV. The productions include; "Suburban Bliss" (Child of the Gods), "Bitso Lebe Ke Seromo" and "Moshwela Tharing." He has also been commissioned to produce a number of documentaries for international organisations and NGOs.

One of his most celebrated projects under Moroka Pula includes a 269-minute documentary film, *Moshoeshoe the Mountain King*.

Kalosi is also the founding member of The Motion Picture Association of Lesotho (MPALE) and its first president. He read Political Science and Journalism in Bulgaria between 1983 and 1989.

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Vodacom Lesotho

# Powering Lesotho's Quest for Financial Inclusion

Lesotho's telecommunications giant, Vodacom Lesotho, is synonymous with financial inclusion. The Company enjoys a lion's share of 1.1 million clients in the mobile money market through its platform, M-Pesa (operated by its subsidiary, VCL Financial Services). This translates to M1.5 billion worth of financial transactions per month.

It further accounts for 82 percent of the mobile subscribers' market share. With 1.4 million subscribers, the Company experienced a relatively flat subscriber base growth for the past three years. This is largely attributable to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Our medium-term strategy speaks to the fact that we want to continue to connect people and ensure that the speed and convenience at which we connect is improving to ensure that people are connected, not only digitally but also financially through our mobile money offering, M-Pesa which continues to lead the pack in the country.

"We currently have about 85 percent market share. So, if you are talking financial inclusion in Lesotho, you are talking about Vodacom Lesotho," says Vodacom Lesotho's CEO, Mr. Mohale Ralebitso.

"If you think about the M1.5 billion that flows through M-Pesa per month, think about how long it would take to move all that money around the country catalyzing economic development, before the arrival of M-Pesa," he adds.

In addition to being a financial inclusion enabler and connecting the nation, Vodacom Lesotho also intends to avail cutting-edge information technology (IT) solutions to facilitate Lesotho's quest to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). "The idea is for local businesses to be able to conduct e-commerce on digitally enabled platforms, and not just physically. This is important because unless our small, especially rural-based enterprises have access to digital markets beyond the physical, it limits their scope of opportunity," Mr. Ralebitso states. He further contends that if we want to talk about balanced growth, Lesotho cannot continue to focus on growing only the urban areas while excluding those in the rural periphery of the country. Vodacom Lesotho hopes to be in the vanguard of the

country's adoption of the Internet of Things (IoT). At the basic level, Mr. Ralebitso says IoT can be used to track vehicles' location at any given time. "If the government knew where all its fleet was, it would mean so many things towards stopping wastage and corruption. Our cars as a company are only where they are supposed to be, we know who is in them, where they are going, and if it is necessary, we can limit their ability to go where they are not supposed to." He adds.

Improving productivity within the agricultural sector to ensure food security is also among the sectors that Vodacom Lesotho intends to revolutionise through the use of IoT. Vodacom will study Lesotho's agriculture environment with a view to digitising activities. This will help Basotho to increase output and put less stress on the land, with sometimes less than ideal farming methodologies. However, Mr. Ralebitso believes that for the country to make a meaningful 4IR uptake and progress, other players and aspects of these new developments have to step up. "The skills profile of our people has to change. We cannot continue producing skills that are mismatched to the business needs. Lesotho cannot continue to have an obsolete curriculum that produces people who are only good at being mineworkers in this era."

Mr Ralebitso says the country should ponder on how it can be a player of note in the mining sector and what Information Technology could be invested in the sector and other industries. This is because the future of mining is going to be different. Lesotho, which currently uses open-cast mining, will get to a point where mines could no longer use traditional methods. In the future, mines will have to automate and send unmanned equipment to do the job.

"That type of equipment has to be able to have layers of intelligence, which Basotho can programme and execute efficiently. Otherwise, we are going to lose our footing in the little that we have in the global mining space." The Vodacom CEO added.

A member of the Vodacom Group, Vodacom Lesotho is part of Vodafone, one of the world's largest communications companies by revenue. It is a leading and purpose-led African connectivity, digital and financial services company with operations in South Africa, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique,

Lesotho, Egypt, Ethiopia and Kenya. Its mobile networks cover a population of over 295.8 million people.

Vodacom Lesotho started operating in 1996, with the government of Lesotho as a shareholder through its stake in Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation. When the government started privatizing public enterprises in 1999, it invited bids for its share in Vodacom Lesotho. In July 2000, Sekhametsi Investment Consortium, a group of local businesspeople and private individuals, was announced as the successful bidder. It holds a 20 percent share in Vodacom Lesotho, with the remaining share held by Vodacom Group.

On Lesotho's bicentennial celebration in 2024, Mr. Ralebitso says, "Our message to Basotho is to go back to the genius of the founding father, King Moshoeshoe I, to say that we can have a nation that is diverse, lives in peace, and therefore has a chance at prosperity, with the ability to not forget, but forgive and look ahead." He says as a business entity, Vodacom has to push harder for digitalization. 4IR is something that they have to enable for all Basotho, and as much as possible, make it reasonable from a cost perspective.

**"We have to continue to be that entity which can be called upon, whether it is in football or in connecting schools, and doing all those things which nobody else is able to do. And we want to continue to do these in partnership with Basotho."**

**Mr Mohale Ralebitso**  
Vodacom Lesotho's Chief  
Executive Officer





*Post election protests  
leading to 1998 riots*

# The Legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe, any Lessons for Current Leadership

Writes Sofonea Shale

*Lesotho has for some time now been in the spotlight of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) agenda for its political instability and insurgencies that have defined it as a vulnerable state. This article looks at the legacy of the founding father, Morena Moshoeshoe and it challenges the current leadership to see whether it can take any lessons for transforming Lesotho into a stable, peaceful and prosperous sovereign country.*

*Morena Moshoeshoe built a strong system and the centrality of the leadership that was cohesive, governable and progressive. However, modern Lesotho has been unable to achieve many of its development policy targets due to flaws in its political setup.*

*The Nation that Morena Moshoeshoe built was firmly rooted in peace more than 200 years ago. Today, Lesotho is hardly counted among the peaceful, well governed, corruption free and happy countries in the world. The triple threat to Lesotho, namely famine, HIV and AIDS and weak institutional capacity have been worsened by the political instability and military insurgencies of 2014-15.*

*From 2012 to date, Lesotho has had four elections and changed Prime Ministers a staggering five times. As things worsen, the prominence of names of political leaders has grown from one level to another, not so much about the political parties they represent or*

*even the governments they lead, but by their actions when they were mandated to lead the country through elections. By 2017, all significant political leaders in Lesotho had worked together in coalitions. In keeping with the adage that there are no permanent friends and foes in politics, many politicians have been in and out of coalition governments, but they have failed to deliver to the Basotho nation the peace, stability and development that the people desire.*

A patriotic, credible, compassionate and foresighted leadership is definitely a missing element in the solution that Lesotho needs for the economic and social development of the Kingdom. Basotho think Morena Moshoeshoe represents the leadership that this country needs. Morena Moshoeshoe's leadership was premised on a governance system that delivered development, served peace, accommodated the downtrodden and created social coherence.

The grandiosity and splendor of Prime Minister Matekane, though yet to be tested, the brilliance of Dr. Majoro, the oratory of Dr. Mosisili and the exactitude of Dr. Thabane could not on their own make Lesotho prosper. Although Basotho may be justified to give a standing ovation for the work done by Morena Leabua and bow their heads for Dr. Mokhehle for reviving democracy in Lesotho since 1993, such should be judged against the realities on the ground.

Morena Moshoeshoe did not inherit any political system but built his own system of governance out

of a history of wars and calamities of the day. His success was not largely, as other people believe, due to desperation on the side of those fleeing the Zulu mayhem, but it was due, in most part; to his genius. What is interesting about the value system that also became a governance system for Basotho is the way Morena Moshoeshoe used his influence to create strong institutions, thus being able to articulate and achieve public interests.

At the dawn of the new millennium, Lesotho developed two key development frameworks namely Vision 2020, a blueprint of what Lesotho would be in the year 2020 and the poverty reduction strategy described as its implementation framework. The mission statement of Vision 2020 pronounced bold aspirations to say;

By the year 2020 Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, a united and prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well-developed human resources base. Its economy will be strong. Its environment well managed and its technology well established.

If the development route conceptualised above was to be used to reflect on how Lesotho has performed on Vision 2020, clearly, the country has regressed. Achieving development in Lesotho could not be realised because the institutional transformation was not commensurate with the desired change. The declaration of Vision 2020 did not compel the government to stop undermining section 105 of the Lesotho Constitution which, as an example, provides for the national planning board to prepare, coordinate, and supervise the preparation of plans and to advise the government on the economic development agenda. It was in the journey towards Vision 2020 that the Lesotho government amended the Constitution to reduce the powers of the national planning board to that of the advisory role. This decision manifested rigidity and self-interest and was largely motivated by the desire of political leaders to have ultimate power and influence on the affairs of the state. Put differently, Lesotho had chosen regression over building strong institutions on a foundation that the great King Moshoeshoe left. This



*Lesotho's post-independence Prime Minister, Dr. Leabua Jonathan credited for many past developments in Lesotho, but chastised for suppressing democracy from 1974-1986.*

was a false start. The National Planning Board is still to be established and the nation awaits to see the stance that the new government will take towards its establishment, presumably under reforms.

The National Strategic Development Plan (NDSP I and NDSP II) has been unable to curb the deterioration of life in Lesotho, let alone achieve the objectives for which it was developed to address. The institutions of governance, oversight and security as well as the judiciary as state organs have not been spared the destabilisation for personal interest of their otherwise supposedly autonomous and professional mandate. This weakening of institutions could only end up in instability, political decay and corruption which define Lesotho of late.



*A member of the military looking helplessly as rioters went on a looting spree during the political riots of 1998.*



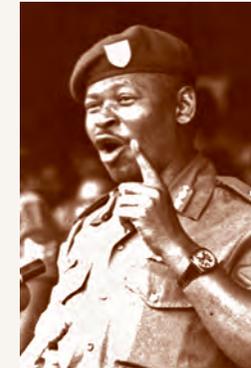
*Protestors at Royal Palace gates*

It is widely acknowledged that in Morena Moshoeshoe's time, Basotho practiced the best form of popular democratic participation through the Pitso system, where his subjects had a voice in the governance of the affairs of the nation. In light of the Mfecane wars, the leadership of Morena Moshoeshoe at its very infancy was threatened. The fact that Moshoeshoe was able to rise from a history of conflict to a stable, peaceful, participatory, development-oriented, equal and prosperous democracy negates modernisation development theorisation that the global South is compelled into. Morena Moshoeshoe built his own, not so much on the battlefield, but on values that were more impactful than war. The magnanimity with which he took victory, defined the hallmark of his diplomatic advancement to enemies but most importantly, coalescing with other chiefs without seeking to vanquish them. His wins in battles were great achievements, but they could not have survived without a strong people, coherent and united in common purpose that could not have survived.

Morena Moshoeshoe abolished the death penalty and any form of punishment for women found guilty of witchcraft. He ordered that no one should be despised for their views regardless of status in society and wanted all to be heard on the matters that affected his subjects.

Morena Moshoeshoe also had the conviction that no community was built by force and authoritarian leadership, rather by negotiation and dialogue. For him, no problem was bigger than collective wisdom, another principle on which he founded his nation. He used the chief's council and on that platform, there was no issue immune to open and honest scrutiny of the councilors, irrespective of its nature. He allowed his people to deliberate on issues and summarised their wishes into decrees. His conviction on the consultation was also found in his council of advisors, which would provide rich and diverse perspectives on the issues of governance.

The governance system of Morena Moshoeshoe resembled a discernable level of development and stability of the political system. He was not heavy handed on the people. Instead, he demonstrated that which he wanted from his people by being exemplary. For example, history tells us of how the cannibals killed and ate his grandfather. Forgiving them sent a strong message to his subjects about what he means by being a people able to forgive.



*Major General Lekhanya' military junta ruled from 1986 - 1993*

It is cultural for Basotho to respect their in-laws. By marrying many women, Morena Moshoeshoe created bonds and ties with many families, a practice also used by his subjects to court different clans. Morena Moshoeshoe also accepted many people from different clans and chiefdoms and did not discard their identities. This explains why Basotho are an amalgam of tribes and clans.

Contrary to many chiefdoms of his time, Morena Moshoeshoe entrenched into his system of governance, regard for the vulnerable sections of his people. These included women, children and persons with disabilities. It was a given that able bodied men and women would work collectively at *tšimo-kholo* to provide for the common abundance. Again, women would not stand trial at the chief's kraal, but were represented by their husbands for any wrongdoing. The widowed and the deserted were taken care of by society and men in the society were duty bound to ensure the livelihood of those who needed support.

Moshoeshoe also had a strong system to ensure the sustenance of livelihoods and the redistribution of wealth to combat poverty and hunger among his subjects. He practiced the *mafisa* economic justice and development a model to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. In this system, the ones with more than adequate means of livelihood, especially cattle, would lend part of their herd to those who did not own any. They would then rear them as their own, milk and use for ploughing. In return, when the herd had increased, they would then share offspring to give the poor a jumpstart for the growth of their own heads and achieve self-sustenance. This model ensured that whenever rich people became richer, at least one family was getting out of destitution. The *mafisa* system was a means of sharing and evenly distributing wealth among his people. Morena Moshoeshoe himself outshone this practice by redistributing cattle after successful raids. His political system characterised humanity, equality, and justice.

distributing cattle after successful raids. His political system characterised humanity, equality, and justice.

### Moshoeshoe's Relevance in the Contemporary Governance Challenges

Lesotho today represents everything contrary to the system that Morena Moshoeshoe created. The primary question is whether the status quo can be changed and whether the current leadership can reclaim his legacy.

The African Peer Review Mechanism report of 2010 rightly points out that since independence from Britain in 1966, the political history of Lesotho has been dominated by instability, controversy and conflict, sometimes spilling over into violence. There is a general consensus among many political analysts and scholars that democracy in the form of modern political formations are also the engineers of political instability in Lesotho. This is evidenced through the history of political instability that has resulted in among others, the state of emergency declared by Leabua Jonathan in 1970 resulting in the persecution of members of Basutoland Congress Party that had won elections, the military coup of 1986 that removed him from power and more recently, the riots of 1998.

There have also been many intra and inter-party conflicts that resulted in several splits. As of October 2022, when the country held elections, a nation of just over 2 million had 65 political parties contesting elections.

The diversity, political dynamism and the challenges of today are not any foreign. Different political parties of today may be equated to the clans and tribes that Morena Moshoeshoe did not seek to coerce and subsume in his own. The system of Morena Moshoeshoe has been able to relate with other systems and built a coherent value system that became a way of life. Put differently, the system of Morena Moshoeshoe was able to appeal to the conscience of the individual subject, thus making it functional.

In Morena Moshoeshoe's governance, opportunities were abundant and the policies pro-poor. Today, political parties jostle for proximity to power, which gives them access to national resources. Ordinarily, this power is then used to skewedly distribute resources on nepotism, corruption and favouritism as the formulae. Given this distribution formulae, those who lose the power to rule find themselves losing everything. Again, those who lose power in their political party formations believe that their chances of getting crumbs as political elites, who would join parliament and subsequently be appointed ministers stand of chance of making it in life because clinging to power is a means of survival.

In Morena Moshoeshoe's system, the *matsema* and *mafisa* strategies were used commonly to create and evenly distribute wealth. The system of Morena Moshoeshoe relied on the people for its success. However, today the politicians seek to be in government more for personal gain than to pursue the course for the good of the populace. Unlike in Moshoeshoe's era, the people are the means to resources at election time.

### Lessons to Reclaim the Legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe

Whether or not there are any lessons for the temporary leadership to learn from Morena Moshoeshoe, the starting point should be establishing where Lesotho got it wrong. The British took 98 years to demolish the value-based system that Morena Moshoeshoe built. If the current crop of leaders is to use the lessons from Morena Moshoeshoe to address today's challenges, a reflection on what went wrong is instructional.

The modern political leadership define independence as political power. They ought to contest, compete and use this power to advance the country, but owning this power has degenerated into corruption, nepotism and public misery. Therefore, Basotho inherited a state that was so different from what Morena Moshoeshoe created, with no intention whatsoever to reclaim its former glory. The post-colonial state in Lesotho, like many other African states, inherited the authoritarian, un-

equal, violent and inhumane state.

The leadership today, should first admit that the instability, poverty, violence and rivalry found in Basotho is a manifestation of the grotesque independence architecture that negated the governance of Morena Moshoeshoe and that must be reversed, albeit within the confines of the modern democratic dispensation. This is a precondition for those who may want to transform Lesotho from the weak and vulnerable state that it is into a Morena Moshoeshoe value-based system of governance. This commitment is necessary because leadership will have to sacrifice some benefits that go with post-colonial state.

Although Basotho are the beneficiaries of critical donor support today, the country was once a granary of Southern Africa. In the 1870s, diamond diggers at the Kimberly mines provided a ready market for Lesotho wheat and Basotho farmers exported wagon-loads of grain annually. The country was so wealthy that it could support the British government to purchase two Spitfighter jets during the First World War. This could be reclaimed through a strong decentralisation, renewed chieftaincy that is anchored on a solid and progressive democratic government. Only a committed and people-centred democratic dispensation without self-interest can make Lesotho the envy of other progressive African countries like Botswana and Rwanda.

The reforms process in Lesotho, which seeks to empower institutions and limit excessive powers of the state has met many challenges. These obstacles explain in part, what would otherwise be the attitude of political leadership to reclaiming the value based system of Morena Moshoeshoe.

The reforms process in Lesotho presents an opportunity for leadership to change the path through which Lesotho is going. The progress made in reforms shall tell the extent to which it is possible for the political leadership in Lesotho to reclaim the value-based system of Morena Moshoeshoe.



**Sofonea Shale** is a well-rounded governance expert. He is a seasoned civil society practitioner with 30 years of experience 19 of which in the top leadership. He leads Development for Peace Education (DPE) as the Coordinator and Head of the

Secretariat and the Southern African People's Solidarity Network(SAPSN) as chair. He represented the youth voice in the Senate of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Lesotho nominated by the King acting on the advice of the Council of State in 1998-2002.

He is well vested in governance, democracy, elections, participation, conflict, mediation and peace facilitation, the competencies he has gained and used in civil society, consultancy and advisory capacities. He has offered training and facilitation of dialogue processes like elections for political parties, sports associations, civil society and other formations. He is an analyst and commentator of note in the Lesotho politics and SADC. He is key in the civil society facilitation of political dialogue and support to the SADC process in Lesotho. He offers advisory support to the government, institutions and the leadership of the country on various issues, in particular the national reforms process. He is the Chair of the Tribunal of the Independent Electoral Commission in Lesotho and a member of the Technical Working Committee of the SADC Parliamentary Forum on Governance, Democracy and Elections. He is a former member of the National Reforms Authority.'

Shale holds a Bachelor of social sciences, BA Honours in Political Sciences-specialisation in International Relations, a Masters Degree in Development Studies, Masters Degree in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies and is pursuing a PhD.

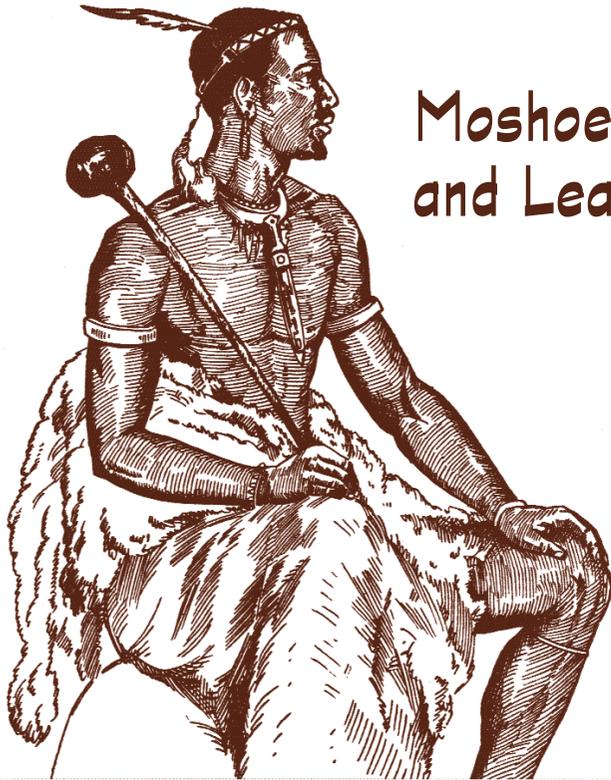


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# Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership: 'Semoshoeshoe'

Writes Professor Keneuoe Motsoene

In response to these challenges, the National University of Lesotho launched an ambitious initiative in 2015. As part of its third home-grown introspection, the university set up the Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership (MIPL). Named after Morena Moshoeshoe I, the founding father of the Basotho Nation, the MIPL aims to instill his attributes of servant leadership, empathy, peace, patriotism, and unity among the present and future leaders of the nation. The institute's mission is to nurture and inspire a new generation of leaders who can bring about change and drive socio-economic growth and development.

The MIPL adopts the *Semoshoeshoe* philosophical framework as its guiding principle. It aims to revive the virtues, values, and ethos of Morena Moshoeshoe I and reshape the mindset of every Mosotho individual towards maintaining peace, fostering servant leadership, and promoting ethical behaviour. This approach provides a national platform for individuals, groups, and organisations both within and outside Lesotho, fostering a shared belief in Morena Moshoeshoe I's legacy of national unity, peaceful conflict resolution, servant leadership, and patriotism.

The institute has pioneered the National *Semoshoeshoe* renaissance campaign, which mirrors the *Semoshoeshoe* framework's objectives. The campaign aims to engage all levels of Basotho society, inspiring a sense of national unity and promoting peaceful conflict resolution, servant leadership, and patriotism.

At its heart, the MIPL is committed to producing thought leaders grounded in the principle of Botho "*Ubuntu*," a quality exemplified by Morena Moshoeshoe I. This focus on empathy and humaneness is central to the MIPL's mission. It aims to develop visionary servant leaders through rigorous training and research, guided by Moshoeshoe I's principles, including peace, respect for self and others, unity, reconciliation, magnanimity, forgiveness, generosity, and inclusiveness.

The relevance of MIPL's mission is underscored by its alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. This goal advocates promoting peaceful, inclusive societies for sustainable develop-

ment and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. The degradation of peace values, evident in moral decay among Lesotho's populace, is a pressing concern. The MIPL seeks to restore these values through its activities and initiatives.

Looking ahead, the year 2024 holds considerable significance for Lesotho. This year will mark the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Basotho nation. The *Semoshoeshoe* campaign is envisioned as a critical tool to prepare all Basotho for this historic milestone. By reflecting on the legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe I and embracing his principles, the campaign aims to foster a national renaissance of identity, love for fellow humans, and patriotism. This commitment to the spirit of *Semoshoeshoe* is central to realising "The Lesotho We Want" – a nation united, peaceful, and prosperous, in 2024 and beyond.

We believe in the transformative power of the Moshoeshoe I Institute of Peace and Leadership. We invite all stakeholders to join us on this journey of nurturing servant leaders, fostering peace, and creating a brighter future for Lesotho. Together, we can build a nation that embodies the spirit and vision of Morena Moshoeshoe I, a nation we can be proud to call our own.

*Lesotho is grappling with major issues on its path to a more prosperous and balanced future. Given its rich cultural history and resilient populace, Lesotho is finding its stride on the world stage mired by inconsistencies. For nearly a decade, Lesotho has been undertaking a journey of national reforms to address endemic political instability and foster harmony. However, despite rounds of political leadership changes and nearly eight years of attempts, the reforms have yet to yield the desired outcomes.*

*Further exacerbating the situation are 'famo' music gang wars, which not only have political effects in Lesotho but also incite terror in communities in neighbouring South Africa. A growing concern is the involvement of young Basotho children in extremism and violent behaviour, a phenomenon locally known as 'manomoro', a group of young people typically aged from 13 to 25 who are responsible for violent crimes including murder and robberies. While others have said the manomoro gangs were linked to cults, their criminal activities have led some to call for urgent curbing of these threats to peace and order in Lesotho.*



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*Morija LECSA Church built by Francois Maeder was completed in 1857. One of the most iconic sights of Makhoarane Precinct, and home of the Protestant Church in Lesotho*

# Makhoarane Precinct, the Melting Pot of Basotho Culture and the Preservation of the Royal Heritage

Writes Stephen Gill

## Introduction: Makhoarane as a site of cultural ferment

In mid-1833, just nine years after Moshoeshoe and his people established themselves at Thaba-Bosiu, the citadel and 'mother' of the Basotho nation, from which Moshoeshoe was able to expand many-fold the territory under his suzerainty, 'teachers of peace' arrived to add a new element to the experiment in nation-building. Invited by Moshoeshoe himself, who was desirous of concluding an alliance or partnership with them, these young missionaries of the Gospel were guided to the south by the monarch himself. Makhoarane was selected as the most suitable location, well-watered, with good soil and abundant wood. A small settlement arose there which the missionaries christened 'Moriya' (The Lord Will Provide).

Makhoarane is a long, curved plateau that rises 400 metres above the plain. The area had previously been home to the Bushmen, and then from the 1600s, the Mapetla or Pioneers (Amatsetza, from the Zizi), the first mixed farming peoples to settle the Caledon River valley. Temporarily devoid of population because of the upheavals of the Lifaqane, Makhoarane now became home not only to the French Protestant missionaries, but also to the cohorts of Letsie and Molapo, Moshoeshoe's two senior sons, and their maternal uncle, Matete.

From the very beginning, it was Moshoeshoe's intention to see what would emerge from the interface between his people and the missionaries, who dedicated themselves to the nation: "In order to prove to our new friends the firmness of our convictions . . . and the purity of our intentions, we offered to establish ourselves

definitely in their midst, and to share their lot, whatever it might be"<sup>1</sup>.



True to their word, Casalis, Arbousset and Gosselin, as well as their wives and other colleagues who followed, both at Morija and at additional sites, worked tirelessly to build the nation through the rejuvenating work of the Gospel. They also worked to enhance local communities through literacy, various crafts and other educational initiatives, as well as Western medicine and forms of healing, new crops, fruit trees, domesticated cats, and a range of technologies. Casalis in particular became an advisor

<sup>1</sup>Eugene Casalis, *My Life in Basutoland*, J. Brierley translation, facsimile reprint of the 1889 edition, (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1971), p. 183.

to Moshoeshoe on diplomatic issues, while Arbousset developed local leaders in the church and embryonic schools through his 'Society of Evangelists'.

Basotho sifted and adapted these different initiatives and experiences, comparing and contrasting these with their own traditions and felt needs. As such, a range of syntheses emerged as culture became in some regards more pluralistic. Much ferment arose in the contestation of worldviews and the personal encounters that took place, leading as well to new creative expressions. So too, the 'baruti ba khotso' endured war, disease, draught, locusts and other challenges together with their followers and the nation, to the point that they, though relatively few in number, became one of the pillars of nationhood even during the lifetime of Moshoeshoe. Although men were less likely to convert, or to remain converted, many women did, including the senior wives of Moshoeshoe, followed by those of Letsie and Lerotholi. Women as such, were at the forefront of the emerging spiritual, cultural and social (re)evolution.

From one generation to the next, the missionary enterprise expanded, with new institutions and associations that would make an ever-wider impact: Morija would grow from being a small settlement to become 'Selibeng sa Thuto, Selibeng sa Tsebo', the fountain of learning.

## Matsieng: The centre of gravity shifts from Thaba-Bosiu to Makhoarane

The Basotho nation lost a great deal of its territory to the west of the Caledon during the wars of 1865-1868 with the Orange Free State. In order to prevent a complete debacle, Moshoeshoe requested the protection of Britain, which was granted on 12 March 1868. The founder of the Basotho nation, then

well over 80 years of age, could rest assured that his people would survive. Moshoeshoe passed away on 11 March 1870, after which his senior son Letsie succeeded as *Morena e Moholo*. By then Letsie had left his previous place of residence at Morija to a point 7 km further up the valley at Ha Rakhuiti which became known as Matsieng.

Letsie faced two great challenges: i) the imposition of magistrates from the Cape Colony which took over the administration of Lesotho in 1871, and ii) the fact that his brothers Molapo and Masupha governed their districts with little regard for him, the same being true of Moorosi's Baphuthi in the far south.

The colonial administration, though limited in terms of officials and security forces, proved to be quite effectual in limiting the power of the chiefs as the magistrates did their best to prevent abuses, thus gaining favour with a section of the population. This experiment, however, was completely undermined by the 'Peace Preservation Act' by which the Cape sought to disarm Basotho in 1880, as if 'they could not be trusted'. The nation was badly divided, with Molapo and his son Jonathan favouring disarmament, together with many of the junior sons of Moshoeshoe, while Lerotholi, Masupha, Ramaneella and Joel fought against the Cape. Ultimately, the 'rebels' were able to keep the Cape forces at bay, the stalemate leading to the withdrawal of the Cape from the administration of 'Basutoland' in 1884 and the territory reverting to direct administration under the British High Commissioner. Hence forward, the nation would be guided by a Resident Commissioner and officials whose task it was to support the chieftainship, and especially the central role of the 'Paramount Chief'.

During the Gun War, Letsie had played a double game with the Cape, reaffirming his allegiance while 'passively' working against the 'rebels'. Though the new British administration supported his central position from 1884, his health was now frail and the nation was more enthusiastic towards his son, Lerotholi, who was seen as a great hero in the Gun War.

The second challenge that Letsie faced was handled differently. During the 1870s, it was discovered that the sons of Molapo were quickly settling in the Malibamatso and Senqu river valleys deep in the mountains of the country, and had met with Baphuthi coming up from the south at what is today ha Makunyapane (in Thaba Tseka). Letsie (followed by Lerotholi) deployed his allies – especially the Bafokeng ba Khoele of his mother ‘Mamohato’s people – and his sons to take control of these mountainous areas. A major move in this regard was the placement of Lelingoana’s Batlokoa in the upper Senqu basin to displace the Makhokoloe of Lekunya, allied to Joel Molapo. This way, the expansive plans of Molapo’s sons and the Baphuthi were greatly curtailed, with chiefs loyal to Matsieng/ Makeneng eventually taking over the entire Senqu river valley.

Makeneng, the village of Lerotholi, was established in 1892 after the death of Letsie I. Situated at the top of a small plateau mid-way between Matsieng and Morija, this Royal Village, largely unknown today, presents a magnificent panorama and has much to offer visitors and tourists. Then home to Lerotholi’s 68 wives, some of its most notable architectural features have endured, crafted expertly by Basotho artisans, graduates of Leloaleng Trade School in Quthing, led by Gideon ‘Qebe’ Seboka.

### More complex challenges and contrasting visions of development

Forged in the time of war, Lerotholi was the last of the Heroic Age. Threatened from outside and later from within, the greatest challenge was to maintain the integrity of Moshoeshoe’s legacy. During the time of Lerotholi’s son, Letsie II (1905-1912), the unique position of ‘Basutoland’ was secured, surrounded as it was by the newly-formed Union of South Africa. Though the Union would try on a number of occasions to incorporate Basutoland over the following four decades, Basotho remained firmly opposed to the possibility because both the ‘Colour Bar’ and later Apartheid would have made their future even less secure. Letsie II built his royal village at Phahameng, just to the east of Morija.

Lerotholi had worked so hard to see the codification of various laws (Laws of Lerotholi) endorsed during his lifetime so that his wayward son, Letsie II, could succeed him. Yet Letsie II was a hopeless drunkard, and spent most of his time with Bookholane, the very junior but beautiful wife of Letsie I, his deceased grandfather. Letsie II passed away quite prematurely in early 1913.

Griffith Lerotholi, the younger brother of Letsie II, then assumed the Paramouncy. Instead of serving as Regent till the son of his brother



*The Royal Museum and Archives in Matsieng*

came of age, Griffith intended to sit on the throne ‘with both buttocks’. He was also the first Royal to convert, in this case to the Roman Catholic Church. This gave a new direction to the Monarchy and to the nation as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate poured resources into the country, such that by the 1940s, they came to surpass the previously well-established PEMS / Protestant Church of Basutoland. Griffith located his village below that of his grandfather Letsie I at Matsieng, from which location (New Matsieng) all subsequent monarchs have resided.

Once the external threats were minimised and central leadership from Makhoarane had re-assumed control of the country, the other key imperative was the health, prosperity and development of the nation. This challenge became increasingly difficult during periods of rapid

change. Population growth, overploughing and overgrazing, and the constant bickering between chiefs over territory led to a scenario where Basutoland became a net importer of foodstuffs from the 1920s after previously serving as a bread basket for the region. As a result, i) increasing numbers of men (and women) sought a better life in South Africa, whether in terms of migrant labour or permanent residence; ii) a number of local movements arose to criticise chiefly abuses and to seek various remedies thereto, some even calling for greater democracy, while others opposed what they perceived as the growing ‘collusion’ between the chiefs, the churches and the colonial administration to undermine local values and traditions; and iii) the greatly deteriorating situation in the 1930s led to a more interventionist colonial administration that finally heeded the pressure and some of the advice of internal reform movements.

Griffith was succeeded by his son Seeiso in 1939, but Seeiso died relatively soon thereafter (late 1940). His wife, 'Mantšebo, became Regent for the next 20 years. She was a complex figure, crying pitifully as a weapon she used against British officials, but expecting Basotho to call her 'Ntate' (Father, Sir) because 'no woman has held such power'. When the now-mature son of Letsie II, Makhaola, continued to make noise that he was the rightful heir, she had the fine stone house of Letsie II at Phahameng torn down, stone by stone, symbolic of the utter demise she wished upon that family.

Regent 'Mantšebo eventually gave way in 1960 for Moshoeshoe II to take the throne, his fortunes being decided before he really had any say in the matter. He would be a constitutional monarch, with merely symbolic powers, yet he foresaw that the rise of political parties was so divisive that these would tear newly independent Lesotho apart.

### The present day

2016, the 50th Anniversary of Lesotho's Independence from Britain, was a sombre and sober moment, less of celebration and more one of reflection and self-examination. 2024, the 200th Anniversary of the arrival of Moshoeshoe and his people at Thaba-Bosiu, may be another moment, perhaps more forward looking if at all the National Reforms process and other initiatives succeed to re-set the clock, re-calibrate the system and give our people hope for a better future.

During the 1950s, various debates were held about the future of the Basotho nation? Would it:

- i) continue to be ruled by an executive monarch, with power still largely placed in the hands of chiefs, the mainstay of traditional authority, tempered by councillors, a small civil service, churches, and traders?
- ii) evolve to become a constitutional monarchy, with power largely in the hands of elected leaders, either under a system of tiers from district to national representative bodies, or through direct elections under a network of political parties?
- iii) evolve to become a republic, and jettison all ties

with traditional authority?

- iv) craft a hybrid model to meet the nation's needs and aspirations?

Since then, other possibilities have arisen:

- v) throw in its lot and become a part of a liberated South Africa or federation of Southern Africa?
- vi) look forward to the break up of South Africa and carve out / craft a new larger state within the vacuum left?

Various voices have been raised over the intervening years. What is perhaps most striking however is the massive growth of the civil and security services, the diminishing role accorded to chiefs and churches, the proliferation of political parties, the growing loss of confidence in party political leadership, the ever increasing co-dependence of Lesotho's destiny with regional and international bodies, the growing inequality in terms of wealth and opportunities, and the urgent need to address the plight of youth who, from 2012, have found their fortunes ever more precarious. Let us also remember that these challenges do not face Lesotho alone. South Africa, liberated South Africa, now has rolling blackouts (load shedding) and its water problems become ever more acute. After all, insecurity and rampant corruption are local, regional and global issues.

What then of the Legacy of Moshoeshoe? Or the Legacy of Makhoarane? We have seen that our monarchs are real people with strengths as well as weaknesses. So also other forms of leadership. In a short narrative, we have only been able to give a minimal amount of detail in this regard. Much more could be said, and needs to be said. A few points might be made, however:

- i) Leadership based purely on heredity (1st son of the most senior family) is inadequate, especially in times of great trial and tribulation;
- ii) Electoral Democracy without accountability or relative stability and security is no solution;
- iii) Leadership of whatever kind must be accountable to the people;
- iv) Life evolves and institutions (family,

chieftainship, churches, business, government) must adapt or lose relevance;

- v) Internal leadership faces pressures from below, as well as pressures from without – no nation is truly 'sovereign' in the sense that it can choose any path it wants.

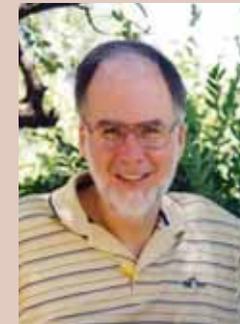
The fact that history is not taught in most schools, that even what is taught may be simplistic, leaves us as a people with a poor perception of what is truly possible. Politicians promise us the sky even when the Treasury has no means of fulfilling such promises. When the truth dawns on us, we become disillusioned.

Makhoarane, the brooding mountain, has witnessed the rise and fall of kings, the spiritual inspiration and cultural interface with the baruti ba Moshoeshoe (of different denominations), the establishment of institutions that have had a far-reaching impact across the nation and regionally, the creative outpouring of (among others) a Thomas Mofolo, a ZD Mangoela, and a JP Mohapeloa, and more recent initiatives like the Morija Arts & Cultural Festival, and now the Seriti sa Makhoarane Heritage & Tourism Network (SSM)

SSM is a community-based network committed to developing the tourism value chain in the greater Morija-Matsieng area based upon enhanced preservation, presentation and promotion of its key heritage sites and resources. Makhoarane has a wealth of history, heritage sites, living culture and creativity to share with Basotho and the wider world.

Makhoarane, long celebrated in song, will continue to make an impact as Basotho re-appropriate certain aspects of their broader traditions while adapting others so as to enhance their sense of botho (fuller humanity) so that both individually and collectively, a more hopeful and stable future can dawn, one that even Moshoeshoe the Great would appreciate and commend.

*Khotso, ha e ate!*



**Stephen Gill**

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Moshoeshoe's strategies for enlarging his domain, missionary interventions / initiatives, institutional growth and change, Makhoarane heritage and community-based tourism, Lerotholi and Makeneng Royal Village, leveraging resources for social and economic growth

**Current Position:** Curator Emeritus, Morija Museum & Archives; Head, Admin & Project Unit, Seriti sa Makhoarane (SSM)

**Accomplishments:** Helped lead a growing team of colleagues, volunteers, apprentices and Friends at Morija Museum & Archives for 33 years during which we developed a range of programs and initiatives in Collections Management; Public Education; Research, Consultancies & Publishing; The Living Arts & Culture; and Heritage Management & Community-based Tourism.

**Publications:** A Short History of Lesotho (1993); A Guide to Morija (1995); The Story of Morija Museum & Archives (2005); (ed) Mekolokotoane/ Jubilee Highlights 1833-2008 (2009); Museums Lesotho (2015) and a range of shorter publications, including "Thomas Mofolo: The Man, The Writer, and His Contexts". (+266) 5885-8662; [morija@leo.co.ls](mailto:morija@leo.co.ls) or [tebohogill@gmail.com](mailto:tebohogill@gmail.com)



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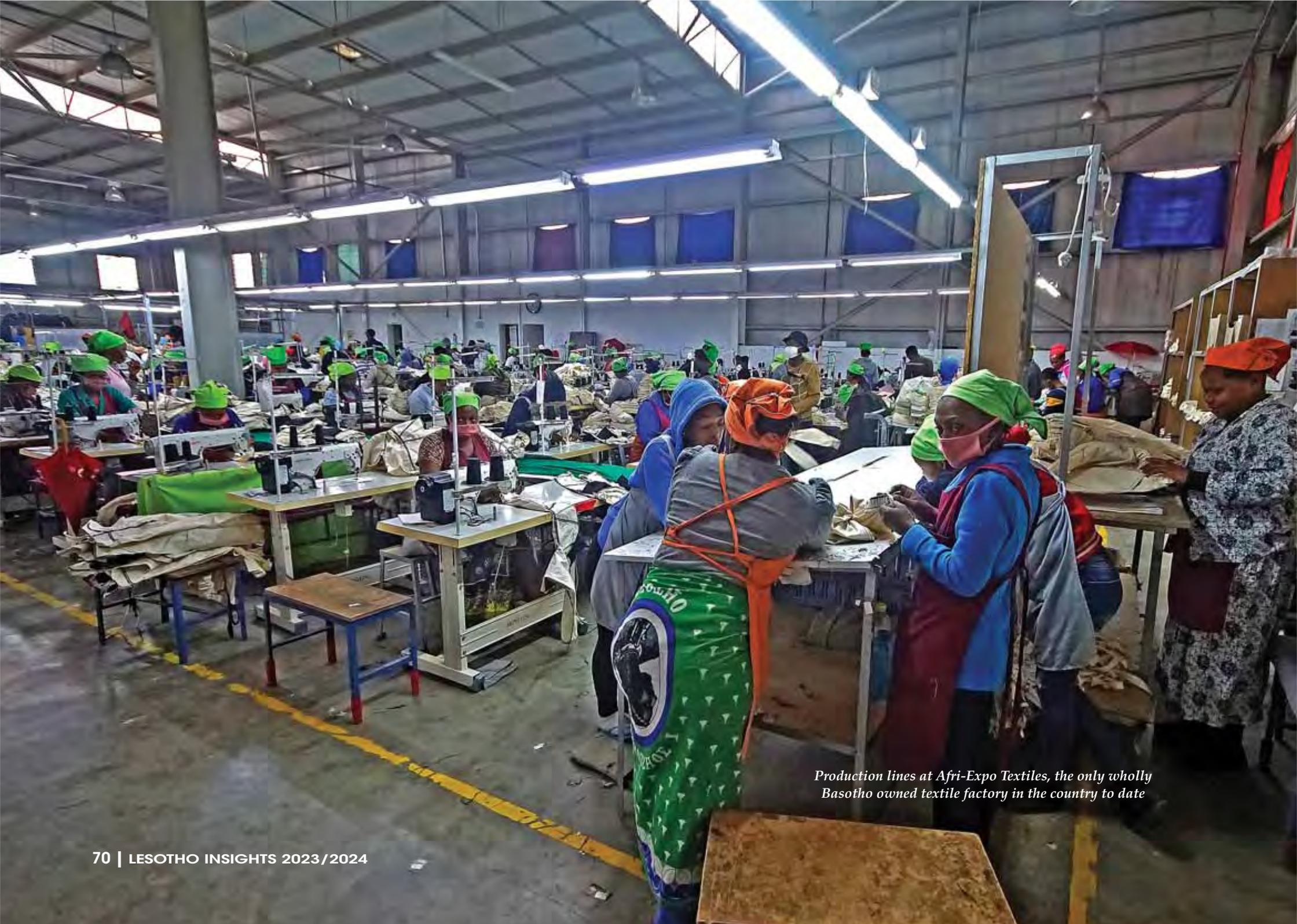
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*Production lines at Afri-Expo Textiles, the only wholly Basotho owned textile factory in the country to date*

# Lesotho' Prospects on Trade

Writes Keketso Lawrence

*The Kingdom of Lesotho has a rich history of trade with people from clans and tribes from neighbouring nations. Legend has it that Basotho in the early 1800s were already in regular contact with other nations from across the seas and beyond the plains of the great deserts, exchanging artifacts, animal skins, food and other important items.*

*It is therefore no coincidence that even at the founding of the nation in 1824, the Thaba-Bosiu headquartered administration under Moshoeshe I, continued to seek new allies and maintained greater relations with the nations of the world, from the production of iron-age tools and weapons to large scale farming, especially wheat, sorghum and meat production.*

*The country was the main supplier during the gold rush in South Africa while also maintaining contact with the traders from afar.*

In the modern day economy, Lesotho has continued from where the founding fathers left off, forging trade links with international partners on a number of fronts, from mountain grown wool and mohair, textiles and clothing, indigenous agro produce, precious stones and water resources.

Categorised as one of the least developed countries of the world, Lesotho enjoys some preferential market access across the globe through facilities like the United States' Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), the European Union's Everything But Arms market platform, the Africa-Caribbean setup, several Asian trade partnerships, the vast African Continental Free Trade

Area agreement as well as other lucrative markets from around the world and in the region.

Lesotho is ranked 122nd among 190 world economies in the ease of doing business, having declined from a record high of 100 in 2016 due to a number of factors such as persistent political instability, especially post-election conflicts. While the country's economy is largely dependent on its only neighbour, South Africa, it is however susceptible to external shocks from larger world economies due to its structural trade nature, which makes it difficult to bring equilibrium to its balance of payments.

For the Mountain Kingdom, whose economy is highly dependent on trade across regional and overseas markets, the recent negative economic developments meant a sudden stand-still of the manufacturing sector amid unprecedented cancellation of orders from the AGOA and other outside markets. Even newly found opportunities such as the cannabis industry had to face sudden closure.

Though not organised and overlooked for a long time, the Lesotho Micro-Small and Medium Enterprise sector has been one of the strongest since independence and has actually shielded the country from some of its worst unemployment levels over the years.

The sector has no clear identity at the moment and the Government is well advanced in the process of developing MSME Policy, which will create an enabling environment for the development and growth of small businesses in the country. Furthermore, a data management system to register



*The despatch section of Lesotho Flour Mills, Maseru Industrial Area*

all MSMEs has been developed, through which even the smallest of businesses can be reached for empowerment and access to finance as a way of sustained job creation, especially for women and youth.

The Government has recently commenced the implementation of an ambitious policy aimed at encouraging the sustainability and indigenisation of local industries. Through the project, the objective is to at least see business establishments grow and run down through three generations of success. The policy is deliberately designed for youth participation in the private sector development programme, while also empowering women for continuity, es-

pecially where they are usually side-lined after the passing on of the husband, who are the anchor of the business establishment.

The Government continues to support the revival of the economy through supporting Private Sector Investment, and growing MSMEs, especially women and youth, while at the same time encouraging programming that will tap into the capabilities of the diaspora to promote investment and improve service delivery in health, education and other sectors. This is credited to development support from a number of vital development agreements such as with the UN agencies, the US, the EU, China and other global friends and financial institutions.

In her maiden budget speech, Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane emphasised the commitment of the new government to Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth and Private Sector-Led Job Creation as the cornerstone for economic recovery and growth.

“...inclusive and sustainable economic growth is a critical aspect of any country’s development strategy. It is characterised by an economy that grows in a manner that benefits all members of society, regardless of their income level or social status, while also being environmentally sustainable,” she told parliament, adding that a key driver of such growth is private sector-led job creation and livelihood opportunities by businesses and enterprises.

She said this approach recognises that a thriving private sector is fundamental to generating economic growth and poverty reduction, while stating the economy has to be set on a new growth trajectory of at least 5 to 7% per annum.

Minister Matlanyane said the road to recovery and growth that produces employment and reduces poverty was anchored on the pursuit and achievement of the following: Restoration of Macro-fiscal stability and consolidation of public financial management reforms to entrench fiscal discipline; efficient use of resources and improved controls and accountability.

“These are critical in rebuilding the confidence of the local and foreign investors, as well as development partners in our public policy and management,” she emphasised, adding that this required aggressive implementation of the Investment climate reform agenda. Otherwise Lesotho will be disadvantaged in attracting the much needed investment in areas where the

*Storage silos for wheat and maize milled and packaged at Lesotho Flour Mills*



country has competitive advantages, she added. "We are compelled to be forward looking and dynamic and develop futuristic industries that are driven by innovation and technology development (such as sustainable production technology, Health care predictive analytics, digital education, fintech, nanotechnology and others). Furthermore, we will build systems and enhance the capacity of relevant institutions to fight economic crimes, especially corruption, and money laundering, and close any potential conduits for terrorism financing," she said.

She continued that the focus will be on enhancing productivity, promoting diversification and value chain development through the use of improved technology and mechanisation, especially in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, while also adopting appropriate technology and advanced mechanisation including appropriate seed and fertilisers inputs as well as climate-smart technologies in agriculture to increase yield of basic grains, legumes, vegetables and deciduous.

The Minister of Finance added that in the same vein, the Government of Lesotho would facilitate increased production of meats (poultry, beef and pork) as well as eggs, fish and milk by farmers to satisfy local demand and processing for export.

Among others, she also mentioned the tourism sector has been identified as one of the priority sectors that will enhance sustainable and inclusive economic growth and private sector job creation. She stated that plans for the sector that her maiden budget would address were related to investment promotion and marketing Lesotho as a preferred tourism destination to stimulate recovery, as the sector was hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the new investments in this sector, she said the reconstruction of additional facilities by Semonkong Operator will be to enhance adventure activities while improving tourist engagement and experience. This would encourage tourists to spend more time in Lesotho and spend money on local accommodation facilities.



*Packaged bread flour ready for distribution*

"The traditional events that act as major tourist magnets will be resuscitated and enhanced through such programmes as organising Basotho Diaspora Homecoming Event in partnership with the International Organization for Migration to host Basotho from about 48 countries in the world to come and tour the attractions sites in view of creating Lesotho Tourism Ambassadors and new tourism investment leads," she said.

The Government had partnered with the World Bank and would in the future launch an initiative aimed at boosting the availability of financial products and business support services, primarily for small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with a particular focus on women and youth.

This project, she explained, sought to promote financial inclusion by improving the efficiency and dependability of digital services offered by the government to businesses, as well as by increasing access to financial services that can help facilitate the establishment and operation of new businesses. This initiative, she said, would also improve the business environment by reducing the time and cost involved in regulatory compliance, especially

for MSMEs, and make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and run their own businesses. Additionally, the project aims to enhance the resilience of firms in the face of climate change, pandemics, and other natural disasters, she added.

"The initiative also aims to enhance the emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem and improve access to early-stage financing for start-ups and youth-owned businesses. This will be achieved through the establishment of an entrepreneurship hub in Maseru, as well as the support of digitalisation among MSMEs. Private investment in high potential value chains will also be facilitated, with a focus on upgrading skills and promoting the adoption of sustainable production practices to boost productivity and promote environmentally friendly growth," Dr Matlanyane stated.

She said the two priority value chains targeted by this initiative were horticulture and the textile and clothing industry. Specifically, the initiative aims to aid the recovery of textile companies while promoting the participation of Basotho-owned firms in the value chain.

In terms of horticulture, the initiative seeks to promote the growth and development of this sector through various measures that would be outlined in more detail during the implementation period. This sector, which includes trade, tourism and industrial promotion, plus SMME development has a proposed budget allocation of M475.2 million this year.

Lesotho had in recent years suffered economic stagnation and it needs sustainable public and foreign direct investment that would allow it to create sustainable jobs and reduce poverty. The country also needs a productive private sector investment for increased exports and value chain and thus the support of traditionally small players in manufacturing and food production to meet some of the set targets, is an important strategic imperative Dr Matlanyane added.

The country has also put in place new investment strategies focusing more on people's participation and empowering Basotho to take part in directly building their own economy. With the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO) as lead agencies, together with commercial and development partners, Lesotho has set a new route that has widened not only the SMMEs playing field in the growth of the economy, but also encouraging the ordinary villager, who is a smallholder farmer to broaden their dreams.

Among others, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has developed the National Trade Policy Framework together with its requisite strategy, the National Export Strategy, both spanning the period 2021-2025. The Strategy is meant to strengthen the capacities of producers and service providers in strategic export sectors. These include horticulture; textiles and apparel; and light industries to take advantage of market access opportunities provided under arrangements such as AGOA, SADC, EU and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The implementation of the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap is ongoing to improve movement of goods and services across borders, thereby, reducing cost and time of doing business.



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Lesotho National Development Corporation

# Advertorial



We are levelling the playing field for fair trade for all  
"Re batalatsa mabala a khoebo e hloekileng bakeng sa bohle"

# Advertorial



The persistent and adverse global economic challenges emerging today, are not only a cause of concern for bigger economies, but even more threatening for smaller and least developed countries like Lesotho.

With shifting priorities in global trade as well as volatile markets presenting a new order amongst trading blocks and partners, it is an economic imperative for government entities tasked with growing and maintaining the economy such as the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) to go back to the drawing board, carve a new vision and to realign strategies on how best fulfil its mandate.

The mandate of LNDC - under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Business Development and Tourism - is to "initiate, promote and facilitate the development of manufacturing and processing industries, mining and commerce in a manner calculated to raise the level of income and employment in Lesotho". LNDC also promotes Lesotho as an attractive investment location for both foreign and domestic investors.

The LNDC presents its new five (5)-year Strategic Plan 2023/24 to 2027-28 with the main aim to improve the livelihoods of Basotho by making a positive and sustainable impact on the Lesotho economy. The new Strategic Plan comes with an emphasis on building capacity and wealth for communities while caring for the environment to create inter-generational value.

"This strategic plan has brought a shift in our slogan, "We Build Industry," to "Together we build sustainable industry." This shift is drawn from the lessons learnt over the years, notably that collaboration with external stakeholders including government, development partners, academia, regulators, the private sector, and existing investors is paramount to the successful implementation of this plan," proudly states the Interim Chief Executive Officer of LNDC, Mr. Molise Ramaili.

He explains that the mandate gives the LNDC sufficient room to explore innovative ways to catalyze Lesotho's economic growth including the creation of a conducive environment for starting and maintain a business in Lesotho.

"This is what has inspired our theme, "Re batalatsa mabala a khoebo e hloekileng bakeng sa bohle. "We are levelling the playing field for fair trade for all!"



Advocate Molise Ramaili  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

This theme is aligned to national and regional development plans in terms of priority sectors, regional integration and value chains as well as the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)," he further elaborated the plan was also developed in a manner intended to ensure responsiveness to current global economic, markets and environmental trends and to contribute to the generation of the nation's resilience.

We are levelling the playing field for fair trade for all!  
"Re batalatsa mabala a khoebo e hloekileng bakeng sa bohle"

# Advertorial



The guiding policy of the strategic plan responds to a diagnosis that LNDC had a limitation to evolve into a capable entity armed with an effective business and operating model that builds industry, provides inter-generational value funded from within its own model and one that focuses beyond just creating jobs, but to also grow the economy. In a nutshell, the new strategy of LNDC demonstrates the intention to shift towards a development corporation of the government of Lesotho that is invested in adding optimal, long term value to viable investments by local businesses and Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) that create better economic benefits for the country.

The newly unveiled LNDC strategic plan is premised on six (6) goals, which define how the corporation intends to fulfil its mandate to 2028. namely:

## 1. Institutional Legitimacy

The objective of strengthening the institutional legitimacy is to ensure interoperability within the organisation and to promote the institutional integrity of LNDC. This is intended to promote stakeholder engagement and to articulate the drive towards building industries for the domestic private sector, with access to markets, finance infrastructure and FDI partnerships.

## 2. Sustainable Development

In the new strategy, LNDC is committed to promoting responsible industry that conforms to the Ethics, Environment, Social and Governance (EESG) framework in its evaluation of compacts with investors. The corporation also intends to promote investments in green technologies and to facilitate access to green finance.

## 3. Information hub for large-scale industry and business intelligence

The strategic imperative of this goal is to render LNDC as a trusted advisor and partner to government and investors that provides credible information on opportunities, trends and performance to assist decision making. Under this strategic goal, LNDC will also implement the Nation Brand Strategic Framework and highlight the nation's strategic advantages on industrialization.

## 4. Improved organizational and People delivery

This strategic imperative focuses on the people capital of LNDC to ensure that the Corporation has efficient human capital with the requisite business acumen and intrapreneurial skills and also utilising intelligent business systems to take industrial promotion to the next level.



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"Re batalatsa mabala a khoebo e hloekileng bakeng sa bohle"

# Advertorial



## 5. Sustainable Infrastructure & Technology

With significant industrial property investment under its portfolio, the new strategy mandates the Corporation to maximise its Return On Investment on all properties and charges it to extend its infrastructure offering to include leasing and purchase of industrial technologies and equipment.

## 6. Financial Strategy for organizational and industry sustainability.

The key objective of this strategic goal is to expand revenue streams of development finance and to reduce the concentration risks inherent with the current operating model. The LNDC also seeks to establish a legal entity that will be tasked with facilitating and implementing development finance.

"Investment attraction is a subject that is facing a new set of challenges due to changing global conditions, most commonly of course the adverse effects of Covid-19 and geo-political factors, most notably the Russian and Ukraine war. These have drastically impacted global supply chains in various sectors, and Lesotho is not an exception to these repercussions," notes Mr. Ramaili.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer indicates that through strong collaboration with stakeholders, the LNDC intends to achieve success in the implementation of the new strategic plan by focusing on the growth of a select number of high-value-adding industries based on the comparative advantage of the country. Other opportunities, he adds, will include the incorporation of green programmes, opportunities for property development, and the promotion of sectors that support the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, the plan will focus on creating enterprises that will establish trade and value chains that will create employment. The investment approach will seek to boost domestic investment by facilitating access to finance, attracting required FDI and providing trade enhancing services for improved market penetration.

"One of our key coherent actions is to "Develop an Ethics, Environmental, Social and Governance (EESG) framework and programmes as a means of adhering to standards adopted by socially conscious investors. Our efforts will also focus on the integration of industries for wealth creation and sustainability purposes such that our domestic businesses can access the same investment opportunities that international investors have accessed over the years. This will be a well-crafted twinning strategy between domestic and foreign investment," the Interim CEO emphasises.



We are levelling the playing field for fair trade for all!  
"Re batalatsa mabala a khoebo e hloekileng bakeng sa bohle"



"I invite you to come on board as we roll out our strategy to facilitate the creation of enterprises that will generate jobs over the five- year period, in high value industries such as the automotive, agriculture and agro-processing, technology and services sector..."





*Two diversion tunnels at Polihali have been completed to make way for the building of the dam wall*



*The artist impression of the proposed 166 meter high Polihali Dam (copyright LHDA)*

## Phase II of Lesotho Highlands Water Project Roars to Life

Writes Manyathela Kheleli

*The commencement of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, does not only bring to fruition, the desire of watering the economic aspirations of both Lesotho and South Africa, but also continues to cement the bilateral bond between the two neighbours.*

*Lesotho continues to project itself as a hub for sustainable freshwater resources in the region. This has rendered the country to become a strategic ally in the economy and geopolitics of the SADC region, as Lesotho's water wealth has the potential to bring change and*

*influence the economy of the SADC region.*

*On 23 May 2023, King Letsie III and the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa officiated the sod turning of the estimated M42 billion Lesotho Highlands*

*Water Project Phase II at Polihali in Tlokoeng, in the Mokhotlong district. The project is the second phase in the implementation of a treaty that was signed by the two countries in 1986 for the construction of infrastructure to provide water to the industrial hub of South Africa, Gauteng, whilst simultaneously generating hydroelectricity for the Mountain Kingdom. President Ramaphosa says the project is a beacon of hope, a symbol of progress, a symbol of international cooperation and a testament to the strength of bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.*

*When complete, Phase II will deliver the third dam of the multibillion project at the confluence of Khubelu and Senqu rivers, which will pump an additional 400 million cubic meters of water to the Vaal dam. Phase I made up of Katse and Mohale Dams commissioned in 2004 currently delivers about 780 cubic metres of water per annum. This export of water, aptly referred to as Lesotho's 'white gold', earned the national fiscus royalties amounting to M1.33 billion as at the end of 2022.*

*With tenders for the main works valued at approximately M20 billion, the construction at Polihali marks yet another milestone that will change the fortunes of Lesotho. Currently reeling from massive unemployment and slow economic growth, Phase II presents an opportunity for Lesotho to get out of the woods and to improve its infrastructure. In the short term, the construction will spur economic growth and create about 6 000 jobs for the next five years, while in the long run, the country will benefit from ancillary roads and other developments created by the project. Lesotho will also earn more royalties and become self-sufficient in power generation.*



The construction of Polihali Dam, which is the ultimate objective of LHWA Phase II, was preceded by the building of advance infrastructure that included the construction of access roads, bridges, power lines, two diversion tunnels and accommodation facilities for the contractors. The historic sod-turning ceremony at the damsite on 23 May 2023 marked the beginning of the multi-billion project.

The construction at Polihali entails the building of the dam wall, a tunnel that connects Polihali to the main Katse reservoir and the construction of bridges, the main one being the Senqu bridge. Billions of maloti worth of tenders have been awarded to international, regional and local sub-contractors for the works that will see the creation of about 6 000 jobs in the country in the next five years. During this period, the construction is expected to provide an economic stimulus that is projected to contribute about 5% of annual year on year growth to the country's GDP.

Similar to the Mohale Dam, the Polihali Dam wall will be a 166-meter Concrete Face Rockfill Dam (CFRD). The dam will create a reservoir on the

Senqu and Khubelu rivers with a surface area of 5 053 hectares and a full supply storage capacity of 2 325 million cubic meters. The dam embankment will be constructed in compacted layers from free draining rockfill, sourced locally in the Lesotho highlands, very close to the dam. The main dam embankment will contain 15 million cubic meters of rockfill together with the 43m Saddle Dam (also a Concrete Face Rockfill Dam) which will be made up of a total of 1.25 million cubic meters of rockfill.

Using rockfill has a further advantage in that, placement can continue during periods of heavy rainfall, which is a frequent occurrence in Lesotho. Polihali Dam is designed to be constructed in stages to allow overlapping of the major activities on the critical programme path. This method also shortens the construction period and has a further advantage in that, impoundment can be initiated during the construction period. The dam will also include a spillway, a compensation outlet structure and a mini-hydropower station.

The Polihali Dam construction contract was awarded to the SUN Joint Venture, comprising main partners: Sinohydro Bureau 8 (China);

Sinohydro Bureau 14 (China); Unik Civil Engineering (South Africa) and Nthane Brothers (Lesotho). Subcontractors include Melki Civils and Plant Hire (South Africa); MECSA Construction (South Africa); SIGMA Construction (Lesotho) and Kunming Engineering (China).

At the time of the award, the contract was valued at approximately M7.68 billion. The construction of the dam wall is projected to be completed in 2029. Depending on the climatic conditions, the Polihali reservoir could be filled to capacity between two to seven years after the start of the impoundment of water. However, based on the experience of Katse and Mohale dams that were filled in record time, it is expected that Polihali will also reach its storage capacity ahead of time.

The second key deliverable in the implementation of Phase II is the Polihali Transfer Tunnel which is intended to transfer water by gravity from the Polihali reservoir to the main Katse reservoir, the centrepiece of the LHWP. From Katse, water is further transferred through the delivery tunnel to the 'Muela Hydropower Station constructed during Phase I, and then on to the Ash River outfall outside Clarence in the Free State on its way to Gauteng. The transfer tunnel from Polihali to Katse is five meters in diameter and will cover 38 kilometers. Both tunnel boring, as well as drill and blast methods will be used to excavate the tunnel.

The Polihali Transfer Tunnel construction also includes the intake works and gate shaft at the Polihali reservoir; outlet works and gate shaft at the existing Katse reservoir with underwater connection to the lake; access adits to the waterway and associated construction infrastructure.

The tunnel boring machine to be used is a double-shield gripper TBM, with precast concrete segmental lining, erected and grouted at the rear of the TBM. A double-shield machine is able to simultaneously excavate the rock and erect the segments, while the machine is fully protected by the shield. With shield and segments, the tunnellers are never exposed to unsupported ground, and in

effect, never see the rock, except for the spoil emerging from the cutter head.

With a total contract value of approximately M9.2 billion, the tender for the construction of the tunnel has been awarded to the Kopano Ke Matla joint venture made up of Yellow River Company (China); Sinohydro Bureau 3 (China) and Unik Civil Engineering (South Africa) who are the main joint venture partners. Subcontractors include Nthane Brothers of Lesotho, Esor Construction and Mecsa Construction of South Africa.

The tunnel is expected to be completed in 2028, almost a year ahead of the completion of the dam wall.

The project also includes the construction of three major bridges under Phase II. The first of the three major bridges is the Senqu Bridge. Almost a kilometer long (825m) and at the height of 90m, the Senqu Bridge will be the first extradosed bridge in Lesotho and is larger than the Mphorosane Bridge on the Malibamatšo River, which spans the Katse Dam and was constructed under Phase I of the Project. Mphorosane is only about 465 meters with a height of 86 meters. When complete, Senqu bridge will set a new record as the longest and tallest bridge in Lesotho. It is also the largest of the three bridges that will be constructed under Phase II to span the Polihali reservoir. The bridge design has taken into consideration the Mokhotlong highlands' long, cold and harsh winter conditions.

Due to the deep valley and the terrain of the area, the deck will be constructed incrementally from both abutments. This construction method will minimise disturbance to the surrounding work area and increase workers' safety. An in-situ segment midspan of the centre span will connect the two parts to form a continuous deck. The pier shape has been preferred as ideal to be constructed with sliding formwork. The bridge was designed by Zutari, formerly Aurecon Lesotho, who will also oversee the works. The two other bridges to be constructed are Mabunyaneng and Khubelu bridges.

The tender for the construction of this major bridge was awarded to WRES Senqu Bridge Joint Venture at the approximate value of M2 billion. WRES Joint Venture includes South African, Lesotho and international companies as per the requirements of the Phase II Agreement. The primary partners are: Webuild S.p.A. (Italy); Raubex Construction (Pty) Ltd (South Africa); Enza Construction (Pty) Ltd (South Africa) and Sigma Construction (Pty) Ltd (Lesotho). Sub-contractors include: EXR Construction (Pty) Ltd (South Africa); Gleitbau-Gesellschaft (Austria); Post Tensioning and Structural Solutions (Pty) Ltd (South Africa) and Freyssinet International et Cie (France).

The procurement of all works was guided by Article 10 of the Phase II agreement between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa. In particular, Article 10 (b) states that preference for contractors and consultants shall be given in the order of Lesotho, South Africa, SADC Member States, and international in the awarding of the contracts provided that such suppliers meet requirements in terms of cost and quality in the manner that advocates for competitiveness and transparency.

At close analysis, the magnitude of the project has dictated that major contractors will be drawn from international players, predominantly from China, Austria and France. South African companies have also featured considerably and Lesotho Companies have also been a party to the joint ventures. Nthane Brothers is one such beneficiary, the company is part of the main contractors in the SUN joint venture awarded the tender for the construction of the dam wall. As a rough estimate, in the tender for the tunnel contract, the minimum participation for Lesotho contractors is 14.3%, which in monetary terms is over M1.3 billion according to the LHDA.

With regard to employment, all unskilled labour will be sourced from the project area and other areas within Lesotho. Recruitment is managed off-site by an independent labour recruitment consultant, in collaboration with local community structures and oversight by the Department of Labour. Phase II construction is expected to create approximately 3 000 unskilled jobs. All unskilled jobs are reserved for Lesotho nationals. Data on the number of jobs that

will be created during the construction of the Senqu Bridge, the Polihali Dam, and the Polihali Transfer Tunnel specifically is estimated at around 6 000 jobs.

The impact of Phase II of the LHDA on the economy of Lesotho cannot be overemphasised. Indicative estimates that are yet to be ratified by the Central Bank project that Phase II contributes to about 5% of GDP and 10% of annual government revenue year on year. Much of this trend has already been evident in the construction works of the advance infrastructure, and indications are that the trend is going to surge with major works underway. The economic spillovers from the dam infrastructure construction will also affect other industries such as transport and fuel, tourism and the retail sector. At the household level, the quality of life for Basotho employed in the project will make a huge difference in transforming lives.

During the conceptualisation of the Polihali Project, the LHDA also factored the facilitation of other downstream economies for the benefit of Basotho. The Authority has recently approved its new 10-year strategy which, unlike previous times,

explicitly spells out the maximisation of commercial opportunities and development of business enterprise as a key strategic goal. In that goal, is the intent to explore tourism and fisheries as a key commercial opportunity and business area that the project intends to develop for the benefit of Basotho in the project area and beyond.

The amount of water delivered each year is agreed upon by both governments and is managed in terms of an approved water schedule. The current supply rate is 780 million cubic meters per annum. The Polihali Dam will add another 2 322 million cubic meters in terms of storage capacity enabling an incremental increase in water transfer volume to 1 270 million cubic meters per annum. Water delivery from Polihali is expected to start as soon as the commissioning is done in 2028.

On the generation of hydropower for consumption in Lesotho, the government confirmed the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme on the Malibamatšo River in November 2021. Procurement for the design and construction supervision of the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme commenced in late October

2022 and is underway, as is the procurement of consultants for the environmental assessment (ESIA) and the resettlement action planning (RAP) associated with the Oxbow Scheme.

According to the current master programme, construction of the Oxbow scheme is expected to commence in 2026. The scope of the Oxbow Hydropower dam includes a 100-metre high dam, two tunnels and a high-pressure steel pipeline as well as a power station that will produce an installed capacity of 80 MW of power from four turbines to ensure the country's self-reliance with electricity. The capacity of Oxbow will add a total of about 40% to the grid. There will also be an additional 40% to the electricity generation capacity of 'Muela as a result of the increased flow of water from Polihali. Power generation is expected to commence in early 2030.

The Oxbow Hydropower Scheme will significantly increase the security of power for Lesotho and possibly render the country self-sufficient in power when added to the output of the solar power generation project at Ha-Ramarothole.



*The artist impression of the main Senqu bridge poised to become the biggest bridge in Lesotho, at the height of 90 meters and length of 825 meters (copyright LHDA)*

# ECOCASH & ECOSURE CELEBRATE 10 YEARS (OF EMPOWERING BASOTHO)



# Econet Expo

## Driving The Digital Economy

The Econet Expo, Lesotho's first digital Expo, was the ultimate destination for all Basotho, young and old, to join the global digital revolution and explore the latest digital technologies, products, and services.



The Expo featured some of the most highly anticipated products and services of the year to ensure digital access and inclusivity for all in the country. Our products centred around these main categories; AI Technology, MSME Accelerators, Smart Living, On The Go, 10x Business Solutions and Gaming.

### All attendees experienced our digital solutions that are designed to:

- Make life easier and more affordable in the home
- Improve speed and productivity in the workplace
- Keep people connected, wherever they may be
- Enable speedy cashless financial transactions
- Educate and stimulate the minds of children
- Create connected families and communities through exhibits, interactive workshops and live demonstrations.



The Econet Expo was an ultimate digital solutions experience that captured the hearts and minds of all Basotho who attended.

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Embrace boundless freedom and seamless connectivity!

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In 2023 we introduced our groundbreaking innovations and developments, setting new standards in how we bring connectivity to Basotho.

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With the introduction of our cutting-edge eSIM technology, you can switch mobile carriers with just a few taps on your phone.

The eSIM, or embedded SIM, is a virtual, non-physical SIM card securely embedded in your device.

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- **Reducing Wireless Traffic:** With more users connected to the Fibre Network, we're relieving congestion on our wireless infrastructure, leading to a smoother and faster wireless experience for everyone.
- **Future-Proof Connectivity:** Fibre is ready for the next generation of technology, ensuring you stay connected in the years to come.

With eSIM and an expanded Fiber Network, we're dedicated to providing Basotho with a faster, more flexible, and more reliable connection across the nation.

Inspired to change your world

## BACKGROUND OF C4005D

# INSTALLATION OF TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PHASE II



Pollhali Powerstation - Makhotlong

Econet/CBS JV has successfully completed the implementation of Phase 2 LHDA C4005D contract, under which it was contracted to upgrade and expand the existing LEC telecommunications network from Maseru Central via Maputsoe to the Katse Dam, as well as a network from Maputsoe via 'Muela and Tlokoeng to Makhotlong network to provide telecommunication services to the new dam site at Pollhali, plus the specified sites requiring services during the construction period.

The Scope of Work included the upgrading of some existing nodes to accommodate the higher bandwidths, the installation of new nodes in the Pollhali area, the establishment of a ring network configuration to achieve high availability and reliability, as well as the provision of data network equipment, voice communication and video conferencing equipment, and related services.



*Prime Minister Samuel Matekane flanked by the Minister of Natural Resources Mhloimi Moleko and other dignitaries, cut a ribbon to mark the commissioning of Ramarothole Power Plant (picture courtesy of LEWA)*

# Lesotho Bursts into Solar Power Amid Power Outages in South Africa

Writes Manyathela Kheleli



*With a population of about 2.3 million, only 38% of Lesotho's population has access to electricity. However, the rate of household electrification has continued to rise steadily in recent years, thanks to the Rural Electrification Project currently being implemented by the Ministry of Energy. With measures being taken to connect rural households to the national grid, a new challenge on the supply side has also come to haunt this development.*

*Current data indicates that Lesotho needs at least 150 megawatts (MW) of peak power to meet her daily demands, but only generates 72Mw from the 'Muela Hydropower Station run by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. The deficit is augmented by imported power from the South African power utility, Eskom and Mozambique's Electricidade de Mocambique (EDM) within the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP). What is the future of supply looking like, and are there any prospects for export?*

The major concern is that Lesotho imports about 53% of its power from very unstable sources. In particular, Eskom of South Africa that remains saddled by capacity challenges as evidenced by load shedding in the neighbouring country. Eskom supplies an average of 20% of electricity to the national grid. To give context to the South African power problem, it is estimated that the South African economy is losing an average of M1.5 billion daily to load-shedding.

The country has also encountered another setback, where unit 1 at 'Muela Hydropower station failed to restart in June 2022. From then on, the station was operating at two-thirds of its rated capacity until July 2023 when the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, LHDA announced the successful restoration and return to operation of the unit.

For Lesotho, the fears that the country could also experience power cuts may not materialise. This is because the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and Eskom have signed the Electricity Import and Export Agreement, which has shielded Lesotho from load-shedding, but it is clear that the country has to free itself from its heavy reliance on electricity imports.

In an effort to address the power deficit in the wake of growing demand, Lesotho has set itself to implement the 2015-2025 Energy policy, which sets out the strategic direction of the country's energy sector developments. At the outset, the Energy Policy aligns with the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II) towards the national vision to promote the development of environmentally cleaner renewable energy and to increase the share of clean energy in the country's energy mix. Some of the policy's key objectives on power generation are to: improve the security of power supply, to ensure that base load requirements are met through local generation, and to enhance the participation of private sector and cooperative associations in the electricity supply industry.

In ensuring the security of power supply in the country, the policy further commits to adopting strategies towards power generation using large, mini and micro-hydro power stations, as well as exploring other clean energy sources from wind and solar power. The government of Lesotho has approved the construction of the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme following the success of the feasibility studies and the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) as part of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The scope of the Oxbow Hydropower dam includes a 100-meter high dam, two tunnels and a high-pressure

steel pipeline as well as a power station that will produce an installed capacity of 80 MW of power from four turbines to ensure the country's self-reliance with electricity. The capacity of Oxbow will add a total of about 40% to the grid.

It is anticipated that the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme will be commissioned in 2029, a year after the commencement of water transfer from Polihali to South Africa. The power generated from Oxbow will be transferred through a 132 kilovolts double circuit transmission line covering about 138 kilometers. On the other hand, in her maiden Budget Speech 2023/24, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane indicated that a mini-hydropower project is due to commence with funding from the Japanese Government grant valued at M184 million at Katse Dam.

Whereas the feasibility of wind power is currently being explored and poses great potential, it is solar energy projects that have taken off at full speed. The first solar generation facility of note is the 280 kilowatt plant at Moshoeshoe I International Airport commissioned in 2013. The major solar power installation in the country is the 30 MW Ramarothole Solar Plant which was handed over to the Government of Lesotho by the People's Republic of China in June 2023. The Ramarothole plant in Mafeteng district is part of phase 1 of the 80MW solar power generation project. The initial arrangement of 70MW has subsequently been agreed to increase to 80MW. Phase II of the project will have a capacity of 50MW. The project is funded to the tune of US\$150 million through China-Aid under the auspices of the Shared Future Initiative for African countries and financed by the Export-Import Bank of China.

The ground-mounted solar project which covers an area of over 220 hectares is expected to run at a full capacity of 80MW in December 2024. The project was launched in 2021 with the works carried out by two Chinese companies, China Sinoma International Engineering and TBEA Xinjiang New Energy.



*Power stations at Ramarothole Power Plant*



*Controls and monitors used at Ramarothole Station*



*One of the inverters at at Ramarothole solar Power Plant used to convert direct current from a network of solar panels to alternating current for home use*

Photovoltaic solar power projects will help Lesotho to optimise its energy mix and to cultivate solar power expertise in order to improve the economy and Basotho's livelihoods. The Ramarothole solar plant is owned and operated by the Lesotho Electricity Generation Company (LEGCO). LEGCO is a company wholly owned by the Government of Lesotho that was established in 2020. It has been mandated to promote the generation of electricity in the country and to ensure the security of electricity supply.

Solar energy is the future for many countries. This is especially so for countries like Lesotho that have abundant sunlight throughout the year. Other solar projects in Lesotho include the project by OnePower, which received grant funding from development partners to set up 10 mini-grid

photovoltaic (PV) projects in Lesotho's rural areas. The mini-grid sites are Matsoaing, Thlanyaku, Sehlabathebe, Lebakeng, Tosing, Sebapala, Sehonghong, Mashai, Ribaneng, and Ketane. The Lesotho Energy Master Plan estimates that the country has a potential for solar energy generation at an annual average of 7 520 MJ/m<sup>2</sup> per day on a horizontal surface.

With Lesotho boasting the highest lowest point in the world at 1400 meters, the country's high altitude presents massive opportunities for wind farms. Estimates have indicated that there is potential to generate over 6 000 MW of wind power in Lesotho in the foreseeable future. This potential indicates that opportunities are abound for investors in this area. Current projects include the 35MW Letšeng Wind project, currently in the last stage of financial closure as

well as the Semonkong Wind project, currently in a feasibility study with promising results.

However, by the very nature of the technologies used in wind or solar power generation, a lot of investment is needed in terms of the funds to purchase the equipment as well as the expertise required to operate them.

With 'Muela back to full capacity at 72MW and the additional 30MW from Ramarothole, Lesotho currently has energy security of over 65% of its power requirement based on current demand. This development also implies that Lesotho has effectively reduced power imports of about 54MW from July 2023, which is a significant saving by the country. The completion of Phase II at Ramarothole and the projected additional supply when the Oxbow

Hydropower Plant is completed in 2029 will also add another 130 MW of power to the national grid. This development therefore implies that with such developments, Lesotho will become a net exporter of power to other countries within the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP).

Coupled with massive potential in wind energy, Lesotho has the required resources to produce clean energy for Southern Africa in abundance. Through donor agencies and development partners such as the United States of America, European Union, China, Japan, Germany and other wealthier countries, Lesotho can harness renewable energy to lessen the power supply gap that currently exists, and also explore opportunities for generating power for export in the future.

*A section of solar panels at Ha-Ramarothole cover an area of over 220 hectares*



*The newly constructed 200 bed capacity Maseru District Hospital and Eye Clinic undergoing final touch-ups. It is expected to be operational by 2024.*



# Lesotho National Health Policy

Writes Kekeletso Motopi

*The Lesotho health services sector is guided by a ten-year master plan that envisages the provision and expansion of services. The plan titled The National Health Strategic Plan (2017-22), is premised on the contents of the National Health Policy and explains in detail, how the objectives of the National Health Policy will be implemented, its priorities, and expected outcomes and how the results will be measured. The National Health Policy (NHP 2016) and the National Health Strategic Plan (NHSP 2017-22) are implemented concurrently. The National Health Strategy provides the basis for stakeholder discussion and dialogue on the priorities of the health sector and the basis for partners (both inter and intra-sectoral) to prioritise their programmes and funding plans in the health sector. It also facilitates growth and investment in the health service provision and supply.*

*The shared vision of this strategy is a global vision that seeks to achieve universal health coverage for people of all ages. This strategy was developed within the context of global health parameters and is informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 3) and has internalised the goals and targets of the SDGs for health.*

The National Health strategy reflects, and has adopted other global and regional strategies and frameworks such as the Paris Agreement on climate change (2015), Global Health Security, building a resilient health system, Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health (Workforce 2030), Engagement with non-state actors, Global Strategy

for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030), Reducing HIV transmission by 2020, Elimination of Mother-to-Child transmission of HIV and syphilis, the End TB Strategy, WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and Global plan of action on violence are all expressed in the constitution, which provides protection to health, equality and justice for all, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

To ensure the successful implementation of the plan, the government has allocated M1.1 billion to support its implementation for the fiscal year 2023/24.

The National Health Strategic Plan (NHSP) ensures a functional, accountable, transparent and equitable health system. Building a functional health system requires a strong policy and regulatory environment, and a transparent and accountable system of planning, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation (including research) for better health outcomes.

The plan draws on curbing the spread of communicable diseases. The most common communicable diseases include preventable diseases such as infections and viral hemorrhagic fevers. Covid-19 is one such disease which the plan is focused on. The global pandemic spread across the world in a matter of months and Lesotho tackled it through the provisions of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan also makes provisions for the HIV and AIDS programme. The overarching goal

of the HIV and AIDS programme is to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment and care for HIV and AIDS services for the people of Lesotho. In line with the UNAIDS strategy, the MoH strategy targets zero new infections and zero AIDS-related deaths. The previous strategy has four main targets aimed at reducing by 50 percent, the percentage of young people aged 15-24 years who are infected, reducing new HIV infections in children by 90 percent and reducing HIV-related deaths by 25 percent (all compared with a 2009 baseline). Lesotho is said to have a generalised HIV epidemic with 25% of adults aged between 15-49 years being HIV positive. About 310,000 persons (adults and children) are living with HIV and AIDS in Lesotho.

The prevalence rate is higher in women (30%) than in men (23%). HIV prevalence in women is highest between the ages of 35 and 39 years at 45.5% and in men at 43.5% between 40 and 44 years. Key populations with high HIV prevalence include female sex workers (FSWs), men sleeping with men (MSM), migrant and factory workers and transgender persons. HIV prevalence in key populations is higher than in the general population with a prevalence of 72% among FSW, 43% among factory workers and 33% among MSM. It is estimated that there are 18000 new HIV infections and about 9900 HIV and AIDS related deaths each year.

Notably, the country has also made enormous progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS. It has surpassed the UNAIDS 90-90-90 and has exceeded the second and third 90 targets, achieving 90-97-92. These findings position the country well as it aims to achieve the even more ambitious UNAIDS target of reaching 95-95-95 targets by 2025.

While Lesotho, like many of its Least Developed Countries (LDCs) peers is grappling with a number of health challenges, it has also prioritised improving its health services by increasing access through infrastructure development and improving necessary skills and technology at the

local level to address such and reach its target goals.

For the current financial year, the government has proposed M3.2 billion for financing health sector programmes. This will among others, allow the deployment of the health workforce in critical areas, procurement of critical equipment in hospitals, and implementation of disease prevention programmes. The planned works will also proceed for the cancer centre being established for the country.

Other critical programmes include the global move to diagnose all missing TB cases and enroll them for treatment through 'Operation Hlasela lefuba' launched by the Ministry of Health in February 2023. The operation is ongoing.

Plans are underway for the country to open doors to its first cancer treatment facility in 2024 to provide services locally rather than sending patients abroad for treatment. With support funding for the facility provided by the Lesotho government and specialist medical staff already undergoing training with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria, the African country of 2.2 million people is in a good position to start building the centre in the capital, Maseru, and purchase the necessary equipment.

This centre would save the country approximately US\$7 million it spends annually on sending its cancer patients to South Africa and India for treatment and care. Completion of the first stage of construction will enable the provision of chemotherapy and radiotherapy for around 1,000 patients a year, with some accommodation available for patients requiring longer periods of treatment.

The envisaged second phase of the construction will extend the centre's capacity to provide services for more walk-in patients. It will also add diagnostic and nuclear medicine facilities for both cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Cancer is

increasingly both a health and development issue for many low and middle-income countries, with a growing number of cases putting more pressure on the government and family resources. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, Global Cancer Observatory, the number of people expected to develop cancer in Lesotho each year will grow by almost a quarter by 2030, with a similar annual rise in related deaths. Lesotho is one of 28 African countries which does not currently provide radiotherapy – an essential tool in the treatment of cancer.

Apart from the cancer clinic, the country is also planning a new eyecare department at the Maseru District Hospital and Eye Clinic. The multi-million Maloti project is expected to benefit at least 400 000 people in Maseru and other districts. The state-of-the-art, 200-bed Maseru District Hospital and Eye Clinic is anticipated to start operating in December 2023. It is part of the reconstruction of the old Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

The hospital is expected to provide services including eye care, cancer, tuberculosis (TB), HIV, and non-communicable diseases including telemedicine platforms. The hospital will also have training facilities and dormitories for trainee doctors and nurses. It will feature state-of-the-art medical equipment and act as a national referral hospital, working in collaboration with the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital to treat patients.

The hospital construction is being funded through a Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) programme. The platform among other things seeks to promote the China-Africa relationship through collective dialogue and practical cooperation.

The Lesotho health plan is open for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) that cover service delivery, supply chain and hospitality services. In 2012, the Government of Lesotho (GoL), with support from



*Covid-19 vaccination facilitated by the Ministry of Health*

the International Financial Corporation (IFC), undertook a PPP project to strengthen healthcare waste management in 15 health centres and two district hospitals. The project was to pilot the collection, transportation and disposal of healthcare waste from the selected health facilities.

The GoL, with funding from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), started a project to refurbish 154 health facilities. With support from IFC, a PPP project was initiated to address facility management, Information, Technology and Communication (ICT) including connectivity in 165 health centres.

The MoH has a memorandum of understanding with the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) and selected private health facilities to provide health services.

The country is not new to PPP partnerships. Its maiden PPP arrangement was to design, build and operate the Queen Memorial Hospital (QMMH) for 15 years. The PPP signed in 2009 opened a new era for private sector involvement in healthcare in Africa, and was seen as the International Finance Corporation (IFC)'s flagship model to be replicated across the continent.

Lesotho embarked upon this partnership as a strategy to rebuild the country's failing network of public health facilities. In 2012, the health network provided services to approximately 375,000 outpatients and 23,000 inpatients. Health sector public-private partnerships (PPPs) come in a variety of forms, from the outsourcing of specific support services such as catering, to more complex arrangements that include financing, building, designing and facilities management of hospitals.

Under the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital PPP, which has since collapsed, Netcare was contracted to treat all patients present at the

Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital, up to a maximum of 20,000 inpatients and 310,000 outpatients annually. Patients paid the same user fees as they would in any public facility. Certain services such as transplants, elective cardiac and vascular surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy were excluded from the contract for reasons of affordability. Like the old Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, under the PPP the new hospital was contracted to function as the country's clinical teaching facility for health professionals.

In return, the government paid an annual unitary fee that covers capital repayment and service delivery costs. The fee would be adjusted only for inflation or if additional services beyond those in the contract are agreed and incorporated. The agreement provided that, if Netcare failed to uphold agreed performance standards, the government could make penalty deductions from this fee. Any patients served in excess of the maximum number covered by the contract were to be charged to the government at a rate of \$4.72 per outpatient and \$786 per inpatient (at 2007 prices and excluding VAT and annual inflation).

The sector has a diverse structure, covering funding, regulation and the delivery of health services featuring a combination of private and public sector participation, mainly run by government. Non-governmental organisations, such as religious bodies, Lesotho Red Cross Society and others, also shoulder a portion of the work in the direct provision of health services.

Health services are delivered across primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In total, there are 286 health facilities across the country, 265 primary healthcare centres, 20 general and district hospitals and a tertiary referral hospital, Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) located in the capital, Maseru. The government operates 40 percent of the primary health centres and 55 percent of the hospitals.

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*Routine Maintenance of Bongalla to Maela road - Construction of a Vented Ford sponsored by Road Fund*

### **Vision**

We are committed to enhance Lesotho's economy through efficient revenue collection and disbursements towards road infrastructure.

### **Mission**

To effectively and efficiently collect revenue and disburse funds for safe road infrastructure.

### **Purpose**

To collect road user charges and finance road works and road safety activities.

### **Employee Philosophy**

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### **Core values**

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T= Transparency,  
R= Responsibility,  
A= Accountability,  
I= Integrity, and  
T= Team spirit at all levels.

### **Mandate of Road Fund**

The Road Fund was established under the Section 21(3) of the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011 and operationalised by the Finance (Road Fund) Regulations 2012. The main reason for establishing the Road Fund was to shift the burden of financing maintenance of Lesotho's

road infrastructure from general taxes collected by the central fiscus to road user fees, and to close the persistent financing gaps that characterised road maintenance prior to the establishment of the Road Fund.

### **Revenue Collection**

In order to finance road infrastructure projects, Road Fund is mandated to collect revenue on identified streams; these are short term permits and special permits for motor vehicles collected by the Department of Traffic and Transport under the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Another stream is that of Toll Gate Fees collected by Revenue Services Lesotho; Fines on traffic offences and

other road user charges collected by the Lesotho Mounted Police Services through Traffic Police. The Road Maintenance levy on petrol and diesel is collected by Oil Companies. All collected funds earmarked for the Fund are then transferred to Fund's coffers on a monthly basis.

The year 2021-2022 showed remarkable recovery from effects of COVID-19 worldwide pandemic which had adversely impacted on the operations of the Road Fund in the previous year. There was an overall increase in revenue collection for the period under review compared to the previous year; mainly on Road





*eSpot Fine in motion as a road user pays road traffic offence fine via Ecocash*



*Part of Traffic Police Officials during a Stakeholder Engagement Meeting with Road Fund*

Maintenance Levy and Toll Gate Fees collections. Total Revenue collected for the period up to 31 March 2022 amounted to M 183,762,680 increasing by M 51,857,517 (40%) from M131,650,822 collected for the same period up to 31 March 2021.

### **Road Maintenance Projects**

The Road Fund remained committed to working with the Road Implementing Agencies. These are the Roads Directorate, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship as well as Maseru City Council for maintenance of roads; while for road safety, the Road Safety Department remained the relevant stakeholder.

In 2021-2022, the Fund allocated a total of M201, 855, 000 and Implementing Agencies were only able to implement

projects that amounted to M86,781,649. Road Implementing Agencies have been going through different spells of non-performance due to delays in the submission of Annual Road Maintenance Programmes, delayed procurement processes, insufficient supervision of contractors and non-compliance and insensitivity to contractual obligations and the law.

### **Road Safety Management**

The Road continued to sponsor road safety initiatives which are aimed at reducing the number of road crashes on Lesotho's roads. The Road Fund continued to support automation of some Law Enforcement processes for efficient collection of Road Safety Data to assist in decision making and better tracking of road traffic offenders. The Lesotho Mounted Police Service through the Traffic

Police Department was funded through the Road Safety Department to procure Reflective Jackets, Speed Cameras, Roadblock trailer, Alcohol breathalysers and white hand gloves.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management**

Stakeholder engagement remains the Road Fund's key focus at any time. High level stakeholder engagement meetings were convened with various stakeholders including the Minister of Finance, Principal Secretaries Ministries Transport and Public Works as well as Finance and Development Planning, Director of Public Prosecutions, Commissioner of Police and Chief Justice, amongst others. The meetings were held to ensure success in the collaboration between the Road Fund and these agencies on a variety of projects.

The Road Fund also organised technical meetings with Road Implementing Agencies and with the Road Safety Department. These are held at an operational level to improve working relations for better service delivery.

### **Brand Identity Manual**

The Fund has developed a Brand Identity Manual which describes visual elements that represent its Corporate Identity. The Manual is being implemented in phases mostly to ensure protection of the Fund's interests by preventing unauthorized or incorrect use of the Road Fund name and identity. For instance, the use of a unique font type, description of the logo, corporate colours and identifying elements form part of the Road Fund's identity.



**TOYOTA  
MASERU**



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*Moshoeshoe Walk hikers arriving at their destination in Thaba Bosiu amid jubilation and cheers, after walking in the footsteps of King Moshoeshoe for three days*

# The Inspiration Behind Moshoeshoe Walk to the Highest Order of Ramatšeatsana

Writes Sebatso Phakisi

*The annual Moshoeshoe Walk event, which is at the top of the calendar for hiking enthusiasts is the brainchild of an entrepreneur and visionary, whose idea was to encapsulate the spirit of Moshoeshoeism among young and adult Basotho.*

*The walk has grown from humble beginnings of just forty hikers back in 2007. Sixteen years down the line, Moshoeshoe Walk now boasts more than 700 hikers coming from all corners of the world. It has become one of the most important events on Lesotho's tourism calendar and has earned its founder, Thabo Maretlane the most prestigious national award for a civilian, 'Officer of the Most Loyal Order of Ramatšeatsana' - in commemoration of the King's Birthday in July 2023.*

*Over the three days on which the event is held, hikers walk a total of 116 kilometres from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu, walking and tracing the footsteps of King Moshoeshoe I, the founding father of the Basotho nation, who left Menkhoaneng, his place of birth in search of a fortress for his people. Thaba-Bosiu was Moshoeshoe's 'Promised Land' where he would establish the Basotho nation - a nation like no other, going through many trials and tribulations to achieve a feat that is today, the envy of many African nations that lived in Southern Africa.*

*The Moshoeshoe Walk also plays a significant*

*role in promoting the heritage of the Basotho nation. The walk teaches participants endurance and perseverance, which are the cornerstones of nation building displayed by the great King Moshoeshoe I. The walk has become a huge tourism asset with Maretlane estimating that it injects about M2.5 million into the economy over the three days.*

There is an African proverb that says: "To go back to tradition is the first step forward" As Basotho also say, we have to honour those who came before us because they have shaped who we are today. This is what the annual Moshoeshoe Walk to Thaba-Bosiu is all about.

Back in the 1980s, when Thabo Maretlane was still in High School, he began yearning to study the origins of the Basotho nation. His research led him to wonder why such a beautiful country like Lesotho was not getting as much exposure that it deserved. These thoughts temporarily took a back seat when he had to cross the border into South Africa after high school in search of employment in the mines like many of his peers.

He finally left the mines and in 2007, he hosted the inaugural Moshoeshoe Walk with just 40 hikers drawn largely from his acquaintances and those who shared the same interests in getting to know the country and who had a penchant for hiking. On Good Friday, for the first two years, they walked from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu. He later decided that the walk should coincide with



*The founder of Moshoeshoe Walk Thabo Maretlane receives the MLOR Medal from His Majesty King Letsie III*

Moshoeshoe's Day, a national holiday that celebrates the day when the founder of the Basotho nation died. The walk would also be a perfect stage to showcase the actual path that Moshoeshoe and his people took for him to have created the Basotho nation as we know it today, one of the most sought-after adventure and heritage hike in the calendar of major events in the region.

Moshoeshoe set off the migration from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu in the winter of 1824. His was a nine-day expedition covering a distance of 116 kilometres with his people travelling with all their cattle, household belongings and food. It was a journey for everyone, including the elderly, women and children. This is why the journey took nine days to the summit of Thaba-Bosiu - the hill that was believed to grow taller in the night and yet looked like an ordinary hill plateau by daybreak, but still difficult to ascend.

The modern day version of the walk covers the same track and distance to relive the journey of the founder of the Basotho nation and his followers for three days. This one gives a chance for local and international hiking enthusiasts to test their endurance, mental and physical strength as they only have themselves and their luggage to navigate the terrain to Thaba Bosiu. The walk teaches endurance and perseverance, which were the qualities of the great King Moshoeshoe I.

For the starting point, the modern day Moshoeshoe Walk starts at Menkhoaneng, inside what remains of the kraal where Moshoeshoe's cattle were kept in his compound beneath the hills. Participants climb a small hill to Malaoaneng Ha Seetsa. Then they pass Mahobong in Leribe and reach Thaba Phatsoa at sunset. The first day is 31km and it is regarded as a warm-up, with no major challenges.

Day two becomes the real test of endurance and sheer staying power covering a distance of 56 kilometres. Starting at 0400hrs, just before the break of dawn. Participants start the walk that is known to be challenging and a test of character, walking in mountainous terrains past Ha-Tobolela towards Lipetu Pass, which is where the cannibals ambushed, killed and ate Moshoeshoes's grandfather, Peete during the journey to Thaba-Bosiu. The treacherous terrain also crosses three

main rivers and the hikers eventually set camp at Malimong. Usually arriving late in the night.

Day three covers the last stretch, which is another 29 kilometres passing through the Kome Caves into Sefikeng, Thupa Kubu and into Ha Nchela pass overlooking Qiloane into Thaba Bosiu, where the first party arrives in the late afternoon. Hikers are usually presented with certificates amid the jubilation of all and sundry.

Queen 'Masenate Bereng Seeiso has been one of the eminent persons who have devoted themselves to partake in the walk. She has done the entire three day walk several times and used the event as part of her fundraising initiatives for the Hlokomela Banana Foundation, of which she is the patron. His Majesty King Letsie III has also participated in the walk to relive his ancestor's journey. In the 2023 edition of the walk, Prime Minister Sam Matekane

and the Minister of Tourism, Mokhethi Shelile also graced the walk with their presence.

Other prominent figures from other countries have also attended the walk including celebrities like South African actor, Fana Mokoena, who speaks highly of it. Moshoeshoe Walk has also attracted people from South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Eswatini, the UK and Germany among others.



*Hikers led by flagbearers from the Lesotho Defence Force*



*Far left, Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso at the Moshoeshoe Walk*

Along the route, hikers go past many villages and the walk brings with it a good season for the village economies to thrive. It has become customary for Basotho living along the route to sell traditional food and snacks along the way. Villagers also sell walking sticks and even provide horse riding for hikers who want the experience of the Basotho ponies' saddle as they cover the distance.

The founder of the walk estimates that the village

economy makes hundreds of thousands of Maloti in the three days, which makes a big difference in communities that live on less than a Dollar per day. At the national scale, Maretlane estimates that the hospitality industry makes an average of M2.5 million in the three days through the provision of hospitality services including the sale of handicrafts for tourists.

The walk has over the years not only helped

Basotho relive the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I by bringing droves of tourists into Lesotho, but it has also contributed significantly to social responsibility projects for communities along the route. It has resulted in the building of schools, clinics and bridges in the remote villages of the country through the support of sponsors. The walk has contributed handsomely to charitable courses, by providing school shoes and clothing to vulnerable children. These gestures are in keeping with

Moshoeshoe's ideology of always striving to serve rather than being served.

It is for these initiatives that Maretlane was awarded the prestigious national award for a civilian, "Officer of the Most Loyal Order of Ramatšatsana" in celebration of the King's Birthday in July 2023. The citation of the award reads; "His Majesty King Letsie III by the grace of God, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Lesotho is pleased by these presents to appoint Mr. Thabo Maretlane Officer of the Most Loyal Order of Ramats'eatsana in recognition of the tremendous work through organizing the annual Moshoeshoe walk from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu. The walk that aims to rekindle the spirit and of unity amongst Basotho nation and the international community, in honour of the founder of Basotho, Morena Moshoeshoe I".

On receiving the award, Maretlane said the honour came as a surprise which made him realise that what he does as his passion was being recognised. The award came with a big responsibility to grow the event and make it more popular to promote heritage and boost the tourism sector, which will help Basotho to be financially independent, he said.

Building up to the 2024 edition when Lesotho will be celebrating 200 years since the formation of the Basotho nation, a lot is already being done behind the curtains. The organisers have started collaborations with the Department of Arts and Culture in the Free State in South Africa. Plans are afoot to bring high ranking officials from Eswatini as well as the Lozwi people from Zambia to attend. There will be the Bana Ba Thari Lifestyle Festival hosted on 3 March 2024 and a series of events a week before the start of the Walk from 7 to 9 March 2024. The walk continues to enjoy extensive coverage from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in South Africa and other major media houses. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is also expected to cover the 2024 edition.



*Cultural Dance Competitions are common on Moshoeshoe's Day where schools from different regions compete every year.*

# Tourism Events

Lesotho hosts a number of major entertainment and tourism events throughout the year. Here is a selection of major events that attract multitudes of revelers in and outside the country.

## Apica



APICA, which stands for African Picnic and Camping is an African movement inspired by the outdoor picnic setting in the landscape of the Lesotho mountains. The event is mainly sponsored by Econet Telecomm Lesotho together with Jam Sessions Lesotho.

The event attracts well over 400 attendees. This two-day event is a family friendly featuring both local and international and an array of fun-filled activities. Hosted annually during the Easter holidays in the month of April, attendees can expect a lot of fun, traveling, and music for friends and lovers

**Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/AfricaPicnicAndCamping/>

## Maletsunyane Braai Festival



Maletsunyane Braai Festival is the biggest braai festival in Lesotho. It is an annual event taking place on the last weekend of November. It takes place against the backdrop of the breath-taking Maletsunyane Falls in Semonkong which is about 115km from the capital City-Maseru. The fall has been certified by the Guinness World Records as the longest commercially operated single-drop abseil in the world. Maletsunyane Falls has been listed by Conde Nast Traveler as one of the 50 most beautiful places to visit in Africa.

The event is ideal for campers, braai lovers, and adventure fanatics who's love an escape into the deep, river filled mountains of the Kingdom. It is a two-day event hosted annually between the 24th to 26th November. It headlines both local and international acts, and boasts fun filled activities such as braai, camping and bon fire with friends.

A perfect event for escaping and networking.

**Website:**  
<https://www.maletsunyanebraaifest.co.ls/>  
**Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/maletsunyanebraaifest/>

## Letofe Lifestyle Music Festival

The Lesotho Tourism Festival (LETOFE), which is now called the Standard Lesotho Bank LETOFE Lifestyle Experience, is usually held in the third week of December, just before Christmas. The event features the best of local and international artists from the genres of Jazz, Afro-soul and RNB.



For more information, check out their online pages:

**Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/Letofe/>  
**Instagram:**  
[https://www.instagram.com/letofe\\_ls/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/letofe_ls/?hl=en)



*Roof of Africa Rally Riders at the 'Round the Houses' leg of the annual Roof of Africa rally in Lesoto, dubbed one of the hardest enduros in the world.*



### Menkhoaneng Walk

The Menkhoaneng to Thaba Bosiu Walk follows the historic trek/footsteps of the founder of the Basotho Nation, the Great King Moshoeshe I, from his birth place at Menkhoaneng to Thaba Bosiu where he established the Basotho Nation at his final resting place. The first walk took place in 2007 with around 40 participants and as of 2018 has grown to over 700 participants, with a good percentage of international participants.

The event occurs from March 11th during Lesotho's national holiday commemorating Moshoeshe's Day. The walk occurs for over three following the exact journey of the late King Moshoeshe I's footsteps from Butha-Buthe (Menkhoaneng) to Thaba Busiu, where the nation of Lesotho was founded in 1824.

- Facebook:**  
<https://web.facebook.com/moshoeshewalk/>
- Instagram:**  
<https://www.instagram.com/moshoeshewalk/>
- Website:**  
<https://moshoeshewalk.wordpress.com/>

### Roof of Africa

The Roof of Africa is known as the Mother of Hard Enduro - the world's original hard enduro. The Roof of Africa covers an astonishing distance of 250 to 350km for 3 days with The lowest elevation that riders will be at, covering 1,400m.



It has become one of Lesotho's most expected annual event hosted between 29th November to 2nd December. It's said to be the oldest hard enduro race staged for the first time in 1967. The race is a three-segment/section race. Section One, (round-the-houses) starts off in Maseru CBD and is entered by all competitors, while section two is staged near Thaba Bosiu with the finish at Bushmans Pass. Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron riders will start based on their finish positions in the Maseru CBD. Racing Section 2 will comprise of 100 – 160km of riding in the Mountain Kingdom. Competitors will start this section based on their combined overall times from the first two racing sections.

- Facebook:**  
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**AVANI**  
Hotels & Resorts

## Avani Lesotho Hotel & Casino's Commitment to a Greener Future of Sustainable Tourism

Avani Lesotho Hotel & Casino is committed to the future of sustainable travel. As part of the Avani Hotels' group determination to become a Net Zero Carbon organization by 2050 Avani has introduced science-based targets for energy, carbon, and water intensity as well as pledging to cut organic waste to landfill in half in the next 8 years.

In light of this Avani Lesotho Hotel & Casino is committed to implementing eco-conscious initiatives focused on preserving the planet for future generations. This is done in the following ways:

- Eradicating plastic straws and replacing plastic straws with those made of fast-growing bamboo and purchasing eco-friendly products such as cups and bags for the restaurants.
- Implementing QR code menus at all restaurants to reduce the use of paper.
- Removing the single use of plastic water bottles and replacing this with glass water bottles in conference rooms, the hotel bottles its own water for this.
- The hotel encourages guests to do their bit in ensuring sustainability by putting messages in the rooms that encourage guests to use water sparingly and use their towels more than once during their stay.
- An onsite vegetable and herb garden which ensures that the hotel can have its own fresh produce.
- The hotel has recently launched an app that facilitates paperless check-in, check-out, and billing by prioritising digital payments and other paperless transactions.

At Avani, we uphold belief that travel is a force for good and are committed to supporting sustainable tourism both on property and industry level," said **Sharlene Maema, Sales & Marketing Manager.**

## Meetings to Impress at Avani Maseru Hotel

Avani Maseru Hotels' team of conferencing and events professionals are on hand to organise intimate meetings and large-scale affairs which boast stylish and various sized meetings and events rooms. Guests can also hire these out for cocktail parties, weddings or business events and conferences.

Business is productive and events impress with the hotels' seven flexible venues boasting natural daylight and some of the best-equipped facilities in the city. Taking out all the stress and inspiring unique ideas, a professional planner can organise a VIP boardroom meeting or an interactive conference for up to 600 in theatre style. From a poolside cocktail party to a memorable celebration in a marquee, to hosting a private poker game in the casino, the hotel offers exceptional service.



Avani Maseru Hotel



Avani Maseru Hotel



### Cleketseng

Dubbed the Magic 5, Cleketseng is an annual event held since 2015. The event offers a picnic experience appealing mostly to the youth in the atmosphere of a Picnic and fun. Hosted at a picnic spot near Mokhetsoaneng in the outskirts of Maseru, the event pioneer the best in local music talent. Cleketseng has become a buzz word in the local entertainment scene with the #Cleketseng trending on social media.

**Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/cleketseng/>

### Lesotho Wine Festival

It's a holistic experience that celebrates the culinary arts, local flavors, and the joy of shared moments. Indulge your palate with delectable bites from our carefully selected food vendors, offering a tantalizing array of gourmet delicacies that perfectly complement the wines on offer.

As of 2023, the event celebrated its 10th Anniversary, hosted at the regular Maseru Club grounds. It welcomes world class wine makers, and brands from the culinary industry from both Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa. The event welcomes over 100 wine brands, musical

performances and food vendors from over 10 stalls.

**Facebook:**  
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<https://www.instagram.com/lesothowine/>  
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<https://lesothowine.co.ls/>

### Lesotho Gin and Trout Tourism Festival

The Great Spirit of the Kingdom moves across our mountains and waters beckoning to visitors far and wide to come and savour the flavours of Lesotho. As the premier Food and beverage tourism festival in the country, Gin & Trout offers amazing gin tasting experiences and varied expressions of world famous Lesotho Trout in some of the most breathtaking locations in the world.

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## Maletsunyane Braai Festival

Maletsunyane Braai Festival is the biggest braai festival in Lesotho. It is an annual event taking place on the last weekend of November. It takes place against the backdrop of the breath-taking Maletsunyane Falls in Semonkong which is about 115km from the capital City-Maseru. The fall has been certified by the Guinness World Records as the longest commercially operated single-drop abseil in the world. Maletsunyane Falls has been listed by Conde Nast Traveller as one of the 50 most beautiful places to visit in Africa.

Visit [www.maletsunyanebraaifest.co.ls](http://www.maletsunyanebraaifest.co.ls) for ticket sales

Maletsunyane-Braai-Festival

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# ALLIANCE – A BASOTHO LEGACY 30 YEARS IN THE MAKING!

In 1993, a group of visionaries happened to be socialising in Maseru. One of them mentioned an opportunity to buy an insurance company that was available. To his surprise, his audience bought in to the idea, and all that were able to do so, started pledging, and even went on to call other friends and potential business partners to join in. Thus, just like that, a legacy was born! The insurance landscape in Lesotho was transformed forever!

Initially, the company started selling short-term insurance products, and operating from a tiny, rented office in Maseru. But because of the vision they had when they started this company, which was to give the previously sidelined Basotho an access to insurance services, they soon introduced Life products. For the first time, insurance was not a prestige thing, or only accessible to Basotho in white collar jobs. Alliance was a pioneer and visionary that recognised and respected the right for every Mosotho, irrespective of socio-economic status, to have access to financial services, in particular insurance services.

This was achieved though coming up with market relevant products and ensuring that there is something for every Mosotho. The products were given Sesotho names, resonating with our clientele. For the first time- in the history of Lesotho, clients did not need to have a pay slip to be insured. This is because as a local company, Alliance understands Basotho, their way of life, their wealth, and their toil. For once, the private sector, government employees, small business owners, contractors, the educated, the uneducated, Basotho, all were given access to our insurance products.

30 years later a lot has been achieved. Our footprint can be seen in all the 10 districts of Lesotho. Our network includes branches in all the ten districts of Lesotho. It also includes sales agents in all our branches. We also have very knowledgeable and hardworking brokers administering some of our business, particularly Short-term products, and some Life business.

One other source of pride for Alliance is the partnerships we have formed along the way. These includes our affiliation with our soccer teams, representing our strong community ties, and the willingness to positively impact our local soccer scene. Due to this relationship, for the first-time soccer players in Lesotho got paid to focus on their game.

We are also truly proud and grateful to our hard-working brokers who continue to support us and work with us. We would not be an award-winning company that we are today if we did not have them as our partners. Our appreciation also goes to our staff and shareholders, for allowing us to give back to our community in various ways. During the covid era, they allowed us to fight the pandemic and ensure that Basotho are healthy and safe and get back on their feet to provide for their families.

Finally, Alliance has formed a new partnership with Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation with a campaign aptly named Ke-Lapeng. The vision here is to do our bit to promote local tourism as well as love and pride for Lesotho and Basotho. For this project, we are building landmark frames across all identified tourism attractions in Lesotho. This allows tourists to take pictures of themselves and share, thus promoting Lesotho as an attractive touristic destination. This in turn will create jobs and improve our people's socio-economic conditions. **Afterall, Lesotho Ke Lapeng!**

We thank all Basotho for their support, without which, we would not be where we are. As we celebrate 30 years, we can only promise to continue offering excellent service. We also promise to continue giving back to our community as we have been doing. We will continue to build new partnerships along the way. Mosotho o re, "le'soele le beta poho! E tsoe Motho ke motho, ka Batho!"

**Likhomo Basotho! Here's to 30 more years of service Excellence !**



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# Savoring the Craft

DISCOVERING THE MAGIC BEHIND  
HOUSE OF LINFORD'S DISTINCTIVE SPIRITS

**Nestled at the heart of Lesotho, House of Linford stands as a testament to the fusion of heritage and craftsmanship. Our micro distillation company is more than just a producer of spirits – we are curators of moments, creators of experiences, and guardians of tradition.**

At House of Linford, our mission is to ignite a global movement of connoisseurs and enthusiasts who seek more than just spirits but yearn for stories, memories, and emotions that transcend time. We envision a world where our creations become the catalyst for shared laughter, whispered conversations, and celebrations of life's most cherished moments. Guided by tradition yet driven by innovation, we are committed to shaping a future where each sip from House of Linford's products is an invitation to embrace the extraordinary.

At the cornerstone of driving Lesotho's economic vitality, we collaborate intimately with local farmers, cultivating the very essence of excellence in grains.

Through an unwavering gauntlet of exacting quality assessments, these grains ascend to earn the coveted title of 'the magic bunch'. With Lesotho's rich natural beauty as our backdrop and the purity of our inputs coupled with the passion and expertise of our team, we meticulously craft each batch, infusing the essence of our land into every bottle. We manufacture, distribute and market our current house brands, Linford Vodka and Senate Gin.

Our ambition knows no bounds! We stride forward to claim a paramount position as the foremost producer of both alcoholic and ...

... non-alcoholic libations on the African landscape. With a resolute gaze towards the horizon, we are poised to conquer untapped horizons, including burgeoning domains like spirit coolers, ready-to-drinks, ciders, wines, and beers. As we unfurl our reach across the continent and beyond, we shall sow the seeds of our distinction far and wide, reaping the rich harvest of triumph in every corner we touch.

## Linford Vodka

Unveiled in 2019, this vodka marks Lesotho's inaugural venture into locally crafted spirits. Its distinct personality originates from the pure waters filtered by the Maluti Mountains, culminating in a youthful, revitalizing, and refined flavor profile.

## Senate Gin

Since 2017, the gin market growth was observed to have surpassed other spirits by almost 60%. In 2020, during the mist of industry bans due to Covid-19, we decided that there would be no better time to introduce a London-Dry style gin. The growth of Senate Gin is predominantly due to locals who are intentional about supporting local brands and tourists who would love to carry a piece of the Mountain Kingdom home.





The Market

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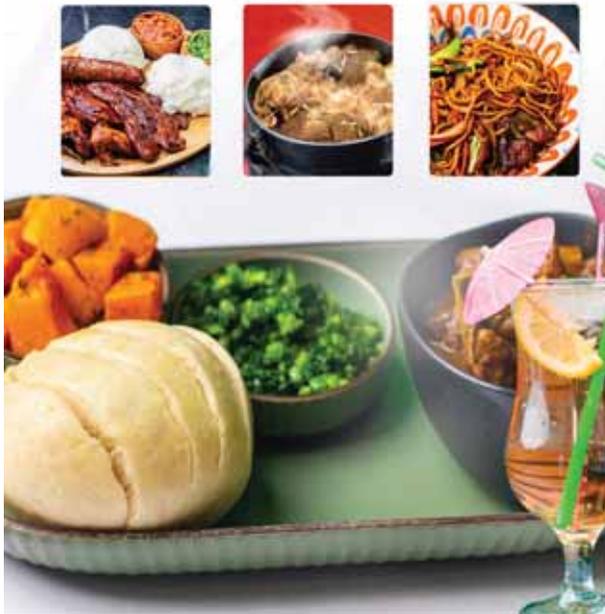
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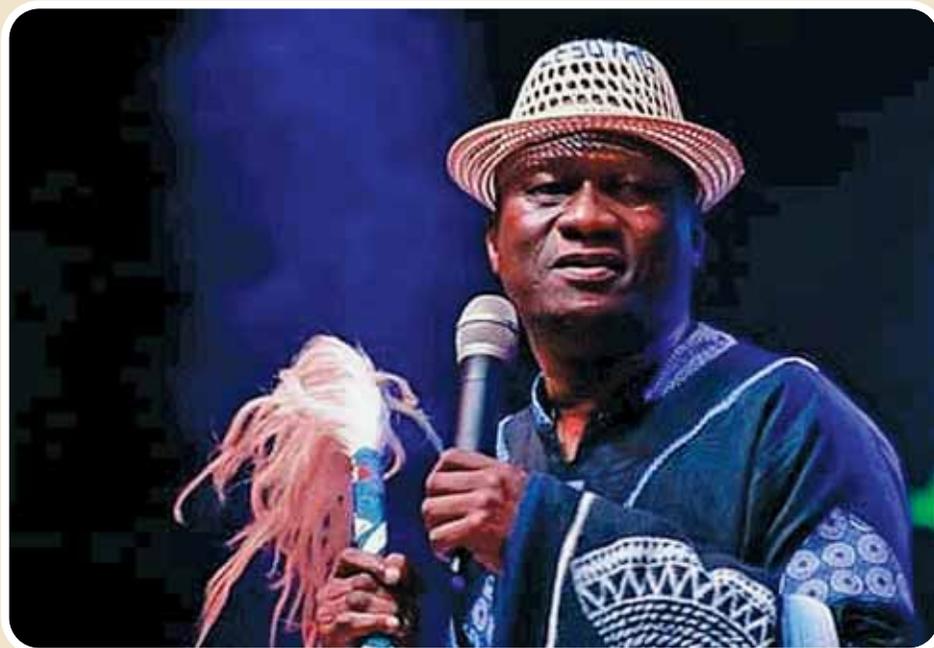


*Lephoi Elias Mohale, popularly known as Ntate Mantša On Lesea is one of the most successful Famo artists of our time with 37 albums under his belt.*



# Famo Music, A genre Mined from the Belly of the Earth - Spotlight on Mantša oa Lesea

Writes: Sebatso Phakisi and Manyathela Kheleli



*Imagine working underground, deep in underground tunnels of a foreign land, where darkness is your permanent companion, along with unbearable heat and giant rocks that can cave in and crush you in an instant. In the grim environs, you long and fantasise about quitting and going back home.*

*It is rather better to be a herdboyc, you tell yourself, yet at that very moment, you remember your children and start imagining*

*them starving. You hear voices of your mother and wife crying that they cannot feed the children without income from deep in the dungeons. That is your reality. That is all the inspiration that you need to go through another soul sucking shift underground. But you still miss home.*

*These were and still are, the realities for Basotho mineworkers who have provided migrant labour in South African mines since*

*the 1920s. Towards the end of apartheid in 1990, over 100 000 Basotho men worked in the mines and the numbers have reduced by more than half in recent years. It is these experiences that formed the foundations of famo music as we know it today.*

*The unique Lesotho genre has gained popularity over the years. It has grown and has been recorded by distinguished artistes such as the late Phau Manyetse of Tau ea Matsekha, Apollo Ntabanyane, Puseletso Seema and Mantša oa Lesea among others. The artistes have recorded hit songs that have gone platinum and arguably made millions in record sales, but none of the artistes has anything to show for it. So unique and splendid is famo music that the American pop singer, Paul Simon, with 16 grammy awards under his belt, remixed Tau ea Matsekha's song, Ke Ikhethetse E Motle for his opening track, Boy in the Bubble on his album, Graceland, which was released in 1986 and went to sell 16 million copies worldwide.*

*On the flip side, famo music has become known as an instrument of gang-related clashes leading to the murders of hundreds of Basotho in recent years. In neighbouring South Africa, famo is now known as the music played by illegal miners wreaking havoc in disused mine shafts. These miners are known as Zama zamas and they have been blamed for all manner of crimes in South Africa to the extent of threatening bilateral relations between Lesotho and its powerful neighbour.*

Famo music came at a time of hardship and was a great avenue for Basotho miners to reinvigorate their souls and calm their minds. With their accordions (koriana) and an oil drum, mine workers would gather after a long backbreaking and depressing shift underground digging for gold or diamonds with a calabash of home brewed beer to unwind and escape their harsh realities.

Before the accordion, they used *sekhankula* (a sesotho

traditional bow-like musical instrument), but with the European settlers coming in, Basotho got accustomed to the accordion and adopted it. Famo songs are mostly about life, the life conditions of mineworkers, reminiscing about growing up in Lesotho, or merely expressing their feelings about an array of issues. Where one missed a lover, a child or a parent, famo plugged the gap. Some songs were funny while others were sad. One of the common characteristics of many songs was the ululation of a woman.

The structure of famo music has a striking similarity with rap. It contains a combination of expressive rhymes and poetry accompanied by a musical beat. So similar are the forms that the new school famo is infused with Hip Hop. Among these are Ntate Stunna, Kommanda Obbs, Queen Mo, Malome Vector and Morena Leraba. They have become ambassadors of the genre paying homage to those artistes who came before them.

The music gained popularity in the townships of Soweto in Johannesburg, being played in Randontein and Carltonville. Soweto townships, like Senaoana, Phiri, Molapo, Mapetla, Naledi and Moletsane were the preferred meeting places of the criminal networks of Basotho migrant workers who called themselves *Marashea* (the Russians). *Marashea* started off as a protection bloc against ethnic wars common in the mines at the time, but eventually turned into criminal syndicates that had influence and even sponsored famo music.

Famo is also expressly a protest genre and Lekena Bohale's 1997 track *Boloabe* is a clear demonstration of this. The song expresses his frustration at the stigma that the music suffered from some who discriminated against it because of its association with illiterate mineworkers. Fed up with the stereotype, Bohale wrote the song to vent his frustrations.

*Boloabe ke kelello ea motho  
Boloabe hase korianana...  
Batho khale ba re sonta,  
Liriti tsa rona li behiloe fats'e  
Le se 'nale soma 'mino oa korianana  
Korianana e ts'oana le mesebetso eohle  
Ebile e buseletsa motho.*

*Wandering is one's way of thinking  
Wandering is not the accordion,  
People have long been despising us,  
Disregarding our integrity,  
Do not keep on criticising the accordion music,  
Accordion music is like any other type of work,  
It benefits those who play it.*

It is such artistes like Bohale who made the music relatable with such lyrics that reprimand the public raising awareness that despite popular belief, famo artistes were fending for their families and deserved respect.

In the 1970s, famo was also known as *focho* and it was common for people to say: "*Re ea fochong*" (we are going to focho). Focho in Sesotho means missing the target. In the context of *famo*, it refers to disorder, where the audience would dance and sing randomly in response to music tunes played on an accordion.

Famo music produced talented artistes who excelled in that genre. In the late 1960's, the first major recording artistes to make a living from famo were Tau ea Matšekha which was made up of the late Forere Motloheloa (accordionist) and Apollo Ntabanyane (composer/ vocalist). The pair met and started performing in shebeens in the mines and became successful with albums such as *Ha Peete kea Falla* released by EMI, which led Ntabanyane to leave the group and start his own career.

In 1974, Ntabanyane declared himself the king of famo music at a concert held at the then Maseru Airport hotel attended by Her Majesty, the late Queen 'Mamohato Seeiso. Although the famo genre was dominated by male artistes, women on rare occasions took centre stage. These include 'Malitaba, whose music was played on Radio Lesotho, and Radio Bantu of the South African Broadcasting Corporation back in the 1970's. She was instrumental in paving the way for other female famo artistes like the great Puseletso Seema and *Bo 'Me Ba Maphutšeng*. 'Malitaba was a force as she was able to breakthrough and become a star in a male dominated genre, especially at the time when black



*Tau ea Matšekha, led by the late accordionist, Forere Motloneloa were the first to record Famo music.*

women were segregated in society and in homes. She became one of the most respected female famo artistes of all time.

Although famo became a hit genre not only liked by Basotho, but also by other tribes like Zulus and Xhosas, the artistes struggled financially as they were not paid what was due to them. Artists like Mahase of *Mahosana a ka Phamong* once declared that record labels gave them flimsy contracts. Demos were sent to record labels in the 80's and were rejected until around 1985 when acceptance improved. At the time, Mahase said looking back at his career; he was paid peanuts as a session musician at Johannesburg's Downtown Studios.

There is no information available in terms of the genre's commercial success because the artistes were largely illiterate. Instead, there is strong evidence of clandestine shenanigans and exploitation, especially by studio owners and record labels in South Africa. As a result, most famo artistes have nothing to show for their prowess.

The experiences of Lephoi Elias Mohale, better known as Mantša, demonstrate how famo artistes were exploited back in the day. The Mafeteng born artiste got into famo music by chance. He had hoped to emulate Ladysmith Black Mambazo's Joseph Shabalala but one day in 1982, he found Peretle and Mabili playing at a stokvel at his home village, Tajane in Mafeteng.

Fast forward to 1988, Mantša was in the mining town of Welkom in South Africa, where he was introduced to Edward Vierra, a white South African of Portuguese descent who ran a chain of businesses in the mines. After listening to his music, Vierra convinced him to record and they went into the studio in Johannesburg with Teboho Motsie and the late Phakane of Rutla Masupha to record his first album, *La Hlaha Lekanyane* with ten tracks.

It was his first experience in the studio. No contract was signed and he had no clue how many LPs were produced from the recording, except that he recalls that Edward bought him an accordion.

In 1989, then aged 24, he recorded another album, the self-titled *Mantša* with title track, *Khale le 'Matla*. He believes that this is where his music made a breakthrough judging from his fame. But still, he never got any information from Vierra, who was now his producer. He would only get money when he asked for it and at times, along with other artistes produced by Vierra, they had to lie that they were attending a funeral to get money. Otherwise, the producer was content with providing him with clothes from his string of shops in Welkom. In Vierra's stable were also other famo artistes like Matsie, Keketso Mathula and Seputsoe, all suffering the same fate.

In 1991, Mantša released an album, *Mantša oa Lesia*, which was unfortunately misspelled *Lesea* (meaning an infant) for *Lesia*. It was another hit album that increased his popularity. Like the ones before, he still had no idea how much the album made in sales, save for his growing fame which was his only gauge for success. Mantša says Vierra paid him R2 000 for his efforts.

Recognising his growing popularity and to serve his aspiration to change the negative public perception of famo, Mantša set himself to change his tune and make the music palatable to all his fans and possibly recruit more followers. In 1996, he started singing about issues of the day, spreading messages of respect, tolerance, love for humanity, and most importantly, the love of God. One of his revered songs, *Molisa oa Ka* – inspired by Psalm 23 is one example that changed the face of his music and persuaded the elite and the clergy to look at famo differently. The track got the highest airtime on Radio Lesotho and featured prominently on the playlists of most black radio stations at the time.

In 1999, Mantša released *Mantša No.9*, with the hit song, *Keletso* which hit gold, if not platinum status. As was to be expected, Vierra had concealed information from him. Mantša only became aware of his celebrated work after he was contacted by journalists from Sowetan Newspaper in South Africa and other publications that his album had done well and had been nominated for the 2001 South African



*Morena Leraba, one of the emerging artists is poised to transform Famo into a new genre with appeal to younger listeners and international audience.*

Music Awards (SAMA). He did not win, but he recognised that he had reached celebrity status. He was also invited to perform at the awards ceremony, singing a medley with the late Tsepo Tshola, Frank Leepa, Coyote Motiñoane and Jabu Khanyile.

Mantša severed ties with Vierra in 2000 and registered Mantša Music Productions to produce, market and distribute his music. Vierra was literally in tears when Mantša broke the news, and more companies sought his signature. In 2002, he was approached by Universal Records, where he first signed a recording and distribution contract. Under this contract, he produced *Mantša No. 10* and received

a M50,000 advance, and was promised 10% royalties on the sale of the album. They also organised performances for him and made him famous.

Mantša eventually cancelled the contract with Universal, opting to pursue his music through his own label. With 37 albums under his belt to date, he contends that by now, he should probably be owning a private jet and he talks about this in one of his hit songs, *Airport* from his album, *Mantša Number 14*. He currently produces other famo artistes and is now working on his 38th album. His music is now distributed on online platforms like Apple Music and Spotify.

Despite its beauty, famo has become an economic and social problem in Lesotho affecting the lives of thousands of people in the bloody gang violence. The gang problem is also compounded by illegal mining perpetrated by the so-called zama zama gangs who have taken over disused gold mines in South Africa creating diplomatic tension between Lesotho and her neighbour. However, with well meaning musicians like Mantsa, famo has a place in the heritage of Basotho music. It also has a bright future with upcoming artists who are redefining the artform into contemporary music, with an appeal to the youthful and affluent segments.



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We specialize in the fastest delivery of Laptops, Desktops and Peripherals as well as repairs. We are the biggest registrar of .ls domains and the best Web-Hosting company in Lesotho. Our websites are top of the range and our Cloud solutions are trusted by big organisations in Lesotho.

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*Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho's painting depicting Basotho men riding their sure-footed Basotho ponies*



# Steve Rasehloho, a History Painter and Sculptor of Note

Writes Manyathela Kheleli



*The cover painting and most of the paintings in the bicentennial section of the Lesotho Insights are the work of Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho. Steve specialises in painting but is also a sculptor. Born and bred in Maseru, Lesotho at Boinyatso, a village near Roma, Steve is also an entrepreneur who has achieved notable success on both the art and business.*

*Inspired by Baroque and Neoclassical artists, he undertook to discover his talent in the realm of art from a tender age where he was always drawing; intrigued by anything artistic. Today, we are proud to celebrate his work.*

*Rasehloho has painted eminent persons including, His Majesty King Letsie III as well as former prime ministers and ministers in Lesotho. He has also done history paintings commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, the*

*Royal Palace and some corporates. Some of his paintings have been presented to King Mswati III as gifts from His Majesty King Letsie III, while other works have been sold in Germany, the United States, China, and Namibia among others.*

After completing his matric, the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) in 1991, Steve says it took him six years to figure out what he wanted to do with his talent. He then enrolled into the fine arts course at Machabeng College in 1998 and graduated in 2000. Upon completing the course, he moved to the University of the Free State to pursue a degree in fine arts in 2002 and completed it in 2008. It was at the University of the Free State where he studied art history, painting and sculpture in different materials such as wood, stone, steel, clay and bronze. "At the moment I work with commissioned portraits, but I mostly enjoy making history paintings in my small studio at Sea Point, in Maseru," Rasehloho said. Steve says he enjoys being his own boss and dreams of opening an arts museum named after himself in Lesotho.

While he only got to learn the intricacies and differences of different arts forms, his inclination has always been on history paintings. This was also inspired by his keenness in studying history which he found easy to understand with the aid of pictorial illustrations. It is from those experiences where the urge to paint historical pieces was derived. "In creating history paintings, I use the original landscape as the background, if possible. This helps in depicting the scene as it was told. Choosing the subject matter requires more research and models for posing. I imagine scenes as I read the story, put all my subjects together and start organising them on the canvas."

In depicting his story, Steve focuses on the characters



*Steve working on a pulpit sculpture destined for a church in Bloemfontein*

and allows them to enhance the subject matter. For example, in a painting called "Victory at Thaba Bosiu" the scene depicted shows Basotho warriors in battle with the Boers at Thaba Bosiu in 1865. The battle takes place at the foot of Rafutho Pass. History tells us that Basotho also rolled rocks and threw them at the enemies as additional weapons during combat. That history is encapsulated in the painting, where Rasehloho shows warriors holding big rocks to hurl to the enemy below them. We can also see two rock formations that make Rafutho Pass, which still remain even today. This is the level of details and storytelling that makes his work extremely powerful. "The depth of the landscape puts my spirit on the scene as it happened," he explained. He also finds pleasure in painting war scenes and clouds. "In most of my history paintings, especially my best paintings, I invest a lot of time on the clouds as well."

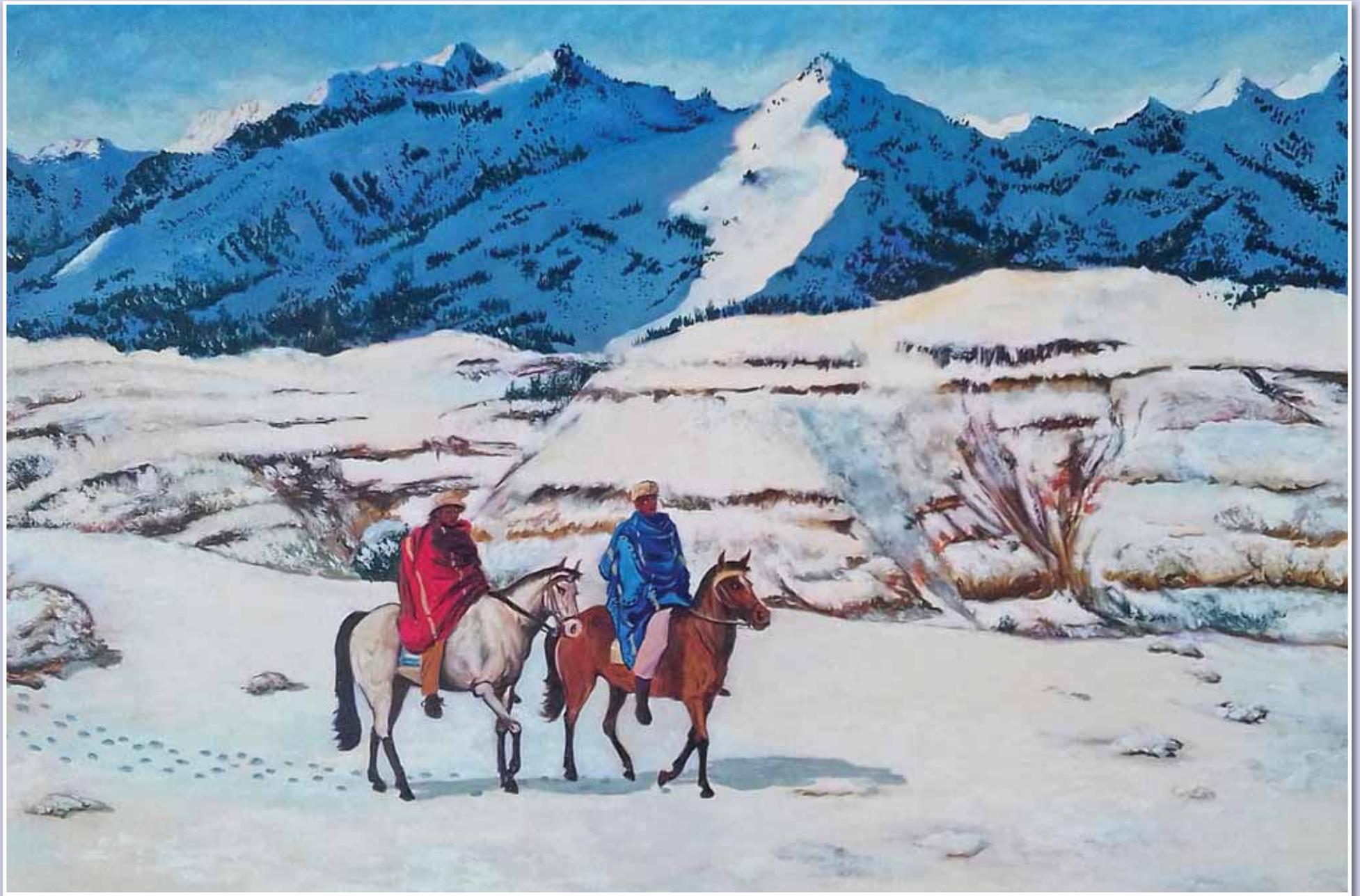
As part of his sculpting work, Steve has produced works for many churches in Lesotho and South Africa. He has built alters and pulpits, with some coming from as far as Limpopo. These include works for the Roadmap Ministry in Bloemfontein, the Holy Ghost Ministry, and Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Maseru.

His works have been on display at many exhibitions in South Africa, China and the United States. His paintings called the 'Three Kings' which is the cover picture of this edition of *Lesotho Insights* depicts the iconic Kings of Lesotho starting with King Moshoeshe I, King Moshoshe II and the reigning King Letsie III. This painting was initially commissioned by the then Minister of Tourism, Mrs. 'Manete Ramaili for the Ministry of Tourism. However, the painting was eventually purchased by Avani Lesotho in 2016 after the minister left office. It is now on display at the hotel.

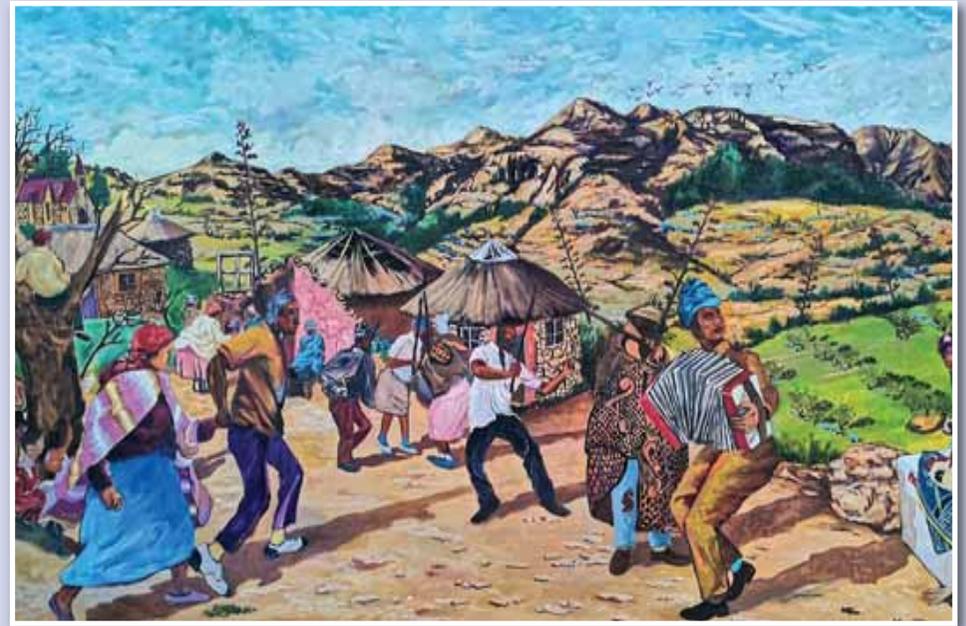
The 'Three Kings' is a display of the kings' regalia inside a palace, it is a majestic portraiture that serves as a national treasure. In the painting, Steve has shown an artistic illustration of what he would have wanted the palace to look like. The pillars in the painting vary from ordinary pillars to functional art of horse sculptures while others are the Queens.

On the ceiling is a painting of a shepherd and his flock "because our King represents a shepherd who takes care of his flock," Mashoabathe said.

*For art commissioning, Steve Mashoabathe can be contacted on +266 69355822 or 5852 4935 or on email: stevemashoabathe@gmail.com.*



*Traversing snow-capped Maloti Mountains on horse back (173 cm x 100 cm oil on canvas. Painting by Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho)*



*A selection of oil on canvas works depicting Basotho way of life. (by Steve Mashoabathe Rasehloho)*



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