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Lesotho's Economic Warning Lights Are Flashing

By Staff Reporter

Maseru

Beneath the surface of policy optimism and reformist pledges, a quieter but far more consequential storm is brewing in Lesotho's economy.
The latest African Development Bank (AfDB) report, released in July 2025, offers a sobering assessment: Lesotho is edging dangerously close to economic instability, with structural weaknesses now translating into tangible threats to jobs, public services, and national competitiveness.
The report notes that while Lesotho's GDP growth is expected to remain positive in the near term, it is insufficient to reduce poverty or unemployment, especially in the face of rising inflation, a bloated wage bill, and stagnating private investment. Government revenue is faltering, donor reliance remains high, and debt servicing costs are rising faster than projected. This combination, the Bank says, is unsustainable under current conditions.

Policy Paralysis and Missed Leverage

Despite Lesotho's geographic advantage and preferential access to international markets through AGOA and SACU arrangements, the country is failing to leverage its economic positioning. The AfDB warns of institutional inertia in translating trade access into tangible export

growth. Manufacturing output remains flat, and foreign direct investment continues to drift toward regional competitors with stronger regulatory environments and infrastructure readiness.
Analysts say the country is slowly losing ground to nations like Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Botswana. These countries have actively invested in governance reforms, ease of doing business, and digital infrastructure.
Lesotho, by contrast, is being weighed down by slow budget execution, under-spending in productive sectors, and the absence of a coherent industrial strategy.

Youth and Rural Economies Left Behind

One of the most serious red flags raised in the report is the disconnection between economic policy and demographic realities. With a growing youth population, the AfDB notes that Lesotho is not creating jobs at the rate needed to absorb new entrants to the labor market. Unemployment is particularly high among young graduates and rural dwellers, for whom agriculture remains the main source of income but receives minimal investment.
The agricultural sector, which could serve as both a food security buffer and an economic engine, is undercapitalized and vulnerable to climate shocks. Public spending favors recurrent costs and urban infrastructure while rural development continues to be sidelined.

Rising Fiscal Pressures, Declining Confidence

The report highlights increasing pressure on Lesotho's fiscal health, with public debt expected to exceed 60 percent of GDP by 2026 if reforms are not urgently implemented. At the same time, confidence in the government's economic stewardship appears to be waning among investors and development partners.
Lesotho's private sector remains fragile, with limited access to credit and no meaningful incentive framework for scaling up domestic enterprises. The current policy framework is not geared toward enterprise growth, the report notes. Reforms are needed to reduce informality, modernize tax policy, and unlock investment flows.

Subtle but Certain Signals

While the AfDB stops short of predicting imminent collapse, the tone of the report is unmistakable. Unless Lesotho acts now, the economic situation will deteriorate beyond repair. The Bank calls for structural reforms, particularly in public financial management, private sector facilitation, and sectoral diversification.
Among its key recommendations:

- Reduce the government wage bill and improve spending efficiency.
- Prioritize infrastructure projects that support trade, energy, and agriculture.
- Accelerate financial inclusion and digital payments infrastructure.
- Rebuild investor confidence through legal and regulatory reform.

The Bottom Line

Lesotho's economic problems are not new, but their consequences are becoming harder to ignore. The danger lies not in sudden collapse, but in slow erosion: of productivity, of opportunity, and of fiscal space. Without urgent structural reforms, the country risks slipping into a prolonged phase of stagnation where growth exists on paper, but not in people's lives.
As the AfDB gently warns, the window for bold economic reform is narrowing. If Lesotho misses it, the cost of recovery may prove far greater than the cost of prevention.

Letsoela Blames Political Interference for Mahao's Death during Explosive Court Testimony

By Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

In a striking revelation before the High Court, the current Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela, has laid blame on interference by authorities in army affairs as a root cause of the instability that led to the 2015 fatal shooting of former army commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao.

Testifying under cross-examination in the ongoing high-profile trial of nine LDF members, including the former army chief, Retired Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli,

Letsoela painted a picture of a deeply fractured military, where divided loyalties and defiance of lawful authority paved the way for chaos and ultimately, tragedy.

Letsoela told the court that Mahao had been lawfully appointed as the Commander of the LDF on August 29, 2014, by the "then competent authority," in reference to the former Prime Minister.

However, the change in command was never fully realized due to what he described as "unhealthy civil-military relations" and deliberate interference from senior officials and politicians.

"Mahao's appointment, though lawful, was not honored. Kamoli had been lawfully relieved of his duties, yet he continued to exercise power within the army. This created two centers of command, one under Kamoli, the other under Mahao," Letsoela testified.

According to Letsoela, this dual command structure bred division and confusion within the military ranks. Soldiers were unsure who to obey, and factions began to form, a dangerous situation for any disciplined force, but particularly volatile in a politically sensitive environment like Lesotho's at the time.

He described the situation as a direct consequence of interference by those in authority, which destabilized the chain of command and placed the military in a precarious and dangerous position. "It was this interference, not simply internal military disagreement, that sowed the seeds of the unrest and ultimately the fatal incident that claimed Mahao's life," he added.

The murder trial has gripped national attention since it began, as it involves some of the most senior former members of the LDF, including Kamoli, who has long been accused of undermining civilian control over the army during his tenure. The accused face charges of murder, attempted murder, and other crimes related to Mahao's death in June 2015.

Mahao, who was ambushed and shot dead by fellow soldiers outside Maseru, was a respected figure in both military and civilian circles. His death drew international condemnation and prompted a Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention, which ultimately led to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into his killing.

Letsoela's testimony adds a new dimension to the trial, shedding light not only on the internal breakdown within the army but also on the political manipulation that fuelled it.

His words appear to support long-held claims that Mahao's death was not an isolated act of violence, but a symptom of a broader systemic failure involving the abuse of power and disregard for legal authority.

Relief for Lesotho, US Imposes 15% Tariff on Lesotho Exports

By Staff Reporter

The United States has issued a final executive order imposing a 15 percent tariff on exports from Lesotho, a significant change from the previous 50 percent ad valorem rate. The announcement, made this month, has calmed the government in way although ripples of concern still linger through Lesotho's industrial sector, particularly its vital textile industry that was mostly hit by the previous change in tariffs in the earlier months.

The tariff, set to take effect in seven days, comes after a 90-day pause during which the Lesotho government engaged in negotiations with the US. Despite these efforts to renegotiate its way out of the mess, the Lesotho textile industry has experienced uncertainty, with potential decreases in orders from clients that were being felt, forcing firms to decrease their workforce while other investors had to close shop and go back home.

After the news of the 15 percent tariffs, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Business Development held a press conference to address the dynamics of these new tariffs, making the nation aware of the governmnet's strategy to mitigate the effects of the tariff and chart a path forward for the country's industrial sector in the face of the new trade challenges. The Honourable Minister responsible for trade, Mokhethi Shelile, outlined the potential
effects on employment, revenue and the overall contribution of the trade sector to Lesotho's GDP.

This executive order brings back memories of the Trump administration's trade policies which began earlier this
year, involving imposing tariffs on various countries, including those in Africa. These tariffs, justified under national security concerns or as leverage in trade negotiations, almost caused significant disruption to global supply chains, affecting numerous developing economies.

Lesotho, heavily reliant on its textile exports to the US under agreements like the African Growth and Opportunity
Act (AGOA), has been particularly vulnerable to the proposed changes in US trade policies. AGOA, designed to promote trade and investment between the US and eligible African countries, has been instrumental in the growth of Lesotho's textile sector. However, tariffs like this new 15 percent levy pose less threat to these gains as opposed to the previous 50 percent.

Nonetheless, the imposition of this tariff still raises questions about the future of Lesotho's industrial sector. The
textile industry, a major employer and contributor to the nation's economy, could still face reduced competitiveness in the US market, leading to job losses (although now at a lower rate), closure of many firms, decreased revenue and economic instability.

Other countries included in the latest round of adjusted tariffs include:

South Africa 30 percent
Botswana 15 percent
Democratic Republic of Congo 15 percent
Mozambique 15 percent
Zimbabwe 15 percent


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Court Affirms Judges' Integrity in Dismissing DPP's Recusal Bid

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The High Court sitting as the Constitutional Court has firmly dismissed an application by suspended Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Advocate Hlalefang Motinyane, in which she sought the recusal of three judges presiding over her constitutional review case. The Court, through Justices 'Malebona Khabo, Tšeliso Mokoko, and Moneuoa Kopo, restated its unwavering commitment to justice, stating that each judge has taken an Oath of Office to uphold the rule of law without fear, favor, or prejudice.

In a strongly worded judgment delivered at the beginning of the week, the Court emphasized that judicial independence is rooted in the solemn oath sworn by judges to dispense justice impartially and in accordance with the Constitution of Lesotho.

"Our loyalty runs to the Constitution of Lesotho and none other," the bench declared, dismissing any insinuation of bias.

Advocate Motinyane had filed the recusal application on the basis that the judges might not be impartial in handling her review case. At the center of the legal dispute is her constitutional challenge to the Prime Minister's proposed advice to His Majesty the King, under Section 141(6) of the Constitution, to establish a tribunal to investigate her conduct in office.

Motinyane argued that such a move was unconstitutional and sought judicial intervention to halt the process. However, before the substantive matter could proceed, she filed the recusal application against the three judges, raising concerns over potential bias.

In response, the Court noted that the independence and impartiality of the judiciary are foundational principles of constitutional democracy. It reiterated that judges are bound by oath to render decisions based solely on the law and the evidence before them, not on personal opinions, external influence, or public sentiment.

"The Constitution entrusts the judiciary with the sacred responsibility of administering justice. This responsibility demands a high degree of integrity, discipline, and fidelity to the law," the judgment read.

The Court further reminded that judicial officers are constantly under inspection and must maintain the highest standards of conduct. However, it cautioned against the misuse of recusal applications as a tactic to delay proceedings or undermine judicial authority.

Legal observers say the ruling is a strong statement in defence of judicial independence, particularly at a time when the courts are increasingly being drawn into high-stakes political and administrative matters. It also marks a significant development in the ongoing saga involving the DPP, who has been under suspension amidst allegations of misconduct and maladministration.

As the substantive review application now proceeds, all eyes remain on the Constitutional Court to determine whether the Prime Minister's attempt to invoke Section 141(6) of the Constitution will be deemed constitutional or not.

For now, however, the judiciary has sent a clear message: it stands firm on its oath, and justice, guided by the Constitution, will prevail.

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ESG Lens

Who Benefits? Tracing ESG Red Flags in Lesotho's PPPs

By: Staff Reporter

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a cornerstone of Lesotho's national development strategy. From healthcare to infrastructure, the government has leaned on private capital to deliver essential public services. But as the deals multiply, so do the questions. Chief among them: who really benefits?

While PPPs promise efficiency and shared risk, Lesotho's track record suggests a troubling pattern of opaque contracts, politically connected beneficiaries, and weak oversight.

ESG, or Environmental, Social, and Governance principles, now a global standard for ethical investment and public accountability, are often treated as optional or symbolic in these agreements. This failure to embed ESG into the core of Lesotho's PPPs risks undermining public trust, worsening inequality, and locking the country into unsustainable financial obligations.

Take the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital, a flagship PPP project under the Tšepong consortium. Once hailed as a model of innovation, the project now stands as a cautionary tale. A 2014 report by the Office of the Auditor-General exposed severe cost overruns, poor contract transparency, and governance failures that left the government paying an unsustainable share of its health budget to a private operator. Where were the ESG safeguards? Who monitored social impact, equitable access, or long-term fiscal sustainability?

More recent PPP initiatives, whether in water infrastructure, road construction, or energy, continue to suffer from limited public disclosure. Communities affected by land displacement or environmental disruption are often left out of consultation processes. Social safeguards are either weak or non-existent. ESG impact assessments are rarely published, and in many cases, not conducted at all.

The "G" in ESG, governance, is arguably the most critical. Lesotho's PPP framework lacks strong, independent regulatory institutions with enforcement power. Many tenders are awarded under questionable circumstances, often to entities linked to political elites. Conflict of interest is poorly policed. Procurement rules are routinely circumvented through exemptions or emergency clauses. This creates fertile ground for rent-seeking and public resource capture.

The private sector, for its part, is not blameless. While international ESG standards require companies to assess and disclose their environmental and social impacts, very few PPP contractors operating in Lesotho publish sustainability reports or community engagement plans. Even those that do often treat ESG as a marketing tool rather than a measurable commitment.

Meanwhile, the losers are ordinary Basotho. They are the taxpayers footing the bill for overpriced projects. They are the patients in under-resourced clinics while millions are paid out in profit guarantees. They are the farmers displaced from fertile land without compensation or recourse. They are the workers trapped in substandard jobs with no labor protections.

To turn the tide, Lesotho must embed ESG principles into the DNA of its PPP strategy. Every project must begin with a comprehensive environmental and social impact assessment, subject to public consultation. Governance mechanisms should be strengthened through independent monitoring bodies, transparent procurement systems, and legal frameworks that punish breaches of fiduciary duty.

Parliament must also play a more active role in scrutinizing PPP contracts before they are signed. Civil society and the media need better access to documents and data. International development partners funding or advising on PPPs should condition their support on full ESG compliance.

It is not enough to ask whether PPPs deliver roads, hospitals, or energy. The real question is whether they deliver value, equity, and sustainability. Without answering that, Lesotho risks deepening the very inequalities that PPPs are meant to solve.

The slogan "public-private partnership" implies mutual benefit. But in Lesotho, the balance of power is tilted. Until ESG becomes more than a checkbox, we must keep asking: who benefits?

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BUSINESS&ECONOMY

Lesotho's Inflation Cools at 4.4% in May, But Food and Clothing Bite Harder

By: Malefo Thinyane

MASERU

Lesotho's annual inflation rate settled at 4.4% in May 2025, marking a slight deceleration from earlier highs, but still revealing pressure points in critical consumer categories such as food, clothing, and housing. The latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) report from the Bureau of Statistics highlights not only the resilience of some inflationary drivers but also the complex story underneath the average.

"While the overall index shows stability, sectoral inflation tells a deeper story," notes one analyst, pointing to key necessities like food and housing registering higher-than-average price increases.

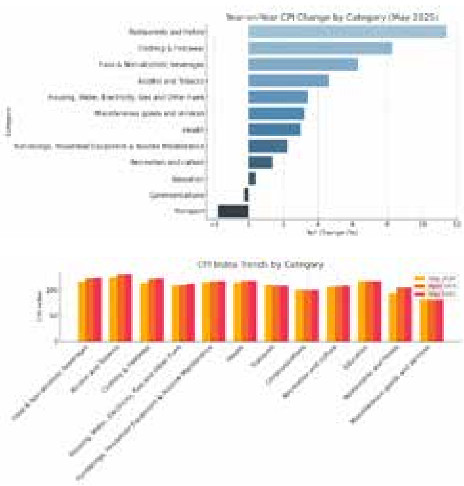
CPI Overview – May 2025

Category	Weight (%)	May 2024 Index	April 2025 Index	May 2025 Index	YoY Change (%)	MoM Change (%)
Food & Non-alcoholic beverages	32.61	116.8	123.55	124.21	6.3	0.5
Alcohol and Tobacco	6.41	124.95	129.99	130.73	4.6	0.6
Clothing & Footwear	8.12	113.65	122.02	123.13	8.3	0.9
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	14.9	109.14	109.73	112.82	3.4	2.8
Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Maintenance	3.32	115.23	116.99	117.65	2.2	0.6
Health	1.91	114.52	117.86	118.0	3.0	0.1
Transport	11.15	110.15	108.69	108.14	-1.8	-0.5
Communications	4.39	99.98	99.98	99.73	-0.3	-0.3
Recreation and culture	1.28	106.59	107.5	108.03	1.4	0.5
Education	4.86	117.06	117.55	117.55	0.4	0.0
Restaurants and Hotels	6.55	94.49	104.92	105.28	11.4	0.3
Miscellaneous goods and services	4.41	114.56	118.11	118.23	3.2	0.1

Key Movers: The Categories Driving Inflation

Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages The biggest contributor to inflation remains food, with a year-on-year increase of 6.3%. This category alone added 2.1 percentage points to the overall CPI. Bread, grains, and vegetables led the price surges, raising alarm for low-income households. Clothing & Footwear Clothing costs spiked 8.3% year-on-year. Notably, footwear prices soared by 10.4%, reflecting higher import costs and seasonal shifts. Housing, Utilities & Fuels With a 2.8% month-on-month increase, housing-related expenses showed the steepest short-term growth. The hike was due to imputed rent and maintenance, while electricity and gas fell. Restaurants and Hotels Restaurant and hotel prices rose a whopping 11.4% year-on-year. Catering services alone increased by 12.6%.

Year-on-Year CPI Change by Category (May 2025)



Bottom Line

May 2025 CPI figures paint a nuanced picture of Lesotho's inflation dynamics—while the headline rate seems benign, underlying pressures are deeply felt at the household level. As winter sets in, attention will turn to how rising energy and clothing prices strain already tight budgets.

For households, it's not just about inflation…it's about where it's happening.

Defence Challenges Widow's Testimony as 'Character Evidence' in Mahao Murder Trial

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU- Tensions flared in the High Court this week during the ongoing murder trial of former Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli and eight other soldiers, as defence lawyers objected to testimony delivered by the widow of the late Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao.

Advocate Letuka Molati, one of the defence lawyers, told the court that the testimony given by 'Mamphanya Mahao amounted to "evidence of character", a category of evidence he argued is inadmissible under the Law of Evidence. Mrs. Mahao had been called to the witness stand by the prosecution to provide insight into her late husband's experiences within the army prior to his death.

According to Advocate Molati, her statements about alleged mistreatment of her husband by Kamoli and the hostility he reportedly faced from within the military were irrelevant to the core legal issue, whether or not the accused were involved in his murder. "This is character evidence, which is not allowed," Molati told the court, adding that once Mrs. Mahao's testimony concludes, he would formally request that her evidence be expunged from the record before cross-examination begins.

The objection arose after Mrs. Mahao shared deeply personal details about her husband's military journey. She told the court that her late husband often confided in her about challenges he faced in the army, including persistent hatred from Kamoli. She recalled how Mahao once said that "some army members did not like him joining the LDF," arguing that "there was no place for academics in the military."

She also testified that her husband had described Kamoli as "a bully," and mentioned an incident where, during a military parade, Kamoli allegedly told Mahao that he would not last in the army and would soon have to return to Speedy Complex, a statement implying that his time in the military was limited and unwelcome. While the defence dismissed the testimony as prejudicial and irrelevant, the prosecution disagreed.

Advocate Lehlohonolo Phooko, for the Crown, defended the admissibility of Mrs. Mahao's statements, asserting that the testimony was not being used to establish character but to provide circumstantial context around the strained relationship between the deceased and some of the accused. "This is not hearsay," Phooko emphasized. "It is circumstantial evidence relevant to what transpired. The truthfulness of the statements is not the issue, the relevance lies in the inference that can be drawn from the circumstances."

He further argued that Mrs. Mahao's testimony helped to establish a backdrop to the fatal operation, reinforcing the claim that the accused, all army members, had motive and intent, particularly given the alleged animosity harboured toward Mahao.

The court has yet to make a formal ruling on whether the contested testimony will be retained in the official record. However, the development adds another layer of complexity to a case that has captivated national attention for nearly a decade.

As the trial continues, the emotional weight of testimony from Mahao's family members is expected to play a key role in shaping public perception, and possibly, the eventual outcome of the case.

Advocate Tuke Retains his position as Law Society's president

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

In a resounding vote of confidence, Advocate Lintle Tuke has retained his position as President of the Law Society of Lesotho, following an uncontested nomination during the Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Hlotse, Leribe.

The AGM, a cornerstone event on the legal fraternity's calendar, brought together lawyers and legal practitioners from across Lesotho. The gathering serves not only as a platform for leadership elections, but also as an opportunity to reflect on the Society's performance, uphold professional ethics, and deliberate on matters affecting the practice of law in the country.

This year's AGM was marked by a strong sense of unity and resolve within the legal community. Advocate Tuke, who has served as President with distinction, was returned to office unopposed, an outcome widely seen as an endorsement of his steady leadership and commitment to the legal profession.

In his address to attendees, Advocate Tuke emphasized the importance of the AGM as a time for introspection and accountability. "This event is not merely a formality," he said. "It is a critical platform where we, as members of the Law Society, evaluate whether our Council can still stand the test of time, whether it remains fit for purpose, and true to its mandate."

He noted that the AGM is also a time for members to elect a council that reflects their vision and expectations. "We must use this opportunity to decide if the Council remains effective, relevant, and capable of advancing our collective interests," Tuke remarked.

Throughout the meeting, discussions focused on key issues affecting the legal fraternity in Lesotho, including the independence of the judiciary, access to justice, professional conduct, and the role of the Society in safeguarding constitutional democracy.

Several participants called for stronger advocacy on legal reforms and better support for young lawyers entering the profession.

The continued leadership of Advocate Tuke is expected to bring stability to the Society at a time when the legal profession is facing evolving challenges, including public perceptions of justice, complex legal reforms, and the need for digital transformation in legal processes.

Many members praised Tuke's leadership style, describing him as a unifying figure that listens and takes a principled stance on key issues. His re-election is seen as a commitment to continuity, but also a call to action for the Council to remain active, transparent, and responsive to the needs of its members.

As the Law Society of Lesotho moves forward, the AGM served as a powerful reminder of the role of lawyers in upholding justice, defending human rights, and maintaining the rule of law in a democratic society. With Advocate Tuke at the helm, the Society now faces the task of not only navigating the legal terrain ahead but also ensuring that its voice continues to shape the future of justice in Lesotho.

FARMERS CORNER

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Lesotho Tribune

Vegetable Inflation Persists as Winter Supply Constraints Deepen

By Motsamai Tjakata, Agricultural Economist

Lesotho's vegetable market remains under significant price pressure as winter production constraints, rising logistics costs, and regional supply bottlenecks converge. The first week of August saw continued inflation in core vegetable commodities, particularly tomatoes and green peppers, underscoring the country's dependency on South African imports during the cold season.

Market Forces at Play

1. Climate-Driven Production Declines Sub-zero night temperatures and frost damage have curtailed open-field production across major growing zones. Tunnel-based farming remains limited due to high capital costs and inadequate extension support.

2. Import Dependency and Border Dynamics Cross-border sourcing from South Africa has intensified, but supply chains remain vulnerable to currency fluctuations and logistical delays. Traders are reporting week-on-week increases in Johannesburg market prices, with transport and handling costs pushing final prices further in Lesotho.

3. Consumer Purchasing Power Erosion

With inflation still trending above central bank targets, the rise in vegetable prices is worsening food insecurity for low-income households and driving substitution toward cheaper and less nutritious alternatives.

Lesotho Retail Market Prices as at 1 August 2025

Commodity	Avg. Price (per kg)	Price Change (2 weeks)
Tomatoes	M20.00	+8 percent
Green Peppers	M18.50	+10 percent
Potatoes	M6.00	No change
Onions	M7.50	+5 percent
Cabbage	M3.60	–4 percent

Source: Lesotho Tribune market tracking data and direct surveys from urban retail points

Benchmark Wholesale Prices in South Africa (Joburg Market)

Commodity	Avg. Wholesale Price	Change vs. July Avg
Tomatoes	R15.40 per kg	+10 percent
Green Peppers	R18.10 per kg	+9 percent
Potatoes	R48.25 per 10 kg	–5 percent
Onions	R68.90 per 10 kg	+6 percent
Cabbage	R2.85 per kg	–5 percent

Source: South African Department of Agriculture and Fresh Produce Market Reports

Strategic Implications

For Policymakers:

Lesotho's structural reliance on vegetable imports has reached a critical point. Incentives for protected winter production and regional cold chain integration should be prioritized in agricultural recovery plans. There is also need to scale up tunnel farming through subsidized credit or blended finance instruments.

For Traders and Retailers:

Retailers should expect further volatility in tomato and green pepper prices and consider forward contracts with South African suppliers where possible. Cold storage investments will become increasingly vital for managing perishables efficiently.

For Consumers:

Households are advised to diversify purchases toward more price-stable and seasonally available crops such as spinach, carrots, and cabbage. Budgeting tools and food-saving strategies should be promoted through community outreach.

Outlook for Mid-August

Tomatoes: Risk of further increases between 8 and 12 percent unless inland South African harvests improve.

Green Peppers: Expected to remain elevated due to tight supply and rising logistical costs.

Onions and Potatoes: Stabilization is likely provided border throughput remains smooth.

Next Issue: The next market bulletin will be published on 15 August 2025.

Ministry of Agriculture Bans Importation of Eggs

By Pheello Mosesi

At a press conference held in Maseru on Monday, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security pleaded with the nation to abide by the new import prohibition regulations that have been set on eggs, potatoes and cabbage.

"The ministry is working hand in hand with all the border management facilities, security and law enforcement fraternities and other ministries to ensure that the measures which were set earlier this year are followed to the tip," said Honourable Pitso Lesaoana speaking on behalf of the Minister Responsible for nutrition, Thabo Mofosi.

He told the attendees of the conference that the new regulations were made based on the quantity of the same products produced locally in a manner to help grow the economy locally, as this will be opportune for local producers on bigger production and healthier business progression.

"The ministry will continue to stay vigilant in order to ensure these regulations are followed, to curb any imports that may be made either on legal borders or illegal country entry points," he noted.

The Minister said they were aware of the fear that the new changes had brought to Basotho in terms of price changes. He, however, assured that through their marketing department, they will regulate the selling prices of the products to ensure that farmers and sellers don't increase selling prices ridiculously, taking advantage of what might be mistaken as "scarcity of eggs, potatoes and cabbage"toare any new developments regarding the ban on the import of the products, the Ministry promised to keep the nation posted.

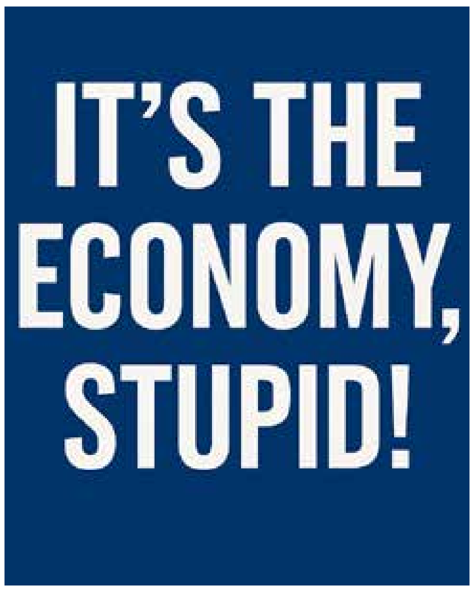
Letsoela Reappointed as LDF Commander for another Three-Year Term

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU
In a move signaling confidence and continuity in the country's military leadership, Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela has been reappointed as Commander
of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) for a further three-year term. The reappointment,
confirmed by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Limpho Tau, will take effect on
August 4, 2025, and run until August 3, 2028.
The announcement was made during the week, with Tau noting that the Prime Minister,
in line with constitutional authority, has the prerogative to appoint a candidate of his choosing to lead the LDF.
"The Prime Minister exercised his powers as provided by law," Tau explained. "The decision to retain Lieutenant General Letsoela was based on his leadership experience, stability under his command, and the strategic continuity he brings to the institution." Lieutenant General Letsoela first assumed the role of army commander on January 23, 2018, following the assassination of his predecessor, Lieutenant General Khoantle Motšomotšo.
His tenure came at a time when the LDF was grappling with internal instability, leadership divisions, and strained civil-military relations, all remnants of previous turbulent years.
Under Letsoela's leadership, the LDF has undergone a gradual but significant transformation. Efforts have been made to professionalize the force, restore public
confidence, and align the military more closely with democratic and constitutional principles. His term has also seen a reduction in high-profile incidents of military-related
violence, a development welcomed by both domestic and international observers.
Prior to this extension, Letsoela was scheduled to retire at the end of August 2025.
However, the new term now extends his service until 2028, allowing him to continue implementing reforms and further entrenching the culture of accountability and discipline within the military.
When asked whether there had been consideration of alternative candidates, Minister Tau stated clearly that the decision was solely at the discretion of the Prime Minister. "It
is within his constitutional mandate to make such appointments," he said. "What matters most is national interest, not the number of candidates available."
Reactions to the reappointment have been mixed across various sectors.
Some view the move as a reasonable step toward continuity and long-term planning in a critical national institution, while others have called for transparent and consultative process in
future military appointments.
Nonetheless, Letsoela's reappointment comes at a time when the LDF continues to play a vital role in national security, peacekeeping, and disaster response operations. With political stability and civilian-military harmony remaining a priority for the current administration, many will watch closely to see how the Commander builds upon his
current legacy.
As the country looks ahead, Lieutenant General Letsoela's extended leadership promises not just consistency but also the opportunity to strengthen the Defence Force
as a disciplined, accountable, and professional institution in service of Lesotho's peace
and sovereignty.

OPINION

It's the Economy, Stupid!



By Hlalele 'Neko

In 1992, a simple phrase helped unseat a sitting U.S. president: "It's the economy, stupid." It was not meant for headlines, it was a memo on the wall, a sharp reminder to campaign strategists that the real issues were not in the clouds of rhetoric, but in the pockets of the people.

Today, Lesotho's ruling party, Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), might consider pinning the same note on the walls of State House and every boardroom where they now indulge themselves in ceremonial governance and elite handshakes.

Because if the African Development Bank's recent Country Focus Report is to be believed and it should be, then Lesotho is staring down the barrel of an economic collapse. Growth is grinding to a halt. Unemployment is staggering. Donor confidence is evaporating. And the masses are tightening their belts while the ruling class loosens theirs around gourmet tables and imported furniture.

What prosperity? For whom?

The name Revolution for Prosperity once stirred a hopeful imagination. It suggested inclusive growth, youth employment, innovation, infrastructure, and rural transformation. But now, the revolution seems to have been reduced to a revolving door of tenders and power games, and prosperity confined to a curated inner circle of politically connected merchants of influence.

The AfDB's report could not be clearer. Lesotho's projected GDP growth for 2025 is a paltry 1.1%, falling even further to 0.5% in 2026. The so-called "revolutionary" government has failed to shield the economy from predictable shocks, such as the expiration of the AGOA agreement, the cancellation of MCC Compact II, and the pullout of PEPFAR and USAID. Instead of strategic countermeasures, we are offered silence, PR slogans, and a digital façade of governance that glows online but delivers nothing offline.

The livelihoods of Basotho do not live on Canva posters and hashtags.

Unemployment now festers at 30.1%, youth unemployment closer to 40%. Textile exports are plummeting. SACU revenues are no longer dependable. Meanwhile, the RFP's leadership continues to operate as if Lesotho is in an economic vacuum, immune from the consequences of disengaged policymaking and shallow political pageantry.

This is not a leadership class that understands the mechanics of economic development. There is a marked absence of fiscal literacy, industrial strategy, or productive investment orientation. Most disturbingly, there is no evidence of empathy for the common citizen. Prosperity has become a tagline, not a measurable outcome.

There is no revolution when the state's most capable thinkers are sidelined, and every appointment is an opportunity to reward proximity rather than competence.

It is one thing to inherit a fragile economy; it is another to actively mismanage it while pretending it is someone else's problem.

The RFP was elected on a promise of transformation. But transformation requires more than reshuffling cronies between ministries and boards. It requires understanding basic principles of economics, governance, and public finance. And it requires political humility, not the arrogance of first-time office holders who confuse popularity with performance.

The Country Focus Report offers clear solutions: diversify trade, strengthen public financial management, and prioritize domestic resource mobilization. But those require strategic capacity, something in short supply at the top.

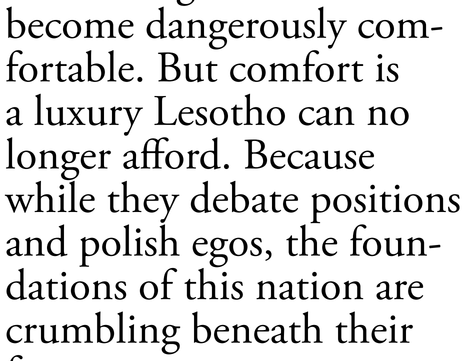
Instead, Lesotho is being run by a group of improvisers who speak of innovation yet struggle to balance a budget or retain foreign partnerships.

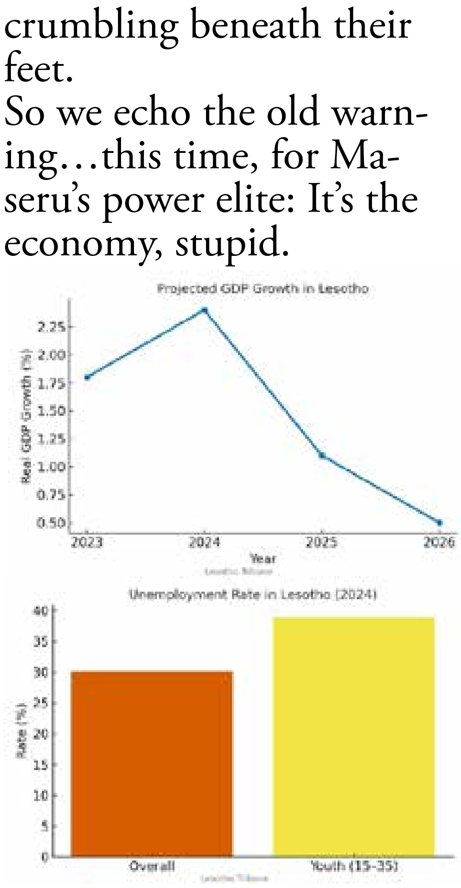
This is a country where rural women walk 10 kilometers to access primary healthcare, where 22% of GDP comes from remittances abroad, and where donor aid has been central to surviva, not just development. Any leader who reads the AfDB report and does not call for an emergency national economic dialogue should not be called a leader at all.

If RFP truly believes in prosperity, let it first demonstrate its understanding of economics; not through speeches, but through outcomes. Where is the job creation plan? Where is the SME financing roadmap? Where is the investment in agri-industrial zones? Where is the energy strategy?

In its silence and its self-dealing, the RFP has become dangerously comfortable. But comfort is a luxury Lesotho can no longer afford. Because while they debate positions and polish egos, the foundations of this nation are crumbling beneath their feet.

So we echo the old warning…this time, for Maseru's power elite: It's the economy, stupid.





Lesotho can burry South Africa's textile industry...

By Staff Reporter

Recent developments in global trade policy have dramatically reshaped the landscape for African textile exporters. On July 31, 2025, former U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing new tariffs ranging from 15% to 41% on imports from more than 60 countries. These tariffs, effective August 7, apply a baseline 10% rate with steeper charges for countries running trade surpluses with the United States. Although Lesotho was initially included in a draft list facing tariffs as high as 50%, diplomatic pressure and economic lobbying helped reduce its rate to 15%. Despite this reprieve, the psychological and operational shock to Lesotho's textile industry has been significant.

Lesotho's apparel sector is a vital economic engine. It provides employment to more than 30,000 Basotho, most of them women, and contributes close to 20% of the country's GDP.

For years, Lesotho has benefited from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), exporting garments duty-free to the United States. These exports serve major global retailers such as Levi's, Gap, and Walmart. The system is built on the "cut-make-trim" model, attracting foreign investors who set up production facilities aimed solely at meeting U.S. demand. But with uncertainty now surrounding tariff rates and the direction of U.S. trade policy, factories in Maseru and Maputsoe are already witnessing order cancellations, layoffs, and business

closures.

Some have suggested that Lesotho could become a regulatory arbitrage powerhouse, capable of undermining even South Africa's more advanced textile industry. While the idea of collapsing South Africa's sector is exaggerated, it is not without economic logic. Lesotho has the potential to outcompete its regional peers, including South Africa, Ethiopia, and Kenya, for a slice of the U.S. textile market.

This is due to a unique combination of trade advantages, lower input costs, and lighter regulatory burdens. In terms of labor costs, Lesotho remains highly competitive. South Africa's higher minimum wage, coupled with unionized labor and more rigid labor regulations, creates a cost structure that foreign textile investors may see as increasingly unattractive.

Ethiopia, once seen as a rising star in African apparel manufacturing, lost its AGOA eligibility in 2022. That move effectively disqualified it from accessing the U.S. market on favorable terms, eliminating it from direct competition for AGOA-driven investment. Kenya still enjoys AGOA status, but faces growing competition and similar exposure to the new U.S. tariffs. South Africa remains a strong manufacturing hub, but is vulnerable to escalating U.S. scrutiny due to its trade surplus and relatively high wages. In contrast, Lesotho's smaller scale and clean AGOA track record offer nimbleness and flexibility that larger economies cannot match.

Lesotho's strategic advantage lies not in undercutting its neighbors indiscriminately, but in positioning itself as an efficient, rules-based, export-friendly alternative for global brands trying to navigate protectionist trends. The country has clear opportunities to attract foreign direct investment by leveraging the very regulatory disparities that place its peers at a disadvantage. For instance, Lesotho's use of third-country fabric and efficient customs facilitation allows it to qualify for AGOA benefits with fewer bottlenecks than South Africa or Kenya.

The Trump tariffs may appear to be a setback, but they also represent a turning point. With U.S. duties on textiles from countries like China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and India rising above 20%, American brands are now reevaluating their sourcing strategies. Lesotho must seize this opportunity to deepen its comparative advantage. The country must maintain full compliance with AGOA eligibility criteria, strengthen its trade infrastructure, and provide stability and transparency that attract export-oriented FDI. This means supporting labor standards, ensuring visa system functionality, and avoiding any political risks that could jeopardize market access.

Diversifying Lesotho's exports beyond the U.S. and toward regional markets through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is another critical step. At the same time, the country must improve internal trade logistics, enhance financial access for SMEs, and streamline customs processes to boost its appeal to manufacturers and investors alike.

Lesotho is not aiming to become the world's textile giant overnight. But with smart trade policy, investor-friendly reforms, and disciplined governance, it can become a reliable partner for global brands looking to diversify away from Asia and mitigate exposure to volatile trade policies. If the government and private sector act swiftly and decisively, Lesotho could transform this moment of global uncertainty into a generational opportunity for economic transformation.

Now is not the time for hesitation. Lesotho must position itself not as a victim of Trump's tariffs, but as a small country capable of thinking and acting strategically on a global stage. The textile opportunity is still alive. Whether Lesotho captures it will depend on the choices made in the weeks and months to come.

MoET, LCE, UNESCO launch Sexuality education programme

By: Lemohang Botsane

The Ministry of Education and Training, in partnership with the Lesotho College of Education (LCE), has launched a 13-week comprehensive sexuality education training programme for teachers backed by UNESCO. The training will run virtually for 11 weeks and conclude with a face-to-face session. This initiative is a significant step towards empowering teachers to deliver comprehensive sexuality education, ultimately benefiting the children of Lesotho.

According to Dr Mamthimkhulu Matsoso, Dean of the Faculty of Education at LCE, the silence surrounding sexual matters has made it difficult for children to report abuse.

"It's become taboo to discuss sex with children, even in schools," she noted, saying the training therefore aims to break down these barriers, equipping teachers with the skills to address the challenges faced by children.

Dr Matsoso emphasised the importance of open conversations about sex, saying, "If children feel comfortable discussing sex at home and reporting abuse, parents will also be more likely to offer guidance." She added that education begins with teachers, and by training them, progress towards eliminating the taboo surrounding sex education can be made.

The CEO of Curriculum and Assessment from the Ministry of Education, Dr Makhube Ralenkoane, said in the late 1980s, the nation was attacked by a terrible enemy, HIV/AIDS and in the early 1990s it threatened to wipe out all the villages. He said everyone born in Lesotho is either infected, affected or knows someone who's infected with HIV.

"This sexual education programme will help create knowledge about the virus and ways to prevent and treat it. We have made a decision to come up with a curriculum that is going to equip learners with resilient skills, particularly against peer pressure," Ralenkoane said.

The LEC Rector, Nthabiseng Mobe, said the training is intended to equip teachers with relevant content and skills to implement life skills-based sexuality education curriculum, globally known as Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

"This is an area we culturally do not talk of freely with our young children and I can just imagine the challenge it's going to bring for teachers when discussing these topics to primary school learners and to communities to let it be known how important it is to have this curriculum," said Mobe.

CSE is known to have the ability to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and HIV infections, contributing towards building healthier, safer and equitable societies. Since the curriculum of CSE started from when it was known as Life Skills to when it changed to Life Skills-Based Sexuality education, over 3000 teachers have received the in-service teacher training. And through this workshop, trained teachers will be able to train others.

Dr Patricia Machawira, Regional advisor at UNESCO, said they believe that healthy learners learn better and better-educated learners have the skills needed to become and remain healthy throughout their adulthood.

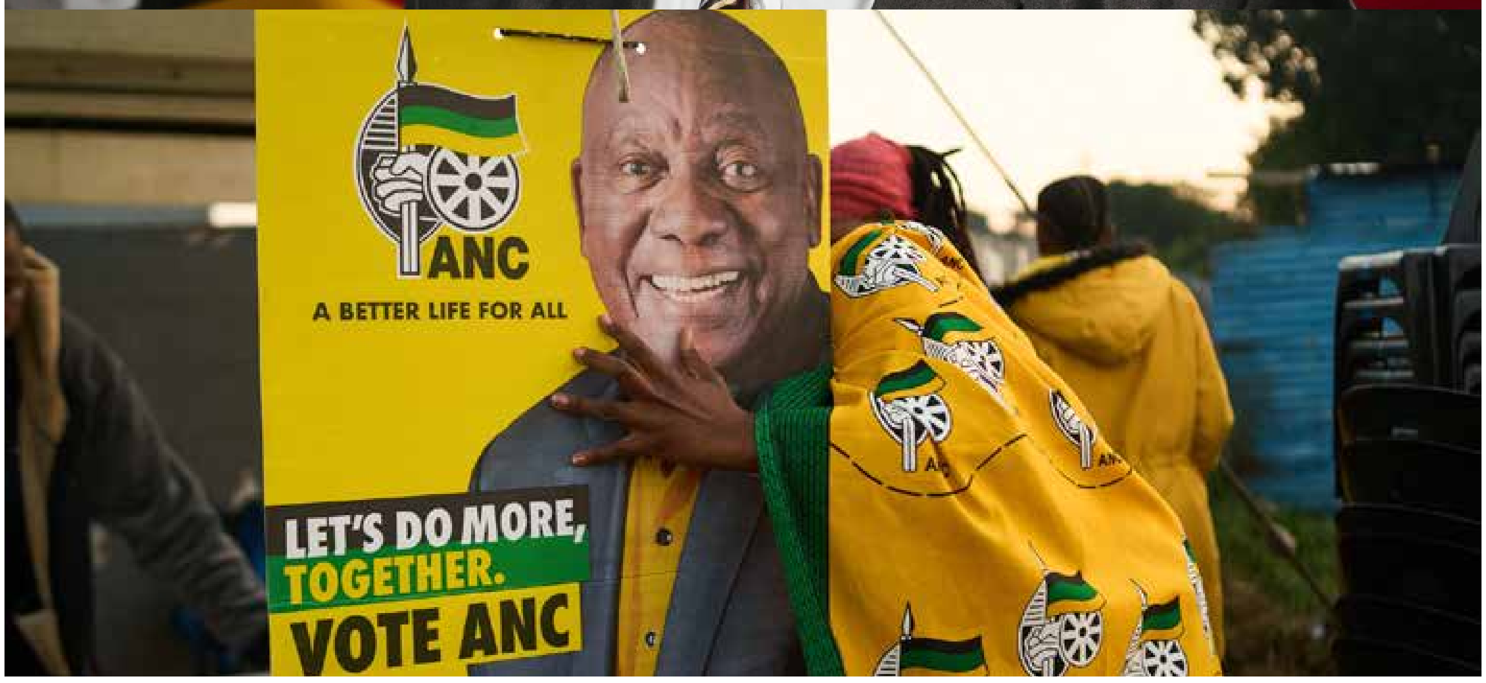
"We know that our young people still face many risk factors that affect their health and wellbeing," Machawira said, adding that this programme would not be possible to reach learners without teachers, which is why they gathered in that manner.

"Investing in our teachers will be important as we know that it's mainly through classroom learning that children listen and learn better," remarked Machawira.

The first week of the training will be the introduction phase of the programme around the campus. Weeks two to 12 will be a virtual interaction session, and week 13 will be a consolidation, assessment and awarding of certificates for participatingteachers.

When Heroes Become Thieves

By Collen Chikore



A truth we have long feared in the whispers of our communities has now been dragged into the glaring, unforgiving light. A report from a senior South African police commissioner, General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, has given an official name to the betrayal that is bleeding our nations dry. It alleges an unholy alliance, a criminal syndicate of the highest order, linking officials from Zimbabwe's ruling Zanu PF and the office of President Mnangagwa with insiders from South Africa's own governing party, the ANC.

The names Zanu PF and the ANC should echo in the halls of global history. These are the fabled liberation movements the world once rallied behind to defeat the racist regimes of Rhodesia and Apartheid. We, their people, gave them our trust, believing they would build nations worthy of the blood spilled for freedom. That trust now lies shattered. The report alleges that these two hands, once joined in the fight for justice, are now joined in a conspiracy to plunder our collective wealth—illegally moving cash, gold, and other minerals across our borders.

To the world watching, this is more than just another story of "African corruption." It is a direct consequence and mockery of your international policies. General Mkhwanazi's report confirms that a primary motive for this syndicate is to bypass the very sanctions you imposed on Zimbabwean elites. While you believe you are isolating a regime, you are, in fact, fuelling the creation of a sophisticated shadow state. Your sanctions have become a catalyst for a more insidious, transnational crime that rots not one, but two nations from the inside out.

The cost of this alleged betrayal is etched onto the faces of our people. Every untaxed diamond spirited out of Zimbabwe is a school that cannot be built in Harare, a hospital that closes its doors in Mutare. The wealth of an entire nation is being siphoned away, leaving millions in poverty while the architects of their misery feast.

This poison seeps across the border into South Africa. The illicit cash fuels the hyper-violent crime that turns our streets into warzones. It hollows out our state institutions, breeding a culture of impunity. And cruelly, it feeds the flames of xenophobia, as angry and desperate South Africans are manipulated into blaming the poor Zimbabwean immigrant, rather than the powerful elites in both countries who are the true authors of our shared pain.

We are witnessing the moral bankruptcy of a generation of liberators. The promise of freedom has been sold for a private jet, a foreign bank account, a life of luxury built upon the suffering of millions.

We therefore appeal to you, the international community. Your work is not done. Inaction is complicity. Do not look away. We demand more than just sanctions; we demand a targeted, global response against these criminal networks. Empower international bodies like INTERPOL to investigate these claims without political interference. Use your financial intelligence to track and freeze the assets of not just the individuals, but the entire web of corruption that enables them. Support the brave journalists and officials like General Mkhwanazi who risk their lives to expose this rot. They are the true heroes now. The dream of a free and prosperous Southern Africa is dying. We are fighting to revive it, and we ask you to stand with us, not with those who have turned their flags into shields for criminal enterprise.

Zimbabwe human rights activist.

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AFRICA

Namibia goes for salmon gold

By Staff Reporter

The cold Benguela current and Norwegian expertise to play vital roles in aquaculture projects Namibia is to set up two salmon farms, aiming to make an impact on Africa's aquaculture industry and to lead salmon production on the continent.

The country first announced plans for salmon farming early in 2024, at Lüderitz. The initial project, Benguela Blue Aqua Farming (BBA), is the brainchild of Austrian entrepreneur Johannes Aldrian.

"We foresee operations will be fully functional at this site within 10 years," says Aldrian. "Our goal is to purchase nearby land and reach annual production capacity at Lüderitz of 35,000t of salmon for export and local markets."

A second salmon player, the Norway-based African Aquaculture Company (AAC), was founded two years ago. It is targeting production of 51,000t annually. Its permits were granted a year ago.

BBA intends to construct a jetty, offices, storage areas, hatching zones and processing units. Aldrian says salmon farming involves several stages onshore and offshore, each requiring various resources, facilities and equipment.

Hatching, which takes place onshore, requires desalinated water. Once the fish weigh 150g, they are transferred to well-boats of 1,000m³ each. From here they will be pumped into large tanks and transported offshore to a self-sufficient facility that resembles an oil rig.

Salmon will also be harvested at this site, again using well-boats. The fish will be carefully removed from the cages once they weigh 4.5kg and transported to an onshore processing facility.

It seems like a lot to bite off, considering salmon is not a naturally occurring species in Namibia.

The two companies aim to replicate the success of salmon farming in Norway and Chile, two of the world's leading producers of farmed Atlantic salmon, all based on Norwegian technology.

A who's who of Norwegian seafood industry experts led the AAC's vision, in collaboration with former PwC partner Torben Foss and AAC's Namibian partner, Clement Kaukuetu.

Kaukuetu has 18 years' experience in horse mackerel fishing. "The salmon dream was born six years ago when I met Foss," he says. "Early on, we both recognised the potential for cultivating North Atlantic salmon in the pristine environments of Namibia and South Africa."

The Benguela current along the west coast of Southern Africa is cold and nutrient-rich, offering ideal conditions for salmon

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Lesotho Bans Imports of Eggs, Potatoes, and Cabbage

By Staff Reporter

The recent policy shift by Lesotho's Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security marks a bold and strategic step toward revitalizing the country's struggling agricultural sector. This week, the Ministry announced a ban on the importation of eggs, potatoes, and cabbage.

The move is designed to empower local producers, stimulate rural economies, and push the nation closer to self-sufficiency.

After months of public missteps and policy uncertainty that left many doubting the government's priorities, the Matekane-led administration deserves credit for a decision that puts Basotho farmers first, without favour or political manoeuvring. This is a welcome change and a meaningful vote of confidence in the country's agricultural potential.

The timing of the ban could not be better. Local farmers are already producing these commodities at competitive prices and quality, making imports increasingly unnecessary.

By restricting the entry of foreign alternatives, the Ministry is not just protecting the local market. It is also sending a strong signal of support to the men and women who invest their time, effort, and capital into sustainable food production.

At its core, this policy supports more than just short-term protection. It lays a foundation for a resilient agricultural economy. It promotes food security by reducing Lesotho's dependency on external suppliers. It encourages sustainable farming practices and provides an incentive for further investment in local agriculture. Most importantly, it fosters pride in homegrown produce.

We believe this move will catalyze broader economic benefits, stabilizing prices, creating rural employment, and encouraging entrepreneurial activity within farming communities. The long-term gains could be transformative, especially if coupled with ongoing support, access to markets, and capacity-building for smallholder farmers.

Of course, no policy is without risks. There is always the potential for price manipulation or supply shortages if regulation and enforcement are not carefully managed. That is why ongoing monitoring, transparency, and collaboration with farmers' unions and consumer protection bodies will be key. A fair and predictable marketplace will prevent abuse and ensure the intended benefits reach the grassroots.

This decision also presents an opportunity to reduce Lesotho's trade deficit by curbing the outflow of currency used to import food. It is a firm step toward economic self-determination. It aligns with the broader national vision of prosperity through self-reliance.

We commend the Ministry for showing leadership and trusting Basotho farmers with the responsibility of feeding the nation. It is now up to the farming community to rise to the occasion, maintaining quality, scaling production, and justifying the confidence placed in them.

Continued from page 20

farming. Its characteristics are comparable to those of the Humboldt current off the coast of Chile, which supports a thriving aquaculture industry.

"These waters are optimal for high-quality Atlantic salmon production, while maintaining a natural environment conducive to sustainable farming," says Kaukuetu. "The involvement of Norwegian aquaculture experts ensures international best practice."

The Norwegian aquaculture veterans are playing a significant role in financing and managing the initiative. AAC has committed to an overall investment of about N$8.5bn. This includes N$100m for the initial offshore pilot phase and N$125m for the full-field offshore development. Namibian investors have also committed to the first round of investment.

Significant funding is still needed to build offshore facilities, including cages, mooring systems, barges and well-boats.

Freshwater hatcheries in South Africa and Norway will supply AAC's hatchlings, known as smolt.

"Namibia is the last frontier for salmon farming," Kaukuetu says. "The long-term plan is to develop a parallel project in South Africa, which is still in the early stages. It will be a shore-based system on the west coast, not sea cages, due to the higher ocean energy levels further south."

The initial location is Fisantekraal, near Paarl.

The planned annual production by AAC of 51,000t of Atlantic salmon is relatively small compared with Norway's export volumes. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, Norway exported 285,163t, a 16% year-on-year increase. Global salmon consumption has tripled since 1980.

Salmon aquaculture represents 70% of the market, according to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). Analysis by MarketWatch, a US website subsidiary of Dow Jones & Co, predicts the value of the global salmon market will double from 2024 to 2033, reaching US$36bn. That would be a compound annual growth rate of 8%. AAC aims to export high-value Atlantic salmon, targeting affluent markets in Europe, North America and Asia. Namibia's proximity to European ports enhances its strategic position as a supplier.

Additionally, AAC seeks to meet demand in Southern Africa, where it is hoped that rising incomes should boost demand for nutritious protein.

Says Kaukuetu: "The project's location along the Benguela current allows for the cost-effective production of premium-quality salmon at competitive prices. This positions Namibia as a potential hub for sustainable seafood production in Sub-Saharan Africa, capable of meeting local needs and global demand."

Aldrian is eyeing the continent as a whole.

"Ultimately, this will become an Africa-funded project, with our product distributed across the continent," he says. Africa's population is about 1.4-billion, representing a huge market and a chance to help with food security.

A UN report says the total global volume of fish and other aquatic animals harvested by farming "has topped the amount fished in the wild from the world's waters for the first time" in mid-2024.

However, the WWF warns that salmon farming, particularly the open-pen method, could have a negative impact on the environment and on certain other species. While it has the potential to feed more people using fewer resources than other protein sources, there are concerns about biodiversity loss.

Chemicals and excess nutrients from salmon farms could disrupt the ocean's ecosystems. Viruses and parasites could spread between farmed and wild fish, risking wild populations and other farms.

Aldrian says these concerns can be mitigated. He recently visited Norway to learn more about reducing environmental risks and noted that efforts include "escape-proof" cages where nothing can enter or exit.

He says cameras will be installed at remote feeding stations to ensure minimal feed enters the ocean.

"Salmon farming is a sustainable and clean way to feed the world's growing population. Moreover, BBA will not use any antibiotics. Our fish will be vaccinated and made resistant to pathogens."

BBA will follow the environmental management plan of Namibia's ministry of agriculture, fisheries, water & land reform, which adheres to strict international codes.

"Given the specialised science required, Skretting, a Norwegian global leader in fish feed production, will source on our behalf and will publicly disclose the origin of its marine ingredients through its sustainability reporting," says Kaukuetu. "Skretting already supplies a number of trout farms in South Africa, so it will be sourced directly from their facilities in South Africa."

" It's not about who consumes the salmon, but what the salmon itself is fed "

A 2024 report by the NGO Feedback, titled "Blue Empire", drew attention to the dichotomy at the heart of salmon farming — it's not about who consumes the salmon, but what the salmon itself is fed.

The report says the Norwegian salmon farming industry extracts nearly 2Mt of wild fish annually due to its feed footprint. And much of the fish oil used in this industry is sourced from northwest Africa, a region facing severe food insecurity. The wild fish are used to produce fish oil, a key ingredient in farmed salmon feed.

The report says the oil "could have fed 4-million people for a year". It adds that four main feed producers — Mowi, Skretting, Cargill and BioMar — supply nearly all the feed for Norwegian salmon farming, and all four source fish oil from northwest Africa.

Geir Kjensmo from the Norwegian Salmon Association says: "In our minds, there is no doubt that the most dangerous threat is the overfishing of key species in oceans around the world to feed the enormous demand for farmed salmon. This practice steals resources from the poorer populations to provide food for the richer."

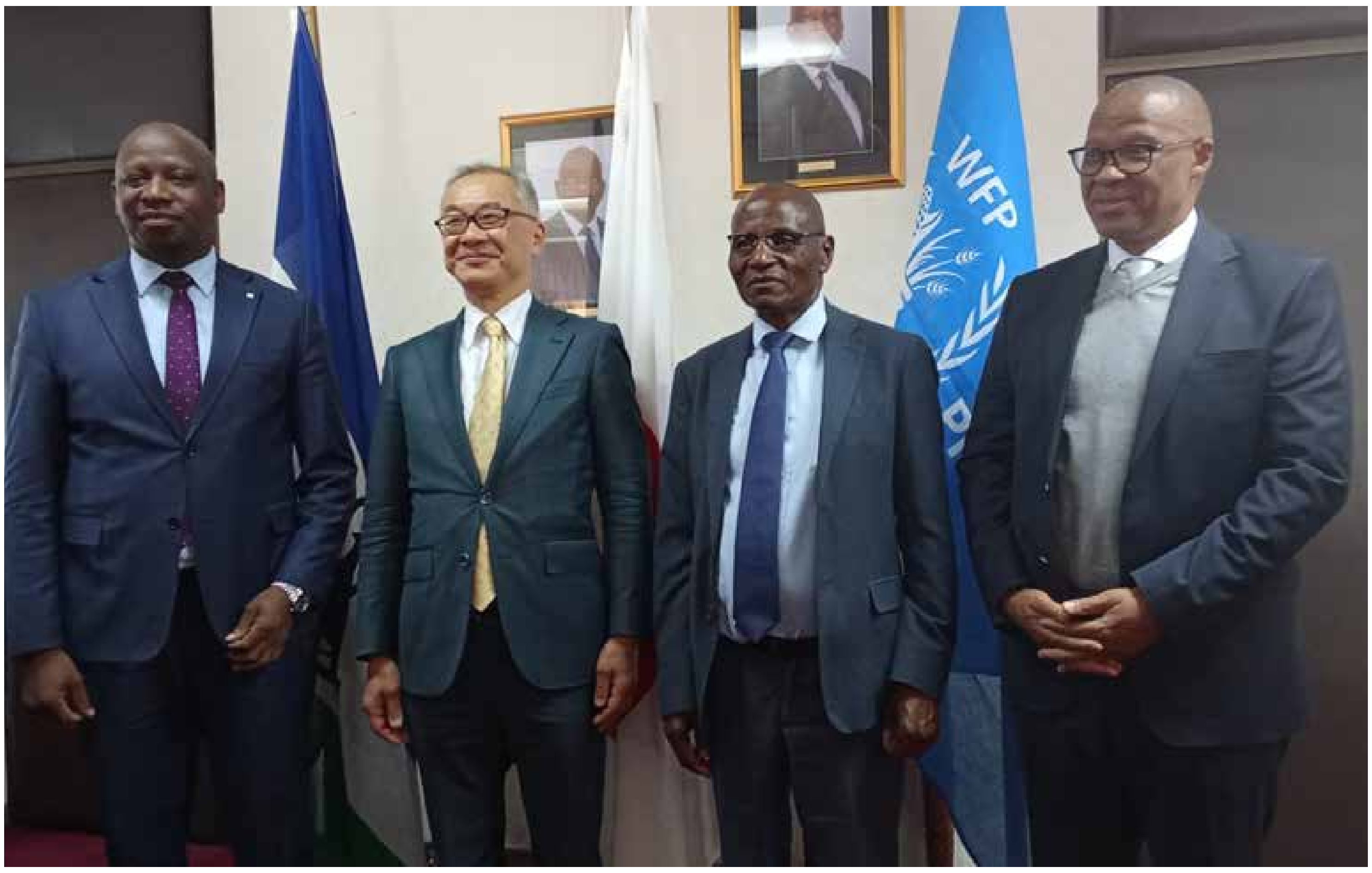
Not so, says AAC's Foss. "We buy feed from producers who have a policy of using fishmeal and fish oil from stocks that are not overfished. We also believe that fish suitable for direct human consumption should be consumed as such, and not made into fishmeal and fish oil."

Aldrian has a different take on the issue. He says all the agriculture and natural products needed for BBA's feed production can be produced locally. "This approach will also be cost-effective, especially since feed accounts for 60% of our overall costs."

AAC plans to employ 5,000 people across various phases of its operations. This includes direct employment in farming activities and indirect roles in logistics and processing. BBA aims to create 600 direct jobs and 1,500 indirect jobs.

Japan, WFP Donate Food Parcels

By: Lemohang Botsane



The government of Japan has committed a total of $1.3 million in food parcels to support pre-primary school children in Lesotho. The donations were made in Maseru
this week, where Japan and the World Food Programme (WFP) Lesotho signed a
Memorandum of Understanding.
This scheme, Japan said, will offer support to 50,000 children in over 2400 preschools in all the 10 districts of Lesotho, delivering vital food items such as canned
fish, maize meal and fresh vegetables, an effort that reinforces Japan's devotion to bettering the well-being of Lesotho's Young children.
The Ambassador of Japan, Shimizu Fumio, stressed Japan's dedication to supporting Lesotho's food security, stating that given Lesotho's socio-economic challenges fuelled by many factors including drought, Japan is glad to be help in developing Lesotho's food security which will help meet the dietary needs of those
affected households and improve the nutritional status of the children.
He highlighted the significance of feeding programmes in schools, saying, "Feeding
programmes play a pivotal role in ensuring children not only have an education opportunity but also have the energy to learn and grow. Japan's continued support of
Lesotho's feeding programmes is not just about food allocation: it's an investment in the future of this country."
Fumio commended the government of Lesotho and WFP for their commitment and
collaboration, stating that with their joint efforts, they reaffirm a shared mission: to ensure that no child goes to school hungry and that every child has the opportunity
to reach their full potential.
Elliot Vhurumuku, Country Director at WFP, received charitable support from Japan
aimed at improving food stability in Lesotho.
He said, "The donations come at a time when WFP is appealing for more funds to
respond to the increasing food insecurity," adding that Lesotho is no exception to
these perils due to global disputes, climate shocks and socio-economic emergencies.
Vhurumuku stated that the majority of children in Lesotho come from disadvantaged
households, saying the donations will therefore come in very handy to fill the gaps.
He said the WFP has been assisting Lesotho with the direct execution of school feeding programmes since 1965 and continues to provide technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education and Training to implement the national school
feeding programme.
He further noted that the signing ceremony enhances WFP's devotion to achieving
its mission through partnerships with the governments of Lesotho and Japan and all
partners concerned with food security and nutrition issues, as well as education.
The Minister of Education, Ntoi Rapapa, showed appreciation to Japan and the support from WFP towards the school feeding programme, deeming it an influential
project. He said the donation will not only address food insecurity issues but will also
uplift education, health and dignity in equal measure.
Rapapa said offerings from the government of Japan amount to JPY200 (equivalenTo about M24 million).
"These funds will directly support 50,000 children across 2400 Early Childhood Care
and Development (ECCD) centres for a total of 180 days," Rapapa said.
Present at this gifting was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations,
Lejone Mpotjoana, who said they are grateful for the donations, saying Lesotho and
Japan have maintained good relations since 1971.
He said the actions of the government of Japan were more than food parcel donations but a symbol of humanity.
"It is an act of mediation established on empathy and a powerful reminder that unity
knows no border," Mpotjoana remarked, acknowledging the WFP in enabling this
partnership.

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ARTS & SPORTS

Lesotho Men's Tennis Team Waves The Flag In Botswana

By Litšitso Letsunyane

The Lesotho Men's Tennis Team took a confident step in their international sporting journey this July as they traveled to Gaborone, Botswana, to compete in the Davis Cup – Africa Group V. The team departed on Tuesday, 22 July 2025, from Moshoeshoe I International Airport, carrying not only their rackets but also their hopes and pride.

The Davis Cup, is a premier international team competition in men's tennis, sees nations from around the globe compete across various levels. In Africa, the tournament is structured into groups (I through V), with countries battling for promotion or fighting to avoid relegation. Lesotho, currently in Group V, was among fifteen nations vying for two promotion slots into Group IV for 2026.

This year's Davis Cup group V matches were hosted at the National Tennis Centre in Gaborone, Botswana. Countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Libya, and Congo were also in the mix, creating a fiercely competitive environment. Lesotho kicked off their campaign with a powerful performance against Mauritius on Wednesday, 23 July. The team made a clear statement of intent, sweeping the tie with dominant showings from top players Mpho Leshoele and Lerato Mathibela. Both players secured wins in the singles matches and later teamed up to clinch the doubles match, giving Lesotho a clean sweep in their opening encounter.

The team, comprising Mpho Leshoele, Lerato Mathibela, Kamohelo Marhibeela, and Langa Matloebe, faced a tougher test on Friday, 25 July, against Rwanda. In a hard fought battle, Leshoele lost narrowly to Rwanda's Claude with scores of 4–6, 5–7, while Mathibela also went down in straight sets (3–6, 6–7) to Etienne. However, the duo bounced back in the doubles match, defeating Rwanda's Dieu Donne and David Manzi in a thrilling 6–4, 7–6 (5) victory that showcased their resilience and teamwork.

Ultimately, Lesotho finished 5th out of the 15 participating nations a significant improvement from their 10th-place finish in 2024. During last year's Group V event, Lesotho had competed in Pool C alongside Botswana, Madagascar, and Libya, where they suffered defeats in all their ties, including a ninth-place play-off loss to Sudan. These young athletes have not only represented Lesotho on the court but have elevated the country's standing in the African tennis community. With continued support and development, Lesotho's climb up the Davis Cup ranks looks promising.