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DEFLECTIONS AND DRAMA: RFP GAINS, DC REELS



National News

Defections and Drama: RFP gains, DC reels



RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU - Expect more defections from the Democratic Alliance and other parties to cross the floor to the ruling Revolutionary for Prosperity (RFP) in the National Assembly.

This is according to the RFP Secretary General, Nthathi Moorosi, in an interview with Metro after controversial Democratic Congress (DC) legislator from the Makhaleng constituency, Mootsi Lehata, left the opposition to join RFP.

"We are delighted since he is brilliant when it comes to parliamentary procedures, which will help us to better understand how things work," Moorosi said, adding "it shows that as RFP we are a trusted brand."

"There are more Members of

Parliament (MPs) who are going to come on our side," she said, but refused to name them, insisting that "it's our secret."

On Monday, Lehata joined the Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane-led RFP during a parliamentary session in which the National Assembly Speaker, Tlohang Sekhamane, read his letter of defection to the RFP - which was received with ululation from the government side of the aisle.

Yesterday, DC deputy leader Motlaletoa Letsosa told this publication that they were shocked that Lehata decided to leave the party.

"It was surprising since he didn't indicate that he would leave; however, it's part of politics," a despondent Letsosa said, adding that "we cannot reverse what he did."

He further said that around January,

Lehata resigned as chairperson of the party's caucus in the august House, to which "no explanation was given."

"We were informed by our MPs that he had tendered his resignation, to which we were amazed, since no reasons were put forth," he said.

Letsosa denied allegations that have been surfacing for months that Lehata quit because he had been labelled as a 'rebel' and had the intention of joining the newly formed Bothata Mahlala-led Basotho Development Front (BDF).

"I don't know anything about that, but it's not true," he emphatically stated.

In February, a purported list of MPs and prominent members was released in which Lehata, Mahlala, legislator Mokherane Tsatsanyane, 'Maletsunyane Constituency MP, Peiso Kelane, former Sports Minister, Likeleli Tampane, party loyalist Ramahoana Matlosa and others were described as going against the leadership of the DC.

In rebuttal, DC spokesperson Serialong Qoo dismissed that letter, which was purportedly written by Secretary General, Tšitso Cheba, as being fake.

"It is a fake circular which is intended to bring conflicts and chaos in the party," Qoo was quoted saying in the media.

"This is a fake circular of heartless, sellouts, backstabbers, unhappy souls and all kinds of bad names which forged the secretary general signature and it is fake.

Our circulars are sent through mails. The only circular which we have is that of 'DC43' and so this is just yet another stunt intended to bring nothing but misunderstanding among our loyal party troops," he said.

The colourful Lehata was recently accused of substance abuse and foul statements in Parliament, to which he was reported to the Ethics, Code of Conduct, Immunities and Privileges Committee, which absolved him.

"Pursuant to Standing Order No 97(4) and the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act, of 1994, the Committee reprimands Hon M Lehata for conducting himself in a manner that reflected adversely on the dignity and integrity of the House and its Members.



The Committee also recommends that Hon Speaker orders Hon Lehata to apologise to the House and the Public at large, mainly for the use of unparliamentary words 'moshana enoa a se ke a ntella. Se ke oa ntella uena sani.'

"Pursuant to Standing Order No 97 (4) and Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act, 1994, the committee recommends the following: Hon Lehata should attend House sittings for five (5) consecutive days without being afforded an opportunity to participate in any debate or to raise a point of order or any communication (be silent in the House), effective from the adoption of this report by the House," the committee noted.

In June 2018, Lehata, who was Minister of Constitutional Affairs during the reign of the coalition government that was led by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili between 2015 and 2017, was accused of raping a 17-year-old and ultimately impregnating her.

Chief Magistrate Manyathela Kolobe controversially freed Lehata on July 25, 2019, much to the despair of child rights activists.

But instead of facing the music for the suspected crime, he negotiated a contentious deal to evade trial.

The charges were dropped after he struck a deal with the court to build a house for the victim and maintenance of M1 000 per month for the minor child.

The arrangement was endorsed by Kolobe.

Lehata was not available for comment as his phone was off.





Breathalyzers questioned



RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU - Police will be sued if they continue to post on their Facebook page those suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol – the practice has been found unconstitutional and inconsistent with the relevant traffic legislation.

This is according to prominent lawyer, Advocate Fusi Sehapi and The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, popularly known as Section 2, in closely similar but scathing letters written to the Minister of Police, Lebona Lephema, for what they term as “abuse of power meted out to the public road users by the police.”

In the correspondence, dated May 12, Sehapi and Sections 2 accuse the police of violating the Road Traffic Act, 1981 since the use of a breathalyser which detects alcohol content as unconstitutional “making a blanket prohibition of usage of alcohol and/or drugs without laying a fair value of exceptions.” They add that “this fails to

clearly recognise as lawful the minimum use of alcohol for medical or religious purposes.”

“It is a trite principle of law that every general rule there’s an exception. The Act must lay a general prohibition of use of alcohol and drugs as it has done. Then allow for some value exceptions to use alcohol and drugs founded on secular grounds, i.e. medical and religious exemptions,” they wrote, in letters which was also copied to Commissioner of Police (Compol) Advocate Borotho Matsoso and the Attorney General, Advocate Rapelang Motsieloa.

The letters also question the accuracy of the breathalyser machine arguing that fearing manipulation and abuse even in the tiniest amount of alcohol in the blood system.

“The law is clear that alcohol or drug content in the body of a road user is not unlawful, unless it is excessive so as to render him lose control of the vehicle. Especially when the drug or alcohol detector was never medically

approved and recognised by Road Traffic Regulations liable to be drawn and communicated to the public by the minister of police via a Government gazette, per Section 114 (1) (q) of the Road Traffic Act of 1981,” they asserted.

Sehapi and SECTION 2 also highlighted that testing alcohol content from blood samples was more reliable than the breath.

Thus “...clearly the evidence took from a breathliser machine cannot satisfy the onus of passing a judge by proving beyond reasonable doubt that indeed one took alcohol or drug(s).”

They also argued that the captions by the police on their Facebook page fail to even disclose whether one has been found guilty or innocent before the courts of law. In a dramatic confutation, Matsoso told this publication that he has not seen the documents. “However, I will not even receive them.”

“Are they the ones who want to control what the police do? Our publications are undertaken by them? They are doing what they are supposed

to, it’s their business, not mine,” he briefly said. Motsieloa told this paper that he has not seen the letters, but someone from his side said that they were received at ‘15:20’. Minister Lebona was not available for comment as his phone was unavailable.

This comes after the High Court barred police from posting pictures of individuals who have been arrested for drinking and driving on their Facebook page.

The Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), which puts those suspected of violating the traffic legal framework on their facebook page, which was seen as a deterrent, has faced challenges.

On April 30, Justice Molefi Makara interdicted the cops from “the continued publication of the appellants’ pictures on Facebook page and/or any other platform.”

The case was instituted by Thabiso Mda and ‘Makatleho Mda whom they sought redress from the police.

The two were represented by Advocate Sehapi.

Lights, bills, action!

Public outcry and court battle ignite over electricity price hike



RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU - Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) has expressed concern over the lack of public participation from consumers in making input towards the tariff rates for the two state-owned utility companies it oversees.

This has been revealed this week in a LEWA newsletter in which the regulator expresses distress - LEWA regulates the Water Sewerage Company (WASCO) and the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC).

In carrying out its mandate, LEWA holds formal public consultations and open forums where the public provides input and testimony on proposed actions or issues, often related to regulations or policies, before a decision is made.

These gatherings offer a platform for citizens to engage with authorities on issues that directly affect their lives, in pursuance of the LEWA mandate and commitment to conducting its regulatory responsibilities in an open and transparent manner.

These hearings are essential in determining tariffs and charges and issuing licenses

"Public hearings also serve as a vital means of educating the public about regulatory matters, license applications, new laws, and policy changes that may directly impact their lives,

When people do not attend, they miss the opportunity to become informed on how proposed changes will affect them. For instance, LEWA's public hearings on the review of water and sewerage

services or electricity tariffs provide the public with insights into how charges are determined, what is being done to improve services, and the rationale behind adjustments, if any.

Lack of participation, therefore, leaves the public ill-informed and more susceptible to misinformation or misconceptions," LEWA says.

"The authority also seeks public input and comments on tariff review applications through a variety of means, such as workshops, face-to-face meetings, seminars with key stakeholders, written representations, and simultaneous broadcasting and radio and television programs," the newsletter further reads.

This is despite the fact human rights advocacy group, The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, popularly known as Section 2, has instated a case in court over the very same issue.

According to a Public Eye article, 'No let-up to Section 2, LEC legal tussle', LEC's suspended Managing Director, Mohlomi Seitlheko, says the company's electricity tariff application and subsequent approval by the LEWA were driven mainly by the cost of bulk power supply, which, in turn, is influenced by the increase of imported electricity.

"This is further exacerbated by the anticipated 300 percent tariff increase by the Muela Hydropower Station and also the planned shutdown of the same for a period of at least six months for its maintenance," Seitlheko said.

He said the 'Muela's breakdown led to a 33.3 percent decline in electricity and will, in turn, inevitably lead to an increase

in the cost of importing electricity from external sources whose tariffs have also increased.

Seitlheko provides the explanation to the commercial division of the High Court in an answering affidavit where he is responding to an application by Section 2 to interdict the LEC's implementation of new electricity tariffs.

The association failed to interdict the implementation of the new tariffs before they were effected on April 1 and now wants the court to review and set aside the new electricity tariffs.

Section 2 says LEWA and its board should be compelled to conduct a proper consultation process with the public and all relevant stakeholders before the implementation of the new tariffs.

"That consultation process must adhere to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as mandated by the Lesotho Electricity Authority Regulations of 2009."

According to the court papers, the association argued that LEC did not produce its latest audited financial statements.

The statements are said to be pivotal for evaluating the rationale behind proposed tariffs but Section 2 argue that instead of producing financials of the year ending 2023, LEC provided statements of the financial year ending March 31, 2022.

The association's president, Kananelo Boloetse, said the latest financial statements, the tariff filling and review procedure was not adhered to and further "the accurate determination of the cost of sales necessitates recourse to the audited

financial statements for the antecedent year."

However, the LEC argue that because their application was made on September 2023, the audited financial statements that were required were those of the year ending March 31, 2022, "since the authority required financial statements for a two-year lag (Year T-2) as well as management account for the year in which the application is made up to the date of submission of the application."

Seitlheko says LEC complied with the said requirement and that the explanation was given to Section 2 when it raised a concern over the financial statements.

LEWA backs the LEC in this, and says financial statements provided by the company are in order, reiterating that a licensee applying for a tariff review is required to submit audited financial statements for a two-year lag (Year T-2)

"It is for the year for which an application is made as well as management accounts for the year up to the date of submission.

The reason for this requirement is that audited financial statements for the year in which a tariff application is made would not be available during the currency of such a year, and in order to complete the financial picture of a licensee's financial position up to the date of filing."

It is said that the contested tariff application and subsequent hike were filed on September 28, 2023, set for the period 2023/2024 to 2026.

LEWA's chief executive officer and ex officio board member, Motlatsi Ramafole, also told the Public Eye that the authority duly considered the tariff application, taking into consideration submissions by stakeholders, including the complainants.

He says their determination considered factors such as the cost of purchasing the electricity from other sources, repair and maintenance costs, labor costs, diesel and lubricant costs, depreciation, operating costs, return on assets, and license fees.

He also states that "the authority took into account Lesotho Electricity's company's financial statements."

On top of that, LEWA says it considered the fact that the 2023/2024 financial year was almost at an end, which then meant that the tariffs that would have applied during that financial year would have been those approved in the previous financial year.

"It is verily averred that the authority is driven by the interests of consumers to ensure that LEC is able to discharge its mandate. It is also important to note that Lesotho imports most of the electricity that she consumes; it comes from sources whose tariff escalations the authority and/or LEC has no control over."

Subsequently, both LEWA and LEC are asking the court to dismiss Section 2's application for lack of merit and other technical grounds. They have asked Justice Realeboha Mathaba to decline jurisdiction, arguing that the High Court in its ordinary jurisdiction is best suited to hear the matter.

"This matter is essentially a review of an administrative decision made by 2nd respondent on the application for tariff review made by the 4th respondent.

This is a matter that falls squarely within the jurisdiction of the High Court in its ordinary jurisdiction and not a matter for determination by the commercial division of the High Court.

This is not a commercial matter and it should be referred to the High Court to determine it in its ordinary jurisdiction."

Load-shedding looms



NEO SENOKO

MASERU - Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) has mourned the delay in restorations at its 'Muela Hydropower Station which has been shut-down since October last year.

The purpose of the shutdown is mainly to continue with the maintenance and repairs of the machinery and equipment which is set to be outdated at the station.

With the estimated cost of around M300 million, the maintenance was set to for a six-month period, starting in October 2024 to March 2025 and since then there has been no generation of electricity at the station due to a total shutdown of the water delivery system

at the 72MW hydro power project.

"The biggest inconvenience is that LEC purchases electricity from 'Muela at a much cheaper prices compared to both Mozambique's EDM and Eskom. Also, at least 50 percent of the electricity generation comes from 'Muela and now that it is not generating, we stand a high risk of security of supply, should Eskom be unable to provide," LEC Public Relations Officer, Tšepang Ledia, told Metro this week.

'Muela Hydro station is the largest and most critical source of electricity supply in Lesotho. About half of Lesotho's domestic power consumption is generated at 'Muela Hydro Power Station. Following the beginning of maintenance work last year, LEC had



assured the nation that despite the shutdown, electricity supply will remain uninterrupted due to secured alternative power sources.

However, with the winter season kicking in and the ongoing challenges with Eskom supply, consumption of electricity is likely to increase on the side of consumers, however, the company has already warned of potential load-shedding, urging consumers to deploy cost saving measures during the winter season.

"The management of LEC informs the public that 'Muela Hydropower (LHDA) has not yet resumed electricity generation, and LEC continues to import electricity. However, supply from Eskom is currently experiencing some challenges and with the winter season here, electricity demand is expected to increase significantly.

To minimize the risk of potential load-shedding due to high electricity usage, LEC urges all electricity users to adopt energy-efficient practices," the company warned this week.

Among other things, consumers are expected to witch off unnecessary lights and unplug electronic devices when not in use as well as limit the use of electric heaters and stoves to essential periods.

These, according to LEC, shall go a long way towards ensuring continued supply to all consumers.

The country sources electricity from Eskom South Africa and EDM Mozambique as alternative measures.

UNDP applauds Lesotho’s human-centric growth

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

MASERU – There have been improvements in the country’s Human Development Index (HDI), particularly in education, health and standard of living.

This is according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2025 Human Development Report (HDR), titled A Matter of Choice: People and possibilities in the age of AI, which was released this week.

HDR – which was launched in 1990 – allows the UNDP to play a substantial part in helping the countries to have suitable responses to key evolving matters involving the scope of human development.

“Lesotho continues to make steady progress in advancing human development, with improvements seen across education, health, and living standards. In 2023, the country has achieved a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.550, placing it in the “Human Development” category for the first year, positioning it at 167 out of 193 countries and territories.

This is a change of +0.005 from the 2022 HDI. This milestone reflects Lesotho’s commitment to expanding opportunities for its citizens, particularly through investments in education reforms and healthcare services.

“Lesotho’s positive HDI dynamics have been primarily driven by notable improvements in education, health, and income.

Between 1990 and 2023, Lesotho’s HDI value changed from 0.483 to 0.550, a change of 13.9 percent; life expectancy at birth changed by -1.94 years while the country is still recovering from its drop since 2007; expected years of schooling changed by 2.08 years; mean years of schooling changed by 3.62 years and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita changed by about 23.4 percent,” the report noted.

It continues: “The report outlines three critical areas for action for AI-augmented human development: Building an economy where people collaborate with AI and find more opportunities rather than compete against it; driving innovation with intent so opportunity for people is not an afterthought but a built-in integral part of AI design and deployment; and investing in capabilities that count by modernising education and health systems to meet 21st-century demands so people have the capabilities to make the most of AI in their lives and to thrive in a world with AI.”



“Amidst this global turmoil, we must urgently explore new ways to drive development,” Steiner said, adding “As artificial intelligence continues its rapid advance across so many aspects of our lives, we should consider its potential for development. New capabilities are emerging almost daily, and while AI is no panacea, the choices we make hold the potential to reignite human development and open new pathways and possibilities.”

The report, according to a press statement, will officially be launched by the development partner and government in June this year in a bid to “...offer opportunity to the various stakeholders to deliberate on the 2025 HDR key messages and recommendations in relation to Lesotho’s human development trend.”

Meanwhile, UNDP head, Achim Steiner, indicated that the report promotes a human-centred approach towards the use of AI when looking at development.

“Amidst this global turmoil, we must urgently explore new ways to drive development,” Steiner said,

adding “As artificial intelligence continues its rapid advance across so many aspects of our lives, we should consider its potential for development.

New capabilities are emerging almost daily, and while AI is no panacea, the choices we make hold the potential to reignite human development and open new pathways and possibilities.”

For his part, the agency’s Director of Human Development Report Office, Pedro Conceição, stressed the need to make correct decisions when using AI.

“The choices we make in the coming years will define the legacy of this technological transition for human

development.”

“With the right policies and focus on people, AI can be a crucial bridge to new knowledge, skills, and ideas that can empower everyone from farmers to small business owners,” Conceição said.

The report further poses an issue of action in the implementation of AI particularly on “whether (it) erodes agency depends on how it is designed and implemented.”

“Critically, human agency and freedom are not the simple sum of choices we make; nor are they zero-sum in the sense that ceding a choice to AI is losing agency.

We may often require decisions to be reached or tasks to be accomplished merely to support more agency-defining choices and actions.

For example, few of us can be bothered to pore over raw weather data and decide the probability of rain, but such information may be invaluable in supporting our choices - from bringing an umbrella to raising crops. In delegating such a decision to machines, we expand our own agency in the choices we choose to make.

By the same token none of us wishes for a machine to decide irrevocably in an instant whether we are a combatant or civilian under the Geneva Conventions.”

SADC PF Committees set to convene to lay foundation for Prison Oversight Model Law

MOSES MAGADZA

WINDHOEK, Namibia – The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) will host a Joint Session of its Standing Committees from April 23 to 25 under the theme: “Towards Developing a SADC Model Law on Prison Oversight.”

The Secretary General of the SADC PF, Boemo Sekgoma, said the meetings, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, mark a milestone in the Forum’s efforts to champion human rights and strengthen parliamentary oversight of prisons across the region.

The meetings will bring together five Standing Committees of the SADC PF, namely: Democratisation, Governance, and Human Rights; Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Action; Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Youth Development; Human and Social Development and Special Programmes; and Trade, Industry, Finance and Infrastructure - to engage in discussions aimed at informing the development of a SADC Model Law on Prison Oversight.

Sekgoma said the rationale for the model law is anchored in the growing need for parliaments across the SADC region to play a more active and informed role in monitoring the treatment and conditions of detainees.

Current statistics show that the SADC region has a combined prison population of nearly 400 000, with alarmingly high percentages of pre-trial detainees and women facing detention under conditions that often fail to meet international standards. Many countries in the region



Zambia’s Dr George Magwende

lack clear, enforceable mechanisms for prison oversight, and the existing legal frameworks often fall short of constitutional ideals.

“The envisaged model law will offer a harmonised tool to strengthen parliamentary accountability, improve transparency, and enhance the protection of detainees’ rights, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and those held in pre-trial detention,” the Secretary General said.

Joseph Manzi is the Director of Programmes at the SADC PF.

He said across three days of thematic sessions and cross-cutting dialogue, Committee members will reflect on issues such as torture prevention, legal gaps, prison infrastructure, food security, health care in detention, gender-based violence, and the unique vulnerabilities of detained children.

The Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights will focus on the role of MPs in upholding democratic oversight, with Malawi Supreme Court, Justice Sylvester Kalembera and Malawi Human Rights Commission Chairperson

Chikondi Chijozi, expected to headline discussions on legal accountability and the right to vote for prisoners.

Meanwhile, the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources will spotlight prison food insecurity and climate-responsive agricultural practices, with guidance from Justice Zione Ntaba of Malawi and Victor Mhango of the Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance.

The Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development will address pressing issues such as sexual and gender-based violence in detention, the imprisonment of children with their mothers, and systemic marginalization of women prisoners. Presenters from Just Detention International and the Centre for Child Law will bring powerful insights to these conversations.

The Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes will focus on the health crisis in prisons, exploring issues around infectious diseases, prisoner rehabilitation, and access to education. Zambia’s Dr George Magwende and Anneke Meerkotter of the Southern Africa Litigation Centre will lead this dialogue.

The Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Infrastructure will explore the economic dimension of prison systems, highlighting budget transparency, access to essential medicines, and the need for improved infrastructure, with input from Melusi Simelane and former South African Deputy Minister of Justice, John Jeffrey.

Manzi said on April 24, all five committees will convene for a joint session to hear from regional experts including Teresa Manuela, the African Commission’s Special Rapporteur on Prisons, and formerly incarcerated individuals like Bozten Kudziwe, who will share lived experiences.

The discussions will feed into a position paper to be presented by Professor Lukas Muntingh of the Dullah Omar Institute on April 25, offering a foundational framework for the drafting of the model law.

Later that day, Professor Verne Harris of the Nelson Mandela Foundation will reflect on the historical legacy and lessons in independent prison oversight, anchoring the work in the values of justice and dignity.

The meetings are expected to generate consensus on core elements of the Model Law, identify key stakeholders for national consultations, and set the stage for a transformative legislative tool that addresses prison conditions, advances human rights, and equips SADC parliaments with the means to effectively perform their oversight functions.

As Sekgoma put it, “This process is about ensuring that the dignity of every person - even those behind bars - is preserved through robust oversight, transparent governance, and accountable leadership.”

Moses Magadza is the Media and Communications Manager at the SADC Parliamentary Forum.



Teresa Manuela, the African Commission’s Special Rapporteur on Prisons

Challenging landscape awaits new AfDB leadership

and agricultural sectors attracting over 75 percent of the projects reflecting the Bank's High 5 Goals which include lighting up, feeding, industrializing, integrating, and improving the quality of life in Africa.

Moreover, the AfDB has played a crucial role in providing technical services for development projects in African countries and also helping some countries navigate periods of debt distress and financial crisis.

However, the candidate who will emerge victorious in this month's elections will have to confront several challenges facing the continent. Africa remains the poverty capital of the world, with over 400 million people still living in extreme poverty.

Of all the world's regions, the continent has recorded the lowest performance in terms of the realisation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The region will need to raise US\$1.3 trillion to realise the SDGs by 2030, which is impossible in the current circumstances.

Africa's infrastructure financing needs range between US\$181 billion to US\$221 billion for the period 2023 to 2030, but the financing is over US\$100 billion as African countries have failed to mobilise capital for infrastructure projects.

Further, Africa is facing a debt crisis with the amount spent on debt servicing having ballooned from US\$17 billion in 2010 to US\$74 billion in 2024, racking up 11 per cent of the total revenues.

Such exorbitant debt servicing amounts end up starving critical sectors like education, health and water and sanitation of resources, thus worsening the poverty levels among the ordinary people.

Moreover, the new president of the AfDB will have to find ways of revitalising and reinvigorating the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) project, which seems to be losing steam almost five years after its launch.

Without trade and market integration envisaged under the AfCFTA it will be difficult for the Afdb itself to live up to its mission.

Hence, the incoming president will have their work cut out for them. However, due to the work that has been done by their predecessors, they will have a solid base on which to build.

Some of their priorities will include expanding the capital base of the bank, mobilizing finance from public and private sources, working with the more than a dozen debt-distressed countries escape their financial crises, and consolidating the African position in the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors track of the G20 which is being presided over by South Africa.

Dr Sizo Nkala is a Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Africa-China Studies



DR SIZO NKALA

The search for the African Development Bank (AfDB)'s 10th president is on. The AfDB will hold elections for a new president on May 29 during its Annual Board of Governors Meeting. The current president, Akinwumi Adesina's second and final term as president of the Bank will lapse in August. Four candidates are in the race to replace him.

These include Amadou Hott from Senegal, Samuel Maimbo from Zambia, South Africa's Swazi Tshabalala, and Sidi Ould Tah from Mauritania.

The winning candidate will have to secure a double majority of the votes from the bank's 54 regional (African) members on the one hand, and the collective of regional and non-regional members will secure another majority from the regional and the 27 non-regional members combined.

Among the bank's non-regional members are the United States, China, the

Netherlands, Germany, France, and Saudi Arabia. The winning candidate will have to secure the support of some of the bank's largest shareholders in the regional list, namely Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa and the Ivory Coast, who by their significant shareholdings enjoy more voting powers.

The US, Japan, Germany and Canada are among the largest shareholders in the non-regional list, which gives them a decisive influence on the outcome of the elections.

Since its establishment in 1964, the AfDB has emerged as one of the premier African development finance institutions at the forefront of addressing the continent's development challenges by promoting economic growth and eradicating poverty.

To that end, the Bank has played a critical role in mobilising finance and resources for infrastructure projects across Africa that are designed to foster regional integration and stimulate economic growth.

The AfDB stands out as one of the few

success stories of pan-African institutions, the majority of which have largely suffered a stillbirth.

Boasting a modest capital of US\$300 million when it was founded in 1964, the Bank now has a capital base of over US\$200 billion.

Its capital base has more than tripled since Adesina took over in 2015 – a testament to his prowess in mobilising capital and growing the bank's stature.

It has also earned a triple-A ranking from international credit ratings agencies – a rare feat in the African context and something which has eluded the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).

In its 60-year history, the AfDB has granted loans for over 4 400 projects and operations across Africa, including highways, railways, ports, plantations, oil pipelines, water and sanitation infrastructure, telecommunications, and power plants, to mention a few.

In 2023 alone, the Bank approved 180 projects worth a total of US\$10.8 billion, with transport, energy, finance

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COLE JACKSON and
DR IQBAL SURVÉ

Bolivia having been welcomed as a partner nation within the BRICS economic alliance, marks a major milestone in its foreign policy. President Luis Arce emphasises the strategic significance of the country's integration into the bloc.

“Our Plurinational State of Bolivia has taken an essential step toward joining BRICS, following confirmation of approval from member states,” Arce shared via Telegram. He highlighted that this advancement would have broad economic and diplomatic benefits for Bolivia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had previously revealed that BRICS leaders finalised a list of new partner countries during the summit in Kazan, Russia.

The gathering, held from October 22 to 24, focused on expanding BRICS membership, reinforcing multilateral cooperation, and addressing regional challenges. The summit concluded with a joint declaration from the participating nations.

The expanding influence of BRICS

Established in 2006, BRICS has evolved into a prominent intergovernmental alliance comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. In 2024, the bloc expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, although Saudi Arabia has yet to formalise its participation.

Russia assumed the BRICS presidency at the start of 2024, overseeing the integration of new members and advancing initiatives for economic and geopolitical collaboration.

During a closed-door session of the Kazan summit, President Putin emphasised the growing influence of BRICS in global affairs. He described the alliance as a driving force in shaping a multipolar world and underscored its role in promoting economic stability and resolving regional disputes.

Putin also stressed the importance of expanding BRICS membership to reflect the aspirations of the broader international community. He noted that over 30 nations have expressed interest in joining, reinforcing the bloc's appeal among countries in the Global South and East.

As part of Russia's leadership within BRICS, Putin proposed establishing a BRICS “grain exchange” to ensure fair market conditions and safeguard national economies from external disruptions.

The initiative aims to protect food security by preventing artificial shortages and market manipulation. With Bolivia's inclusion and the growing interest from other nations, BRICS continues to strengthen its position as a key player in the evolving global economic landscape.

What does Bolivia bring to BRICS?

Bolivia has the largest salt flat on earth, lending itself to mineral extraction (like lithium), scientific research (even as a proxy for Mars during research).

Bolivia is home to a myriad of resources. This could be seen by its top exports in the last quarter of November 2024 included zinc ores and concentrates (\$136 million), natural gas (\$113 million), precious metal ores (\$109 million), tin and tin alloys (\$48.6 million), and non-monetary gold (\$28.6 million).

BRICS+ Series: Lithium Powerhouse Bolivia in BRICS



Meanwhile, the most imported goods were gas oils (\$137 million), motor spirit and other light fuels (\$75.7 million), motor vehicles (\$24.2 million), insecticides (\$15.4 million), and various food preparations (\$15.2 million).

As a major natural gas exporter, Bolivia supports BRICS' energy diversification efforts, providing alternatives to Western energy markets. Its mineral wealth also bolsters the bloc's manufacturing and infrastructure projects, aligning with BRICS' goal of economic self-sufficiency.

Bolivia is also part of what is called the Lithium Triangle (other nations being: Chile and Argentina). Despite being the lightest metal, lithium plays a massive role in today's technologically driven world. It powers essential devices such as smartphones, laptops, and electric vehicles, making it a key component of modern batteries.

With global lithium consumption rising by 8.9 percent per year, demand continues to surge as hybrid and electric vehicles, energy storage solutions, and portable electronics become more prevalent. While lithium reserves exist across all six inhabited continents, over 75 percent of the world's supply is concentrated in the salt flats of Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia - known as the

“Lithium Triangle.”

What does BRICS bring to Bolivia?

BRICS provides Bolivia with direct trade links to some of the world's largest economies, including China, India, Brazil, and Russia.

These include: (1) Diversified export markets for Bolivia's key resources like lithium, natural gas, and minerals; (2) Reduced reliance on Western markets, creating a more balanced and stable trade portfolio; (3) Easier trade agreements within the BRICS framework, potentially lowering tariffs and boosting Bolivian exports.

The probability of securing funding for Bolivia through BRICS' New Development Bank (NDB) increases considerably - providing Bolivia with funding for infrastructure, energy, and industrial projects. Increased foreign direct investment (FDI) from BRICS nations, particularly in lithium extraction (Noting China as the largest EV manufacturer in the world), energy production, and manufacturing. Potential access to joint ventures in sectors like renewable energy, transportation, and mining technologies.

Bolivia's induction into the BRICS alliance marks a pivotal step in reshaping both its national development trajectory

and the broader geopolitical landscape.

As a nation rich in natural resources - particularly lithium, natural gas, and precious metals - Bolivia offers strategic value to BRICS, enhancing the bloc's pursuit of economic diversification, energy security, and technological self-reliance. In return, Bolivia stands to benefit significantly from expanded trade networks, increased foreign investment, and greater access to developmental financing through institutions like the New Development Bank.

This partnership signals a broader shift toward a multipolar global order, where emerging economies assert greater influence in international affairs. Bolivia's entry into BRICS is not only a win for its domestic economy but also a symbol of the bloc's growing appeal and cohesion among Global South nations.

As BRICS continues to evolve, Bolivia's contributions - especially in the critical area of lithium - will be instrumental in powering the future of clean energy and sustainable development.

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How licencing Starlink threatens our sovereignty



KHASANE RAMOLEFE

When US president Trump says that Ukraine started the war, everyone laughs him off: but could he be right?

If he is right, could Starlink be the same trigger for Lesotho?

To understand this you need to go back to the end of World War II. The four “victorious” nations “divided” Germany, and her capital Berlin, amongst themselves.

The problem was though, that Berlin was deep in “Soviet territory.” So the Soviets blockaded Berlin, 1948 to 49□ hoping that France, the UK and the US would leave Berlin, and they would take over. This did not happen. Instead they clubbed together and airlifted EVERYTHING that Berlin needed to survive.

In the face of this “aggressive” move by the Soviets, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was born in 1949.

In response to NATO, the Soviets and her satellite states, formed the Warsaw pact in 1955. You will see that NATO preceded the Warsaw pact by a full 6 years. Each was a “counter measure” against the other.

The USSR fell in 1991, as did the

Warsaw pact. The satellites became independent countries, like Poland, Ukraine, etc.... But NATO has lived on.

Ukraine wants to be a member of NATO: but one of the key agreements between the then presidents of the US, Reagan and Russian, Gorbachev, was that NATO would not encroach to the Russian border. Ukraine is so close to the Russian city of Stalingrad. So close to strategic oil and gas reserves. It is so painfully close. Russia, under Putin did not like this, and struck first.

What is happening in Ukraine now, happened to Lesotho in 1986.

Following the sham elections of 1983, most of Lesotho’s “western” allies were appalled. In an interview with Cliff Saunders of the SABC, the dictator Leabua Jonathan said; if my friends in the west will not help me, I will turn to my friends in the east. Or words close to that.

With that, Lesotho removed the Taiwanese, and replaced them with the People’s Republic of China; in the same building that the Taiwanese built. The USSR had an embassy on Constitution road. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had one in Maseru West. All of this in 1983/4.

In the heart of “apartheid” South Africa, a country based on “Western

civilization and democracy” which hated anything communist, you had communists?

Something had to be done. So there was a blockade. Then a coup. Have no illusions, in as much as the military led the coup, it was orchestrated from South Africa with tacit “western” support. And the communists were gone.

Starlink is only getting a licence in Lesotho as it cannot get one from, or in South Africa. As a country we are being exploited. No, we are being abused.

If Russia can invade Ukraine, to protect its sovereignty, can South Africa, a fellow BRICS nation, not so that to Lesotho? She has before!

If President Trump agrees with Russia, and understands that Ukraine wanting membership of NATO is the trigger, would he not understand that Starlink would the trigger in Lesotho?

If this hypothesis is true, then we will not get ANY help as long as Trump is president.

Worse still. South Africa may just wait. Leave Starlink and its licencing alone. Wait until she has to renew the “Lesotho special permit”; then not renew. And cripple our economy. Worse than the blockade did. Deport tens of thousands. BaSotho would lose over 100 000

jobs in South Africa. More than twice the number of textile workers! Our travels into SA; out trade with SA: all of this could be compromised. If not dead. We would be worse off than Mexico.

Over a decade ago, fighting for my right to dual citizenship, I wrote in this particular paper. At the end I highlighted that, in providing dual citizenship, we could ask for a special dispersion, as Zimbabwe had. This became the Lesotho special permit, LSP.

Starlink is such a bad mistake. No one looked at the numbers. There is potentially more coming in remittances from SA than Lesotho receives from the factories. From AGOA.

Starlink is a tragedy.

Yes, we need both; AGOA and LSP. But, we are potentially harming our relationship with South Africa. It is already strained, but they will be unhappy that we are the back door that let Starlink get into their market.

We forgot that SA is our ONLY neighbour. Our largest trading partner. AGOA is about 10 percent of our GDP. South Africa’s trade is about 80 percent of our GDP.

And we will not even be getting 30 pieces of silver for this treachery.

What an interesting time to be alive.

SACU stance on US tariffs



NEO SENOKO

MASERU - The Southern African Customs Union (SACU), which Lesotho is part of, has called upon the United States (US) to consider observing differential treatment, more specially to consider exempting LDGs and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in its harsh economic decisions.

The customs union has further expressed concerns regarding the unilateral measures that fragment global trade, including the recent decision by the US Administration to introduce tariffs effective on April 9.

“The member states of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) have noted with concern the rise in unilateral measures that fragment global trade, including the recent decision by the US Administration to introduce tariffs effective on April 9, 2025, and the implications that this decision has, not only for exports to the US, but for the entire multilateral trading system,” a communique by the SACU Council of Ministers issued in Johannesburg, South Africa, this week.

“While recognizing that the reciprocal tariffs have been paused for 90 days, (effective until 9th July 2025) and a universal 10 percent will now apply in the interim, the uncertainty for SACU exports to the US remains, hence a need to address this issue as a matter of agency,” the Chairperson of the SACU Council of Ministers, Ericah Shafudah, wrote.

Given the historic ties between the African continent and the US and Member States of SACU in particular, the US is not only a strategic partner but also remains one of SACU’s biggest trading partners.

The economic relations between SACU and the US have been largely administered through the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle and African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as well as the US Generalized System of Preference (GSP) and the unilateral preferential schemes which provide duty-free treatment to designated beneficiary countries.

These unilateral frameworks have contributed significantly to mutually beneficial trade relations that have promoted US investments, intra-industry supply-chains between the two sides that have fostered economic development, job creation and industrial growth.

For Lesotho, since the inception of AGOA in 2000, exports to the US have been dominated by the textiles and apparel firms that have provided jobs for thousands of Basotho, predominantly women. The country’s main export product is textiles and clothing, a sector that remains the highest formal private sector employer in the country.

Out of the current total number of employment at 30 830 as at December 2024, companies that export to the United States employ 42 percent (12 810). The rest of the employment statistics is for other markets within the region including SACU and SADC.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development, Mokhethi Shelile, has labelled the latest incidents with the US shocking, identifying the US as a key market, representing 45 percent of Lesotho’s exports.

“It is still a key market for Lesotho, given its large contribution to the economy and the potential, should Lesotho lose the market there is a huge potential drop in the total exports and ultimately job losses. The loss of export receipts is expected to put pressure on foreign reserves as Lesotho’s trade balance widens,” Shelile had said.

The US’s unilateral action to raise without prior consultations with the affected member states is a departure from the norm and will have significant implications on global trade and the foundational principles of the multilateral trading system.

For the SACU region, the imposition of tariffs would reverse the gains made with the US which supported to lift millions out of poverty on the continent. Further, the tariffs risks transforming of exports from predominantly more value-added manufactured to a more extractive relationship. SACU members have therefore, reaffirmed their support for a predictable, development-oriented, transparent, fair, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core.

SACU acknowledge the critical role that the World Trade Organization (WTO) has played in fostering global economic growth and encourage the organization to serve as a forum for dialogue to help prevent escalating trade conflicts and, instead, utilize the organization for constructive engagements.

The SACU members further emphasized the need for the urgent reform of the WTO to among other address existing imbalances and provide policy space for Africa’s industrialization.

In order to preserve the internal market, SACU members will ensure that in any efforts to conclude partnerships with the US, the common external tariff is preserved, and due regard is taken not to undermine regional industrial capabilities.

The SACU members also committed to prioritize the implementation of the AfCFTA, including finalizing the outstanding rules of origin on clothing and textiles, and automotive.

This includes the development of regional value chains to set SACU on more sustainable development trajectory and to coordinate export strategies to leverage existing trade agreements that SACU is party to.



RSL, SARS launch study to address cross border delays

NEO SENOKO

MASERU - In a continuous journey towards modernization of border management systems and enhanced trade facilitation, the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) in collaboration with their South African counterparts, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) officially launched the End-to-End Time Release Study (TRS) aimed at conducting an in-depth diagnostic of border procedures by tracking the full journey of goods and travelers from arrival at one side of the border to release on the other.

The WCO Time Release Study (TRS) is a strategic and internationally recognised tool to measure the actual time required to clear goods and complete cross-border formalities - from the time of its first arrival until final release from the border - with a view to identify process and trade flow bottlenecks, and to take the necessary remedial measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of cross-border processing.

Supported by the World Customs

Organisation (WCO), the TRS is pivotal in providing invaluable data on the time it takes for goods to move across the Lesotho and South Africa borders, from arrival to release at the Maseru and Ficksburg border posts.

By identifying delays and inefficiencies, this study will assist in addressing bottlenecks and improve operational procedures on both sides of the border.

The results will lead to reduced waiting times, lower transaction costs, and greater predictability for traders and businesses.

The RSL's Commissioner Client Services and Head of Customs, Rakokoana Makoa, shared during the launch that the initiative is a dual responsibility to ensure continuity in protecting economic interests for both countries.

"By identifying delays and inefficiencies, this study will help us address bottlenecks and improve operational procedures on both sides of the border. The results will lead to reduced waiting times, lower transaction costs, and greater predictability for traders and

businesses. For RSL and SARS, the TRS will allow us to streamline our operations, harmonise procedures, and eliminate unnecessary delays.

Over and above the anticipated benefits of improved efficiencies, this study will also be instrumental in guiding us towards the successful implementation of the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) model at both Maseru bridge and Ficksburg border posts. This will provide the benchmarks needed to align our processes for a seamless cross-border trade environment," Makoa said during the launch last week.

Importantly, the TRS aligns directly with Article 7.6 of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which mandates the implementation of Time Release Studies to assess the efficiency of border procedures and identify areas for improvement.

This is a vital part of the WTO TFA's broader goal of streamlining global trade and improving border efficiency.

The TRS is also integral to Article 8 of the WTO TFA, which promotes Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and the development of One Stop Border

Posts (OSBPs).

"As we progress with this study, we must acknowledge the support provided by the WCO in developing the CBM framework for Lesotho, which serves as the foundation for successful OSBPs.

The data from this study will enable us to identify key areas for improving coordination between Lesotho and South Africa's Customs, other border agencies, and the private sector. This will ultimately streamline processes, reduce delays, improve transparency, and enhance trade flows between our two countries," Makoa added.

Time Release Studies are vital – not only to identify the root causes for border delays and to help with the transition of traditional borders into automated and technology-driven borders, but also as measurable and data-based precursors for the improvement of entire trade corridors.

It also gives practical effect to the commitments made by Commissioner Generals of SACU Tax and Customs Administrations to drive the trade facilitation agenda amongst SACU Members States.



SOCIETY

Celebrating Dr Jonathan Butler: A musical icon's journey and achievements

TRACY-LYNN RUITERS

Musical legend and internationally acclaimed South African composer and songwriter Jonathan Butler was recently awarded an honorary doctorate by Stellenbosch University (SU) for his significant contributions to the arts and culture, particularly in his role as a composer, songwriter, and performer.

He was also recognised for his dedication to creating platforms that ensure access to the arts for young people from marginalised communities.

Speaking about the momentous occasion, Butler shared the emotional weight he felt as he walked up to the podium to receive his degree. "Walking up to the podium was very overwhelming," he said.

"The thought of this happening to me as a little boy never occurred to me at all. Seeing my family there made it even more emotional, especially considering our experience growing up.

"What we didn't have in education, we definitely had in music. I felt so incredibly proud. The weight of it all was truly amazing."

Butler also reflected on his ongoing work and passion for music, stating that retirement is not a concept he entertains.

"Retirement, what's that? To a musician, there's no such thing," he said. "I am always working on new music, and I love giving back to young musicians through masterclasses.

"I am also involved with Lelela Charitable Non-Profit, supporting over 5 000 children in Cape Town through the arts and education. There's no retirement

in my world."

On his ongoing collaboration with other artists, Butler added, "I have written for numerous artists over the years, and collaboration has always been key to my growth as a songwriter. It's about sharing ideas and creating something beautiful together."

In his acceptance speech, Butler shared, "This moment is a dream fulfilled, one that has come through beyond anything I could ever ask, think or imagine. It is a glorious day, one that I will carry in me for the rest of my life.

One of the greatest guitarists of all times from South Africa and Cape born Jonathan Butler performing at the Cape Town International Jazz Festival.

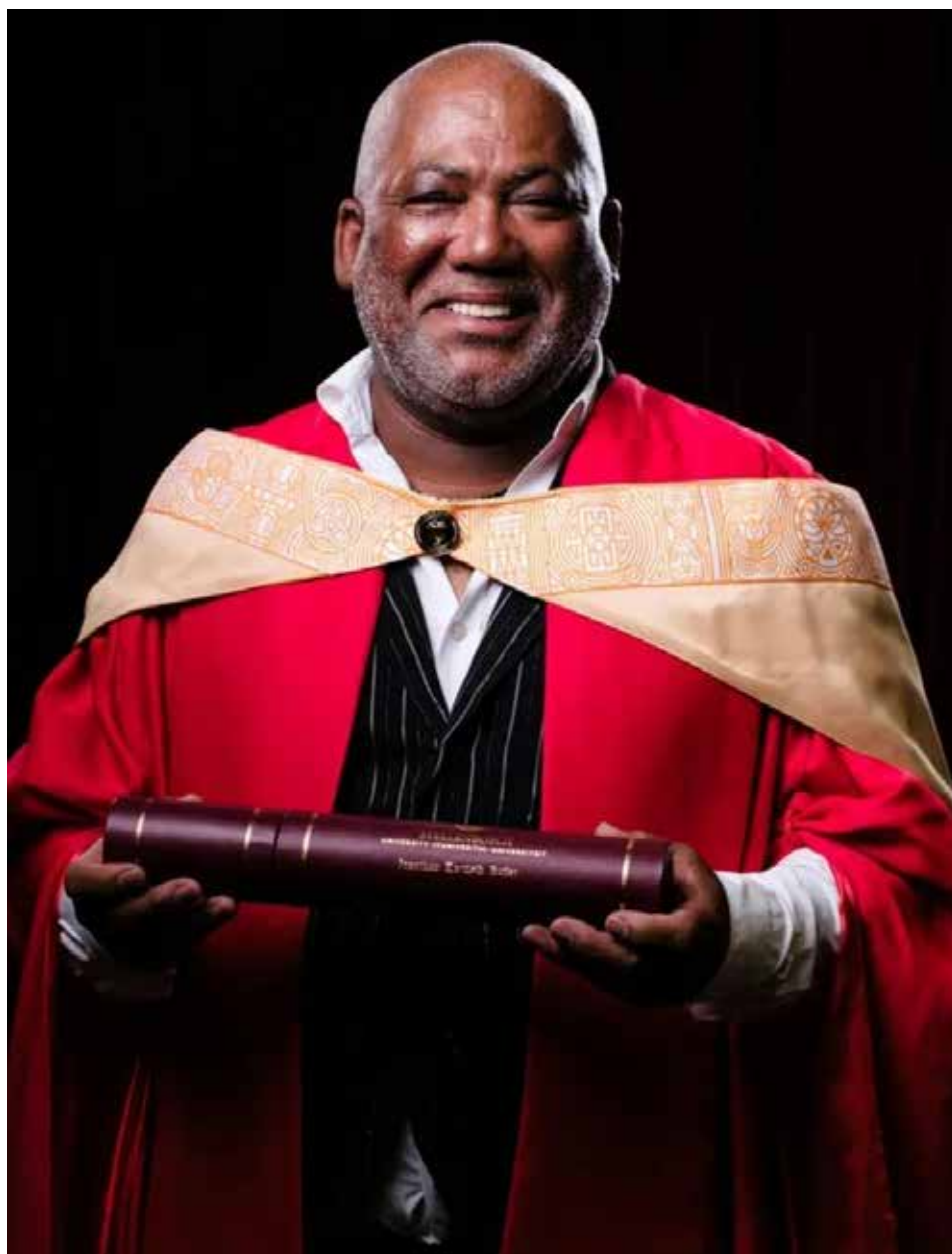
I stand before you deeply humbled. I am filled with gratitude and joy." Reflecting on his upbringing in South Africa, he spoke about the hardships he faced growing up in Belgravia Estate in Athlone, Cape Town, under the shadow of apartheid.

As one of the first artists of colour to be played on South African radio and appear on national television at a time of severe racial segregation, Butler's achievements were ground-breaking.

As the youngest of 12 children in a family that used music to make ends meet, Butler began touring at the age of seven when he joined a travelling stage show.

He was later signed to perform on a string of hit recordings, turning him into a local teen idol. His influence grew, and he later became a key voice in the international movement advocating for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

Having made a name for himself in



Africa and the United Kingdom (UK), Butler's breakthrough in the United States came in 1987 when he toured as pop star Whitney Houston's opening act.

That same year, his Grammy-nominated hit single "Lies" reached #27 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart and peaked at #18 on the UK Official Singles Chart.

His cover of "If You're Ready (Come Go with Me)" with Ruby Turner also made waves in the UK. Over the years, he has released over 28 albums, including several gospel projects, with his track "Falling in love with Jesus" being one of his most beloved songs.

Despite his international acclaim, Butler has remained grounded and true to his roots. He is the first Global Entertainment Ambassador for the Lelela Foundation, which provides arts education for at-risk youth in South Africa.

Through its arts curriculum and messaging, Lelela directly serves more than 5 000 South African learners per week.

Butler continues to make music across multiple genres and tours the world. His latest album, Ubuntu, features a collaboration with iconic artist Stevie Wonder on a cover version of Wonder's song "Superwoman."

Reflecting on his deep connection to South Africa, he expressed his ongoing commitment to young musicians in Cape Town through the non-profit Arts Capital. "My heart always longs for my home," he shared. "I come back every year to work with young musicians and share stories with them."

To aspiring musicians, Butler offered a message of hope and determination: "To the young Jonathan Butler's out there, look up at the sky and believe that one day, you'll take flight into your future. Practice, practice, practice, and always remember where you come from."

As he proudly accepted the honorary doctorate, Butler concluded, "It's a proud moment for me, for my family, and for the community I come from."

"The thought of this happening to me as a little boy never occurred to me at all. Seeing my family there made it even more emotional, especially considering our experience growing up.

"What we didn't have in education, we definitely had in music. I felt so incredibly proud. The weight of it all was truly amazing."

Butler also reflected on his ongoing work and passion for music, stating that retirement is not a concept he entertains.

"Retirement, what's that? To a musician, there's no such thing," he said. "I am always working on new music, and I love giving back to young musicians through masterclasses.



Lishoeshoe off to a good start

As Lesotho edges Botswana in tight COSAFA U-17 Girls' Championship Group C clash



TEBOHO LEBESA

MASERU - In a tense and tactical encounter at the 2025 COSAFA U-17 Girls' Championship, national Under-17 team, Lishoeshoe, secured a narrow 1-0 victory over Botswana in their Group C opener, solidifying their position as a rising force in Southern Africa's youth football landscape.

Played at the Hage Geingob Stadium in Windhoek, Namibia, the match showcased grit, determination, and a moment of brilliance from solitary goal-scorer, Thato

Molete, whose strike proved decisive.

The game began cautiously, with both teams prioritizing defensive stability. Botswana, historically a strong contender in the tournament with a runners-up finish in 2021, sought to leverage their experience, while Lishoeshoe aimed to build on their surprising, yet superb, 2024 campaign, where they debuted as finalists before falling to Zambia's record-breaking 15-0 victory.

This victory marks a significant milestone for Lesotho, a nation increasingly punching above its weight in regional competitions.

After their 2024 debut saw them reach the final despite heavy odds, this year's squad has demonstrated tactical maturity under coach Tjamela Tjamela.

For Botswana, the loss complicates their path to the knockout stage. The team, which entered the tournament with high hopes after intensive preparation camps in Gaborone, according to media reports, faced a must-win scenario against Zimbabwe on Monday – a game they won 3-0.

Hosted in Namibia from May 10 to 17, the 2025 COSAFA U-17 Girls' Championship features nine teams divided

into three groups, with group winners and the best runner-up advancing to the semi-finals. Lesotho's win places them atop Group C.

The tournament serves as a critical platform for regional talent development, with players born on or after January 1, 2009, eligible to compete. Scouts from top African clubs and collegiate programmes in the United States of America and Europe are closely monitoring standout performers whose performances could pave the way for professional opportunities.

COSAFA's investment in youth tournaments has redefined women's football in Southern Africa. Since its 2019 inception, the U-17 Championship has unearthed stars such as Zambia's Mercy Chipasula, the 2024 Golden Boot winner, and South Africa's Jessica Wade.

For Lesotho and Botswana, the match underscored the growing competitiveness of smaller nations, challenging traditional powerhouses like Zambia and South Africa.

Namibia's role as host has also drawn praise, with local organizers ensuring smooth logistics despite initial concerns over venue readiness.

"The passion here is incredible," COSAFA spokesperson, Lynda Greeff, is quoted in the press saying. "These young athletes are inspiring a new generation of girls to embrace football".

Lesotho faces Zimbabwe today, aiming to secure semi-final qualification. Botswana, meanwhile, defeated Zimbabwe convincingly and hope for favourable results elsewhere to advance as a best runner-up.

With both teams' fates hanging in the balance, the final group-stage matches promise high drama.

The 2025 COSAFA U-17 Girls' Championship continues to deliver thrilling narratives of underdog triumphs, heartbreaks, and the unyielding spirit of young athletes chasing glory.