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PARLIAMENT URGED TO STEP UP HUMAN RIGHTS OVERSIGHT



MPs raise alarm over child marriage in Thaba-Tseka

Members of Parliament from Women's Caucus have raised concern over child marriage, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts and gender-based violence during a public hearing held with communities in Mashai, Panteng, Ha Monyollo yesterday.

The public hearing supported by Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) brought Women's Caucus closer to community members to hear directly about challenges affecting families, particularly women and children.

Chairperson of the Women's Caucus, 'Mamamello Molomo said Parliament is concerned about the growing challenges of child marriage, children dropping out of school and gender-based violence. She said parliamentarians decided to visit communities to listen to their concerns and understand the challenges they face

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Parliament urged to step up human rights oversight



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU - Wrapping up a high-level two-day engagement in Parliament this week, stakeholders emphasized the critical need for deeper legislative involvement in translating international human rights commitments into domestic action.

The engagement through the support from SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), brought together Members of Parliament, parliamentary staff and technical stakeholders, from Monday to Tuesday this week.

The sessions focused on bridging the gap between Lesotho's constitutional, regional and international human rights commitments and their practical implementation.

During a key

presentation on the role of Parliament in human rights state party reporting, Bokang Lethula from the Human Rights Unit, Ministry of Justice and Law highlighted that while parliaments possess the core mandate to represent the people, make laws, approve budgets and hold the executive branch accountable, a significant implementation gap frequently persists.

"Although the executive branch typically drafts and submits state party reports to UN treaty bodies or the Universal Periodic Review, it is parliament that ensures those commitments translate into real-world action, aligning with the UN Human Rights Council's call to promote parliamentary involvement at all stages," she said.

The discussions spotlighted persistent

barriers, such as executive dominance where governments treat reporting as an exclusive executive task, capacity gaps where MPs and staff lack specialized training on UN human rights machinery, and information silos involving poor communication between drafting ministries and legislative committees.

To strengthen parliamentary engagement and inclusive governance, the sessions put forward strategic recommendations, including institutionalizing participation by amending parliamentary rules of procedure to mandate the review of all state party reports.

Additional proposals involved building capacity through partnerships with National Human Rights Institutions, the Inter-

Parliamentary Union and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, establishing a dedicated cross-party human rights committee to track treaty obligations year-round and publishing an annual parliamentary scorecard on the state's human rights implementation record.

Reflecting on the success of the sessions, Hon. Mothofela Ramakatsa, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Law and Public Safety, noted that the workshop was highly informative and that lawmakers learned a great deal, affirming that they will use the insights gained to engage more meaningfully as lawmakers moving forward to protect human rights.

Background context from SADC-PF highlights that a growing coalition of conservative religious,

political and traditional actors across Africa is actively pushing back progress on human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality.

Often masked as efforts to defend cultural identity and family sovereignty these transnational campaigns threaten regional commitments including the Maputo Protocol and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, by promoting restrictive laws and pushing narratives that dismiss human rights as incompatible with African traditions.

Established in 1997, SADC-PF promotes democratic governance, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development across 16 member states through initiatives such as its SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project.



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ORASECOM, partners commence joint basin survey



NEO SENOKO

MASERU- The Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), together with its partners, the University of South Africa (UNISA), The Wilderness Project (TWP), the European Union and the German Government through the GIZ Transboundary Water Management in the SADC Region Project has commenced the Fourth Joint Basin Survey (JBS4), a basin-wide scientific and collaborative assessment of the health and water quality of the Orange-Senqu River and its major tributaries.

The Joint Basin Survey has been conducted every five years since 2010 and is one of ORASECOM's key transboundary instruments for understanding how the shared river system is changing over time and for generating evidence to support its sustainable management by its riparian states, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa.

The Joint Basin Survey commenced last week and will continue until 15 December 2026, covering the Vaal, Upper Orange-Senqu and Lower Orange river systems.

The University of South Africa and The Wilderness Project will undertake the survey, in collaboration with



officials from ORASECOM Member States.

The two teams will use complementary approaches to build a basin-wide picture of water quality and ecosystem health, combining detailed scientific assessments at selected sites with observations and sampling along the river system.

The UNISA-led surveys will focus mainly on selected tributaries of the Vaal and Orange-Senqu rivers, as well as selected groundwater sites. The teams will assess water quality and pollution sources, including bacteria, nutrients, metals, microplastics, and other pollutants that can persist in the environment.

The surveys will also examine the health of river ecosystems by studying aquatic plants and organisms, fish, riverside vegetation and the condition of river habitats. The surveys will also assess groundwater and its connection to the wider river system.

“At selected reservoirs and wetlands, scientists will collect

sediment samples to understand how environmental conditions have changed over time, providing a longer-term picture of the basin's health.”

“In addition, UNISA will engage with communities and other stakeholders to document local knowledge, wateruse practices and people's experiences of environmental change.

This will help complement the scientific findings with local perspectives and experiences of how the river system and surrounding environment are changing,” ORASECOM said in a statement this week.

The Wilderness Project will provide a source-to-sea perspective, surveying the Orange-Senqu River from its source in Lesotho to its mouth at Alexander Bay, as well as the main stem of the Vaal River, which feeds into the Orange-Senqu.

Using a river health assessment methodology that involves traversing the entire length of the river by canoe, the TWP team will

make continuous, fine-scale recordings across several parameters including human activities and pressures, biodiversity, invasive plants, pollution sources, water abstraction, agriculture, infrastructure and other indicators of river health.

“Along the route, the team will also collect data on water quality, river flow, sediments and ecosystem health.

This will include testing for nutrients, metals, microplastics and other contaminants, as well as studying aquatic organisms, fish and other indicators of biodiversity.

River flow will also be measured along the main rivers and at key tributaries to better understand how water volumes change and how different tributaries contribute to the river system,” ORASECOM added.

Together, the UNISA and TWP surveys will provide both detailed assessments at selected sites and a broader picture of conditions along the river system.

Building on previous Joint Basin Surveys undertaken in 2010, 2015 and 2021, JBS4 will add to a growing body of basin-wide knowledge that helps ORASECOM Member States track changes over time, identify emerging pressures and determine areas requiring greater management attention.

Strengthening cultural ties through Wu Opera performance

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU - Lesotho and China have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cultural cooperation and people-to-people relations as the two countries marked Lesotho's 60th Independence Anniversary with a Chinese cultural evening featuring the traditional Wu Opera.

The event, held in Maseru on Friday, brought together government representatives, members of the diplomatic corps and distinguished guests to celebrate Chinese cultural heritage and the longstanding friendship between the two countries. Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso graced the event.

Speaking at the event, Chinese Ambassador to Lesotho His Excellency Yang Xiaokun highlighted the importance of cultural exchanges in promoting mutual understanding, respect and cooperation among nations.

He said the performance was particularly significant as Lesotho celebrated six decades of independence, while China marked the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Ambassador Yang said the two countries had different histories and national circumstances but shared a common determination to shape their futures, pursue development and improve the lives of their people.

He noted that China and Lesotho had maintained a sincere friendship and treated each other as equals,



with cooperation across various sectors yielding positive results.

"People-to-people exchanges are an important bridge between countries and peoples," he said.

The ambassador said the cultural evening was more than an opportunity to enjoy artistic performances, describing it as a platform for people from the two countries to learn about one another and build lasting bonds.

The event also coincided with the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, which seeks to strengthen ties between China and African countries through greater

interaction and mutual learning.

Ambassador Yang said the initiative provided fresh impetus for cultural engagement and reinforced the importance of exchanges in advancing human progress, peace and development.

He also highlighted Chinese President Xi Jinping's Global Civilization Initiative, which advocates respect for different civilizations, cultural diversity, dialogue and inclusiveness.

The ambassador said the evening's performance offered Basotho an opportunity to experience Wu Opera, a traditional

Chinese performing art originating from Zhejiang Province with a history spanning more than four centuries. Delivering remarks on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, hon. Lesaoana Pitso expressed appreciation for China's continued support for Lesotho and its contribution to the development of the country's cultural sector.

Pitso said the Chinese government's programmes and initiatives had created valuable opportunities for Basotho through training, capacity-building, education, professional development and exchange programmes.

He said these

initiatives had contributed to developing human capacity in Lesotho, while exposure to new skills, knowledge, technologies and international experiences had strengthened the capabilities of local artists and cultural practitioners.

He added that such opportunities broadened the horizons of Basotho artists and enabled them to contribute more effectively to cultural development, tourism and the creative economy.

He also commended the Chinese people for their warmth, generosity and hospitality towards Basotho, noting that relations between the two countries extended beyond governments and institutions to meaningful connections between their people.

Reflecting on the history of cultural cooperation, Pitso said Lesotho and China had enjoyed significant exchanges, particularly from the early 2000s until the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted international activities.

During that period, Basotho artists travelled to China to showcase their music, dance and cultural heritage, while Chinese performing groups visited Lesotho to share their traditions.

He said these exchanges went beyond artistic performances, providing opportunities for artists to learn from one another, build friendships and deepen understanding between the two nations.

Pitso further noted that cooperation had extended beyond performing arts, with China having supported Lesotho through the provision of pottery equipment and technical expertise.

BUSINESS

Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."
- Napoleon Hill, author

Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." -
Sigmund Freud, neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis

Vodacom offers light, warmth and security for young minds in Mafeteng

NEO SENOKO

MASERU- In a move to continuously bridge the education gap in the country, the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation has officially renovated and handed over five classrooms to Matelile Primary School in Haseiso Mafeteng district.

The investment has transformed severely deteriorated learning spaces into safe, dignified and welcoming classrooms where children can learn with confidence and fulfil their potential.

The project addressed conditions that had placed a daily strain on teaching and learning. Learners had been attending lessons in classrooms with leaking roofs, cracked walls and damaged floors; conditions no child should have to endure. The renewed classrooms now offer light, warmth and security, giving young minds the space to concentrate, imagine and thrive.

This transformation was reinforced by the community effort behind it. In September, Vodacom Lesotho employees joined parents, teachers and pupils to paint the five renovated classrooms. Together, they brought colour and warmth to the school, demonstrating



that lasting progress is built not only through investment but also through shared ownership and collective action.

Delivered through the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation's Education Pillar, the project reflects the Foundation's sustained commitment to education, inclusion and community empowerment.

It also brings Vodacom Lesotho's purpose of connecting Basotho for a better future to life by extending the meaning of connection beyond technology to opportunity, dignity and the foundations of lifelong learning. Speaking at the handover, the Minister of

Education and Training, Prof Ntoi Rapapa, commended Vodacom Lesotho for its long-standing contribution to education and community development across the country.

"We sincerely thank Vodacom Lesotho for this contribution and its continued partnership in advancing education by expanding digital skills, connectivity and learning opportunities for young people. We look forward to deepening this partnership."

"Before the refurbishment, I witnessed the difficult conditions faced by learners and teachers.

This contribution provides a safer, more conducive environment for learning.

The Ministry will build two additional classrooms and ablution facilities, complementing these efforts as we create better opportunities for our children and a brighter future for Lesotho," Rapapa said.

Matelile Primary School Principal Nondaniso Mapele commended Vodacom Lesotho, revealing that learners were studying in a severely dilapidated building, with holes in the walls, cracked floors and a roof further damaged by strong winds.

"When the minister visited, rain was pouring into the classrooms; a stark reminder that a complete renovation could not wait.

Today, our 351 pupils have a safer, more dignified learning environment. We are deeply grateful to Vodacom Lesotho, the Minister and everyone who helped turn an urgent need into renewed hope for our school," she said.

For families, the renewed classrooms offer reassurance that their children can learn in an environment that supports their wellbeing and potential.

Poor conditions had forced some children to leave, but these safe and

welcoming classrooms restored confidence that they will return, thus also giving more families a reason to choose Matelile Primary School and believe in a brighter future for their children.

The renewed classrooms will serve generations of learners and provide a stronger foundation for educational progress in Ha Seeiso. Through this investment, the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation continues to demonstrate that meaningful connection extends beyond technology: it connects children to opportunity, communities to possibility and the country to a better future.

Dr Kelello Lerotholi, a member of the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation Board of Trustees, reflected on the Foundation's contribution citing that for 30 years, Vodacom Lesotho has served Basotho in ways that extend far beyond connectivity.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to support this school and will continue working with the Ministry of Education and Training to advance quality education for every Mosotho child.

I urge learners to value and care for these classrooms so that they may serve them and generations of learners to come," Dr. Lerotholi said.



SOCIETY

ADÉLA makes history as ‘Nicole Kidman’ breaks into Billboard Hot 100 Top 10



PHOLOSO MANYAMA

Slovak pop singer ADÉLA is making music history, with her single “Nicole Kidman” reportedly breaking into the Top 10 of the US Billboard Hot 100.

The 22-year-old singer, whose real name is Adéla Jergová, is the first Slovak artist to score a Top 10 hit on the influential US singles chart, marking a significant milestone for the country’s representation

in international pop music.

Her breakthrough follows the success of “Ain’t In LA”, which became the first song by a Slovak artist to enter the Billboard Hot 100 in August 2026.

The single initially debuted at No. 85 before climbing the chart, eventually reaching No. 27.

“Nicole Kidman” has continued to build momentum following the release of ADÉLA’s debut album, ***PRIMA***, on

September 4.

The album debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200, giving the emerging pop star another major career achievement.

ADÉLA first attracted international attention through ***The Debut: Dream Academy***, the competition that led to the formation of the girl group KATSEYE.

After her elimination, she pursued a solo career, developing a bold pop identity that blends dance, theatrical

performances and provocative storytelling.

Her growing profile has also taken her to major music stages, including Lollapalooza in Chicago and the UK’s Reading and Leeds festivals.

With “Nicole Kidman” continuing to gain attention, ADÉLA’s rise signals a major moment in her solo career and brings unprecedented visibility to Slovak talent on the international music scene.

- IOL

Fernando da Cruz falls ill after Kaizer Chiefs register third straight Premiership draw



Metro MIHLALI BALEKA

Kaizer Chiefs' assistant coach Dillon Sheppard, who took charge of the post-match press conference following their 1-1 draw with Stellenbosch at FNB Stadium on Wednesday after head coach Fernando da Cruz fell ill, says they are doing everything they can to win matches.

Da Cruz steered Chiefs to their third successive

draw in the Betway Premiership against Stellies, leaving the team fourth and unbeaten after eight games. They have secured 14 points from three wins and five draws since the start of the season.

However, Da Cruz arrived late for his post-match broadcast duties on SuperSport TV before being completely replaced by Sheppard for the official press conference following a 10-minute wait. The former Bafana Bafana

international explained his superior's absence.

"The coach has fallen ill," Sheppard said. "He was vomiting, so the doctors have been checking him to see whether he's okay."

Prior to falling ill, Da Cruz cut a frustrated figure on the Chiefs dugout as his team had to come from behind to salvage a draw. They allowed Stellies to take the lead through Sinxolo Kwayiba before equalising via Mduduzi Shabalala,

following several wasted opportunities. This wastefulness in front of goal comes after defensive mistakes cost the team dearly before the Fifa break, where they dropped six points across three matches.

Sheppard conceded that their overall struggles have been a bitter pill to swallow, which is why they will continue working hard to get the team running like a well-oiled machine. "I don't think it's a case of settling for one point," Sheppard elaborated. "Each game has its different merits and dynamics. Obviously, everyone wants to win a football game."

"I think we are doing enough to win, but if you look at the type of goals that we are conceding, we have to do better – especially in defensive moments. The stats show that we are second or third in conceding chances per game."

"We are not conceding a lot of chances, but teams are scoring. It's something that we need to improve on."

"A young (Wandile) Duba got a chance, and if he took it, he could be a top goalscorer in the team. But we are working, and these are things we can improve. Importantly, we are not losing games. It can be better. We want to be up there and pick up points."

Chiefs will turn their focus to the CAF Confederation Cup group stage qualifiers against Red Arrows in the first leg on Saturday, with the clash set to be held in Zambia. They need to win that game – or at least score – to carry vital momentum into the return leg at home a week later.



Orlando Pirates bounce back from MTN8 final defeat with 3-0 win over TS Galaxy

Metro SMISO MSOMI

Orlando Pirates 1 (3)
Radiopane, Moremi, Masilela
TS Galaxy 0 (0)

Premier League 2026/27 Season

	CLUB	PLD	GD	PTS
1	Man City	6	+11	18
2	Arsenal	6	+5	15
3	Brighton	6	+13	13
4	Brentford	6	+6	10
5	Everton	6	+3	10
6	Chelsea	6	+2	10
7	Leeds	6	+3	9
8	Hull	6	+2	9
9	Liverpool	6	0	9
10	Ipswich	6	-3	9
11	Newcastle	6	-3	8
12	Crystal Palace	6	-3	7
13	Man Utd	6	0	6
14	Coventry	6	-6	6
15	Nott'm Forest	6	-3	5
16	Aston Villa	6	-5	5
17	Sunderland	6	-6	4
18	Bournemouth	6	-6	3
19	Spurs	6	-6	3
20	Fulham	6	-4	2

Vodacom Premier League 2026/27

LOG

STANDING

AS PER WEEK 06

POS	CLUB	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	BANTU FC	6	5	1	0	19	7	12	16
2	MATLAMA FC	5	5	0	0	12	3	9	15
3	UNARE FC	6	4	1	1	13	8	5	13
4	LIOLI FC	6	3	3	0	12	4	8	12
5	LUABATHO FC	5	3	2	0	11	0	11	11
6	MAJANTJA FC	6	3	2	1	7	4	3	11
7	LCS FC	6	2	1	3	6	6	0	7
8	LDF FC	6	1	4	1	4	6	-2	7
9	MANONYANE FC	6	1	3	2	9	7	2	6
10	LIMKOKWING FC	6	1	3	2	7	9	-2	6
11	MEMBERS FC	6	1	2	3	2	8	-6	5
12	MZAMANE FC	6	1	1	4	3	17	-14	4
13	VILLA FC	6	1	1	4	3	6	-3	4
14	MACHOKHA FC	6	1	1	4	5	13	-8	4
15	LIFOANE FC	6	1	1	4	6	14	-8	4
16	LMP5 FC	6	0	2	4	4	11	-7	2

Following their 2-0 MTN8 final loss on Saturday, Orlando Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou vowed that the league defending champions would respond positively, insisting they still have plenty to fight for this season.

Pirates responded with a 3-0 victory over TS Galaxy in the Betway Premiership encounter at the Orlando Amstel Arena on Tuesday night. Boitumelo Radiopane opened the scoring in the first half as he bagged his third goal of the season, with Tshepang Moremi and Simphiwe Masilela netting the second and third for the night.

Pirates lost to Sundowns at Moses Mabhida Stadium on Saturday, missing out on a historic fifth consecutive MTN8 crown. However, Ouaddou made it clear he believes that defeat can provide valuable lessons as his team turns its attention to the four remaining competitions ahead of them.

The Buccaneers are still competing in the Betway Premiership, Nedbank Cup, Carling Knockout and CAF Champions League, with defending their league title remaining their top priority.