FREE

Metro

News you can use

BUSINESS NEWS pg 08

Govt. slammed for reducing Let'seng royalty rate



NATIONAL NEWS Sehonghong youth get new space to tackle social challenges – pg 04

NATIONAL NEWS The missing country: Lesotho was not counted, and not invited – pg 06

Scan QR code to get E-copy of Metro

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2026 Tel.: 266 5886 5494 | editor@maserumetro.com sales@maserumetro.com Est. 2017

LESOTHO MAPS OUT NEW APPROACH TO TACKLING MALNUTRITION



02



Lesotho maps out new approach to tackling malnutrition



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

Lesotho has called for predictable and sustainable financing to strengthen food security and combat hunger and malnutrition, following revelations that 36% of children under the age of five in the country are stunted.

The call was made by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office 'Makatleho Motsoasele during a high-level convening on Advancing Durable Solutions Towards Zero Hunger in Africa, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last Tuesday.

His Majesty King Letsie III, who serves as the African Union Champion for Nutrition and the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) Zero Hunger Champion attended the event.

Presenting Lesotho's position, Minister Motsoasele said the country's 2023–2024 Demographic and Health Survey revealed that only 9% of children aged between 6 and 23 months receive a minimum acceptable diet, while 54% of women experience anaemia.

Minister Motsoasele said the statistics highlighted the urgency of strengthening national interventions to address hunger and malnutrition.

She noted that Lesotho needed to move away from fragmented interventions and recurrent humanitarian responses towards integrated, resilient and nutrition-sensitive food systems.

The Minister highlighted several government-led initiatives aimed at improving nutrition and household resilience, including maternal and child nutrition programmes targeting the first 1 000 days of life, the Ntlafatsa Bana Cash Plus Programme, home-grown school feeding and climate-smart agriculture through the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP) II.

Minister Motsoasele explained that the interventions integrate nutrition, social protection, agricultural productivity and disaster preparedness to strengthen household resilience.

However, the Minister acknowledged that limited domestic resources, fragmented programme coverage, inadequate agricultural infrastructure and insufficient anticipatory financing continued to undermine progress.

She therefore called for increased investment to expand nutrition services, strengthen nutritious food value chains, improve school feeding programmes and support climate-resilient agriculture.

Lesotho is also seeking blended financing, climate adaptation resources and private-sector investment through its proposed Food and Nutrition Resilience Programme, which is aligned with the continental Food Security Resilience Platform.

The Minister further emphasised the importance of strengthening cooperation with development partners, international financial institutions and private-sector stakeholders to support sustainable agricultural transformation.

She reaffirmed Lesotho's commitment to progressively increasing domestic nutrition financing, aligning agricultural investments with the Kampala CAADP Declaration and its Action Plan, and strengthening accountability through annual reporting.

Minister Motsoasele stressed that addressing hunger required moving beyond political commitments towards measurable action, calling on development partners to complement national efforts with predictable financing and long-term partnerships.

Advancing Durable Solutions Towards Zero Hunger in Africa is the high-level convening of the African Union (AU) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) aimed at advancing durable solutions towards zero hunger in Africa and it took place on 3 November 2026 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The event was organized by the AU Commission and the IFRC in collaboration with the kingdom of Lesotho represented by His Majesty King Letsie III, who serves as the African Union Champion for Nutrition and IFRC Zero Hunger Champion.

The objectives of the event included strengthening African leadership and country ownership in advancing durable solutions to food and nutrition insecurity, showcasing locally led approaches, promoting coordinated investment and advancing the role of the Food Security Resilience Platform and Food and Nutrition Resilience Programme.

FOR SALE

2017 KIA RIO HATCH 1.4



Manual Transmission

54 000 km

Good Condition

Service Book Available

Service Book Available

Insured

M145 000 - Slightly Negotiable

DM TO BUY

Sehonghong youth get new space to tackle social challenges



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA - Young people in Sehonghong have welcomed the establishment of a Youth Resource Centre, describing it as an opportunity to improve their access to information, develop skills and explore opportunities that could improve their livelihoods.

The centre was officially opened by UNFPA in partnership with the government and its partners: Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), Vodacom Lesotho, Nedbank Lesotho and Letšeng Diamonds.

The building which served as an old police station was handed over by the police for refurbishment and conversion into a youth resource centre.

While stating the purpose of the event, Deputy Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development Thae Makhele said it was aimed at launching the facility to respond to the needs of young people in the area.

During a dialogue held alongside the launch, young people highlighted several challenges affecting their



lives, including limited access to secondary education, unemployment, early and unintended pregnancies, substance abuse and depression.

They explained that although primary education is free, many children are unable to proceed to high school because their parents cannot afford the costs, leaving them at home without meaningful activities or opportunities.

The youth further raised concerns about older men luring young girls with money, peer pressure leading to alcohol and drug abuse and the lack of employment opportunities, which they said contributes to frustration and depression among young people. They expressed hope that the newly established centre would provide a platform for accessing information and opportunities.

They said they would use its computers to conduct research, apply for opportunities, access sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, advertise their businesses and obtain weather forecasts to support agricultural activities.

A young person from Sehonghong, ‹Makarabelo Suhlane, expressed gratitude for the facility, describing it as an investment in the future of young people. “As young people, this is not just an event but an opening of our future. We will develop one another,” she said.

Suhlane urged young people to make responsible use of the facility to ensure that it benefits the wider community.

Member of Parliament (MP) for Mashai, Sekhele Mosebetsane, acknowledged the prevalence of early and unintended pregnancies in the area.

He welcomed the establishment of the centre and urged young people to utilise it to improve their circumstances.

UNFPA Deputy Representative Motselisi Phakisi said the organisation collaborates with the government to ensure that every pregnancy is a choice while empowering young people to reach their full potential.

She said the renovated centre would serve as an important information hub, providing young people with information on pregnancy prevention, HIV and gender-based violence (GBV).

The handover fulfilled commitments made after development partners together with Members of Parliament, visited the community in 2025 and engaged young people to understand the challenges they face.

Sannere officially unveiled as UNFPA Youth Ambassador





LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA - Sannere has officially been appointed a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Ambassador, marking a new chapter in using music to engage young people on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Sannere was officially unveiled during the closing ceremony of the Thaba-Tseka Youth Pact for the Future on Friday, where young people gathered to celebrate youth empowerment, partnerships and development initiatives.

The occasion also marked the first public performance of Sannere's newly composed song, Bacha, which carries a message on preventing early and unintended pregnancy among young people.

Through the song, he uses artistic platform to encourage young people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

Presenting him to the youth, UNFPA Assistant Representative Motšelisi Phakisi said UNFPA had signed an agreement with the musician to communicate SRHR messages through songs, allowing young people to enjoy music while gaining important health information.

She said the partnership seeks to make conversations around SRHR more relatable and accessible, particularly among young people who may find conventional information platforms less engaging.

That his appointment also strengthens youth representation in advocacy and development processes, providing a platform through which young people›s concerns and aspirations can be amplified.

The Thaba-Tseka Youth Pact for the Future brought together government, development partners and the private sector in a collective commitment to improving opportunities and essential services for young people, including those in remote communities.

It was implemented in partnership with the Government of Lesotho, with contributions from Vodacom Lesotho, Letšeng Diamonds, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority and Nedbank.

Born Relebohile Monaphathi, Sannere hails from Mokema ha Lebakae in the Maseru District. He ventured into music in 2018. Through his music, Sannere has also distinguished himself as an artist who promotes Sesotho language, culture and Basotho identity.

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Its mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person›s potential is fulfilled.

NATIONAL NEWS

The missing country: Lesotho was not counted, and not invited

MAMELLO MARY-ALMA MOLEFI



The Summit in Cape Town asked a good question: **what do Africans need to find work?**

It did not ask the harder one: what does a person in Lesotho in their twenties get from any of this?

From 3 to 6 November 2026, more than 2,200 leaders from over 190 countries gathered in Cape Town, One Young World says. The Summit closed at the Castle of Good Hope, The Presidency says.

Lesotho was there in the room, in the applause, in the photographs.

Lesotho was not there in the evidence. And Lesotho was not there in the programme.

That is the story of Cape Town for Lesotho. Not what we learned. What we were left out of — and what a jobseeker in Maseru loses because of it.

Counted out

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation did not arrive in Cape Town with only a programme. It arrived with evidence.

In a Q&A with East African Watch, Ivor Ichikowitz says: "One example is the African Youth Survey, which we launched in 2020 to give young Africans a stronger voice in decisions affecting their lives. The 2026 edition interviewed 4,901 young people aged 18–24 across 16 countries, exploring their views on employment, leadership, economic opportunity and Africa's future."

Sixteen countries. Lesotho is not one of them.

That matters because the Survey is now being quoted as what "young Africans" think. Across all 16 countries, it finds 27%put creating new, well-paying jobs first, followed by 25% who put reducing government corruption first.

It finds 76% said leaders are out of touch, 73% said democracy is always preferable, and 56% said Africa needs its own model of democracy, not a Western one.

Do those numbers hold for a school-leaver in Lesotho? We do not know. A school-leaver in Lesotho was not asked.

"Our survey found that 35% of young South Africans identified creating new, well-paying jobs as a priority for Africa's progress, the highest proportion among the 16 countries surveyed," Ichikowitz tells East African Watch.

South Africa was asked. Lesotho was not. Yet a graduate in Lesotho will live with policies shaped by a conversation that did not include them.

What others have that we don't: data about themselves. South Africa can walk into a donor meeting, a summit, a budget debate with its own numbers. Lesotho cannot. That is not a research gap. It is a negotiating disadvantage.

What we can do better: run our own survey. Same rigour, same age group, same questions about jobs, corruption, leadership, and democracy — so that when the next summit claims to speak for "young Africans," a Mosotho in their twenties has their own numbers to answer back.

Invited out

The second absence is sharper, because it is about money and work, not just opinion. "Our partnership with One Young World is a practical example. The Foundation is the founding partner of its National Programme for Job-Generating Entrepreneurs, which supports 10 South African founders aged 18–35 who are already building businesses with the potential to grow and employ others," Ichikowitz says in the Q&A.

Ten founders. All South African. None from Lesotho.

Kate Robertson, co-founder of One Young World, says it the same way to ITWeb: "South Africa's youth unemployment challenge demands more than preparing young people to find jobs. We must also support the entrepreneurs who have the vision and potential to create them."

No one disputes that South Africa needs this. The question is why the model stops at the border.

A founder in Maseru faces the same problem as a founder in Johannesburg — how to turn an idea into a hire — with less power, less data, fewer investors, and fewer customers. If the programme is about job-generating entrepreneurs, why is the country with unemployment for 15 to 24-year-olds at 48.75%, the Bureau of Statistics says, not in it?

The model is deliberate. Mentoring, networks, investor introductions — not direct funding.

"The programme provides tailored mentoring, business networks and introductions to prospective investors and commercial partners. Participants also join One Young World's global community of more than 20,000 young leaders across over 190 countries," the Q&A says.

That is exactly what a founder in Lesotho needs. And exactly what a founder in Lesotho did not get.

What others have that we don't: a mentor, an investor introduction, a network that outlives the summit. South Africa's 10 founders now have all three. A founder in Lesotho has none of the three, and is expected to compete as if they do.

What we can do better: build our own cohort. Ten founders, aged 18 to 35, already building businesses with the potential to employ others, given mentoring, networks, and investor introductions, judged not by applause but by whether they still exist in May 2027. What do those businesses look like? The Summit cohort gives the answer:

"Botlhale AI develops digital services in African languages, helping make technology more accessible. JOBJACK connects unemployed Africans with entry-level jobs, while Zaio equips young people with software development, data and AI skills," the Q&A says.

African languages. Entry-level jobs. Practical skills. All of it relevant to a jobseeker in Lesotho. None of it built in Lesotho, for a jobseeker in Lesotho, in Sesotho.

That last point is not a cultural footnote. It is economic. A tool that does not understand Sesotho cannot hire a Mosotho in their twenties to test it, translate it, sell it, or support it. Language decides who gets the entry-level job behind the technology.

What others have that we don't: technology built in their language, for their market, by people like them. What we can do better: insist AI is built in Sesotho by Basotho — not a translated chatbot, but a tool built with Sesotho speakers, for Sesotho problems, on Sesotho data. Not because language is heritage, though it is. Because language is where the jobs are.

The gap is not just a ranking

The Ayre Index makes the exclusion visible in a different way.

It puts Lesotho second last, 55th out of 56 Commonwealth countries, on 27.8 out of 100. It puts electricity at 60.6%, and data at nearly a quarter of income for the poorest 40%.

Only 15 of 56 Commonwealth countries meet Ayre's readiness benchmark, the Ayre Think Tank says. Those 15 could see a combined $389.2 billion increase in their economies after 10 years, against $29.2 billion for the other 41 — a $360 billion gap.

A jobseeker in Lesotho is on the wrong side of that gap. Not because they are less talented. Because they were not counted, not connected, and not given the same starting conditions.

And even meeting the benchmark is no guarantee of work. South Africa qualifies, but unemployment for 15 to 24-year-olds still stands at 46.3%, the Ayre Think Tank says.

So the problem is not just that Lesotho is behind. The problem is that the systems designed to close the gap keep designing a jobseeker in Lesotho out.

What others have that we don't: reliable power, affordable data, functioning transport, straightforward rules for starting a company. What we can do better: fix those basics first, before we promise a school-leaver in Lesotho an AI future they cannot charge a phone to reach.

What being missing costs

Being missing is not abstract. It has a price for a jobseeker in Lesotho. When you are not in the Survey, your priorities do not shape the agenda. When you are not in the cohort, your founder does not get the mentor, the investor introduction, the network.

When you are not in the room where the demo day is planned — provisionally for late May 2027, Ichikowitz says in the Q&A — your business does not get judged on whether it grew and created employment after delegates went home.

"A summit like One Young World should leave a lasting commercial and social legacy.

For the founders in our programme, support continues beyond Cape Town through mentoring and connections, culminating in a demo day provisionally planned for late May 2027. The real test is whether those relationships help businesses grow and create employment after delegates have gone home," he says.

That test will happen. It will happen without a founder in Lesotho.

A jobseeker in Lesotho will never attend One Young World on this model. So how does a jobseeker in Lesotho benefit? They do not, unless the model changes.

That is the question Cape Town did not answer: if this model were expanded beyond South Africa to a country like Lesotho, what would need to adapt to work in a smaller market?

A network without money works in Johannesburg, where there is power, data, investors and customers. Does it work in Lesotho, where the Ayre Index puts electricity at 60.6% and rural access at 43%? Or does a founder in Lesotho need a different model — smaller, cheaper, offline-first, built in Sesotho?

What Lesotho must do now

Lesotho cannot wait to be invited. It cannot wait to be counted.

If the Survey will not come to Lesotho, Lesotho must run its own — so a Mosotho in their twenties is counted on their own terms.

If the cohort will not come to Lesotho, Lesotho must build its own — so a founder in Lesotho gets the mentor, the network, and the investor introduction that others already have.

And if AI will not be built in Sesotho by others, Lesotho must insist it is built in Sesotho by Basotho — so a graduate in Lesotho is a builder, not just a consumer.

The Summit, 3 to 6 November 2026, returned to African soil for the first time in 13 years, in the 50th anniversary year of the Soweto Uprising, Standard Bank says.

The students who marched in 1976 did not ask to be counted. They demanded to be heard.

A jobseeker in Lesotho should not have to ask to be counted either. But until they are — in the survey, in the cohort, and in the language the future is being built in — Cape Town will remain a summit about Africa, without a jobseeker in Lesotho in it.



CHOGM promised prosperity. The Ayre Index showed who gets it

MAMELLO MARY-ALMA MOLEFI

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting asked a good question in Antigua and Barbuda: how do we accelerate partnerships and investment for a prosperous Commonwealth?

It did not ask the harder one: what does a jobseeker in Lesotho get from that prosperity?

CHOGM 2026 took place from 1–4 November 2026 in St John's, Antigua and Barbuda, bringing together Heads of Government, Ministers, and representatives from business, civil society, and youth organisations. Its theme was "Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth".

Antigua and Barbuda became the smallest country to have hosted a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. That fact matters for Lesotho. It proves a small state can host the world, set the agenda, and be remembered for more than its size.

But the most important thing to come out of St John's was not the communique. It was a ranking.

The man who paid for the mirror

Calvin Ayre is not a head of government. He is an Antiguan-Canadian philanthropist, entrepreneur, and founder of the Ayre Think Tank.

At CHOGM, his group was not in the background. As a silver sponsor of CHOGM, the Ayre Group contributed to the successful delivery of the event, providing screens, audiovisual equipment and other technical support across the event.

Beyond its sponsorship, the group participated in several initiatives throughout CHOGM, with a focus on tourism investment, youth innovation and emerging technologies.

Among these initiatives was the launch of the Ayre Think Tank and its inaugural Ayre Index, a major study examining how Commonwealth countries can better prepare young people for the opportunities created by artificial intelligence.

In other words, Ayre did not just sponsor the stage. He paid for the mirror the Commonwealth was forced to look into.

His message after the summit was about legacy, not applause: "I want the legacy to be young Antiguans building companies, local people gaining better skills and good jobs, and investment that keeps giving back to this country. That is why the Ayre Group supported CHOGM, and why our work does not stop when the last delegation returns home".

That is the test Lesotho should apply to every summit it attends. Not: did we attend? But: what was built, who got skilled, and what kept giving back after the delegations went home?

Ayre put his own answer in plain language: "I've spent my life in businesses where new technology changes everything, and I know you can't stand still. AI is going to change how we work, how we do business and how wealth is created. What matters is giving young people the skills and the chance to get ahead – whether to start businesses, find jobs or build something for themselves".

A founder in Maseru would agree. A graduate in Lesotho would agree. The question is whether the systems around them agree.

What the Index actually says

The Ayre Index, the 2026 Commonwealth Youth AI Readiness Index, provides an assessment of the conditions facing young people across all 56 Commonwealth member states. Drawing together published evidence on connectivity, digital skills, education, employment, enterprise, safeguards and attitudes towards AI, it asks where the foundations are.

It is not a small study. Drawing on 1,128 research sources, the study assesses the conditions affecting approximately 732 million people aged 15 to 29 across all 56 Commonwealth countries.

It sets a readiness benchmark of 53 out of 100. Only 15 countries meet it.

Singapore leads the index with a score of 77.6 out of 100, followed by Malta on 75.0 and Australia on 71.0. The United Kingdom ranks fourth with 70.8, narrowly ahead of Canada on 70.2. At the other end of the rankings, Lesotho scores 27.8 and Malawi 26.3.

Lesotho is 55th out of 56. Second last. Not because a Mosotho in their twenties lacks talent. Because the conditions around them — power, data, skills, enterprise, safeguards — are not ready.

Only three of the Commonwealth's 21 African countries meet the study's readiness benchmark: Mauritius, ranked eighth; South Africa, thirteenth; and Nigeria, fifteenth.

That is the continental picture in one line. Africa is not one story. Mauritius, South Africa, and Nigeria have crossed a threshold. The other 18 African Commonwealth members have not. Lesotho is near the bottom of that second group.

The Index also puts a price on the divide. The Ayre Index identifies a US$360 billion difference between the potential AI-related economic gains of 15 countries meeting its readiness benchmark and the remaining 41 nations.

Under the study's moderate scenario, the 15 countries meeting its readiness benchmark have a combined potential AI-related impact on the level of GDP of US$389.2 billion after ten years. The other 41 share US$29.2 billion.

Read that again. The gap between the ready and the unready is twice all major donor aid combined. CHOGM can talk about partnership and investment. The Index says partnership without readiness simply reproduces inequality, faster, with better technology.

These are modelled scenarios rather than guaranteed returns. They should not be read as a promise. They should be read as a warning: if AI rewards readiness, and readiness is uneven, AI will reward the already-ready.

What others have that we don't

The Ayre Think Tank produced a white paper reporting on the findings from the Index, and the paper identifies five global priorities: affordable and reliable access to technology; education that develops practical skills; stronger routes from training into employment and enterprise; AI tools suited to local languages and needs; and safeguards that enable young people to question automated decisions.



Those five are a checklist. Lesotho fails most of them. Others pass them.

What others have that we don't: reliable power. Affordable data. Practical skills training that leads to a job, not just a certificate. AI tools in their own language. Rules that let a person question an automated decision.

Take Rwanda, ranked 47th — still below the benchmark, but ahead of Lesotho. Research found that 4G networks cover 98.8% of the population and mobile data is comparatively affordable. Electricity reaches 72% of the population. In June 2026, the government established the Rwanda AI Agency to coordinate the development and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

Rwanda is not rich. Rwanda is organised. It has coverage, a price people can pay, and an institution with a name, a mandate, and a date.

Lesotho has none of those three in the same clear form. The Ayre Index puts electricity at 60.6% in earlier reporting on Lesotho, and data at nearly a quarter of income for the poorest 40%. A school-leaver in Lesotho cannot build an AI future on a phone they cannot charge or data they cannot afford.

Take Nigeria, ranked 15th, just above the benchmark. The Index notes a paradox that should comfort and challenge Lesotho at the same time: 90% of young Nigerians surveyed expected to use AI for work or education within a year, but Nigeria scored just 0.8 out of 10 on measures of conventional digital capability.

Ambition is not readiness. Wanting AI is not the same as being able to use it, afford it, or earn from it. Lesotho shares the ambition. Lesotho must now build the capability.

What CHOGM got right — and what it left out

CHOGM got one thing right: it let a small country host. Antigua and Barbuda showed that size says nothing about ambition. Ayre himself said it after the summit: "Antigua and Barbuda has just shown the world that the size of a country says nothing about the size of its ambition".Lesotho should take that seriously. Lesotho is small. Lesotho is also a Commonwealth member with a story, a language, and a diaspora. Smallness is not the excuse. Smallness is the strategy, if Lesotho uses it.

CHOGM also got one thing right by accident: it allowed an uncomfortable number to be published in the room where leaders were celebrating partnership. The Index did not flatter the Commonwealth. It divided it into 15 and 41. That is useful. Flattery never built a power line.

What CHOGM left out is harder. The communique speaks of partnerships and investment for a prosperous Commonwealth. The Index speaks of a $360 billion gap. Those two documents do not yet meet. Partnership without a plan to close the readiness gap is just a photograph. For Lesotho, the gap between communique and Index is the story. Leaders promised prosperity. A jobseeker in Lesotho got a ranking: 55th.

What we can do better

Lesotho cannot wait for the next CHOGM to be ready. Readiness is not a summit outcome. It is a budget, a rule, and a build.

First, fix the basics before we promise AI. Affordable and reliable access comes first in the Index's five priorities for a reason. A founder in Lesotho needs power that stays on, data they can afford, and transport that lets them reach a customer. Without those, AI is a slogan.

Second, build in Sesotho. The Index calls for AI tools suited to local languages and needs. That is not cultural decoration. It is economic. A tool that does not understand Sesotho cannot hire a Mosotho in their twenties to test it, translate it, sell it, or support it. Language decides who gets the entry-level job behind the technology. Lesotho must insist AI is built in Sesotho by Basotho, not translated for Basotho after it is built elsewhere.

Third, turn training into employment. The Index calls for stronger routes from training into employment and enterprise. Lesotho has training. Lesotho does not have enough routes. A graduate in Lesotho needs a mentor, an investor introduction, and a first customer — the same three things the One Young World founders cohort in Cape Town gave to 10 South Africans and to no one from Lesotho.

Fourth, count ourselves. The researchers caution that the index measures conditions associated with readiness rather than the artificial intelligence competence of individual young people.

Lesotho should use that honesty. If the global data on Lesotho is thin, Lesotho must produce its own — on skills, on data costs, on power, on what a jobseeker in Lesotho actually needs — so the next Index measures Lesotho, not a guess about Lesotho.

Fifth, create the institution. Rwanda created an AI Agency. Lesotho needs a named owner, with a date, for AI readiness. Not a committee that meets. A person who can be asked: what did you fix this quarter?

The benefit test

Ayre's legacy test is the right one for CHOGM: young Antiguans building companies, local people gaining better skills and good jobs, and investment that keeps giving back.

Apply that test to Lesotho.

Did CHOGM leave a company built by a founder in Lesotho? No.

Did it leave a skill gained by a school-leaver in Lesotho? No.

Did it leave investment that keeps giving back to Lesotho? No.

It left a number: 27.8. And a ranking: 55th. And a gap: $360 billion.

That number is not shame. It is leverage. Lesotho can walk into the next budget, the next donor meeting, the next Commonwealth meeting, with a number that cannot be ignored, and a plan that cannot be dismissed as vague.

Antigua and Barbuda showed that a small country can host the Commonwealth. Lesotho must now show that a small country can refuse to be second last — by fixing power, cutting data costs, building in Sesotho, turning training into jobs, and counting itself properly.

CHOGM promised a prosperous Commonwealth. The Ayre Index asked who that prosperity is for.

Until a jobseeker in Lesotho can answer that question with a job, a company, or a skill that pays, the promise is still unpaid.

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

Govt. slammed for reducing Lets'eng royalty rate

Metro **NEO SENOKO**



MASERU- Yearn for Economic Sustainability (YES) has condemned the decision by the government of Lesotho to reduce Lets'eng Diamond royalty rate from the statutory 10 percent to a variable rate of between three percent.

According to YES, the decision represents a deeply troubling development in the management of the country's most valuable natural resources and further raises serious questions about transparency, accountability, national sovereignty and the extent to which the current government respects the constitutional and statutory rights of the nation.

"Section 107 of the constitution of Lesotho provides that all land in Lesotho is vested in the Basotho Nation, by default anything in that soil belongs to Basotho. more importantly, Section 3 of the Mines and Minerals Act 2005, explicitly provides that all rights of ownership in minerals are vested in the Basotho Nation. This is not a public slogan. It is the law of our country.

"The government is entrusted with administering and managing these national resources in the public interest. It does not possess an unrestricted mandate to make decisions that compromise the economic interests of Basotho Nation without proper accountability," the organization said.

The statement comes following the announcement by Gem Diamond this week that the government of Lesotho has approved a variable royalty rate of between three percent and six percent, to be determined on the six-monthly average dollar per carat.

This is effective for sales post 1 October 2026.

Gem Diamonds is a leading global producer of high value diamonds. The company owns 70 percent of the Lets'eng mine which is famous for the production of large, exceptional white diamonds, making it the highest dollar per carat kimberlite diamond mine in the world.

Gem Diamonds' Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Clifford Elphick has labbled the government decision as a good policy decision ensuring the long-term sustainability of the mine.

"Sales of Lets'eng's rough diamonds in September achieved good prices, with results further supported by the sale of the exceptional 347 carat Lesotho Jubilee.

These results are encouraging indicators that demand and prices for Lets'eng quality diamonds are firm."

"The agreement by the Lesotho government to introduce a variable royalty rate of between three percent and six percent is a good policy decision ensuring the long-term sustainability of the mine.

We are value the continued support of pur funders, Nedbank and Standard bank as we progress the refinancing of our debt facilities," Elphick said in a statement.

However, according to YES, the decision by government is poor, citing that while Section 60 of the Mines and Minerals Act 2005 gives the Minister statutory authority to remit royalties under specified circumstances, the existence of such authority does not remove the obligation of transparency, accountability and proper administration of public resources.

"Furthermore, Section 61 deals with the deferral of royalty payments upon application by the holder of a mineral concession.

We demand that the Minister publicly disclose the application, reasons, conditions, approvals and legal instruments upon which this royalty arrangement was authorized," the organization added in a statement this week.

Econet hands over medical equipment to Loretto Health Centre



NEO SENOKO

MASERU- In a move to improve the delivery of maternal healthcare services, Econet Telecom Lesotho has handed over medical equipment to Loretto Health Centre which currently serves a big population of around 47, 148 on average.

Worth around M400, 000, the equipment includes oxygen concentrator for medical use, manual Delivery Bed, Ultra sound scan as well as Patient Monitor, Examination Bed, a Stretcher for Ambulance use and a Nebulizer.

In delivering his remarks during the hand over event, Econet Telecom Lesotho Chief Executive Officer (CEO)





Dennis Plaatjies said the donation, which has been financed through Sasai Econet Financial Services and Higher Life Foundation demonstrates a commitment from the company towards supporting the community through healthcare services for a better tomorrow.

"This support will surely restore hope and believe to this healthcare centre, particularly those in need of maternal healthcare services. As a result, we are happy to be handing over these much needed equipment to Loretto Health Centre and believes that with this type of equipment, the institution shall reach new heights," Plaatjies said in his remarks.

Plaatjies added further that Econet has been able to achieve this goal through the support of its customers, calling for more support which will in turn allow the company to continue changing lives.

Representing Loretto Health Centre, Sister 'Manaleli Moremoholo appreciated the efforts made by Econet Telecom Lesotho, citing that the equipment shall assists the institution to continue excelling and providing best services to its patients.

"We appreciate what Econet has done for us because indeed we have been struggling with shortage of medical equipment, but now things will be different. The major challenge now is on lack of human resource, of which we are calling for assistance from the Ministry of Health to come on board because we are ready to serve," Moremoholo said in her remarks.

Loretto Health Centre is a Primary Healthcare Clinic operating under the Christian Health Association of Lesotho which is a religious health organization. It offers general care, maternity services, dental care and vaccination services.

Ayanda G. Thabethe crowned Miss Cosmo South Africa 2026

SMISO MSOMI



Ayanda G. Thabethe has officially been crowned Miss Cosmo South Africa 2026, marking her return to the pageantry world and setting the stage for her international journey to Vietnam later this year.

The television presenter, host, content creator and entrepreneur will represent South Africa at the international Miss Cosmo competition, which is expected to culminate in Vietnam in December.

Thabethe is no stranger to pageantry. She previously represented the country as Miss South Africa First Runner-Up in 2022 and Miss Supranational South Africa 2023.

However, her latest return comes after several years of building her career beyond the pageant circuit.

She has established herself as a familiar face on South African television, having worked across platforms including "Expresso" and "Afternoon Express", while also developing her career in hosting, content creation, brand partnerships, public speaking and entrepreneurship.

Thabethe completed her academic studies in Dietetics and Human Nutrition and is currently in the process of completing her required community service.

For Thabethe, returning to pageantry at this stage of her life is less about winning a crown and more about using it as a platform for impact.

"I'm returning to pageantry as a woman who has grown beyond the crown.

The last few years have allowed me to build a career, find my voice in media and, most importantly, understand what I want my platform to stand for," she said.

"I'm not coming back simply to compete; I'm coming back with something to contribute. Miss Cosmo gives me an opportunity to take the work I have already started in South Africa and place it on a global stage."

From the crown to creating impact

At the centre of Thabethe's Miss Cosmo South Africa campaign are two initiatives, Crown Confidence and Sustain Her, which reflect her focus on empowering young women.

Crown Confidence is aimed at helping young women develop confidence, communication skills and the ability to articulate their value and aspirations.

Drawing from Thabethe's own experiences in pageantry, media and public speaking, the initiative provides young women with practical tools to find their voices, communicate confidently and pursue opportunities.

Sustain Her, meanwhile, addresses two issues affecting young women: period poverty and textile waste.

The initiative was developed in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg, with lecturers Zanné De Meillon and Danial Carsten, and in partnership with NPC Love Our City.

Through the initiative, donated clothing and textile waste are repurposed into reusable menstrual pads and menstrual dignity kits for young women.

To date, more than 1,968 reusable sanitary pads have been produced, while 320 girls have received menstrual dignity kits, with another 148 kits prepared for distribution.

The initiative also incorporates confidence and leadership workshops through its partnership with Crown Confidence, taking its focus beyond menstrual products to address some of the confidence and opportunity gaps faced by young women.

A contribution of R165 can sponsor a reusable menstrual dignity kit. Donations are facilitated through Love Our City, with eligible contributions to a Section 18A-approved organisation potentially qualifying for a tax deduction, subject to SARS requirements.

Thabethe heads to Vietnam

Thabethe's international Miss Cosmo journey begins this month when she travels to Vietnam from 16 to 19 August for the Miss Cosmo 2026 pre-launch event.

The event will bring together the international organisation, national representatives and stakeholders ahead of the main competition later this year.

It will also be Thabethe's first official engagement with the Miss Cosmo organisation in Vietnam as she begins preparations to represent South Africa internationally.

Founded in Vietnam by UniMedia, Miss Cosmo is built around the philosophy of "Impactful Beauty", which aims to move beyond traditional definitions of beauty by celebrating women who use their voices and actions to create positive change.

The competition combines pageantry with cultural exchange, entertainment, tourism, education and community engagement.

South Africa already has a connection to the Miss Cosmo platform.

In 2025, television and fashion personality Bonang Matheba hosted the Miss Cosmo Grand Finale and Beauty Music Festival in Ho Chi Minh City, where more than 80 national representatives took part.

For Thabethe, following another prominent South African woman's involvement with the organisation adds significance to her own international journey.

"A crown should amplify what is already inside you".

As she prepares to take the South African flag to Vietnam, Thabethe says she wants her reign to reflect the woman she has become since her previous pageant experiences.

"I've always believed that a crown should amplify what is already inside you. For me, this is an opportunity to bring together the worlds I love – media, storytelling, fashion, women's empowerment and impact – and to represent South Africa with intention."

She added that she wants her journey to reflect a woman who is "ambitious, curious, grounded and willing to use her platform for something bigger than herself."

Her Miss Cosmo South Africa journey is supported by Aureus Alliance Holdings, the headline sponsor of the South African title.

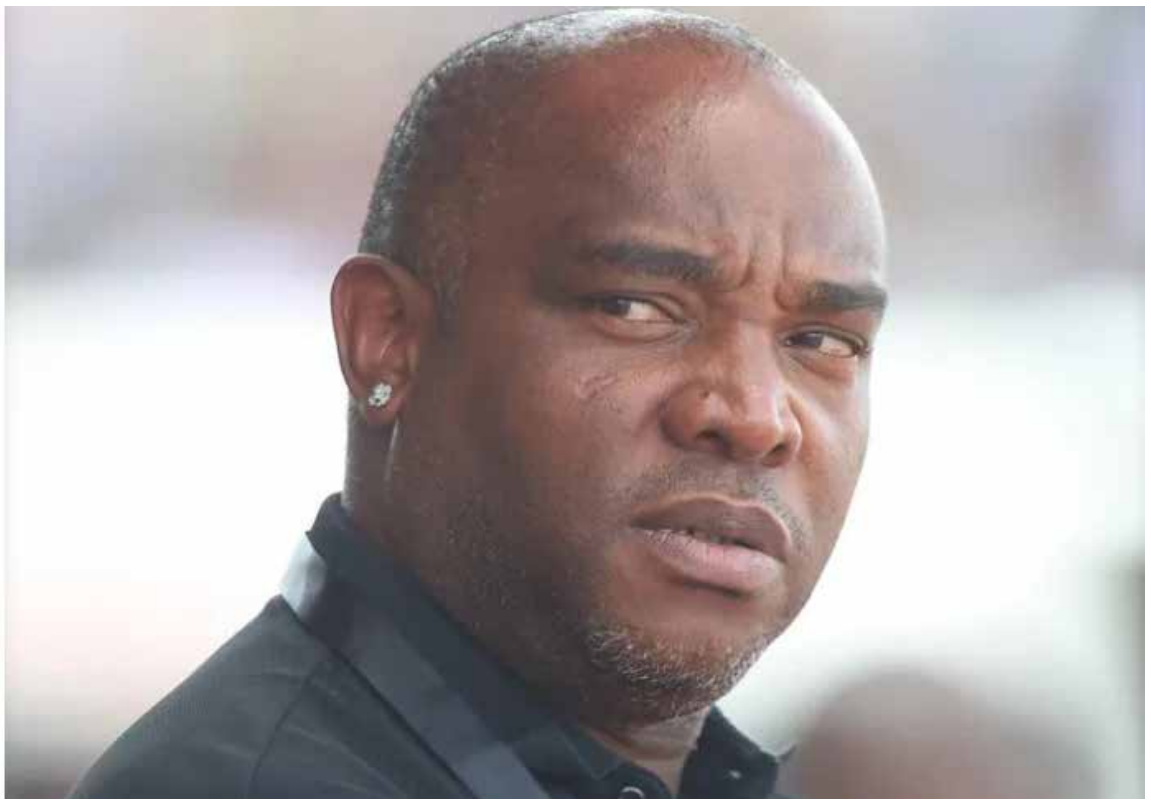
With her international campaign now underway, Thabethe returns to the pageant stage with more than her previous experience behind her. She brings with her a growing media career, entrepreneurial ambitions and initiatives aimed at creating tangible opportunities for young women.

For Thabethe, the crown is therefore not simply a title, but another avenue through which she hopes to turn visibility into impact.

- IOL

FREE
Metro
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2026
SPORT

Benni McCarthy fires back at Hugo Broos over Relebohile Mofokeng criticism



MIHLALI BALEKA

Bafana Bafana legend Benni McCarthy has taken a swipe at Hugo Broos for saying that Relebohile Mofokeng would struggle in the Belgian Pro League, adding that he is pleased with how the attacker has adapted so far.

Mofokeng has enjoyed a fine start to life at Royale Union Saint-Gilloise following his move from Orlando Pirates, scoring five goals and registering four assists in 17 matches across all competitions for the club.

His immediate adaptation has seen him grow in leaps and bounds, showing the ability to be a key figure for Bafana after playing an important role in three successive wins last month, including back-to-back qualifier victories over Guinea and Eritrea.

The 22-year-old will be eager to continue his rich vein of form when Bafana face Kenya in back-to-back Afcon qualifiers, starting at Orlando Amstel Arena on Friday before the return leg in Nairobi next Tuesday.

McCarthy, who will lead the Harambee Stars against his home country – where he remains the all-time top scorer with 31 goals – recently spoke about Mofokeng's progress. He touched on how the youngster has proven his doubters wrong, including former Bafana coach Broos, who previously questioned whether Mofokeng's slight build would hinder him abroad.

"I think the biggest compliment I can give the boy is that he proved Hugo Broos wrong," McCarthy said during an interview with SportyTV.

"Hugo Broos was highly critical of him, thinking that he was too small, he was too skinny, he was too petite, and he wasn't up to European standards that he would not fit in.

"But he's gone there, and he's proven him wrong. He's scored four goals and a couple assists already so early in the season.

"He's proven his biggest critic wrong and that's what I'm the most proud of the boy. And that shows that he's South African blood and he's a survivor.

He can survive anywhere. You put him in an uncomfortable situation, and he comes up top."

While Mofokeng is enjoying his football, McCarthy advised him not to become complacent, urging him to finish the season strongly and potentially attract clubs that could see him feature in the Champions League next season.

"He just needs to continue, and keep on believing in himself," McCarthy said. "That's the biggest part of it all. He'll then know that he'll pull himself out of any situation.

He's got to try and pull himself out of every uncomfortable situation he finds himself in, and then he'll flourish. It's a great stepping stone for him."







Is Percy Tau set for a stunning return to Mamelodi Sundowns ?

MIHLALI BALEKA

Percy Tau has reportedly been spotted training with former club Mamelodi Sundowns over the last few days, with reports suggesting that this is merely to keep fit as he attempts to revive his career following a spell on the sidelines.

While there might not be direct talks regarding a contract should he impress coach Miguel Cardoso and his technical team, the possibility is not totally off the table.

Tau seems to have already made himself comfortable again at the club, having been spotted in the VIP section alongside several Sundowns players during their 3-1 defeat to USM Alger on Sunday afternoon.

Tau returned to Chloorkop a few weeks after posting photos of himself training alone, prompting a comment from his former Sundowns coach and Bafana Bafana incumbent Pitso Mosimane, who wrote: "The Return!!"

It would not be the first time Sundowns have re-signed one of their former players this season. Cassius Mailula also returned to the club after training with the squad prior to the start of the campaign.

- iol