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News

Majoro to create 8000 jobs in two years

Staff Reporter

In a bid to reduce the ever-soaring rate of unemployment in Lesotho, the government is incubating several new business ventures that will, among others, create an estimated 8 000 jobs in the next two years, the budget speech for the current fiscal year has shown.

Presenting the budget in the national assembly earlier today, the minister of finance Dr Moeketsi Majoro said the initiative was a joint venture between both the ministry of trade and industry, together with the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC).

Majoro said the 2019/20 fiscal year would be the first year for the implementation of the Second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDPII).

“The theme for NSDP II is ‘inclusive growth, private sector-led jobs and reduced unemployment’. Lesotho is not only facing a fiscal crisis; our people are also facing a jobs crisis.

“With hindsight, government now knows it is must actively seek investment; creating a conducive business climate is simply not enough. With this lesson in mind, government is rolling out, not one, but two initiatives to attract investment.”

The minister added: “The new business ventures including, eight new firms in clothing and electrical components, with an estimated 8,000 jobs to be created in 2 years; fresh produce activity and an out-grower scheme aiming at 500 jobs in the Maseru area, expansion of area under deciduous fruit production to increase from the current 34 ha to 150 ha in the next two years and 500 ha in the medium term which will add 1,000 jobs.”

In addition, he said LNDC would finalise, by mid-year, plans for large integrated piggery, poultry, aquaculture, and beef operations as well as a grains initiative to roll out the area planted to 4,000 ha in Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Berea and Maseru for both domestic and export markets.

He said one investor has plans to construct a silo for the storage of surplus grain.

Completion of both the Tikoe and Belo Industrial Estates is likely to create 23,000 jobs in the medium term (three to five) and close to 50,000 jobs in the long term (six to 10), the minister said.



The minister of finance Dr Moeketsi Majoro

He showed it is therefore important that government ensures that the infrastructure needs of these estates are met on time.

“In addition to the promising and exciting work that the LNDC and the Ministry of Trade and Industry are doing in catalysing private investment, Government has organised an investment laboratory in which both investors and government work out all the modalities necessary for an investment to take place. “The lab, which starts in earnest tomorrow, has already registered more than 80 investors, with potential for investment of M10 billion and 20,000 jobs created. Interest has been expressed in agri-business, tourism and creative arts, technology and manufacturing.

“In addition to the work of the LNDC — which at last is honouring its mandate to build industry—government is implementing an innovative approach to accelerating investment, economic growth and job creation.

“Rather than create a conducive business climate and hope investors would come on their own, government goes out to court them into the four focal areas outlined above.

“The economic or investment laboratory is essentially a one-stop solution development dialogue between government and

investors. Each project requires many government services. In this lab, the entire political leadership and providers of public services are directly involved.

“Infrastructure and business climate requirements are demand-driven, as opposed to the traditional approach in which we supply these and wait in case they are attractive to some investor.”

About the laboratory to be launched tomorrow morning, the minister said the project would run until the first week of April.

At that point, he said, government, coordinated by the Ministry of Development Planning, will hold a one-day job summit to announce the total value of investment committed in the lab, the number of jobs to be created, the roadmap of actions between government and investors, and a dedicated delivery unit to co-ordinate and implement the investment roadmap derived from the process.

The construction of the Belo industrial estate, he said, was underway, adding that when completed it would provide 58 factory shells and create up to 14,500 jobs starting in 2020.

“The government of Lesotho is financing the construction of the first 16 factory shells. I call on Basotho investors, commercial banks, insurance companies, and pension funds to consider investment in the remaining 42 factory shells.

“This would create a new investment opportunity for Basotho that has so far been the monopoly of LNDC. To expand commercial vegetable farming and horticulture for local and export market and to optimise the use of our productive agricultural land, Government will support formalisation of land titles and scale up an existing model that promotes consolidation of small holdings into commercial anchor farms for production of high value vegetables.

“These anchor farms will evolve to serve as mentors and aggregators to support and create a reliable market for emerging farmers by sourcing produce from their smaller satellite farms.

“The model could ultimately mature to incorporate some elements of an out-grower scheme whereby the anchor farm provides agricultural inputs to a network of small farmers in addition to mentorship.”

The minister added: “Government has tapped into a new emerging agricultural market of producing medical Cannabis for exportation and processing.

“The ministries of health, of agriculture and food security and of trade and industry have joined hands to make this wonderful initiative a success. So far 50 cannabis licenses have been issued. However, only one company is close to exporting its first produce.”

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News



President of Lesotho Association for Teachers (LAT) Letsatsi Ntsibolane



Education minister, Professor Ntoi Rapapa

Teachers oppose new education bill

MATHATISI SEBUSI

MASERU - Teachers Unions are bitterly opposed to some sections of the Education Act Amendment Bill 2019 tabled before Parliament by education minister, Professor Ntoi Rapapa, arguing that they are meant to instill fear on the continued collective bargaining powers and organised teachers' processes.

The teachers contend that the bill, which is meant to address teachers' grievances on the hiring of principals and teachers' retirement package is a draconian law that is designed to instill fear in teachers and paralyze education fraternity with threats.

President of Lesotho Association for Teachers (LAT), Letsatsi Ntsibolane articulates that while they are delighted the bill addresses their two major grievances, they will not let it go through.

Ntsibolane argued that this is because Rapapa has seized the opportunity to react to and address the current situation between teachers and the ministry negatively by including new subsections that give him the authority to control teachers and everything that has to do with the teaching fraternity.

The amendments he said, were introduced without consulting either the trade unions or any education stakeholders.

He said the subsections grant the minister the authority to personally make inspections in classrooms and act against defaulting teachers - a role Ntsibolane alleges should be

performed by inspectors.

Through the bill, Ntsibolane said the minister gives himself the authority to choose a conciliator and to dissolve conciliatory board which is currently dealing with the disputes.

"The Conciliator which is Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolutions (DDPR) has the authority to resolve disputes where trade unions have dispute of interest or rights with the Government to ensure transparency and fairness in resolving disputes.

"The minister of education taking the authority will deny teachers the chance to fair trail and a chance to fight for their rights," Ntsibolane argued.

He slammed the bill for intimidating teachers with a no-work no-pay principle - a practice he described as both unpractical and in contravention of the labour law,

He said the labour law is clear that when a teacher is absent from work without permission, such a teacher should be disciplined in a way the supervisor deems befitting. "This could be through suspension or dismissal, the no-work no-pay principle only applies when there is a legal strike as per the employer's terms."

The union leader said the minister even gave the inspectors authority to order immediate teachers' supervisors to take immediate actions against teachers who have breached teaching laws and to deal with them accordingly.

"This is losing the mandate of inspections in schools which is meant to improve schools in

Lesotho and not trap teachers," he said. The current education act he said stipulates that inspectors should file reports after inspection, showing that if a teacher is not performing up to standard, the matter should be accordingly communicated with the teacher in question and resolved accordingly.

Chairperson of social cluster committee in Parliament Fako Moshoeshoe said the bill is yet to go through the committee where all concerned stakeholders including teachers' unions will be invited to peruse it clause by clause.

"All concerned parties will be given a chance to air their views about the bill," he said. Moshoeshoe said thereafter, the committee will file a report basing its self on the stakeholders' opinions, before sending it to Parliament.

According to the education amendment bill 2019 whose objective is to amend the Education Act 2010, to improve the general management of the education sector and maintain the principles of good governance, the act that is being amended is fraught with short comings such as inconsistencies with other laws like teachers' pension Act No4 of 1994 and public officers defined contribution pension fund Act No4 of 2008.

According to the amendment bill, the said contraventions make it practically impossible to pay gratuities that were agreed to with the principals upon completion of at least 12 consecutive months of their contracts.

Section four (3a) of the

amendment bill stipulates that the Minister shall take necessary measures to ensure that proper teaching and learning at a school is not compromised and where circumstances warrant, the minister may take appropriate action as may be prescribed against relevant structures.

"If a teacher is absent from duty without permission, the principle of no work no pay shall apply notwithstanding any disciplinary procedure provided under this Act," reads section 55(3).

While section 19 (i) of principal law notes, "where in the course of inspection, an inspector discovers a breach of discipline committed by a teacher, the inspector shall instruct an immediate supervisor of the teacher to take disciplinary action against the teacher in terms of the disciplinary code and the instructed supervisor shall comply with the instruction and if the immediate supervisor fails to take disciplinary action in accordance with subsection (1), the minister may, notwithstanding the provision of section 57, appoint a committee to inquire into the alleged breach of discipline and the committee shall make recommendation to the appointing authority.

"A teacher who is entitled to retire at the age of 65 shall upon coming into effect of this Act, have an option to retire at any age from 50 to 65 years" reads section 62(4).

"The minister shall appoint a Conciliator who shall conciliate disputes of interests among parties to the dispute," section 59(1) reads.

Late judge hailed as fountain of integrity

RELEBOHILE TSOAMOTSE

MASERU — Mourners at the memorial service of the late High Court judge Justice 'Maseshophe Hlajoane hailed her as a fountain that nurtured the seeds of integrity, civility and work ethic and professionalism.

Justice ' Hlajoane died on March 2, at Medic Clinic in Bloemfontein, South Africa after a short illness.

Addressing fellow mourners at the late judge's memorial service which was held last Friday at the Palace of Justice, Acting Chief Justice 'Maseforo Mahase said it was during poignant moments like this that jurists realised that the tallest tree that provided the eternal shade to their aspirations in the promotion of human rights, rule of law and independence of the judiciary had suddenly been removed.

Justice Mahase said the late judge's passing had left a huge void difficult to fill as she was expecting they would together walk the long arduous route of guiding the judiciary to greater and new heights.

She said the judiciary shall forever mourn the loss of that great woman of their generation, adding that she and her colleagues, however, felt privileged to have learned from her and reaped invaluable lessons from her wisdom, intellect, work-ethics and integrity.

She described Justice Hlajoane as a person whose exemplary life would always be a flashing light to plague the dozing conscience of mankind.

"Her goodness was not found in a passive commitment to a particular creed, but in her active participation in a lifesaving creed, not in a moral pilgrimage that reached its destination point, but by the love ethic by which she journeyed life in a highway. "She literally sucked the concept of justice from the thumb, from the cradle to the grave and that it is an enviable record that most of the judicial officers can only hope to emulate and that it is also why it even later pleased His Majesty to again elevate her to the position of Acting Judge of the Court of Appeal and later, Acting President of the same court, a position she however owing to legal intricacies never assumed."



The late High Court judge Justice Maseshophe Hlajoane

The Acting Chief Justice further described the late jurist as a fearless and indefatigable fighter for human rights, rule of law, judicial independence and incorruptible beyond dispute and unrivalled.

She added: "Only few among the judicial officers can match her resoluteness to stand firm and dig in her heels in defence of these seminal concepts of the jurisprudence." For his part, the Attorney General King's Counsel Haae Phoofolo said in the past 39 years that he had known Justice Hlajoane, she had always been an honest person who took her judicial oath seriously.

Phoofolo said judging from Justice Hlajoane's curriculum vitae, her ascendancy to the high judicial office she held until her demise had not been an easy and rapid one but characteristics of her make up fate made her to learn the rules of the game very deeply as she also submitted herself to the divine guidance.

Phoofolo said he could boldly

say that when Justice Hlajoane became a Judge of the High Court, she was ready for the challenge both with the immense knowledge of the law in practice and theory and also with character, the tools which made her a no nonsense type of judge. "Justice Hlajoane has left her legacy in the judiciary that makes the nation proud although she left at a time when Lesotho needed a Judge of her wisdom and integrity above all," Phoofolo said. Treasurer of the Law Society of Lesotho, Advocate Moshoeshe Mokaloba described Justice Hlajoane as the kind of judge that was not involved with politicians and was one of the few who did not only hear cases but also wrote and delivered judgments, qualities he said set her apart from other Judges. Mokaloba said the Law Society acknowledged Justice Hlajoane's contributions in maintaining and restoring the rule of law and justice in Lesotho, adding the late judge always ensued that legal proceedings were conducted fairly.

The late judge was born Maipato Letebele in April, 14, 1951 in Ha Rats'iu, Berea. She was the sixth child in a family of 10 of the late Makebe and 'Mathabang Letebele. She is survived by three children. According to her employment history in the judiciary, Justice Hlajoane first became a clerk of court in 1980, Between 1980 and 1991, she was promoted from the position of first class magistrate to third class magistrate. She served as a Resident Magistrate from 1991 to 1993. She was appointed Secretary of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) from 1993 to 2001 before she served as Registrar of the High Court and Court of Appeal.

She was appointed to bench as a judge of the High Court in 2001, a position she held until her death.

A second memorial service will be held for the late judge on Tuesday at the ministry of health's auditorium. She will be laid to rest in Bela-Bela, Berea on Thursday.

Committee declares govt broke



Minister of Communication Thesele Maseribane

MATHATISI SEBUSI

MASERU - A subcommittee that has been established to address the teachers' grievances has declared that the government is broke, hence it cannot afford the eight percent increment the teachers demand.

The committee has, however, encouraged the teachers who have embarked on a legal nationwide mass action to write a proposal to the government, requesting a discount on their pay as you earn tax.

This follows long negotiations between the two parties with the subcommittee chairperson,

Thesele Maseribane saying they have finally arrived at a point where they fully understand the hassle both factions are facing.

The bickering between the education ministry and teachers' unions, Maseribane said dated back to the past 10 years, adding they had now agreed to work hand in hand with the teachers' union to resolve the long-standing gripes.

"The two parties also agreed that the ministry of education would continue preparing to implement the new education curriculum and train grade eight teachers from the districts that were left behind on the first training by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and

the Lesotho College for Education (LCE) on mathematics, science, English and Sesotho.

"The ministry is currently distributing books in all secondary and high schools and by the end of the March, all schools will have received the books," Maseribane said.

He added that the ministry will sensitize communities on the new curriculum and encourage them to contribute their skills and knowledge on culture over Radio Lesotho programmes on culture and traditional music.

He further announced that the ministry of education will work together with teachers' unions and get lists of teachers who have not been paid to ensure that they get their monies.

The two parties, he also showed agreed that the increase in teachers' salaries upon acquisition of higher qualifications will be verified by the two parties and taken before the cabinet for determination.

Meanwhile, learners are expected to return to school for a week as per the provisions of their strike.

For his part, the Minister of

Education and Training Professor Ntoi Rapapa promised that they were working very hard to ensure that the strike ended, adding a lot of progress had already been realised.

Rapapa further pledged that during the week that classes would be attended, they would ensure that by the end of that week, they had something tangible that would keep teachers in schools.

According to Maseribane, the high stress level between the ministry of education and teachers need to be interrogated, attributing its source to the laws that both parties do not agree on, abide by and understand.

Lesotho Association for Teachers (LAT) president Letsatsi Ntsibolane said progress made towards addressing the teachers' grievances would determine whether or not the strike continued.

Although Ntsibolane confirmed the development in their discussions, he could however not be drawn to say whether or not their strike would continue after classes were attended for a week.





SCALABLE NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE WORKSHOP INVITATION

Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) in conjunction with the Internet Society (ISOC) will host a workshop on Scalable Network Infrastructure at Lancers Inn, Cnr. Kingsway & Pioneer Road, Maseru from 25 – 29 March 2019.

The workshop targets the Network and IT Systems Administrators who have little to no experience as it is an introductory course. The following topics will be covered:

1. Basic Routing (Static routing, TCP/IP model)
2. IPv4/v6 Addressing
3. OSPF
4. BGP
5. Management of router configuration
6. Network Operations Centre (NOC)- Network Performance monitoring tools
7. Routing Security concepts
8. Internet Exchange Points between networks

Interested candidates must submit their CV to the following email by **20 March 2019 17:00hrs.**

lsadmin@lca.org.ls

Successful candidates will be notified by email on 21 March 2019. Attendance is free of charge. However, participants are required to bring their own laptops.



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Sport

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Lesotho players shine in SA chess tourney



Local chess players during a recent national tourney at the Lerotholi Polytechnic in Maseru

NTHAKO MAJORO

MASERU - Lesotho players dominated an open chess championship in Thaba Nchu, Free State in South Africa last Saturday.

According to the spokesperson of the Chess

Federation of Lesotho (CFL), Khiba Selatela, Lesotho's Khanyapa Theko recorded 5.5 points to win the Albert Moroka Open Chess Championship.

Selatela said the Candidate Master (CM) Tokelo Klaas, also from Lesotho, was the runner-up with 5.0 points.

Other local players - Palama Makhele, Monaheng Motlomelo and Teboho Lelimo finished 11th, 12th and 19th respectively.

"Theko appeared on first position after he recorded 5.5 points and Klaas made on second place with 5.0 points Selatela told Public Eye.

"Makhele recorded 2.5 points, Monaheng Motlomelo 2.0 while Teboho Lelimo recorded 1.0."

Selatela further said: "We also had a development section where in the under-10, two young players from Lesotho also finished first with 5.0 and 4.5 points, namely Bonolo Ntsielo and Reitumetse Taioe respectively."

Selatela said apart from Lesotho and the South African players, there was also one player from Malawi. The tournament was however not a World Chess Federation (FIDE) rated event.

All Lesotho players, Public Eye has been told, competed in the Thaba Nchu chess event on their own. Theko and Klaas are among the short-listed chess players for this year's Lesotho Annual Sports Awards (LASA) together with their fellow chess mates Sechaba Khalema and 'Malehoa Likhomo.

The chess quartet have been nominated for the Sport Star of the year accolade and are competing for the title against top athletic duo Neheng Khatala and Lerato Sechele.

Klaas, Theko and Khalema are also competing among themselves for the Sportsman of the year, while Likhomo on the other hand was also short-listed for the Sportswoman of the year against the same Sechele and Khatala.

Likewise, the 2019 Albert Moroka Chess Open Championship runner-up in the junior category Taioe, has also been short-listed for the Junior Female Sportsperson of the year, alongside Lelimo and other chess junior players Mojakisane Lebakae and 'Mallillo Phera.

The chess foursome competes against junior athletics duo 'Manqabang Tsebela and Thebe Semoko.

Chess Federation of Lesotho president T eliso Motloheloa has also been short-listed for Umpire/Referee of the year where he competes against Chakatsa Lephole and 'Mamokebe Moshoeshoe, both netball umpires.