



# BLOW TO MAHAO

*... another ABC member wants  
recent NEC elections nullified*

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ASERU – The newly elected All Basotho Convention (ABC) executive body's bid to assume office could be stalled a bit longer after another party member last week filed a notice to sue for its nullification.

Motseki Lefera, in papers dated March 19, 2019 and signed by his legal representative T. Hoane of Makara Chambers, gave notice he would ask the High Court this week to invalidate results of the party's February elective conference.

"Please kindly take notice that an application will be made before this honourable on the 27th March 2019 at 9:30am or so soon thereafter as the matter may conveniently be heard for an order in the following terms:

"That the proceedings and outcomes of the elective conference of the All Basotho Convention Party (ABC) held on the 1st and 2nd days of February 2019 be cleared null and void."

The notice of motion indicates the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ABC and the Lesotho Council of NGOs, which conducted the disputed poll will be cited as respondents.

During the hearing slated for this coming Wednesday – two days before lawyers representing the feuding factions in the first application square off in court - Lefera intends to depose an affidavit to support his application.

"And please take further notice that the affidavit of the petitioner will be used in support of this application and hereto attached. And further that the constitution of the All Basotho Convention Party (ABC) is hereto attached and marked Annexure "A" for the attention of this Honourable Court," reads the notice of motion.

Lefera's application is the second since the ABC elective conference produced a result that seems to have rubbed party bigwigs, including leader Thomas Thabane, the wrong way.

This has been followed by a titanic battle for the right to run the party with the losing committee pitting its wits against the victors.

Following the conference, the outgoing NEC locked the incoming NEC out of party



Prof Nqosa Mahao

offices in Met Cash Building claiming that the new officials have not been officially inaugurated and that the elective conference was still ongoing until officially closed by the party's leader Thomas Thabane who was elected unopposed.

Trade and Industry Minister Habofano Lehana, Mining Minister Keketso Sello and Mohapi Mohapinyane – ABC Member of Parliament for Rothe – were the first to challenge the results of the hustings when they lodged an application in the High Court.

The trio wanted the court to nullify the results and order fresh polls on the grounds that there were serious irregularities which had affected the credibility of the elections.

The high court issued an interim order barring the incoming NEC from exercising its authority.

After a few postponements, the High Court recently ordered that: "The parties shall hold settlement negotiations immediately and conclude such negotiations on or before March 19, and that Mr R. Makamane (Assistant Registrar of the High Court) mediate such negotiations."

During ensuing negotiations, the outgoing NEC demanded two of the party's newly-elected executives; Professor Nqosa Mahao

and Lebohang Hlaele, step aside for them to hand over power.

The old NEC members also wanted guarantees they would remain in cabinet.

But a source close to Mahao said on the eve of the ill-fated talks: "Mahao and Hlaele were elected by the elective conference as deputy leader and secretary general respectively, this is non-negotiable. Who should replace them if they step aside? This is a ridiculous demand."

The talks have since collapsed meaning the parties will have to argue their cases before Acting Chief Justice Mahase this week.

"The parties undertake to hold the negotiations in good faith and to conclude the process on or before March 19, 2019. The parties shall attend the settlement negotiations with their respective legal representatives who shall play a consultative role.

"If the negotiations collapse or fail by March 19, the order continued, then the matter shall be heard on March 20, 2019 at 09:30 and this honorable court shall issue and deliver its judgment (full or ex tempore) on March 29, at 09:30", the court order compelling the two factions to negotiate said. The faction opposed to Mahao argues the elections were "clearly rigged". "The total number of votes received for any given portfolio were higher than the total number of delegates that were registered to vote. Number of registered voters was announced as 1538 but as much as 1611 people voted; that gives you a difference of 73. That is a significant number if you consider that Mahao won by a 147 margin," they said.

ABC leader Thabane described Mahao before the elections as a "useless rag" that should not be voted into the NEC.

"He is not even an ABC member but just a rag being blown by the wind," Thabane told a rally in Abia.

"Tell him I said he must stop all he is saying. If he wants to start his own party let him go ahead. The ABC leader is me and not Mahao. Tell him I said the ABC leader is Thomas Motsaohae Thabane and once I step down, ABC members will elect another ABC member not a PFD member," he said.

Thabane later apologised for his utterances.

Mahao moved from the Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) in 2015 after his brother, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, was assassinated by the army under controversial circumstances.

Members of the Mahao family together with many others who were known as PFD members then joined the ABC.

The ABC held its elective conference from February 1 to 2 but emerged from that conference divided.

## News

# NSS loses jobs case



High Court judge, Justice Semapo Peete

## RELEBOHILE TSOAMOTSE

**M**ASERU – The National Security Services (NSS) has hit a brick wall in its fight to show cadets employed

towards the end of the Pakalitha Mosisili administration were corruptly hired.

The spy agency has been locked in a bitter legal dispute with 77 recruits it fired in January

last year on the basis their appointment had been irregular.

Its legal problems deepened last week when High Court judge, Justice Semapo Peete threw out the agency's application to introduce new evidence bolstering its case.

This NSS filed a counter application to the cadets' case on the eve of judgement in the main case but Justice Peete ruled that he was not convinced with the reasons put forward by the NSS.

He accordingly dismissed the counter application but said he would deliver judgement in the main case on Friday next week.

In the main case, the dismissed officers approached the High Court in 2018 to challenge their dismissal from work. The officers were hired during the tenure of the former Prime Minister Mosisili but the four-party coalition government

led by Prime Minister Thabane dismissed them when

it took power on allegations that their engagement was politically biased.

Director General NSS, Pheello Ralenkoane, the then Minister of Defence, Sentje Lebona, the Public Service Commission and the Attorney General are cited as respondents.

The officers were all served with letters that read: "After considering your irregular employment into the National Security Services for the position of Intelligence Office Four as stipulated in the NSS Recruitment Policy of 2012, take notice that you are hereby discharged from the service with effect from January 1 2018."

The officers then approached the High Court to reverse their dismissal.

They also want the court to order their reinstatement with full pay from February 2018 as they allege they were last paid in January 2018.

According to an affidavit by one of the dismissed officers, Lietsiso Mothala: "During August 2017 the first respondent wrote letters requiring us to 'show cause' why he should not terminate our employment with the NSS.

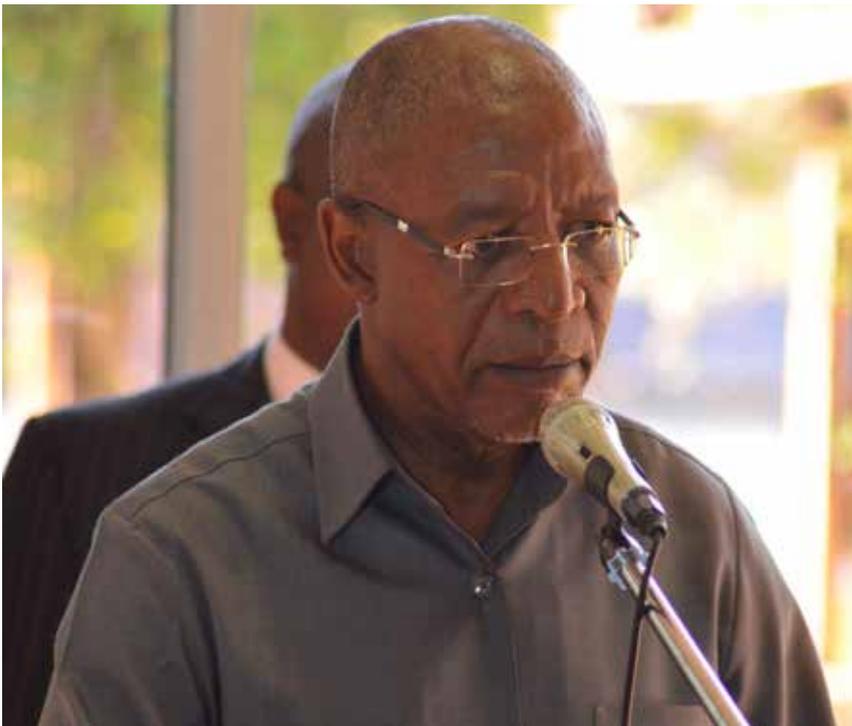
"We have been legally advised and verily believe the same to be correct that the Director General NSS or any other respondents cannot lawfully terminate our contracts which were concluded before the first respondent occupied office . . . because our employment was done by appropriate authorities of NSS before the present Director NSS could occupy office.

"Following our employment, we were allocated contracts of employment and we were allocated employment numbers in the Public Service. We were also deployed at various posts of the NSS in different districts and earned a monthly salary."

Mothala added: "The Director General NSS has no lawful authority to change what his predecessor has done merely because he does not agree with it."

The officers said only a court of law could set aside an employment contract they had with government.

"By writing us letters to 'show cause why' our employment cannot be terminated, preparing lists and convening interviews, in which applicants are already employed, the Director NSS was purporting to treat our employment as a nonexistent and of no effect. He was clearly acting unlawfully," Mothae alleged.



Former Prime Minister Dr Pakalitha Mosisili

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# News

MATHATISI SEBUSI

**M**OHALE'S HOEK – Hundreds of villagers in Mohale's Hoek district will need food assistance this year owing to poor harvests and are also staring at severe water shortages as the effects of climate change begin to bite.

Environmental experts on Friday warned villagers in Maphutseng village are particularly badly hit, saying this was in the main due to poor land management that has resulted in massive top soil erosion.

This was revealed at a climate change adaptation manual launch that was held by Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and Ministry of Education with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at Bethesda Primary school in Mohale's Hoek.

This dovetails with a World Food Programme (WFP) report in January which confirmed more than 300 000 people countrywide would require food assistance urgently.

"The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) results indicate that more than 320,000 people - almost 20% of the country's population - will require lifesaving humanitarian assistance over the lean season, a situation that is further exacerbated by ongoing dry weather that is resulting in late/irregular planting, poor pastures and limited access to water. "With a significant risk of another El Niño induced drought, UN agencies in Lesotho have requested and received Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) support for rapid multisectoral response and immediate lifesaving assistance aimed at the most affected populations in the southern districts and Maseru.

"Planned interventions include emergency food and cash assistance aimed to save lives, reduce morbidity and mortality, protect livelihoods, and prevent and respond to immediate protection risks," the WFP said in its country brief.

More than half (57%) of Lesotho's population live on less than one dollar per day. GDP stands at USD2.3 billion while its national GDI per capita is USD1,270 (World Bank).

Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget.

The Government allocates 7% of its national budget to social protection programmes such as school meals, pension for the

# Water woes nail hungry M. Hoek

*... climate change takes toll*



elderly, child grants and public works.

The population's high vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring climatic hazards, including droughts, early frost and a low performing economy. Up to 29% of people below the age of 35 are unemployed. Agriculture, which contributes 7% of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80% of the population living in rural areas, said the WFP which supports the Government's efforts to build the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulating agricultural production.

The climate change adaptation manual for schools, which was developed for capacity building, has been integrated in school curriculums to teach children ways to adapt and survive severe climatic conditions while also working towards regaining their lost environment. Speaking at the launch Mamomohau Mohlotsane from National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) said climate change affects everybody and should therefore be included in every subject so that children understand the importance of looking after the environment for their benefit and that of future generations.

She said climate change is damaging the environment which if not taken care of will leave people hungry and stranded with nowhere to live.

She added that the new integrated curriculum already

addresses challenges people face due to climate change and the climate adaptation manual will be of great help in ensuring that people start conservation farming and looking after their pastures and wetlands to avoid land degradation and burning out of water sources.

Holy Cross High School principal sister Paulina Selelekoane, whose school has been practicing conservation agriculture and teaching children about climate change and adaptation said her school is no longer safe for children due to dongas around it. She, however, added that ever since they started teaching children and practicing climate change adaptation techniques, students performed well in geography thereby increasing the pass rate.

According to her, even though they are surrounded by dongas and drought was recurrent, there was change in some areas where they have been practicing conservation agriculture and water and land conservation. The Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Basic Education Neo Liphoto warned that current land management practices resulted in soil erosion and reduced soil fertility.

According to him, the widespread degradation of the environment and wetlands contribute to challenges of rural poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity therefore there is need for the country to put a sustainable mechanism in place in order to help rural communities and Basotho at

large to survive and overcome the uncertainties.

He said school communities are no exception in challenges brought by global climate change therefore youth awareness on climate change and its impact must be prioritised not only at schools but also in villages.

"This is necessary as the youth are among the marginalised groups in society who if nothing is done shall bear harsh consequences of the global climate change, therefore excluding them from the global climate change awareness campaigns and disaster risk reduction processes will do them no good," Liphoto said.

Government will partner non-government organisations working on soil and environmental rehabilitation programmes.

The ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation has in this connection directed available resources towards programmes aimed at easing the deleterious effects of climate change while at the same time maximising agricultural returns.

The Chief Conservation Officer in the ministry, Malefetsane Nthimo, said government would support water harvesting and climate smart agriculture, which he said would go a long way in ensuring that Basotho produce enough to eat and some surplus for the market.

"We are also talking about small irrigation schemes and shade-nets for vegetable production," he said, adding other activities will look to support mainly youth agricultural efforts. Herdboys' associations practicing sustainable grazing projects as well as clearing invasive species on the rangelands would also get government support.

Nthimo was speaking at the joint launch of the climate change adaptation manual for schools by his ministry, the ministry of education and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The manual was developed to educate scholars on the results of climate change whose harsh effects have been dramatised by Cyclone Idai. Flooding in Southern Africa has affected about two million people in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe since rains began in early March and Cyclone Idai struck on March 14 and 15.

Waters are still rising, as is the death toll – now in the hundreds, but expected to exceed 1,000 people. Idai is the strongest cyclone on record in the Southern Hemisphere. The UN children's agency, estimates that 260,000 children are affected.

# Parliament accused of sidelining disability bill

MATHATISI SEBUSI

**M**ASERU – The Lesotho National Federation Organisation of the Disabled (LNFOD) wants Prime Minister Thomas Thabane to expedite passage of the Disability Equity Bill which has stalled in Parliament.

LNFOD has written to Thabane requesting a meeting to discuss the Bill which has been with the social cluster committee since it was first read in Parliament on 3 September 2018.

Bills are read in parliament three times before being sent to the King for ascent.

The organisation was alarmed when details of the Bill were not included in this year's budget, hence the plan to meet Thabane.

LNFOD project coordinator, Moeletsi Rabasotho, said they are disappointed and surprised that when Parliament opened, Bills that were read after theirs were read for the second time while theirs was skipped.

According to him, the last time they communicated with the social cluster committee, they were informed that the committee would start by holding public



hearings and public consultations on the Bill.

He added that public consultations held in November and December 2018 in all districts were successful.

LNFOD had hoped the social cluster committee would have incorporated its findings to strengthen the Bill and presented it for the second time to parliament by now.

Former Social Development

Minister Matebatso Doti who was working on the bill before she was fired had said the Bill, among others, would provide disabled people with access to education and grant educators the chance to acquire training in the use of Braille.

"It will also protect the disabled against discrimination at work places and will ensure that they get access to social and entertainment places while

also protecting their rights to participate in national elections and have access to public information in a form of braille and other forms of accessible format," she said.

LNFOD executive director Nkhasi Sefuthi said the bill marks a paradigm shift in Lesotho as people living with disabilities are considered objects of pity and charity.

According to Sefuthi, the enactment of the Bill into law would contribute to the advancement of the rights of people with disabilities and promote disability inclusion in the public and private sectors.

"It will give people with disabilities power to claim and enforce their rights and participate effectively in decision-making processes.

"LNFOD now appeals to the Social Cluster Committee to review the Bill bearing in mind the barriers faced by people with disabilities in terms of access to social services including access to information, physical infrastructure, education, employment, and independent living for people with disabilities.

"We also appeal to the Parliament of Lesotho through its two houses to consider the Bill, mindful of the long time taken by the executive to complete the Bill and speed up the processes as soon as it may be practicable for the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities in Lesotho," he said.

# LRA fraud suspects released on bail

RELEBOHILE TSOAMOTSE

**M**ASERU – Four fraud suspects – including three policemen – who are also accused of impersonating Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) officers were on Friday released from custody on R3000 bail each.

The suspects are reported to have pretended to be LRA officials and went around extorting money from business people.

The incidents happened in Ha Thetsane where the suspects conducted door to door "audits" and collected cash from unsuspecting businesses.

Magistrate Thamae Thamae ordered the accused to put forward a R10 000 surety by bringing to

court Basotho nationals who will undertake to pay the surety in case they default or surrender assets valued at 10 000 to court.

The accused are police officers: Messrs Mokheseng Khoabane (29), Keketso Palesa (35), Pheello Motsingoane (34) and two civilians: Khotso Nqhae (25) and Tebello Lehloenyana (31).

Advocate Tlali Motsie, who represented Khoabane, asked the court to release his client as he had a family to provide for.

He also said his client would not interfere with witnesses as investigations into the matter are complete.

The prosecution said it was not opposed to bail but that the court should be aware that Lehloenyana is still at large.

Advocate Lechesa Mahao was concerned other accused persons may also abscond but agreed to R5000 bail for each accused.

However, Advocate Motsie said the fact that Lehloenyana was at large should not affect his co-accused. He asked the court to exercise its discretion in determining the amount of bail to be paid.

"We do understand that the other accused person is still at large, but we ask this court to exercise its discretion on the amount of bail to be paid," Motsie said.

The suspects allegedly demanded tax clearance certificates and trader's licences from at least eight LRA clients at their business premises.

During the "inspections", the suspects are alleged to have threatened to take drastic measures such as closing down businesses for failure to comply going on to extort money from their unsuspecting victims.

The LRA has urged the business community to verify the authenticity of people purporting to be from the tax authority and report suspicious operations to the police.

The revenue authority has previously said LRA officials do not collect money during audits but rather raise awareness while payments are made at banks or at the LRA banking hall housed in their head office.

The suspects will appear before the same court on April 2.

## News

From Page 4

Heavy rains continue to pound the region, likely leading to more lives lost, more people displaced, as more livelihoods and property destroyed. The project titled “reducing vulnerability from climate change” and carried out in the foothills and lowlands of the lower Senqu river basin is aimed at reducing environmental degradation while reducing vulnerability of livelihoods to climate shocks.

Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change (RVCC) project coordinator Lebone Molahlehi, said the project has been working closely with the ministry of forestry in looking after forests, rangelands, soil and water conservation in Mohale’s Hoek district.

According to him, the 10-year project that started in 2015 has been piloted in three community councils in Khoelenya, Lithipeng and Thaba-Mokhele.

Climate change challenges are always discussed at high-level forums to the exclusion of children and the youth.

The ministries of forestry and education, with the help of the UNDP, decided to integrate climate change into the school curriculum from primary school

# Water woes nail hungry M. Hoek

to conscientise children on these issues from a young age.

According to him Mohale’s Hoek was chosen because of its proximity to the Senqu valley.

He added that the aim of the project is to teach communities to know more about climate change, its impact and sources.

Amongst activities during the pre-implementation and awareness period of the project, workshops were held in different villages to inform and teach people about climate change and the importance of looking after rangelands and conserving water and soil which mostly could be done by planting trees, controlling land degradation, removing of invasive, undesirable shrubs from rangelands and reseeded of rangelands.

Malintle Kheleli, manager of Schools in Lesotho under Geography and Environmental Movement (GEM) said under

the project, climate education is taught in schools from lower grades, teaching children how to survive.

He added schools that are teaching about climate change are more environmental management friendly and perform very well since environmental studies integrates other subjects.

She added they plan to expand the project countrywide, as they have only 27 schools covered in Mohale’s Hoek so far.

Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Basic Education, Neo Liphoto, said current land management practices had resulted in soil erosion and reduced soil fertility in the country.

He said widespread environmental degradation and wetlands contribute to rising rural poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity therefore there is need for the country to cobble a sustainable mechanism to help

rural communities to overcome the uncertainties.

He said schools are no exception to challenges brought by climate change therefore youth awareness on climate change and its impact must be prioritised not only at schools but also in villages.

“...added youth awareness on climate change must be integrated in the curriculum in all education and sustainable developments goals and disaster risk reduction strategies.

“This is necessary as the youth are among the marginalised groups in society who if nothing is done shall bear harsh consequences of global climate change, therefore excluding them from the global climate change awareness campaigns and disaster risk reduction process will do them no good,” Liphoto said.

The manual, which is the brainchild of GEM, has already received support from all stakeholders, with the ministry of education and its curriculum development department promising it will be adopted into the national curriculum.

The manual had been formally presented at a breakfast meeting in Maseru the previous day.

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# Lesotho to meet Bloem at talent show

‘MAPALO NKHELOANE

In an effort to strengthen cultural ties between Lesotho and South Africa-based artistes, and to showcase local talent to potential promoters, Angel Jason, born Napo Lithoko, will on April 6 host a “Lesotho meets Bloem” talent show at Vegas Night Club (Tourism Centre) in Bloemfontein.

Lithoko, who is a pop dancer, believes that the grass is greener on the other side of the border and is therefore determined to explore it.

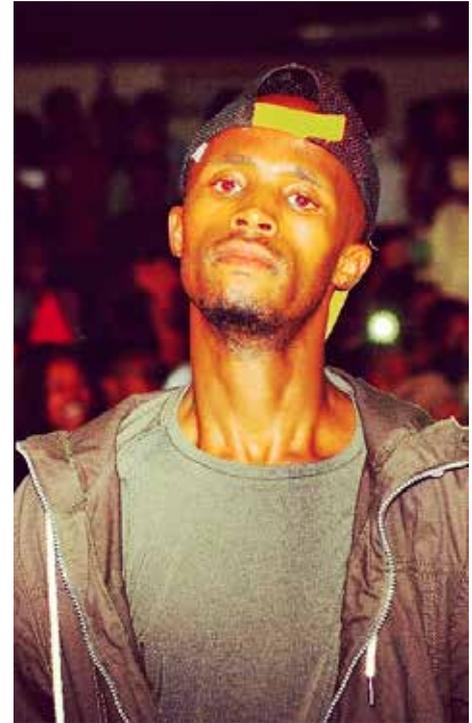
“One of my greatest wishes is to inspire local artistes to become the best versions of themselves in the future and maybe performing on the international stage is the platform we need for that to happen. Forming a bond with the artistes from neighbours might be a step in the right direction,” Lithoko says.

The aim is to make the show an annual event, elevating it to a launchpad for revenue generation and growth of the entertainment industry.

The likes of Osmic, 2 Ball, Kaytee Fresh, Vesta, Drigger, Dj Marley and many others are expected to grace the show.

The 26-year-old pop dancer began his career in 2005 and has slowly built a profile for himself in the local entertainment industry.

“I am just a youth with dreams



of taking the entertainment industry in Lesotho to greater heights because it has potential to even create jobs that we all know are so scarce in our country,” Lithoko says.

Lithoko was one of the 2015 Vodacom superstars in the dance category for which he scooped a whooping M20 000.

In 2016, Lithoko was hired as a dance choreographer at

Machabeng College and also worked as the main event manager at Victoria Hotel.

He indicates that he has also successfully hosted a lot of events that have contributed immensely to changing the lives of some youth in Lesotho; something he emphasises gives him great satisfaction.

In 2017 the passionate Lithoko hosted a dance challenge

event that featured high schools in Maseru and paid school fees for the top dancer, a Methodist High School pupil.

The following year, Lithoko hosted a dance competition comprising all tertiary institutions called “dance or die trying” at KwaLichaba Chesanyama lounge.

A student at Lerotholi Polytechnic walked away M3 000 richer.

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# Sport

THE BEST SUNDAY READ



## Bantu, Sentebale Funeral renew vows

NTHE THE MAPHAONG

**MAFETENG** – Mafeteng-based Econet Premier League outfit Bantu FC, have renewed vows with their long-time partners Sentebale Funeral Gap Services for another three years.

The two parties had been in partnership for the past seven years, starting from 2009 and ending in 2015. This time around Sentebale Funeral Gap came on board with M200,000.00 to strengthen a renewed three-year relationship with the team. The Mafeteng team had part ways with Sentebale Funeral Gap for three years, starting from 2016 up to 2018 and they are now partnering again for another three years.

Sentebale Funeral Gap had been technical sponsor of Bantu FC, assisting the team with footballing equipment such as soccer kits, goalkeeper gloves, soccer balls as well as other training equipment.

Speaking at the re-launch ceremony, Sentebale Funeral Gap Managing Director, Alicia Motšoane, expressed her satisfaction over the partnership with premier league champions

Bantu FC, promising that the company will do its best to further market and present the successes achieved by the team. She stated that Sentebale Funeral Gap as technical sponsor will also bring other sponsors on board because, as a funeral organisation, it is scattered all over the 10 districts of Lesotho therefore it will easily attract other business owners to lend a helping hand to Bantu FC.

“We are proud and honoured to announce the renewal of our sponsorship with a well-known brand like Bantu Football Club. Bantu FC is not only known locally but also internationally. As a responsible funeral organisation, we had granted M200 000.00 to our favourite team Bantu FC. “Sentebale Funeral Gap is proud to be associated with the premier league giants and wishes the team all the best for years to come. As a partner on this journey we will do our outmost to market and present the successes achieved by this humble giant,” Motšoane said during the renewal of vows on Tuesday at Mafeteng.

She further indicated that Bantu President, John Leuta, had been knocking on their door seeking

to revive the partnership hence why they had come back with that kind of money to assist the team, further adding the company was not sponsoring Bantu FC only but they had spread around Mafeteng district where they had sponsored small teams at Kolo, Sekamaneng.

“We have sponsored smaller teams at Kolo, Sekamaneng and we had also sponsored Mafeteng Police to fight the high crime rate in this district by holding sports activities around the district of Mafeteng,” she added. She concluded by appealing to the community of Mafeteng to come and buy their policies and she also appealed to all Mafeteng business owners to come on board in sponsoring the team.

Leuta also expressed satisfaction on their partnership with Sentebale Funeral Gap again.

“The team was struggling to raise money for transport. This money is going to go a long way in assisting us when our players are going for training sessions. Since Bantu players conduct their training sessions in Maseru every day and most of their hosting games are played at Setsoto Stadium, this money is going to

help a lot in terms of transport.

“When the team is growing, sometimes you see it competing at international tournaments such as CAF competitions and our team was struggling with transport to the extent that LeFA had to come to our rescue, but since the beginning of this partnership our problems are now a song of yesterday. As a result we want to thank the company for their continued support,” Leuta said during the ceremony.

Similar sentiments were echoed by the team’s vice president Molefi Lenqosana who further emphasised that the sponsorship is going to play a vital role in upgrading the team: “Sentebale Funeral Gap is found everywhere in the districts of Lesotho, and where you see it, you will also find Bantu FC supporters there which shows that our team will be growing tremendously.”

Lesotho Funeral Gap had been technical sponsors of Bantu since 2009 when it was promoted from A-Division.

Lesotho Flour Mills, Lesotho Post Bank, and Metropolitan Lesotho also came on board as main sponsors of Bantu FC.