

Welcome Remarks by
Principal Secretary – Ministry of Finance and Development
Planning
Nthoateng Lebona (MS)
Labour Force Survey Report Launch
4 July 2025

Programme Director

Allow me to start by paying my respects to:

His Majesty King Letsie III

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly

President of the Court of Appeal

His Lordship the Chief Justice

Honourable Deputy Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers, in particular, the Hon Minister of Labour and
Employment Hon Mokhosi, also representing the Hon Minister of
Finance and Development Planning

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Heads of
International Agencies, in particular, the representative of ILO
Senior Officials

Private Sector representatives and NGOs

Media Houses

Ladies and Gentlemen

allow me to say all protocol observed

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Welcome to this important event, the launch of the 2024 Labour Force Survey (LFS) Report.

This report is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning through the department of Bureau of Statistics (BOS), Ministry of Labour and Employment and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Today marks another milestone in Lesotho's commitment to evidence-based policy and planning, particularly in the area of employment and labour market development. Production of employment and labour market indicators fulfils an objective of monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving NSDP II Extended, SDGs, Agenda 2063, sector strategies and other development frameworks.

It marks the juncture at which we redefine the decent work agenda as we understand better where we are in terms employment and labour development. The report will uncover where we need to close the gaps and create opportunities to employ the human capital that the country has.

Everyone, above 15/18 years of age has the right to work. It is a divine mandate. Through work, we serve others and earn a living and grow the economy.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Statistics are a vital part of the development of any country and Lesotho is no exception. They are needed for evidence-based decision and policy making in order to:

- Provide qualitative and quantitative measures of the development process;

- Allow the people of Lesotho to judge for themselves the progress on the implementation of policies and reforms as well as

Support economic management and delivery of services.

Special thanks to the BOS for aligning this survey with international statistical standards, including resolutions of the 19th, 20th, and 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This alignment ensures that Lesotho's labour data are internationally comparable and methodologically sound.

The 2024 Labour Force Survey is a critical tool for understanding the structure, dynamics, and challenges of our labour market. It provides us with insights into key indicators such as the Labour Force Participation Rate, Employment-to-Population Ratio, Unemployment, Youth Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET), Informality, and Labour Underutilization (LU1–LU4). These findings are critical in identifying policy gaps and opportunities for improving access to decent and productive employment for all Basotho.

This report therefore unpacks the labour and employment situation in Lesotho, highlights headline indicators and points to the remaining policy issues that the country still needs to address

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight a few notable results:

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) stands at 52.0 percent, indicating that just over half of the working-age population is either employed or actively seeking work.

The unemployment rate remains high at 30.1 percent, and even more concerning is the extent of labour underutilization, with the composite measure (LU4) reaching 46.1 percent—meaning nearly half of our working-age population face some form of unmet employment need.

Informal employment continues to dominate, accounting for 84 percent of total employment, especially among women and youth. Youth unemployment is alarmingly high at 48.75 percent for the 15–24 age group (according to UN definition), and this calls for urgent and coordinated interventions, while among youth aged 15 – 35 years (as per Lesotho definition) unemployment rate stands at 38.9 percent.

Ladies and Gentlemen

These numbers are not just statistics—they reflect the realities of employment situation in the country. This is a call to us as a government, development partners, employers, private sector and all other stakeholders, to intensify our efforts in fostering an inclusive and job-rich economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to invite all, academia, policy analysts, private sector, and others, to make full use of these results to inform policy, programme design, and dialogue to combat unemployment. Let us work together to address the challenges highlighted in the survey and to unlock the full potential of our labour force, especially our youth.

I am sure we will have fruitful discussions to reset the agenda for decent work in Lesotho and how to accelerate implementation of key programmes.

In closing, I wish to express my gratitude to the Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Labour and Employment for leading the data collection and analysis, and to our cooperating partners, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), for their continued support in strengthening Lesotho's labour statistics system. We need to work towards increasing the frequency of undertaking the LFS -

annual and have quarterly estimates. We need to feel the pulse of the economy very closely so that effective and responsive measures can be taken.

At this juncture I wish to invite the Hon Minister of Employment and Labour to deliver the keynote address.

Kea Leboha