

Lesotho Independence Day Special

Marking 60 years of independence with deeper focus on youth

RETSELISITSOE THEKO
AMBASSADOR OF LESOTHO



On Oct. 4, the Kingdom of Lesotho will mark 60 years as an independent and sovereign nation.

This diamond jubilee is an occasion for Basotho at home and abroad to honor the courage of those

who secured our freedom, to reflect honestly on our national journey and to renew our commitment to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. It is also an opportunity to thank the many friends whose partnership has supported Lesotho throughout six decades of nationhood.

Lesotho gained independence on Oct. 4, 1966, carrying forward the enduring legacy of King Moshoeshoe I, the founder of

the Basotho nation. His leadership was grounded in unity, dialogue and respect for human dignity. These principles continue to guide the kingdom and remain central to our national identity. Our constitutional monarchy, our commitment to peaceful engagement and the resilience of our people have enabled Lesotho to preserve its sovereignty while contributing constructively to regional and international cooperation.

Over the past 60 years, Lesotho has expanded access to education and health services, strengthened public institutions, improved infrastructure and deepened its participation in the international community. Progress has not always been even, and important challenges remain. Poverty, unemployment, climate change and the lack of strong economic opportunities, particularly for young people, require a sustained national effort to address. This anniversary therefore invites both celebration and responsibility. It calls on the gov-

ernment, citizens, civil society, private sector and our development partners to work together in advancing reforms and inclusive development.

Lesotho enters its seventh decade with valuable strengths. The country is rich in water resources, renewable-energy potential, distinctive textiles, diamonds, agriculture and tourism opportunities. Its mountains, cultural heritage, Basotho blankets, music and renowned horsemanship offer visitors an experience rooted in community and history. Responsible investment in these sectors can create employment, support local enterprise and connect Lesotho more fully to regional and global markets.

Japan has been a respected partner in Lesotho's development journey. Japan recognized Lesotho upon independence, and diplomatic relations were established in July 1971. Cooperation has grown through support for education, health, food secu-

urity, infrastructure, renewable energy and human resource development. Our relationship is founded on mutual respect and a shared belief that lasting development depends on capable institutions and empowered people.

The participation of Their Majesties King Letsie III and Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso at the 2025 World Expo in Osaka, together with Lesotho's National Day program, conveyed its culture, development priorities and investment potential to Japanese and international audiences. Lesotho's engagement at the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development further strengthened dialogue with Japan on economic transformation, energy, job skills and sustainable growth. These exchanges demonstrate the practical value of diplomacy in bringing governments, businesses, universities and communities closer together.

As we look ahead, Lesotho seeks partner-

ships that promote decent employment, technology transfer, climate resilience and opportunities for young people and women. Education and skills development must remain central, because the ambitions of our nation will be realized through the knowledge, confidence and creativity of Basotho. We also invite Japanese companies, academic institutions and travelers to discover Lesotho and to build relationships that serve both countries.

Within Southern Africa and the wider international community, Lesotho will continue to support peace, multilateral cooperation and sustainable development, while speaking clearly and consistently for the needs and aspirations of small, landlocked developing states.

The 60th anniversary belongs to every Mosotho and to every friend who has walked with the kingdom. It reminds us that independence is sustained through responsible citizenship, accountable leader-



ship and national unity.

Guided by our motto, *Khotso! Pula! Nala!* (Peace! Rain! Prosperity!), Lesotho celebrates with gratitude and moves forward with purpose. May this diamond jubilee deepen cooperation, strengthen hope and inspire a new generation to build a more secure and prosperous kingdom.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.