



MEDIA STATEMENT

OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE DELAYS IN THE PAYMENT OF OLD AGE PENSIONS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

The Office of the Ombudsman (OoO) has noted with serious concern continued reports and complaints regarding delays in the payment of Old Age Pensions (OAP) and other social assistance grants in Lesotho.

The complaints received suggest that some beneficiaries experience prolonged delays in accessing benefits intended to support their basic needs, including food, healthcare, transport and other essential living expenses. These concerns affect some of the most vulnerable members of society, including elderly persons, persons with disabilities and impoverished households.

The OoO recalls that in 2024 it investigated a complaint involving a pensioner whose OAP was delayed for approximately fifteen (15) months due to administrative failures within the Ministry responsible for social development. The Ombudsman found that the delay amounted to maladministration and recommended measures to improve service delivery, establish clear timelines for processing pensions and prevent similar occurrences in future.

The OoO continues to receive complaints concerning delays in the payment of OAP and other social assistance grants. Many of these complaints mirror issues that were previously the subject of Ombudsman investigations and recommendations. The persistence of such concerns raises doubts about the extent to which corrective measures have been implemented and sustained. It further suggests the existence of systemic weaknesses in the administration of social protection programmes that may be adversely affecting vulnerable beneficiaries across the country. These circumstances warrant a broader inquiry into the efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of the systems responsible for the delivery of social assistance benefits.

Accordingly, and in the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Ombudsman by law, I have decided to initiate an own motion investigation into the administration, processing and payment of OAP and other social assistance grants in Lesotho.

The investigation will examine, among other matters:

- (a) the causes and extent of payment delays;
- (b) the effectiveness of registration and verification processes;
- (c) the adequacy of administrative and payment systems;
- (d) compliance with previous Ombudsman recommendations;
- (e) the impact of delays on beneficiaries; and
- (f) measures required to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery.

The Ombudsman invites beneficiaries, family members, civil society organisations, community councils and members of the public who have experienced delayed payments or related administrative difficulties to submit information to the OoO.

Social protection programmes exist to uphold human dignity and reduce poverty; beneficiaries should not be prejudiced by avoidable administrative failures.

Further information regarding the investigation will be communicated in due course.

Media and Complaints Enquiries:

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Issued at Maseru on this **8th day of JUNE 2026**

ADV. TLOTLISO POLAKI

OMBUDSMAN