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## OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

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### OBITUARY NOTICE

OMB/ORG/9

21<sup>st</sup> November 2024

#### PASSING OF AN OMBUDSMAN TRAILBLAZER

The Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Advocate Tlotliso Polaki, regrets to announce to the international Ombudsman community, the passing of Honourable Mohale Henry Nt'saba on the 19th December 2024 a few months to his 100th birthday.

Honourable Nt'saba was the pioneer Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Lesotho, who established the office from inception. Before his death, Honourable Nt'saba was, to our best knowledge, the oldest surviving Ombudsman pioneer and trailblazer in the world. He was appointed to the office on the 18th October 1993 and retired in 2002 after nearly a decade in the role.

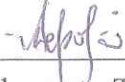
Our Ombudsman Office in Lesotho is eternally indebted to Ntate Nt'saba, as he was fondly called, for his immense contribution in birthing our office and setting it on a foundation that we pride in today. When he was appointed to the office, all he had to work with for the most part of the first year were his personal secretary, office assistant, and a chauffeur. By the time he retired, the Ombudsman's office boasted a strong and capable twenty-four-person workforce, including six investigators and other support staff. The complaint load had climbed to an average of one thousand three hundred and eighty-four (1,384) complaints per annum. Honourable Nt'saba also introduced and

implemented a complaints management system, and made sure all his staff received periodic training on the job.

It was an honour to celebrate this contribution as part of the special event held for *Ombuds Trailblazers* at the recently concluded International Ombud Expo hosted by the Government of Botswana from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024. Before that event, I had visited him at his home in Maseru. He was always in good spirit and rich in wisdom; it was striking how at 99 years, he could still recall events dating back nearly thirty years. Meeting with him was an exceptional privilege that left one craving for more. As the Late Honourable Lethebe A. Maine, then President of the African Ombudsman and Mediation Association (AOMA), described him on his retirement, 'he was a man of humility, always steadfast, and who provided light to younger Ombudsmen in the region.'

Before his appointment as an Ombudsman, Honourable Nt'saba had a remarkable public service career that spanned several decades. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from the University of Fort Hare in the then Union of South Africa in 1946. He subsequently proceeded to the University of South Africa where he was awarded his BA Honours degree in 1951. He studied for his post graduate degree, majoring in development studies at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Upon return to Africa, he devoted his life to teaching and helping to mould African youths into responsible and successful adults in various educational institutions. He served in both the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho between 1947 and 1961. Later, he joined the colonial civil service and held high profile public positions in government, including as Assistant Secretary in the Office of the then Resident Commissioner. He served in the Lesotho Constitutional Commission between 1962 and 1964 before being appointed as one of the first set of Permanent Secretaries of the newly independent Kingdom of Lesotho. He also worked in various government parastatal organizations and on several consultancy projects before his retirement.

Honourable Mohale Henry Nt'saba will be greatly missed by all. May God grant him eternal peace.



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Advocate Tlotliso Polaki  
Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Lesotho