

KURUMAN/MADIBENG

Desperate community reinvigorates Road Forum



Victor Mulangisi

These people from different villages gathered at Madibeng community hall saying that their patience is on the wane and that they are about to burst over the state of their roads and mandated the Road Forum committee to be decisive enough...

The sagacious roads debacle is resurfacing, this time from a different corner, in Madibeng also under Joe Morolong constituency. Communities in the area are fast losing patience and ready for a showdown. Roads are horrible and vehicles have to negotiate with the terribly rutted gravel surface.

A community meeting intended to brief the media about the state of roads in Madibeng and the surrounding villages took place on May 2, 2019 at the community hall. The Road Forum was mandated by the community to take a bold and decisive stance to ensure the issue of roads is taken seri-

ously, because there is laxity and unending logistical scapegoats from the Department of Roads and Public Works.

The well-attended meeting had explosive exchanges of words that defined the depth of anguish whirling in the minds of Madibeng, Bosram, March, Penret, Klein Eiffel, Laxey and Tsineng communities. The villagers have taken the blame to the Road Forum for believing in statements coming from government officials since a pact was reached five years or so ago to improve the state of roads in the vast Joe Morolong area.

The Road Forum averted an election boycott by strongly appealing to the communi-

ties that such an undertaking was an illegality outside their scope of influence. Both Mr Lebogang Mantsabane and Mr Kagiso Gaborokwe, leaders of the Road Forum, openly retreated when the idea was dangled in the meeting saying discouraging people to vote was a direct violation and a criminal offence.

"Those who feel that they cannot go and vote must do so at their own discretion without influencing others. Stay at your home quietly but don't disturb others because it is an individual's right to vote and not a solution to this challenge," Gaborokwe said.

Hardly forty kilometres of the targeted roads have been tarred since 2014 when an agreement was reached between government and communities following vehement protests.

Also present at the meeting was Madibeng Chief Othadisa Seneo who conceded that roads were in a despicable state and such a meeting was very important to find a way forward. Asked whether or not he was supporting vote boycott, he said, "I am here to attend the Road Forum meeting as announced, not boycotting elections"

The strong message was that after the elections, the Road Forum must revitalise its activities as the community is ready to reactivate protests as a means of communicating with the stiff-necked government. Some community members said that while central government officials are listening to their plight regional and some provincial officials are trivialising the great problem faced by this community.