



Senqu Bridge Officially Opening: Strengthening Connectivity and Shared Prosperity

The Senqu Bridge was officially opened in a landmark ceremony that marked a significant milestone in the implementation of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) and reaffirmed four decades of cooperation between the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa. The official opening was presided over by His Majesty King Letsie III, alongside President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, senior government officials from both countries, traditional leaders, diplomats, private sector and community representatives. The occasion formed part of the broader commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the LHWP Treaty, a partnership widely recognised as a model of regional cooperation and shared development in Southern Africa.

The Senqu Bridge, the largest extradosed bridge in Lesotho, stands as a remarkable feat of modern engineering. Constructed to withstand the harsh climatic conditions of the

highlands, the bridge replaces the existing bridge crossing that will be submerged once the Polihali Reservoir reaches full impoundment. At full operation, it will serve as a vital infrastructure artery, maintaining national connectivity across the future reservoir and linking Mokhotlong to the A1 Road.





In his project brief, the LHDA Chief Executive, Mr. Tente Tente, described the opening of the Senqu Bridge as a defining milestone in Phase II of the LHWP and a powerful symbol of what sustained bilateral cooperation can achieve. Marking the 40th anniversary of the LHWP Treaty, he reflected on the Project's growth into a pillar of Lesotho's economy and a catalyst for inclusive development, that has delivered high-quality infrastructure, employment, skills transfer, and new opportunities in tourism and local enterprise. Noting that near completion of advance infrastructure works, he acknowledged the sacrifices made by local communities and reaffirmed LHDA's commitment to livelihood restoration, social development, and environmental stewardship, emphasising that the Senqu Bridge is proof that 'this Project is for the people and made possible by the people,' and that the next 40 years must embed justice, inclusivity, and lasting benefits for generations to come.

In his address; President Cyril Ramaphosa hailed the Senqu Bridge as a major milestone in the partnership between Lesotho and South Africa, one that embodies shared purpose, resilience, and determination in addressing complex developmental challenges. He highlighted the bridge's role, together with the Mabunyaneng and Khubelu bridges currently under construction, in enhancing regional connectivity by improving mobility, reducing transportation costs, and expanding access for communities, businesses, and tourists. Central to his remarks was a reaffirmation of both countries' commitment to inclusive and humane development, underscoring the importance of ensuring that affected households are not left worse off as a result of the Project.





He further highlighted the Project's strong socio-economic impact, noting that construction of the Bridge created over 1,200 jobs, largely for Basotho, and advanced skills development through the participation of local professionals and graduates under the LHDA Young Professionals Programme. Framing the LHWP as one of the world's most successful transboundary water resources projects and South Africa's largest investment beyond its borders, President Ramaphosa expressed gratitude to the Basotho nation for contributing vital water resources and reaffirmed his government's resolve to deepen bilateral cooperation across water, energy, infrastructure, skills development, and social development.

In his closing remarks, His Majesty King Letsie III emphasised that the Senqu Bridge symbolises vision, partnership, and shared purpose, reflecting the commitment of both nations to advance development that benefits people, communities, and future generations.

His Majesty acknowledged the sacrifices borne by communities affected by Phase II of the LHWP, who were confronted with relocation and loss of land, and reaffirmed that these communities are not bystanders but foundational stakeholders in the Project. He called on all implementing agencies to honour commitments relating to compensation, resettlement, livelihood restoration, and environmental protection in line with the LHWP Treaty principles.



“We were not merely constructing concrete and steel,’ His Majesty noted, ‘but building bridges of opportunity that connect communities, strengthen cooperation, and advance economic growth.”



The successful completion of the Senqu Bridge highlights the skill and dedication of Basotho and engineering teams, contractors, and workers, whose contributions over nearly three years strengthened national technical capacity and will support future infrastructure development.

In officially declaring the bridge open, His Majesty concluded with a message of unity, stewardship, and responsibility, urging all stakeholders to preserve the Lesotho Highlands Water Project as a national and regional asset that continues to uplift Basotho while contributing to regional resilience.

As both nations reflect on 40 years of partnership under the LHWP, the official opening of the Senqu Bridge stands as a renewed call to uphold the Treaty's founding principles of; mutual benefit, peace, cooperation, and shared prosperity. It reinforces the commitment that Phase II implementation must remain people-centred, environmentally responsible, and development-driven.

