

LHWC Launches Site-based Oversight Programme at Polihali



The Lesotho Highlands Water Commission held its first meeting of 2026 at Polihali on 28 January, preceded by a visit to key project sites to familiarise delegates with progress and challenges on the ground.

The visit included a tour of the main works, namely the Polihali dam, the Polihali transfer tunnel and the Senqu bridge construction sites. Delegates also visited Sekokong to view fields planted with beans and maize under a collaboration between local farmers and the LHDA and were briefed on the fodder production initiative implemented on compensated fields in partnership with the Lesotho Defence Force.

The Tuesday tour concluded with a visit to Thaba-Phatšoa, a rangeland rehabilitated through the LHDA ICM programme and hailed as an exemplary and flagship initiative selected to host the national launch of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Explaining the purpose and timing of the visit, RSA Chief Delegate Mr Teboho Nkhahle said Commission resolved that, every second monthly meeting will be held at designated Project sites. This approach is intended to ensure that delegates remain abreast of latest developments and gain first-hand appreciation of complex issues to inform Commission decision-making. Such exposure enables the Commission to respond effectively when the LHDA requires support or tables matters for consideration. This visit marked the first in this series.

Speaking during an interview with the Through The Weir team, Mrs Ndileka Mohapi indicated that progress on construction was now encouraging compared to previous visits. She expressed appreciation for the level of technology deployed on major works such as the transfer tunnel, and commended project teams for navigating challenging conditions to advance construction.

“Being on the ground allows us to fully appreciate the challenges raised by the implementing agency, as well as the turnaround strategies being applied to mitigate them. I also commend the Livelihoods Restoration Programme team for the strong collaborations established with government departments and other partners to ensure sustainability beyond construction,” Mrs Mohapi said.



The delegation—comprising Mrs Ndileka Mohapi, Dr Musa Furumele, Mr Makhetha, Dr Mokotjomela and Mr Teboho Nkhathle—concluded the visit at the Ramonakalali Innovation Hub, while some members departed earlier due to pressing work commitments.

Delegates welcomed the Hub's focus on imparting practical skills and knowledge to local communities to improve self-reliance in food production, strengthen food security, and alleviate poverty and malnutrition. These challenges were identified as key social concerns during the PHASE II's socio-economic and public health studies in the planning phase. The Commission delegates further encouraged partnerships with institutions of higher learning for research and development, noting that the Project, now in its 40th year, represents a significant learning platform for researchers.

Mr Nkhahle added that while the delegates had gained an overview of social and environmental programmes currently underway, plans are in place to return for a more comprehensive review of livelihoods restoration, compensation and resettlement programmes. This, he said, is essential to understanding the tangible impacts of these interventions on people's lives and forms a core component of the Commission's oversight and monitoring mandate.

