

Ministers Undertake Oversight Visit to LHWP Phase II



In a demonstration of bilateral commitment to the successful delivery of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Phase II, the Minister of Natural Resources, Honourable Mohlomi Moleko, and the South African Minister of Water and Sanitation, Honourable Pemmy Majodina, conducted a two-day oversight visit from 14th to 15th December 2025. The visit formed part of ongoing efforts to monitor progress on Phase II works, beginning at Polihali and concluding at Katse.

Minister Majodina was accompanied by a high-level delegation including the Deputy Minister in South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, senior government officials, members of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) Board and its Chief Executive Officer, as well as representatives of the Rand Water Board, the largest consumer of LHWP water. Minister Moleko was joined by the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources, members of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC), the LHDA Board of Directors, and LHDA Executive Management.

Welcoming the delegation at the Polihali Operations Centre, Acting LHDA Board Chairperson, Ms Kanthimathie Rattay, highlighted that the visit reaffirmed the LHWP's strategic significance—not only for regional water security and hydropower development—but also as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation in both Lesotho and South Africa.

The Chief Executive, Mr. Tente Tente, and the Project team presented key Phase II progress highlights, noting the near completion of the Senqu Bridge, advancement of the Polihali Dam wall towards elevation 1,977 masl, and progress on the 38 km Polihali Transfer Tunnel, with the Katse-side TBM exceeding 2 km and the Polihali TBM set to launch beginning of 2026. They also reported over 14,000 jobs created across various skills levels, continued growth of the Young Professionals Programme, progress in community livelihoods restoration, and strong environmental stewardship measures.

The project leadership also acknowledged existing challenges, including delays, labour-related matters, and contractor compliance issues and briefed the ministers on the mitigation measures underway.

Closing day one of the visit at Polihali, Minister Moleko expressed satisfaction with overall progress and reiterated Lesotho's commitment to the core objectives of the LHWP: water transfer, hydropower generation, irrigation and fisheries development, tourism promotion, and broader socio-economic upliftment.

Day two took the delegation to Katse, where the ministers reviewed progress on the Katse Lodge, the new campsite and caravan park, and the TBM site at Ha Bereng, including the segment factory producing precast tunnel linings.

In her concluding remarks, Minister Majodina commended the progress to date but raised concerns about delays in specific components. She urged LHDA to maintain focus on ensuring water delivery by 2029, in line with binational commitments. She further noted that both governments are exploring mechanisms to unlock water access for local communities around the dams and in South Africa's Free State Province. Minister Majodina also encouraged Rand Water and Gauteng municipalities to prepare the necessary infrastructure to receive the increased water volumes once Phase II comes online.

The visit followed an earlier oversight engagement held at Polihali in August, underscoring the shared resolve of the two governments to maintain rigorous monitoring, uphold project delivery targets, and ensure that Phase II of the LHWP continues to advance in a transparent, coordinated, and accountable manner.

