



LHDA engages stakeholders ahead of the main conference

In early March, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) held a series of stakeholder meetings in Polihali, 'Muela, Mohale, and Katse, as well as in Maseru for the media, trade unions, NGOs, and the academic community. These meetings served as a prelude to the main conference held last week.

The discussions aimed to foster open dialogue on LHDA's mandate, stakeholder engagement strategies, and ways to enhance community benefits and participation in the Project. These sessions built on the success of last year's engagements, where stakeholders shared their experiences, highlighting both achievements and challenges.

Serving as feedback platforms, the mini conferences provided an opportunity to assess progress in key Project areas while addressing outstanding issues and obstacles. Stakeholders from the four field operations branches (FOBs) commended LHDA for successfully implementing the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) programme, which has contributed to rangeland improvement, wetland rehabilitation, and alternative livelihood initiatives. However, concerns persist over delays in communal compensation payments and the well-being of resettled communities under LHWPI.



The Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II (LHWPII) meetings were attended by key stakeholders, including the Principal Chief of Mokhotlong, Members of Parliament for the Senqu and Malingoaneng constituencies, and district administrators from Leribe, Thaba-Tseka, and Mokhotlong.

While notable progress has been made—particularly in ICM implementation, livelihoods interventions, and addressing community complaints in the western areas of Phase II regarding blast damages, labour recruitment, and business participation—stakeholders sought further clarification on the execution of livelihood programmes, labour recruitment, and the inclusion of local small and medium-sized enterprises in the Project.

Superintendent Morapeli, District Police Commissioner (DISPOL) for Thaba-Tseka, expressed appreciation for the LHDA's engagement efforts, noting that law enforcement often deals with community grievances and demonstrations without full context. He emphasized that these discussions provided much-needed clarity on issues they frequently encounter.

Hon. Monethi Ramakalima, MP for Malingoaneng, thanked the LHDA for addressing key concerns, including corporate social investment obligations of major contractors, mitigation of declining rangelands, conservation challenges, pollution, and efforts to ensure communities benefit more from the Project.