



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

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Efforts underway to resume the Polihali diversion tunnels construction activity

Maseru, 11 February 2021 – Efforts to get the drill and blast operations on the Polihali diversion tunnels to continue are underway after the temporary interruption caused by the heavy rains and high Senqu River levels at the end of January.

The heavy rains experienced across the country affected the diversion tunnels construction site. The temporary bridge which provides access across the Senqu River to the construction site was overtopped and the embankments were damaged. There was flooding in the tunnels. The Contractor is dewatering the two diversion tunnels. The bridge embankments have been reinstated and access restored. The full extent of the damage will be known once the dewatering exercise is complete.

No one sustained injuries as the site was evacuated to ensure the safety of all those on duty at the time.

Overall, there was no significant flood damage at the other construction sites which include access roads, transmission line construction and civil works. All the main access roads under construction were still passable. These are the Polihali Western Access Road (PWAR) from Ha Seshote to Polihali and the Polihali North Eastern Access Road (PNEAR) which connects Polihali to Mapholaneng, and the Northern Access Road (NAR) between Leribe and the Katse village. No flooding was reported along these routes and construction activity on the roads and other construction sites continued without interruption.

Procurement for the construction of the water transfer main works i.e. the Polihali Dam and Polihali Transfer Tunnel is expected to commence in the first half of 2021. Other major works tenders scheduled to go out to market in the next few weeks include those for the construction of major bridges.

The water levels of the Senqu River continue to be closely monitored as do the Katse and Mohale reservoir levels. The Katse and Mohale live reservoir levels stand at 71.86% and 41.01 %, respectively, today. Water transfer continues as does the production of hydropower at 'Muela.

As the implementing authority responsible for the implementation and management of the LHWP on behalf of the governments of Lesotho and South Africa, the LHDA continues to monitor the situation closely.

End.