



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **DWS welcomes the beginning of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project**

09 November 2022

The Department of Water and Sanitation welcomes the awarding of major contracts that will kickstart Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) announced on Monday, 7 November 2022, that the Polihali Dam and Polihali Transfer Tunnel construction contracts have been awarded and the work will resume in earnest.

This step is a key milestone in Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), signalling the start of the final lap of the water transfer infrastructure construction.

The work on Polihali Dam is expected to commence in November, while the work on Polihali Transfer Tunnel is set to start in December 2022 and the project is expected to be commissioned in 2028.

The Polihali Dam will be a concrete-faced rockfill dam, which will create a reservoir on the Senqu and Khubelu rivers. The infrastructure also includes a spillway, a compensation outlet structure, and a mini-hydropower station.

The Polihali Transfer Tunnel will transfer water by gravity from the Polihali reservoir to the Katse reservoir, the centrepiece of the LHWP.

From Katse, water will move through various places including the Ash River outfall outside Clarens in the Free State on its way to Gauteng.

The project will see an increase in the annual water supply rate, which will be a welcome addition to meeting South Africa's rising water needs.

On completion, the Polihali Dam will add approximately 2 325 million cubic metres in storage capacity to the LHWP Phase II, which will increase the project's current annual supply rate capacity from 780 to 1 270 million cubic metres.

The additional flow of water from Polihali will simultaneously increase power generation within Lesotho.

This is another step towards meeting the country's electricity needs and reducing its dependence on imported power.

The Department's spokesperson Sputnik Ratau, says the awarding of contracts comes at the perfect time as the department continues the work towards ensuring adequate water infrastructure.

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“The awarding of the contracts to start with Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project comes at an opportune time when the Department is getting all its ducks in a row to ensure adequate infrastructure that will meet the current and future demand for water.

“The increasing population, coupled with rapid urbanization, continuing economic activity, impact of climate change, put a strain on the water infrastructure, therefore, the sooner we complete Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, the better,” Ratau said.

“This will go a long way in mitigating water shortages and water security will be realized,” he added.

Ratau indicated of the thousands of job opportunities that will be afforded through the contract appointments.

“The contracts are estimated to generate approximately 5000 job opportunities continuously for a period of three years, in both Lesotho and South Africa.

“To date the advanced infrastructure programme has generated more than 4000 jobs,” he concluded.

### **Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

**For more information, contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942**

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