

MOVES TO STRENGTHEN FISHERIES POLICY THROUGH COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS



The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), together with the Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security's Department of Livestock, has embarked on a series of consultations with local communities and leaders in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) reservoir catchments to develop an inclusive fisheries policy. The initiative, supported by the Ministry, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and LHDA, seeks to unlock the potential of the country's reservoirs while boosting food security and rural livelihoods.

The LHDA delegation was comprised of staff from the Public Relations and Environment branches. In their introduction, LHDA officials reminded communities that the construction of major dams under the LHWP, managed by LHDA, has created vast water bodies with significant potential for fisheries and aquaculture. Beyond their primary role in water supply and hydropower generation, these reservoirs are increasingly recognized as valuable opportunities for community-based fish production.

Speaking during the consultations, Mr. James McC, FAO and Ministry consultant on fisheries and aquaculture, emphasized that the policy is expected to strengthen cooperation between communities, LHDA, and other reservoir stakeholders, thereby fostering greater local ownership. He further highlighted that the consultations aim to develop policies that are both practical and relevant to everyday realities, balancing conservation with community needs.

The consultations were highly interactive, with community members expressing appreciation for the initiative. They also outlined areas where they seek support from the government and LHDA, including drowning prevention measures and safe fishing practices.