

# Wetlands Protection Awareness



The Principal Chief of Matsieng, Mr. Seeiso Bereng Seiso, in collaboration with the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) Mohale and the Department of Forestry, held a community engagement with livestock farmers at the Matšeng wetlands to raise awareness about the ongoing destruction of rehabilitated wetlands by herders.

During the gathering, LHDA Environment Officer, Mr. Tlohang Ntoa, outlined the critical importance of wetlands, emphasizing their role as a key water source for the Mohale Dam, one of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Dams, the dams remain the country's economic backbone. He further noted that the wetlands serve as essential habitats for wildlife and as vital water points for livestock.

A representative from the Department of Forestry, Ms Makara, highlighted legislation protecting wetlands. She stressed that anyone found violating the Wetlands, Environmental Act of 2008 faces penalties, with fines starting from M5,000.00.

Principal Chief Seeiso strongly reprimanded those responsible for damaging the wetlands and issued firm instructions for the immediate removal of cattle-post huts erected too close to the wetland area. He reminded attendees that safeguarding wetlands and promoting responsible range management is crucial to sustaining the country's natural resources and economic development and further emphasized that it is the responsibility of every Mosotho to safeguard the wetlands.

Speaking on behalf of local chiefs and livestock farmers, Chief Metsing Theko Lekhanya pledged full cooperation with the Principal Chief, LHDA, and the Department of Forestry. He affirmed that communities are committed to conserving the wetlands and protecting all existing rehabilitation projects.

The meeting closed with a renewed sense of unity and determination. Community leaders, government departments, and farmers expressed their shared commitment to protecting Matšeng wetlands—recognizing them as a priceless resource for water, wildlife, livestock, and national development.