

Press Release

Parliament portfolio committee on Natural Resources and TRC visit the Polihali Dam affected communities

As part of empowering communities affected by mining projects and the Lesotho Highlands Water Projects (LHWP) within Polihali dam construction areas, Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) in partnership with local authorities in Mokhotlong and Botha-Bothe districts will hold a 3 day community gatherings for the Parliament Natural Resource's Cluster with a purpose of sensitising members of parliament about grievances which severely affect the communities.

These gatherings will be used as a platform for communities' members residing near the Polihali Dam construction site and those in mining sites to stage their concerns and position on government policy issues which in their views are a problem to their development. These policies include among others the Lesotho Highlands Water Project compensation policy, compensation rates, community resettlements and the project employment policy to the affected communities. Members of parliament will have their sessions with affected communities of Ha Phohla, Malubalube and Ha Sheshile.

According to a research conducted by TRC, it is common in Lesotho that development projects such as large dams inevitably have an impact on communities that usually manifest in resettlement, loss of land and other personal and community assets. These further affect the livelihood, traditions and cultures of communities concerned. This transition is traumatic as people are forced to change customary practices- their livelihood, traditions and cultures without being properly prepared for these adjustments.

The transition takes away community's means of income and survival; fields, pastures, medicinal plants and natural resources (river sand, water, natural water sources, etc.). These are taken away without adequate compensations. When traditions and culture are affected, communities are sometimes uprooted from their original homes; where they were born and bred. These movements create a sense of emotional loss to a resettled person. As places of origin hold some kind of relationship between the living and their ancestors, vacating a place leaves an emotional void which is eventually linked to the failures of an individual in the future.

The gatherings will be from 1st - 3rd December 2017 at Ha Phohla, Malubalube and Ha Shelile

Transformation Resource Centre is an ecumenical organization dedicated to the promotion of social justice, peace, good governance, participatory and development. The TRC's main focus is to empower communities, civil society organization and citizens to take a leading role in articulating their human rights issues in their respective areas.

29th November 2017