Farming is already ongoing a stone's throw away from the project's weir.

ADVANTAGE: Vegetable farming is what some community members are already taking advantage of as some farming activity was also visible at taking water from the Lubuyane River into the conveyance system.

*v* This one is specifically for subsistence farming. Some farming activity was also visible at taking water from the Lubuyane River into the conveyance system.

"There is now more than enough water." Dlamini said there was also another one by Micro Projects, which is for portable water to benefit about 200 homesteads.

"We also have a borehole project by World Vision for the Madolo community. That £2 million borehole project is now near completion," Thomson Shabangu, the community’s liaison officer, also concurred how excited everyone was with the Government of India sponsored irrigation project.

The project has three phases: Phase one is the construction of weir, which is a water diverting structure to take water from the Lubuyane River into the conveyance system. This phase has been completed.

Phase two is the construction of the conveyance system, which include the pipeline taking water from the weir to the edge of the field. According to Minister of Agriculture Jabulani Mabuza, most of the work has been done as it has been reported that it is at 70 per cent completion. "If it’s more water for the farmers!” he exclaimed. He led the Saturday Observer team to the weir with the project site foreman, delays were caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Looking uphill. Residents of this rural community love farming. Some farming activity was also visible at taking water from the Lubuyane River into the conveyance system.

"We had a meeting with the community as assurance was given that the project will not disturb water supply for the other farmers," Dlamini said. He added it was government policy that projects should not leave other homesteads dry just to serve the targeted areas.

Residents of this rural community love farming. Some farming activity was also visible at taking water from the Lubuyane River into the conveyance system.

This was after some farmers had raised concern that the project would divert all the water down to the project pipeline.

When asked how the project was going to be safeguarded from abuse, the constituency headman said there is plenty water. "There is now more than enough water."

He said besides the irrigation project sponsored by the Government of India there were other ongoing water projects as well.

"This one is specifically for subsistence farming of crops like maize for the targeted homestead areas where the pipeline will go downstream.”

Dlamini said there was another one by Micro Projects, which is for portable water to benefit about 200 homesteads.

"We also have a borehole project by World Vision for the Madolo community. That £2 million borehole project is now near completion," Thomson Shabangu, the community’s liaison officer, also concurred how excited everyone was with the Government of India sponsored irrigation project.

"If it’s more water for the farmers!” he exclaimed. He led the Saturday Observer team to the weir where it is nestled at the foot of two hills, where fresh water streams poured in.

The project started this year and was meant to have been complete in four months. However, according to Thokozani Maseko, the project site foreman, delays were caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

"It is more water for the farmers!” he exclaimed. He led the Saturday Observer team to the weir where it is nestled at the foot of two hills, where fresh water streams poured in.

The project started this year and was meant to have been complete in four months. However, according to Thokozani Maseko, the project site foreman, delays were caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Advantage: Vegetable farming is what some community members are already taking advantage of as some farming is already ongoing a stone’s throw away from the project’s weir.

Through the 2020/21 budget, government has made available the required resources so that the project can be fully implemented and the community benefits as soon as possible. This was said by Minister of Agriculture Jabulani Mabuza.

"As a ministry we are grateful to both the Governments of India and of Eswatini for supporting this project," he said.

"Now that all the funding required for the project is available we are optimistic that we should be able to have all development work complete by October this year and have the first crop of vegetables by December.”

He said the world was facing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a negative impact on the economy, disrupting people’s lives and ever resulting to loss of lives.

FINALLY: The life-giving water that has the Maphalaleni farmers excited.

Project one of COVID-19 mitigation programmes

The Lubuyane Project at Maphalaleni is part of government’s responsibility to ensure food security at household and national level.

In the words of Minister of Agriculture Jabulani Mabuza “The Lubuyane Project, which is also not spared from negative impacts of the pandemic as costs of material keep on escalating, has become one of our COVID-19 mitigation programmes.”

Minister Mabuza said this was because the project will support livelihood at household level and beneficiaries will also be able to sell surplus produce.

"It is in this spirit that one wishes to see more of such investments, commitment and collaboration," the minister said last week.