



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

## **INAUGURATION**

**ADDRESS BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOKGWEETSI E. K. MASISI**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**VENUE: UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA INDOOR SPORTS  
ARENA**

**DATE: 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

- **The First Lady of the Republic of Botswana and my dear wife, Mrs. Neo Masisi;**
- **My dear mother, Mrs. Precious Masego Masisi and other family members;**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;**
- **Your Lordship the Chief Justice, Terence Rannowane and your dear spouse Dr. Malebogo Mosau-Rannowane;**
- **Your Excellency the Former President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr. Festus Mogae and Former First Lady Mrs. Mogae;**
- **The President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Ian Kirby and Mrs. Kirby;**
- **The President Judge of the Industrial Court, Judge Tebogo-Maruping;**
- **The Acting Permanent Secretary to the President, Mr. Elias Magosi;**
- **Your Ladyships and Lordships Judges of the High Court and Industrial Court and your spouses;**

- **Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations and your spouses;**
- **Dikgosi le Bahumagadi;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **The Right Reverend;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Members of the Media Fraternity;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Batswana betsho ke dumedisa ka Pula!**

**A Pula ene! Pula!**

1. Having been sworn-in by Chief Justice Tereence Rannowane, I am honoured for me to express my profound gratitude to the people of Botswana for having performed their national duty by exercising their constitutional right to elect the political leadership of their choice. I am indeed delighted and humbled by the demonstration of trust bestowed upon me and my Government by Batswana.

2. At the outset therefore, I want to reiterate my determination to devote my time and energy to improve the lives of our citizens who are yearning for the social and economic transformation of our country. I wish to emphasise here that Botswana should always remain at the epicentre of our development agenda.
  
3. Today, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, marks an important day in the path of development of Botswana's democracy. It is an occasion that symbolises the wishes of the majority regarding the direction that the nation should take. It is a reminder of what our ideals are as a democratic state. This is essentially because we can never fully appreciate the democracy and the peace that we continue to enjoy, nor the unity we are known for globally until the essence of what defines us as a nation has been put to a test.

4. It is only then, that we will know our true mettle, and understand the meaning of our values and above all, the measure of our commitment to uphold and protect those values which are anchored on our long-standing national principles of Self-reliance, Unity, Democracy, Development, Therisanyo and Botho – yielding Kagisano!
  
5. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2019, you spoke with one voice to preserve that which our forefathers and foremothers worked very hard to achieve. It has been an easy journey for us as a nation over the years as the path for democracy was long carved out for us by those who began modern political journey in 1965. Our duty was only to preserve the work of our founders. I therefore, stand before you this morning humbled by the fact that we have once again succeeded in this endeavour of preserving our democracy and unity as a nation.

6. In this regard, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Honourable Members of Parliament and Councillors from different political parties for their electoral victory. However, I wish and hasten to remind all victors, regardless of political affiliation, that our duty is to serve the interests of Botswana and Batswana without fear or favour.
  
7. Similarly, I want to commend the leaders of political parties, party candidates, independent candidates as well as the electorate themselves for taking part in the general elections. Former President Dr. Mogae once said, **“In doing so, they have enriched our democracy, sharpened the contest, enhanced public debates on national issues and enabled the electorates to make informed choices”**. I can assure you that we are united in our political commitment to take this country to greater heights by ensuring that there is inclusive socio-economic development. We stand united because of the aspirations we have as a

people to make this country a better place for all of us to live in.

8. We must view this day as a national victory where our common love for freedom, decency, democracy and the fundamental rights of our people to determine their future has risen above any political differences we may have as a people. Therefore, I want to urge all of us to continue on this path and work together in building a peaceful and harmonious country as a united people.
  
9. In assuming the position of President of this Republic on this important day, I need your support, your prayers and blessings to effectively fulfil the Presidential Oath that I have just taken. I once again pledge to play my part and to do my utmost best to address the needs of the people of this nation and to work with you to realise both our dreams and our vision as a nation.

## **CHALLENGES**

10. When I was inaugurated as the 5<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Botswana on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, like many of you, I had aspirations about where we could take this country. We have as a nation faced a myriad of socio-economic challenges over the years. For example, in the early nineties we bore the brunt of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and lost thousands of lives of our people to this scourge.
  
11. Almost a decade later in 2008, our economy was battered by the global financial downturn forcing us to halt some major development projects that impacted negatively on our economic prosperity. Today, we continue to face problems and challenges of unemployment, poverty, corruption, hostile external interference to our democracy and and threats of capture, alcohol and substance abuse, climate change and drought amongst others. But despite all these, we have always stood together as a nation to address these challenges.



12. As we look into the future with the optimism only a Motswana can muster, we must hold firmly to our resolve to transform our economy from over reliance on our natural resource wealth to increasingly rely mainly on knowledge capital and thus yielding a knowledge based economy.

### **NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY**

13. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, the National Transformation Strategy that we are working on will be a reference document that will guide the implementation of our National Vision 2036, which espouses **Prosperity for All Batswana**. In this regard, the recently appointed National Transformation Strategy Team will lay out the fundamental changes needed in policy, institutions and mindset to transform Botswana.
14. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, when I made the decision to run for the highest office of the land, my priorities were focused on three key areas

that need to be addressed in order to turn our fortunes around. These are; creating jobs for our people, particularly the youth, improving service delivery both in the public and private sectors, as well as strengthening our governance structures.

15. The details pertaining to other important development programmes will be outlined in my State of the Nation Address, which I will deliver in a few weeks' time.

16. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, young people are the hardest hit by joblessness. In order to address the twin problems of unemployment and poverty amongst our people in general, I have committed to prioritise job creation during my tenure.

#### **JOB CREATION**

17. One of our key priorities is to ensure the creation of meaningful and sustainable jobs by promoting public private partnerships with local and foreign

investors in some of the key sectors of agriculture, mining, tourism, manufacturing, electronics, pharmaceuticals as well as research and development amongst others. Through these sectors as well as the arts, the creative industry and sports, there is enormous potential for the creation of thousands of jobs for Botswana.

18. The Government of Botswana is also in negotiations with Forbes to host the 2020 Under 30 Summit in Gaborone as part of the President's Initiative. It will be the first time that the Forbes Under 30 Summit will be held in Africa. The event brings together at least six hundred of the world's most elite entrepreneurs and game changers. They will be 200 Africa best, 200 World Best and Botswana Best. The Summit presents yet another opportunity not only for the young entrepreneurs in Botswana to learn from others and grow their businesses but also explore more ways to creating jobs for the youth.

19. Initiatives such as these are aimed at producing commercially viable and high value products and services, targeted at the export market. I say this cognisant of the fact that, creating a conducive and enabling environment for the private sector to grow is key to our economic transformation and growth. This will be underpinned by Government's facilitation through the ease of doing business reforms.
  
20. In this regard, a number of policy and legislative reforms have been introduced primarily aimed at creating a favourable environment for the private sector to thrive and grow.

#### **THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS REFORMS**

21. The recently introduced policy on the change of land use will enable Batswana the flexibility to use their land for expanded economic benefits. With this policy, it is my hope to see many citizens putting their land to productive use. The changes my

Government has introduced to our immigration policies such as the issuance of visas on arrival, the improvement of residence and work permits turnaround time, will also go a long way in facilitating potential foreign investors to set up shop in this country. It is the intention of my government to digitise these services to make coming and staying in Botswana easy.

#### **ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION DRIVE**

22. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** Government will furthermore leverage on the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD), to give citizens an opportunity to set up industries to empower them and in turn create the much needed jobs for our people. In order to implement our economic diversification and the citizen economic empowerment initiatives, Government will enact legislation to enforce compliance by relevant institutions including the private sector. This is why I am happy to announce that the EDD strategy is

being reviewed to close the existing gaps and help us to achieve in full, the goals of the Citizen Economic Empowerment Programme.

#### **INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION (IMO)**

23. Furthermore, **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, as trade is the lifeblood of all nations and the global economy, diversification of our economic base is imperative. In this regard, we will continue to assess viability and feasibility of some unconventional sectors such as investments into the Freight, Shipping and Logistics Sector. These includes investment in ownership of infrastructure such as ports, ships, freight and freight planes, long haulage trucks and, among others. Despite Botswana being land locked, experiences of other land locked countries such as Ethiopia and Switzerland, have demonstrated that this new sector could prove viable and sustainable. Important partnerships with agencies such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) will be forged in this

regard. This approach will therefore offer Batswana new skill and jobs in the vast ocean economy, thus expand livelihood options for Batswana beyond their borders.

### **DIGITALIZATION**

24. The world, as many of you may appreciate, has already made significant strides in moving towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution. To this end, we are also working hard to embrace the dictates of this global digital revolution and transform our people and economy. Immediate steps are going to be taken to cause the necessary disruption to facilitate the changes so essential for us to enhance our speed of doing things.
  
25. My Government will continue to fund digital entrepreneurship, Research and Development as well as train communities on basic internet skills to reap maximum benefits. Furthermore, a commitment has been made to provide technical

assistance to the Government in ensuring that youth led ICT companies are trained and capacitated.

26. Liquid Telecom has partnered with the Botswana Innovation Hub to train one thousand five hundred youth in coding or software development. Additionally, a country wide internet access programme for students will see the development of Edu-zones providing a dedicated platform that will drive research, innovation and digital learning around the country. All these efforts will underpin our drive to change our economy to be knowledge based and transform our country from a middle to a high income status.

#### **SERVICE DELIVERY**

27. **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,** becoming a high income country requires that our governance systems as well as service delivery, should be beyond reproach. This will demand relentless efforts from all of us to improve service



delivery across all sectors of Government and the private sector to ensure that Botswana is highly competitive as well as an ideal destination of choice for foreign investment. Public Sector Reforms are critical for improved service delivery and therefore they will be accelerated and intensified.

### **HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

28. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** the health of our people cannot be separated from our objective of improving service delivery and the social well-being of Botswana. The provision of health infrastructure must be adequate and equitably distributed to meet the unique needs and challenges of health services in Botswana. This is cardinal in that good health and wellness are basic human rights and necessary conditions for any country's development. It is the intention of my government to work relentlessly to achieve a higher rate of return on our investments in the health sector. To this end, more investments will be made in the

innovation and research space, more attention by our tertiary institutions will be paid to material science application to solve our health problems including through physical fitness.

29. Furthermore, Botswana continues her efforts towards the fight against HIV and AIDS. The country's performance towards the UNAIDS 2020 targets of 90-90-90 and ending AIDS by 2030 are ongoing. We are already witnessing encouraging results in this regard because people on HIV and AIDS treatment are virally suppressed. As a result, Botswana is rated at 94 percent, thus surpassing the global target of 90 percent. This is indeed some notable achievement in ensuring that Botswana live long and healthy lives.

30. **Distinguished Guests,** my Government will continue to implement some critical programmes under the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) aimed at enhancing quality and access to education in line with local and global demands.

Central to all these, it is the intention of my government to care more for its teachers and other cadres as a precursor to improvement.

31. In order for us to commodify knowledge, tertiary institutions must offer programmes that are industry needs specific, futuristic, innovative and viable. In this regard, programmes offered by institutions of higher learning will move away from domesticating knowledge to globalising it, in order to increase our graduates' competitiveness.

#### **HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

32. As you may be aware, in the recent past, Botswana has experienced high incidences of human-wildlife conflict particularly relating to elephants due to their significant increase in population. This largely reflects the success of our conservation strategies, where for example, approximately 40% of Botswana's land mass in the form of national parks, game reserves and Wildlife Management Areas

(WMAs), is currently set aside for wildlife conservation. However, despite this land reservation, elephant population has increased beyond the capacity of the game reserves to encroach into human settlement areas and hence the conflict.

33. My government nevertheless, will continue to commit to outcomes that will set the tone for conserving and managing our wildlife, and elephants in particular, while ensuring that we achieve sustainable benefits through their contribution to rural livelihoods and tourism growth. Citizens will play more meaningful and economically empowering role as we diversify our tourism base.

#### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

34. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** my government remains concerned by the new scourge of serious gender-based abuse and violence against women and children in our society. My government will not rest until this scourge is brought under

control through a combination strategies that include strengthened legislation, policing and effective mobilisation for community involvement.

### **FIGHTING CORRUPTION**

35. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** we cannot hope to improve service delivery nor achieve any of our national objectives if our institutional frameworks are not robust, transparent, accountable and free from corruption. I have fought against the menace of corruption since ascending to the Presidency and it is my intention to continue to do so. I therefore wish to emphasise that my Government will put in place measures and mechanisms, through the application of best practices of good governance to ensure that corruption is defeated.
  
36. Parliament has passed the law on the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities. To operationalise this law, the Ethics and Integrity Directorate is being established. In the same vein, I would like to reiterate that I am

committed to the rule of law in this country, as that would enhance confidence and send message to all of us that the law must be abided or face consequences of non-compliance.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

37. As part of Government's efforts to deepen the spirit of *therisanyo*, my Government is committed to a comprehensive review of Botswana's Constitution which will take stock of the changed social, political and economic landscape over the last fifty three years. The engagements and consultations necessary to start the ball rolling will be initiated soon after the full formation of my government. I remain resolute in my commitment to create a more inclusive Botswana.

### **FOREIGN POLICY**

38. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, we remain grateful to the international community and our development partners for the support they continue to give us to

carry out our development agenda. We will continue to work closely with the international community at large to promote peace, democracy and economic integration amongst others, to help advance the global development agenda with special emphases on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union Agenda 2063 and multilateralism.

39. In our engagement with the international community, my Government will continue to pursue a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy, which is a hybrid of our values and our development aspirations. This is natural in that we are a developing country founded on democratic ideals.

### **CONCLUSION**

40. As I conclude my remarks, I would like to once again thank God Almighty and Batswana for the confidence you expressed in my leadership through the ballot. Therefore, my pledge this morning was not only to

uphold the highest standards of the Presidency but also to you Batswana from all walks of life to serve you to the best of my abilities, for the promotion of peace and stability at home and abroad, I will do all in my power to unite us and lead from the as we grow.

41. I am confident that with the prevailing inspiration and purpose, we shall achieve our aspirations as espoused in our National Vision 2036.
42. I thank you for your attention and may God bless Botswana.

**PULA!**