

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS PRESENTED TO
ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS BOTSWANA (ACEB)**

ON THE OCCASION OF ITS GALA DINNER

ON THE 26th October 2018



BUSINESSBOTSWANA

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PRESIDENT, MR GOBUSAMANG KEEBINE

- Director of Ceremonies,
- ACEB Chairperson.
- CEO of (*ACEB*), Lillian Mosimaneotsile
- Members of ACEB
- Invited guests
- Media here present

Ladies and Gentlemen, I greet you all!!!

- 1) It gives me great pleasure to have been invited to the **Association of Consulting Engineers Botswana (ACEB)** gala dinner as guest of honour; I most sincerely appreciate the gesture.
- 2) This provides an opportunity for me to meet with yourselves and understand more about the engineering profession; the hinderences (redtape and bearuocratic) you encounter in your day to day functions; opportunities availed to the Engineering industry in the build environment and across a variety of other specialties.
- 3) Certainly, it is a good opportunity to debate issues of concern and guide each other on how these can be positively mitigated.
- 4) I am informed that ACEB membership covers a wide spectrum of services that include among others Civil, structural, infrastructure, electrical, mechanical, water, wastewater, geotechnical, contract and project management; and that your current membership stands at 49 Consulting Engineering firms; also that there's a growth trajectory.

- 5) I am also informed that the Association was formally registered and approved as an Association in 1993, 25 years ago; and not being in the know of how many registered engineering companies exist in the country, I hope the 49 registered constitute with ACEB constitute a significant % of the total registered.
- 6) Director of ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen allow me to congratulate ACEB for staying true to its mandate, a pursuit that has enabled the engineering profession and Botswana as a nation to have cordial partnerships with international organizations such as;
- FIDIC (International Federation of Consulting Engineers) and
 - Group of African Member Associations (GAMA) which is a FIDIC chapter of Africa.
- 7) Rre Makosha I must say I appreciate the fact that ACEB is a member of Business Botswana (BB) in good standing. Most times organisations ask questions such as “what is in it for us? effectively asking what are our benefits to be a member of BB, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- 8) In Botswana despite the fact that the country is 52years, the chamber’s role is still very infantile. In developed countries it is almost law (if not law) that the chamber of commerce is the lead agency in vetting all foreign companies wishing to set up in their countries; including engeearing companies like yourselves; in neighbouring Namibia I am informed it is required by law to be a member of the Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; in China

for example we are informed all major companies wishing to do business internationally must be members of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade; (BB has an MOU with CCPIT) among others to ensure that Botswana companies have a voice to engage the multinationals from China should they wish to come and do business in Botswana.

- 9 BB promote social dialogue and economic reforms with the Government of Botswana to ensure that companies such as yours are not disadvantaged when work related opportunities are availed.
- 10 Our role is to advocate for Botswana companies which are our member to be accorded fair and level plain opportunities to ensure that Botswana companies gain on economically in order to generate wealth, prosperity and jobs.
- 11 Ladies and gentlemen, the private sector continue to constructively engage Government in key developmental strategies and policy formation. The private sector through Business Botswana continue to engage Government in improving our doing business environment. Director of Ceremonies, the theme for this, occasion “*The role of engineers in today’s business market.*” is befitting in that it reflect on the status and stability of ACEB, its members and relationship with other associations of international status. It is therefore important that the leadership should continue to provide strategic direction and guidance to all its members and other stakeholders, in order to continuously raise the stutas and image of the engineering practice in Botswana.

12 The role of the private sector has never been as prevalent as it is now; with Botswana's economic landscape changing and being focused more towards diversification and outward focus in growth, it is critical for professions such as your to not only lead in exporting skilled personnel but also lead in engaging in work related activities particularly in the region but equally internationally; we as Botswana want to see a building in London with a Botswana engineer acknowledged as being the lead engineer of the project.

13 Business Botswana recognise that it is up to the private sector to take the lead in growing Botswana's economy; the private sector will continue to be the engine of growth, entrepreneurs are innovators and the job creators; but all this will dissipate to NIL if there is no deliberate agitation from the Government to ensure that Botswana professionals are given the due recognition; job protection and allocations are clearly made with a deliberate intention to ensure indigenous companies are protected against multinationals; Trump says America 1st hence maybe the time has arrived where we Botswana must say Botswana 1st.

14 BB will continue to urge associations such as ACEB to continually strive to get more members as "Motswana a re setshwarwa ke ntsha pedi ga se thata" meaning generally that together we shall prevail. The Government equally urges companies to associate so that in engaging them we look at national issues not individual.

15 Master of Ceremonies, I am reliably informed ACEB will be hosting the Group of African Member Association (GAMA) Infrastructure conference in

2020 in Gaborone. It would be an honor for Business Botswana to be part of this conference as a stakeholder and would like to encourage other ACEB stakeholders and members to prepare and actually take part in this conference.

16 As indicated above, Business Botswana formed part of the delegation that went to China. The purpose of this trip was to forge meaningful strategic partnerships with Chinese businesses and ensure that opportunities available are equally available to the engineering sector of Botswana at a professional level.

17 Business Botswana through its Engineering sector, continually lobby government to grow the sector.

18 Ladies and gentlemen, we are aware that government is of the view that consulting engineers are expensive and delay the projects; if this is a myth lets work together to dispel; but again we should introspect and ask ourselves this question “if these are all perceptions what created them and how and what do we do to dispel them”. We need to find ways of changing this thinking because it does not assist the profession. It is a given worldwide on the importance of the role the engineering profession play on the infrastructure development and hence the growth of the economy.

Issues pertaining to the growth and setting up especially SMEs are a concern to BB; impediments continue, hence BB resolve to continue to engage Government to among others continue to positively reform some of the following which continue to hinder doing business:

- BURS requirement for Value Added Tax (VAT) on unpaid invoices.

- Inequitable work distribution.
- Procurement Methods in place currently.
- The essence of economic stimulus programme (ESP) and its intended achievements etc.

We are aware of the impact and the end results of the above on the sustainability of most companies.

Ladies and gentlemen I thank you.