



BUSINESS BOTSWANA

BOTSWANA – ZIMBABWE BUSINESS FORUM

VENUE: GICC

DATE: Tuesday, 13th February 2018

**CLOSING REMARKS BY: Business Botswana President, Mr
Gobusamang Keebine**

Director of Ceremonies,

- a) **Minister of Investment, Trade & Industry (MITI), Hon. Vincent T. Seretse**
- b) **Acting BITC Chief Executive Officer, Mr Olebile**
- c) **Acting BB Chief Executive Officer, Mr Norman Moleele**
- d) Zimbabwe Delegation
- e) Captains of Industry
- f) Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me take this opportunity to join those who spoke before me in welcoming our friends from Zimbabwe and say that, I hope your short stay in Gaborone has so far been good.

2. I am to talk about the role of the private sector. But before I even do that, let me say something about the organisation I represent, Business Botswana was formed in 1971 as an independent private sector body representing business across all sectors of the Botswana economy.

Our Role is to:

- Influence Government Policy through engagement in Constructive Dialogue

- Advocate for the creation of a business friendly environment in the country.
- Provide services to our members including creating various avenues for networking.

Through our philosophy of constructive dialogue, Business Botswana has won the confidence and respect of Government and other stakeholders. In carrying out our Advocacy role;

- We represent private sector interest and articulate the views of business in various policy making bodies at various levels.
- Ensure that private sector has representation in the different committees set up by government

3. Now, getting back to the topic of today.

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, it has become even more imperative for private sector to take the lead. Albeit, a desired approach, it is still extremely challenging given the transformation and slow economy of Botswana.

4. We, at Business Botswana recognise that it is up to the private sector to take the lead in growing Botswana's economy; after all, the private sector is the engine of growth, because entrepreneurs are the innovators and the job creators.

5. In the past, and unfortunately it is still largely so today, the development of the private sector has been government driven. However, it has been recognised by both public and private sector that a shift is required whereby policy and strategic decisions that contribute to business growth should be initiated and directed by the private sector.
6. There is a concern, not only in Botswana, but I believe on a continental scale, about long-term sustainability. It has now become clear that regional integration is an imperative if we are to ensure long-term sustainable growth. In this way, we will avoid a situation where our economies end up in fragile states due to limited or diminishing resources, for Botswana this is our mineral depletion.
7. Business Botswana has been working, in some instances, with BITC to lure investors to Botswana because for us, inward investment is key, especially through partnerships with local entities looking for expansion opportunities and external market filtration.
8. In the past, Business Botswana signed Memorandum of Agreements with other chambers of Commerce, the recent one being the MoU signed with the Kenya National Chamber of

Commerce (KNICC). Following the signing, a joint business Council, primarily to strengthen institutional support for promoting business opportunities in both Botswana and Kenya. So far, we have already witnessed positive outcomes.

We've seen the likes of Mauritius attract a multitude of investment interests through its trilateral agreements, and it's been a proven strategy that has seen that country moving in strides. In terms of emulating that model, the opportunity for Botswana, Zimbabwe and potentially another first world nation can certainly yield results and business growth in the tourism, energy and ICT sectors for example.

9. For us in Botswana, the private sector's role has not only been operational in terms of constructive criticism, we have been engaged by government in key developmental strategies and policy formation. The private sector through Business Botswana has been instrumental in improving our doing business environment.

10. We have made significant strides through partnerships, and I trust that today, more doors will be opened to strengthen already powerful trade linkages between Botswana and Zimbabwe.

11. In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me once again thank you for your participation at this business forum, which I believe has set the basis for exchange of business ideas.

12. I urge you to take advantage of the interactive sessions during the forum to foster partnerships. I wish all participants positive business interactions.

13. Thank you for your attention.