



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOKGWEETSI E.K. MASISI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
COMMEMORATION OF
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY**

**1 MAY 2020
GABORONE**

1. **Dumelang Bagaetsho**, I am indeed honoured to join workers from all sectors of our economy as well as the global community to commemorate the 2020 International Labour Day.
2. However, it is disheartening that today we commemorate this day at a solemn moment in the history of our country and indeed the world. As you all know, millions of people around the world have been infected by the coronavirus, or COVID-19 while billions of lives have been adversely affected by this pandemic. Its impact on the global economy has been severe as we also witness markets plunging to historic low levels.
3. We commemorate this day, when millions of workers around the world including in Botswana are at home because of the restrictions that have been imposed on them in efforts to curb the spread and transmission of the COVID-19 virus. It is a time when

many are unsure of what the future holds for them regarding their jobs or the future of their companies.

4. Traditionally, the commemoration of this day is marked by celebrations locally and globally. However, it has not been possible to do this year because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. **Betsho,** I would like to assure you that as Government we are committed to the welfare of workers in this country as evidenced by the robust measures that have been put in place to cushion workers and companies during the on-going national lockdown. This strategy will ensure that workers do not lose their jobs and companies do not collapse during this crisis. Similarly, Government is working on an Economic Stimulus Package that will be implemented post the COVID-19 virus.
6. **Fellow Citizens,** allow me to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to all workers across

Botswana for the significant contribution that they continue to make towards the socio-economic development of this country. Their commitment and dedication to work truly demonstrates clear patriotism towards their country.

7. **Bagaetsho**, let me remind you that Labour Day, is not just an ordinary day. It is one of the oldest and most celebrated worker's holidays across the globe and it symbolises the emancipation of workers from poor and inhumane working conditions. This is a Day that provides a platform for all of us to take stock in earnest, of the progress that we have made in our endeavours to improve the working conditions of our people, while at the same time, reflecting on our shortcomings.
8. To this end, I wish to underscore that, improving the working conditions of workers is not an end in itself, but rather, it is a process that requires the concerted efforts of all strategic stakeholders. We can only make

meaningful progress for this country and our people when we are united, because as it has been said before, ***'The ties that bind us are stronger than the ties which divide us'***.

9. I wish to remind you that the working conditions of employees are of paramount importance as they border on social justice and socio-economic progress for all, and can determine the political and economic stability of any country. It is therefore important for us to create decent working conditions and decent jobs. We also have to ensure security in the work place and provide social protection for families.

10. As a show of commitment to improving working conditions, Government, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU), Business Botswana (BB) and the Botswana Federation of Public Sectors Union (BOFEPUSU) signed the second generation Botswana

Decent Work Country Programme (BDWCP) 2020-2024 in February this year of our Lord 2020.

11. The BDWCP is a consensus tool that, among others, aims to promote workers' rights, productive and decent employment opportunities, as well as enhance social protection and strengthen social dialogue in our country.
12. The adoption of BDWCP is a demonstration of our resolve as Government to place decent work as one of the cornerstones of our national development strategies. I have no doubt that with the support of all stakeholders, we will effectively and efficiently implement the BDWCP for the benefit of our workers.
13. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, or the SDGs particularly Goal 8, puts decent work at the centre of economic development. In that regard, it is a requirement for every society to create working conditions that provide quality and sustainable jobs

that will enhance the economic growth of our countries. The Government of Botswana is committed to this Goal.

14. I would like to assure you therefore, of my full support and commitment to the principles that promote and encourage decent working conditions and decent jobs for all.
15. In conclusion, as we continue to fight COVID-19, I urge you to remember to maintain social distancing, continue washing your hands with clean water and soap. I also urge you to continue staying at home during the national lockdown to protect yourselves and your country.
16. We are optimistic that we shall win the battle against COVID 19. Our factory machines shall grind again, our productive forces shall once again get back to work and contribute meaningfully towards the rebuilding of our economy. When that time comes I

urge our labour force to give everything their all and ensure that we rise again.

I thank you.

A Modimo o re babalele Bagaetsho.

PULA!!!