

# **SIGNING CEREMONY**

**BETWEEN**



**BUSINESSBOTSWANA**

**AND**



**DATE:** Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**VENUE:** BITC HQ

**TIME:** 1430hrs

**REMARKS BY:**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, Mr Norman Moleele**

Director of Ceremonies,

- a) BITC CEO, Mr Kelositse Olebile
- b) BITC Management here present
- c) BB Management here present
- d) Stakeholders watching virtually,
- e) Members of the media here present

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon to you all,

- 1) Today is one of those momentous occasions that Business Botswana (BB) and Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) can be proud of. For many years, through many different dialogue forums, issues have been brought to the table. We have discussed, deliberated, negotiated and at times, even disagreed on matters that pertain to role clarity and our existence. However, the point I want to drive home today, is that we are now able to drive their ambitions forward for Botswana's economic development, and today marks a link that will ensure that we work together to achieve a conducive business atmosphere and drive economic diversification, citizen economic empowerment and the implementation of initiatives that will have a significant, positive impact on the growth of Botswana's private sector.
- 2) Distinguished guests, allow me to briefly explain BB's existence and role. We are a *Chamber of Commerce, Employer Organization and Business*

*representative body*. Thus our role is to ensure that government puts in place laws and regulations to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic processes and costs. This will result in simplification of the process of starting and operating businesses and thus remove cumbersome processes. Over the years Business Botswana has been able to transform the business environment and even attract new business through constructive engagement and sharing ideas on removal of impediments to business. Business Botswana continually engages government on various issues of concern that impede the growth of the private sector and SMME development.

- 3) Since inception, Business Botswana has accomplished a lot with regards to legislation, policy reforms and doing business reforms. Our relevance has been critical even during the covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Of late, BB has developed a Private Sector recovery Plan which aims to assist Government and other stakeholders to re-build the economy and reduce the effects of the pandemic. We thank the UNDP Botswana for the support they gave to us to achieve this.
- 4) Master of Ceremonies, please allow me to share with you the Private Sector economic recovery plan launched last week. The objective of this plan is to ***“Build Back Better, with the private sector acting as its own driving force.”*** To achieve this, the plan includes:

- a)* A more inclusive private sector, with particular emphasis on the participation of youth and women.
- b)* A diversified economy, with strengthening local value and supply chains.
- c)* A greener economy capitalizing on opportunities to recycle and to utilise renewable energy.
- d)* A commercially independent agriculture sector capable of self-reliance.

The above strategic objectives resonates with BITC's mandate as well as Vision 2036 strategic objectives. The plan is available for download at [www.bb.org.bw](http://www.bb.org.bw)

- 5)** Ladies and gentlemen, through this MOU, we intend to enhance the private sector's ambitions to truly become an engine of growth. Business Botswana has on numerous occasions cited the importance to balance and grow both the domestic and international markets. We are confident that through this MOU, the private sector will take on the responsibility of contributing more effectively to the country's sustainable growth through employment creation and diversification and further position Botswana as a destination of choice.
- 6)** Ladies and gentlemen, together we can help reduce the cost of doing business in Botswana, meet the various policy and project objectives, build

capacity, execute policy and institutional frameworks and promote partnership projects that will positively affect viable and sustainable citizen owned enterprises. The private sector will now also have a stronger role in trade negotiations and will collaborate with government to promote foreign and local investments. Even though Business Botswana has been participatory in negotiations and promoting Botswana as an ideal investment destination as well as encouraging partnerships and affiliations between its membership base and foreign direct investors and partners, I believe the MOU will strengthen our role in this capacity, and allow our institutions to be more effective. Let's not forget that we are not the only country striving for a piece in the international pie, many others have signed similar agreements and are well on their way to achieving economic growth through a private sector enriched and driven economy.

- 7) I know when we sign agreements, we always cite that the document will be effectively implemented. I must however, emphasize that Business Botswana and BITC will ensure that the agreement scopes are periodically monitored and evaluated with a view to give regular updates, to stakeholders including the media on progress.
  
- 8) Mr. Olebile, I wish to emphasise the need for us to be partners instead of competitors. I therefore propose that for any mission planned locally, regionally or internationally, Business Botswana must form part of the

planning and coordinating processes. BB will do the same should delegations or missions be arranged from its end.

An efficient joint-council team has to be immediately formed to ensure that the MOU obligations are met and dealt with timeously. I propose that the team meet in the week to come, to draw up the implementation plan for endorsement before end of July 2020.

**9)** With these few remarks, let me take this opportunity to congratulate both our teams for facilitating this agreement. Let's get the ball rolling!