



BUSINESSBOTSWANA

**BOTSWANA – SWITZERLAND BUSINESS FORUM.**

**VENUE: GABORONE**

**DATE: Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**VOTE OF THANKS**

BUSINESS BOTSWANA PRESIDENT,

Mr. Gobusamang Keebine

Director of Ceremonies,

- **His Excellency Dr Mokgweetsi E.K Masisi**, President of the Republic of Botswana.
- **His Excellency Mr Alain Berset**, President of the Swiss Confederation.
- **Hon. Mmusi Kgafela**, Minister of Trade and Industry.
- Honourable Ministers here present.
- Members of the Diplomatic Corp
- Permanent Secretaries here present
- Captains of Industries
- Members of the Media here present
- Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

**Good morning to you all!**

- 1)** Your Excellencies, opportunities like these are not only imperative but desirable in our continued quest to advance Botswana's efforts to grow its economy.
- 2)** Your Excellency, Dr M.E.K Masisi, the private sector of Botswana would like to share its heartfelt gratitude and thank you for your commitment to economic diversification by continually working tirelessly to increasing foreign investment, with a view to achieving an export-led economy that continues to propel the growth of Botswana and add to employment creation.
- 3)** Your Excellency, Mr Alian Berset I wish to also thank you for choosing Botswana as your Country's trade and investment destination of choice.
- 4)** Director of Ceremonies, kindly allow me to share with you the offering of the organisation I represent, Business Botswana.
- 5)** We are an independent private sector body representing businesses across all sizes sectors of the Botswana economy; acting as an *employer Organisation*, a *Chamber of Commerce*, and a *business representative body*; hence our role is to ensure that we engage the Government to create laws and regulations that facilitate the process of doing business.

**6)** Over time, working with the Government of Botswana we have been able to transform our business environment and attracted new business through constructive engagement and sharing ideas on the removal of impediments to doing business and ensuring the World Bank's ease of doing business ranking in Botswana continues to improve. We continually engage the Government on various issues of concern that impede the growth of the private sector and SMMEs.

Furthermore, Business Botswana:

- Represents private sector interest and articulates the views of the private business sector in various policy-making bodies at various levels, from local Government to National Government.
- Working closely with the Government to ensure that the private sector has representation in the different committees set up by the Government to review policies, procedures, laws etc on doing business in Botswana.
- Business Botswana is also the Secretariat to the SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF) representing 15 employer organisations in the SADC region. BB is also the Secretariat to the Association of SADC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI); these fora aims to bring together the private sector from across the region to facilitate integration and trade to reduce barriers to trade and sustainable growth.

**7)** Business Botswana recognises HE President Masisi and the Botswana Government's significant efforts and achievements through policy objectives and initiatives, such as Digitisation, the Reset Agenda, Value Chains creations etc. which initiatives have set Botswana on a path of Growth towards being a Higher Income Country in 2036.

**8)** BB continues strengthening relationships with the Government to ensure that the private sector becomes the engine of economic growth as it aligns to Government policies and strategies.

**9)** Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in the economy of any Country, Botswana and Switzerland included. Therefore, this delegation

is exemplary of our shared commitment to creating networking and collaborative opportunities for inclusive economic growth for our business communities. Switzerland is amongst the countries with the world's highest GDPs per capita and has a highly skilled labour force, and the sectors represented here today by the Swiss private sector are critical for Botswana's private sector to emulate.

We are advised that the major elements of the Swiss heterodox policy regime are protectionism, social partnership, export-driven growth and sheltered domestic industries, a lean state and prudent fiscal policy, and hesitant active industrial policymaking; elements we in Botswana evaluate as we continue the journey of being a private sector led economy.

I, therefore, urge the delegations from both countries to take advantage of the networking opportunities that will follow the formal programme to further grow your business portfolios; by forming collaborative ventures etc. to learn from each other.

To Swiss businesses, Botswana is the gateway for reaching the entire Southern Africa region, hence making it an ideal investment destination of choice as we talk Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Ladies and gentlemen, I am confident that we will continue to;

- i.* nurture trade relations and partnerships between Botswana and Switzerland as we foresee further opportunities for collaboration;
- ii.* harness and strengthen our chambers of commerce and to link members in trade opportunities and to further lure investors into Botswana.

**10)** Your Excellencies, I put it on record that Business Botswana need support and business partnership with the Swiss business fraternity to continue to develop the SMME sector in Botswana.

As I conclude Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me once again thank you for your participation at this business forum and encourage both Botswana and Swiss private sector to ensure sustained follow-ups. I assure you that Business Botswana, stand ready to facilitate your follow-up initiatives where necessary.