



BOTSWANA

SPEECH BY

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT,

MR. SLUMBER TSOGWANE

AT THE

**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE BOTSWANA LABOUR
MARKET OBSERVATORY GOVERNING BODY**

FAIRGROUNDS HOLDINGS - GABORONE |

11 OCTOBER 2022



SALUTATIONS

- Hon. Minister of Education and Skills Development – Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe
- Hon. Minister of Labour and Home Affairs – Ms Annah Mokgethi
- Hon Minister of Finance – Ms Peggy O. Serame
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development – Ms. Miriam Maroba
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs – Mr. Jimmy Opelo
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance – Dr. Wilfred Mandlebe
- HRDC Board Chairperson – Ms. Choice Pitso
- Other Senior Government Officials and Heads of Parastatals here present
- Representatives of the ILO and other UN Bodies here present
- Captains of Industry, Academicians and Heads of Education and Training Institutions
- CEOs and Heads of Trade Union Movements
- Members of the Fourth Estate
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen Good Morning

1. Director of Ceremonies, it is my honour to be present here on behalf of Government to officially launch the inaugural Botswana Labour Market Observatory Governing Body under the theme “***Building Labour Market Intelligence for Effective Implementation of Education and Employment Policies***”.

2. Distinguished Guests, Botswana committed herself to the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a concept that resonates so well with the country's development ideals of achieving "Prosperity for All", as espoused in Vision 2036. This cannot be realised without deliberate efforts to enhance delivery of the Vision 2036 Pillars on Sustainable Economic Development and Human and Social Development, in tandem. As we transit into a "Knowledge Based Economy" the importance of Productivity, Research and Innovation cannot be over emphasised especially in expanding productive employment opportunities through commercialisation of research outputs and prototypes, creating employment opportunities and reducing poverty.
3. The National Employment Policy (NEP) could not have come at a better time as it recognises the need to expand the size of the economy to create employment opportunities, both in the formal and informal sectors, through the provision of a conducive environment for growth. It is premised on among others strengthening the growth of employment in the private sector; improving the flow of information between job seekers and job openings; and developing a framework for coherent and coordinated policies with systematic monitoring and evaluation while providing timely labour market information that is reliable and accessible for further research and innovation.
4. Bagaetsho, as a nation we have been commended for formulating good policies, albeit often plagued with implementation challenges attributed to lack of effective coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The NEP has sought to deliberately establish an implementation mechanism that will facilitate close

coordination and monitoring of the labour market. This will need to be fed by reliable statistics and information as per today's theme.

5. The establishment of the LMO Governing Body therefore will among others, aggregate comparable labour market information and data and ensure that it is accessible. I am happy to note that the LMO Governing Body is a composition of officials from the Public and Private sectors as well as the Civil Society. Its primary function will be to ensure the production of reliable labour market information for various actors regarding the labour market situation and provide career, business and policy advice to influence proper decision-making across the Botswana labour market ecosystem. It will integrate critical information on the labour market, including statistical and non-statistical information, to inform the development and implementation of national policies and strategies. Thus, ensuring close coordination between stakeholders and foster strong institutional linkages.
6. Specifically, it will be responsible for labour market monitoring, analysis and reporting on employment and labour policies, information exchange on labour market issues, and coordination among users and producers of labour market information and analysis. It will therefore ensure that Botswana's employment challenges are effectively diagnosed, that there is engagement in technical dialogue with stakeholders to promote employment and decent work as part of the Government's national development efforts. This will result in a well-functioning labour market which is a critical avenue toward achieving inclusive and pro-poor growth that yields productive employment.

7. Distinguished Guests, you will concur with me that the weak demand for labour in our country has been the central problem, whereby the economy, especially the private sector, has not been generating enough jobs to accommodate all new entrants to the labour market in the recent past. Our biggest challenge is the employment of youth, which is also our biggest opportunity. We need to tap into the potential that lies within young people and capitalize on the demographic dividends.
8. Our policy response requires that we place emphasis on the fundamental transformation of the structure of our economy – to move from low growth and low labour absorbing sectors, to sectors of high growth, high productivity and greater labour absorption. Therefore, the conceptualisation and the implementation of policy or institutional reforms depends on the evidence from analysis of trends and sharing of information on what works, and what needs to be changed.
9. A lot is at stake and the nation is looking up to you to unravel the labour dynamics and complexities presented by the socio-economic constructs behind the unemployment statistics. We are aware that on an annual basis, Statistics Botswana without fail publishes unemployment statistics in whatever disaggregated form which needs to be processed further to give us the benefit of the dynamics within our labour market. Similarly, the Global Competitiveness Report has in the last decade or so ranked Botswana as having unskilled labour force as one of the main impediments of doing business in Botswana despite having a high literacy rate and likewise does not shed light on the dynamics and other factors at play.

10. I am therefore confident that the LMO Governing Body we are launching today, will provide the much needed answers and provide guidance in measuring the social out comes of our policies. It is not by coincidence that you are part of the LMO Governing Body. You have been carefully chosen to serve in your individual capacities as experts in your own right across the various fields related in one way or the other to the labour market.

11. The credibility of the advice that you will provide will be tested in how you actually discharge your duties and as such your professionalism should be evident through the output of your work, whether it being; quality research papers or policy briefs; comparative analysis of labour market trends; assessments of the feasibility of strategic interventions made; bringing together stakeholders and leading meaningful discourse on emergence of new skills or current skills demanded in the economy; trekking indicators on employability, productivity, reduction in poverty and so forth.

12. Countries worldwide are faced with labour market transformation challenges owing to technological advancements as well as COVID 19 pandemic. Often we talk about the economic impact of COVID 19 especially loss of business and jobs and little attention is given to the social impact and the well-being of the employees which has actually put to test the robustness of our social protection system. We need more than ever to ensure provision of timely labour market information to support skills development especially where we are experiencing a shift in labour demand across sectors for instance; in Botswana we experienced low demand in the Tourism sector as compared to the Health sector, Agriculture and Service sectors. It is necessary to provide intelligence

to help us identify areas that have potential demand and reallocate skills across new occupations and sectors. We need to be cognisant of the fact that digitalisation and automation have resulted in low demand of labour in certain sectors of the economy and therefore we must ensure that digital literacy is encouraged so that no one is left behind. In this context, I therefore expect the Labour Market Observatory Governing Body under the coordination of the Human Resource Development Council to:

- (i) Advise Government on trends concerning labour supply and demand as well as related socio-economic phenomenon and to present accessible and timely information on these trends to Government and other users.
- (ii) Investigate education, training, labour and employment gaps (mismatches) taking into account their wider impact on economic growth and their relationship with overall levels of productivity, technological changes etc. and advice Government as necessary.
- (iii) Define, map, interpret and communicate labour market intelligence taking into account career advancement for Botswana, to match the demand for the right skills and qualifications in the private sector.
- (iv) Improve the performance and effectiveness of the employment exchange services and the Botswana Labour Market Information System, which is currently being developed.

- (v) Recommend for research undertaking that aims to promote a better alignment between the skill supply and demand, and ensure stakeholders (institution-industry) collaboration for implementation of outcomes.
 - (vi) In consultation with all stakeholders, to determine the direction and priorities of the Botswana labour market and ensure they contribute to the attainment of the Vision 2036 ideals, the National Employment Policy and the Economic Recovery and Transformation Program as well as the Reset/Reclaim Agenda.
 - (vii) Set parameters and provide guidance on methodologies for the collection and management of labour market information, in accordance with nationally approved standards and in coordination with other public institutions linked to the production of socio-economic statistics such as Statistics Botswana.
13. The output of your work will ensure that we have better tailored employment policies and labour market programs to labour market needs, more responsive education and training systems to local labour market demands as well as more informed educational and occupational decisions of job seekers and students among others. Furthermore, firms will only invest if they are confident about future costs, demand and economic prospects.
14. New investment provides our country with opportunities for employment creation, to that end the LMO will provide investors with valuable source of labour market information with regard to the availability of skills in the economy and thus, give them confidence. Both local and foreign investors

(employers) will be able to effectively determine how easy or difficult it is to find new employees and how to best direct recruitment efforts when armed with information on how many people are qualified for certain types of work.

15. Ladies and Gentlemen, in light of the aforesaid, allow me to conclude my speech by stating that today's event is thus not about pontification but about paving way for finding concrete solutions to seemingly intractable problems. This is so because the LMO brings together the key role players in a structured manner to discussing pressing problems confronting us in our respective responsibilities and our country as a whole. It advances labour market information management at a time when there is widespread recognition globally of the value of evidence-based policy making and the need to find a better combination between the imperatives of growth and that of social equity.

16. Director of Ceremonies, as we come to the crescendo of today's event, allow me to kindly invite the inaugural members of the LMO Governing Body to join me at the podium as I present them to you. I am happy to announce that this Body will be Chaired by the Chief of Staff, Rre Boyce Sebetela.

17. Electronic Presentation of the Members

18. I therefore now declare the Botswana Labour Market Observatory Governing Body officially launched.

19. I thank you.

Pula !!.