



BOTSWANA

REMARKS BY

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS,
HONOURABLE MS. ANNAH MOKGETHI**

AT THE

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

FAIRGROUND HOLDINGS GABORONE

11 OCTOBER 2022



SALUTATIONS

- Your Honour, the Vice President of this Republic, Rre Slumber Tsogwane
 - Hon. Minister of Education and Skills Development – Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe
 - 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
 - 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. On behalf of the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, I wish to express our excitement at this momentous event, marking the official launch of the inaugural Botswana Labour Market Observatory Governing Body. This presents itself as a “cherry on the icing” cementing our relationship with HRDC since entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in December 2018. The MoU

detailed among others, the exchange of information, sharing of data and data platforms, sharing resources, both financial, material and human as well as capacity building. Post the signing of the MoU, we have witnessed successful implementation of critical activities through our collaborative efforts. These include; the assimilation of the National Employment Services System (NESS) user requirements into the Labour Market Information System specifications. I am happy to indicate that the development of the system started on the 1st October 2022.

2. In 2020, we jointly launched the integrated National Jobseekers' Database together with the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) into the LMO website hosted by HRDC. (highlight the benefits of the integration) In 2021 we collaborated in the launch of the inaugural Labour Market Information System indicator and Metadata Handbook- a critical instrument that will be used by the LMO Governing Body to monitor performance of our labour market.
3. Ladies and Gentlemen, as per the theme of this event, ***“Building Labour Market Intelligence for Effective Implementation of Education and Employment Policies”***, the launch of the LMO Governing Body therefore, presents an important tool to support the monitoring of the implementation of the National Employment Policy (NEP). To that end, the importance of the role being played by HRDC on this matter cannot be over-emphasised. Allow me Director of Ceremonies, to sincerely commend HRDC for these efforts.

4. The National Employment Policy is an embodiment of a shared vision to translate our national aspirations into tangible economic growth. In particular, creating employment opportunities commensurate with qualifications and skills endowed in our people; that are not only empowering but uphold fundamental human rights of the worker and contributes to the reduction of income inequality as espoused in the Botswana's Decent Work Country Programme.
5. The NEP was designed not just to coordinate employment issues nationally, but also, to promote socio-economic convergence within the economic sectors as a whole. To this end, it sets ambitious goals – among other things, increasing employment and reducing poverty. It has targeted to reduce unemployment rate to less than ten percent by 2030. Despite the impact of COVID -19, this goal is feasible, provided the domestic economy grows between 5.5 percent and 6.0 percent per year, on average as also espoused in Vision 2036.
6. Director of Ceremonies, what separates transforming economies from stagnant or at the worst regressing ones in this new era is the extent to which sectors that drive the economy have access to information, particularly that relating to the labour market. It is on this basis that we launch the LMO Governing Body to avail labour market information, labour indicators, job market analysis and labour market performance reports.

7. The launch of the LMO Governing Body is therefore timely, given that as a country we are seriously challenged with the production of statistical reports on employment and the state of our labour market. We need to develop our economy and position ourselves in the global market to be more productive, producing high value, lower volume, highly differentiated goods and services for niche markets and being more competitive.
8. I am confident that my work hence-forth as the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs which includes among others, ensuring productive engagement of our workforce and facilitating provision of decent and sustainable employment will be made easy by the availability of reliable data and information through the Labour Market Observatory.
9. As a Ministry, we will depend on the functionality of the Labour Market Observatory as well as the envisaged Labour Market Information System to adequately discharge our mandate. This will ensure a seamless flow of information and intelligence on labour market dynamics from the reality on the ground produced by the labour market information system onto the LMO.
10. Ladies and gentlemen, as already alluded to, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic has had a devastating impact on the employment sector, and indeed, the entire economy of Botswana, resulting in increased unemployment. In this regard, our pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda has been threatened. However, we remain steadfast in our

commitment to inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The output of today's launch will be input in the review of the Botswana Decent-Work Country Strategy which ends in 2024. Director of Ceremonies, the attainment of 'decent work' for all women and men, including young people and migrant workers is a significant and crucial precondition for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth for any economy.

11. As you may be aware, we are presently implementing the second generation of the Botswana Decent Work Country Programme (2020 – 2024), which advocates for enhanced labour market institutions and practices. Government remains resolute in improving the quality of workers' lives by addressing the socio-economic dimensions that are critical to the world of work. We believe that the implementation of the Decent Work Country programme will significantly contribute towards the attainment of full and productive employment for all.
12. Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, social protection, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.
13. On issues of labour, you will all note Ladies and Gentlemen, that Botswana has made significant progress in the implementation of

international labour standards, as a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). As a country we have so far ratified 15 ILO Conventions and we are in the process of reviewing some of our labour laws in order to harmonize them and align them with the international labour standards. This is on the backdrop of concerns from stakeholders with respect to the application of ILO Convention No 87 during the 106th and 107th sessions of the International Labour Conference. As a result, Government, in collaboration with the employers' and workers' organisations has established a tripartite Labour Law Review Committee to spearhead the process of labour law review and I am pleased to say we are making good progress.

14. The labour law review process covers the Employment Act, Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations Act, Public Service Act, No.30 of 2008 and Trade Disputes Act, No.6 of 2016. Through the labour law review, the Government aims to facilitate employment, provide industry-focused skills, promote workplace safety and health, enhance productivity and work ethic and to manage industrial relations in an inclusive manner. The intention of the labour law review is to bring provisions of the laws in conformity with the ILO conventions ratified by Botswana, to incorporate the various decisions of the Courts to facilitate doing business and to close the gaps in the Acts emanating from developments in the labour administration system.
15. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy that today we are adding yet another recognised institution for consultation and engagement on

labour market related matters in the form of Botswana Labour Market Observatory Governing Body. This is in addition to the High Level Consultative Council, the Cabinet Committee on Employment and the National Employment Coordination Council whose establishment are underway, the National Business Conference, the Minimum Wage Advisory Board and the Labour Advisory Board are some of the recognised institutions for consultations, engagements and social dialogue in Botswana.

16. Bagaetsho, as I conclude, I wish to appeal to employers in the public and private sectors, as well as industry to ensure completion of the Employers Annual Returns in accordance with Section 9 of the Employment Act. The returns provide critical information needed to facilitate the strengthening of our labour market programs and education system and to design appropriate employment and education policies, on- the-job or work place skills development as well as issuance of work permits for migrant labour, among others. Furthermore, it enables HRDC to develop the LMIS and to effectively undertake human resource planning and development as well as make projections of skills in demand for both now and the future.
17. Director of Ceremonies; Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen let me end here and thank you all for your attention and wish you a fruitful and enlightening day ahead.

PULA! PULA!