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#bossokemang



BURS frustrates BDF retirees

- Minister claims that retired soldiers have been paid
- BURS deny, demand model to exempt retired soldiers



Makgolo

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BOTSWANA REVENUE Service (BURS) Chief, Jeannette Makgolo has refuted recent claims made

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Boko's P8m gamble

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UMBRELLA FOR Democratic Change (UDC) president, Duma Boko has hired Canadian lobbying firm Dickens & Madson to burnish his image abroad, sway American policy in his party's favour and connect to American government officials for a hefty P8 million.

Boko, who is also President of Botswana National Front (BNF) signed the lobbying agreement with President and director of Dickens & Madson, Ari Ben-Menashe on the 10th of July 2024. Ben-Menashe, who is an Iranian born naturalized Canadian has already been paid his first USD 50 000 retainer fee as per terms of the 12 months contract, which is worth P8 052 816 in total.

The deposition and contract were submitted to the United States Department of Justice on the 8th of August 2024, to fulfil that country's Foreign Agents Registration Act, just 2 days before Boko launched the 2024 general election UDC

- Canadian lobbying firm Dickens & Madson hired to burnish Boko/UDC image abroad, connect American and British government officials
- Deal signed on August 8th, USD50 000 retainer fee already paid

UDC President, Duma Boko



[PIC:PRESSPHOTO]

manifesto in Gaborone. The contract which has been seen by this publication specifies that Dickens & Madson will perform services and conduct its activities on behalf of Boko to lobby contacts within the governments of the United States and United Kingdom to assist him attain the office of the President of the Republic of Botswana.

In a response to an invitation to comment on the story, Boko responded late Friday afternoon; "I am reaching out to international organisations and governments, seeking to secure the integrity of the (2024) elections and stop the fraudulent IEC from pulling off the fraud of 2019".

Boko, though, neither confirmed nor denied the P8 million figure cited or the

public relations services on behalf of the Foreign Principal's (Boko) goals and activities. Registrant also provides lobbying services to the Foreign Principal in other countries," reads the agreement in part.

Moreover, Dickens & Madson says that it will attempt to influence United States policy in favor of Boko becoming the elected President of Botswana through means of lobbying, public relations and economic development activities. "If needed, Registrant (Dickens & Madson) will also assist the Foreign Principal (Boko) in the preparation and/or dissemination of informational materials," reads part of the document.

Besides lobbying the executive and legislative branches of the United States of America and United Kingdom, the agreement also proposes spreading activities of lobbying to "other mutually agreed upon country or countries, and or International Organizations as well as provision of other services to assist in devising and executing of policies for the beneficial development and stability of your political goals

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Human-Wildlife conflicts gobble P130M

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THE DIRECTOR OF THE Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNPN), Moemi Batshabang has told The Patriot on Sunday that cases of human-wildlife conflict continue to gobble over P130 million from the department's budget, annually. Batshabang said this on Monday during a nationwide human-wildlife consultation pit stop in Moshupa. He further revealed that P100 million, which represents a quarter of DWNPN's budget is eaten up in regular expenditures for fuel, accommodation and meals as rangers respond to reported cases while P30 million is spent annually in paying compensation claims.

Batshabang together with the Deputy Permanent Secretary presiding over Natural Resources in the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism, Abigail Engleton and University of Botswana's Professor Olekae Thakadu form part of a committee tasked by cabinet to establish the views of Botswana

in regard to human-wildlife conflict.

Meanwhile, Professor Thakadu said the committee was established last year and started in Kasane to examine human-wildlife conflict which has since gained broader national prominence. He further averred that human-wildlife conflict is becoming an increasing national concern because it is doing battle with the livelihoods of citizens.

"It is becoming a growing problem because the wildlife is roaming everywhere. It is even getting worse because elephants are breaching their natural territories and observers are opining that they are returning to their ancient natural routes," said Thakadu, before noting that even non-big-five wildlife like baboons, jackals and leopards among others are presenting a formidable threat to government's agricultural policies.

"It's a serious cause for concern because if a Motswana dies without an elaborate curriculum vitae, we will rather say he was an avid farmer but now they kill people,

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NEW KFC ALL STARS

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First Capital donates P50,000



IN A GENEROUS ACT OF COMMUNITY support, First Capital has donated P50,000 to the Gaborone City Council Choir for the purchase of new uniforms. Known for its harmonious performances, the choir will now be able to present itself in fresh, new attire.

“We believe in giving back to our community, and this donation is one way we can show our appreciation for the arts and local talent,” said Mr. Thatayaone

Matlapeng, First Capital Bank Country Manager – Consumer Lending.

The City Council expressed gratitude for the donation, noting that the new uniforms will enhance the choir's appearance and boost its members' morale.

“We are incredibly grateful to First Capital Bank for their generous donation,” said His Worship, the Mayor of Gaborone, Mr. Austin Abraham. “This contribution will not only help our choir look their best

but also inspire them to continue sharing their musical talents with our community.”

With five branches and six consumer service centres nationwide, First Capital Bank is committed to the communities it serves, recognising the impact of donations and collaborations.

This contribution to the Gaborone City Council Choir demonstrates the bank's support for local talent and the arts.

Polio rapid community investigation

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH INFORMS members of the public that they will be conducting an urgent rapid field investigation in the community of Gaborone and surrounding areas, from the 19th to 23rd August 2024. The field investigation consists of house-to-house visits, to look for children with acute flaccid paralysis, which refers to sudden weakness of the limbs. The exercise will be conducted in Gaborone, Molepolole, Mogoditshane, Mmopane, Metsimothabe, Gakuto, Mmatseta, Tlokeng, Gabane, Tloaneeng, Ramotswa and Mmokolodi, and will target children aged 15 years and below.

This is part of an initiative to strengthen polio surveillance in the country. It is also a precautionary measure and recommended



exercise, following the recent detection of vaccine polio virus in an environmental sample collected from Glen Valley

wastewater treatment site in Gaborone. Further laboratory investigations are underway to determine the significance of the virus detected.

The vaccine derived polio virus was isolated from a sample collected on the second of July 2024.

The public is encouraged to allow health officials who will be wearing identifying uniform and having identifying documents, to conduct this crucial investigation. Furthermore, the public is advised not to panic, but to keep their environment, food and water clean all the time. The Ministry will always advise as may be necessary.

Dr Christopher Nyanga
For Permanent Secretary

Transfer of registration now open

THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL Commission (IEC) wishes to formally inform all voters, stakeholders and any interested persons that in pursuance of the provisions of Section 15 of the Electoral Act, the Secretary to the IEC has, on the 14th August, 2024, certified the General Voters' Registration Rolls, the First Supplementary Voters' Registration Rolls, as well as the Second and last Supplementary Voters' Registration Rolls. This occurred after a successful voters registration exercise conducted by the Commission between the 5th January and the 31st, May 2024.

The certification also followed fulfillment of the statutory and twenty-one (21) days inspection of the General voter roll and the Supplementary Rolls respectively. The rolls are therefore placed at the following areas for inspection by anybody with interest to do so: office of the Secretary to the IEC in Gaborone; all IEC district offices; District Commissioners' offices, and Council Secretaries/Town Clerks' offices. The Commission has also provided copies of certified Polling District (Council Ward) rolls at some dikgotla in each constituency for anybody resident there to participate effectively in this process, if they are desirous of doing so.

It has to be noted that the inspection of the certified rolls is not necessarily another opportunity to raise objections. The objections were raised, ventilated, and concluded during the inspection before the certification of the rolls. The current inspection is therefore, meant for the voters to appreciate that their objections and/or queries have been attended to and in the process, promoting transparency in the whole electoral management process.



The Commission also wishes to highlight that the transfer of one's registration has now been opened in terms of Section 25 of the Electoral Act. However, it is not going to be done as a free for all kind of activity, where any voter(s) may unrestricted. Only those whose principal residences have changed registered would be assisted to transfer their registrations accordingly. The law requires one facilitating the transfer to make appropriate enquiries with one seeking to be transferred to satisfy themselves that indeed the voter concerned deserves to have his/her registration transferred. To make an application for the transfer, a voter appears at the IEC office situated where he/she wishes to be transferred to, with a valid National Identity Card (Omang) and a voter's registration card issued to them at the time of registering as a voter.

The Commission therefore, humbly requests for the Furthermore, the Commission humbly thanks all Batswana who heeded the call to register for the October 2024 General Elections, as well as all leaders who took their time and other resources to encourage Batswana to register for the General Elections.

Lastly, the Commission openly commits to delivering the 2024 General Elections within the confines of the existing legal framework. There will be no deviation from any legal provisions on the part of the Commission. All the voters and stakeholders are also encouraged to openly associate themselves with the same commitment.

Jefferson Stamisang
SECRETARY
INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL
COMMISSION



The African tourism renaissance

Now is the time to unlock its tourism potential

AFRICA IS EXPERIENCING A TOURISM renaissance. Since 2022, the continent has seen a remarkable turnaround in its tourism fortunes, and it is enjoying an influx of foreign currency. Experts agree that now is the time to capitalise on this renewed interest in Africa as a tourist destination, as opportunities like this don't come along very often.

“Africa is in the best possible position to benefit from post-pandemic travel. In terms of tourism, the continent has grown significantly post-Covid 19, and according to the United Nations Tourism Report 2024, the continent has achieved a 96% recovery, which is driven by European markets,” explains Prof Elmarie Slabbert of the Tourism Research in Economics, Environments and Society (TREES) research unit at the

North-West University (NWU) in South Africa.

“I think there is something to be said about the hospitality of Africans, the vast landscapes to escape to, the bucket list drive, the special places to visit and above all, the unique and authentic experiences – this is Africa! This continent has also opened its doors wide to tourists after realising the devastating effect of the absence of tourists. Priorities post-Covid such as air connectivity, digitisation, investment and ease of access have contributed to this growth,” says Slabbert.

She also notes that Africa's tourism offering is becoming more relevant as people yearn to be in nature and spend time with family and friends.

“However, it is important to ensure that we develop this sector in a sustainable way in order to offer these products to many generations to come.”

If Africa can continue to adapt to the demands of the tourism sector, the future looks bright. “Sustainable practices are becoming a factor influencing travel

behaviour and choices. Despite many challenges, tourism to Africa will continue to grow because of what it has to offer and its people. Africa needs the European injection into tourism, which drives economic growth, infrastructure development, job opportunities, improved livelihoods and the conservation of valuable attractions and wildlife. The strategy to increase international tourist arrivals is very effective and shows how cooperation between different departments can make a difference – an example for other continents and countries,” concludes Slabbert.

“In June 2024, 1.6 million foreign travellers visited South Africa, of which 641 284 were tourists staying overnight, mainly for holiday purposes. The majority of these tourists (77%) were from SADC countries, with Zimbabwe being the largest contributor at 169 490 tourists, according to Stats SA. South Africa received 40 591 tourists from the USA and 15 601 from the UK in June. This shows that Africans are travelling and choosing South Africa as their destination.

Human-Wildlife conflicts gobble P130M

FROM PAGE 1

the economy and devastate property,” he noted, adding that the committee is under instruction to collect the views of Batswana and subsequently develop a national framework strategy for human-wildlife conflict. This mandate also includes an identification of both short-term and long-term mitigation policies.

They have also been instructed to come up with a monitoring and evaluation plan as well as to develop a stakeholder engagement strategy. Furthermore, they are also tasked with assessing the government's wild game ranching initiative and hand their report by end of



September 2024.

Meanwhile, Kgosi Lenna Kubung of Ralekgetho told the committee that his area is afflicted by leopards, kudu and mongooses which ravage both

creatures, it is difficult to trap them and are more problematic when are nursing their young,” said Kubung. Meanwhile, Sekoma Okatswa of Polokwe region said a combination of leopards, baboons, and hyenas have brought him to the point of ruin for raiding his smallholding for two consecutive years. Okatswa added that small game, jackals and kudus thrive in his farming area and that the best fences have come to naught in mitigation. However, unlike in the northwestern parts of the country farmers largely decry damage and losses to small predators including mongooses, foxes and jackals, porcupines as well as vervet monkeys.

Boko's P8m gamble

FROM PAGE 1

and to assist you in attaining the Office of the President of The Republic of Botswana,” reads the agreement in part.

The contract further stipulates that the lobbying services will strive towards maintaining contacts with the executive and/or the legislative branches of the governments and international agencies in order to “urge the institution and/or maintenance of legislative and/or executive policies favorable to you, and the elimination or prevention of such policies and opinions

unfavorable to you. We shall lobby the government of the United States to actively assist you in attaining the office of the President of the Republic of Botswana.” The signed agreement between Ben-Menashe and Boko is partly redacted.

The pact further discloses that Dickens & Madson will promptly obtain a meeting for Boko in the United States with senior U.S. officials to cement his international credentials during which he will also have

the opportunity to discuss military cooperation with the United States. “The retainer for this consultancy agreement shall be US\$50,000.00 payable upon signature of this agreement by wire transfer,” states the agreement.

Moreover, as per the contract Dickens & Madson will develop a series of guidelines within which they will have the discretion to act on Boko's behalf, subject always to his specific instructions. To that end as part of the deal, the firm

TENDER NOTICE

1. Botswana Development Corporation Limited invites proposals from capable 100% Citizen Owned Companies to provide proposals for the below tenders. Bidders must be duly registered with Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA).

Tender Number	Reference	Tender Name	Registration Codes	Closing Date of the tender	Tender Closing Date
ITT/BDC002-2024/25		Project Management Consultancy Services for Botswana Development Corporation	Code 317 Other Consultancy Services Sub-code 01 Management Consultancy Services OR Code 311 Project management Services Sub Code 01 General Project Management.	27 th August 2024	3 rd September 2024 @ 1100hrs
ITT/BDC003-2024/25		Solicitation For Technical Services to Facilitate an Investment Symposium for Botswana Development Corporation	Code 139 Miscellaneous Services, Subcode 16: Event management Services	2 nd September 2024	10 th September 2024 @ 1100hrs
ITT/BDC004-2024/25		Provision of Wellness Program Services to Botswana Development Corporation on a three-Year Contract	Codes 317 other Consultancy Services – Sub Code 07 Health Consultancy Services OR Code 134-Health Services sub code 06-Psychosocial OR Code 139-Miscellaneous Services subcode 03-Physical wellbeing services OR Code Health Care Consulting Services subcode 02-Guidance and Counselling	9 th September 2024	17 th September 2024 @1100hrs

2. Tender documents will be sent to Bidders after paying a non-refundable fee of **P560.00** from 08:00hrs to 1530hrs hrs on weekdays with effect from **16th August 2024**.
3. Youth registered companies are entitled to pay **50% (P280.00)** of the purchase price subject to the provision of proof of 100% youth ownership. Payments can be deposited on the below account referencing the tender name.
4. Proof of payment should be emailed to: procurement@bdc.bw

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS:

Account Name	Bank	Account Number	Account Type	Branch Code	Branch Name	Swift Code
Botswana Development Corporation	Standard Chartered Bank Botswana	0100110107601	Current	662367	Industrial	SCHBWBWGXXXX

5. Queries and/ or clarifications relating to the issuance of these documents may be addressed to: Procurement Unit
Email: procurement@bdc.bw
Tel: +267 365 1300
6. Bidders should submit the documents per the submission format prescribed in the Tender Document.
7. Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, BDC is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender offer, nor incur expenses in the preparation thereof.

Botswana Development Corporation
Fairscape Precinct, Plot 70667 | Fairgrounds Office Park
P/Bag 160, Gaborone
Tel: +267 365 1300 | Fax: +267 390 3114

Even in death, Kgosi haunts govt

▪ Kgosi's leaves behind P50m, P30m, and P3m defamation suits against Government, DIS boss -Magosi, BoB P100bn saga, seized assets and firearms cases

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THE DEATH OF FORMER Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services (DIS) Director General Isaac Kgosi may have come as both a shock and a relief to President Mokgweetsi Masisi's administration, but has also brought a new headache, given the series of criminal and civil cases still before the courts.

Since his passing, the state has notably refrained from making any public comments or offering condolences regarding Kgosi's death. However, the pressing question remains: what will happen to the string of cases involving Kgosi and the state?

A legal expert at the University of Botswana, Obonye Jonas explains that an Executor of Kgosi's estate will now be responsible for pursuing these matters, while the state, if it chooses, can still go after the estate through him/her. According to order 19 of the rules of the High Court, "No proceedings shall terminate solely by reason of the death, marriage or other change of status of any party thereto unless the cause of such proceedings is thereby extinguished".

Subsection 3 further says, "whenever a party to any proceedings dies or ceases to be capable of acting as such, his executor, curator, trustee or similar representative may by notice to all other parties, and to the Registrar, intimate that he desires in his capacity as such thereby to be substituted for such party, and, unless the judge otherwise orders, he shall thereafter for all purposes be deemed to have been so substituted".

An Executor Datif responsible for managing Kgosi's estate according to the terms of his will and applicable laws, will be responsible for filing the will with the appropriate probate court to initiate the probate process, identifying and taking control of the deceased's assets, and determining the value of those assets at the time of death. The Executor will also settle any outstanding debts and taxes, manage the estate's assets during the probate process, and eventually distribute the remaining assets to the beneficiaries as specified in the will.

Jonas says however, personal cases, such as those involving defamation and unlawful arrest, may face significant challenges and could be difficult to continue as they involve giving evidence.

Kgosi's Court Cases

According to law, when a litigant or defendant dies, the outcome of a case can vary depending on whether it is a civil or criminal matter. In civil cases, if the plaintiff dies, the case can generally continue if the claim can be inherited or transferred to the plaintiff's estate or legal representative.

One of Kgosi's lawyers, Diba



Issac Kgosi

Diba says the deceased's personal representative can substitute him/her in the case, continuing the legal proceedings on their behalf. Like other lawyers, he says defamation cases, which are personal in nature, will likely die because the cause of action is considered personal to the individual. This means the case could end without a resolution unless specific laws allow for continuation and substitution. Isaac Kgosi had two defamation cases before the courts, which remain unresolved following his death.

P30m defamation claim (2020)

In 2020, Kgosi through one of his lawyers, Unoda Mack demanded P30 million in damages from the state for defamation. He claimed that defamatory statements were made against him by the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) lead investigator, Juko Hubona. These statements were included in an affidavit opposing bail for Welheminah Maswabi, also known as Butterfly, who was charged with financing terrorism. Hubona's affidavit claimed that Kgosi was involved in theft, money laundering, and terrorism, including transferring large sums of money from the Bank of Botswana to various international accounts. Kgosi vehemently denied these accusations, stating they were false and fabricated to damage his reputation. Besides the P30 million in damages, he demanded a public apology, a retraction of the statements, and an assurance from the state that no further defamatory statements would be made.

Magosi Defamation suit (2022)

In 2022, Kgosi also filed a defamation lawsuit against his successor at DIS, Peter Magosi, seeking P3 million in damages. Kgosi claimed that Magosi made defamatory statements in a 2019 affidavit, alleging that millions were siphoned from DIS funds during Kgosi's tenure. Magosi suggested that the funds were used for illegal activities and that individuals linked to Kgosi, including former DIS officers, acquired properties not aligned with their incomes. Kgosi denied these allegations, arguing that they were baseless and had

severely harmed his reputation. He demanded damages, interest, a public apology, and a retraction of the statements. The case is currently before Justice Michael Leburu of the Gaborone High Court. Like another one, the case according to lawyers will likely die.

P50m unlawful detention suit

In another case, Kgosi was suing the state for P50 million for unlawful arrest and detention in a military prison at Sir Seretse Khama Barracks. The case, presided over by High Court Judge Dr. Zein Kebonang, who was previously co-accused with Kgosi in the National Petroleum Fund (NPF) case, involves several state entities, including the DIS, Botswana Defence Force, and Botswana Police Service.

Kgosi claims the arrest warrant, issued by Palapye Magistrate Rebecca Motsamai, was irregular, forged, and outside her jurisdiction since the alleged tax evasion occurred in Gaborone, not Palapye. He asserts that his arrest on January 15, 2019, at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport was a public spectacle aimed at humiliating him, with media invited to cover the event. Kgosi sought damages for various claims, including unlawful arrest and detention, inhuman treatment, emotional distress, and physical suffering, arguing that the actions were malicious and without legal basis. Legal experts say, like defamation cases, because its personal in nature, it highly likely to be buried with the applicant.

Executor pursues seized assets

The real war will likely center around the criminal matters involving Isaac Kgosi's properties, which both the executor of his estate and the state will be keen on securing or retaining. These include Kgosi's firearms and assets that were forfeited to the state, currently under legal dispute. While a criminal case generally abates if the defendant dies, as a conviction cannot be imposed on a deceased person, lawyers suggest that these cases might continue due to related civil matters that need to be addressed by the deceased's estate. According to the law, if there are damages to be

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SADC unlocks renewable energy wealth

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THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED HIGH level 2024 SADC Sustainable Energy Week to be held later this year on the 2nd-4th December in Gaborone is expected to boost Botswana and her SADC counterparts to close the electricity supply deficiency by exploring ways to fully exploit renewable energy and secure SADC energy future.

The first ever edition of the SADC Sustainable Energy Week summit is jointly hosted by SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREE) and the Ministry of Minerals and Energy respectively.

Addressing the media on Thursday, Minister of Minerals and Energy Lefoko Moagi said the five-day event will feature a High-Level Plenary, Presentations, Break-out Sessions, and Technical Site Visits. "In addition, the following institutions have been identified as conference partners and will assist in holding side events such as the off-grid solar and solar water heating.

These institutions are International Solar Alliance (IRENA), Solar Thermal Training (SOLTRAIN) and Global Network of Sustainable Energy Center (GN-SEC)," he said, adding that the event provides an invaluable platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among key stakeholders in the energy sector.

According to Moagi, the primary aim of the SADC-SEW24 is to



Minister of Minerals Lefoko Moagi (L) with Executive Director of SACREE Kudakwashe Ndhlukula [PIC:PINO KILANO]

promote opportunities in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors along the entire energy value chain. He added that the focus areas will include policy and enabling environments, financing, grid integration, energy efficiency, renewable energy technologies, clean cooking, energy storage, and more.

"We anticipate that the SADC Sustainable Energy Week 2024 will yield several critical outcomes which includes: Enhanced Regional Cooperation: Strengthening collaboration among SADC member states to achieve a unified approach to sustainable energy. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: Advancing policy discussions and developing frameworks that support renewable energy and energy efficiency," he said.

Moagi said the Government of Botswana, through the Ministry of Minerals and Energy, is profoundly

committed to advancing sustainable energy solutions. "The SADC Sustainable Energy Week holds significant importance for us as it aligns with our national energy goals and the broader objectives of the SADC region toward the energy sector," said Moagi.

Meanwhile, the Executive Director of SACREE Kudakwashe Ndhlukula said the private sector in Botswana is also expected to come on board and take part in the build up of the conference, adding that more activities will be undertaken in the buildup towards the event.

He said the platform will enable SADC member states and the industry to share ideas on how the region could secure its energy stability through tapping into the renewable energy to balance the electricity supply deficiencies that is common in majority of countries that rely more on importing electricity.

He said the theme for the inaugural SADC-SEW24 is "Accelerating Sustainable Energy Solutions for an Energy Secure SADC Region" calls for the SADC member states to secure their energy future as soon as now.

Research

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has in its 2021 research paper titled "Renewables Readiness Assessment: Botswana" noted that Botswana has considerable unexploited renewable energy potential, especially as solar, wind and bioenergy aims to use these renewables to achieve economic energy security and independence.

The renewable energy study was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Minerals and Energy.

IRENA said Botswana announced at the end of 2020 that renewable energy would account for at least 15% of the country's energy mix by 2030, with 50% renewable energy contribution to the energy mix by March 2036.

Also, IRENA observed that is the case in most countries of the region, Botswana's power system is characterised by unreliable power supply, lack of investment, poor maintenance and high service costs.

"To meet its peak power demand, Botswana imports power from the Southern Africa Power Pool (SAPP) - mainly from South Africa - and when imports are not available, resorts to the use of costly backup diesel power plants," explained IRENA.

Mascom promotes digital safety

▪ Dedicates 2024 Batanani Charity Walk to cybersecurity

AMANDA DAVID
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AS A KEY PLAYER IN DIGITAL services, Mascom appreciates the challenges that come with technology, hence its deliberate decision to commit to digital safety through the 2024 Batanani Charity Walk.

Mascom Chief Executive Officer, Dzene Makhwade-Seboni said since its inception in 2019, the Batanani charity walk has donated proceeds to addressing and sensitising the nation on numerous issues such as gender-based violence, mental health, drug and substance abuse and protection of children and further confirmed that this year participants were walking towards creating a safer digital space for the youth.

"As a digital services provider, Mascom has a purpose that says we are powering connections that inspire change. It is on this basis of our firm commitment that this year for the Batanani walk we emphasize and shine a spotlight on the importance of online safety, stepping up digital safety," she added.

Makhwade-Seboni said parents today are faced with new challenges in raising children in the digital



age but acknowledged that the use of technology is critical to the development of children and the advancement of the lives of Botswana.

CyberSmart Botswana Managing Director, David Moepeeng said the funds raised would empower CyberSmart Botswana to extend its digital safety awareness programmes to secondary schools across the country, impacting tens of thousands of young lives. He acknowledged that though the internet offers incredible opportunities, it also poses significant risks such as online predators, cyber scams, cyber bullying, and misinformation which are just a few of the challenges which young people face in the digital era.

"Equipping them with the knowledge and tools to navigate

this digital landscape safely is not just an option; it is a necessity. At CyberSmart Botswana, we believe in a proactive approach to digital safety. Through interactive workshops, engaging educational materials, and community outreach, we strive to create an environment where our youth can thrive online without fear," he added.

As this year's beneficiary of the Mascom Batanani charity walk, CyberSmart Botswana's mission is to transform awareness into action, and fostering responsible digital citizens who are not only aware of the dangers but are also equipped to protect themselves and others. "This mission would not be possible without the incredible support of partners such as Mascom. Your commitment to raising funds for

and supporting our digital safety programmes is a testament to the power of collaboration and community spirit," he echoed.

As a pioneer and advocate for the safety of children, the First Lady of Botswana, Neo Masisi joined as chief walker at this year's edition of the Mascom Batanani charity walk. In her remarks after the walk, she applauded Mascom for its initiative adding that the initiative is a celebration of health, wellness and community spirit which brings people together to support vital social causes. She said the walk's theme Cyber Security Awareness. Step up for digital safety is befitting as Botswana navigate an increasingly digital world and further noted that the campaign aligns with objectives outlined in the national cyber security strategy of Botswana which prioritises digital safety.

"It is very pleasing that Mascom continues to ensure the involvement of other partners and key stakeholders in their commitments to social responsibility. The funds raised today will enable CyberSmart Botswana to launch a nationwide campaign aimed at educating secondary school students about digital safety."

She further noted that the campaign presented as a road show aligns with the on-going school digitalisation projects spearheaded by the Ministry of Education and Skills Development



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24HRS TOLLFREE LINE: 19777 (All networks)

Gambling Authority Has Zero Tolerance For Corruption
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Email: gamblingauthority@tip-offs.com
Website: www.tip-offs.com

TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NO. GA 3/1/5-I 005/2024-2025

Provision of Consultancy Services To Assist The Gambling Authority With Professional And Technical Support in Developing A Horseracing Strategy.

A non-refundable fee of P1000.00 for purchasing the tender and P500.00 for Youth Owned Companies. Payments should be made via EFT to Gambling Authority bank account.

If you are interested in purchasing the tender document, email your company name, contact persons name and telephone number to tenders@gamblingauthority.co.bw

Closing date: 13 September 2024 at 1200HRS



www.gamblingauthority.co.bw

West Wing, Fairground Office Park, Gaborone

(+267) 3957672

Bridging Botswana's Digital Divide in Education



LAGAGO TAMOCHA*
EDUCATING THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNER

THE POTENTIAL FOR digital technology to transform education is undeniable. For a developing country like Botswana, integrating digital tools into the classroom could be a game changer, offering new opportunities for students and teachers alike.

Yet, a significant obstacle remains: the digital divide, which highlights the disparities in technology access between urban and rural schools. As Botswana strives to become

a knowledge-based economy, addressing this divide in education is essential.

A Tale of Two Realities

In urban areas such as Gaborone and Francistown, schools are becoming increasingly equipped with modern technology—computers, tablets, and interactive whiteboards—allowing students to engage with digital learning resources. However, rural schools present a contrasting picture.

Many of these schools lack even the basic infrastructure, let alone the advanced technology that urban schools enjoy. With outdated textbooks and minimal resources, students in rural areas face significant challenges in keeping pace with their urban peers.

This divide has far-reaching implications. Students with access to modern technology can develop essential skills, such as coding and online research, which are crucial in today's

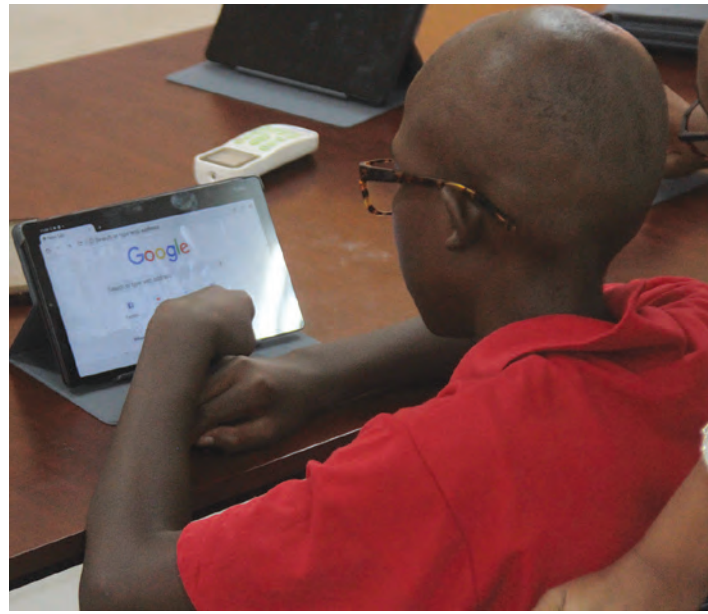
world.

Conversely, those in rural areas may struggle to acquire these skills, potentially widening the educational gap. Teachers in rural schools also face difficulties, as they often lack the training and resources needed to integrate technology into their teaching.

Root Causes of the Divide

Several factors contribute to this digital divide. One major issue is the lack of infrastructure in rural areas. While urban schools often benefit from stable electricity and internet connectivity, many rural schools still operate without these essentials. A 2022 report by the Ministry of Basic Education revealed that over 30% of rural schools in Botswana lack access to stable electricity, and many have limited or no internet connectivity.

Economic disparities also play a role. Rural families, more likely to live below the poverty line, often cannot afford digital



devices such as laptops or smartphones for their children. Even in urban areas, the high cost of data limits students' ability to engage with online learning outside of school.

Another contributing factor is the shortage of trained teachers in rural areas. Effective use of digital tools in education requires teachers

who are skilled in technology integration. However, many teachers in rural schools lack the necessary training and support, further entrenching the divide.

The SmartBots Initiative: Merits and Challenges

The SmartBots initiative, launched by the Botswana

government, aims to enhance digital access across various sectors, including education. The initiative has made significant strides in expanding internet connectivity, even reaching some of the most remote areas. SmartBots also offers training programmes to improve digital literacy among both students and teachers.

However, the initiative has not been without its challenges. While urban areas have benefited significantly, rural regions have not seen the same level of progress. Many rural schools still lack the infrastructure promised by SmartBots, and the gap in digital access persists.

Moreover, although SmartBots provides digital literacy training, it has not fully addressed the need for ongoing support for teachers. Without continuous training and resources, teachers in rural areas may struggle to keep up with technological

advancements, limiting the effectiveness of the initiative.

Opportunities for Improvement

To bridge the digital divide in Botswana's education sector, targeted improvements are necessary. First, infrastructure development should be prioritised in rural schools. The government could partner with private companies to expand electricity and internet access in underserved areas, ensuring that all schools have the necessary resources to support digital learning.

Teacher training is another crucial area for improvement. While initial training programmes are beneficial, ongoing professional development is essential. The establishment of regional training centres or the provision of online resources could help ensure that all teachers, regardless of location, have access to the support they need. Community involvement is

also key. Parents, local leaders, and civil society organisations can play a significant role in supporting digital literacy and encouraging students to engage with digital learning. By fostering a supportive environment, the community can help bridge the digital divide and ensure that every child in Botswana has the opportunity to succeed in the digital age.

The digital divide in Botswana's education sector presents a significant challenge, reflecting broader socio-economic inequalities. While the SmartBots initiative has made commendable progress, there is still much work to be done. By focusing on infrastructure development, teacher training, and community involvement, Botswana can bridge the gap between urban and rural schools, ensuring that every student has the tools they need to thrive in a digital world.

GOVT COFFERS RUNNING DRY

Civil Servants face salary cuts?

BAKANG TIRO

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CIVIL SERVANTS COULD soon see the party of massive perks such as overtime allowances over for them as government continues to find best possible means to save costs after a huge slump on its revenues particularly at the Government Investment Account (GIA) which its value stand at P4.1 billion, The Patriot on Sunday has learnt.

The government revenue streams are subdued and the Minister of Finance Peggy Serame's attempt to approach the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial injection this week has been met with advice from them government must cut its wage bill.

The IMF has for a long time called government to reduce the public service wage bill.

Information gathered by this publication is that the Head of Public Service, Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP), Emma Pelloetse instructed the heads of departments and ministries to

- Govt plans to reduce wage bill, overtime allowance could be frozen
- PSP instructs Permanent Secretaries to closely monitor the budget
- We are in this situation because of the Govt reckless spending- Rari

ensure optimal utilization of funds and ensure that overtime allowances and other travel expenses are put to a check.

"The PSP and Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) leadership have been in constant discussion to see how the huge public service wage bill is being managed during these difficult times where government accounts are going under pressure. Trade unions will be soon engaged," said an impeccable sources at Government Enclave.

The current decline in government revenues is said to be likely to bear no positive outcomes on this current financial year salary negotiations between the government and five cooperating trade unions (5CTU).

Currently, the negotiation is on the arbitration process that has been halted after change of guard in the leadership of

5CTU after the Coordinator Tobokani Rari and Deputy Coordinator Kethlalefile Motshagwa stepped down.

The duo was replaced by the Secretary Union of Botswana Teachers Union (BTU) Agang Gabanna as Coordinator and Secretary General of Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU) Tshespo Mberekhi as the Deputy Coordinator.

Government and unions settled for arbitration process after the two disagreed over the salary adjustments proposal for financial year 2024-25. The unions proposed 15 percent while DPSM proposed five (5) percent that had been agreed for three financial years of 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years.

Pelloetse denied knowledge of the allegations about civil servants' salaries. She referred inquiries on the matter to the Ministry of Finance.



Pelloetse

Reckless

Attempts to contact the leadership of 5CTU Gabanna and Mberekhi for a comment were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, the former coordinator and Secretary General of Botswana Sector of Educators Trade Union (BOSETU), Tobokani Rari said if there are any plans by the government to freeze allowances for civil servants, the trade unions should be engaged.

"That will be going against the tenants of fair industrial relations practice where it there is anything that is going to be adversely affect the workers then our expectation is that as part of the critical stakeholders we should be engaged as part of the people that will be affected so that we can also provide alternatives as the labour movement," said Rari in an interview on Friday.

Rari said as to whether

government is broke or not, it is clear that there has been reckless spending by the government that has eroded and degraded the government important financial reserves. He said there has been active since government decided to buy expensive cattle from USA, Chema Chema money splash and the decision by the Executive Cadre of government to increase their salaries by 23 percent last was bound to backfire and affect government coffers.

"The Executive Cadre of the government, Permanent Secretaries also went a step further and awarded themselves 15 percent in overtime allowance. Workers go on overtime because they don't just want to make money because they do so because there is a work that needs to be done beyond the working hours because there is a need for service at that particular hour when civil servants are on duty," he said.

Rari said as civil servants, it is not like we are crying for overtime, but they are mindful of how important public service delivery it is to the public, adding that it would be unfortunate and reckless for the employer to suspend overtime payment for civil servants.

Serame revealed that the due to the impact of COVID-19, the Government Investment Account (GIA) declined from P23.9 billion in 2019 to P2.8 billion in December 2020.

She said as at the end of May 2024, GIA was at P4.1 billion compared to P19.1 billion in May 2023.

BURS frustrates BDF retirees

FROM PAGE 1

by the Minister of Defence and Security, Kagiso Mmusi, regarding the payment of pensions to retired soldiers.

Speaking in an interview with this publication, Makgolo stated that to her "knowledge, none of the retired soldiers have received their pension payments", contradicting the minister's assertions. Minister Mmusi has publicly said that the first batch of pension payments to retired members of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) has been made. However, Makgolo dismissed this claim, stating, "As far as I know, no payments have been made to the retired soldiers. We are still in the process of addressing the outstanding issues related to these payments."

Makgolo was asked the question of whether they will be taxing the funds, which the cabinet, has ruled should be exempt from tax.

Mmusi confirmed to this publication that no changes have been made regarding exemption from tax. "Yes it is true that the funds will be exempted from tax," he said. Adding to the complexity of the situation, BURS is reportedly hesitant to exempt the funds from tax demanding assistance in developing a model to exempt the retired soldiers from certain tax obligations. This exemption model was seen as a critical step in facilitating the smooth and timely disbursement of the pension funds by the executive.

An official at BURS who preferred anonymity the issue is further complicated by the fact that some retirees were already owing huge amount of tax, "over the model issues, we have been receiving a lot of retired soldiers looking for tax clearance certificates and we were not coping. The issues are just complex. We are under

pressure to deliver, as the issue is reportedly being used for political gain. It is claimed that the President has assured retired soldiers that payments will be made before the end of July," said a source at BURS.

Speaking to this publication, BDF Retired Military Association Secretary General retired Brigadier Mabe Gaborone said it is not true that they have received their money. "We only hear of that money in the media. Our members have not received anything."

The government is reportedly under pressure to fulfill its promise that the first batch of pension payments would be made by July which just passed. The delay has sparked concerns among the retired soldiers, many of whom are still waiting for their promised funds. The situation has caused significant frustration, with some suggesting that political motives may be at play in the delay. Brigadier Thulaganyo Masisi, Masisi's older brother was recently quoted as saying there are public officers who are out to frustrate government's noble efforts towards the retired soldiers by frustrating the whole process.

It is understood that technocrats have reportedly cautioned that the financial issues surrounding the pension payments are highly complex and require thorough analysis and careful planning. Sources say they have warned that rushing the process could lead to significant errors or oversights, potentially exacerbating the situation. These experts argue that ensuring accuracy and compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks is essential, and that such matters cannot be resolved hastily without risking long-term financial stability and fairness for the retirees and the government.

Even in death, Kgosi haunts govt

FROM PAGE 3

recovered or other civil liabilities, the case may be pursued by or against the estate.

Kgosi's estate is expected to inherit the responsibility for these assets, with the court ultimately deciding how the seized assets will be handled. The legitimacy of the seizures is under scrutiny, as Kgosi had contested them, arguing that the state failed to prove they were proceeds of crime.

Assets Forfeited by State (2019)

In July 2019, Lobatse High Court Judge Tebogoo Tau issued an order for the seizure of Kgosi's properties, including a farm, money, his Phakalane home, and motor vehicles. The seized assets include Portion 82 and Portion 83 of Sentlhane Farm, Lot 61299 in Gaborone, a Land Rover (B 414 AXU), a Land Cruiser (B 975 BHI), 200 heifers, 24 Simmental cattle,

36 Brahman white cattle, one Brahman bull, one Simmental bull, and P549,763.07 held in a Barclays Bank of Botswana account. The state took full control of these properties pending investigations and the potential institution of civil penalty or forfeiture proceedings under the Proceeds and Instruments of Crime Act (PICA).

Seized Firearms

This year the High Court of Botswana ordered the return of firearms seized from Kgosi, ruling that the Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) acted unlawfully by confiscating them without a warrant.

The court further said the arms are not arms of war according to the Arms and Ammunition Act as claimed by the state.

The firearms were taken during a 2019 raid under allegations of unlawful

possession, but Kgosi maintained they were legally acquired and registered, claiming the seizure was politically motivated. Justice Zein Kebonang found that the seizure was unjustified and illegal, stating that the DIS undermined the rule of law. The state, which failed to justify the continued confiscation or appear in court, has appealed the ruling. Like with the above case, the executor will likely fight for these assets, according to lawyers.

The P100bn lie

Isaac Kgosi also leaves behind the controversial "stolen P100 billion" hoax, a case sponsored by the state. Despite the High Court dismissing the case, the state seems to have abandoned the case, allegedly hoping it will fade away over time. In 2019 the state claimed that former President Ian Khama and Kgosi looted P100 billion

directly from the central bank. The DIS, along with the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crimes (DCEC) and the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP), alleged that Khama and Kgosi orchestrated this theft during Khama's presidency, with DCEC investigator Jako Hubona stating in court that the two had directed the Bank of Botswana to open accounts used to embezzle the funds.

However, the Bank of Botswana dismissed these allegations as false. Earlier this year, in response to a parliamentary inquiry from Maun West legislator Dumelang Saleshando, Finance Minister Peggy Serame also distanced herself and her ministry from the case, stating that neither she nor the Bank of Botswana were aware of any missing P100 billion or involved in any related investigations or court cases. She clarified that

the responsibility to withdraw the case lies with those who initiated it.

Prior to that, the Chief Justice Terence Rannowane had also expressed concern over the damage caused by the case, "We are all aware of the Wilheminah Maswabi case, where the accused was brought to court on fabricated evidence. That particular case caused untold reputational damage to our criminal justice system, not just here at home but abroad. As head of the judiciary I get concerned when our institutions professional image takes a hit. In fact, I am on record in one of my legal year speeches expressing regret about the tendency of charging people first and investigating the case thereafter." Maswabi has since been reinstated by the state and sources say she has chosen to abandon her suit for defamation to prioritise her peace.

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Recruitment

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd. is a subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (India), a government of India undertaking public sector unit, having its registered Head Office at Gaborone and wishes to invite applications from suitably qualified and experienced individuals for the following posts:

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Nationality: Motswana
Age: Candidate should have completed a minimum of 24 years of age and should not have completed 35 years of age.
Qualification: Degree in Data Science/Information Technology. Data Protection and or Privacy certification will be desirable and preferably from Law background.
Work experience: At least 3 years' experience handling data/security of data/data processing related field in government, parastatal or private sector
Key Competencies: Fluent in English, analytical and detail Oriented, resilience, good understanding of finance and financial techniques, statistical and data analysis methods, proactive, result oriented & business acumen.
Process of Recruitment: Interview

Post no. 2- Information Technology Officer

Nationality: Motswana
Age: Candidate should have completed a minimum of 24 years of age and should not have completed 35 years of age.
Qualification: Minimum of a Degree in Information Technology.
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Note: Only shortlisted candidates will be responded

12th Parliament

'Opposition outperforms BDP' -Keorapetse

Q: Who is Dithapelo Keorapetse (Sticks)?

DK: I grew up in Selebi Phikwe where I did my elementary school to senior secondary. I have been an MP for Selebi Phikwe West since 2014, the time during which I served as Minority Whip, Minority Leader, Opposition Whip and now Leader of Opposition. I've chaired the Public Accounts Committee for four years. I am a pracademic, I've taught Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Botswana for nearly seven years. I have also been an anti-corruption officer at the DCEC, and I've been an active trade unionist in both UB Union and the Federation of the Trade Unions. I also have NGO experience having served as Board Vice Chair of BONELA.

Q: What are the functions of LOO in Parliament on daily basis?

DK: LOO is the official spokesperson of the majority opposition party in Parliament. LOO is part of key Committees such as the Business Advisory which sets the agenda for Parliament and Selection Committee which places MPs into committees. LOO responds to all major policy debates in Parliament and sets the tone for the Opposition. LOO represents the opposition in key national events and key inter-parliamentary bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, SADC-Parliamentary Forum and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. LOO, assisted by the Opposition Whip, convenes and chairs the Opposition caucus to discuss parliamentary matters. LOO also communicates with the media on opposition parliamentary issues.

Q: Reflect on your term as LOO, the successes and challenges since you were elected to the position?

DK: Under my stewardship, we managed to restore the UDC and Joint Opposition Caucus which were moribund. We managed to link UDC MPs with the Party National Executive Committee and party experts who advise us on technical matters. We have managed to have timely, quality, timely and codified responses to SONA and the budget proposals and policy debates. We have hosted press briefings and managed bipartisanship in some key areas. LOO Office is hamstrung and controlled from OP through the Green Book. It is not well resourced. Divided opposition has been a major challenge. The ruling party has collapsed committees, and these have been big challenges.

Q: What is your overall assessment of opposition MPs' performance in the current 12th Parliament that is about to come to an end?

DK: Opposition MPs have done very well. We brought nearly ten Bills during the twelfth Parliament and many motions addressing key issues affecting Botswana. We have asked probing third-degree questions to expose corruption, incompetence and lack of responsiveness of the

The Leader of the Opposition (LOO) in Parliament, Dithapelo Keorapetse is adamant that the opposition aisle has fairly outperformed the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in terms of contribution in the 12th Parliament that is about to close, paving the way for 2024 general election that is only two months away. Keorapetse, who is one of the senior MPs having served two terms, also believes that the opposition could still find a common ground and work together under the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) after Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF) walked away. In this week's edition of On the Couch with Your Candidate, Keorapetse speaks to **STAFF WRITER BAKANG TIRO** to gauge the performance of the UDC and the opposition in the 12th Parliament.

governing party. The opposition has caused action on the side of the government to give services to the people through our parliamentary interventions. We have done very well in Committees before the ruling party illegally and unethically collapsed them through a motion.

Q: Highlight some of the motions and bills that have been tabled before Parliament by UDC. What is progress in terms of their implementation?

DK: UDC motion on the living wage has caused an upwards revision of the minimum wage, though not enough. Our perseverance on electoral reforms has caused reforms such as the coming Bill on indelible ink for voters and funding of parties and other reforms which the governing party has committed to do such as counting of ballots at polling stations. We have also managed to get the Media Practitioners Act repealed and the introduction of the Freedom of Information Bill. So many things have moved because we didn't relent in our efforts.

Q: There are suggestions that BDP uses its majority advantage and shun motions or bills proposed by the opposition not looking at the merits of such proposed bills or motion. What is your view on this, is it progressive for our democracy or not?

DK: It is true. Almost everything we bring to Parliament is shot down by the ruling party, but we see most of those things being brought back by the same ruling party. There is consideration of de-linking health staff from mainstream public service as a result of our motion. There was a review of regressive Statutory Instrument 106 of 2019 to employ Batswana and less foreigners at Khoemacau mine after our motion. The government has agreed to bring an independent body akin to CCMA to resolve trade disputes. We caused Statutory Instrument No 76 of 2021 Published on September 24th, 2021, to ban importation of school uniforms without a permit. We caused a near stoppage of Pink Tax; VAT is exempted from Sanitary Pads because we pushed for that.

We decried VAT on key commodities and now Vat removed from various products such as pampers, baby formula, cooking oil etc.

Q: Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF) broke ranks with UDC. As LOO in Parliament, how do you unite the opposition which is fragmented?

Agreement (AfCFTA) in addition to the Southern African Customs Union (Sacu).

Botswana might have a point when we look at the trade data between the two neighbours over the past five years. Citrus exports to Botswana by SA grew from R33-million a year in 2018 to R51.92-million last year.

Still, it might seem as though Botswana's government is merely picking on its larger neighbour, and doing so in an election year on the home front. But such a move would be unnecessary and counterproductive for Gaborone, as South Africa stands as a key investor and has never directly provoked the 2.6-million citizen nation, many of whom have relatives across the border.

Looking at the data even more closely reveals why South Africa has been on the receiving end of the ban. While South Africa sent nearly R52-million worth of citrus to Botswana in 2023, the country had total citrus imports worth R53.3-million.

This means the smaller country's citrus products are drawn mainly from South Africa, indeed up to 97%.



Keorapetse

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

DK: We have a good relationship with the BPF, we will collaborate in some instances, and we are not too antagonistic towards each other. The BCP sought to dismember the UDC mainly because Advocate Duma Boko didn't resign to pave way for their leader as they wished, and they

left the coalition. Batswana may force us to work together post elections through a hung parliament. But we are confident that UDC will win and reform Botswana and people's lives.

Q: Previous LOOs have lamented that President Mokgweetsi Masisi

don't extensively consult them especially when he appoints people to posts such as Ombudsman etc., What is your experience as LOO regarding that?

DK: His is not meaningful consultations in which an input is

sought, it's simply informing LOO on his intentions. The President seldom meets LOO to discuss national issues, he meets LOO in parliament sometimes and a lot of the time at official events. It is a tradition which will stop under the UDC. We will ensure that LOO is accorded audience with the President and is meaningfully consulted. LOO office will also have a budget and totally removed from OP.

Q: Apart from being LOO, you are MP for Selebi Phikwe West having been elected for two terms. Kindly reflect on your journey in Parliament as one of the most Senior MPs alongside F/Town West and South MPs Ignatius Moswaane and Wynter Mmolotsi respectively.

DK: I have represented Phikwe West with honour and distinction.

I have tabled a Motion calling for Review of Statutory Instrument 106 of 2019 granting Khoemacau mine permit to hire foreigners in almost all positions, Government has reviewed the instrument, many former BCL employees are employed by Khoemacau.

I have called for BCL Mine reopening arguing that BCL had sufficient mineral reserves/resources to last for decades mined commercially. Outcome is that PNR Botswana has bought Selebi Shafts and explored proving that there is sufficient Nickel and Copper for mining with plus 200 people employed and prospects of more jobs.

I have suggested That former BCL employees remain in institutional housing to prevent desolation of the town. I also argued for special program of subsidized purchase of BCL Houses.

Outcome: Former BCL Employees have resided in houses since 2016 without evictions and government has announced it has bought the houses, pointing it's considering the idea of selling to former employees. There are many other things.

Q: You are now contesting for the third term. Are you confident of another victory more because your former party, BCP has also fielded a candidate Phikwe West?

DK: My faith, trust and hope are in the God Almighty Jehovah and the masses of the people of Phikwe West. As the scripture says in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith of my two terms and deserve to serve my people for the next five years under the new government of the UDC.

Q: You have been very vocal, advocating for developments in

Phikwe that include relocation of some government ministries and departments to Phikwe to revive the town's economy after BCL Mine closure in 2016. What is progress with such proposals you made?

DK: Some are in motion whilst some have been outrightly rejected.

I have argued for more specialists' doctors for Phikwe Hospital. Four specialists' doctors have been deployed to Phikwe Hospital. Pediatrician 1 Internal Medicine(physician) 1 Family Medicine physician 1 Public health physician 1

I have exposed the indignity/lack of privacy and dilapidated delivery beds at Phikwe Hospital Maternity Ward. New delivery beds for maternity ward were bought and partitioning of the maternity ward to offer mothers better service, comfort and privacy during delivery.

I have called for the rebuilding of Selebi Phikwe Hospital and P20 million is budgeted for refurbishing Phikwe Hospital under DM model. I have exposed old and dilapidated infrastructure, equipment and machinery and called for revamping of facilities. The restoration of the main theater, installation of new generator & UPS back up for Accident Emergency and Operation Theaters.

Q: Do you think the Government Political Party Funding can aid the opposition topple the BDP and EMD its long-time state power dominance?

DK: The money is too little; the formula means I can only get about P98 000 for my constituency or about P12 000 per candidate. The decision to do this after 2024 elections is a bad decision, why not start this year? UDC has proposed a democracy fund managed by IEC in which donors can contribute into.

Q: What is your plan after 2024 elections, will you still avail yourself in the next elections, 2029?

DK: The plan is to see my town's economy revamped through the mining industry by relocating the Department of Mines Headquarters to the town, prioritizing the town for base metal processing plants such as smelters, refineries and manufacturing facilities; establishing a national Nickel and Copper Mining.

Museum; favouring the town for major mining events; and moving the Department of Mining and Geological Engineering of the College of Engineering and Technology at the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) from Palapye to Selebi Phikwe for the purpose of establishing BIUST Phikwe Campus among other workable current and past initiatives.

Q: Any other important Information is welcome

DK: Phikwe can and must be better and I am still available to be part of the journey to a better future and life for all.

Botswana's dispute with SA - Gaborone has a point about fair trade

BHASO NDZENDZE

THE CURRENT TRADE ROW IS A canary in the coalmine for the future of intra-African trade. As the continent pursues deepened integration through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, it will undergo similar and bigger stress tests not only in the sub-region, but across the wider landscape.

As South Africans celebrated the Olympic triumph of Botswana's Letsile Tebogo, tensions continued to rise between the two countries over trade matters.

Since June, Gaborone has imposed a unilateral ban on South African citrus produce, citing the need to grow its own domestic industry. On the face of it, it may seem an unprecedented move, but there is nothing new about it.

Currently, there are restrictions on South African vegetables, in place since 2021. This is part of a growing trend, all while the continent is pushing for ever-freer movement of goods under the umbrella of the African Continental Free Trade

Agreement (AfCFTA) in addition to the Southern African Customs Union (Sacu).

Even in tonnage, South Africa's citrus exports to Botswana have moved from 4,686 tonnes to 7,919, nearly double the total since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. This should come as no surprise, as SA is the world's second-largest citrus exporter, only behind Spain.

South African options What should South Africa's response to all this be? So far, the government has been silent on the matter, while seeking consultation with Botswana. Essentially, it has four options.

Pretoria could simply do nothing. As a \$400-billion economy, a few million lost in trade to Botswana – whose own GDP is only around \$20-billion – makes little difference to its annual overhead (though certainly not for the farmers who have toiled all season), and alternative markets can be sought elsewhere.

A second option would be to take the matter to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a contravention of the most favoured nation principle, among others.

Third, South Africa could retaliate

with tariffs of its own. Certainly, by Botswana's logic, there are several products in which it enjoys a wide and growing surplus of its own within the agricultural sector, notably in livestock trade. Indeed, it is a regional powerhouse in that respect.

Between 2019 and 2023, South Africa exported between R2.7-million and R67.5-million worth of livestock to Botswana. By comparison, Botswana-sourced livestock exports to South Africa ranged between R652.8-million (2020) and R1.6-billion (in 2022).

Should South Africa use this as a pretext to introduce its own ban on Botswana livestock? Of course not, that would be detrimental to all involved.

A fourth option is to use Botswana's grievance – no doubt fuelled by the political mood in that country as it heads for elections in October – to open up a fulsome review of the state of bilateral trade between the two countries (and their other neighbours) within Sacu.

Most notably, Botswana and Namibia's diamond-dependent

economies are undergoing strains unlike anything seen since their respective periods of independence.

The popularity of lab-grown diamonds, alongside an early 2024 decision by the G7 to ban Russian diamonds without clarity on how origins will be determined (and thus clear Botswana in an efficient and equitable way), have contributed to a potential decline in one of Africa's most stable and prosperous economies.

Already, the IMF's projections have revised the country's 2024 growth rate from 5.5% to 2.4% – a still-enviable rate by South African standards, but one markedly down by Botswana's.

Stress tests

The present tiff is a canary in the coalmine for the future of intra-African trade. As the continent pursues deepened integration through AfCFTA, it will undergo similar and bigger stress tests not only in the sub-region, but across the wider landscape.

Indeed, there was a border closure between the DRC and Zambia within the same week over

somewhat similar reasons (unlike South Africa, Zambia took advantage of its neighbour's near-landlocked circumstances and drove a hard bargain).

Overall, agriculture has always been the Achilles' heel of free trade and customs union arrangements the world over, from the North American Free Trade Agreement/ United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement to the WTO itself.

Somewhat surprisingly, despite forward thinking on challenges brought by climate change, the latest review round of Sacu (2023) has been silent on the bilateral challenges between South Africa and two of its neighbours which have been on display since at least 2021. The next review will be only in six years' time.

Still, measures have been introduced which can be adapted to the Sacu region. There is merit in agricultural economist Wandile Sihlobo's proposal of a coordinated production cycle, and classification of products which constitute threats to national security under the Sacu agreement's Article 18(2)(f).

Additionally, a European

Union-style common agricultural policy (CAP) arrangement may be worth exploring for common products to shield farmers from market forces unleashed by free trade and achieve fairer trade.

Essentially, it would be an expansion of Sacu's already existing revenue-sharing mechanism, this time to subsidise farmers in both countries and share profits.

For both micro- and macroeconomic reasons, farmer support is badly needed across both countries and their neighbours. A pooled, targeted subsidy would be a form of investment in regional food security. [Daily Maverick]

*Bhaso Ndzendze is an associate professor of politics and international relations at the University of Johannesburg. His work focuses on sovereignty, including on territorial disputes, technology and trade, as well as executive power. One of his recent books is The Political Economy of Sino-South African Trade and Regional Competition, published by Palgrave in 2022.



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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

AS THE BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC Party (BDP) prepares for the imminent 2024 general election, it must do so after fairly determining the *bulela ditswe* disputes arising from the recently held *bulela ditswe* elections which were nothing but a sham. For avoidance of any doubt, the party has accepted this was sham. Over and above resolving the disputes, the party has to hold a special congress to elect its presidential candidate as it is the norm during an election year.

The immediate question is will the BDP overcome these huge hurdles given the short period between now and the general election. Fact of the matter is that the *bulela ditswe* disputes were brought about by the recent chaotic elections where almost all the candidates who lost feel they were not free, fair and credible. I want to believe the winners will privately share the same sentiment. One will remember the last presidential election held in Kang where the sitting President was viciously and vigorously challenged by Mme Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi. Something tells me some

BDP battles Bulela ditswe disputes

of the deserving *bulela ditswe* disputes are likely to be white washed with a few held to save face. This will exacerbate the already high political temperature that has reached boiling point in the party.

Bulela ditswe disputes

I believe I will not be far-off to suggest most of the disputes will be dismissed on procedural grounds before the substantive grounds are determined. Such procedural grounds will be inter alia, that the dispute was not channelled through the regional committee as the rules demand; that the substantive grounds are not material enough to overturn the result; that such grounds would not have conferred an unfair advantage to the winner because all candidates would have been equally affected. That said, I find it unacceptable to expect the very regional committee under whose watch the disputes are premised, to give an objective and impartial report about them.

Further to this, it is abundantly clear to all and sundry that the BDP *bulela ditswe* elections were held under the circumstances and atmosphere that rendered them not free, fair and credible. A fresh *bulela ditswe* election in all constituencies and wards would be desirable. Ordinarily, one would expect the regional committee to be objective and impartial but given the high stakes and the apparent favour of one candidate over the other by the regional committee if reports to that effect are anything to go by, the said committee should be excluded in the equation. It is reported by one of the mainstream media



A voter during the recently held *bulela ditswe*

[PIC: PINO KILANO]

platforms that one regional committee is divided on whether to order a rerun or dismiss the appellant's dispute.

Presidential candidate

In the last election cycle, the BDP held a special congress in Kang during the first quarter of 2019 as per the dictates of its Constitution in an election year. This time around and crucially two months or so before the general election, such has not been called neither has the date been pronounced. Unless the party knows the general election will be held way after October 2024 in which case the special congress could be squeezed in between.

Without saying it, this is a Constitutional matter that cannot be ignored because the ramifications could be too ghastly to contemplate. Chances are that the Central Committee could declare the sitting president its presidential candidate given that some regions have already endorsed the sitting President to be their preferred presidential candidate. If this happened, the party could be liable for litigation by any member and chances are that such a member will stand good prospects of success unless its Constitution provides for the Central Committee to vary that provision as and when it deems it necessary to do so. I am making this assumption

because I could not access the BDP Constitution to confirm whether or not it clothes the Central Committee with such discretion. Such a member predictably, would be one of those disgruntled by the outcomes of the *bulela ditswe* whether they would have appealed and were unsuccessful or they never did any of the two.

Deleterious consequences

I stand corrected: the BDP has never experienced such huge number of *bulela ditswe* disputes like it has this time around. And the party has not been caught on the blind side with respect to electing a presidential candidate in an election year. The party has attributed the blame on the Covid-19 pandemic and the delimitation exercise. I have previously as I do so now, opined that these are lame excuses peddled to serve as a distraction to the BDP's biggest failure of the century-to hold a disastrous *bulela ditswe* elections and to, two months before the general election, not to have convened a special congress to elect a presidential candidate.

These two scenarios is an explicit indication that the BDP is run by a leadership characterised by indecisiveness, serious lack of forward looking and the sheer acts of dropping the ball at crucial times particularly in an election year. If there was a coherent opposition, the BDP would be good for the taking probably than never before. I have already argued that opposition political parties have almost given up on dethroning the BDP. It is not far-fetched to suggest notwithstanding the chaos the party finds itself in, its electoral

demise could be prolonged in this election cycle.

Over and above these scenarios, the BDP is on the back foot from its own members and the general public consequent to the abrupt withdrawals of the infamous Bills on the pension benefits of the President, the Vice President and the Referendum. It is beyond doubt these Bills were 'temporarily withdrawn' to save face than the lame explanation that broad-based consultation was not done.

It is almost a given that the BDP will once again shambolically deal with the *bulela ditswe* disputes in a manner that will stoke more political fires in the party. This because it has become abundantly clear the regional committees have a clear and vested interest on who should prevail in the disputes. If the party demonstrated beyond any doubt it does not have the capacity in whatever form to run a free, fair and credible *bulela ditswe* elections, how would one expect it to run a credible and legitimate resolution of the disputes? It is my belief the resolution of these disputes will also be a sham of sorts. As if the *bulela ditswe* conundrum will not be enough, it will be compounded by that of the election of the presidential candidate. This is a BDP Constitutional imperative that cannot be ignored as and when it suits the Central Committee. It will be intriguing to watch how the BDP manages these two processes simultaneously which could make or break it. Only time will tell but I fear for the worst. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!

adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

Govts should fund journalism as a public good

KABO RAMASIA*

WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ IS controversial. But let me allay fears by stating that I pen this with a very sober mind. And as you read this, I want you to reflect in the same sobriety mood. This is not just a theoretical question but one that require we become pragmatic.

Assuming that we have all cleared our minds, without belabouring the point the sad reality of the matter is that journalism is ailing. The slow death of journalism was occasioned by the arrival of the Internet in the 1990s and later the arrival of big tech companies like Google and Facebook which all altered the communications landscape for good. The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) together with its Algorithms is a sickening headache for media owners. Across the world, media houses have been downsizing with the crisis exacerbated by advertiser's decision to move their money online. What a tragedy.

Digital disruption

Botswana is a country with a low research output, and it is for this reason that there are no available statistics on the declining

fortunes of the media business. However, throughout the world, figures point to a crisis of epic proportions. Although somewhat debatable, for every crisis, there is need for policy intervention. I was privileged to be part of a panel discussion organized by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - Botswana chapter in June during the launch of the African Media Barometer Botswana 2023 analysing the Botswana media landscape. The report noted that the media remains partially free with challenges like laws that inhibit freedom of express and opportunities for the future. Meanwhile, much of the discussion was swayed toward the diminishing media business. Mmegi Managing Director, Titus Mbuya, argued that it could be time government considers a subsidy for the media business. On the other end, I bemoaned the proliferation of digital publications, in this context, mushrooming of online publications as both a blessing and curse. What do I mean? I hope you will read to the very end.

The convergence of digital and traditional media has proved quite both disastrous and perhaps what the doctor ordered to challenge the status quo in today's journalism of a fast-paced era where adoption of technology is at an all-time high and accessing news is just a click away. However, this has had a negative bearing on media which traditionally leveraged all advertising without so much competition. Now, coupled with a lack of resources to run newsrooms, inability to make investment in cutting edge technology has rendered journalism a dying profession in most parts of the world. Whilst some may argue that journalism needed to re-invent itself to survive or for sustainability to occur, the fact of the matter is that digital has taken over the world of communication in this so called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the next revolution may even be the last stroke that broke the camel's back.

According to statista, revenue in the digital newspapers and magazines market worldwide is projected to reach US \$40.23 billion in 2024. The figures show a growth trajectory for consumption of digital media with an estimated market value of US\$44.54 billion by 2029. Further, figures denote that the number of users is projected to reach 1.6bn users by 2029. Statista recorded that User penetration remains at 17.7% in 2024 and is estimated to increase to 20.4% by 2029. Additionally, globally, the US is anticipated to generate more digital revenue (US\$16,430.00m in 2024). This demonstrates a great shift where digital/online platforms currently dominate readership and is set to expand in the foreseeable future. Traditionally, print and broadcast media contributed a great deal to information dissemination before the advent of new media. By this, the fall of journalism is by large attributed to digital technologies. Historically advertising occurred through



traditional media in the form of radio, broadcast television, cable and satellite, print and billboard.

Scholars, Anthony Utulu together with Ogidi Odun, in their co-authored research paper titled: "is the New Media Superior to Traditional Media for Advertising" argued that although new media altered human information dissemination it is not superior to it but an extension of it especially in developing countries. "Adverts are produced to introduce new and reintroduce old products to consumers with the sole aim of persuading them to buy. Broadcast stations also advertise their products for customers (media users) to get abreast of their old and/or new products (programmes), using both traditional and new media platforms," the scholars state.

(Utulu & Odun 2016) posits that whereas new media has gained traction globally as a go to advertising option because of its less expenses, time/and space saving, challenges to internet connectivity in the Global South/ developing countries/poor countries as otherwise referred in economic literature due to the socioeconomic and political divisions. The paper established that low Internet connectivity, disrupted power supply, damaged digital equipment maintenance and low income to access new media hampered its utilization. Consequently, it noted: "If the information needs of the world's largest population, that is, the people in the rural areas of developing countries are to be met, there is still need for traditional and new media to co-exist for some time to come. Both media should work together and make use of each other's comparative advantage to confront unfolding events in the global business environment."

Death of print media

In April, The Editor-In-Chief of the South African based News 24, Adriaan Basson complained about digital platforms. News24 Media appeared before the Competition

Commission to give evidence on the matter in what he termed big tech's "devastating impact of Google, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) on our newsrooms and journalism." Basson argued that in the heydays of newspapers, advertisers were the biggest supporters of freedom of expression and independent media in South Africa. He stated that back then they could hire staff, travel the country covering different stories.

"In the 2000s, with the advent of the internet, more and more advertisers moved their money online. This was completely understandable; advertisements had to follow eyeballs, and most of the reading public was moving away from print to computers and mobile. Our journalism did the same; large teams of reporters started working in a digital-first environment," he noted. He said for a few years they salvaged the online advertising pie. Nevertheless, he maintained that year-on year, the slice got smaller until it was smaller for the entire media fraternity to share. "Because of their sheer scale, the global digital platforms made it much cheaper for advertisers to reach millions of eyeballs. We had to make another plan," he underscored.

In order to survive, he shared that in August 2020, News 24 introduced a subscription service imitating global newsrooms such as the New York Times, Financial Times, and Wall Street Journal. To this end, he said, readers were asked to pay a nominal fee to access 3000 articles a month ranging from investigative journalism exposes, business, lifestyle, and sports journalism.

Sadly, Media 24 has publicly disclosed intentions to close five newspapers with 400 jobs on the line. The media company stated that City Press, Rapport and Daily Sun will be digital -only brands. Media24 stated that it would close the print editions of Beeld, Rapport, City Press, Daily Sun and Soccer Laduma, including the digital editions of Volksblad and Die Burger Oos-Kaap, and

the digital hub SNL24.

Over the years, Botswana has suffered the same fate. The country's biggest publication Botswana Gazette decided to be digital a few years back. The same happened with the Sunday Standard sister publication, The Telegraph which is no longer printed. Before then, efforts to digitally resuscitate The Global Post which used to print hit a snag.

Similarly, the Echo went through the same route. Oh wait! How can I forget Mmegi, during its heyday the Dikgang Publishing Group had a daily newspaper over and above the Friday edition. All that is now history. Now, there is mushrooming of digital publications. Although the increased platforms are a positive in so far as this democracy and holding power to account is concerned, like in the case of South Africa, they will fight for the smaller digital market which remains owing to the alluded competition from Google, X, Facebook, Tik-Tok, Instagram and WhatsApp which are but some of the digital technologies utilized for communications in the 21st century.

In the US, research shows that between 2008 and 2020, media jobs plunged from 71 000 to 31 000. CNN is reported to have laid off hundreds of journalists in 2022 with digital platforms worsening matters.

Govt should fund journalism

Considering this cruel reality of our times, Patrick Walters, Assistant Professor, in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications at Washington and Lee University made a case for journalism to be funded as a "public good" like roads, schools and bridges in the US. Walters, a former reporter for the Associated Press himself argued that journalism is worthy of taxpayers support. He argued that as a public good, Americans ought to understand that the "crisis" and "collapse" of journalism in the last decade was due to the disintegration in the free market. He noted that a growing number of people have called for government-funded journalism although there are those opposed to it. He reasoned that government funding of media in US begun in 1792 with subsidies being offered to postal newspapers. Walters further contends that support could be introducing tax credits that people could use to support news outlets, granting media houses tax-exempts like churches and public schools or designated tax revenue from big tech companies could be used to support independent media overseen by a Corporation for Public Communication as scholars Mark Lloyd and Lewis Friedland suggested in a chapter of The Communication Crisis in America, and How to Fix It book. He proposed that a board overseeing such funding would be publicly appointed. "This would help build the infrastructure of state-supported journalism rather than something that could devolve into a state-run propaganda arm."

Moreover, an article authored by Victor

Pickard and published by the Centre for International Governance Innovation dubbed "In the Digital Era, Journalism should be Considered A Public Good" conceded that the old advertising model is never coming back.

As I argued somewhere at a stakeholder meeting between MISA Botswana and some undisclosed stakeholders, the media crisis is now a policy issue which would need governments to intervene to save the dying profession. I argued that journalism, like any other contributor to the economy needs to be aided by policy for it to survive. Whether that would entail a media fund for start-ups, tax incentives, subsidies or generally a media specific development bank, whatever is needed would have to be implemented across nations. Media sustainability faces growing threats owing to the digital platforms and the need to innovate would require capital injection for news outlets to keep up, otherwise, we should anticipate a situation where in the next decade most newspapers would have become defunct if we were to judge it based on the situation now. As suggested by Pickard new policies to protect the media and democracy to a larger extent are needed as soon as yesterday. "Journalism's move to digital formats — where ads fetch a fraction of the price of traditional print ads — meant that advertising revenues no longer support the level of news media they once did. Even at its height, this advertising-dependent model was never ideally suited to provide all members of society with adequate news and information. With Facebook and Google capturing the vast majority of digital advertising revenue, this model has irreparably collapsed. Today even the staunchest defenders of the status quo must concede that the old advertising model is never coming back. Moreover, other business models such as subscriptions offer insufficient support for most news outlets beyond the largest national newspapers, news organizations with global reach, or strong niche outlets. For the most part, journalism's commercial era is over. Yet local media institutions provide an essential public service that a healthy democratic society requires, regardless of journalism's profitability," he argued. In the US the neo-liberal paradigm that has dominated discourse to the effect that government intervention in media would be suspect is being challenged through the interpretation of the Constitution's First Amendment. But what does it really say? The thinking is that journalism requires public protection and investments from its market failure. Next week we will investigate different funding models that have sustained journalism, emerging ones and how governments must intervene because it cannot be a democracy without journalism.

*Kabo Ramasia is a senior journalist and media scholar.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Colonial powers' time is up

▪ Humanity should get rid of colonial system heritage

DMITRY MEDVEDEV*
PART 2

HERE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE from our present-day reality. I am referring to Charles de Gaulle's foreign policy, which consisted of ensuring France's national independence and greatness. "My aim, then, was to disengage France, not from the Atlantic Alliance, which I intended to maintain by way of ultimate precaution, but from the integration realised by NATO under American command; to establish relations with each of the States of the Eastern bloc, first and foremost Russia, with the object of bringing about a detente followed by understanding and cooperation <...>, to do likewise, when the time was ripe, with China; and finally, to provide France with a nuclear capability such that no one could attack us without running the risk of frightful injury." - Gaulle Ch de/ Memoires d'Espoire. Le Renouveau 1958-1962. P., 1970, p. 284. This included France's famous move to withdraw from NATO's military command in 1966. France would have never achieved this goal without access to the free resources it received from the French-speaking African countries.

France succeeded in achieving the desired outcome by imposing a monetary and financial framework on its former African colonies, making them fully dependent on the Fifth Republic, which assumed the role of a neo-metropole. They did it by issuing the CFA franc as an element of the neo-colonial monetary system for controlling African economic policies. France has been using the euro for over 20 years now. However, it remains a dominant power in the franc zone, since there are still 14 countries in West Africa using the CFA franc, which is pegged to the European currency. African researchers argue that this currency deprives their countries of the ability to use their domestic currencies and financial assets for their own development without facing external restrictions. It is also an obstacle to their economic and monetary sovereignty. It is for this reason that the present-day neo-Napoleon from the Elysee Palace constantly emphasises his adherence to Charle de Gaulle's ideas and views perpetrating this neo-colonial monetary bondage as a vital



Medvedev

necessity (Pascal Boniface, Why the Legacy of De Gaulle and Mitterrand Still Matters for the French Public Opinion, Valdai, March 15, 2021). This is the only way he can succeed. This means that Paris will seek to retain its foothold of Africa's currency market for as long as possible.

In order to preserve its geopolitical presence in various parts of the world, the West relies on the so-called debt neo-colonialism. One of the masterminds of Pan-Africanism, and a prominent government leader of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, warned about this danger back in 1987, when he said: "Debt is neo-colonialism, in which colonisers evolved into technical facilitators, <...> which amounts to an astute effort to conquer Africa (Discours de Thomas Sankara sur la dette, 29 juillet 1987. Youtube. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFaUaau8T8>). How can we talk about genuine freedom for a country if it lacks economic independence and is doomed to be guided by its lenders in the decision-making process?"

The neo-colonial powers are using financial institutions under their

control and extensively exploiting the difficult socioeconomic situation in many countries of the Global South to induce them to borrow at interest rates that are higher than those offered to the so-called golden billion countries. According to the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, countries in Asia and Oceania borrow at an average rate of 6.5 percent; Latin America and the Caribbean, at 7.7 percent, and Africa, at 11.6 percent. At the same time, borrowing costs for Germany as low as 1.5 percent, and for the United States, 3.1 percent (A world of debt. UN Global Crisis Response Group. July 2023., p.10 URL: <https://www.unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt>).

But perhaps the most eloquent fact that brings the problem into focus is that 45 countries spend more on servicing external debt than on healthcare (IBID). In other words, many nations have to sacrifice decent living standards for their citizens and even their future to satisfy the appetites of ruthless usurers.

Neocolonialists are also eagerly profiting from humanitarian assistance projects, taking the last

piece of bread from poor countries without even a twinge of conscience. Take, for example, the situation with the distribution of Ukrainian grain under the Black Sea Initiative, which was proposed to help food-deprived states in Africa and Asia. As a result, the poorest states received only about 3 percent of the total stock of 32.8 million tonnes (Foreign Ministry statement on the Istanbul agreements. July 17, 2023. URL: https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1897157/?lang=en).

Unfortunately, neo-colonial powers are not going to stop there. They now seek to control not only the wallets and health but also the mindset of the inhabitants of the rest of the world. It appears that they have not kept their hands off the moral codes and rules of conduct society had been honing for centuries. Even most religions have been tarnished and perverted. Washington and its satellites are making considerable efforts to revise the fundamentals of Christianity and Islam to suit their own interests, and then relentlessly spread them around the world presented as some modernised religious teachings. That is, they

are making full use of neocolonial practices to attract millions of people to their newfangled perverted cults. The main goal they are trying to achieve is to sever the links between generations, where religious traditions are important to maintain continuity.

Ideological colonisation in its various forms and aspects poses a serious danger. Pope Francis believes that it brings economic aid under the same umbrella with imposing alien ways of thinking on other cultures, which paves the way to confrontation. The Pontiff was right in saying that "subjugating peoples by force or through cultural and political penetration is to be considered a crime." He went on to call for an end to neocolonial practices and their manifestations in the forms of racism and social segregation as soon as possible (Pope: Modern neocolonialism is a crime and a threat to peace, Vatican News, April 1, 2023).

Neo-colonial thinking will always prevail over truth in the minds of Western leaders. This is the axiom we must realise. In fact, there are multiple examples in this regard. Today, there is a serious debate in the Netherlands on whether to withdraw the official apology by the Kingdom's government regarding the Dutch war crimes against Indonesians during their 1945-1949 Independence War. Human rights are only for the chosen ones, it seems, while others are left with efforts to whitewash the violent past of the Dutch East Indies.

Great Britain continues to play an active role in spreading neocolonial practices. It spent several centuries extracting resources from its numerous overseas colonies. Today, London is intent on benefiting from what amounts to delayed-action mines it laid during that time. In particular, this includes imposing its legal system on so many countries, and forcing them to use its judicial mechanisms by treating almost all disputes around the world as falling under its jurisdiction. They have been justifying their efforts to penetrate other judicial systems by falsely asserting the universal nature of UK law, as well as the by talking about the impartiality and professionalism of British lawyers and barristers. Of course, nothing can be further away from the truth. Therefore, we must invest more time to make this British neocolonialism

a thing of the past by improving the performance of national judiciaries and creating independent international courts.

Neo-metropolitan powers have also been targeting certain countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa with their disruptive efforts in order to control their natural wealth, including critical minerals. They focus on gaining unrestricted access to lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt and rare earth deposits they need for transitioning to a low-carbon economy. While pretending to care about the environment and climate change, they are basically pushing the narrative of a green/eco-friendly neocolonialism that primarily benefits the collective West. Wealthy countries are forcing countries across the Global South to act in a hasty and uncalculated manner in order to preserve their environment, while completely disregarding centuries-old customs and traditions in agriculture, water use and minerals extraction. Our partners have openly sided with what they call "regulatory imperialism" which, in fact, amounts to neocolonialism, including regarding the destruction of forests and other major challenges (Gayatri Suroyo, "Indonesia accuses EU of "regulatory imperialism" with deforestation law", Reuters, June 8, 2023). To preserve its "elitist" (or, if we call things for what they are, parasitic) existence, the self-proclaimed "golden billion" will stop at nothing, including artificially induced economic crises. It continues to stall providing loans through global development institutions, and to support pro-Western opposition parties. While doing this, the West is painstakingly imitating a mutually respectful dialogue, trying to create a favourable international environment for itself. In particular, this is how the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation initiative, launched by Antony Blinken in September 2023, was presented to the public. The initiative is made to drag as many countries on Africa's western coast into it as possible. With this sort of pseudo-democratic formats, Washington and its satellites are trying to reinforce their noticeably compromised influence, pull the countries on the content into the global Western agenda, and damage our links with our African partners.

*Article by Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation

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BNF rejects Masisi's privatisation of police services

AS A GENERAL PROPOSITION in a democratic society, the police must be protected against any perception of being

manipulated by private interests. The police play a critical role in the security of both the country and its citizens. The police service is a public institution of the state and must

remain so.

BNF has noted with grave concern the announcement of "adopt a police station initiative". This initiative is a first step towards the capture of



Motshewga

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

exchange of money is involved. The initiative poses a serious threat to the independence of the police, the Criminal Justice system and our constitutional democracy as a whole.

6. Cases opened by the poor, working class and the powerless against businesses and the elites will be seriously compromised during police investigations. It is an eyesore for the police to be in bed with business and the elites under the guise of charitable donations. We recall the Jackie Selebi scandal where a South African Police Commissioner was charged and convicted for accepting bribes from a corrupt businessman in exchange of police protection. We should not allow this cancer to creep into our police service.

The BNF appeals to the Police Commissioner to immediately revoke this initiative.

We call on the government to provide sufficient funding towards policing and the maintenance of police stations.

Our police service must never be turned into a charity case and exposed to corrupt and unethical business elements who desire to capture the police service.

The initiative is nothing but an acceptance that the current Mokgweetsi Masisi led government is failing to fund the police service to ensure that our people live in a peaceful and crime-free society.

The Police Commissioner and the State President must be ashamed of themselves.

Yours in justice
Kethalefile FC Motshewga
BNF Secretary General

KEBONANG J IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA HELD AT GABORONE		CASE NO: CVHGB-000675-24
In the matter between: PELONOMI OAGILE And ACCELERON HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD v/a ACCELERON WATER STORAGE SOLUTIONS ISAACS MANDIGO		APPLICANT
In re: PELONOMI OAGILE And ACCELERON HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD v/a ACCELERON WATER STORAGE SOLUTIONS ISAACS MANDIGO		1ST RESPONDENT 2ND RESPONDENT
		PLAINTIFF
		1ST DEFENDANT 2ND DEFENDANT
SUBSTITUTED SERVICE: SHORT FORM OF PROCESS		
TO:	ACCELERON HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD v/a ACCELERON WATER STORAGE SOLUTIONS , a limited company established under the Company Laws of Botswana and having legal capacity to sue and be sued, offering water storage solutions and whose address for purposes of this suit is P O Box 10886, Francistown and whose further and better particulars are unknown to the plaintiff.	
AND TO	ISAACS MANDIGO an adult male of full legal capacity and a director of the 1st Defendant capable of suing and being sued in his own names and whose address for purposes of this suit is P O Box 10886, Francistown and whose further and better particulars are unknown to the plaintiff	
TAKE NOTICE that by Application issued out of this Court, you have been called upon to give notice within fourteen (14) days after publication hereof, to the Registrar of the High Court and to Akoonyatse Law Firm the Applicant's Attorneys of your intention to defend (if any) in an action wherein PELONOMI OAGILE claims as against yourselves as follows:		
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ii) Payment to the plaintiff in the sum of P 67 790.00 (Sixty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Pula) ;		
iii) Interest on the judgment amount at the rate of 10% per annum from 06 December 2023 until final and full payment;		
iv) Costs on attorney and own client scale; and		
v) Further and/or alternative relief.		
TAKE NOTICE FURTHER that if you fail to give notice, judgment may be granted against you without further reference to you.		
DATED AT GABORONE THIS DAY OF AUGUST 2024		
AKOONYATSE LAW FIRM Applicant's Attorneys Plot 398, Extension 4, Kgasa Close Opposite Lesedi Community Hall P O BOX 25058 GABORONE		
TO:	THE REGISTRAR AND MASTER High Court of Botswana Private Bag 00220 GABORONE	
AND TO:	ACCELERON HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD v/a ACCELERON WATER STORAGE SOLUTION Respondent P O Box 10886 FRANCISTOWN	

our criminal justice system. As the BNF, we call on civil society and the nation at large to reject this initiative with the contempt it deserves. Our rejection of this initiative is premised on the following:

1. The initiative will surrender the police service to the parochial interests of businesses, the corrupt elite and those who are politically connected. The critical question is how will the police objectively investigate cases against businesses that are sponsoring police stations?
2. The initiative has the potential to compromise the integrity, objectivity, professionalism and independence of the whole police service. The old adage that there is no free lunch is applicable here, especially in our capitalism driven and predatory

economic system. The initiative will seriously compromise the police objectivity in investigation of cases lodged against those (and their associates) who sponsor police stations.

3. There is currently no guiding policy framework or law that will regulate this initiative and this gap will result in abuse and total capture of the police service.

4. There is no Parliamentary oversight or any oversight measures to ensure that the initiative is not abused and utilised for nefarious reasons by those who will sponsor police stations.

5. As a nation, we must guard against the unregulated interaction between the police and businesses, especially in instances where the

Business

Masisi for citizen economic inclusion

Wants 40% share for Citizen Contractors in BPC Solar Project

- BPC's multi-million Pula Jwaneng Solar Power Plant Project kickstarts
- Affirms the Govt commitment to create wealth for the local businesses
- China pledge to share its strong green energy experience with Botswana

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PRESIDENT DR MOKGWEETSI MASISI has reiterated the government's commitment to support the local business community and asked the contracted company, Sinotswana Green Energy, a consortium of Chinese and Botswana companies to ensure that it reserves 40% for small and medium citizen contractors in the construction of Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) solar power plant in Jwaneng. Government has taken a policy stance by introducing the Citizen Economic Inclusion Law that requires companies that get business from government to adopt the Citizen Economic Empowerment Programmes (CEEP) to enable citizen participation in the projects that are procured by government entities.

The multi-million-Pula Jwaneng project is estimated to cost around P5 billion and is expected to be commissioned next year. Masisi asserted that the project was a result of a political commitment made by the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) government during 2019 elections.

Masisi emphasized that local contractors are supposed to get the better piece of the cake, adding that the project should benefit the local companies in terms of skills transfer and technological skills.

"We expect transfer of skills and transfer of technology from you our Chinese friends. We have to make sure that we deliver in these two important aspects which will position our local contractors to be on good shape to pursue similar projects in the future independently and on full contracts," Masisi buttressed.

Furthermore, Masisi said the project is in line with Botswana's energy policy goal of providing affordable, reliable and adequate supply of energy for sustainable development, as well as improving access to



President Mokgweetsi Masisi

[PIC:PRESSPHOTO]

and efficient use of energy resources.

He said Botswana through the Jwaneng Solar Energy project bolsters her ambition of being the net exporter of green energy across the SADC region, adding that Botswana has comparative advantage of abundant solar energy and needs to exploit

the full potential of this natural resource.

Masisi said energy transition is imperative for the mitigation of climate change and that the decarbonisation of the mining industry is very important as the country cannot be able to meet green economy transition when its mining operations are

found to be polluting. "We can also not be a high-income economy that pollutes. The two are diametrically opposed altogether. So, alignment of producing green energy enhances the value proposition and provenance of our natural resources. We can get high prices and many more willing

buyers of our diamonds when they are produced of clean energy," said Masisi.

Masisi said integration of green energy in Botswana's mining operations will kill the claim raised by the synthetic diamonds producers that Botswana's natural diamonds are produced out of harmful energy.

For his part, the Economic and Commercial Counsellor of Chinese Embassy in Botswana, Lan Yugiang reiterated China's commitment to support Botswana transition to green economy by fully unlocking the potential of the renewable energy sector.

Yugiang said Botswana is strategically positioned to be a leading green energy exporter in the region and the continent given the vast volumes of sunshine, adding that the country is right direction to diversify its power supply source.

BPC UPBEAT

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BPC David Kgoboko said the Jwaneng PV Plant will be BPC's second utility scale, grid connected solar PV project to be delivered through an Independent Power Producer (IPP) structure.

Kgoboko said the project entails the development, financing, construction, operation, and maintenance of a 100MW solar PV plant. "A 132 kV substation and associated transmission facilities will also be constructed to connect the solar PV plant to the national grid. The power plant will be developed and operated by a Consortium of companies comprising of China Harbour Engineering Company, China International Water and Electric Corporation, and New Energy," said Kgoboko.

Kgoboko also said the China Harbour Engineering Consortium will produce and sell power to BPC under a 25 Year Power Purchase Agreement, adding that the project developer, China Harbour Engineering Consortium was selected through a competitive tender process initiated by BPC in May of 2023.

"Upon completion, it will enhance our energy security, contribute to a sustainable energy mix of renewable and non-renewable sources, and optimise our generation costs by reducing the need for daytime power imports," said Kgoboko.

Botswana demands bigger stake in HB Antwerp ... Want 49.9% stake in the company



Minister of Minerals, Lefoko Moagi

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

BOTSWANA INTENDS TO RENEGOTIATE its proposed purchase of a stake in Belgian gem dealer HB Antwerp to double the size of its shareholding at no extra cost following the downturn in the diamond market, the country's mines minister said on Tuesday.

Botswana is the world's biggest diamond producer by value, meaning its economy has been disproportionately hit by a drop in demand for diamonds caused by a global economic slowdown.

Lefoko Moagi told Parliament that the weaker diamond market had also affected the company's valuation, giving the country room to renegotiate. "We will not be injecting more capital, but we will get more shares for the same amount proposed in 2023. Instead of the 24%, we will negotiate to get 49.9% for the same amount initially

proposed," Moagi said.

Finance ministry budget documents showed in February that the country had set aside P890 million (\$65.95 million) for the 24% stake, valuing the Belgian company at about \$275 million.

The HB Antwerp deal was announced during Botswana's negotiations for a new sales contract with Anglo American's (AAL.L), opens new tab diamond unit De Beers in March 2023.

As Botswana sought to increase its power to market its stones outside a decades-old agreement with De Beers, it said the HB Antwerp deal would strengthen its presence in the downstream diamond industry. It includes supplying the trader with rough diamonds for five years through the state-owned Okavango Diamond Company (ODC). [reuters.com]

Asset managers invest P12 billion on local businesses

- Investment made in the past four years; Minister Serame revealed
- Pension funds to invest 50% of their assets locally
- MP Letsholo worried about low local investment

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FINANCE MINISTER PEGGY SERAME has revealed that during the past four years on average the local asset management firms have invested P12 billion in local businesses with annual turnover of less than P50 million as an effort to stimulate their growth.

She was responding to the questions raised by Kanye North MP Thapelo Letsholo who had asked the minister on the role of the asset management firms in supporting local businesses in terms of investment and capital raising.

Serame said for the same period, an average of eight local businesses with less than P50 million annual turnover had their proposals rejected by Asset Managers for funding.

"In terms of implementing a regulatory requirement that specifies a certain portion of investments to be directed towards SMEs, the Government has to date taken a decision aimed at reducing the exposure of pension assets to global markets, to support domestic economic activity," said Serame.

According to Serame, the new Pension Fund Investment Rule 2 (PFR2) that effected in June 2023, has increased the limit on domestic investment from 30 percent to 50 percent, over a five-year period.

"Therefore, to ensure alignment with the policy decision, the Retirement Funds Act was reviewed in 2022, particularly, in relation to PFR2 of 2023, which is the regulatory tool that dictates investment for pension funds," she added.

She said the Rule has introduced a new class: Infrastructure Funds with a limit of



Finance Minister, Peggy Serame

[PIC:PRESSPHOTO]

five percent (so far, there are two such funds licensed).

Serame added that the policy allows institutional investors (pension funds) to invest through asset managers up to five percent in infrastructure developments (roads, air, rail and communication networks etc).

She said the same policy has increased investment limits by institutional (pension funds) for local private equity funds from five percent to 10 percent.

"So far, the Non-Bank Financial Institution Regulatory Authority (NBFIRA) has licensed six specialised asset managers and one general manager that includes

private equity in their portfolio," said Serame.

In addition, Serame noted that the potential benefits to Botswana's economy and business development, particularly for SMEs, are evidenced by the increased limits under PFR2 which is already in place.

Serame said the framework allows all Asset Managers to allocate part of their funds into private equity and alternative investments.

According to her, an increase in investment limits enables SMEs to grow and expand, therefore, contributing to the economic growth of the at macro and micro level.

MP Letsholo said the level of investment is very low, given the large benefits that asset management firms derive from the contracts extended to them by the institutional investors (pension funds) to manage assets on their behalf.

He, however, expressed optimism on the asset management firms for financing local businesses, adding that it is time for government to have specific legal framework that binds the firms to finance the SMEs as well.

Serame said now there is no specific policy or directive for asset managers to allocate a certain portion of investment funds to SMEs.

De Beers partners with Kwenantle Farmers

...to develop 50 small scale farmers



De Beers Vice President for Corporate Affairs, Otsile Mabelo - De Beers is working with Kwenantle Farmers to develop a programme that will see the company support small scale farmers and help them develop

DE BEERS GROUP HAS PARTNERED with Kwenantle Farmers to develop 50 active and aspiring farmers, offering on-the-ground training for over a period of one year, tailored to the different seasons.

Lembie Thlalerwa, the Director of Kwenantle Farmers is a graduate of The Stanford Seed Transformation Programme powered by De Beers Group in partnership with Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB). The Stanford Seed Transformation Programme is a year-long leadership

programme, taught by Stanford GSB faculty and Seed-trained local facilitators, providing management training, leadership team workshops and networking support.

Kwenantle Farmers has been on expansion since establishment, producing white maize, sugar beans, and lucerne. They

recently added wheat to the list. Lembie has credited the Stanford Seed Transformation Programme with growth focus mindset which has seen the company embarking on expansion and targeting to generate P100 million in revenue in five years. She said it was when she participated in the programme that she learned about being a "growth focused" business.

On Friday, as part of its growth, Kwenantle Farmers officially performed the groundbreaking for its solar & irrigation expansion project. The 1MW solar generation plant will power an additional 264 hectares of farmland, bringing the total land under irrigation to 839 hectares.

According to De Beers Vice President for Corporate Affairs, Otsile Mabelo, De Beers is working with Kwenantle Farmers to develop a programme that will see the company support small scale farmers and help them develop. He said the initiative will help enhance local farming practices, increase productivity, and ultimately contribute to the socio-economic development of communities in the Northern Tuli Block.

"The Stanford Seed Programme is intended to do exactly what we are witnessing today, which is to support entrepreneurs and equip them to grow and scale and contribute to employment creation and broader objectives of economic growth and development. Kwenantle Farmers is contributing significantly to a key sector of the economy being agriculture and you heard Lemaire talking about being growth focused and their impressive plans going forward," said Mabelo, speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"We have partnered with Kwenantle Farmers and Lembie specifically to support entrepreneurship development in the agriculture space and there is a lot the company is doing to support the development of the sector more widely. We have also collaborated with Stanbic bank through their Accelerate Incubator Hub to share insights and experience from the Stanford Seed alumni with aspiring entrepreneurs, and Kwenantle Farmers has supported this initiative as well. Through this initiative we have impacted over 200 entrepreneurs," he added.

[Source: The Projects Magazine]

Bomaid stakeholder engagements



AS PART OF ITS ONGOING commitment to empower customers with essential information and foster transparency, Bomaid kickstarted their continued efforts with stakeholder engagement sessions with a series of visits to its customers in the Palapye region, including a comprehensive and inclusive customer engagement session hosted at Majestic Hotel. These series of engagements are designed to provide stakeholders with an interactive platform to discuss various issues, including product offerings, services, and the Fund's business processes.

These latest series of engagements follow the remarkable milestones achieved through Bomaid's ongoing 'Embracing the Rhythm of Life' campaign. Launched in June 2024, the campaign has successfully connected with stakeholders across multiple channels, reinforcing Bomaid's dedication to customer-centricity, adaptability, affordability, and comprehensive health and wellness solutions.

Bomaid's customer engagement sessions are a key component of its strategy to keep stakeholders well-informed about the Fund's health plans and business processes. By offering clear and accessible information, Bomaid ensures that customers have the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health coverage. These sessions also provide an opportunity for customers to voice their concerns, ask questions, and gain a deeper understanding of the services Bomaid offers.

Delivering the engagement presentation, Dr. Malebogo Keabonye, Chief Clinical Officer, emphasized the importance of these

engagements: "At Bomaid, we believe that empowering our customers with the right information is crucial to their overall well-being. Informed customers are empowered to make the right decisions and also seek the assistance they need from the Fund and across the health care network. These engagements allow us to connect directly with our stakeholders, address their needs, and ensure that they fully understand the benefits of our health plans and the processes that support them."

The 'Embracing the Rhythm of Life' campaign has already seen significant success, including a media roundtable, customer engagement sessions, and the introduction of key figures such as Dennis, the new dental administrator, to local dentists. These efforts are part of Bomaid's broader mission to provide holistic healthcare solutions while strengthening relationships with healthcare professionals.

Reflecting on the positive outcome of the Palapye customer engagement, ahead of the scheduled Francistown engagements, Ms Tarisai Chigodora, Regional Manager North expressed gratitude at the turnout. "We are thrilled with the strong turnout and the meaningful conversations that have emerged from these sessions. We are dedicated to continuing these engagements to ensure that our customers feel confident and supported in their health journey."

As Bomaid continues its journey across Botswana, the Fund remains focused on fostering a culture of transparency, engagement, and empowerment. The success of these customer engagement sessions underscores Bomaid's dedication to enhancing the customer experience and promoting a healthier lifestyle for all.

Know Your Corporate Leader

Full Name: Chedza Balopi

Position: Managing Director

Institution: On Trend HR Solutions

Date Started: 2023

Nature of business: Human Resources Services

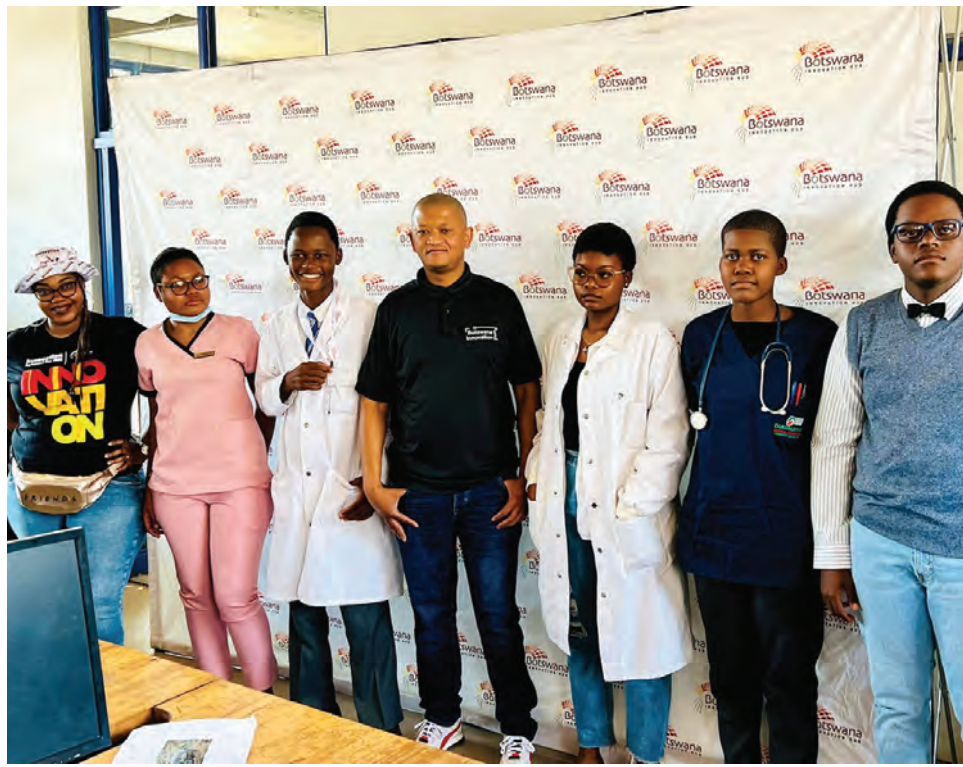


BDIH empowers entrepreneurs

THE BOTSWANA DIGITAL & Innovation Hub (BDIH), in collaboration with UNICEF Botswana, successfully hosted a novel Coffee Session in Kasane aimed at advancing entrepreneurial growth in the Chobe region. This event is part of the ongoing BDIH/UNICEF partnership established in 2023, anchored on shared value and commitment to support Innovation Botswana and provide essential services to communities at their own localities.

Held at Travelodge, the session brought together a diverse group of entrepreneurs, innovators, and experts who shared insights on various topics crucial to building successful businesses. The agenda included discussions on opportunities in the Chobe region, the entrepreneurial journey, funding options, mental health management, and the role of legal technology in entrepreneurship.

Through this initiative, BDIH reaffirms its mandate to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Botswana. The Kasane Coffee Session specifically targeted the business community in Kasane and surrounding areas, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and networking. The collective involvement of BDIH and UNICEF emphasizes the organizations' priority of extending services to underserved communities, ensuring that



entrepreneurs across the regions have access to the same opportunities and resources as their counterparts in urban areas.

A detailed presentation on the LEA Mapping Report outlined the vast opportunities available in the Chobe region. Mr. T.D. Matebesi, LEA Kasane Branch Manager, emphasised the potential for entrepreneurial ventures in areas such as

the Mosetse-Kazungula Railway line, the textile industry, and the Kasane-Kazungula Redevelopment Plan.

Ratidzo Murwisi, a Legal Technology expert, provided an in-depth analysis of how entrepreneurs can leverage legal tech platforms to access critical legal information, stay compliant, and make informed decisions. "Legal technology is

not just a tool; it's a catalyst for ensuring that businesses operate within the legal frameworks necessary for sustainable growth," she noted.

Mental health was another focal point, with Mr. Patrick Bantsi from Cross Over Counselling Agency discussing essential practices for entrepreneurs to maintain their well-being. "Regular exercise, healthy eating, and mindfulness are not just lifestyle choices but essential components of a successful entrepreneurial journey," Bantsi explained.

The session also featured firsthand accounts from local entrepreneurs supported by BDIH. Mr. Thatayaone Dichaba of Dichaba Group, who are incubated by BDIH, shared his experiences of navigating the challenges and successes of entrepreneurship, stressing the importance of tenacity and a positive mindset. "Failure is part of the journey, but focusing on the positives and staying committed to your vision is what leads to breakthroughs," Dichaba advised.

The Kasane Coffee Session was a resounding success, providing participants with valuable insights and practical knowledge to advance their entrepreneurial ventures. BDIH remains committed to its mission of nurturing innovation and supporting entrepreneurs across Botswana, with future sessions planned to continue this impactful work.

CA Sales sees a 17% jump in HEPS



CA SALES HEREBY ADVISES THAT A reasonable degree of certainty exists that for the six months ended 30 June 2024: - - HEPS will be between 42.65 cents and 44.47 cents, representing an increase of between 17% and 22% compared to the HEPS of 36.45 cents reported for the six months ended 30 June 2023; and HEPS increased due to organic growth from all the operations, as well as the successful onboarding of new clients. EPS

will be between 42.45 cents and 45.62 cents, representing a decrease of between 33% and 28% compared to the EPS of 63.36 cents reported for the six months ended 30 June 2023. EPS decreased as a result of a gain on bargain purchase entry of R123.6 million in the prior year, resulting from the acquisition of the T&C Group in Namibia. Excluding the gain on bargain purchase in the prior year, EPS shows an increase more in line with the HEPS increase. [bse.co.bw]

ULP 93 supply improves



equitable distribution of ULP 95 across the country. In addition, BOL wishes to assure the public that the product importation has been ramped up to ensure normalisation of product availability.

Furthermore, Botswana Oil said the Natref Refinery in South Africa, which is the major supplier of ULP 93 in the region, has resumed production following the three months shutdown and hence they anticipate gradual increase in availability of ULP 93 in the coming weeks.

Botswana Oil Limited said it is committed to ensuring continuous supply of petroleum for the country. Botswana Oil Limited (BOL) was established to achieve Government's broader economic objectives of ensuring security of fuel supply and facilitating active citizen involvement in the petroleum industry. BOL is the Government's transformation agent charged with the responsibility of managing state-owned strategic fuel reserve facilities, managing strategic stocks as well as bulk storage and distribution.

BOTSWANA OIL LIMITED (BOL) wishes to inform the public that the regional shortage of the Unleaded Petrol 93 (ULP 93), which is the most consumed petrol grade in Botswana, has significantly increased the demand for ULP 95 leading to sporadic shortages of ULP 95 in some areas.

BOL confirmed their collaborative work streams with the industry to ensure

BSE to host the 27th ASEA conference



ag CEO of BSE, Kopano Bolokwe

THE BSE IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE African Securities Exchanges Association (ASEA), will host the 27th ASEA Conference 2024 from the 27th - 29th November 2024 in Gaborone Botswana. The Executive Committee Meeting will be held on the 27th November, and the Conference from the 28th - 29th November, 2024 at the Royal Aria

Conference Centre, Tlokweng.

The two day Conference is a flagship initiative of ASEA and features presentations and panel discussions on topical issues facing African Capital Markets today. About 300 delegates including ASEA members, captains of industry, policy-makers, prominent capital market experts and entrepreneurs from across the world are expected to attend.

Seed Co issues new shares



THE INVESTING PUBLIC IS HEREBY informed that the Company issued 177,548 new ordinary shares following the exercise on 5 August 2024 of vested rights from the 2018 Seed Co International Limited Share Appreciation

Rights. The new shares have been approved for listing by the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) with effect from 14 August 2024. Following the issue of the 177,548 new shares, the Company will have a total of 393,825,378 ordinary shares of no-par value in issue. [bse.co.bw]

Stanbic invests on Kwenantle Farmers Solar Expansion Project

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KWENANTLE FARMERS RECENTLY held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the commencement of the construction of 1 MW solar expansion project at Talana farms in the Tuli block.

The project, which is funded at the tune of P27 million by Stanbic Bank Botswana in partnership with Agri 3 Fund, is expected to commission in February 2025.

The project includes the installation of solar-powered boreholes and irrigation systems across a new 264-hectare expansion.

Stanbic's Head of Commercial and Business Banking, Lesego Osman said following its completion, the solar plant will power the additional 264 hectares bringing the total land under irrigation at Kwenantle Farmers to 839 hectares. He said this will enable Kwenantle Farmers to set a new standard in sustainable agriculture.

He said Kwenantle Farmers' remarkable growth from P8 million turnover in 2017

to P25 million in 2022, with a goal of reaching P100 million in the next five years, highlights the impact of innovation and dedication.

He said, Kwenantle's commitment to excellence and sustainable farming has distinguished them in the industry where their sustainability journey started with the financing of the silos for cereal storage, to the solar power and irrigation installation. "This speaks highly of our mutual shared value of sustainable Agriculture," he said.

Osman further said at Stanbic Bank Botswana they believe that growth extends beyond numbers as it involves creating sustainable futures, employment and innovative solutions for their clients, therefore he said they are excited to contribute to this growth narrative, ensuring their clients receive strategic support.

"We are proud to be the first bank in Botswana to finance a solar energy initiative of this magnitude in the agricultural sector," he said.

Furthermore, Osman said the solar plant initiative underscores their commitment to



Stanbic's Head of Commercial and Business Banking, Lesego Osman

fostering renewable energy and expressed excitement in seeing Kwenantle farmers taking a lead in integrating clean energy into agricultural practices and setting a benchmark for the future of farming in Botswana.

Kwenantle Farmers Co-Director Lembi Tlhalerwa said through the use of solar they are going to be able to mitigate the cost of electricity from Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) which have always been one of the biggest impediment to their growth. "We have been using BPC and the cost of BPC is something every Mswana knows just how much it is, it really just dents your cash flows," she said.

With agriculture being an extractive industry, Tlhalerwa said by bringing in a renewable energy source, to reduce their carbon footprint. She said it is imperative to invest on conservation, especially that their primary operation is inside a game reserve.

Tlhalerwa said the project will also create 50 additional permanent jobs, bringing the number of staff who are currently employed at the farm from 104 to 154 permanent employees.

"These are just permanent employees, but do note that during our harvest season which usually runs from May until November, we take an additional 50-140 staff as seasonal employees," she said.

The Assistant Minister of Agriculture Molebatsi Molebatsi said the project is a welcome development, and therefore commended Stanbic for supporting farmers and funding projects that are key to Botswana's economy.

He stated that government cannot do everything on her own, so there is a need for private sector especially in the financial sector services to extend their helping hand to government. He urged Stanbic to extend their financial assistance to other farmers.

Further, Molebatsi said the solar plant will significantly reduce Kwenantle Farmers reliance on BPC power and reduce the costs of electricity.

He also said the project is commendable as it is a milestone towards mitigation of climate change effects. "We all have to make sure that when we depart this world; we leave the earth in a good state for the next generations," he said.

RDC offer undervalues PrimeTime – Golden Section Capital

RDC's proposed unit-for-unit swap at a ratio of 0.68750 RDC Linked Units (even less, if the bonus issue is factored in) for every PrimeTime Linked Unit disregards PrimeTime's deep discount to fair value and the quality of its portfolio



ON 9 AUGUST PRIMETIME PROPERTY Holdings announced via the Botswana Stock Exchange's X-News that it has received a written notice from RDC Properties of their intention to make a general offer to PrimeTime unitholders to acquire all the linked units of PrimeTime not already held by RDC.

This follows several months of uncertainty, where both companies traded under cautionary without an offer being made.

In terms of the announcement, RDC wants to offer PrimeTime unitholders 0.68750 RDC linked units for every PrimeTime linked unit. The offer is subject to various conditions, including the successful conclusion by RDC of a bonus unit issue to its own unitholders in the ratio of 1 new RDC unit for each 4 RDC units held.

Considering that deep discount to fair value that PrimeTime is currently trading at, and the huge dilutionary effect that RDC's intended bonus issue will have on PrimeTime shareholders, should the transaction go ahead, it is little wonder that RDC's offer has been met by market scepticism.

Fund Managers and in particular Pension Funds have a fiduciary duty towards their members to protect value when it comes to corporate transactions and opportunistic offers such as these. In addition, especially minority shareholders in PrimeTime stands to be prejudiced most, as the proposed transaction, in its current form, will mostly benefit those with large cross holdings in both PrimeTime and RDC.

According to an analysis of PrimeTime by equity research firm Golden Section Capital, the majority of Linked Units in PrimeTime are held by institutional investors, including BPOPF, BIFM, Debswana Pension Fund, Metropolitan Life Botswana, the Botswana Motor Vehicle Accident Fund and the Botswana United Revenue Service. Collectively, these funds hold just under 60% of PrimeTime's linked units.

Golden Section's research further points towards PrimeTime's high-quality portfolio, which should demand a premium in transactions of this nature. The report shows the portfolio has an "exceptionally good level of occupancy" with Botswana tenancy at 99.5%, Zambia occupancy at 98% and the South African portfolio being fully tenanted. The overall portfolio occupancy for the six months ended 29 February 2024 was 99.4%.

In addition, the report points out that the majority of the Company's tenants are multinationals and regionals, with 30% of

the rental income from major corporates-multinationals, banks, and financial institutions, 40% from national and regional retail chains, and 9% from the Government and parastatal sector (including foreign diplomatic missions, for example the South African High Commission and GIZ Head Office in Gaborone).

The portfolio furthermore boasts the only 5-star certified commercial property in Botswana, the Motswere Building in the CBD Gaborone which was completed in November 2023 and is fully tenanted.

Although the report cites debt as an ongoing concern, it does point out that PrimeTime has steadily whittled away at this, with loan-to-value dropping from 59% pre the pandemic to 51% in 2023 and to 49% at the 2024 interim period. No small feat in the high interest rate environment and economic uncertainty that prevailed in this period.

The research report shows that PrimeTime is undervalued at present, trading at 30% below Golden Section Capital's justified net asset value of P 2.29 (which is still 34% below current net asset value).

This gives PrimeTime's share price a potential upside of 42.29%.

According to Golden Section Capital, given the portfolio quality, extremely low vacancy, good locations, improving momentum, and difficulties in the Zambian market, the company's NAV discount of 53.9% is unjustifiably low.

Golden Section Capital further says that the company currently offers compelling value through a solid portfolio, well managed buildings, experienced management, and is positively positioned for future growth.

In light of these findings, PrimeTime unitholders – and especially fund managers and the pension funds acting on behalf of members - should carefully consider the long-term value of their investments.

The significant undervaluation of PrimeTime's units and the potential for future growth, coupled with RDC's dilutionary bonus issue, indicates that shareholders are better off holding onto their units rather than accepting the current offer. This is the only sensible and commercially viable thing to do.

The question that PrimeTime unit holders must be asking themselves is why trade PrimeTime linked units for RDC ones when RDC performance lags PrimeTime's by such a margin and it exposes them to a basket of weaker assets with high vacancies and significant related party leases?



The University is looking for a qualified and experienced individual for the below-stated positions. The successful candidate will be appointed on a fixed-term contract of up to five (5) years or pensionable terms. The positions are based at the BIUST Campus, Palapye.

1. PROFESSOR- MECHANICAL & ENERGY: DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

Main Purpose of the Job

- Advance the image of the University in the community, locally, nationally and internationally through quality teaching, research and scholarly pursuits.
- Demonstrate and foster excellence in research, teaching and service.
- Manage efforts and performance of research teams.

Qualifications

- A Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering or any related field from a recognized institution.
- A Master's degree in Mechanical engineering or any related field from a recognized institution.
- A BEng (Hons) or BSc (Eng) degree in Mechanical Engineering or any related field.

Professional Registration

- Registered with Engineering Registration Board (ERB).
- Registered with BQA as assessor and moderator or eligible to register within 1 year of assumption of duty.

Experience

- At least 10 years post-doctoral experience in either teaching/lecturing/research or industry experience in the relevant field or discipline, at least 5 of which must be in teaching at tertiary level and graduate supervision or developing and mentoring junior research staff.
- A track record of successful research supervision at all levels including doctorate.
- A national and international record of excellence in research and publication.
- Record of recent/continuing publications (minimum of 30 peer-reviewed publications of ISI journals / scopus or web of science indexed journals).
- Experience of obtaining substantial research funding, of conducting administrative duties efficiently and effectively, and in the development/revision of teaching curricula, programmes and qualifications.

Key Performance Areas

- Provide and facilitate teaching and learning, and assessment in any four (4) of the following courses; Renewable Energy Technologies, Design of Thermal & Fluid Systems, Solar Energy Engineering, Energy Management & Efficiency, Fluid Mechanics, Heat Transfer, Research Methodologies.
- Pursue, develop and lead research and innovation, as per the policy, strategy and goals set by the University.
- Promote and develop social responsibility and awareness amongst students through community service programs.
- Be recognized as an authority in the field of Renewable Energy Technologies, Energy Engineering and Energy Management, whilst developing and maintaining an international profile within that specific field.
- Carry out any other duties which fall within the values of the University, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.
- Participate in the development and review of academic processes, systems and procedures as well as short and long-term plans and budgets for the department.

Competencies:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including presentation.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, communication styles and teamwork.
- Mentoring and coaching.
- Research, critical thinking, analytical and problem solving.
- Able to supervise undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Organizational awareness with an understanding of how to engage the organization to get things done.

Remuneration

The University offers an attractive package, commensurate with qualification and experience.

If you meet the requirements of the above stated position, please send your application letter and a detailed Curriculum Vitae including at least two (2) recent professional referees to;

Director, Human Resources, at the email address below.

recruitment.mechanical.eng@biust.ac.bw

2. SENIOR LECTURER: HIGHWAY ENGINEERING, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING, PAVEMENT DESIGN

Main purpose of the job:

- To teach, educate and supervise undergraduate and graduate students in an academic discipline and to build the knowledge base of the discipline through research and publication.
- To undertake teaching and research activities within the discipline of Highway, pavement design and traffic Engineering
- To give leadership in the University, the Faculty and the Department, and developing the next generation of academics.
- To play a leading role in improving the teaching and research infrastructure of the Department, Faculty and University.
- To be active in some form of professional service.

Key performance areas (where applicable):

- Responsible for teaching and supervision of students
- Should be able to conduct research and publish the findings in indexed journals recommended by the university.
- Should be able to perform professional and consultation services and other services for the university.
- Be able to engage in community service.

Competencies/skills:

- Should have the skills of coaching and mentoring students.
- Should be able to communicate well orally and in writing.
- Should possess the skill of time management and be self-motivated.
- Be a team player and also be able to work independently.
- Good of their academic discipline environment
- Ability to facilitate student learning.

Qualifications/requirements: Academic Qualification:

- PhD degree in Civil Engineering with specialty in Traffic, highway Engineering or pavement design.
- A Master of Science, Master of Engineering in the relevant field of Civil and Environmental Engineering with specialty in traffic engineering, highway and pavement design.
- A Bachelors of Engineering in Civil Engineering or related field

Experience:

- A minimum of two (2) years post-doctoral experience in teaching and research at a tertiary institution of comparable standard. However, two years post-doctoral relevant industrial/professional experience shall be equivalent to one year teaching experience.
- Proven research profile and consistent publication record with at least eight (8) peer reviewed reputable publications in either scopus or web of science indexed journals, commensurate with appointment to the rank of Senior Lecturer.
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As you head back to the office

... Zoom promises it's still relevant



working from home. Yet you're now focused on in-person work. Why?

The physical setup is very important to customers – and therefore to Zoom, too. The future of work is flexible: 65% of our employees don't live near an office and work remotely. But teams still want to come in and collaborate seamlessly. Alongside human connection, we wanted to be able to test our products. We can only do so if we're in the conference room, too.

Why is the physical workplace so important for Zoom, given those working from home often use Zoom to chat to colleagues all day?

Because we're human. When we meet each other face-to-face, some creative work, brainstorming and decision making becomes easier. We may now have generative AI writing up meeting notes and online whiteboards, but there's still something really engaging physically going over and writing something down as colleagues gather. Some in-person time is energising – that's why we want to offer the opportunity for all our employees to do it, that's why see our customers also doing it.

With hybrid teams now the norm in knowledge work, why is it so difficult to achieve truly hybrid meetings for virtual attendees?

A pain-point cited by customers is around equity, and not creating a meeting experience that's balanced between someone in the conference room and someone joining remotely. We've solved it up to a certain extent, for rooms of a certain size. We use AI in our Intelligent Director product: two or three cameras are in the room, slightly angled. Once you do that, through AI, they're able to segment the room so colleagues appear individually on laptops at home, rather than crowded around a table. The challenge comes from the AI being smart enough to find the best view: for example, if someone sits at a different angle, moves around and talks in real-time.

How much is Zoom wanting to shake off the remote working tag? Do you want to be known more for hybrid working – or something else?

We love that Zoom is well known to so many and they use us for connecting all the time. But we see the future of Zoom as really an AI-driven open collaboration platform that modernises the work experience. We've gone in this direction based on customer feedback. We've always had video calls, and built in phone infrastructure, chat capabilities and now Zoom AI Companion. Our AI works in the background to even recommend a desk for employees to sit near their teams for their office days.

Are Zoom customers really embracing AI? Or is there still scepticism?

We're seeing growing comfort and usage among customers. But there are still worries over security and privacy of data and assets – they often go through a rigorous process before turning on AI Companion. And they ask us hard questions related to security – as they should.

We've also taken the position – the right one – that we never use any of our customers' conversation data to train our AI model or third-party ones. And we give controls to customers to turn individual features on and off, so they have control.

[Zoom faced international backlash in August 2023 after an update to its terms seemed to imply the company might harness user data to train AI. A subsequent Zoom policy update said that «for AI, we do not use audio, video or chat content for training our models without customer consent». A Zoom spokesperson confirmed that the company never used conversation data to train its generative AI.]

Is this the future of work then? Workplaces powered by AI?

As generative AI becomes better, it's going to become more of an agent for teams to work on their behalf, sending messages such as, "These customer requests came in overnight, I've set up meetings for you to talk through them. People are burned out by constant mundane tasks. The hope is that AI frees up time so employees can work on energising and engaging jobs instead. We're working on that now.

The advent of AI has led to some fears it can take jobs. But do you think the average knowledge worker is better placed now than they were five years ago?

I've worked for so long and raised a daughter – I'm happy that flexibility is so much more normalised and accepted now. It's created more opportunities, especially for those not able to attend the office because of health issues or caring responsibilities.

But work has also become really busy and noisy now, with so many tools and constant tasks. I'm a tech optimist: my hope is that as more employees become familiar with generative AI tools, they can help them spend time on more engaging tasks. For me, flexibility is the guiding force of the future of work. If done right, it can empower people to do their best work. [BBC]

ZOOM CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER SMITA Hashim explains why even video-chat innovators need the physical space – with a little help from AI.

For many, Zoom rose to prominence during the pandemic era of working at home in pyjamas. Schools held virtual classes on the platform during lockdowns and friends gathered there when they couldn't meet in person. There were even Zoom weddings and funerals. It was so ubiquitous during lockdown that "Zoom" entered the lexicon as a catch-all term for virtual calls, joining companies like Kleenex or Band-Aid whose names symbolise a single product. With offices shut, demand reportedly surged from 10 million daily meeting participants to 200 million in March 2020. Zoom's market valuation peaked at approximately \$161.65bn (£125bn) in October 2020.

But as lockdowns lifted, that sky-high stock price was followed with an equally spectacular crash. Today, the San Jose-headquartered company is hovering closer to its pre-pandemic valuation at around \$17bn (£13bn). Like so many technology companies, Zoom issued layoffs in February 2023, axing 15% of jobs. Soon after, CEO Eric Yuan made a surprising announcement: the company that helped millions of people work from home wanted their own employees back to the office in person. Changing predictions about the future of work prompted a rethink: now, Zoom wants to be known for more than «Zoom calls».

In August 2023, the company announced that workers living within 50 miles (80.5km) of a Zoom office must work in person at least twice a week. Yuan stressed the importance of in-office collaboration for fostering innovation and building employee trust. Zoom also shifted its product focus towards the physical workplace. Its hybrid mandate coincided with the opening of a modern, new London office for its 200-plus UK employees – an «Engagement Hub» featuring 75 work points across library-style benches, agile tables and hot desks bookable through Zoom's reservation tool. The company has tried to market the office as «the blueprint» for a modern workplace. A neighbouring «Experience Centre» that showcases its technology includes a «boardroom of the future», featuring cameras controlled by artificial intelligence (AI) and floor-to-ceiling curved-screen displays. «If our customers use the office, we do too», says Smita Hashim, who joined Zoom as chief product officer in January 2023, just before the company's restructuring. «It means we can make our products even better.» The India-born, California-based industry veteran had previously led product teams at video collaboration platforms Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. But her work for Zoom often encompasses the built environment. After all, the company's headline-making return to the office (it was a largely in-person company before Covid-19) wasn't just for better brainstorming sessions – Hashim says it also makes business sense. Zoom's new workplace focus extends across hardware and software. Both incorporate AI. For example, its Intelligent Director product leverages algorithmically-selected views of in-person meeting participants, so virtual colleagues see them in a Zoom gallery view – although it does require high-definition cameras that are sold separately. And, following the likes of Microsoft Copilot and Google's Gemini, Zoom has released its own always-on automated assistant for work – an AI Companion that uses generative AI to provide meeting summaries, message drafts and meeting room recommendations.

According to the company, this means Zoom's business is about far more than video-call. It wants to be regarded as a workplace company – and known for Zoom Workplace, its suite of collaborative tools.

Here, Hashim talks to the BBC – via Zoom, of course – about the company's transition to the workplace, the evolving role of the physical office and the future of AI at work.

Zoom is synonymous with video calls and

GIMC 10th Anniversary

JAZZ

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Why Canal+'s MultiChoice takeover is going to get messy

The acquirer is only focused on pay TV, while MultiChoice is increasingly focused on anything but ...



MONEYWEB

THERE ARE ENORMOUS EFFICIENCIES to be unlocked – and 50m subscribers will give the combined group greater leverage when negotiating for sports rights. Image: Bloomberg

Some underreported comments from Canal+ chair and CEO Maxime Saada, who was in the country in June, suggest that MultiChoice is in for a rough ride once the takeover by the French pay TV operator succeeds. (At this point, there is no reason to suggest it won't – it seems to have a plan regarding restrictions on foreign ownership).

Canal+ needs MultiChoice to bulk up ahead of its parent Vivendi's split into three entities. Right now, Canal+ lacks the scale needed to be listed separately. The plan is to list the group in London, with a secondary listing on the JSE (mostly to placate local shareholders and probably government).

The French operation is simple. It runs pay TV services in France and a number of European and African countries, as well as in French Overseas Territories.

It operates channels. It also runs a production and distribution company, StudioCanal. Overall, it has more than 26 million subscribers in 50 countries worldwide.

By contrast, MultiChoice is focusing on everything but pay TV.

In recent years, it has continued its shift beyond "video entertainment" and it runs an insurance business, has bought a Nigerian betting outfit (Kingmakers), set up a fintech unit (Moment), and has investments in two emergency response businesses (Aura and Namola), as well as SuperSport Schools and the SA20 league. It also resells internet (!) and has a legacy security and media technology unit Irdeto.

Saada does not appear convinced that this strategy will work.

He told News24: "We have chosen to focus the allocation of our resources on what we believe in our core business: distribution of content."

And this is the focus. We're happy we're making [almost] half a billion euro in profits. We're a profitable company."

"They [MultiChoice] have a different approach. They diversified in home security, fintech, insurance, betting and so on."

And we had discussions about that. And of course, they believe they're right.

And we're not sure they're right.

But maybe they're right. And then we will look at every single business.

And if it makes sense, then again, maybe they're right. But I don't know yet."

MultiChoice

MultiChoice's core pay TV business is struggling. The upper end of the market has been under pressure from over-the-top platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, Apple TV+, and Prime Video for years.

In the past year, it lost nearly half a million subscribers in total in South Africa – 5% of its base.

The declines in the Premium segment (DStv Premium and Compact Plus) and mid-market segment (Compact and Commercial) were even worse at -8% and -9%, respectively.

The drop in the rest of Africa was even greater – this unit lost 13% of its active subscribers (around 1.2 million).

Subscription revenue fell 7%, mostly because of foreign exchange headwinds. The group says, "Unprecedented currency depreciation across our core markets" (particularly Nigeria) has negatively impacted its trading profit by R9 billion since its listing in 2019.

Beyond the core business's subscription

revenue of R45 billion, it makes a further R4 billion a year from advertising, R4 billion from decoder sales, reconnection fees, content sub-licensing and production revenue.

Altogether, this would be considered revenue from its core pay TV business.

It then makes another R1.7 billion from "technology" (read: Irdeto) and R1 billion in decoder insurance premiums.

Its other units don't (yet?) generate meaningful revenue. DStv Internet will be a rounding error.

So too the 'fin-tech' unit, which is effectively just a payments processor. At least betting associate Kingmakers, in which it owns 49%, has turned profitable.

It is no coincidence that MultiChoice sold 60% of that decoder insurance business to Sanlam in June for an initial R1.2 billion (up to R1.5 billion).

It is doubtful the French would want to operate a licensed financial services provider.

Showmax

Showmax, an entirely separate unit set up to compete against Netflix, is another headscratcher for Saada.

"So, if I show you the [Canal+] app now, it's the same content that I have on our set of [set-top] boxes."

"They've chosen to say: Okay, OTT [over-the-top, or online streaming] is a different market, different audience, different offer, different brand [like] Showmax. And we will address that market with Showmax."

[Then] you may have a situation where Showmax is not supporting DSTV and actually may compete with DSTV. But again, I don't have enough information.

Overall, I think DTH [Direct-to-Home, or satellite television] is an asset."

Showmax generated R1 billion in subscription revenue last year (to April), a 17% increase.

MultiChoice is betting a large part of its future on Showmax, which requires a ton of investment as the re-platforming of the service continues. In the last two years, this unit has reported trading losses of R3.7 billion.

It sold 30% of Showmax to Comcast unit NBCUniversal last year. The deal was done so that MultiChoice could leverage Comcast's Peacock video streaming platform. It also offers access to the international group's content across NBCUniversal and Sky.

What to expect?

The offer by Canal+ will close in April 2025. The billion dollar question is how much more 'pruning' of non-core businesses MultiChoice does in the next six months? Or will it leave those hard decisions up to the French?

What's all but certain is that the Randburg group will be unrecognisable in a year or two's time.

There are enormous efficiencies to be unlocked across the combined group. For one, it'll have greater leverage (50 million subscribers) when negotiating for sports rights.

Expect some big cuts, asset sales and a slimmed down staff complement.

Many of the bad habits from decades of ownership under Naspers will be undone.

As for subscribers?

They'll likely be better off. SuperSport is, by far, the most valuable asset inside the group.

MultiChoice has been actively collaborating with StudioCanal on productions for years.

There'll be plenty more of that. There'll probably be a bit more French content too (dubbed, or otherwise)! [moneyweb.co.za]

Hold High the Banner of Reform and Opening Up, and Break New Ground in China-Africa and China-Botswana

Friendly Cooperation

THE 20TH CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE Communist Party of China (CPC) convened its third plenary session in Beijing from July 15 to 18, 2024. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPC, delivered an important address. This is a very important meeting held at a critical period for our endeavor to build a great country and move toward national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization. The session delved into the new circumstances and challenges facing Chinese modernization, formulated systemic plans for further deepening reform across the board.

This meeting has sent a strong message to the world about China's steadfast commitment to reform and opening up in the new era. A review of China's development history shows that China has made great strides to catch up with the times thanks to its reform and opening up. After the 18th CPC National Congress, China has successfully achieved its first centenary goal, also as a result of reform and opening up. Now to usher in a new phase of Chinese modernization and achieve the second centenary goal, China still needs to rely on reform and opening up.

China's reform and opening up is guided by principles and has a clear direction, and the overall objectives are to continue to improve and develop the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance. The Resolution adopted by the plenum has more than 20,000 characters, covering all aspects of promoting Chinese modernization, and offers a panoramic view of further deepening reform comprehensively. The Resolution lays out more than 300 important reform tasks, and makes it clear that all of them shall be completed by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2029, which will provide a solid guarantee for Chinese modernization.

An open China is an important engine of global development and prosperity. In the first half of this year, China's imports and exports exceeded RMB 21 trillion for the first time, up 6.1 percent year on year, with some indicators achieving double-digit growth. In light of China's robust foreign trade, the International Monetary Fund revised up its 2024 Chinese GDP growth forecast to 5 percent in the latest update to its World Economic Outlook. Despite the rising instability and uncertainty in the global economy, China's economy continues to benefit from a solid foundation, strong resilience, enormous potential and robust driving forces and plays an important role as an anchor and source of strength.

The long-term trajectory remains steady and sound. China's economy still plays an important role as an anchor and source of strength.

China's endeavor of further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization will create new opportunities for China and Africa to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and thrive and prosper together. China is the largest developing country in the world, and Africa is the continent with the largest number of developing countries. Shared past experiences and similar aims and goals have brought China and Africa close together. China and Africa will always be a community of shared future. China has stayed committed to the principles of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith, and of pursuing the greater good and shared interests for China's relations with Africa proposed by President Xi Jinping. Together with the African friends and drawing strength from the spirit of China-Africa friendship and cooperation, the two sides have pressed ahead on the path of solidarity and cooperation and taken China-Africa relations to new heights.

China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for 15 years in a row. China-Africa's two-way trade in 2023 exceeded 282.1 billion US dollars, reaching a record high. China-Africa cooperation continues to develop in an all-round, multi-level and high-quality manner.

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) will be held in Beijing from September 4 to 6. It will be an event to celebrate China-Africa friendship, explore cooperation and chart the course for the future under the theme of "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future." With the joint effort of China and Africa, the 2024 FOCAC Summit will be a great success, open up new vistas for China-Africa relationship and write a new chapter of building a China-Africa community with a shared future.

China's endeavor of further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization will create new opportunities for China-Botswana friendly cooperation in the new era. Botswana is an important country in Africa, and has always been a true friend and good brother of China. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975, China and Botswana have expanded cooperation in agriculture, health care, education, infrastructure, digital construction and other fields. In 2023, the total trade



Ambassador H.E. Fan Yong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of The People's Republic of China to the Republic of Botswana

volume between China and Botswana increased by 15.7% year-on-year to US \$710 million with an optimized trade structure. Recently, the 17th Chinese Medical team has arrived in Botswana, which will definitely write a new chapter in the medical and health cooperation between China and Botswana. What's more, the Ramaeba Primary School in Kazungula built with China's assistance will be put into use this year, and the Legolo road project supported by China will also be launched this year.

Next year, China and Botswana will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. China stands ready to share with our Botswana friends the experiences and opportunities of China's development. We welcome Botswana to get on board the express train of China's development and jointly create a new chapter of China-Botswana friendly cooperation.

Given the enormous challenges facing economic globalization, countries in the world have a shared responsibility to oppose unilateralism and protectionism, uphold the global economic order, and keep industrial and supply chains secure and stable. China will further deepen reform across the board and, pursue high-standard opening up to galvanize Chinese modernization, deliver more benefits of our opening up to African countries including Botswana through such platforms as Belt and Road cooperation and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, so as to build an even stronger China-Africa community of shared future.

lifestyle

Anicia's vision for healthier Botswana

ANICIA GAOTHUSI, Miss Botswana 2024, is using her platform to make a difference that extends beyond the usual expectations of beauty queens. With determination and a clear purpose, she has launched the Lights Foundation as part of her "Beauty with a Purpose" project. This initiative is focused on addressing key healthcare challenges in Botswana, highlighting that true beauty is reflected in meaningful action.

At the centre of Anicia Gaothusi's project is a simple yet profound goal: to make everyone a potential lifesaver. "My main objective with the Lights Foundation is to ensure that every person, regardless of where they live, has the basic training and knowledge to save a life," Gaothusi explained. "From performing CPR to administering first aid, these are skills that should be accessible to everyone, especially in communities where healthcare facilities are scarce."

The Lights Foundation's primary objective is to collaborate with healthcare facilities and professionals—doctors, nurses, and other medical staff—to tackle pressing health concerns.

The initiative covers a broad range of health issues, including mental health awareness, the proper administration of CPR, basic first aid procedures, and more. Anicia's project is not just about awareness; it's about equipping communities with the knowledge and skills to save lives and promote well-being.

Quinton Mathophelo, Medical Director of Life Flight Rescue, one of the sponsors of Miss Botswana 2024's



Beauty With a Purpose project, expressed his optimism about the collaboration.

"We hope our partnership with Anicia will help influence public health policies, ensuring that hotspot areas like malls and disadvantaged rural communities have access to first aid kits and AED machines. Our goal is for everyone in the community to have basic life-saving

training, empowering ordinary people to preserve and save lives."

Dr. Kassim, a general practitioner at Olive Medical Centre, another sponsor of the Miss Botswana Organisation, shared a similar sentiment. He noted that their existing working relationship with the Miss Botswana Organisation has already led to impactful awareness and outreach programmes in areas

like Kgatleng and Kweneng, where they encountered children exposed to abuse and lacking access to water and basic healthcare. "Working with Miss Botswana 2024 on her project allows both of our initiatives to reach larger audiences by leveraging each other's networks," Dr. Kassim explained.



He further emphasized the benefits of this collaboration for Gaothusi's project.

"Anicia will have access to Olive Medical Centre's pool of specialists, including paediatricians, nutritionists, and orthopaedics, who are ready to share their expertise. This will enable her to take a more holistic approach in executing her project."

Dr. Kassim underscored the importance of Gaothusi's initiative, stating, "There are numerous settlements that lack basic healthcare facilities and resources. Her Beauty with a Purpose project is vital in creating pathways for international awareness and attracting larger sponsors to address these critical issues."

Other sponsors of Anicia's journey, who were present during the launch, include DKM Athleisure



Wear, which ensures she looks classy and fashionable in their high-performance gear, helping her stay fit and ready for every challenge. Lefkara Dental Spa supports her by making sure she looks and feels her best, while Emergency Assist 911 plays a crucial role in the project, providing first aid training at locations of Anicia's choice as the initiative rolls out across the country.

Other sponsors of Anicia's journey, who were present during the launch, include DKM Athleisure

Modi rallies behind Matumba

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IN AN EFFORT TO HELP reigning Miss Teen Global Botswana Osego Naiye Matumba make her forthcoming participation a success at the third edition of Miss Teen Global, Modi has created a lifestyle clothing brand as part of its support towards the queen.

As an establishment which promotes national identity and the use of culture to promote indigenous knowledge and products, Modi has found the need to offer support to rising talent from national to international level. As such, in preparation for the international pageant coming up in May 2025 at Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, Modi has come up with a clothing brand dubbed "woke Francistown" to help the queen generate income.

In helping Matumba earn up to 35% from woke Francistown merchandise, Joconia Malunga the founder and director of Modi, stated that the rest of the funds will be used for production costs. Explaining further in relation to the impact Modi wishes to create, he said although they are



Miss Teen Global Botswana Osego Naiye Matumba

currently contributing towards pageantry, the idea goes far beyond pageantry alone as they aim to also impact other various fields in the long run.

"Seeing what Naiye is doing as a multi talented model, we want to build her image and grow her brand by not only taking her out there to the people but also ensuring that her financial needs are to a certain extent met.

Most importantly want to cause impact by creating sustainable platforms to help individuals in other different fields succeed at both local and international level competitions".

The 14 year old's mother who is also her manager Lucia Lesego Matumba who has for a long time been one of her reliable sponsors, shared her excitement towards Modi initiative sharing that the queen will be the lead ambassador spear heading woke Francistown. "We trust that this project will help fund a lot of preparations for the Malaysia competition. With such kind of support we can only wish her all the best of success," She said joint efforts by stakeholders alongside training and mentorship offered by Miss teen global Botswana will surely yield positive results.

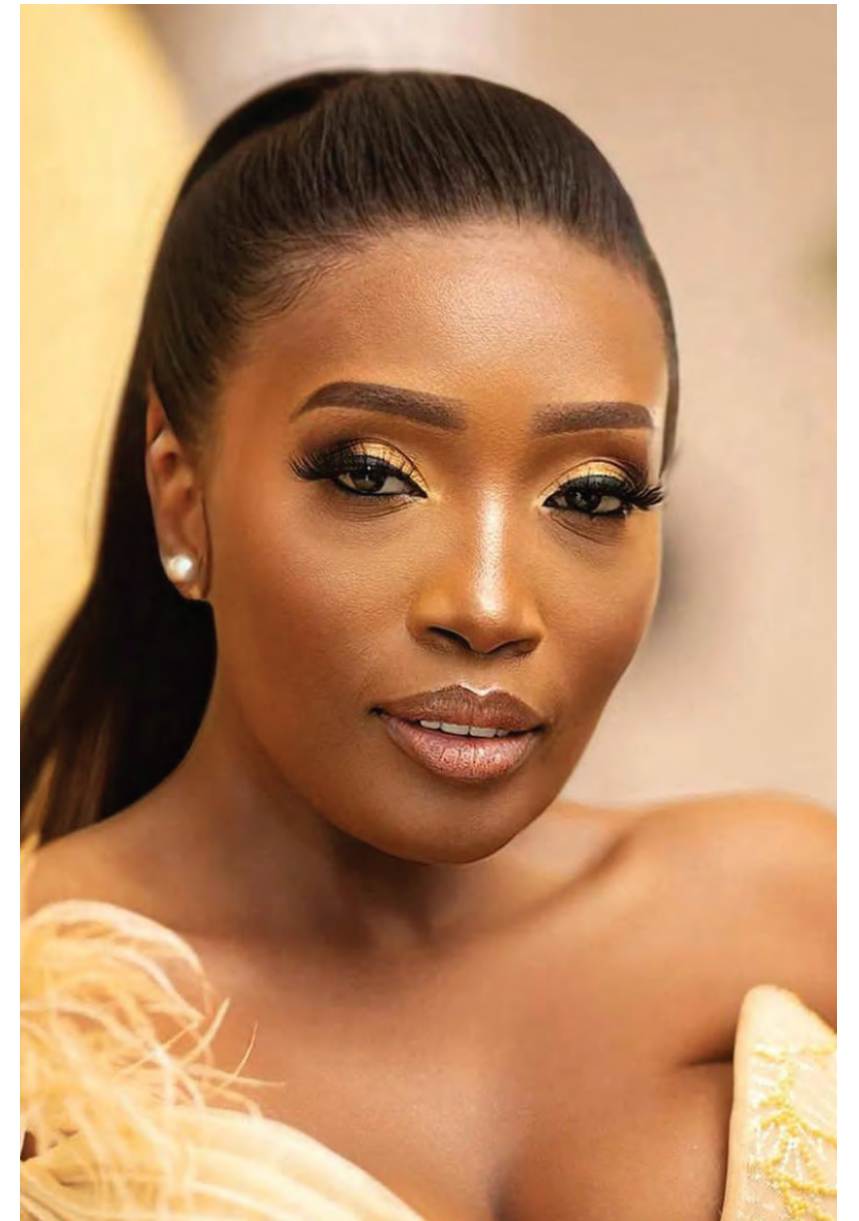
Sophie Ndaba for Palapye

NANCY RAMOKHUA
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SOUTH AFRICA'S FORMER generations actress Sophie Ndaba will grace the Unleash the Tigeress Women Empowerment Movement set to host its inaugural seminar at Cresta Botsalo Hotel in Palapye on 17th August 2024. In an effort to empower female entrepreneurs, the event is themed Women in Business - The CEO Roundtable.

The seminar will be held as a platform to share experiences, break barriers and equip women to lead with confidence. Furthermore, it also seeks to bridge the gap in women entrepreneurship, as a result it aims to bring together visionary business leaders and aspiring female entrepreneurs for an evening filled with inspiration, growth, and actionable insights. Clementine Masogo, the founder of Unleash the Tigeress Women Empowerment Seminar has emphasized that Sophie Ndaba stands as an icon many women can learn from and succeed as powerful trailblazers. "We found it fit to engage in this event as keynote speaker, South African actress and entrepreneur Sophie Ndaba, best known for her iconic role as Queen Moroka in the popular soap opera Generations. This seminar is not just about sharing knowledge but about creating a powerful network of women ready to build empires. We are here to shift mindsets, embrace excellence, and equip women with the tools they need to succeed in today's competitive business landscape," Masogo explained.

With over 100 women expected to attend the event, Masogo highlighted that the seminar promises to give a transformative experience, empowering women to step into their roles as leaders and visionaries, ultimately shaping the future of businesses. The seminar will cover essential topics for the modern businesswoman, including building




Sophie Ndaba

an empire from the ground up, mindset shift, embracing excellence, the art of marketing for SMMEs, and sustaining economic balance to create powerful and enduring businesses. "At the end of the day, we desire all participants to think big, challenge norms and cultivate a mindset of excellence that will propel them to leadership positions in their respective industries," stated Masogo.


Unleash the Tigeress Women Empowerment Movement is dedicated to empowering women entrepreneurs through hosting

impactful conversations, creating networking opportunities and providing educational resources that inspire growth and success. As shared by the Co-Founder of the organization Ndapiwa Nglazi, the women convention is a step towards a future where every woman recognizes her potential and is equipped to realize it fully. "We believe that by empowering women to lead with confidence and vision, we are not only shaping successful businesses but also building a more equitable and prosperous society".

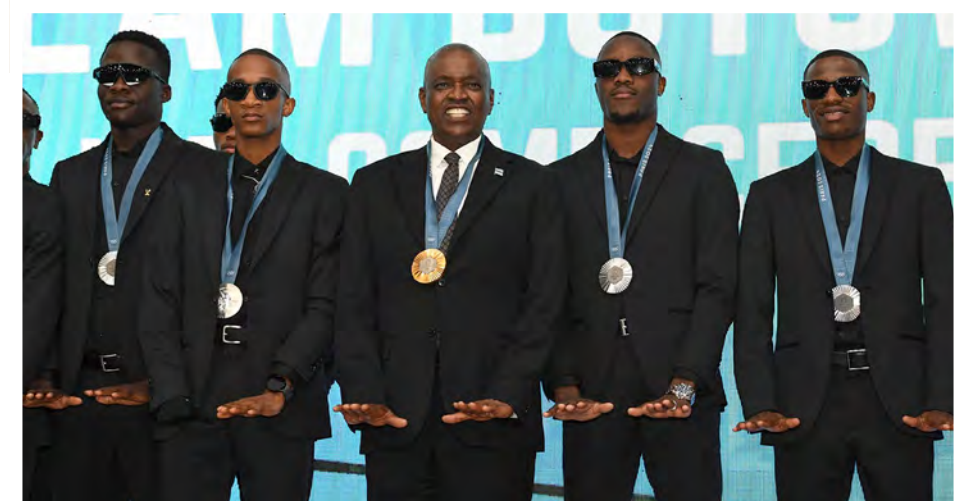
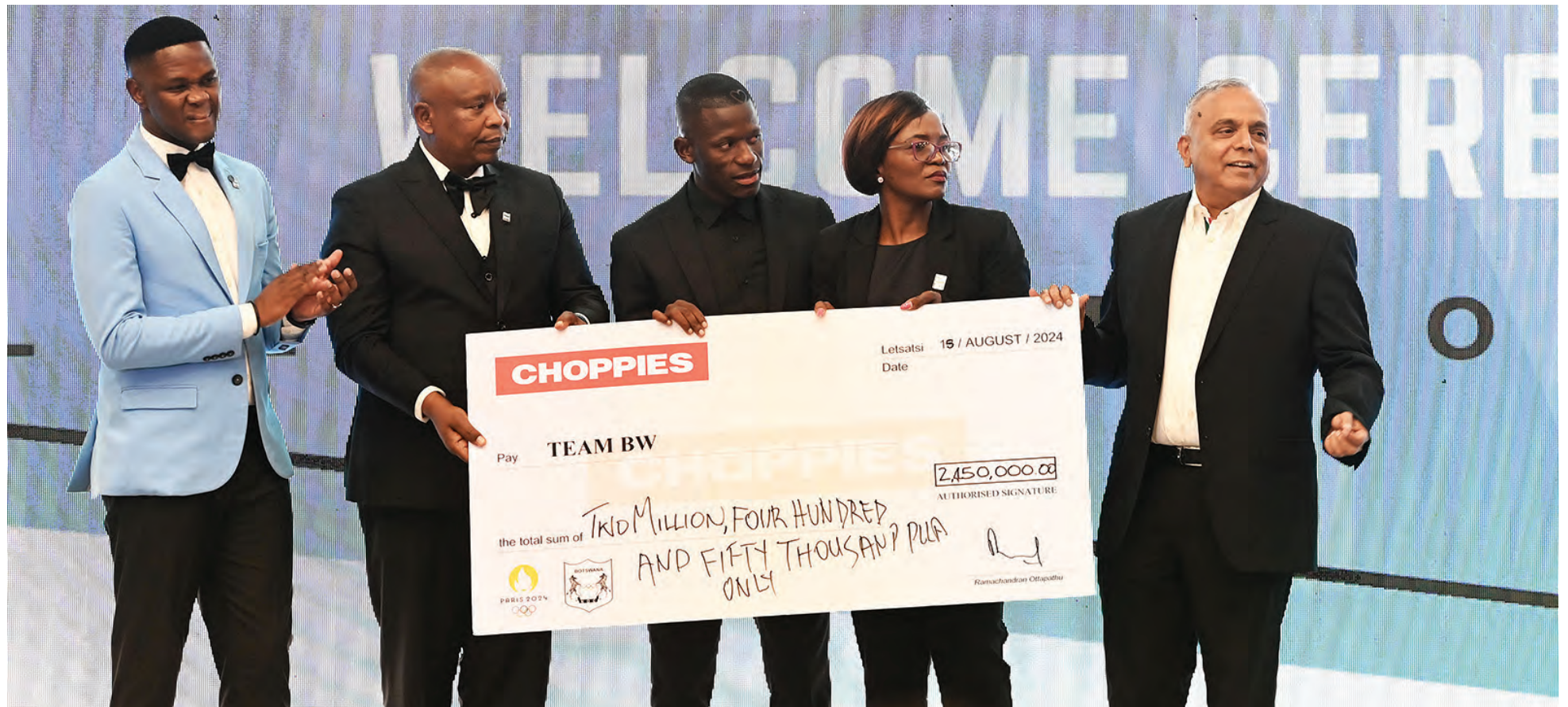


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PARIS 2024: OLYMPISM EUPHORIA

Sport

Harsh penalties for 'stolen' images

- P20 000 fine or imprisonment for 10 years, or both.
- Damages to the photographer, including any profits gained from the illegal use of the photographs.

LAGAGO TAMOCHA
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Businesses and corporations recently found to have unlawfully used photographs of Letsile Tebogo, Botswana's first Olympic gold medalist in the 200 metres, could face penalties of up to P20,000 or imprisonment for up to ten years, or both under the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act.

In addition to these penalties, they may be ordered (by courts) to pay damages to the photographer, including any profits from the infringing party gained from the illegal use of the photographs. This was revealed by Marietta Magashula, CIPA's Awareness and Communications Manager in an interview with The Patriot on Sunday. "These penalties reflect the seriousness with which Botswana's legal system views intellectual property rights. They are in place to deter would-be infringers and to uphold the rights of creators," said Magashula.

Botswana's National Olympics Committee (BNOC) recently issued a stern warning to the violators after several companies circulated congratulatory messages using Tebogo's images alongside their logos without proper authorization. The BNOC reminded these entities that such actions infringe on intellectual property rights, stressing the importance of obtaining permission before using protected content in promotional materials.

This incident is emblematic of a broader issue regarding the unauthorized use of photographs from sporting events, particularly in relation to the economic and moral rights granted to photographers and copyright holders. As Botswana continues to gain momentum in the world of sports, the question of intellectual property rights surrounding these photographs has taken centre stage. The Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA) administers the legal framework governing these rights through the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, one of the primary intellectual property laws in the country. While the excitement of capturing and sharing moments from sporting events is understandable, it is critical to be aware of the legal intricacies involved, especially concerning ownership and the use of photographs.

Ownership debate

Photographs taken during sports events can be owned by independent photographers, sporting agencies, or news organisations, depending on the contractual agreements in place. According to Botswana's Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, ownership of these images is automatic; there is no requirement for photographers to register their works with CIPA to receive IP protection. However, CIPA encourages the voluntary and free recording of such works with the Copyright Office as an additional safeguard in potential disputes.

Magashula underscores the importance

of understanding ownership. "The automatic protection afforded by the law is a crucial element for photographers. However, we always advise registering your work with the Copyright Office to provide additional evidence, which could be invaluable in resolving disputes over ownership," she notes.

Photographer's rights

Under Section 7 of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, photographers are granted exclusive rights over their works. These rights include the ability to reproduce, distribute, and publicly display their photographs, as well as the right to object to any use they deem inappropriate. "These rights aren't just about control—they are about recognising and rewarding creativity. Photographers invest a lot of time, effort, and skill into capturing those iconic moments. It's only fair that they have the right to benefit from their work economically," Magashula explains.

In addition to economic rights, the law also provides photographers with moral rights. This means that any public use of their photographs must credit them, and they have the right to object to any modification of their work that might affect their reputation.

Exceptions, Limitations

Despite the robust protection provided to photographers, there are exceptions and limitations under the law. For instance, photographs can be used without permission for purposes such as news reporting, teaching, or private use, as long as such use does not interfere with the photographer's economic rights and remains within reasonable limits.

Magashula emphasises the importance of caution in these scenarios: "Even though the law provides exceptions, it's always advisable to seek permission first. This ensures that there are no misunderstandings, and photographers' rights are respected."

Other IP Considerations

While photographs are a significant aspect of intellectual property in sports, they are not the only concern. Trademarks, broadcasting rights, and the protection of innovations and designs related to sporting events are also governed by the Industrial Property Act and the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act. This includes everything from the choreography of opening ceremonies to the design of trophies and the music that accompanies these events.

As Botswana continues to showcase its sporting prowess on the global stage, understanding and respecting the intellectual property rights that underpin these events is more crucial than ever. Whether you are a photographer, an organiser, or simply an enthusiast, being informed and cautious will ensure that the excitement of capturing sports moments remains a celebration of creativity and not a battleground for legal disputes.

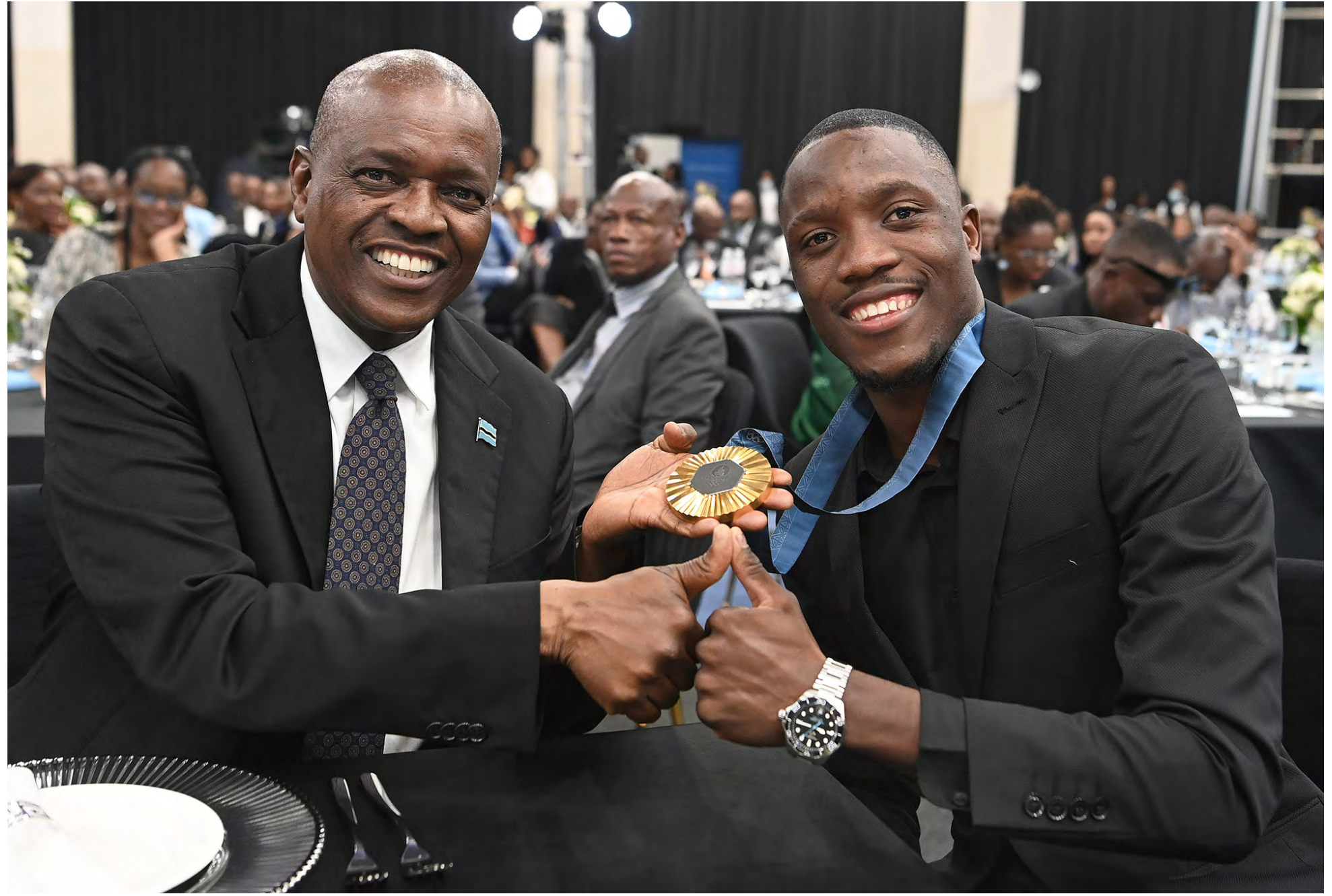


Letsile Tebogo

[PIC.PRESSPHOTO]

Windfall for Olympics team

... Choppies leads the pack with over P2.4m offer



GOLDEN MOMENT: President Mokgweetsi Masisi with our 200M Gold medalist, Letsile Tebogo

[PIC.PRESSPHOTO]

IT WAS RAINING MONEY FOR THE glorious Botswana's Olympics team on Thursday night when the corporate world and government opened purses to reward them for the 200m gold medal and 4 by 400m relay team silver medal.

Sprinter Letsile Tebogo, the relay team and their coaches have become the most rewarded team in the history of Botswana sports. This is in addition to the monetary rewards they received from the Olympics

Committee and the World Athletics.

When welcoming the team on Tuesday, Sports Minister Tumiso Rakgare said Tebogo has been awarded two houses with each member of the Relay team also getting a house.

Choppies total incentive package: P2, 450,000.00

* Letsile Tebogo: P1 million for Gold medal, P50, 000.00 for 100m and 200m final plus P5, 000.00 shopping voucher

* Coach Justice Dipeba and Head Coach

Ntshwarang Chilume: P50,000.00 plus P1,500.00 shopping voucher for a year each.

* Coach Kebonyemodisa Mosimanyane: P200,000.00 plus P2,500.00 shopping voucher for a year

* Tshepiso Masalela: P50,000.00 for qualifying in the 800m final plus a P2,500.00 shopping voucher for a year

* All seven relay team members will receive a P150,000.00 plus a P2,500.00 shopping voucher for a year.

Debswana, De Beers Group and DTCSB

donated P1,080,000.00 to Team Botswana Botswana Defence Force donated P575,000.00 to the team

Orange Botswana donated P700,000.00 to the team

President Masisi and family donated P25 000

Members of Parliament donated P63 000

Members of the public are currently contributing through accounts opened in local banks.

Olympism euphoria

- Paris 2024 and Olympism in Botswana



ASHFORD MAMELODI*

THE UNPRECEDENTED WELCOME celebrations for a sports team returning home on 13 August said it all! The Olympic Games Paris 2024, held on 26 July 2024 - 11 August 2024 (the XXXIInd Olympiad) have come and gone. It is an event that will for a long time remain etched in our minds as history was made and a nation predictably celebrated.

Letsile Tebogo has delivered gold as the first African in 200m at the Olympic Games. He did the same to deliver silver in the 4 x 400m with a team of his colleagues, Kebinatshipi, Ndori and Pesela. This is history and every Motswana has to be proud. Well done Team Botswana. Well done to Botswana Government, Botswana Athletics Association, the Botswana Swimming Association, Botswana National Olympic Committee, Botswana National Sport Commission, sponsors and all other stakeholders. A special word of appreciation to the athletes' parents and coaches. It was

heartwarming to see Botswana united in joy with the blue, black and white Botswana Flag at its most radiant in song, cheer and dance.

As we celebrate the golden era of Botswana Athletics it is prudent that we acknowledge the road travelled in the spirit of Olympism to arrive where we are now. It is only proper that we celebrate all our Olympians who have made a telling contribution to this evolution. We must not lose sight that our first Olympic medal, silver came through Nijel Amos in London in 2012, the same year the Zebras made their maiden appearance at the Africa Cup on Nations finals Gabon & Equatorial Guinea; we also fondly remember the winning of a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 through our strong 4 x 400m relay team.

Our journey in the Olympic Games started in the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games or the XXIInd Olympiad. Who can forget that during these games a Botswana athlete, Robert Chideka came last at these games in the 5000m race? A joke was made that Botswana had come first in the race from the back. Robert has

gone on to serve as the Secretary General of the BNOC. How the situation was completely reversed in Paris 44 years later.

At the level of government, sport in the early days was not a priority although it was encouraged. Successive Ministries (Ministers, PS's and all sport staff) played their part and had to address a clarion call from National Sport Associations for a Ministry of Sport detached from Ministry of Labour & Home Affairs which was also at the time housing Botswana Police and Immigration amongst other key government departments. A victory for sport finally came when a re-configured ministry came about with a fully-fledged sport & recreation department. Botswana National Sports Council continued as the arm of government on Sport matters.

The new Ministry was led by Minister Major General Moeng Pheto with Tickey Pule as his Permanent Secretary in 2007. Sport started making some strides forward. In other words, as Olympism was on the rise so was the level of participation of government in matters of sport including a steady rise in budgetary provisions for sport.

His Excellency the President of Botswana Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi made a significant pronouncement at the welcome ceremony for Team Botswana that the preparations for the XXXIth Olympiad slated for Los Angeles in the United State of America in 2028 would start immediately. That was a first and it is what the leading countries in the Olympic movement do for every Olympic cycle. Some even plan two cycles in advance. I believe it is also important that we consolidate our gains where the BNOC and the BAA ensure that the entire team that made the Paris games are professionally managed including an investment or business manager and possibly psychotherapists of course as well their coaches at a personal level. We are now

competing with top sport personalities across the globe.

Our athletes are young and should not and cannot be left to fend for themselves without professional guidance as they navigate their way in high stake sport. As they focused, which they should, squarely on their game, other aspects of their lives ought to be catered for. An athlete like Letsile has a full 10 years that he potentially has still left in him at the very highest level. It must be a period not only where he wins many medals but also a period where he has to be in a situation where he can prepare for his retirement from professional sport.

Olympism has come off age in Botswana. This is thanks to our pioneering leaders in the sport. The Botswana National Olympic Committee was founded in 1979 and headed by the late Lieutenant General Mompoti Merafhe, who was also the inaugural President of the ANOCA Zone Six. He was followed by the late Ismail Bhamjee who in turn was replaced by long term BNOC Secretary General, Negroes Malealea Kgosietse. Dr. Martin Mokgathi then took over before handing over to the incumbent President Colonel Botsang Tshenyego who was recently elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Commonwealth Games Federation. All these men and their respective teams have made telling contributions to the growth of the Olympic Movement in Botswana including ensuring that Botswana participated in all Olympic and most Commonwealth Games since 1980. Put differently they have sustained Olympism in Botswana and it is thanks to them and other key players that we are able to celebrate our very first gold medal for Botswana in 2024.

With the current and laudable level of political support, we could have an even bigger celebration after the Los Angeles games in 2028. As the Olympic Slogan goes, "Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communiter" / "Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together".

*Veteran sports administrator and author of 'Protecting the Game' - Ashford Mamelodi - writes based on his vast experience in sports administration and involvement Olympism.