

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY

THE PRESIDENT

AT

THE

54TH BDP NATIONAL COUNCIL

Gaborone
01th - 02th April 2016

***"Our Structures; Our Strength – Another 50 years in Government
#Goyagoileng"***

Salutations.....

Good Afternoon

1. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here this morning to officially open our 54th National Council. The theme for this year's meeting is very fitting "***Our Structures; Our Strength – Another 50 years in Government, #Goyagoileng***", as it encapsulates the very essence of this gathering.

2. This theme clearly underscores that the focus after the 2014 general elections has been on 'Team Building' and ensuring that we galvanise our efforts in this regard at the structures, with the aim to strengthen the operations of our Party. I have, to this end, visited all the Regions in pursuance of this endeavour. Other members of the Central Committee have also been involved in some of these activities.

3. I have started to go on a second round of visits to all the Regions. I recently visited Central and North West Regions. The focus on the second round of visits now is assessing how we are doing in relation to the theme, as well as the targets we had set for ourselves of ensuring that the structures are fully

revived and functioning at optimal level. We have also intervened in some of the branches in this regard, as appropriate.

4. Perhaps a clear illustration of this enduring but yet rewarding undertaking is the recent election results in Sekoma ward in the Jwaneng/Mabutsane Constituency. Let me take this opportunity to commend the team that was primarily charged with spearheading this campaign and also congratulate our candidate; Councillor Case Lebotso, as well as applaud those democrats, for their demonstrated unwavering support throughout that campaign.

5. This year's gathering without a doubt comes at an opportune time, a few months prior to our 50 years of independence celebrations. It can therefore, in this regard, be rightly assumed that this Council will accord us an opportunity to correlate our Party activities in relation thereto. It goes without saying that as the BDP, we shall stand tall and be proud of the achievements of this great nation and that our history of performance as the ruling Party is directly connected to that of this Republic.

6. The advances that were achieved by this great Republic are consequent to the architects of our policies that were adopted by our founding fathers. Through their foresight and vision, we pursued the principles of democracy; periodic elections every 5 years, liberal economics and related elements, in particular the emphasis of collective ownership of mineral or natural resources and common development in this regard, aimed at improving the livelihoods of all Batswana, with proceeds emanating from the aforestated products. We are thus very proud that this foresight, helped us avoid the ***resource curse*** and internal conflict and strife that we see in other countries, commonly associated with endowment of mineral resources. Like I have said in the past to the opposition, governance is not a walk in the park, you need to have ability for you to comprehend fully what it involves. The opposition continues to this day to reflect the worst attributes we do not want in our society; no manners, no truth, no tolerance and no patriotism. One of the entities in this country that has shown no contribution to nation building is the opposition. One thing that defines a democracy is the necessity to have different political parties play the role of creating choice for voters through alternative policies and providing checks and balances for the ruling party. But in this

country it seems the opposition's role is just to register that they exist through making false claims and childish utterances.

7. Democrats, make no mistake, for us to be where we are today, celebrating these milestones, a lot had to be done, including a lot of personal sacrifices, not only for individuals but for the country. For Botswana to be resolute in the pursuance of its ideologies at a period when it was fashionable to be associated with socialism and communism was very telling and character building. The country was also surrounded by hostile, colonial, racist and apartheid regimes, at the time. We should, in this respect, take a moment to express profound gratitude to our forefathers and Party elders. The legacy that they have bequeathed this Party is very evident. It is therefore now incumbent upon us, the latter generation, to ensure that we continue with this legacy and ideals as espoused by our founders. We should in this respect, never ever take the mandate we were given by Botswana to govern for granted. We should not even for moment waiver in our resolve to serve Botswana.

8. We the BDP are the architects that designed the tremendous development that have been achieved in building this country in the last 50 years. We in the BDP are the

doctors who have cured and continue to cure illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, corruption and many others. We in the BDP are drivers who are taking this country and its citizens on a journey of prosperity. The opposition on the other hand are the architects who qualify in building divisions and cracks in society that if in government would bring all we have built tumbling down. The opposition are the doctors whose cure is to infect the nation with lies, cheating and engaging in scare tactics and lack of patriotism.

9. In light of the foregoing, basically underscoring that the history of Botswana is inseparable to that of the BDP, the Central Committee has decided that in tandem with the national celebrations, we will also commemorate the Golden Jubilee at Party level. To this end, the Central Committee has established a team to come up with exciting proposals to mark this historic and momentous occasion. Among others, I have proposed that we set up a BDP Museum to be commissioned on Independence Day. Details will be availed as we advance the operationalization of the matter, but I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to every democrat, particularly veterans who could be in ownership of such material as literature; old manifestos, membership cards, uniforms other memorabilia to

donate or share them with the BDP 50 Committee for display at the museum.

10. It will be recalled that in requesting for a fresh mandate from Batswana prior to the elections, one of the things we promised them was job creation. Accordingly, post elections, following careful consideration, we came up with the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP). The ESP is a programme whose primary objective is to improve the economy using 3 elements;

- i) being to catalyse economic growth through increased Government spending in identified sectors;
- ii) diversify the economy, and;
- iii) accelerate employment creation.

11. The ESP is thus one component aimed at galvanising existing programmes so as to improve economic growth. In this regard, we pledged 5 national priority areas; namely, Employment Creation, Poverty Eradication; Elimination of Mother - to Child Transmission of HIV; Improving Education Outcomes and Fighting Corruption. Consequent to the mandate promise to Batswana, ***Job Creation*** has been adopted as an immediate area for implementation as it was priority number one.

12. The ESP was officially launched in Machaneng on 13th February 2016. So far, as of March 2016, some of the projects billed to start under this programme were;

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

Construction of Roads

The Government intends to tar about **532.5** kilometres of road.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The following Expansion of Educational Facilities projects;

Secondary Schools

Classrooms; 369
Science Labs; 90
Staff Houses; 426

Primary Schools

Classrooms; **409**
Staff Housing; **486**
8 Cubical Toilets ; **1280**

MINISTRY OF LANDS AND HOUSING

The following 3 Peripheral land projects,

1. Peripheral Land Servicing; **7,509 Plots**
2. Minimal Land Servicing; **39,283 plots**
3. Full Servicing; **8,466 Plots**
4. Pool Housing Maintenance; **500**
5. Instalment Purchase Scheme(ISP)/Youth Housing; **750 Units**

Low Income Housing

1. Turnkey; **1500 Units**
2. Home Improvement Loans; **787 Units**

District Housing; **16 Units**

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Construction of new facilities and upgrade of 28 structures

1. New Clinics; 6
2. Upgrade of Hospitals;5
3. Upgrading of Clinics; 6
4. Upgrading of Health Posts; 11
5. Staff Houses; 128
6. Toilets; 41

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

- 1- Grey water re-use project

2- Lotsane Irrigation project

3- Service Centres

Glen Valley Infrastructure Rehabilitation

Grading of roads to production areas (189 km)

Electricity Connection to Mosisedi and Shashe Farms

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT WILDLIFE AND TOURISM

- Kasane/Kazungula tourism Development Project
- Monuments Development
- Dams Tourism
- Community based Tourism

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Economic Diversification Drive

Import substitution

Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

There are 7 such zones earmarked in the country:

Francistown – Mining supplies, services and logistics hub

Gaborone (Adjacent Sir Seretse Khama International Airport) – International diamond activities and specialized manufacturing

Gaborone Fairgrounds – Financial services

Lobatse – Beef, leather and biogas park

Greater Palapye – Integrated coal value addition

Selibe Phikwe – Mineral beneficiation

Tuli Block – Horticulture; agro business

Pandamatenga – Integrated farming, agro business and food processing.

13. It is therefore, with humility, when I say the programme has been well received by Batswana, especially the component that emphasises the need for local procurement and use of companies at local level. The programme is appreciated because of the economic benefits that improve peoples' livelihoods. There are some nevertheless, who want to mislead the public into believing that this program is not meant for their benefit, whilst they themselves as leadership in opposition ranks benefit. We have seen them at work where they have tried to lie and cheat their way into government. At elections they pay people to vote for them because they cannot get people to vote for them for anything else. They also have to cheat by resorting to trafficking of votes to win in a particular area. They have to lie and cheat and scare people to believe we want to assassinate their leaders.

14. This unfortunately is how our politics has evolved in opposition circles, to become politics of the gutter. It is a pity when people resort to such and stoop to these low levels. It is their policy of desperation and hopelessness that they would condemn policies aimed at improving the lives of our fellow citizens. As long as the BDP is in Government, which it will continue to be, they have no sense of belonging or supporting this country of Botswana and demonstrate a high level of being unpatriotic. When we do well in world ratings they condemn us for doing well. They don't support our national teams, they don't fly our flag at such events, they don't wear national colours on Fridays, they don't even sing the National Anthem. They celebrate when we have electricity cuts, they celebrate when there is no water, they celebrate when our dams run dry and when we have a drought.

15. Our democratic credentials speak for themselves. We assist all Batswana without regard for Party affiliation, because that is what democratic principles prescribe and we have lived these democratic values for over 50 years and we will continue to do for the next 50 years and more we are in Government. We have never implemented policies selectively, be they health related(HIV/AIDS medication), Agriculture, Construction and Financial Services etc. In fact, there are quite a number of

indexes that rate Botswana highly in this regard, relating to issues of governance, as well as for economic performance.

16. We have been consistently at the top of the continent and have also been rated above European countries in many of these indices. My advice to Botswana is that you should scrutinise these pretenders, who claim that they are a Government in waiting, to determine if indeed their actions seem to indicate such a likelihood or whether they have the character to be entrusted with the huge responsibility of Government. Will you entrust an alcoholic to drive your vehicle! Of course not! Neither should you entrust the opposition to be in Government. Both would end up in a fatal crash. They peddle all these unpatriotic tendencies through themselves and opposition journalists and opposition lawyers in the attempt to undermine our constitution.

17. Let me also take this moment to speak about the issue of '**Maitseo and Botho**'. As you may all recall that when I took over the Presidency, I introduced my Governing compass, to be guided by the **5Ds**. On the Ds of **Democracy, Development, Dignity**, we are doing quite well. When using a comparative analysis in this respect, especially looking at the United Nations(UN) Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) and related

institutions, we have been used as a benchmark by many developing countries, to copy the best practices that we pursue in Botswana in this regard. **Delivery** has not been totally fulfilled. Whilst we have achieved in some areas in this regard, we still need to capacitate our people, both in Government and the Private Sector, primarily it is an issue that is linked to our work ethics as a society. **Discipline** has been the area where we have problems. One of the major issues of concern that we have been addressing has to do with social ills and the degeneration of our values, especially amongst our youth. I, on 4th March 2016, gave a national address pertaining to the issue at the Thamaga Village Kgotla. I also addressed the issue recently at the BDP Youth Council in Mosu, as well as engaged the Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) on the same, to ask the latter to intensify teaching of social values in their congregations. In addressing the nation on the issue in Thamaga, I invited all Batswana to secure our culture of **Botho** as Batswana for our well-being, for our traditions and for our improved productivity and discipline.

18. The future of this Republic lies with our youth. Our Education system is aimed at assisting these young people to weave a path for themselves that will see them grow into responsible young citizens. It is therefore very disappointing

when the very people who we are striving towards improving, are the ones who seem to be involved in issues of anti-social behaviour that does not compliment learning. I believe that parents should also assume responsibility for what children consume so that we do not end up with harmful products that can forever damage their future and that of our nation.

19. Let me also hasten to indicate that I have noted over time with great concern that we still have a few members in our society who have made it a habit to write uncouth messages about others on social media. Again, let me underline that social media can be used more positively. At Party level, I think it will be fair to highlight that it can be used positively to among others, promote the Party, Government Policies and Programmes. It can be used as a platform for interaction and positioning the Party in good light to recruit new members, whilst also reminding Batswana that *there is still no alternative and we are still the best placed Party to move Botswana forward, for better development and better livelihoods.*

20. Following the Siele Commission and our extensive consultations in the Regions, the Party will in the intervening period leading to the elections in 2019 introduce a new vetting system. Some of the reforms will include a new registration

process, as well as new membership cards. I believe that the Secretary General will in his statement, discuss some of these operational issues. It is critical that those aspiring for political office should be seen as having the integrity to hold such a post. It therefore, goes without saying that this will require us, Party members, to stay focused on Party interest, rather than personal interests, in that we ensure that various elective competitions for Party leadership positions do not lead to deepening divisions between Party members and a culture of entrenched political rivalry.

21. We should use the opportunity of meeting at this National Council, to identify our common denominators in the governance of these electoral reform processes. We should work hard to bridge political differences between us emanating from systems adopted to improve and advance our internal democratic processes. Our diversity as Democrats has always been our strength. These are the **basics** of democracy and you either win or lose and we must all be prepared to be mature enough to accept the results whether you are a candidate or a supporter of a candidate.

22. Furthermore, we should go out and encourage others to come and join our Party. I am pleased to inform you that our

efforts to recruit new talent into the Party have borne fruit. The ripple effects of these recruitments have been felt and are taking effect nationally. What is gratifying about this is the fact that a majority of those joining or more than 90% of those recently recruited are young people, who are also energetic and very active. Most importantly, they will, without a doubt, augment and catalyze our recruitment drive.

23. As earlier indicated, I and the Central Committee have been visiting Regions to assess the Party structures, their level of organization, educate them on their functions and identify shortcomings, which we can collectively rectify. With our introspection, I believe we are showing Batswana and also reassuring them that we are still the best placed Party to lead Botswana. The nation we have so successfully built would be involved in a fatal collision and destroyed if the opposition were ever in government.

24. In conclusion, allow me Democrats, to reiterate my request to you all, to continue serving this Party diligently and tirelessly in everything we set out to do. I should also use this opportunity to reiterate that we have a mandate from Batswana based on the promise of our manifesto. We should, in this respect, continuously ensure that we fulfil these

promises and also cascade the manifesto to all our members and ***Batswana botlhe***. We should inform them that ***Yes there is still no alternative*** and we are still the only Party that can represent their ideals, and that yes indeed we remain committed to ***"moving Botswana Forward"*** as we are the only Party with the people able to do so. Remember what this Party stands for, to lift up Botswana and Batswana. To work for them and for a better Botswana.

25. I wish you all good deliberations during this Council as we build *our structures and our strength, for another 50 years in Government, #Goyagoileng.* ***WE TAKE BOTSWANA FORWARD! BOTSWANA PELE!***

I thank you for your attention.

