

**BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY
LEADERSHIP FORUM/PITSO
MAHARAJA CONFERENCE CENTRE
GABORONE: 14 AUGUST, 2010**

**DEFENDING OUR DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND
CONSOLIDATING OUR GAINS TOWARDS 2014**

1. We gather today to take time to introspect, to reflect, to look back at our success and achievements and the challenges in our party. This is not the time for recriminations, finger pointing, posturing and political bashing of colleagues. As I have said we must rise above things that divide us or that put us in collision with each other. This takes resolve and determination and calls on all of us to draw from the positive side of our character and the goodwill within us.

2. We must do all these against the backdrop of opposition politics of Botswana, the intent of unity by opposition parties and their intention to dislodge the BDP from Government. To combat the opposition, we need to engage our collective thoughts in a cohesive manner.

It its over 45 years history, the BDP has never lacked creativity. It is that creativity that has sustained us, it is that creativity that I call upon from all of us in unison to take head-on as we face challenges of our time. Today I call upon all of you democrats to stake our resilience, our resolve and our determination to serve the party and the nation in our hearts and minds. We need this so we build on the strength and goodwill of our people for now and for posterity.

3. Fellow Democrats, I preface my speech, with these words so that as you listen to me, you should know where I am coming from. I want to make it abundantly clear that this Pitso, is going to be different than any we have held in the past, in its format and how we intend to execute its outcomes. First while, it is critical that, we must vent our concerns, we must be very honest with our contributions. Deliberations, contributions, criticisms are welcome. However, these must not be an end in themselves, they must pave way for solutions to challenges we face in taking the party to victory in 2014 and beyond. Let me now come to one of the reasons why we are all gathered here today. Firstly, as you all know, the party has different structures which are defined by the constitution. These structures have defined roles,

among others they are to grow and defend the party. We have structures only in name. This has been confirmed by other reports and more telling the structures were there not to serve the party. We must address these concerns. The party is why we are all here. Why are these people, manning different structures abdicating their responsibilities? We need answers. From my point of view, to do nothing cannot be an option. However, most of our structures are in intensive care. Do you remember who said that? Today we will discuss and I hope recommend how to revive them.

4. Secondly, some of the issues that continue to bedevil us are the factions. These have reached unhealthy levels, despite our repeated resolutions at different forums noting that we need to stop them. It is clear that some amongst us are getting value out of these factions, what they benefit I do not know, by continuing to keep them alive to the point of institutionalizing them, we are actually destroying our party. The party elective committees in particular, the Central Committee positions, polarized us. The campaign for these positions was vicious to say the least and there was a lot of misinformation. In particular as the party leader I was accused of many things and my name was used in

vain across the factional divide. We did not go to elections as a united party, de-campaigning each other, even supporting the opposition in some cases. This information has been brought forward by fellow democrats during the Elections and Post election review by the party which confirmed these views. This is not acceptable at all. We cannot afford to have Judases amongst us. Here we need your input on how to contain them.

5. Thirdly, we also are seeing lack of collective spirit within the party and a rise of individualism. Where we must see ourselves, as brought together, by a shared vision, purpose, with a mission to serve Batswana, some think they come first before the party.

6. Bulela Ditswe is also raised as a major issue, that has caused a rift in the party. I hold a different view. Bulela Ditswe as a system, while it needs improvement, did not cause mekoko. It is democrats, and how we handle Bulela Ditswe that cause Mekoko. Our failure to accept defeat and our intolerance to defeat and our putting our interest above party interest. This requires a change in our mind sets to do things in a transparent way, above factional divide and putting the party first. And then there is the issue of fundraising. We can only be active and visible if we have

funds. We need new ideas on how to improve our fundraising and visibility all over the country.

7. I have spoken about the issues we are to discuss so that as you make your contributions you have a comprehensive menu before you. We must not concentrate on what should have been, but what we must do to revive our party, to have fun in being a democrat in our party and restore the faith of Batswana so that, we offer them more than any political party in this country.

8. As we plan for a 2014 victory, let's not lose focus and remember we have a contract with Batswana and we must deliver on our promises. If we do, we shall find favour with all Batswana. (Youth and Old etc).

9. We have a team which will facilitate this Pitso. I urge you to give them support. It is my fervent wish that we shall together find solutions to our challenges and help the party prepare for a victory in 2014.

TSHOLETSA!!! TSHOLETSA!!! TSHOLETSA!!!

