

SPEECH

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

THE PRESIDENT

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL SERETSE KHAMA IAN
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AT THE

BDP YOUTH WING CONGRESS

IN GABORONE ON 18th JUNE 2010

Your Honour The Vice President
Chairman of the BDP Hon Daniel Kwelagobe
Members of the Central Committee
Ministers
Members of Parliament
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

1. It gives me great pleasure to officially open the BDP18th Youth Wing National Congress. It has been two years since the last Youth Congress which was held in Gumare at which you adopted certain resolutions emanating from your deliberations. Today you are gathered here to once again take stock of your activities and map the way forward. As you reflect on the resolutions you adopted then, it is equally important that you devote your energies in finding sustainable programs and strategies that will take us to 2014 and beyond.
2. Let me at the onset, take this opportunity to commend you for your active and admirable participation in the last general elections. It is important that the Youth Wing is an

integral part of the main Party without which the Party would be incomplete. It is for this reason that your conduct and activities should reflect the aspirations and ideals of our Party. You are the future leaders of the BDP and by extension of the country because the BDP is still the only capable Party and there still is no alternative. In recognition of this fact I reserved 50 percent of positions of specially nominated councilors for the youth after the last general elections. This initiative was motivated by the fact that for you to grow into capable future leaders you need to be empowered today and there is no better way of doing so than exposing you to leadership roles at an early age. It is my expectation that this initiative will serve the purpose for which it is intended.

3. Situating Youth development at the centre of our national development program remains critical. My government continues to be committed to empowerment of the youth through various economic empowerment programs. These programs of which you all are aware by now, are continually monitored to see if they make the intended impact and any deficiency noticed remedied accordingly. By the same token, Government is able to determine additional programs suitable for the enhancement of youth empowerment. In this connection,

government has increased the allocation of the Youth Development Fund to cater for the expanded youth activities and programs.

4. Contrary to our critics, not all funding of these programs is done through the consolidated fund. It is instead done to a large extent, through proceeds of the alcohol levy. As Government we do however remain concerned by abuse of alcohol and other substances by some Batswana Youth. The latest statistics on alcohol abuse indicate a reduction in cases like road traffic accidents and domestic violence. A clear signal that the message is reaching the intended audience. While we commend the team leading the campaign against alcohol abuse, we should guard against complacency as there is still a lot more room for improvement. Excessive consumption of alcohol not only deprives our country of future leaders through fatal road accidents, it also impacts negatively on productivity.

5. Additionally we have to work very hard to encourage financial institutions to implement innovative measures when dealing with the Youth, so that young people may have the opportunity to fully participate in the economy of our country. I therefore expect the BDP Youth to also

come up with some ideas on how to empower the Youth of this country to augment my own efforts.

6. In my last inauguration speech I introduced the 5th D to my roadmap to urge the entire Botswana workforce to work hard and diligently to deliver the expected service to the nation. It goes without saying that all the 5 Ds will become an illusive mirage if we are not all patriotic and committed.
7. We will continue to expand and improve service delivery through, among others, intensifying reforms in the civil service and recruiting community development workers, and continuing to advance women's participation, youth development and empowerment of people with disabilities. The implementation of these tasks requires that the youth themselves, play a vital role and occupy a special and forward place in the national offensive against poverty.
8. Education also remains the key to success and therefore plays a critical role in the advancement and empowerment of the youth, as well as the cultural development of our people. Again we call on young people to demonstrate seriousness in pursuing their

studies, thus reducing the rate of school dropouts and academic exclusions.

9. We will continue to work to provide the facilities and possibilities for our youth to participate in sports, including representing our country internationally.

10. As future leaders of this country I urge you to be exemplary in your conduct. For a long time now our Party has been preoccupied with factional fighting and jostling for positions of power. A fact none of us can deny. As you all are aware, the youth of this Party have not been immune to the factional disease currently afflicting our Party.

11. I am the first to admit that as a Youth Wing you have not been very active in the Party programs not through your own doing but as a result of factions in the Party. This cannot continue and you shall not remain marginalized operating on the fringes of the Party. You should not be pedestrians any more but drivers in the highway of democracy. This demands from you independence of vision as well as accountability and innovation that is rooted in the economic and social upliftment of Batswana.

12. As the leader of your Party I intend to create space for you to influence the Party policies and direction, through our shared vision and purpose. Be wary of those amongst you who do not have the patience to build, who believe they are above our collective force to articulate our democratic principles. These frustrated few should not derail us from our mission.
13. Allow me to share with you this, the world has many of these self seeking people, and one thing they share which has become fashionable around the globe is the review of the constitution of their countries in order to create space for themselves. These people should not fool you for history is full of them and they have failed.
14. I wish to make it categorically clear that I stand by the action I took in reaction to the conduct of those members who we have since expelled. Discipline is paramount to the efficient and smooth running of any organization and the BDP is no exception. It is for this reason that I do not apologize for my actions as the Party Leader. We as the leadership are determined to uphold our constitutionally enshrined principles to ensure that the interests of the Party come before those of individual members.

15. I therefore urge you and all others in the Party, whatever your position to rise above factional divisions and work together to advance the interests of the BDP. For us to achieve this, we should all be prepared to fully implement the compromise resolution adopted at the last National Council.
16. As you deliberate your strategy to sustain the Party to 2014 and beyond, I wish to encourage you to come up with strategies to address the non functioning structures of the Party.
17. It is incumbent upon every member of the BDP to play his or her role in building our Party. Let me assure you that the leadership of the BDP is behind you every step of the way. Remember there still is no alternative to the BDP and the future of the Party lies with you.
18. With those remarks I declare this Congress officially opened. I wish you successful deliberations.