



## **SPEECH**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOKGWEETSI E.K.MASISI  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE  
THE AFRICAN UNION HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON  
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE**

**GABORONE**

**28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

**THEME: *"Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's  
Transformation"***

- The Right Honourable Excellency Mr Motswahae Thomas Thabane, The Prime Minister of Lesotho,
- Your Honour Mr. Slumber Tsogwane, The Vice President of the Republic of Botswana,
- Your Lordship the Chief Justice, Mr Terrence Rannowane,
- Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Mrs. Gladys Kokorwe,
- Your Excellency Dr. Festus Mogae, The Former President of the Republic of Botswana,
- Your Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, The Former President of the Republic of Liberia,
- Your Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, The Former President of the Republic of South Africa,
- Honourable Ministers here present,
- Honourable Members of Parliament here present,
- Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions here present,

- Representatives of Non Governmental Organisations
  - Senior Government Officials,
  - Ladies and Gentlemen,
1. It is indeed my singular honour and privilege to have been invited to officiate at this High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.
  2. Let me take this opportunity to welcome you all to this important Conference. I also wish to extend a hearty welcome to our guests from outside Botswana; and thank them for honouring the invitation to participate at this High Level Dialogue.
  3. I would like to thank the African Union for choosing Botswana as the host of **the 7<sup>th</sup> High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance**. We are humbled by the honour to host an event of this magnitude, which has brought together pioneers and stalwarts of Democracy, Human Rights and Governance under one roof.

4. It is common knowledge that most of the conflicts in Africa remain etched in the competition for resources and access to state power. In addition, the lack of due regard for basic human rights of our people, also continues to ferment tensions resulting in the perpetuation of such conflicts. This situation breeds corruption and political instability which impede the much needed economic progress on the continent.
  
5. **Distinguished Guests**, it is against this background that the 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union that was held in January 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, declared 2018 as the *Africa Anti-Corruption Year* and in line with this declaration, the theme "*Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation*" was launched under which this conference is being held in Botswana for the next three days.

6. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, the theme for this Conference is particularly apt in addressing corruption from a developmental perspective. Therefore, today presents an opportunity for us to demonstrate our resolve as Africa in the promotion of the ideals of democracy, human rights and good governance.
7. It is an opportunity that enjoins us to collectively recognize, and embrace the distinct correlation between the prudent management of resources, democracy, the respect for human rights and good governance. We should thus, strive to harness this correlation for the betterment of the lives our people, and economic prosperity on the continent.
8. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, as you are all aware, corruption is the most universally known impediment to socio-economic development throughout the world. It remains the biggest threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) as adopted by members of the United Nations in 2015.

9. You will be interested to know that corruption as a constant variable, is featured under Chapter 5 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. It is correctly identified as a risk and impediment to the attainment of Aspiration 3 of *'An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law'*. According to Agenda 2063, Africa may not be able to realize inclusive growth and sustainable development because of corruption.
10. Furthermore, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) describes corruption as an insidious plague that undermines democracy and leads to violations of human rights, distorting markets and eroding the quality of life.
11. Transparency International also defines corruption as a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all countries. It undermines

democratic institutions, slowing economic development and contributing to political instability in many countries.

12. At the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Conference of the Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in March this year, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, a decision was taken to establish a High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa.
13. According to the report from this Panel, '*Africa loses over 50 billion United States Dollars annually through illicit financial flows*'. This report as well as research elsewhere including the general library on anti-corruption show that the real cost of corruption in Africa remains unknown.
14. I therefore make a humble request for researchers, practitioners and academics to engage in work that will serve to inform us of the real cost of corruption across African countries, sectors and industries. This

will allow us, to formulate national policies, and develop relevant programmes and strategies to fight corruption.

15. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, we all know that the continent is blessed with vast resources which have not translated in most cases into economic growth and wealth for our countries and people. We have vast deposits of mineral wealth and raw materials, most of which are exported to the developed world.
16. However, the proceeds of these exports have not brought about meaningful economic growth and transformation to the continent, as the majority of our people still live in abject poverty.
17. I am therefore pleased to note that this conference, with participation from diverse fields covering Academia, Civil Society, Governments, Business and International Organizations as well as experts on

Democracy, Governance, Human Rights and Anti-Corruption will contribute meaningfully to efforts towards fighting the scourge of corruption.

18. We all know that African leaders have over the years come up with legal instruments to address corruption and its implications on peace, stability and socio-economic development in Africa.
19. It is therefore important for Africans to tap into their traditions which serve to buttress democracy, social and political stability, respect for human rights, rule of law, prudent macroeconomic management and socio-economic development.
20. Indeed, African leaders have at various African Union High Level Meetings, continued to discuss a wide range of peace and security initiatives aimed at preventing, managing and resolving conflicts and crisis situations on the continent. All these efforts are geared towards bringing about peace and stability

which will lead to a conducive environment for sustainable economic growth.

21. I am pleased to note that the agenda of this conference will be facilitated by great minds from this continent, including Heads of State and former Heads of State from different countries on the continent and covers topical issues which we all have to deal with one way or the other.

22. **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** Botswana has over the years received favourable accolades in the area of good governance and has accordingly received good ratings from Transparency International. This however, has not driven us to a false sense of complacency. My Government continuously strives to put in place measures and mechanisms, through application of best practices of good governance to ensure that corruption is defeated.

23. The long-standing peace, democracy and good governance experience that Botswana is often cited for, predates the modern, democratic discourse and peace processes. Botswana, in their respective communities, have always had a *Kgotla* system, which is a community level participatory governance system through which public opinion, consultation, adoption of key decisions, as well as arbitration are processed.
24. The *Kgotla* system has maintained social cohesion and unity in various communities and promotes freedom of expression and equality before the law. We have managed to infuse the *Kgotla* system into the modern day democratic process such that it continues to play its important role at the community and national levels. The *Kgotla* system is therefore the foundation of our democratic institutions. This is why we are gathered here at the Tlokweng Kgotla this morning to showcase these very principles that have sustained our democracy for so long.

25. Furthermore, Botswana has remained a multi-party democracy, as provided for in the Constitution. In this respect, Botswana has held eleven multi-party elections since Independence in 1966; and we will be holding our twelfth in 2019.
26. **Distinguished Guests,** Botswana has in recent years, in the fight against corruption developed standards for corruption risk management. I strongly believe that as a foundation for the execution of an effective anti-corruption programme, there must be a strong political will in all its facets, including promulgation of supporting legislative frameworks and the development of administrative, institutional anti-corruption capacity requirements.
27. In this respect we have established oversight institutions like the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) and the Office of the Ombudsman, the Botswana Unified Revenue Service

(BURS), the Botswana Police Service, the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB), the Competition Authority and the Directorate on Public Prosecutions (DPP).

28. Efforts from these institutions have gone a long way in ensuring that public resources are managed prudently. Government is committed to introducing a combination of new legislation are ethical codes, including specific legislation on Declaration of Assets and Liabilities, to further enhance our transparency. The Bill on Declaration of Assets and Liabilities has been drafted and will be readied for presentation to Parliament.
29. However, despite our best efforts, we are aware, as Government, that there is certainly a lot of room for improvement in our systems, in order to achieve the desired results. We cannot though, as a country hope to win this war alone. Collaborative efforts across the continent are a requisite modus operandi, as corruption is a cross border phenomenon.

30. It is worth noting that corruption is not just an African issue but a global scourge affecting both developed and developing countries alike. That notwithstanding, it should remain a high priority for us in Africa, to commit to fighting and defeating it.
31. My Government is willing to exchange experiences with you. I can assure you that we will embrace and adopt the outcomes of this conference in furtherance of our commitment to the ideals of the African Union.
32. Finally, let me wish you a fruitful and productive dialogue. To our guests, the people of Botswana are known for their warm and welcoming spirit.
33. Time permitting, please feel free to interact with our people and learn more about our beautiful city of Gaborone.

**PULA!**