



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS

BY

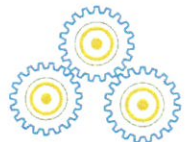
HONOURABLE BIGGIE G. BUTALE

ACTING MINISTER OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

NATIONAL COMPETITION CONFERENCE

CRESTA BOSELE HOTEL SELEBI PHIKWE

22ND THURSDAY 2018



MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT,
TRADE AND INDUSTRY
BOTSWANA



Director of Ceremonies

The Mayor of Selebi-Phikwe: Rre Molosiwa Molosiwa

Competition Commission Members

Chief Executive Officer of the CA - Mme Tebelelo Pule

SPEDU Board Members

CEOs of public and private institutions

Selebi Phikwe Town Honourable Councillors

Government Officials

Captains of industry

Competition Authority Employees

Members of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

1. I am delighted to be with you this morning because one can never overemphasise the need for us as a nation to support the Selebi Phikwe Community.
2. Further, I am glad that the Competition Commission and the Competition Authority have chosen Selebi-Phikwe as the venue for this year's National Competition Conference. This is a clear indication that "this town hold a very special place in our hearts." You could not have chosen a better place.
3. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** I am informed that this Conference brings together over 100 participants from the Business Sector, Regulators, Academia and other strategic partners of the Competition Authority such as the broader civil society including public sector and trade unions.
4. It is without doubt that BCL mine was the lifeline of this town. Ever since the closure of the mine, every effort has been made to ensure that town is revitalised to reclaim its former glory. Thankfully, the business community and political leaders of Selebi-Phikwe have maintained an indomitable spirit that will propel the town on a successful path.

5. **Director of Ceremonies**, since inception, the Competition Authority periodically hosts a Forum where key stakeholders gather to deliberate on the effects of competition on the activities of the various sectors in the economy. I am particularly heartened by these types of engagements as they eventually carve out a deliberate path towards economic growth.
6. Director of Ceremonies, this year's theme is, **"Economic Stimulation: Is Competition the New Hope?"**
7. I am confident that robust competition is the bedrock upon which product innovation, industrial growth, competitive prices of goods and services, quality goods, consumer welfare and general expansion of markets are foisted upon. It is our sincere conviction that fair and vigorous competition is a necessity for economy growth, creation of jobs, wealth and prosperity for all.
8. During the 2008 global downturn, many economies experienced economic contraction for a sustained period and our Region was not spared. However, I am happy to note that over the last few years, the economy has recovered and we have witnessed some growth. This state of the economy was buttressed during the 2018 budget

speech, which projected a 5.3 percent growth rate in 2018. To achieve this growth, we should all play our part.

- 9. Director of Ceremonies,** I am fully aware that we have representatives of the Private Sector and I wish to implore them to assist Government to address the monumental national challenges confronting our nation. Our view as Government, is that our principal role is not to create jobs but provide a functional micro and macro-economic environment for the Private Sector to take the lead in growing the economy.
- 10.** It is in view of the above that my Ministry, is doing all in its power to ensure that the doing business environment in Botswana is conducive to support the Private Sector. This is undertaken to improve the country's economic performance rankings as well as attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and ultimately grow the economy.
- 11. Director of Ceremonies,** as you might be aware, Government will continue with implementation of infrastructural developments across the various economic sectors such as water, road network, energy and information technology and other sectors to stimulate the economy. A significant amount of the budget will be utilised for this

development, and I implore the Private Sector to be ready to participate in these projects.

12. These infrastructural investments will afford enterprises in Botswana the incentive to take part in economic development. This will result in job creation and sustenance of citizen livelihoods.

13. Although Government creates these massive opportunities for growth, I am informed by the Competition Authority that at times the anticipated growth in employment, productivity and other efficiencies are not realised because of harmful anti-competitive conducts. Such anticompetitive conducts include bid rigging and collusive tendering, market allocation, price fixing, predatory pricing, that are prevalent in the market.

14. Director of Ceremonies, I am informed that since the establishment of the Authority in 2011, bid rigging cases account for almost 40% of the restrictive business cases that the Authority has handled. Empirical evidence has shown that bid-rigging can increase the cost of goods and services by up to 20%. Further, data has shown that the cost of such conduct is around 35% to 55% for developing countries.

- 15. Director of Ceremonies,** I am fully aware that in some instances markets are not fully functional and efficient because of the legislative environment that restrict competition. In this regard, we are fully supportive to the Authority in their endeavour to undertake a comprehensive study of the laws that harm and restrict competition.
- 16.** As I conclude my remarks, it is my sincere hope that this Conference will propose interventions to mitigate against that the only impediments in the Competition Law and Policy to promote national priorities such as unemployment and poverty eradication. I therefore, implore you develop workable strategies for implementation.
- 17.** With those remarks, I wish you productive deliberations during this Conference.
- 18.** It is now my singular honour to declare the 2018 National Competition Conference officially opened.
- 19.** Thank you.

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