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Forensic audit on track

- Thirty entities have been identified by the project team for forensic auditing by Alvarez and Marsal Middle East Limited
- Platforms allowing citizens to submit information are now closed and submissions are being reviewed
- The final report is expected in February 2026

Forensic Audit project Media and Communications Manager
Mr Christopher Mbulawa

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Service Centre for Africa director, Dr Matthias Naab (right) and other delegates during the ministerial segment of the ongoing 2025 Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng on Tuesday. He reaffirmed UNDP’s support for Africa’s collective vision to harness biodiversity as a driver of sustainable development, resilience and peace.
Photo: Gothusang Lesego

UNDP endorses Gaborone Declaration on biodiversity

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

TLOKWENG - The Gaborone Declaration on biodiversity is a bold and timely framework that positions biodiversity as a strategic asset for the continent’s transformation and as a catalyst for achieving Agenda 2063 and the Kunming-Montreal

Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), says United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s Regional Service Centre for Africa director, Dr Matthias Naab.

The Declaration’s key priorities include, strengthening biodiversity governance, policy coherence and implementation of the African Union Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Also, the Gaborone Declaration priorities include scaling up Nature-Based Solutions and ecosystem restoration to enhance resilience and livelihoods and expanding transboundary conservation landscapes to promote ecological connectivity, peace and regional integration as well as mobilising innovative finance, including the creation of an Africa Biodiversity Fund, to sustain large-scale action for people and nature.

Dr Naab, who delivered UNDP’s statement of support during the Summit’s Ministerial Segment at the Africa Biodiversity Summit 2025 in Tlokweng on Tuesday, therefore reaffirmed UNDP’s readiness to help operationalise the Declaration through a suite of ongoing and new initiatives, that included the Biodiversity for Resilience (B4R) Programme, as well as partnerships supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative.

“Together, we can translate ambition into tangible outcomes, restore ecosystems, empower communities and build a nature-positive and resilient Africa,” he said. Dr Naab underscored the long-term importance of the commitments made in Gaborone, reminding delegates that ‘by safeguarding nature today, we secure dignity, prosperity, and opportunity for generations to come’.

Furthermore, he commended the Africa Union Commission and Botswana for convening what he described as a ‘landmark gathering’ that placed nature at the heart of Africa’s transformation agenda.

“This Summit reaffirms Africa’s collective commitment to leverage biodiversity for prosperity, recognising that the continent’s natural capital is the foundation of sustainable development, resilience and peace,” said Dr Naab.

He further said the Summit reinforced the central role of biodiversity in Africa’s sustainable future, linking environmental stewardship with social equity, economic transformation and peace across the continent. **BOPA**

Govt committed to biodiversity preservation

By Lorato Gaofise

TLOKWENG - The launch of the Green Growth for Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) project is a key step toward integrating conservation and development, dependent on sustained investment and joint ownership by KAZA member nations.

Launching the project on the sidelines of the inaugural Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng on Monday, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi said the project aimed to link conservation efforts with socio-economic progress, as well as to protect natural resources for the benefit of local communities.

Further, he said the project responded to the 2024 KAZA Heads of State directive to ensure stronger community participation and that livelihoods benefited in conservation.

Mr Mmolotsi also expressed gratitude to European Union for funding the project under its NaturAfrica Programme.

In addition, the minister reiterated government’s commitment to preserving Botswana’s biodiversity to ensure that future generations benefitted from the country’s resources and related ecosystem.

Biodiversity, Mr Mmolotsi said was the foundation upon which the country could build a prosperous future for all.

For his part, African Union Commission’s (AUC) commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Sustainable Development and Blue Economy, Mr Moses Vilakati said biodiversity held the key to Africa’s development and the realisation of the aspiration of Agenda 2063.

The AUC’s climate objective, Mr Vilakati said was to foster regional integration, adding that the transboundary conservation areas were also a catalyst for both regional integration and for accentuating peace and stability.

Transboundary conservation areas, he said were also provided for in the African Union Biodiversity Strategy and Action

Plan, adding that the summit also had held a thematic area on transboundary conservation areas.

“We know that benefits to local communities and the provision of incentives is at the centre of the approaches that we are advocating through this summit. Without the communities, our biodiversity can easily be in ruins,” he said.

He therefore, commended the EU and its partners for funding the initiatives within the KAZA area, as well as the partner countries of KAZA TFCA.

The commissioner further emphasised that the AUC remained committed to working with all member states on achieving transboundary conservation initiatives.

The EU Ambassador to Botswana and SADC, Ambassador Petra Pereyra said through its global gateway flagship initiative, NaturAfrica Programme, the Ambassador said EU was supporting biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods in Africa.

The NaturAfrica Programme, she explained was part of a global gateway Africa

investment package, which was adopted at the European Union-EU summit in February 2022 under the framework of the EU-EU partnership, ‘and it underscores our commitment to a comprehensive, 360-degree approach that integrates environmental sustainability with social economic development’.

The programme, she noted had worked in 35 priority landscapes across the continent and across the Transcontinental Conservation Areas in Southern Africa, which covered over 1.5 million square kilometres of protected and conserved eco-systems, including tropical forest, savannas and wetlands of global importance.

Nearly 78 million people, she said relied on the ecosystems for their food, water, energy, income and their livelihoods.

“NaturAfrica Programme combines biodiversity conservation with social and economic development, ensuring that local communities, particularly women, youth and indigenous people benefited directly from conservation efforts,” said Ambassador

Pereyra.

In the specific case of Southern Africa, the ambassador said EU was supporting the sustainable management of a number of trans-frontier conservation areas for the benefit of the people and the planet.

In the first phase, she said six trans-frontier conservation areas in Southern Africa were targeted.

The KAZA area, Ms Pereyra said was one of the most extraordinary landscapes on the planet and a living example of how biodiversity and human well-being were deeply interconnected across the borders.

The newly launched project, she said would address three main issues in the KAZA TFCA, being the need for; cross-sectoral planning and management frameworks, complete investable economic opportunities in the area and strong trans-boundary governance between the five countries.

The KAZA area, established by a treaty in 2011, is the largest terrestrial transboundary conservation area, spanning parts of Botswana, Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. **BOPA**



Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi and Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, Ms Lesego Chombo during Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng on Monday. Mr Mmolotsi reiterated government’s commitment to preserving Botswana’s biodiversity to ensure that future generations benefitted from the country’s resources and related ecosystem. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

‘Botswana conservation success exemplary’

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - The 2025 Africa Biodiversity Summit is both timely and profound, as it provides an opportunity to showcase Botswana’s conservation success story and share with the world lessons from many decades of successfully looking after some of the best biodiversity hotspots.

Delivering a keynote address at the Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng yesterday, President Advocate Duma Boko said government continued to invest significant resources in the protection of the biodiversity.

Currently, he said the country had set aside 40 per cent of its territory as protected areas and wildlife management areas.

“Our track record in conserving our wildlife, including elephants, is second to none,” he said.

Botswana, President Boko further said supported the establishment of Africa Biodiversity Fund to bridge the large gaps that Africa carried in conservation finance.

“We must collectively mobilise domestic and international finance, incentivise private investment, explore innovative instruments

such as green bonds, payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity credits, while re-directing harmful subsidies into nature-friendly initiatives,” he added.

Achieving such ambitions, he said required adequate resources, stressing that no country could manage biodiversity alone.

In addition, he said biodiversity must be mainstreamed across all sectors, including; agriculture, mining, urban development, infrastructure and energy.

He highlighted that there was need to seek economic models that rewarded conservation, generated jobs in eco-tourism, sustainable harvesting and green supply chains.

“It is imperative that we develop and align our national biodiversity strategies and action plans to the Africa Strategy and Action Plan and other global biodiversity instruments to ensure commonality of purpose and coordinated action,” he said.

The African continent, the President said was blessed with lands, wildlife, waters, forests and wetlands, which were not just beautiful landscapes, but a foundation for livelihoods, culture, identity, climate resilience, health

and prosperity.

He, therefore, expressed concern that the world species, ecosystems and communities’ well-being and security was threatened by environmental challenges such as the; biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, land degradation, shrinking forests, water scarcity, rising human-wildlife conflict, fragmented wildlife corridors and invasive species

Additionally, President Boko said transboundary ecosystems required cross-border cooperation, adding that regional economic communities, civil society, private sector, international partners also played a vital role.

Such partnerships, he said ought

to be equitable, respect national sovereignty, human rights and offer mutual benefit.

Africa’s rich biodiversity, he said should create sustainable jobs for Africans.

As such, he said improving the livelihoods of citizen was also key to ensure that they meaningfully and sustainably benefited from the continent’s rich biodiversity.

“Prosperity must be defined not only by Gross Domestic Product, but in secure food systems, clean water, resilient communities, nature-based economies and healthy ecosystems that buffer the shocks of climate change,” said the President.

When nature was degraded, President Boko said the costs

were huge and often borne by the underprivileged, whilst when nature thrived it supported all the people.

He further expressed hope that deliberations at the summit themed:Leveraging Africa’s Biodiversity for Prosperity would lead to bold and transformative outcomes for Africa to be not just a region of abundant nature, but one where biodiversity was interwoven with prosperity, justice, resilience and hope.

“Let this summit be more than words. Let it mark a turning point. It must be an opportunity to renew our political will, commit resources, seal partnerships and establish the Africa Biodiversity Fund,” he added. **BOPA**

Audit progressing well - official

By Ndingililo Gaoswediwe

GABORONE – The forensic audit initiated by President Advocate Duma Gideon Boko to strengthen accountability and combat corruption across the public sector is progressing according to schedule.

This was said by the Media and Communications Manager for the project, Mr Christopher Mbulawa, who confirmed that the second phase of the audit, was currently underway and remained on track to be completed within the set timeframe.

The final report is expected in February 2026.

“We are optimistic that the project will meet its deadline, and so far, we have not encountered any major challenges,” he said.

The audit, conducted by Alvarez and Marsal Middle East Limited, was launched in March to examine risks of corruption, fraud and financial mismanagement across government ministries, departments, State-Owned Enterprises, and regulatory bodies.

Mr Mbulawa said the process began with a comprehensive risk

profiling exercise across the public sector, completed within four weeks.

The findings guided the selection of entities requiring deeper investigation.

Currently in its second phase, Mr Mbulawa said the audit involved detailed investigations into 30 entities identified by the project team for forensic auditing by A&M.

He said public engagement was an important component of the initiative, with platforms made available between August 7 and September 15 to allow citizens to submit information.

These channels, he said had since closed and all submissions were now being reviewed.

Mr Mbulawa stressed that the forensic audit was independent of other government investigations and that it was premature to quantify the number of entities audited, noting that analysis and verification of evidence remained ongoing.

While the team is on track with fieldwork, they need to review and assess all collected data before finalising any report.

Meanwhile, some members of the public have welcomed the initiative.

A Mathangwane resident, Mr Oliver Magudu, said a comprehensive audit could help reduce financial losses, recover misused funds, and strengthen accountability.

Mr Magudu hopes that this will not only cut down ongoing losses but also improve efforts to find and recover misused resources, ensuring accountability and restoring public trust.

Similarly, Ms Keitumetse Badu of Bokaa noted that forensic audits could uncover hidden corruption and strengthen internal systems, adding that demonstrating commitment to good governance could boost investor confidence and public trust. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko (right) and Angola Minister of Environment, Ms Ana Paula Chantre Luna de Carvalho Pereira, who represented Angola President and chairperson of the African Union, at the first Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng yesterday. President Boko said the Summit provided an opportunity to showcase Botswana’s conservation success story and share with the world lessons from many decades of successfully looking after some of the best biodiversity hotspots. Photo: Godfrey Mpuse

Mmolotsi reaffirms commitment to Maputo Convention

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - Botswana will soon become a full party to the Maputo Convention.

Addressing delegates at the 2025 Africa Biodiversity Summit in Tlokweng on Tuesday, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi thus urged other African states to do the same.

He said the convention should not remain a symbolic document but must translate into tangible action.

He further said collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector and local communities was essential for achieving the objectives of the Maputo Convention.

“As we discuss these critical issues, I urge us all to remember that collaboration is key. We must hold ourselves accountable to the promises we make to future generations,” the minister said.

Mr Mmolotsi further commended technical experts for developing draft administrative and regulatory documents to strengthen the implementation of the convention.

He stressed that the frameworks adopted should empower local communities, support livelihoods and be flexible enough to respond to ecological diversity across Africa.

He added that effective administrative structures would be crucial in coordinating cross-border conservation, aligning national policies with regional commitments and ensuring the efficient use of resources.

At the same time, the minister said the regulated frameworks that would be designed must be adaptive, responsive and inclusive to regulate free movement.

The frameworks, he said should not only reflect the realities of Africa’s diverse landscapes and ecosystems, but also be informed by the knowledge and experiences of the local communities who depended on the resources.

Meanwhile, African Union Commission Commissioner for Rural Development, Sustainable Development and the Blue Economy, Mr Moses Vilakati, said the summit came at a defining moment for Africa’s environmental

future.

He noted that the continent, though rich in biodiversity, was also on the frontline of climate change impacts, habitat loss and species decline.

Mr Vilakati underscored that biodiversity was not just an environmental issue, but the foundation of Africa’s economies, food systems, cultures and public health.

“We must move beyond declarations to decisive action. Let this summit be remembered not only for speeches, but for the bold commitments it inspires,” he said. He called for stronger policy frameworks, investment in nature-based solutions and greater involvement of youth and indigenous communities in conservation leadership.

He encouraged member states to work towards positioning Africa as a global leader in sustainable biodiversity management.

Mr Vilakati expressed gratitude to President Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, Minister Mmolotsi and national institutions for hosting and supporting the summit. **BOPA**

DailyNews

Published by: Department of Information Services
37795 Wellie Seboni Drive
Private Bag BR 139 Gaborone

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Online Edition: <https://dailynews.gov.bw>

Printed by: Government Printing and Publishing Services

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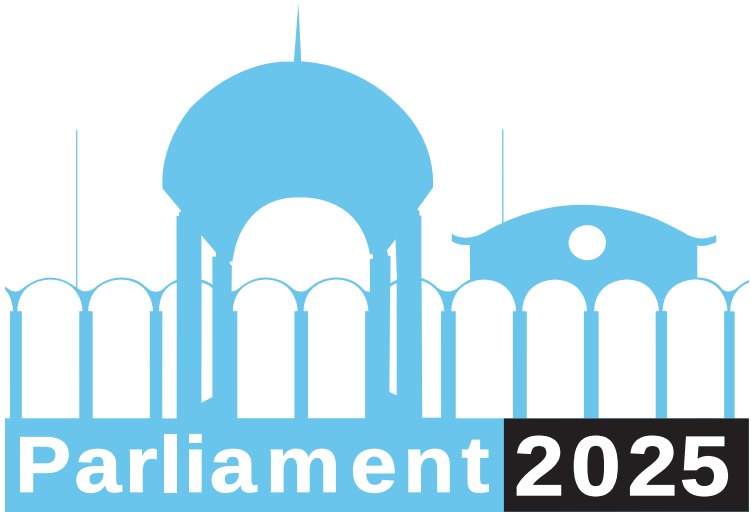
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Circulation 20 000 per day except Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.



Social Protection programmes dominate budget

By Kehumile Moekejo

GABORONE - An estimated budget of P9.8 billion of the proposed P15.3 billion will be required to implement social protection programmes under the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs during the NDP 12.

Among others, the said social protection programmes included Ipelegeng, destitute housing, Rural Area Development Programme (RADP) and Constituency Community Programme (CCP).

Presenting the Public Investment Programme (PIP) on Tuesday, Assistant Minister, Mr Ignatius Moswaane said his ministry was committed to improving the lives of vulnerable citizens through targeted support and improve their access to essential services.

Mr Moswaane said in addition, improving service delivery and strengthening decentralisation initiatives, infrastructure development was also part of their priorities for NDP 12.

He proposed an estimated budget of P2.9 billion toward infrastructure projects for local government services.

“The ministry continues to invest in infrastructure projects that improve the lives of communities across the country, including building and maintaining roads, designing and constructing storm water drainage systems and constructing and upgrading bus ranks and truck ins,” he said.

Furthermore, Mr Moswaane noted that the sum of P805.7 million was required to refurbish and maintain primary schools across the country during the plan period.

He said despite their efforts to address some challenges facing primary education, more work was needed across primary schools to ensure a conducive learning environment.

Mr Moswaane said part of the budget would also finance the expansion of the reception class programme, aimed at strengthening early childhood learning.

The assistant minister also said waste management and pollution control would cost an estimated P770 million, which would be channeled toward rehabilitating landfills and funding related environmental management projects.

“In a clear demonstration of our commitment to safeguarding public health and protecting

the environment, the ministry continues to procure landfill equipment for districts, develop integrated waste management plans and construct or expand existing landfills, thereby ensuring effective waste management and the preservation of our natural environment,” he noted.

Additionally, he said while the budget would also fund ongoing construction of upgrading customary courts, plans were also underway to automate the customary court case management system during the first half of the plan to enhance its efficiency.

He said this would go a long way in improving expedition of cases, while also enhancing transparency and service delivery to the public. He said these tribal administration projects were estimated to cost P608.5 million.

For primary health care services, Mr Moswaane proposed an estimated amount of P351 million, primarily for the completion of ongoing projects such as construction of clinics, upgrading of health posts as well as the general refurbishment of health facilities across the country.

He also said essential equipment such as ambulances, medicines, furniture and staff housing would be prioritised during NDP 12.

BOPA

Research council underway

By Kehumile Moekejo

GABORONE - Plans to establish the National Research and Innovation Council, which will be mandated with overseeing national research processes are at an advanced stage.

The development is part of the government’s commitment to strengthening the coordination and facilitation of national research programmes.

Presenting proposed projects and programmes under his ministry during NDP 12, the Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere said his ministry was requesting P10.6 billion, from which P5.2 billion would fund research and development to position Botswana as a globally competitive knowledge management hub.

Mr Tshere said the approval of the National Research Agenda 2025-2029 in July paved way for government to finance various



Presenting the Public Investment Programme to Parliament on Tuesday, Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo said all-access household and rural electrification programmes would continue under the NDP 12. She also said Botswana aspired to be a net exporter of energy supply to the region.

Botswana invests toward power export dream

By Kehumile Moekejo

GABORONE - As part of the P40 billion requested for NDP 12, the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo says an estimated P36 billion from the proposed funds will go toward generation, transmission and distribution of electricity.

In addition to meeting local demand, Ms Kenewendo says the objective was to also establish Botswana as a net exporter of energy supply to the region.

Ms Kenewendo said in order to play a pivotal role in driving economic development, her ministry intended to use the available resources to produce and supply electricity to both the local and regional market.

“The main focus is to ensure that we are able to generate for domestic need and be able to cater for the Southern Africa power pool. Further, the aim is to have an improved transmission infrastructure that will help us deliver electricity reliably

to all customers in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner,” she said.

Presenting the Public Investment Programme (PIP) to Parliament on Tuesday, Kenewendo said from the proposed budget, an estimated P20 billion was required by the electricity sub-sector to build an electricity generation capacity of 4.8 gigawatts with optimal use of available green energy resources.

Additionally, Ms Kenewendo underscored the need for an efficient infrastructure for electricity transmission, which she said was estimated at P13.5 billion.

She regretted that the current infrastructure was dilapidated and inefficient, due to increasing demand.

Ms Kenewendo also said there was need to expand electricity network coverage to areas such as Kgalagadi South and North West regions.

She said enhancing the grid capacity, together with interconnectors would enable the country to realise its aspirations of

being a net supplier in the region.

The minister further said all access household and rural electrification programmes would continue in NDP 12, which she said were currently at 76 per cent and 83 per cent respectively.

In order to accelerate household connections, she said the zero connection would continue through renewable energy initiatives.

For petroleum sector, Ms Kenewendo said government aspired to increase the national storage capacity from 62.5 million litres and 15 days supply cover by undertaking several capacity storage projects across the country.

“The aim is to increase national strategic capacity to at least 90 days during NDP 12 period through government’s completion of the long discussed projects, in particular, the Tshale Hill project, Ghanzi and Francistown storage capacities. Further, there are BETP initiatives anticipated to address the establishment of the provision for commercial buffer stock of 14 days,” she said.

She said the construction of biodiesel plants of 5 000 litres daily capacity would contribute towards reducing the sector’s carbon footprint.

Ms Kenewendo said from the P2.2 billion required, the private sector would contribute P18 million while the rest of the budget would be funded by government.

On other issues, she noted that there were plans on developing a synthetic diamonds policy in order to address competition between natural and lab-grown diamonds, to ensure enhanced market share for natural diamonds.

“It is expected to contribute to ensuring increased market share for natural diamonds, but in particular to guide, educate and defend our customers from value lost from the synthetic diamonds,” she noted.

Ms Kenewendo said her ministry would invest on assessment of rivers to ensure safe and environmentally friendly practices were used to mine sand. She noted that upholding the highest standards of safety and environment in mining was essential to maximise economic benefit from the sector.

BOPA

Ramogapi warns of rising water deficit

By **Thato Mosinyi**

GABORONE - Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi has raised concern over of the country’s water deficit, which currently stands at 17.3 per cent. If not addressed, he said the situation was anticipated to increase by 51 per cent by 2035.

Mr Ramogapi revealed this to Parliament on Tuesday during presentation of his ministry’s proposed projects and programmes under NDP 12.

He said water scarcity was exacerbated by climate change hence resulting in low recharge of dams and underground water sources.

Mr Ramogapi said other major challenge for the water sector was limited water supply distribution network owing to the dilapidated infrastructure and geographical expansion of demand centers.

He said in some cases, the challenge had led to high levels of water bowsing that came with increased operational costs.

Mr Ramogapi said insufficient sanitation infrastructure and services had also led to water pollution adding that about five per cent of the country population still practiced open defecation due to insufficient sanitation facilities especially in rural areas and along the major highway.



Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi has raised concern over the country’s water deficit, which currently stands at 17.3 per cent. He said water scarcity was exacerbated by climate change resulting in low recharge of dams and underground water sources.

“The problem of open defecation causes pollution of the environment, posing a threat to ambient water quality,” he said.

In addition, he stated that drinking water quality was

similarly threatened by insufficient sanitation infrastructure, high salinity of groundwater as well as climate change effects. This, he said would ultimately have negative effects on various sectors of the

economy particularly agriculture, wildlife and tourism.

With regard to housing, Mr Ramogapi indicated that access to adequate housing was constrained by issues of affordability and the situation was worsened by the high prevalence of poverty and unemployment.

Other challenges, he said included poor quality of housing structures and lack of essential services such as sanitation.

To address both challenges, Mr Ramogapi proposed Parliament to approve over P47.2 billion of which an estimate P4.5 billion would be channeled towards completion of ongoing projects while P42.6 billion would be for new projects for both water and housing projects.

Furthermore, he said the Housing Act would be formulated to provide a legal and institutional framework for the development, regulation and delivery of housing in Botswana.

“It will outline the roles and responsibilities of government entities, set housing standards and ensure that the national policy on housing is implemented in a structured manner,” he said.

He noted that the housing strategy would also be developed with the aim to operationalise the housing policy and translate it into a focused action oriented

framework with priority goals, target outcomes, timelines and mechanisms for the coordination of stakeholders. Similarly, he highlighted that the existing water distribution network had surpassed its design capacity and life span, hence the need for rehabilitation and expansion of water distribution networks especially in major villages.

He said the network rehabilitation and expansion programme was aimed at improving efficiency of the system, increase network coverage and reduce water losses.

It is against this background that Mr Ramogapi indicated that the sum of P13.4 billion would be allocated for the implementation of network rehabilitation and expansion projects during NDP 12.

He said the budget was inclusive of the P1.6 billion required for the completion of the ongoing Maun water and sanitation as well as Molepolole water supply network projects.

The proposed new projects under this programme, he said included network rehabilitation and upgrade for Molepolole and Thamaga, Kanye and Moshupa, Greater Gaborone, Greater Francistown, Mochudi, Kweneng, Gumare, Masunga, Machaneng, Serowe and Sefhare clusters.

BOPA

Govt envisions 24-hour economy

By **Thato Mosinyi**

GABORONE - As a means of curbing high unemployment rate, specifically among the youth, government is committed to introducing a 24-hour economy that is divided in eight hours shifts.

Presenting the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs’ projects and programmes under National Development Plan 12 in Parliament on Tuesday, minister Major General Pius Mokgware indicated that the 24-hour economy would create job opportunities, allow for improved productivity, efficiency as well as health and safety in the work place.

“Botswana faces significant unemployment challenges which are worsened by the restricted working hours hence the need to introduce a 24-hour economy,” he said.

To mitigate the inconveniencing current hours of operation, Maj. Gen. Mokgware noted that the ministry was exploring the transformation into 24-hour economy whereby hours of work were split into eight hours shifts aiming at keeping business operations, services and production going around the clock to boost competitiveness and job creation.

He said the ministry envisions leveraging digital platforms, logistics and extended night operations to tap into global time zones and new economic niches.

“Such a shift promises to get more people into jobs, increasing value chains and opening job opportunities thus reducing the dependency on traditional daytime operations only,” he said.

In support of this initiative, Minister Mokgware highlighted that the ministry would engage neighbouring countries to facilitate opening of some strategic

boarders for 24 hours in a gradual and phased manner.

This, he said would also save huge amounts of money on overtimes and the exposure to the risk of working long hours that came with exhausting and less concentration of employees.

Maj. Gen. Mokgware therefore noted that National Productivity and Competitiveness Policy would be implemented to foster productive employment and job creation while mainstreaming productivity, competitiveness and work ethic across sectors.

He said the ministry would intensify training on work ethic and mindset change in workplaces across both the private and public sectors and enhance the national competitiveness landscape through multiple-stakeholder engagement.

He noted that a national drive on productivity and competitiveness would be carried out for both the public and private sectors

and an institution of excellence would also be set up for the same course. To that effect, he said the proposed ministry’s programmes and projects budget for NDP 12 was an estimated cost of over P1 billion.

Of that amount, the minister said P869.6 million was required for the ministry’s infrastructure development programme and its aim was primarily to complete the refurbishment of the ministry headquarters building, establishment of the Dobe boarder post and completion of the Mogoditshane community library.

He said a total of P167.5 million would be invested in the ministry’s computerised and ICT programme.

The main projects, he said included the development of electronic identification system(digital ID), automation of labour administration functions as well as computerisation of the records management system.

BOPA

Ministry aligns NDP 12 projects with economic goals

By **Thato Mosinyi**

GABORONE - In an effort to meaningfully contribute toward economic growth and diversification, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has aligned its NDP 12 Public Investment Programmes with national aspirations particularly the goals of economic growth, job creation and sustainable development.

Minister Wynter Mmolotsi informed Parliament on Tuesday that the ministry’s portfolio was both ambitious and transformative, reflecting a clear commitment to inclusive growth and positioning Botswana as a globally

competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

He thus pleaded with legislators to approve the proposed P3.9 billion to form part of NDP 12 to resource the ministry in delivering on it’s mandate.

To advance this mandate, Mr Mmolotsi said the national tourism strategy and master plan was being executed, supported by key operational initiative outlined in the revised tourism policy, with the total estimated cost required amounting to P819.7 million.

He said the plan was to expand tourism offerings and enhance visitors’ experience.

Mr Mmolotsi said the initiative would diversify the tourism

product, stimulate private sector growth and create jobs, particularly in rural communities where attractions were abound.

To support both tourism and environmental management, the minister indicated that the ministry would invest P1.6 billion in infrastructure to strengthen institutional capacity and enhance regional competitiveness.

He also noted that efforts to address issues of re-arming wildlife anti poaching unit were ongoing following the approval of the initiative by Parliament in April 2025.

In relation to environmental protection, Mr Mmolotsi stated that climate resilience and

pollution reduction remained critical to sustainable development hence a total of P292.6 million was required for the programme. He said the cost for environmental protection had been increased by P12 million to include the establishment of the Department of Community Based Natural Resource Management.

Mr Mmolotsi indicated that in an effort to safeguard the country’s ecosystem, the ministry would implement the restoration of degraded landscapes and management of invasive spices as well as implement early warning systems and develop strategic ecosystem management tools.

BOPA

Expo promotes agro-processing

By **Thandy Tebogo**

KANYE - Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture Dr

Edwin Dikoloti has stated that agro-industrial clusters are more than economic engines but also catalysts for social inclusion as well as gender empowerment that could lift rural communities towards prosperity. Dr Dikoloti said this during



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (left), MP for Kanye West, Mr Victor Phologolo (second left), MP for Kanye East, Mr Prince Mosanana (centre) and other officials touring stalls during agro-processing, cluster development and Temo Expo launch in Kanye on Tuesday. Dr Dikoloti encouraged farmers to form clusters to unlock potential of the agricultural sector. Photo: Thandy Tebogo

the agro-processing cluster development conference and Temo Expo launch held at the National Agricultural Research and Development Institute (NARDI) in Kanye on Tuesday.

The minister implored farmers to create clusters that would not only be production centres but also beacons of hope, sustainability and dignity.

Lessons learnt from other African states, Dr Dikoloti shares, showed that agro-industrial clusters supported by incubators and special economic zones helped small-scale farmers, especially women, built successful agribusinesses by providing training, infrastructure and market linkages.

“Together we can transform raw potential into enduring prosperity and make agriculture the cornerstone of a brighter and more inclusive tomorrow,” he said.

He said agro-processing alone was not enough, stating that it was the spirit of collaboration, the magic of clusters, where farmers, processors, entrepreneurs, researchers and financiers came together to unlock the true potential of the local agricultural sector.

Clusters, he said transformed isolated efforts into harmonious

symphonies of progress, where each player strengthens the other and whole community would rise whilst the country shone.

He noted that the local agricultural sector was not commercial, but instead dominated by subsistence practices which were characterised by low productivity, rudimentary technologies, climate vulnerability, weak market linkages and weak value chain development.

Minister Dikoloti said the status had not changed despite the hefty support that government provided to farmers in the past, saying the narrative had to change.

“Imagine a future where our produce does not end at the farm gate of Mmalore and that of Mosisedi, but travel far and wide as vibrant products cherished in markets across the globe,” he said.

Agro-processing he said was the future and had the power to turn raw produce in to high value goods that tell stories of innovation, resilience and excellence.

The Chief Executive Officer of NARDI Professor Julius Athlapheng stated that the conference and expo held under the theme: Creating Business Linkages for Sustainable Agricultural Chains, marked a significant milestone in Botswana’s journey towards agricultural transformation and economic diversification.

Professor Athlapheng stated that the expo provided an invaluable platform for all value chain players to come together to exchange knowledge and agribusiness opportunities, showcasing groundbreaking technologies, cultivating partnerships that would drive sustainable growth.

He said the aim was to advance value addition in agriculture, stimulate economic development and enhance livelihoods through integrated and efficient agro-industrial clusters.

The objectives of the two-day conference was to facilitate sharing of emerging business opportunities in agricultural value chains, best practices, research and innovations that would elevate agro-processing capabilities and competitiveness.

Professor Athlapheng said the expo also intended to promote cluster development as a strategic tool for optimising resources, boosting productivity and expanding market access.

The other aim was to highlight emerging technologies and solutions that contribute to sustainable, climate resilient agro-industrial development.

Butale advocates gender-inclusive economic policies

By **Thamani Shabani**

FRANCISTOWN - Dr Cheludo Butale, a feminist entrepreneur and innovator, has sounded alarm over Botswana’s economic success that overlooks critical issues like gender equality.

Speaking in an interview, Dr Butale observed that Botswana’s macroeconomic framework had long been hailed as a success story, with its stable economy, sound monetary policy, and fiscal discipline earning it a reputation as one of Africa’s most stable countries.

However, beneath this success lies a critical oversight - the limited incorporation of gender issues in macroeconomic decision-making.

As the founder of Assimilate Experts, a firm that advances transformation at the intersection of gender, macroeconomics, and sustainability, Dr Butale argues that Botswana’s economic policies were not as gender neutral as they seem.

“Macroeconomic policies, such as fiscal and monetary policies, have different effects on women and men. Women-led businesses, which are mostly

in domestic and service-based industries, do not benefit much from a weaker currency,” she said.

Dr Butale explained that women also dominated the informal sector, including small-scale trade and unpaid care work, making them more susceptible to inflation, financial limitations, and shifts in import prices.

She noted that the recent policy changes, such as the increase in the Bank of Botswana’s annual rate of crawl and the Monetary Policy Rate, had gendered economic consequences that could further marginalise women.

For instance, the depreciation of the Pula can lead to higher import prices, which can disproportionately affect women who are more likely to be involved in informal cross-border trade, she said.

Dr Butale advocated a more inclusive approach to economic policy-making, one that takes into account the different needs and experiences of women and men.

“We need to embed gender-responsive approaches into fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate

policies. This can be achieved by conducting assessments of how policy changes affect women, implementing gender-disaggregated monitoring and social protection measures, and incorporating gender-sensitive credit assessments in regulatory frameworks,” she added.

She said by adopting a more inclusive approach, Botswana could build a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits all its citizens, not just a select few.

“Macroeconomic stability should translate into micro-level equality, not just for a select few, but for all Batswana,” she explained.

The solution, Dr Butale argued, was in adopting a gender-responsive approach to macroeconomic governance.

She said this involved incorporating gender analysis in fiscal policy, bond markets, and monetary operations to ensure that economic policies were designed to promote gender equality and reduce poverty.

She argued that by working together, policymakers, businesses, and civil society could create a more inclusive economy that benefited

everyone.

“It is time for Botswana to transition from gender-blind to gender-responsive macroeconomic governance. It is time to build a resilient, inclusive economy that works for all,” disclosed Dr Butale. **BOPA**



Dr Cheludo Butale

BOPA

Dipaakanyo di tsweletse sentle



Segopotso sa ngwaga le ngwaga sa World AIDS Day se tlaa tshwarelwa kwa Kanye, Sedimonthole a tlhola gangwe. Molomaganya merero ya dikgang tsa bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS wa kgaolo ya Kanye, Rre Kebonyemodisa Marumo o kopile borre go itsosa mo go itlhatlhobeng mogare. O supile gape fa dipalo tsa mogare o mosha di lemotshega segolo thata mo bananeng.

Ka Relief Lephutshi

KANYE - Dipaakanyo tsa segopotso sa ngwaga le ngwaga sa letsatsi la mafatshefathe la HIV/AIDS di tsweletse.

Molomaganya dikgang tsa tsa HIV/AIDS wa kgaolo ya Kanye, Rre Kebonyemodisa Marumo o tlhalositse fa seemo sa bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS kwa kgaolong ya Kanye e le selekanyo sa batho ba ka nna dikete tse tharo ka setlha sa ngwaga.

A re dipalo tse di gomagometsa banana ba ba nang le mogare ka dipalo tse di magareng ga masome mane le masome matlhano setlha sengwe le sengwe.

O tswelletse ka go tlhalosa fa se se raya gore ka ngwaga kgaolo e kwadisa dipalo di ka tshwara selekanyo sa makgolo a mabedi e le banana ba ba amilweng ke mogare.

“Se ga se matshwenyego a a kalo le fa ditsholofelo tsa rona e le gore go seka ga nna le ba ba tsenwang ke mogare gotlhelele”, a tlhalosa.

O supile fa dipalo tsa mogare o mosha di lemotshega segolo thata mo bananeng, a re bomme go supega e le bone ba ba

itlhatlhobang kgapetsa kgapetsa ka dipalo tse di kwa godimo.

A re seemo se se tshwenyang ka go itlhatlhobela mogare ke gore, balekane ba bone ba bo rre, ba itlhatlhoba ka dipalo tse di kwa tlase ka jalo sebe sa phiri e nna gore dipalo tsa bone di supa go amiwa ke mogare o mosha go le kwa godimo go fetisa bomme.

O sedimositse fa go tshegetsatsi le go tlaa tswela kgaolo molemo ka jaana go na le thulaganyo ya go fitlhelela batho kwa metseng e e mabapi e tshwana le Lotlhakane East, Lorolwane le Gasista ka maikaelelo a go gakolola, go rutuntsha le go tsibosa setshaba ka bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS.

Rre Marumo o tlhalositse fa se e le ka ntlha ya matshwenyego a boimana jwa banana segolo jang kwa motseng wa Lorolwane. Mabapi le go nna teng ga melemo ya diritibatsi tsa bolwetse mo dikokelong tsa kgaolo, Rre Marumo o tlhalositse fa go santse go na le melemo, le ntswa bosheng, ba ne ba tshwanetse ke go diragatsa thulaganyo e ntsha lefatshe ka bophara go abela balwetse melemo ya selekanyo sa beke fela. **BOPA**

Ba Ipelegeng ba tlaa duelwa ka maranyane

Ka Cathrine Simane

TSABONG - Modulasetilo wa khansela ya Tsabong Rre Elias Motlhanke a re babereki ba Ipelegeng ba tlaa duelwa ka maranyane a Orange Money le Smega morago ga gore khansela e itemogele ditshenyegelo tse di kwa godimo tsa go duelela babereki kwa posong.

Fa a bua mo diphutegong tsa kgotla kwa Tsabong bosheng Rre Motlhanke o boletse fa mo ngwageng ono wa madi wa 2025/2026 khansela e abetswe P19 million fela, madi a a supileng fa a le kwa tlase mme ka jalo a patika gore go thapiwe palo e potlana ya babereki ba Ipelegeng.

O ne a supa fa gape lenaneo leo le santse le sekasekwa go bona gore le ka tokofadiwa jang gore le tswellele le solegela Batswana molemo.

O ne a tlhalosa fa maikaelelo a khansela e le go dirisa madi a lenaneo la dikgaolo tsa botlhophi a CCP go tlhabolola nngwe ya dikago tsa puso gore e tle e dirisiwe e le lefelo le bana ba ba kwa tlase ga dingwaga tse tlhano ba kalwang teng.

Fa a bua ka lenaneno la SHHA Rre Motlhanke o ne a tlhalosa fa le fetotswe go nna la Bonno Housing Programme mme a lebogela gore banni ba le bantsi

ba tsentsa dikopo, a supa fa le ka tlhabolola matshelo a bone ka bangwe ba bone ba ka hirisetse puso matlo a bone go e thusa go araba selelo sa tlhalelo ya boroko jwa babereki.

Le fa go ntse jalo o ne a gakolola banni ba kgaolo eo ba ba

setseng ba akotse lenaneo la pele la SHHA go duela dikoloto tsa bone tse di saletseng kwa morago go thusa gore ba bangwe le bone ba thusiwe, a kopa jalo le ba ba tseelwang matlakala go duelela tirelo eo.

Rre Motlhanke o ne supa fa

khansela e le yone e tlhokomelang bana ba dikolo ka dijo mme e tlaa tswelala e tokofatsa go ya pele gore bana ba seka ba tlhoka dijo mo dikolong jaaka e le maitlamo a yone.

O boletse fa matlhabelo a leruo le le farologanyeng go akarediwa

le dihutshane a a agilweng kwa Tsabong a setse a le mo seemong sa go bula dikgoro go ka dirisiwa mme rakontereka a setse a neetse ba lephata la lefatshe le temothuo mme bone ba tla a neela ba ba maeba ba BMC go a tsamaisa ka fa go tshwanetseng ka teng.

Modulasetilo o ne a supa fa khansela ya Tsabong e tswelletse ka letsholo kgatthanong le tiriso ya bana ba dingwaga tse di kwa tlase mo go tsa tlhakanelo dikobo mme a kaya fa se swabisang e le go bo dikgang tsa mohuta oo di ntse di tswelletse ka go begwa.

O ne a kopa le go gakolola borre ka e le bone ba supiwang ka monwana mo dikgannyeng tse go emisa kgokgontsho eo le gore e nne bone basireletsi ba bana jaaka go tshwanetse ga nna.

Mo go tse dingwe modulasetilo o ne a tlhalosa fa kago ya lebala le le botlana la metshameko la kwa Tsabong e tlaa re mo bagaufing e wediwe, a supa fa rakonteraka a setse a simolotse tiro.

Modulasetilo o ne gape a rotloetsa batsadi le ba-tsaya-karolo botlhe go kgalemela bana ba bone ba ba tsenang kwa sekolong se se golwane sa Tsabong Unified Secondary School ka ba senya dikago tsa sekolo ebile ba inaakantse le tiriso ya motsoko le bojalwa, gape a bolela fa le boitswaro jwa bone e le jo bo fatlhang. **BOPA**



Modulasetilo wa khansela ya Tsabong, Rre Elias Motlhanke a re babereki ba Ipelegeng ba tlaa duelwa ka maranyane a Orange Money le Smega, morago ga gore khansela e itemogele ditshenyegelo tse di kwa godimo tsa go ba duelela kwa posong.

Five vie for Kgalagadi South constituency

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG - The race for the Kgalagadi South parliamentary seat is officially underway, with five candidates successfully

registering and confirming their participation in the upcoming by-election to be held on November 15. The five aspirants would contest the seat left vacant following the passing on of the Member of

Parliament Dr Micus Chimbombi. According to Tsabong District Commissioner, Mr Levis Thupa, the candidates have met all the necessary requirements, qualifying them to vie for the parliamentary position. The by-election would see a spirited battle amongst three political party representatives and one independent candidate. These are;Mr Tshephang Brooks representing Botswana Congress Party(BCP), Ms Dianna Kaartzee

for Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Mr Phenyio Sedimonyane for Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), Mr Tokyo Modise for Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), and Mr Kealeboga Kapeko as an Independent Candidate. Notably, Ms Dianna Kaartzee of the BDP stands as the sole woman among the confirmed candidates. The November 15 poll is viewed as a crucial political barometer, giving the people of Kgalagadi South the opportunity to elect their

new representative in Parliament. Candidates are expected to focus their campaigns on addressing key regional issues, including infrastructure, employment and the challenges unique to the vast, semi-arid constituency. As the official campaign period begins, constituents are urged to exercise their democratic right and turn up in numbers on the election day to choose the leader they believe would best serve their interests. **BOPA**

Summit calls for protection of Africa natural heritage

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - Africa has been called to safeguard the rich tapestry of life that defines Africa’s natural heritage. Speaking at the First Africa Biodiversity Summit in Gaborone, African Union Commission (AUC) - Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy, director, Mr Harsen Nyambe, underscored the urgency of safeguarding Africa’s biodiversity as the foundation of sustainable development and resilience on the continent. Mr Nyambe highlighted Africa’s extraordinary ecological wealth, spanning the rainforests of the Congo Basin, the Serengeti’s savannahs, the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean and the vast deserts of the Sahara. “These diverse ecosystems are not simply landscapes but lifelines that sustain livelihoods, regulate climate, provide food, medicine and hold cultural, spiritual identity for millions of Africans. However, he cautioned that those invaluable natural systems were facing unprecedented pressure from land degradation, climate change, pollution and unsustainable exploitation, stressing that, the urgency to act had never been greater.

Describing the technical segment as the engine room of the summit, Mr Nyambe urged participants, comprising researchers, policymakers and practitioners to engage collaboratively and think boldly. He called for the integration of African science, indigenous knowledge systems and regional cooperation to design actionable strategies that would not only shape the outcomes of the summit but also influence global biodiversity frameworks. Reaffirming the African Union’s commitment to environmental sustainability, Mr Nyambe cited ongoing efforts under the African Union Biodiversity Strategy and the African Green Stimulus Programme. He also noted the alignment of those initiatives with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, ensuring Africa’s unified and influential participation in global environmental governance.

“We must ensure that biodiversity is mainstreamed across sectors, from agriculture and infrastructure to finance and education, so that conservation becomes a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of development,” he emphasised. Mr Nyambe called on delegates to act with clarity, courage and conviction, reminding them that the outcomes of the summit would shape Africa’s environmental future for generations to come. “The youth of Africa are watching, they are counting on us to protect the natural legacy that is their birthright,” he said. Ministry of Environment and Tourism, permanent secretary, Mr Boatametse Modukanele also made a call for action on Conservation and Sustainable Development, calling for unity, collaboration and concrete action to protect the continent’s natural heritage. “For the first time, our continent has come together, not just to celebrate Africa’s rich natural heritage, but to take concrete steps to secure it for future generations,” said Mr Modukanele. He described the technical session as a crucial platform where science met policy, a space designed to translate knowledge into action.

Participants were urged to explore how to strengthen biodiversity monitoring, restoration and governance, mobilise financing for conservation and integrate biodiversity into national development plans. Mr Modukanele underscored the importance of ensuring that deliberations at the summit moved beyond theory and led to practical, measurable outcomes on the ground. “Our task is to ensure that these discussions do not remain theoretical, but inform real, practical actions, we must be bold enough to translate technical knowledge into policies that work, budgets that prioritise nature and partnerships that deliver results,” he said and explained that implementation was the most critical step.

Mr Modukanele called for partnerships that would enable Africa not only to conserve its biodiversity but to harness it for sustainable economic growth. The First Africa Biodiversity Summit has brought together policymakers, scientists, civil society representatives and development partners from across the continent to discuss strategies for biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and ecosystem restoration.

The summit aims to align continental priorities with global biodiversity targets while promoting inclusive, science-driven approaches to environmental protection. **BOPA**



Former Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) leaders, Messrs Poloko Motlhobogwa (left), Jeffrey Sibusibi (centre) and Slumber Mokgosi being welcomed to Alliance for the Progressive (AP) party during a media briefing in Molepolole recently. Former Mokgopeetsane ward councillor, Ms Keamogetse Keikanne was also among those received. AP chairperson, Maj. Gen. Pius Mokgware said the development signified the party’s strengthened presence in Molepolole South, adding that over 300 new members had joined since January. Photo: Lindi Morwaeng

Alliance progressives welcomes former BDP leaders

By Lindi Morwaeng

MOLEPOLOLE - The Alliance for Progressives (AP) has strengthened its ranks in Molepolole South with the high-profile defection of several prominent Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) leaders. The new members were officially welcomed during a press briefing held in Molepolole on Thursday. The group, described by AP leadership as ‘big fish,’ includes Mr Jeffrey Sibusibi (former Kweneng District Council Chairperson and BALA President), Mr Slumber Mokgosi (former Kweneng District Council Deputy Chairperson and Lephaleng ward councillor), Mr Poloko Motlhobogwa (long-serving Sebele ward councillor), and Ms Keamogetse Keikanne (former Mokgopeetsane ward councillor). AP Chairman and Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Retired Major General Pius Mokgware, said the development signaled the party’s strengthened presence in Molepolole South. He added that over 300 new members have joined since

January, which is expected to enhance the party’s ability to mobilise support, increase voter turnout and demonstrate growing influence for both the AP and the UDC coalition. “This is not just about numbers. It is evidence that Batswana still believe in the UDC’s leadership. We are committed to delivering on our promises and advancing our mission to build a just, progressive, and people-centered government,” said Maj. Gen. Mokgware. He said new and recent members will be officially welcomed at a mass rally in March next year. AP Secretary General Dr Phenyio Butale said party growth required expanding membership and including experienced leaders. “We are welcoming leaders who bring with them knowledge, capacity, and the desire to contribute to national solutions,” he said. He further stated that the AP remained a stable, peaceful, and progressive movement where every voice was respected and valued. Mr Butale also said new

members were not placed on probation. He noted that all who join get full membership and equal rights immediately. Mr Sibusibi, speaking on behalf of the new recruits, said that leaving the BDP was a difficult decision. They consulted widely and assessed various parties before choosing AP, whose values aligned with theirs. “We did not rush. We studied policies and leadership. We chose AP because it puts the people’s interests first,” Mr Sibusibi said. He added they aimed to follow the AP constitution and build grassroots structures. Mr Mokgosi said they were joining out of commitment, not curiosity. He added that they had come to stay, support the leadership and build the organisation. Mr Motlhobogwa said many of their supporters also wanted to join AP and would be presented at the upcoming rally. AP leadership said the recruitment drive aimed to consolidate the party’s influence in key constituencies. **BOPA**

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

Toyota Corolla B 869 AIS. I Laone Chepete wish to change ownership of the above mentioned vehicle belonging to Brendah Tombs. Anyone against this transaction should come forth **74058697** / DRTS Office.



Ofentse Daniel of Tatisiding has launched the ‘Drug Free Youth’ pageant to combat drug abuse, a growing issue in Botswana.
Photo: Thamani Shabani

Drug Free Youth pageant organisers seek support

By Thamani Shabani

TATISIDING - Ofentse Daniel of Tatisiding near Francistown has launched the ‘Drug Free Youth’ pageant to combat drug abuse, a growing issue in Botswana.

The pageant aims to uplift youth in Tatisiding, a village grappling with serious drug issues, by encouraging those caught in addiction to break free and inspire others to avoid that path.

Scheduled for November 8, the inaugural pageant will feature 20 participants; 10 males and 10 females representing Tatisiding.

She expressed belief that the pageant would spark a significant change.

Daniel attested to the alarming prevalence of drug sales in local hotspots, emphasising the urgency of her project.

Daniel’s own tumultuous journey began at the age of 18, born out of family turmoil. Growing up in a household marked by violence and substance abuse, where her father’s alcoholism led to domestic strife, she found herself caught in a web of pressure and despair.

“It was not planned, I turned to drugs as an escape from the pain at home,” she admitted.

The trauma affected her education, resulting in poor performance during her junior certificate examinations. Matters worse was when she lost a close relative who was addicted to drugs. Now a dedicated mother of four and happily married, Daniel’s past experiences fueled her passionate commitment to help others. As a former victim of drug abuse, she understands the devastating impacts first-hand.

Reflecting on her decision to embark on this mission, she recounted growing up filled with anger and resentment stemming

from her family circumstances.

“At 18, I chose drugs as a means to cope with my problems,” she recalled. The initial lack of support meant she struggled silently until a chance encounter with a doctor altered her path, pushed by her husband’s insistence that he did not want a partner involved with drugs or alcohol.

The vision for pageant came to her in a dream, where she witnessed a large group of drug victims discarding their substances and embracing recovery.

The dream served as a catalyst for her to reach out to the community and establish a project capable of empowering young people. “I shared my vision with my husband, who encouraged me to turn this dream into a reality,” she said.

Daniel hopes to expand the project beyond Tatisiding, with plans for Nata as the next place, where drug abuse is also rampant among the youth.

The pageant winners will not only serve as ambassadors for a drug-free lifestyle but will also lead educational workshops in the North East District to spread their message further.

Despite her dedication, Daniel faces significant challenges, particularly securing sponsorship for the event, which requires approximately P20 000. “I have reached out to individuals, businesses, and government departments, but responses have been slow as the event date approaches,” she shared.

With the clock ticking, she appeals for timely sponsorship to ensure the success of the initiative.

Daniel’s story is not just about overcoming her past; it is also about empowering the next generation to rise above the challenges of drug abuse. **BOPA**

Young dancer earns nomination

By Benita Magopane

GABORONE - A rising star from Botswana’s Juvenile Championship programme and a member of the local ballroom dance troupe Moonlight Dance Studio, Abigail Modise has made history as the first young Motswana to be nominated for the prestigious African Children of the Year Awards 2025, scheduled for Johannesburg, South Africa on November 22.

Recognised under the Arts and Culture and Philanthropy categories, Abigail’s nomination celebrates her exceptional talent in dance and her inspiring contributions to her community.

Speaking in an interview, the Molepolole-born young dancer said the nomination had further fueled her passion for dance.

“This nomination is a reminder and validation that hard work never goes unnoticed,” she said, adding that she was most proud of her community service work, such as donating her pre-loved toys, clothes, and shoes, through the support of her parents and dance studio, to a children’s home in Gamodubu.

The 9-year-old shared that she had in the past joined forces with Moonlight Dance Studio and the Botswana Red Cross Society in helping the needy in Gaborone with toiletries after the destructive floods earlier this year.

“I really want to do more and hope to be able to do that in the future,” she said.

Abigail, whose love for dancing started at the age of three, said she only fell in love with ballroom dancing last year and had since decided to pursue the art professionally.

“My mom enrolled me in ballet first, but it just did not do for me,”

she shared, adding that it was only after attending an all-dance-styles competition, when she realised that Latin American dance was what she wanted to do.

“After nagging me about wanting to dance for a while, I decided to take her to ballet school, she was six at the time,” said Abigail’s mother, Onkelamen Modise, who confessed that she did not take her daughter’s love for dancing

seriously at first.

A year passed and she could tell that Abigail was not happy with ballet but after the all-dance-styles competition, she finally knew the dance routine she loved.

According to Abigail’s coach, Alex Kgwedi, founder and director of Moonlight Dance Studio, the young star had demonstrated remarkable dedication in everything she does, during training sessions or on the competition floor.

“In just a year that I have known Abigail, she continues to excel and deliver outstanding results. She has grown tremendously,” he said, calling her an inspiration to watch.

He said what set Abigail apart was her discipline and deep passion for dance, qualities that made her success well-deserved.

For Abigail, success is the only option moving forward.

“I want to be a well-known dancer, not just in Botswana but worldwide, and also an affluent medical doctor so that I can help the needy,” she said. **BOPA**

A rising ballroom dance star, Abigail Modise has made history as the first young Motswana to be nominated for the prestigious African Children of the Year Awards scheduled for November 22, in Johannesburg, South Africa.





Gaborone United ladies team left-back player, Goitseamang Tlaama (left), coach William Monene (centre) and general manager, Owe Mmolawa during a media briefing in Gaborone on Tuesday. The team left for Cairo, Egypt to compete in the CAF Women’s Champion League from November 8 to 21. They are in Group B alongside TP Mazembe, ASEC Mimosa and JKT Queens. Photo: Phenyio Moalosi

Red Roses chase CAF glory

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Gaborone United women’s team, Red Roses, has left for Cairo, Egypt where they will compete in the CAF Women’s Championships League, which will take place from November 8 to 21.

The Red Roses are in Group B with defending champions, TP Mazembe from DRC, Ivory Coast’s ASEC Mimosas and JKT Queens from Tanzania.

Speaking at the press conference, the team’s coach William Monene said preparations had been going well. He said from the COSAFA competition, they rested only for two weeks and converged again to start their journey to Egypt.

He said during their intense preparations they managed to play against two South African clubs, Mamelodi Sundowns, which they played to one all draw, and University Of Johannesburg winning 3-2 against them.

“I am confident to say my team is ready and we are going to Egypt as the first club in Botswana to qualify for the CAF Women’s Championships League. Playing there on its own is a motivation for the girls,” he said.

Furthermore, Monene said

they were also going to Egypt to try and win their games, adding that as a team they had developed a culture to play their games and win them.

He said representing the country at continental level was a major opportunity that offered players valuable exposure.

“It is an international experience and some could get opportunities to play at big clubs both in Africa and other continents,” he said.

Monene said all the three teams were a close book to them, adding that their first game against JKT Queens would be on Sunday, followed by TP Mazembe on Wednesday and their last Group B game would be against ASEC Mimosa on Saturday.

The team representative, Goitseamang Tlaama said they were prepared for any challenge, adding that they had learnt a lot of lessons from COSAFA, which she said would come handy.

She said morale in camp was high and all the players were looking forward to fight for the badge. Gaborone United women team general manager, Owe Mmolawa said Gaborone United women team was a project.

He said the team was a

project because three years back as management they sat down and realised that the future of football was feminine.

Mmolawa said they invested largely in their women team, and it never disappointed as it had already brought silverwares to the club. **BOPA**

Moesi to advance BAA development

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The appointment of Patrick Moesi by Botswana Athletics Association (BAA) as the Sport Development Manager Technical is seen as a move that will strengthen the country’s athletes development efforts

Moesi is a shrewd administrator, a qualified coach and a technical officer with a referee bronze level from World Athletics.

BAA Acting President Oabona Theetso said in an interview that Moesi brought a wealth of knowledge to the organisation.

“He was a track referee; he has served as the BAA Secretary General, Botswana Tertiary Students Sports Association Vice President, and a former athlete, who has also been active in growing the game.”

Theetso said Moesi’s knowledge was going to augment the BAA technical department adding that his appointment was a welcome development.

Botswana has been struggling in the field events, and it has never qualified a single athlete for the Olympics and in that regard Theetso said field events were part of the sport development manager technical mandate.

“We believe he will do a lot in that area as he will be focusing on development of coaches, programmes development and other areas,” he said.

Meanwhile a press release from BAA says Moesi holds a Master’s Degree in Olympic studies, Olympic Education, Organization and Management of Olympic Events from the University of Peloponnese in collaboration with the

International Olympic Academy (Greece), and a Bachelor of Education (Physical Education) from the University of Botswana.

It says before joining the BAA, Moesi served in various roles including as Campus Recreation Officer and Acting Manager at the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST), where he oversaw Sports and Recreation, Culture and Arts, Student Activities, Leadership, and Welfare.

“As the founding sports and recreation officer at BIUST from 2014 -2025, he played a pivotal role in establishing the University’s sports and recreation structures, developing policies, managing sports and recreational facilities, and affiliating BIUST teams with national and international sports bodies,” says the release. **BOPA**