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President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi (centre), and First Lady Neo (right) appreciating a piece from a local jewellery designer, Mr Mpho Mokgatle at a show to mark the premiere of the Lucara Diamond Company's Akh-Ba-Ka necklace tour led by Andre Messika Diamonds in Gaborone on Friday. President Masisi emphasised the importance of structured partnerships with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) entities to achieve the country's economic goals as a diamond-producing nation. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe

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Botswana advances in HIV stigma fight

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - Botswana have transitioned from a society that once associated HIV/AIDS with sin, witchcraft, infidelity, misfortune, or death to a society that predominantly embraces and supports individuals living with HIV.

This transformation was highlighted by Assistant Minister for the State President, Ms Boitumelo Gofhamodimo, in her remarks during the official launch of the Botswana People Living with HIV (PLHIV) Stigma Index 2.0 Study Report on Thursday.

Ms Gofhamodimo emphasised that this positive change would not had had been possible without the relentless advocacy of people living with HIV who worked towards altering societal perceptions and behaviours towards those affected by HIV.

She mentioned that the study findings would provide insights into the current status of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the country, shedding light on the challenges faced by PLHIV. Moreover, she stressed that these findings would underscore the

importance of addressing stigma and discrimination, which could hinder progress in comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment services.

Ms Gofhamodimo applauded the collaborative efforts of the government, National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA), Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (BONEPWA), UNAIDS, and the Global Network for people living with HIV for conducting the study in 2022.

The report, finalised in December 2023, offers a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of stigma and discrimination experienced by those living with HIV in Botswana. It assesses internal and external stigma, discrimination within communities, and the impact of stigma on disclosure, treatment, and care services for PLHIV.

The study also documents actions taken by PLHIV to address stigma, captures their experiences with discrimination, and compares the prevalence of stigma and discrimination in Botswana with other countries in

the region that have conducted the Stigma Index survey.

Launching the report, the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Policy, Advocacy and Knowledge Branch director, Ms Christine Stegling expressed concern that HIV stigma and discrimination threatened access to vital health care services, hindering prevention, testing, treatment and support for those affected.

To address this, Ms Stegling stressed that it was important to build resilient systems, including community health systems, where everyone could access health care services without fear of stigma and discrimination.

She also added that it was crucial to eliminate all forms of stigma and discrimination, and commended the government's multi-sectoral approach and political commitment towards combating the HIV scourge as a public health threat.

A lot of what Botswana has achieved in the fight against HIV/AIDS and ending stigma and discrimination, she said was made possible through mutual partnerships with development

partners and collaborations with civil society organisations.

On behalf of UNAIDS, Ms Stegling also thanked NAHPA for partnering with UNAIDS Botswana to provide technical assistance, BONEPWA for continued leadership in the development of Stigma Index survey, as well as the respondents who participated in the survey to make the study a success.

Presenting the study findings, University of Botswana consultant, Dr Serai Rakgoasi said the study sample comprised 1 645 respondents in both rural and urban areas in 24 census districts, around the country.

Dr Rakgoasi said 6.8 per cent of respondents reported actions related to internalised stigma such as self-isolation from family, friends, avoiding health care, seeking jobs and other means of support, 28.7 per cent reported negative feelings about their HIV status such as shame and guilt and 21 per cent felt that their HIV status had an impact on their ability to meet needs such as secure relationships, love, self-respect and respect for others.

With regard to resilience, he said 11.1 per cent of the respondents felt that HIV had negatively affected their self-confidence, 4.5 per cent felt that HIV had affected their self respect, whilst 2.5 per cent felt HIV had affected their respect for others.

Respondents, he said felt HIV had affected them as follows; 9.1 per cent their desire to have children, 10.3 per cent their ability to cope with stress, 5.5 per cent their ability to achieve personal goals, 7.9 per cent their ability to have close relationships, 9.4 per cent their ability to find love, 4.0 per cent their ability to contribute to the community and 2.8 per cent their ability to practice a religion or faith.

Dr Rakgoasi expressed delight that the level of social exclusion from social gatherings or activities, because of respondent's HIV status was relatively low, as only three per cent of respondents had ever felt excluded from either family, religious or any social activities.

Overall, he said the study showed that 5.6 per cent of respondents had experienced at least either verbal abuse, blackmail, physical abuse, job discrimination or some form of abuse or discrimination against their partner, spouse or children, because of the respondents' HIV status. **BOPA**

Maribe applauds heads of missions

By Olekantse Sennamose

GABORONE - Botswana Heads of Missions have been appreciated for their active participation, insightful contributions, and unwavering commitment during their two-day performance retreat which ended on Friday.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Ministry of Foreign Affairs acting permanent secretary, Mr Clifford Maribe said that the retreat gave the envoys a platform to delve into the complexities of the ever-changing global landscape, and enabled them to recognise the profound paradigm shifts and challenges reshaping the world.

“Amidst these challenges however, lie opportunities for growth, innovation, and meaningful change. Through our collective efforts, we have not only identified key areas for adaptation, but also chartered a course for diplomatic evolution that is both agile and forward. We have reaffirmed our commitment to diplomacy as a tool for peace, understanding and cooperation,” he said.

Mr Maribe said that through the retreat, the envoys had a chance to embrace diversity as a source of strength, thereby recognizing the richness of perspective that enriched diplomatic activities.

“We have acknowledged the imperative of leveraging technology responsibly to enhance our diplomatic outreach and effectiveness. As we return to our respective posts and responsibilities, let us carry forth the spirit of this retreat, the spirit of resilience, adaptability, and collaboration,” he said.

Mr Maribe expressed confidence in the envoys and urged them to be architects of change and drive the country's diplomatic efforts towards a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

“Together we have the vision, the talent and the determination to navigate the challenges ahead. Remain stronger, more united and more impactful than ever before,” he said. The performance retreat, themed: Navigating Paradigm Shifts, Empowering Diplomatic Evolution, was preceded by a week-long Heads of Mission conference. **BOPA**



Ms Gofhamodimo (centre) Ms Stegling (left) and NAPHA coordinator, Mr Ontiretse Letlhare during the People Living with HIV stigma index 2.0 study 2022 report launch in Gaborone on Thursday. Ms Gofhamodimo said Botswana had transitioned from a society that once associated HIV/AIDS with sin, witchcraft, infidelity, misfortune, or death to a society that predominantly embraces and supports individuals living with HIV. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

Ethiopia, Botswana ready to cooperate on agriculture

By Olekantse Sennamose

GABORONE - Botswana's new ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr Tebelelo Boang sees opportunities for cooperation and mutual benefit for the two countries, especially in agriculture.

Speaking in an interview at the end of the Heads of Missions conference in Gaborone recently Mr Boang noted that the two nations signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) in 2017 for cooperation in the agricultural sector.

He said Botswana and Ethiopia could work together in the beef industry because the East African country has a much more large herd of cattle than Botswana but facing challenges of animal diseases.

He said Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) could export its quality and effective animal vaccines to Ethiopia to control and eliminate some of the diseases.

Mr Boang also noted that BVI was the only reference laboratory in Africa accredited by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), adding that Botswana's expertise in animal vaccines could be shared with Ethiopia and other African countries.

Furthermore, he noted that BVI also produced test kits to determine an animals health on the spot, adding that the kit has been certificated by the WOAH.

Furthermore, he said the genetic makeup of local cattle and small stock were superior to those of Ethiopia although

they had more domestic animals, noting that Botswana could benefit by improving the quality of their cattle through artificial insemination.

“We are in a good position to assist the Ethiopians,” he said.

Mr Boang also noted that Ethiopia had a well-developed leather industry and expertise in the sector, which he said could be beneficial to Botswana since the country has plans to develop its leather industry through the envisaged Lobatse leather park. He reasoned that we could send Batswana to get training and expertise in Ethiopia as they were ready to assist.

He said Ethiopia has industrial parks which were equivalent to Botswana's Special Economic Zones, and that the two countries could work together and share

ideas on the best ways to make them more effective and productive.

He said the excellent relations between the two countries had led to Ethiopian Airlines planning to start flying into the country from June, specifically the tourist town of Maun, and that they could also transport Botswana beef to international markets as they had a superior network in the aviation industry.

He added that flying to Maun would also boost the local tourism and hospitality industry.

On other issues, Mr Boang said Botswana could help other African countries on issues of peace, democracy and respect for the rule of law as well as helping to push the African Union agenda of ‘silencing the guns’ in the continent. **BOPA**



Miss Botswana (second left) donned the iconic P70 million worth Akh-Ba-Ka necklace containing the 2 550 diamonds totaling 71.49 carats and the 110 carat raw stone was discovered in Karowe mine owned by Lucara Diamond Company. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe

Botswana diamonds sparkle on runway

By Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE - Botswana's diamonds shimmered on the runway during an exhibition of the Akh-Ba-Ka jewellery line held at the Gaborone International Convention Centre on Friday.

In the front row, President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi and First Lady Neo were in attendance, both elegantly dressed in matching black outfits with a hint of red.

As the lights dimmed to kick off the show, cheers filled the air, and the brilliant Lucara-mined diamonds cast a dazzling light over the audience comprising mining magnates and industry leaders.

Presented by the well-known local model, Emmanuel Kayenda, of Batho Fashion Week, the runway showcased some of the industry's top models and beauty queens, including Miss Botswana 2019 and 2017 winners Oweditse Phirinyanne and Nicole Gaelebele.

They adorned themselves with exquisite pieces ranging from

modern chokers to diamond-drop earrings and sparkling rings.

A definite standout from the collection was the breathtaking design by Mpho Mokgatle, the winner of Lucara Diamonds' inaugural jewellery designer competition and a native of Moshupa.

His earring and necklace pendants, inspired by traditional Botswana crafts like *leselo* and *tlatlana*, captured the hearts and eyes of the audience.

However, the evening's highlight was the debut of the iconic signature piece from the Akh-Ba-Ka collection, worn by the current Miss Botswana, Anicia Gaothusi.

She joined an elite group of models, including supermodel Naomi Campbell and the current Miss World Africa Lesego Chombo, in displaying this prestigious necklace, marking a significant moment in the history of the brand.

The P70 million worth flamboyant necklace whose exceptional diamonds were cut from a single 110 carat raw stone discovered in Karowe mine, contains 2 550 diamonds, totaling 71.49 carats.

In the centre of the necklace is a 33-carat diamond inserted in the pendant area.

Akh-Ba-Ka is transcendence from soul to the light, representing the rough diamond's journey, as well as the journey of the brand itself.

Officiating at the event, President Masisi said the collection was the embodiment and a reflection of highly refined and attractive designs crafting and sculpturing skills all put together.

He said that the premiere appreciated the sparkle and clarity of colour in diamond

gem stones as they had passed through many skilled hands in the mainstream and down stream stages of the diamond industry to become immaculate jewellery pieces of high calibre.

"The jewellery collection being showcased must reflect an increase of locals participation in the lucrative value added processes of international diamond trading, thus Botswana need good and genuine partners in this endeavour of advancing the country's national economic interests," President Masisi said.

Lucara diamonds cooperation chief executive officer and president, Mr William Lamb said the masterpieces showcased were symbolic of Botswana's diamond's value and beauty as well as their uniqueness.

He said the jewels paraded were a reflection of Botswana's beauty and warmth of its people adding that Lucara was thus privileged to be able to mine in Botswana and contribute significantly to the country's economic growth.

BOPA

Partnerships in minerals value chain ideal - Masisi

By Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE - Government has taken a bold step to facilitate an ecosystem of long-term partnerships with knowledgeable and skilled entrepreneurs in the minerals value chain to increase revenue earnings.

President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi said this during the Akh-Ba-Ka exhibition of the necklace by Lucara Diamond Company, led by Andre Messika Diamonds on Friday.

He emphasised the importance of structured partnerships with foreign direct investment entities to achieve the country's economic goals as a diamond-producing nation.

He said the goal was to make diamonds beneficial to all citizens.

President Masisi highlighted the government's proactive stance in empowering the majority of citizens to actively participate in the diamond industry.

"We hope to leverage on the finances and programmes under the new diamond agreement, part of a recent transformative sales agreement with the De Beers group," he said.

Dr Masisi said the commitment to growing the mineral beneficiation sector included expanding efforts to involve more locals in the minerals sector.

He stressed the importance of not only focusing on diamond extraction but also on the entire diamond value chain, including cutting, polishing, marketing, designing, and retailing jewellery.

"The country's human capital technical capacity should no longer be concentrated at the upstream scale of extracting or mining of diamonds gem stones, sorting and selling them rough, but should rather be in the entire participation of the diamond value chain," he said.

Additionally, the President

said Botswana must acquire knowledge and skills for cutting, polishing, marketing and selling diamonds as well as participating in designing, manufacturing and retailing of jewellery pieces that would make a cut in within the world's diamonds trading and fashion trendsetters.

Thus, he praised the addition of local jewellery designing to the diamond industry and expressed delight in government association with Andre Messika Diamonds, known for its transparency and traceability in diamond production.

"This remarkable diamond traceability development enables customers access to advanced and yet reliable traceability certificate which is an assurance of clean and responsible mining," he said.

The President commended Lucara-Karowe mine for its role in unearthing quality gemstones and contributing to Botswana's development.

He attributed Lucara's success to the enabling environment created by the government, emphasising the company's support for local communities, sports, and the creative industry.

He therefore expressed optimism that Botswana would draw dividends in the foreseen establishment of Andre Messika Diamonds cutting and polishing factory in Botswana.

The factory establishment, he said, would not only create employment for locals but likewise create a market for Botswana diamonds.

Mr Andre Messika, the managing director of Messika Diamonds, pledged to assist the government in promoting Botswana diamonds globally.

He highlighted Botswana's potential for substantial economic and social development through leveraging its diamond resources effectively. **BOPA**

Masisi condoles with Kemokgatla family

By Keonee Majoto

KANYE - President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi has urged the family of the late Ms Mmalogo Kemokgatla to pin their hopes on God as they deal with the loss of their mother.

Condoling with the family at Kanye's Goo-Ruele Ward on Friday, President Masisi said while death marked the end of each person's earthly sojourn, those remaining behind should stay strong and not lose hope.

Urging Ms Kemokgatla's

children to not despair, he said they should draw strength from Batswana's tradition of coming together to render support to those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Dr Masisi said it was that same spirit that compelled him to go and show the Kemokgatla family support at their time of need.

A family representative, Ms Lady Koboyankwe told President Masisi that the 75-year-old Ms Kemokgatla succumbed to a short illness on April 9.

Ms Koboyankwe thanked the

President for always finding time out of his busy schedules to stand with grieving families.

Another family member, Mr Leonard Morakaladi described the deceased as a strong pillar that many families relied upon in different ways.

Mr Morakaladi also thanked President Masisi for his visit, saying the knowledge that he shared in their grief was an important source of strength for them.

Ms Kemokgatla was buried in Kanye on Saturday. **BOPA**

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‘Calls to honour Dingake justified’

By Olekantse Sennamose

GABORONE - Government has noted pleas by Batswana to honour Dr Michael Dingake’s legacy. This was said by Minister for State President Mr Kabo Morwaeng at the funeral of the former Robben Island political prisoner in Gaborone yesterday.

Mr Morwaeng said the calls were justified looking at the political sacrifices of Dr Dingake.

“He was one of Botswana’s most distinguished stalwarts and a lover of democracy. He was also a lifelong democrat in spirit, conviction and deeds and that is why he continued living for democracy even after prison,” he said.

Mr Morwaeng said Dr Dingake’s sacrifices in the emancipation of the Southern African region from minority rules should serve as an inspiration to regional nations each time they went to the polls.

“It is a pity that democracy is backsliding in the continent,” he said. He also said Botswana’s democracy as laid down by the likes of Dr Dingake should be embraced as a collective heritage by all, ruling or opposition.

“It is in that light that government is committed to conducting the coming elections constitutionally to honour such a legacy.

I am personally privileged to have rubbed shoulders with him and he was a teacher to many of us on ethical leadership,” he said.

Liberation icon and fellow Robben Island ex-inmate, Mr Mac Maharaj described Dr Dingake as a gentle giant who committed himself to a lifetime of struggle since 1952 when he joined the African National Congress (ANC). Mr Maharaj described Dr Dingake as a foot soldier who demonstrated in spirit and practice that unity between Botswana and South Africa was entwined.

“He never believed that one could be free if others were not free. He understood the interconnection between the African continent and the world, and that different cultural identities should not build walls around people, but enrich them,” he said.

Mr Maharaj also said Dr Dingake was a believer that progress in human society must be grounded in humanity, adding that he was a trustworthy member of the ANC and a member of the underground cell led by Dr Nelson Mandela.

“I personally met him when our movement embraced the necessity for an armed struggle, when freedom fighters had to live with the reality of a death penalty. He gave up a well paying job of 45 Pounds to sacrifice for the struggle which mind-boggled us at the time,” he said.

Mr Dumelang Saleshando, who is the leader of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP), said Dr Dingake had the shortest term of all BCP presidents, but made the most impact.

He also urged government to honour his wish to reform Botswana democracy such as counting ballots at the polls and the use of indelible ink. Other speakers at the funeral included Ms Vickie Taivo ya Taivo, wife of Mr Andimba Taivo ya Taivo, a Namibian national and fellow struggle icon in the fight against apartheid. Dr Dingake is survived by his wife, seven siblings, four adult children, 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. **BOPA**



BCP members carrying the coffin of their party founding president Dr Dingake during the burial service in Gaborone on Sunday. In his message, President Masisi said without the story of Dr Dingake, the story of Botswana’s contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa would not be complete. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

Masisi pays tribute to liberation struggle icon

By Olekantse Sennamose

GABORONE - Late liberation struggle icon, Dr Michael Dingake will be remembered for his unwavering commitment and selfless service to the nation as a Member of Parliament between 1994 and 1999, read President Mokgweetsi Masisi’s message during the former’s funeral service in Gaborone yesterday.

“We remain enthused by his sense of duty and his serious approach to national issues. We recognise the pioneering role he played in the politics of Botswana,” read the message.

President Masisi described Dr Dingake as an erudite scholar whose research work and lectures contributed to the socio-economic development of the country.

He said Dr Dingake’s good deeds followed him in the country and beyond, although he remained grounded.

“Without the story of Dr Dingake, the story of Botswana’s contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa would not be complete,” he said. Dr Masisi said that the region owed its renewed hope for peace and freedom to his acceptance of his fate of the bounty that was placed on his head. Other speakers also described Dr Dingake as a gentle giant, internationalist and father figure.

His uncle, Professor Benjamin Bolaane said Dr Dingake was an internationalist who also loved his clan back home in his native Bobonong. “He prided himself with that small enclave that he celebrated even its every small achievement. He understood the essence of the South African struggle, which took brains at that time when many people were not that read,” he said. Professor Bolaane said because of his

influence, many in his circles were socialised into his political views.

“He liked education as did his father and that is why he managed to obtain three Bachelor’s Degrees even while in prison, and it inspired us. His life was long for a purpose,” he said. His former political colleague, Mr Mokgweetsi Kgospula said Dr Dingake was very firm on party affairs, something he said did not go well with other leaders in the party.

“His upwardness made him an enemy to many within the party. One of his celebrated motions

in 1995 was that which called for a vote of no confidence on the government of the day. He had done his background well to support it, and it was debated for 23 days, the longest debate on record,” he said.

Mr Kgospula said Dr Dingake saw the liberation struggle against apartheid as that of Southern Africa rather than South Africa alone. His nephew, Mr Martin Dingake indicated that Dr Dingake first took ill on Friday evening.

“The first signs of his illness came through vomiting and we rushed him to the hospital

where tests revealed poor blood circulation to the head,” he said.

He said his condition worsened the following day and doctors recommended surgery but later opted for physiotherapy. “His heart rate lowered because of the poor circulation, and this affected his brain according to the medical team, and it was on Sunday evening that he passed on,” he said.

Other messages of condolences came from former presidents, Dr Festus Mogae, Dr Seretse Khama Ian Khama and former South Africa president, Dr Thabo Mbeki. **BOPA**

SHOMA region nominates Masisi

By Merapelo Mosarwa

MAHALAPYE – SHOMA region has nominated President Mokgweetsi Masisi as the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) presidential candidate for the upcoming general elections.

Speaking during BDP Special Elective Congress of SHOMA region in Mahalapye on Saturday, party Chairperson, Mr Slumber Tsogwane said to intensify impact of available government programmes the President came up with a noble initiative of Mindset Change that was a game changer to nip rural poverty in the bud.

He said since independence, poverty in rural areas had been worrying and so was rural development to which the BDP led government came up with numerous programmes to address.

Mr Tsogwane who is also the Vice President and Boteti West Member of Parliament, said the party had sound and effective structures, capable of taking the country forward and to move it

from an upper middle-income country to high-income status.

To that end, he said to date BDP remained a party of choice with no alternative.

BDP attributes are beyond reproach and the party cherishes the principles of good governance, democracy, peace and tranquility and therefore, deserves to be re-elected into power, Mr Tsogwane said.

Regarding rural-urban migration, Mr Tsogwane said the phenomenal fuelled poverty in rural areas as only the elderly and children were left behind.

To address this, he said government came up with flagship programmes such as Chema Chema, Temo-Letlotlo and the yet to be launched Thuo-Letlotlo that were deliberately tailor made to improve the standard and quality of life for Batswana.

Mr Tsogwane implored democrats to subscribe to the party constitution as it spelled out what should be done during election year citing Bulela Ditswe rules and regulations.

Therefore, he said such a move would create a platform for tolerance among democrats with regard to all stages that involved party’s preparations towards elections.

He encouraged democrats to familiarise themselves with the party constitution and obey it to thwart unbecoming behaviour detrimental to the future of the party.

Mr Tsogwane was of the view that regional structures of the party were paramount as consultations on the ground were done through such structures using bottom-up approach, to aid in drafting programme, laws, policies and projects that were capable of changing people’s lives for the better.

Shoshong MP, Mr Aubrey Lesaso urged democrats to unite ahead of the general elections to ensure they emerged victorious.

He said the BDP trajectory over the years spoke volumes and implored Batswana to vote wisely and secure the future of the country. **BOPA**

Operation Triple Zero supports adolescents

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - As part of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Centre of Disease Control Botswana (CDC) continues to provide technical and financial assistance to government and its partners to effectively upscale paediatric and adolescent HIV care and treatment services across health centres and hospitals in the country.

Speaking during the launch of Botswana Operation Triple Zero (OTZ), a customised adolescent-focused service delivery model in Gaborone on Thursday, Deputy Chief of Mission, Ms Amanda Jacobsen said in 2023-2024, about P6.4 million (US\$467 000) was provided to UNICEF to support the OTZ initiative.

Ms Jacobsen said the OTZ approach would lead to an increase in the number of adolescents who would be comfortable to disclose their HIV status and to enroll in and continue ART care as well as to take full ownership of their health care. She said the introduction of the triple zero approach would assist to reach adolescents and young people living with HIV with a package of care that included youth-friendly HIV services and connectedness.

This included positive living messages, caregiver education on supportive parenting and strategies to improve health by targeting zero missed appointments, zero missed medications and zero viral load for adolescents and young persons. She further said it would provide a platform for young people living with HIV to interact with peers facing similar challenges, "which has helped to relieve anxiety and uncertainty among enrollees."

Ms Jacobsen said adolescents of ages 10-9 and young persons of ages 15-24 living with HIV were among the most vulnerable yet under-served populations in the HIV response compared to adult populations, adding that they lagged behind across the entire HIV treatment cascade.

She noted that adolescents and young people living with HIV were faced with challenges related to growing up with HIV infection, including stigma and discrimination, clinical complications, side effects of treatment, problems with long-term adherence to treatment, stress, anxiety and other mental health issues while facing developmental tasks of life.

"Disclosure of HIV diagnosis to others, including sexual partners, sexual and reproductive health decisions, academic performance with potentially long-term effects on employability, income and well-being are challenges young people face," she said.

She added that challenges included transitioning from health services provided in pediatric HIV care settings to

adult HIV care systems, the lack of adolescent-friendly health services and assuming increased responsibility for their own care.

For her part, UNICEF representative Dr Joan Matji said the triple zero came at a critical time where adolescents were falling behind regarding the 95-95-95 targets. She said Operation Triple Zero aims to address the treatment gap among adolescents by ensuring that no adolescents missed their doses and appointments and that all were virally suppressed.

"Through OTZ, the hope remains to see young people committing to zero missed doses, zero missed appointments and zero viral load which will in turn reduce the treatment gap that currently exists," she said.

Dr Matji said UNICEF was grateful to have young people that were ready to champion their needs to ensure their voices were amplified and heard at all levels.

She highlighted that young people were the cornerstone of the country's present and future, saying in the final stretch against HIV it was important to approach interventions with a renewed energy to reach the final mile.

"As the last mile of achieving epidemic control and ending AIDS by 2030 draws close, it is imperative to ensure that relevant stakeholders are targeted in the interventions that will be deployed." Dr Matji said the Ministry of Health in partnership with the National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA), UNICEF, CDC, Botswana-Baylor and Sentebale, would work to tackle the HIV treatment gap among adolescents and address some underlying contributors to poor treatment outcomes. **BOPA**



People with Disabilities (PWDs) at a financial inclusion workshop facilitated by Pretinum Enterprises and Botswana Council of Disabled in Gaborone recently. Mr Chait encouraged PWDs to start businesses so as to promote their independence, creativity and be economically empowered. Photo: Felicity Male

PWDs receive business mentorship

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - People With Disabilities (PWD) have been encouraged to start businesses so as to promote their independence, creativity and economic empowerment.

Coca-Cola Botswana General Manager Mr David Chait said it was important to raise awareness about the potential people living with disabilities had in entrepreneurship so that they could use available opportunities and resources tailored for them.

Mr Chait was speaking in an interview during a workshop facilitated by Pretinum Enterprises and Botswana Council for the Disabled in Gaborone on Wednesday.

The workshop covered topics such as financial inclusion, identifying individual strengths, how to scale up and sustain a business, business skills and strategy, access to funding and

leveraging technology. In that regard, he said financial inclusion for people living with disabilities was crucial for promoting their independence, autonomy and overall well-being.

He said the topics covered were critical for any aspiring entrepreneur and that PWDs were given the tools to take their businesses to the next level and to inspire them to dream big.

He added that it was important that PWDs were empowered to effectively manage their finances.

Mr Chait said the Coca-Cola bottling partner in Botswana continued to help and enable the economic empowerment of a diverse network of customers, suppliers and communities.

He praised the organisation for the economic empowerment, saying it was fundamental to strengthening human rights and enabling all people, particularly vulnerable and underrepresented groups, to have control over their

lives and positively influence society.

Mr Chait said after the workshop, participants would conceptualise a business idea that would be presented to a panel of judges and that they would stand a chance to win cash prizes totalling P9 500 to help them on their way.

He said the winning business idea would get a cash prize of P5 000 with second place receiving P3 000 and third place P1 500.

He said success stories of entrepreneurs with disabilities should also inspire and challenge stereotypes about what people with disabilities could achieve.

One of the attendees, Ms Mpho Babedi, said they were thankful to be given the opportunity to be empowered, saying they were mentored on how to develop ideas that would lead to the start of a business. "We were also encouraged to network and peer support," she said. **BOPA**

Botswana Congress Party endorses Saleshando

By Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE - Botswana Congress Party (BCP) has endorsed Mr Dumelang Saleshando as its presidential candidate for the 2024 general elections.

Various speakers during the BCP presidential candidate launch at the Notwane Grounds on Saturday took to the podium to throw their weight behind Mr Saleshando's candidacy. They cited his readiness and integrity to be the country's leader should the party claim state power in the next general elections.

The party's women's wing chairperson, Ms Tshimologo Dingake commended Mr Saleshando for the role he played in promoting women's participation in politics. "In recognition of the gender disparities in politics, Mr Saleshando took a bold decision when recently unveiling five female parliamentary candidates

to contest under the BCP ticket in the next general election," she said.

The BCP has fielded Dr Unity Dow in Kgatleng West, Ms Ethel Gamphone in Mahalapye East, Ms Julia Chepete in Mogoditshane West, Ms Daisy Bathusi in Boteti East and Dr Mpho Pheko for Gaborone Central.

The move, she said, demonstrated Mr Saleshando's commitment towards women empowerment, adding that he had during his tenure as an MP advocated against gender-based violence, particularly on women and children. The representation of women in political parties, she said, was crucial for a vibrant and representative democracy.

She added that the women's wing fully believed that Mr Saleshando had the interests of women and the girl child at heart, pleading with the country's women to vote for the BCP in the general elections and ensure that

Mr Saleshando becomes the next head of state.

Supporting Mr Saleshando's presidential bid, former Mogoditshane MP, Mr Mokgweetsi Kgosipula said Botswana would be in good hands under the leadership of Mr Saleshando due to his wealth of knowledge on economics and politics. "I have known Mr Saleshando from his youthful days as a student at the University of Botswana and I can certify that he has over the years demonstrated great leadership skills," Mr Kgosipula said.

BCP Vice President, Mr Taolo Lucas compared Mr Saleshando to the biblical 'Moses' who relieved the children of Israel from slavery.

As a graduate of economics and political science from the University of Botswana, Mr Lucas said the BCP leader had what it takes to relief Batswana from unemployment, low wages

and other social ills.

In his acceptance speech, Mr Saleshando urged BCP members to vigorously campaign in order to ensure victory in the general elections in honour of the late founding party president, Mr Michael Dingake. "Let's dedicate this year's elections campaign in memory of Mr Dingake, and the onus is on you as the voters to ensure that we honour him with a sounding victory in the upcoming general elections," he said.

He said he was confident that the BCP could attain the 31 constituencies required to be declared the ruling party. "With proper hard work and determination, the 31 constituencies could be easily won, therefore, we need to start working now," he said.

He dismissed allegations that the BCP was ready to form a coalition government should they run short of winning the required number of constituencies. **BOPA**



Loan system validates eligibility

By Gontle Merafhe

GABORONE - Not everybody who registered will proceed to the next level for application of the Chema Chema fund as stated in the eligibility criteria.

LEA Head of Information and Knowledge Management, Ms Dinah Solani clarified to BOPA in an interview that the system was designed to validate applicants for eligibility.

She said at registration level, they enquire about exposure to business over the past three years as a way of profiling and informing themselves on the interventions needed to fund a business.

She said they used the information to confirm what business skills the applicants possessed, adding they were not interested on LEA training only, but even training offered by other stakeholders.

She said LEA was mandated to register all SMMEs interested in applying for the fund as well as capacity building, monitoring and support for those interested.

“LEA is the first step before applicants are passed to CEDA for funding,” she said

Ms Solani said on the first day, 5 553 people showed up at LEA’s 15 branches, mostly to enquire on loan eligibility criteria and sectors to be funded.

She further said 12 690 people went into the system to create accounts, but with no required documents hence could not proceed with registration.

This, she said presented congestion in the system due to suspended transactions.

She said only 1 100 of 12 690 were able to successfully register while 341 were registered at the offices.

“These numbers are a reflection that self-registration works as the office only registered 34 per cent while 66 per cent are self-registered,” she said.

She said they preferred the elderly to get physical service from the offices, while tech-savvy generation/youth could use self-registration.

She also said once teething problems on the system were addressed, self-registration would be the most convenient method.

Ms Solani further said the fund management committee was already at a funding approval stage for the proposals submitted.

She said their turnaround time was 10 days, provided all the necessary processes were completed.

She said the fund covered micro enterprises that made less than P200 000 per annum. She said even registered companies would undergo eligibility criteria to qualify for Chema Chema.

She said repaying the loan within the set period, qualifies one for a top up.

She also explained that those with business ideas would be assessed depending on their business experience.

She said 66 per cent of the people who registered were female while 34 per cent was male. She said 44 per cent of youth had also registered.

“The 45 per cent of the 1 000 who have registered are only presenting business ideas, 26 per cent are in the retailing and selling, 8.3 per cent in agriculture and 4.8 per cent in manufacturing while the rest are spread across other sectors,” she said.

The 40-year-old Mr Ben Mogami said should his proposal pass, he would use the funds to develop his garden into an event hosting site which will include a campsite. He was also hoping to be capacitated with business skills to enable him to use the funds wisely. **BOPA**



Ms Serame addressing residents of Mahalapye at Xhosa Ward on Thursday. She encouraged youth and women to take up for government funding programmes in large numbers as they were meant to uplift lives. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

‘Fund provides better opportunities for youth, women’

By Tshiamiso Mosetlha

MAHALAPYE - Women and youth have been advised to utilise the newly established Chema Chema Fund to uplift their lives since they have been left behind.

The fund is aimed at transforming the informal sector and providing financial support to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

This was said by Minister of Finance, Ms Peggy Serame at a kgotla meeting she addressed in Mahalapye recently. The fund, she said, was aimed at changing the informal sector and creating more employment opportunities.

Minister Serame also said government had increased the fund from the initial P200 million to P500 million. She said government increased the fund to cushion Batswana

against unfavourable economic conditions and other hardships arising from unemployment. “Through the fund, new and existing informal businesses will be provided with affordable short-term loans at 2.4 per cent interest, procurement of infrastructure, expansion of businesses, capacity building and administrative costs, adding that the loan would be topped at P50 000.

Ms Serame said there was a lack of capital options for enterprises operating in the informal sector despite its weighty addition to employment creation in the country. The minister advised beneficiaries to invest the money wisely to ensure it benefited the country and improved lives of Batswana. She said by empowering the informal sector, they paved the way for increased job opportunities and bolstering

the economic landscape.

She appealed to dikgosi and district councils to assist informal traders with spaces where they could operate their businesses. She also appealed to government institutions to buy from small businesses in order to uplift them.

She said public servants preferred to buy from established markets. On a related issue, Ms Serame warned potential beneficiaries to be aware of false and fake messaging as well as service offerings in relation to the fund. This was after some residents complained that some people were selling them Chema Chema forms.

They said the forms were also sold in some Internet cafés. However, a press release from the Ministry of Entrepreneurship has advised the public to deal with appropriate authorities.

Minister Serame noted that the fund appointed the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) to deal with registering and training all qualifying citizens, while Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) would deal with the disbursement of funds after assessing applications of qualifying applicants. “No other person, company or entity has the authority or a legitimate basis for claiming to offer administrative or other such training services, including consultancies to deal with the guidelines or disbursement process.”

Earlier Kgosi Tshipe Tshipe appealed to the ministry to request the offices of LEA and CEDA to be established in Mahalapye. Residents told the minister that the programme was good and would uplift the businesses of the informal sector. **BOPA**

ERB reports successful forum

By Marvin Mothabane

GABORONE - Sponsored at the tune of about P770 000 Engineering Registration Board (ERB) has reported a successful delivery of the fourth Engineering Forum held in Gaborone last month. For this year’s forum the organizing committee had planned for 300 participants, however, the event witnessed unprecedented multitudes exceeding the target by more than 200 delegates earning sponsors great mileage.

Speaking during a breakfast meeting in Gaborone Thursday, ERB Standards Manager, Ms Clare Mosarwa said the forum was a success thanks to the

sponsors who raised a cumulative P526 000 in cash and P244 000 in kind towards provision of other important services.

She said this year’s forum was packed with speakers who brought impact through availing information and offering mentorship and trainings, thus enhancing the quality and relevance of engineers in Botswana.

She said unlike the COVID-19 period, the forum saw a great number of engineers and delegates gathered under one roof in a three-day action and sharing insights on developmental agendas concerning the engineering fraternity.

Ms Mosarwa said this time

around, they had breakaway rooms set for two days which hosted special seminars targeted at comprehensively discussing pertinent issues concerning engineering excellence and shaping the future.

She said for the first time the forum was attended by young people and women who equally made presentations addressing critical issues related to the quality of engineering locally.

Notably, Ms Mosarwa said next year’s event was proposed for March 5 to 7, with the engineering week planned to commence March 3, and would be delivered under the theme: From Imagination to Implementation: The Engineering Journey. **BOPA**

Use Chema Chema Fund wisely - Kwape

By **Thato Modiakgotla**

KANYE - Chema Chema Fund was introduced partly in recognition of the effects COVID-19 has had on the economy, particularly the informal sector.

“The COVID-19 fight has depleted funds that could have been used to grow the economy and create job opportunities for Batswana, therefore, this is the time for eligible citizens to wisely use the fund to better their lives,” said Member of Parliament for Kanye South Dr Lemogang Kwape.

Dr Kwape was speaking during the Chema Chema Fund workshop in Kanye on Saturday and advised Batswana to approach the right institutions for information regarding government programmes and not fall prey to those who want to discourage others from benefitting, by misinforming them. Dr Kwape, who is also the Minister of Foreign Affairs advised that funds be used wisely so that businesses that have benefitted could grow and eventually contribute to the economy.

He urged public servants to be courteous to those needing their assistance for the initiative to achieve its intended purpose.

CEDA Kanye branch manager, Mr Tuelo Rabaloi said government acknowledged the importance of the informal sector as contributors in growing the economy, hence the introduction of Chema Chema Fund.

“The informal sector contributes in reducing unemployment and poverty and it is mostly made up of women who take care of families and they deserve to be assisted,” said Mr Rabaloi, adding that the sector currently contributed 3.2 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product with potential to do more.

He said the idea behind the fund was to also lay a solid foundation for businesses, to grow them so that they could qualify for funding from institutions as CEDA.

Mr Rabaloi further explained that Chema Chema loan was unsecured, noting that there was no security required for one to be assisted. He, however, noted that the loans must be serviced to ensure that other Batswana could benefit as well. “Even if you are black listed, you can still apply for Chema Chema and married people can apply individually for their various projects,” he said.

Mr Rabaloi urged Batswana to use the funds for the intended purpose and to work hard to grow their businesses, so as to successfully service the loan.

Wealth Point Consultancy director, also Youth Development Fund beneficiary Mr Tefo Maleka shared his success story, testifying that government

programmes were good if properly used. He said after paying back his YDF loan, he further approached CEDA for fund assistance to grow his business. The loan, he said had also successfully been cleared.

For a businesses to succeed, he said one must have clear set goals, good record keeping and multiple streams of income. **BOPA**



Dr Kwape during the Chema Chema Fund workshop organised by his constituency office in Kanye on Saturday. He advised Batswana to take advantage of the fund to grow their businesses.
Photo: Thato Modiakgotla



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MODULE 4: Developing Your People (3 days)
MODULE 5: Industrial/Labour Relations (3 days)
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The cost is **P1,000.00** per participant per day inclusive of lunch, morning and afternoon Tea. Accommodation has to be arranged separately by the organisation.

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Module	Gaborone	Francistown
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Module 2	June 19 - 21	June 12 - 14
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LTC aims to reclaim clean place status

By Jeremiah Sejabosigo

LOBATSE - Lobatse Town Council (LTC) has promised to intensify refuse collection and implement other strategies of making the town clean.

This was said by the Mayor of Lobatse Mr Mosimanegape Dithebe when officially launching the Lobatse Upkeep and Green City Initiative at Peleng Kgotla on Friday.

He said Lobatse used to be the cleanest town in Botswana and one of the cleanest towns in Africa alongside Nairobi (Kenya), Kigali (Rwanda) and Windhoek (Namibia).

“Lobatse used to be counted amongst the cleanest town in Africa.

I don’t know what went wrong along the way. However, we need to go back to the crossroads where we lost our way and reclaim our status of being one of the cleanest places,” he said.

He said the town was blessed with beautiful mountains terrain and heritage sites, which deserved to be kept in a clean state and preserved.

The mayor said just like Pillar 3 of the national Vision 2036 focused on environmental sustainability, it was important for authorities and members of the community in Lobatse to protect their environment by keeping the town clean.

The event was held under the theme: Environmental Cleanliness My Responsibility # A Re Chencheng.

“This theme calls on all of us to be responsible and keep our environment clean,” he said.

Mr Dithebe said though LTC had shortage of resources it would do everything required to make the town clean at all times.

He said LTC had established a strategic partnership with the European Union to protect the environment through green energy and waste recycling initiatives.

LTC Environment and Health Committee chairperson Mr Ontiretse Mosimanewamacha, who is also Peleng East councillor, said Lobatse used to win national awards for environment cleanliness.

He expressed concern that the town was dirty nowadays with waste dumped in open spaces and along the roads.

“Our environment is not clean anymore. There are people who dump waste everywhere in our town. We have realised that people dump waste in the open spaces,” he said.

However, he warned that stern action would be taken against those people since that practice amounted to contravention of the Waste Management Act.

Mr Mosimanewamacha further said the council would dispatch Green Scorpions workers to educate the public about proper handling and disposal of waste.

He further said many pit latrines in Lobatse were overflowing and not in good conditions, which contributed to making the town’s environment dirty.

To address the challenge, he said LTC had decided to discontinue building of the pit latrines.

He said no permission would be granted for building of new pit latrines in the town.

Mr Mosimanewamacha also informed residents that the council struggled to collect waste from households twice a week due to poor condition of its refuse collection trucks.

He said council would address the situation and start collecting waste on time.

Mr Mosimanewamacha said council would put waste disposal skips in selected locations, adding that council was in the process of outsourcing waste collection in SHHA areas.

The council’s chief environmental officer Mr Desmond Tshotelo said in response to

the government concern that many villages, towns and cities in the country were untidy, the LTC leadership developed initiatives of making the town clean.

He said they intended to have transformed the environment of Lobatse in a period of three months through the Lobatse Upkeep and Green City initiative.

He said through the initiative, they would ensure waste was collected from households regularly and the council would conduct litter picking.

He added that they would undertake a de bushing and grass cutting exercise, de-silting of culverts and trenches, and collection of garden waste as short term initiatives.

“The long term measures include monthly clean up campaigns, quarterly multi-sectoral clean up campaigns, and public education on environmental cleanliness,” he said.

In her welcome remarks, Peleng Customary Court president Ms Tebogo Kemoabe urged residents to desist from dumping waste everywhere. **BOPA**



SYDNEY - A police vehicle outside the Westfield Shopping Centre at Bondi Junction in Australia yesterday. Australian police on Sunday identified the perpetrator of a Sydney shopping centre stabbing that killed six people, saying no intelligence suggested the attack was driven by ideology. The suspect in the Saturday afternoon attack was 40-year-old Joel Cauchi from Queensland, New South Wales Police Assistant Commissioner Anthony Cooke told reporters.

Photo: Xinhua



STATISTICS BOTSWANA

PUBLIC NOTICE

15 April 2024

CANCELLATION OF TENDER

PROVISION OF DELL PROSUPPORT AND NEXT BUSINESS DAY TO STATISTICS BOTSWANA FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS TENDER NO: STB/DCS/23-24/005

Reference is made to the tender notice dated the 9th November, 13th November and 20th November 2023, for the above mentioned tender which appeared on the Daily News.

This serves to notify you that Statistics Botswana has resolved to cancel the tender, due to administrative issues.

Statistics Botswana apologizes for any inconvenience caused.

For Enquiries contact:

Phenyo Tafhi
Tel: 3671300
Email: ptafhi@statsbots.org.bw



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Statistics Botswana invites interested locally registered companies to tender for:

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Payment is required on collection of the tender document.

Alternatively, an EFT/deposit to the following banking details and email proof of payment to the email stated underneath.

ABSA

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Account Number: 1001058

Branch Name: Barclays House

Branch Code: 290267

REF: STB\DCS\23-24\001 – Name of Company

Proof of Payments to be addressed to: gmakelepe@statsbots.org.bw or okelapetseng@statsbots.org.bw

Invitation to Tender documents may be obtained from Statistics Botswana Accounts Unit located at Fifth (5th) Floor, Corporate Services, Four Thirty Square, Plot 54350, CBD, PG Matante Road , Gaborone during working hours from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays), from 07:30 – 12:45hours and 13:45 – 16:30hours from 15th April 2024.

Closing date: 7th May 2024 at 1000 hours.

Opening date: 7th May 2024, immediately after tender closing.

The tender will be opened at Statistics Botswana Head Office, North Wing First (1st) Floor, Four Thirty Square, Plot 54350, CBD, PG Matante Road, Gaborone in the presence of bidders wishing to attend.

Late tenders, telephonic, telegraphic, telex, emailed or faxed tenders will not be accepted.

Enquiries in relation to this tender can be made to:

Phenyo Tafhi
Assistant Manager Procurement
Statistics Botswana Private Bag
0024 Gaborone Botswana
TEL: 3671300

Email: ptafhi@statsbots.org.bw

Dibete residents appreciate projects

By **Merapelo Mosarwa**

MAHALAPYE – Residents of Dibete are happy with government efforts of bringing forth developments to their village.

In a Kgotla meeting addressed by Shoshong Member of Parliament, Mr Aubrey Lesaso in Dibete on Friday, residents

expressed their appreciation that their pleas for better amenities were being addressed.

One of the residents, Mr Saleboeng Modikwa applauded Mr Lesaso for his efforts to bring services and developments closer to the people.

Mr Modikwa said bringing services and developments closer to the people would ease access

to services and improve the lives of residents.

He said such a move enhanced citizen participation in governance hence reducing inequality and leading to improved service delivery.

For his part, Mahalapye's District Health Management Team (DHMT) coordinator, Dr Kagiso Tshegetsang shared that the clinic was nearing completion, which was scheduled for November. He assured residents that they would receive medical attention locally and there would be no need to travel long distances to places like Mahalapye to seek such services.

He added there was also an ambulance servicing the village.

Residents further thanked the area MP for aiding them with building a new guard room with an ablution block at the local primary school. Encouraging residents to take advantage of Chema-Chema, Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) representative, Ms Lame Bogapi said that there was no deadline for applications for the flagship programme's loans and that there was no age restriction, adding that any Motswana could apply.

Through Chema Chema Fund, Batswana can take short-term

loans payable after six months with a 2.4 per cent interest rate.

The fund presents opportunities for citizens to enhance their lives and also to generate income for themselves.

Kgosi Lekgathane Mabuo of Dibete called for improvement of Poloka road that is mainly used by pupils to go to school, noting it was difficult to use during rainy seasons to crossover to the other side.

He also pleaded with Mr Lesaso to facilitate reconnect ion of Wi-Fi at kgotla offices so that residents could not miss out on the country's development news.

BOPA

Education ministry, Wild Entrust Africa sign MoU

By **Esther Mmolai**

MAUN -Wild Entrust Africa has entered into a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development aimed at empowering learners on issues of sustainable conservation.

The partnership will deliver coaching conservation's Learning from Wildlife programme to all 75 primary schools in Ngamiland.

Speaking during a workshop themed: Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders Through Collaboration in Education and Sustainable Conservation on Friday, Batswana deputy chief, Kgosi Kealetile Moremi hailed the collaboration, saying it was a paradigm shift in the delivery of education system.

She commended Wild Entrust Africa for its dedication to environmental education in schools coupled with providing essential resources such as books and posters. She said it had not only enriched the learning experience of pupils, but had also empowered them to become stewards of the environment.

not only promoted academic excellence, but also cultivated a deep connection to nature.

She added that the coaching conservation initiative had the same vision as their forefathers, as the programme was basically trying to build responsible citizens who took care of the ecosystem.

Kgosi Moremi said it was also important to acknowledge the pivotal role that Ngamiland played, noting that the region hosted the famous Okavango Delta, which was internationally recognised as teeming with diverse wildlife.

"Our region serves as a beacon of conservation excellence and a magnet for tourists from around the globe," she said.

She also noted human-wildlife conflict, saying it was topical in the international sphere, and that coaching conservation would inculcate a sense of awareness and responsibility in learners.

Principal education officer, Ms Veronica Ridge thanked the ministry for the partnership with Wild Entrust Africa.

She said the programme supplemented schools' curriculum and urged teachers to support it as it provided benefits such as motivating learners who were not academically gifted to love school and participate in class.



US deputy chief of mission, Ms Amanda Jacobsen (left), Prof. Nkomazana (centre) and UNICEF representative, Dr Joan Matji during the launch of Operation Triple Zero in Gaborone recently. Prof. Nkomazana said the programme would reduce HIV prevalence among young people.

Photo: Gothusang Lesego

OTZ initiative seeks to reduce HIV prevalence

By **Lesedi Thatayamodimo**

GABORONE – The initiative Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) purposed to achieve the remaining 5-2-2- of the UNAIDS targets has been launched.

Officially launching Botswana OTZ, a customised adolescent-focused service delivery model, in Gaborone recently, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health Prof. Oatlhokwa Nkomazana said the initiative was youth focused because young people had not yet attained the target as they were still at 85-83-76 according to statistics. She said young people who constituted two thirds of the country's population had

potential to be the key drivers for the country's economy, adding that without addressing treatment gap among adolescents and young people, such posed the risk of reversing the gains Botswana made thus far. She said the OTZ programme would bridge the gap in treatment adherence, accessibility to treatment and viral load suppression, adding that it had the ability to increase adherence to treatment and viral and load suppression by up to 10 per cent.

She said virally-suppressed meant that the target group health status improves, making the young generation productive in the process.

She said the ministry would continue strengthening partnerships to revitalise primary health care.

For her part, the manager for education communications and advocacy division at NAHPA, Ms Elizabeth Koko said the OTZ promoted the best interest of children and adolescent welfare. She said adolescents and young people were a priority of the Ministry of Health.

She said the programme would improve health outcomes of young people, adding that they would be reached out to with a mix of communication strategies as well as offered psychological support.

BOPA

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OFMB e atolosa madirelo

Ka Pelonomi Gare

MOCHUDI - Khamphani e e dirang dijo tsa leruo le menontshane ya diywalo ya Organic Fertilisers Manufacturer Botswana (OFMB) e tlaa tlhoma kgwebo ya bone kwa Masama.

Fa a bua mo phuthegong ya kgotla bosheng, motshwarelela kgosi ya Bakgatla Kgosi Bana Sekai o tlhalositse fa khamphani ya OFMB e e ntseng e direla kwa Mmamashia e tlaa atolosa madirelo a yone.

O tlhalositse fa kgosi kgolo ya Bakgatla, Kgosi Kgafela Kgafela wa bobedi a dumalane le mong wa khamphani e go dirisa lefatshe la Masama la 1 000 hectares gore go dirwe theko le thekiso ya menontshane le dijo tsa leruo teng.

O tswelletse a re lenaneo le la kgwebo ya go nna jaana le tla a bo le le mo magatong a mararo la

ntlha e le le mo go yone khamphani e e tlaa bong e fiwa dingwaga di le masome a mabedi le botlhano e ntse e gweba go rurifatsa fa kgwebo e ka dira letseno.

Legato la bobedi e tlaabo ele le mo go lone go tlaa bong go amoganwa dikitsa magareng ga rakgwebo le Bakgatla ka kakaretso gore le bone dikitsa tsa temo ya menontshane e e ka rekisetwang mafatshe a sele ba nne le yone, fa la boraro e tlaa bo ele le mo go lone morafe o tlaa bong o busetswa lefatshe la bone go dira kgwebo.

Kgosi Sekai a re go dira jaana go tlaa tswela Bakgatla mosola ka ba tlaa nna le tshiamelo ya go amogana dikitsa le baitseanape ga mmogo le go tlamela ba ba sa berekeng ditiro. O tlhalositse fa ditumalano tsa go nna jaana di nnile le mokwalo ga ba ga saenwa go rurifatsa fa go sena matshosetsi ape a tshenyetso sechaba.

Mo go tse dingwe kgosi o ne a ngongorega ka modumo mo motseng, a supa fa marekisetso a bojalwa jaanong a phadisanya le dikereke ka modumo, selo se se kgoreletsang ledula mo motseng. O gwehlile mapodisi go dira se se tshwanetseng go busetsa motse mo taolong.

Bakgatla ba ne gape ba istisiwe ka pulo semmuso ya leobo la Bakgatla e e tlaa dirwang ka Motsheganong a tlhola ga tlhano e dirwa ke Kgosisikgolo Nchauphe Makapan wa boraro wa Bakgatla ba ga Mosetlha.

Ka jalo, Kgosi Sekai o kopile Bakgatla go berekisana sentle le ba komiti ya pulo semmuso ya leobo go netefatsa gore tiro e e tsamaya ka thelelo.

Fa a tswa la gagwe tona wa tsa papadi le madirelo yo gape eleng Mopalamente wa Kgatleng Bophirima Rre Mmusi Kgafela o supile fa tshwetso e

e tserweng ke kgosisikgolo ya go letlelela khamphani ya OFMB go dira kgwebo mo Kgatleng ele botlhokwa ka e ka tswela morafe mosola.

“Letlole la Bakgatla le tlaa dika le na le letseno le le botoka fela thata ka bontlha bongwe jwa madi a tlaa bong a dirilwe ke kgwebo a tlaa bo a tsennngwa mo letloleng go ya ka ditumalano tse di dirilweng,” ga bua jalo Rre Kgafela

O gwehlile beng ba masimo a a dikologileng Masama go sa rekisa masimo a bone ka ba na le sebaka sa go rekisetse khamphani ya OFMB ditlamelo dingwe tse e tlaa di tlhokang go nolofatsa kgwebo.

Fa a kgwa Kgosi Sekai kgaba ka modumo o o diragalang mo motseng, Tona Kgafela a re o etse tlhoko gore bontsi jwa marekisetso a nnotagi gammogo le dikereke di tsosa modumo o o feteletseng, a rotloetsa batho go dira se se tshwanetseng go itsa go gotlha-

gotlhana le molao. A re molao wa Liquor Act kana wa nnotagi ga o na ditsetlana tse di buang ka modumo mme ba tlaa dira ka bojotlhe go netefatsa gore o a baakanngwa.

Modulasetilo wa khansela ya Kgatleng Rre Daniel Molokwe o neseditse mafoko a ga Kgosi Sekai pula, a supa fa Bakgatla ba tlaa amogana dikitsa mme morago ba kgone go ithetsa fa khamphani ya OFMB e setse e simolodisitse kgwebo.

O gakolotse morafe go kgaogana le mafoko a a seng boammaaruri a gore lefatshe la morafe la Masama le rekisitswe, a re dikgang tsa go nna jaana di thuba morafe ka bogare mme di die ditlhabololo go tswela pele mo kgaolong.

Rre Molokwe a re ele ba khansela ba tlaa dira ka bojotlhe go busetsa ledula mo motseng. A re dikgwebo kgotsa dikereke tse di tlaa fitlhelwang di tsositse modumo di tlaa tseelwa ditieseletso. **BOPA**



Rre Boko (molemeng) le Kgosi Nyoka kwa phuthegong ya kgotla kwa Mahalapye ka Labone. Rre Boko o ne a abela kgotla ya Xhosa 1 ditilo di le 150 fa a ile go laela banni ka tshwetso ya gagwe ya go tlogela sepolotiki. Senepe: Baldwin Nyamande

Boko o abetse kgotla ya Xhosa 1 ditilo

Ka Tshiamiso Mosetlha

MAHALAPYE - Mopalamente wa pele wa Mahalapye botlhaba, Rre Yandani Boko o abetse kgotla ya Xhosa 1 kwa Mahalapye ditilo di le 150 bosheng.

Rre Boko yo o tlogetseng sepolotiki bosheng le kgaolo ye a neng a e emetse ya Mahalapye botlhaba, o boletse fa a sa bolo go solofetsa go aba ditilo mo dikgotleng tse neng e le tsa kgaolo ya gagwe mme dikgwetlho tse di mo tlogedisitseng tsa mo hekeetsa go aba ditilo tseo.

A re o setse a abetse dikgotla tse dingwe ditilo a ntse a tlogetse tiro, e le go diragatsa tsholofetso ya gagwe.

O tlhalositse se mo phuthegong e e neng e biditswe ke tona wa madi, Mme Peggy Serame kwa kgotleng ya Xhosa 1 kwa Mahalapye ka Labone.

A re o tlogetse a sa laela bathophi ba gagwe mme seo a se kopela maitshwarelo.

Rre Boko o tlhalositse fa a le teng kwa Mahalapye, a ka thusa mo kgaolo ka dikgang tsa semolao le go thusa kwa dikoleng. O boletse fa a ne a rakana le dikgwetlho tse di thata mme a bona gore a tlogele.

Fa amogela ditilo, Kgosi Edward Nyoka Xhosa 1 o supile boitumelo a bo a bolela fa kgotla e ne e sena ditilo tse di nniwang ke morafe. O kaile fa a sa bolo go emela ditilo. **BOPA**

Ka Tshiamiso Mosetlha

MAHALAPYE - Modulasetilo wa komiti kgolo ya bomme ba Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Mme Peggy Serame o kgothaditse bomme go ngoka maloko a masha le go ikemisetsa go emela ditlhopho tsa setshaba tse di tlaa tshwarwang monongwaga.

A re bomme ke bone ba tshwereng thipa ka fa bogaleng, ke bone ba buelelang borre e bile gape ba lebile le malwapa a bone.

Tona Serame o buile se kwa phuthegong e a neng a biditse babegadikgang le go amogela maloko a masha mo phathing kwa Mahalapye ka Labone. Mongwe wa ba ba amogetsweng

ke mmaagwe mopalamente wa pele wa Mahalapye Botlhaba, Rre Yandani Boko, e bong Mme Catharine Boko, go tswa kwa UDC. A re palo ya bomme ba ba emelang ditlhopho ga e kgotsofatse ka gore go na le dikgwetlho dingwe tse di ba emang pele jaaka letlhoko la madi, mafoko a a buiwang kwa ditlhareng ke mapolotiki, e bile gape ke bone ba tlhokometseng malwapa.

Mme Serame o boletse fa maloko a komiti ya bomme lefatshe ka bophara, a dumalane ka bongwefela jwa pelo gore Tautona Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi, a tswellele gape go nna Tautona mo ditlhophong tse di tlang. O boletse fa ba solofete go amogela maloko a

mangwe kwa Mookane.

Mme Boko, o boletse fa mmaagwe e ne le leloko la BDP, mme le ene e le mo BDP, mme e rile fa morwa wa gagwe a simolola dipolotiki, a tsena mo go ba kganetso, ka jalo le ne a herekana la BDP a ya UDC.

O kaile fa e rile bosheng fa a utlwa fa Rre Boko a tlogetse sepolotiki, bopalamente le kgaolo ya gagwe, a hutsafala mme ke fa jaanong a bona gore a boele kwa BDP. O boletse fa ba ne ba berekela phathi tsa kganetso ka botswapelo a na le morwa wa gagwe.

A re Rre Boko o ne a tshwenyegile thata mo moweng e bile a lwala, a na le dikgwetlho tsa botshelo fa a tlaa tlogela sepolotiki. **BOPA**



Mme Serame (mojeng) le Mme Kelebogile Othusitse kwa phuthegong ya komiti ya bomme ba BDP le moletlo wa go amogela maloko a masha. Tona Serame o rotloeditse bomme go ngoka maloko a masha le go ikemisetsa go emela ditlhopho tsa setshaba tse di tlaa tshwarwang monongwaga. Senepe : Baldwin Nyamande

Ka Malebogo Lekula

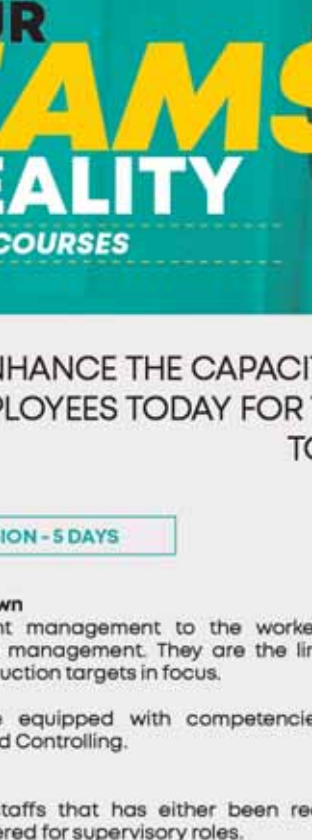


**BOTSWANA
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APRIL-MAY 2024

Calendar

ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF YOUR ORGANISATION!
REGISTER YOUR EMPLOYEES TODAY FOR THE **TRAINING PROGRAMME**
TO BE HELD IN APRIL AND MAY

1. INTRODUCTION TO SUPERVISION - 5 DAYS

Date: 13 - 17 May 2024, Maun
20 - 24 May 2024, Francistown

Overview: Supervisors represent management to the workers as well as representing workers to management. They are the link the Organisations need to keep production targets in focus.

Objective: Participants will be equipped with competencies for Planning, Organising, Leading and Controlling.

Target group
This programme is aimed at staffs that has either been recently promoted to or are being considered for supervisory roles.

2. EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE - 4 DAYS

Date: 9 - 12 April 2024, Gaborone
21 - 24 May 2024, Ghanzi

Overview: Organisations that will survive in the future will be organisations that make customer service a priority. With so much intense competition businesses cannot afford to ignore the importance of serving customers well. The enrolment on Customer Service will enable organisations to be productive and competitiveness in the market. Service quality is therefore important to customers and it is equally important for business growth and sustenance.

Objective: The main objective of this programme is to equip all employees with customer service skills to effectively handle customers to bring organisational success.

Target group
The course targets frontline champions (Receptionists/Front desk Officers), for silent heroes (Administrators/Clerks) of the customers service movement and new employees.

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS 2023

Date: 13 - 17 April 2024, Gaborone (BNPC)

Overview and Objectives: The workshop aim for participants to learn how to apply modern management techniques to execute a project from start to finish, simultaneously managing the seven basic project performance elements: benefit, scope, quality, time, cost, risk and sustainability. The workshops not only cover core project management methodologies but are extended to capacitate managers with technological scheduling skills. The course content is as follows:

- Understanding Project Management
- Initiating/starting up a project - Designing, Organising and allocating Resources to your Project
- Planning a Project
- Project Executing, Controlling and Closing
- Project Management Software - Understanding software scheduling tools

Target Group
Project Managers, project coordinators, project team members, senior and middle managers.

4. SERVICE EXPERIENCE DESIGN 2024

Date: 16 - 17 April 2024, Gaborone (BNPC)

Overview: The Service Experience Design is a process designed to take a holistic view of all related actors, resources, their interactions and infrastructure in order to create a desired unique customer experience. The program will equip the workforce with the skills and competencies necessary to create a setting to deliver exceptional customer experience and enhance organisational competitiveness.

Objective:

- To outline the concepts of design thinking and the process of design thinking
- To understand what makes service excellent organizations.
- To understand value output analysis.
- To understand the application of the Service Blueprinting tool to manage customer experience.
- To understand the application of Customer Value Proposition and Business Model Canvas.
- To understand the application of Service Design Tools in defining and designing customer experience.

Target
Middle management, Strategic leadership and Customer facing personnel qualify for this course.

5. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ISO 9001:2015 AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2024

Date: 17 - 18 April 2024, Gaborone

Overview: ISO 9001 is a global standard for quality management systems (QMS) that helps organizations meet customer and regulatory expectations. The standard was first published by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in 1987 and has since undergone many revisions with the latest revision released in 2015. The (ISO 9001:2015) standard provides a holistic approach of embracing all aspects required of an organisation to demonstrate the ability to consistently provide quality products and services that meet customer and regulatory requirements. ISO 9001:2015 applies to any organization, regardless of size or industry with an endeavour to organise processes, improve the efficiency of processes, as well as continually improve the effectiveness of the organisation.

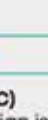
Objective:

- To raise awareness on the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 standard,
- To create awareness on how the standard can be used as a tool to enhance productivity and the quality of products and services in their organisations, and
- To provide a preparatory foundation for implementation of the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

Target
Relevant to all employees.

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Presidents Masisi, Ramaph



A law enforcement officer (left) gesturing as way of expressing his condolences to President Masisi (centre) and First Lady Neo upon their arrival at Polokwane.

President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi and First Lady Neo Masisi accompanied by South Africa President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa visited the site of the tragic accident, where 45 Batswana perished on the eve of the Easter weekend at Mamatlakala Bridge along the R518 in Limpopo. The bus

in which the victims were travelling in crushed and buried during a pilgrimage to Moria. The sole survivor of the accident who had been hospitalised, was discharged and returned to Botswana.

Both Presidents expressed gratitude to emergency



Ministers; Kwape, Morwaeng, Mokgethi as well as Kgosi Kgari III and Mr Molebatsi disembarking the BDF Casa aircraft to visit the site.



President Ramaphosa disembarking the aircraft.



The scene of the tragic accident, which made international headlines.



The spot where the bus plunged off Mamatlakala Bridge, catching flames as it hit a rocky ground



Minister Morwaeng at the scene.



President Ramaphosa (right) showing emotions as President Masisi expresses gratitude to him and his government for the prompt response to the scene of the accident.

Masiba visit scene of accident

personnel, government officials and Mamatlakala residents who responded to the scene of the horrific accident, which made international headlines. The families of six victims who were positively identified went to South Africa on Friday to kickstart the process

of repatriation. The remaining victims will undergo DNA and other tests to facilitate their conclusive identification. President Masisi was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Lemogang Kwape, Minister for State President, who is also MP for Molepolole South, Mr Kabo Morwaeng,

Minister Labour and Home Affairs, Ms Anna Mokgethi, Police Commissioner, Dinah Marathe, Kgosi Kgari Sechele III, minister and head of generale-Botswana, St Engenas ZCC, Mr Oreeditse Molebatsi and senior government officials. **Photos: Godfrey Mpuse and Yobe Shonga**



Masisi (left) and President Ramaphosa during a meeting.



The two Presidents and their delegations in a briefing with South African officials.



Mamatlakala bridge and bursting in



President Masisi (third right) and First Lady Neo (second right) and President Ramaphosa (right) at the scene.



President Masisi viewing the rocky ground where the bus fell.



First Lady Neo (second right) and South Africa Minister in the Presidency, Ms Khumbudzo Ntshavheni.



President Masisi (left) and President Ramaphosa (right) thanking Mamatlakala residents for their assistance during the accident.



Limpopo Member of the Executive Council of Health, Dr Phophi Ramathuba (right) introducing her team to President Masisi.



President Masisi (centre) with Mr Molebatsi (left) and ZCC leadership.

PLACE	DATE	VENUE
Maun	8 th -10 April	Botswana Open University Grounds
Shakawe	12 th - 13 th April	Infront of Fours Supermarket
Kasane	12 th April	Plateau
Gantsi	15 th April	Sefalana
Nata	15 th April	Engen Mall
Tutume	16 th April	Tutume McConnell
Kang	17 th April	Choppies Mall
Masunga	17 th April	Choppies Mall
Francistown	18 th -20 April	Galo Mall Parking
Tsabong	19 th April	Sefalana Mall
Jwaneng	22 nd April	Absa Mall
Letlhakane	22 nd – 23 rd April	Teemane mall
Kanye	23- 24 th April	RAC
Serowe	24 th – 25 th April	Bus Rank
Lobatse	25 th April	Junction Mall
Molepolole	26 th -27 th April	Kgari Sechele
Bobonong	27 th April	Choppies Mall
Mahalapye	29 th -30 th April	Bus Rank
Selibe Phikwe	29 th – 30 th April	Next To Post Office
Palapye	2 nd - 3 rd May	Engen Mall

Small stock lifeline of Tsabong



Minister Rakgare on a tour of one of the small stock farming projects belonging to YDF beneficiaries in the Tsabong area. Photo: Calviniah Kgautlhe

Youth projects impress Rakgare

By Kamogelo Matlala

BERRY BUSH FARM - Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture, Mr Tumiso Rakgare on Saturday went on a familiarisation tour of small stock farming and Tsabong Cultural Centre projects in and around Tsabong.

The visit forms part of the countrywide tour of various projects that were funded through the Youth Development Fund (YDF).

One of the YDF beneficiaries, Tlotlo David said she got P95 000 from the fund and managed to buy 52 goats, which she keeps at the Berry Bush Farm, near Tsabong Camel Park.

The 20-year-old said she decided to follow her dream of becoming a small-stock farmer in 2022. Her

initial step was to approach the ministry for financial assistance.

“I used to watch my parents’ livestock business grow, and one thing I am grateful for is their support towards what I do,” she said. Unlike other youth in the farming business, David has fewer challenges as she has access to free land and water, thanks to a neighbouring farmer.

Her major challenge is predators preying on baby goats.

So far, she has lost 20 kids and a buck. “Nonetheless, I am happy with the project. The grace period for my loan ends in May, thereafter the repayment begins.”

Besides farming, David has a catering business as a side hustle.

Another YDF beneficiary is 30- year-old Tshepang Van Wyk whose project is amongst the Modipane syndicate in a cattlepost on the outskirts of Tsabong.

Van Wyk also got 52 goats last year May through the fund.

“I intend to religiously service my loan so that I will be able to seek further financial assistance from CEDA so that I can increase my flock and start breeding for commercial purposes,” he said.

Sadly for him, predators are a nightmare to his business.

“Also, this area has salty water and this takes a toll on the goats as it dehydrates them. They do not appear healthy at all,” Van Wyk said. He said currently he could not afford to hire anyone as he did not make enough money to pay at the end of the month.

“I run the business on my own and often get help from neighbours, but I am positive and hopeful that I will get ‘there’ one day,” he said.

Mr Rakgare commended David and Van Wyk for using YDF to improve their livelihoods, and also encouraged them to show perseverance and commitment towards their small stock farming businesses.

He also urged them to repay their loans, as failure to do so disadvantaged those on the waiting list.

“Remember this is a revolving fund. Please repay the loan component to enable government to sustain the programme. It is also a way of demonstrating your responsibility and accountability,” he said. He also urged the young entrepreneurs to support and learn from one another.

At the Tsabong Cultural Centre, the Programme’s officer, Keabetswe Motswasele took the minister through the facility and shared insights on some of the works they had on display.

The cultural centre is a host to exhibitions by some of the community’s finest contemporary artists and various museum galleries and archives that depicted extensive natural and historical collections. **BOPA**

Farming is in my blood - Tsabong youth

By Kamogelo Matlala

LOBU FARMS – Ever since he was a small boy, the youthful Banogi Sentlabane used to wake up every morning to herd his father’s cattle to graze and came back in the evening. Sentlabane, aged 37, says farming has always been the bread and butter for him and his family.

“I used to watch and learn as my father went about his daily duties at the cattle post. I was raised among cattle, that is why I love them. Farming has always been in my blood,” he said in an interview after **BOPA** spotted him amongst bidders at the recent Lobu Small Stock Farm auction sale.

Later, Sentlabane took over some of the farming roles from his father and matured into an farmer that he is as present.

After graduating with a Degree in Adult Education from the University of Botswana in 2010, Sentlabane got a job at the Tsabong District Council as a community development officer, where he still works. Despite his job, he never lost his love for farming as he used most of his earnings to uplift conditions of the two cattle posts that he owns in Tsabong and Bogogobo villages, which is about five kilometres from Middlepits in the Tsabong District.

“I started off by buying pure Dorper sheep and pure Boer goats from South Africa to start breeding for sale.”

Considering harsh Kgalagadi conditions, Mr Sentlabane said a Dorper was bred to adapt and flourish under such situations.

“They have low mortality rate, are resistant to diseases and have a high reproduction tempo,” he said.

Also, boer goats can adapt to almost all types of weather and

climate and have high fertility rates.

Today he boasts of an impressive 60 goats and 75 sheep. Over time, he started participating in agricultural shows where, amongst others, he won numerous awards in the best slaughter ship category.

Sentlabane is currently perfecting his proposal and working on a detailed business plan for his envisaged farming project.

“I have never received any monetary assistance, but right now I want to approach CEDA for a loan to install a borehole in Bogogobo. I have faced many challenges, but never despaired because my ultimate dream is to become a successful farmer and now I believe CEDA can assist me realise my dream,” he said.

However, Sentlabane said small

stock farming faced an array of challenges including rain scarcity and dry velds, which led to some of his livestock dying.

“Sometimes, they would drift away in search of water and greener pastures. Remember I have a full time job so my employees at times fail me and do not do what they are supposed to.”

“One cannot simply treat farming as a hobby or take it by chance. You have to take it as a real business and treat your stock with respect as well as those you farm with. Costs of vaccines and cattle feed is expensive and you need to know how to carefully use your money to ensure you breed quality product.” He said farming was a competitive undertaking and one needed to know how to breed stock to impress the market. “You need

to also constantly benchmark with more established farmers to ensure that you are on course.”

One of Sentlabane’s desires is to introduce artificial insemination (AI) for small stock, which he said is uncommon in Botswana.

“In June, I will be embarking on a journey to South Africa to attend an AI course, which I believe will empower me to deal with the management aspects of AI and successful breeding as a whole,” he said. Sentlabane is one of the young farmers in Botswana who have heeded President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi’s call for the youth to grow and take the agricultural sector to new heights. “Small stock has quick returns. All it needs is dedication and commitment. Start small and grow as you learn,” President Masisi had once said. **BOPA**



Sentlabane is one of the young farmers who have heeded President Masisi’s call for the youth to take the agricultural sector to new heights. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Tsabong abattoir strategic business unit

By Calviniah Kgautlhe

TSABONG - The globally renowned and accredited Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) which wields experience in running abattoirs since 1965, is set to operate the Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir as a strategic business unit.

A parastatal, wholly owned by Botswana government, which currently owns and operates three abattoirs in Lobatse slaughtering 650 cattle per day, Maun, which slaughters 120 cattle per day and Francistown with a capacity of slaughtering 350 cattle per day, is now readying to run the newly constructed Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir, which is expected to slaughter 60 livestock or 300 small stock per day.

Speaking in an interview, BMC chief technical officer, Oabona Ramotshwara said BMC long-term vision was to operate the multimillion pula Tsabong abattoir as a strategic business unit.

“To effectively unlock the real value potential of the abattoir, focus will be placed on market requirements for products,” he said.

He underscored that BMC had mapped out a business strategy where it outlined its plans to establish Tsabong abattoir. It cost government P161 million to construct a leading small stock meat processing and packing plant in Botswana.

This, he said, would enable BMC to take advantage of the increasing demand for small stock products locally.

He highlighted that opportunities for expansion into the export market were available, adding that appropriate business platforms to capitalise on such opportunities would be established.

Mr Ramotshwara said BMC shall replicate the current cattle procurement methods used and maintain the current cattle prices of P31 per kg, as well as free transport to the abattoir.

As for small stock, he said the purchase price would be determined by the market segments, dynamics and other protocols or processes.

As for employment, he said, the new national assert shall operate with a staff complement of 85 including the management team, adding that the majority of them shall come from Tsabong District.

He buttressed that the abattoir was endowed with the state-of-the-art automated system, where the processing plant would produce goat or lamb chops, chilled goat or sheep carcasses, deboned beef primal cuts, bone-in or deboned forequarter cuts, offal products, hoofs, and heads.

He said the plant would also produce bone meal, carcass meal, blood meal and tallow, adding that hides and skins would create further value chain opportunities for leather processing and resultant leather products manufacturing in the Tsabong District.

For the financial projections, he said the abattoir would need P93.7 million in its first year of operation to cover start up and annual running costs such as livestock procurement, staff salaries, electricity, fuel and water.

He estimated that the abattoir would return a revenue of around P44.5 million in its first year of operation.

BMC projections reflect initial annual loss of P48.5 million, expected to be covered through

government subvention funds.

Mr Ramotshwara said in its early days, the abattoir would primarily supply Botswana market and thereafter expand to export markets once all conditions for export had been fulfilled including sanitary and phytosanitary

standards protocols.

Eyed markets are SADC, United Arab Emirates or Middle East and North Africa (MENA), European Union (EU) and Norway.

He said the Botswana market would comprise butcheries, wholesalers and retail stores.

Additionally, it will supply government institutions such as schools, hospitals, the military and others as well as the hospitality industry businesses such as hotels, lodges and restaurants.

Furthermore, some products from the abattoir will be sold to the

BMC cannery to produce various BMC ECCO canned products.

For his part, a cattle farmer at Makopong, Edwin Babeile, a BMC regular buyer, called for improved procurement processes between farmers and the BMC, especially the observance of turnaround time.

He said in the past BMC used to take three days to pay farmers but nowadays it took about two weeks to pay farmers, which he opined, escalated production costs.

Babeile partly blames the delays on technology in the financial sector.

He called on BMC to revise its prices and set the standard, adding that the buying prices were currently low and farmers did not make much to insufficiently develop their farms and improve their produce.

He said government was all out to increase the national herd, therefore it was critical for BMC to revisit its processes, thrash them out for the benefit of a farmer for government to achieve its target.

Babeile expressed hope that eventhough BMC would be running Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir, the new project should be run independently so that it does not inherit the liabilities of the parent company. **BOPA**



Botswana Meat Commission which wields experience in running abattoirs since 1965, is set to operate the Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir as a strategic business unit. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Lobu set to revive Karakul pelt industry

By Legolo Tebogo

TSABONG - About 111km from Tsabong, along Tsabong-Bokspits road lies Lobu Smallstock Farm, which was set up by government to be a centre of excellence in breeding high-quality smallstock and studs.

Among its other objectives, Lobu Small Stock Farm is tasked with the responsibility of reviving Karakul sheep.

Karakul sheep was once so thriving an industry that it was dubbed the black diamond of the Kgalagadi, due to its rich shiny black colour and so high a value it almost matched the diamond.

Lobu Smallstock Farm manager, Mr Geoffrey Balogi indicated, in an interview, that although the farm was able to sell its Karakul pelts in Namibia, the revival of the Karakul industry was still facing some challenges because a Karakul flock should graze separately from the rest of the animals in the area.

Mr Balogi pointed out that most of Botswana farmers practiced mixed grazing, therefore the rearing of Karakul sheep was a challenge.

Karakul pelts, Mr Balogi added, easily lose their desired quality if the animals are kept in a mixed grazing area.

“Tsosoloso ya yone e teng mme e bonya ga ise e goroge kwa re batlang e ya teng (The revival of the Karakul industry is happening at a slow pace, it is not yet where we want it to be), Mr Balogi added.

Karakul sheep is mainly kept for its skin, which is harvested before the lamb turns 24 hours or a day old, as such it needs special tender treatment and technical knowhow.

Lobu farm alone cannot revive the Karakul industry, but farmers around the area through Lobu mentorship are encouraged to rear Karakul sheep.

The Karakul pelts from the

Lobu farm are exported in a raw form, which has also been sighted as a challenge to the revival of the Karakul industry.

Mr Balogi said it could have been beneficial if the exportation of the Karakul skins was done after processing, which he opined could boost the quick revival of the industry and help create jobs.

Besides selling Karakul skins, Lobu also breeds Karakul flock to ensure that farmers could learn or buy from the farm.

Currently there are two farmers in the region, who are into Karakul sheep farming for its skins and

export purposes, though on a small scale.

They, therefore, depend on Lobu farm to assist with exporting their products to Namibia, there the pelts are used to make high quality fur jackets and coats.

Mr Balogi also said they assisted Khawa Development Trust to secure the Namibia market.

For his part, Kgosi Piet Manyoro of Khawa said the village trust was yet to export to Namibia and they were pinning their hope on Lobu farm for the assistance in accessing the market for their products.

“Fa ba re mmara o buletswe re tlaa bo rona re simolola”, he said, meaning that the trust was ready with stock once the market ‘opens’.

He, however, said they had not yet stored any skins for export because they were awaiting training on how to use the skinning equipment from Lobu farm.

Explaining how they managed to solve the mixed grazing issue, he said the trust had divided Swarka farm into two; the grazing area for the Karakul and the other for the rest of the flock. **BOPA**



Karakul sheep was once so thriving an industry that it was dubbed the black diamond of the Kgalagadi due to its rich shiny black and so high a value it almost matched the diamond. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Abattoir sparks hope for entrepreneur

By Taboka Ngwako

MAUBELO - Anticipation swirls in the hearts of the Kgalagadi community members, as the completion of the Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir draws closer.

Among those eagerly awaiting its opening is Tumisang Ngwanathebe, a female entrepreneur with a passion for leather processing.

Hailing from Makopong, Ms Ngwanathebe’s journey into the world of leather craftsmanship began in her teenage years.

Inspired by her mother’s skills in crafting leather into household decorations, she began experimenting with the material herself. What started as a hobby soon evolved into a full-fledged career.

“I grew up in a family of farmers who survived on tanning and preserving leather and my passion grew from there and I decided to go commercial,” said Ms Ngwanathebe.

In an interview, the 49- year-old said her self-funded business called Skin and Things Consultancy, which started in 2010, used animal skins to manufacture various products.

From exquisite gift bags, umbrellas to belts and sleek accessories made from animal skins, each product exudes sophistication and reflects Ms Ngwanathebe’s meticulous attention to detail.

Despite her lack of formal business training, Ms Ngwanathebe sought guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture, obtaining certification in leatherwork in order to kick start her business.

“Subsequently, I diversified my expertise by acquiring accreditation to become a trainer and assessor from the then Botswana Training Authority (BOTA), now known as Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA),” she said.

In addition to processing leather products, she trains other people to gain the necessary skills to also manufacture leather merchandise,” she said.

Outlining her creative process, Ms Ngwanathebe says she uses only organic raw materials on her products.

“The creative process involved in making a leather product typically encompasses several stages, each requiring careful consideration and attention to detail,” she explained.

She said the steps involved included design conceptualisation, material selection, pattern making, cutting and assembling.

“Throughout the manufacturing process, quality control measures are implemented to ensure that the finished product meets the desired standards of craftsmanship and quality,” she said.

Ms Ngwanathebe further stated that what sets her apart was not just her impeccable craftsmanship, but also her commitment to sustainability and ethical practices.

“The dye that I use to tan the beautiful colours on my products is sourced from local trees such as mositsane also known as Elephantorrhiza burkei, which is common in sandy areas,” she said.

However, she is swift to point out that she harvests the tree in a sustainable way. “I do not want to

contribute to the deforestation, so I am very strategic in the way I pick which tree to use,” she said.

Additionally, Ms Ngwanathebe procures animal skins from reputable sources including butcheries and ceremonial events

such as funerals and weddings, ensuring ethical sourcing practices are adhered to.

Despite her manual manufacturing methods, she boasts an impressive production capacity of 5 000 leather belts per

day.

“Machines would be of great use so that I get a higher output,” she said. Challenges still persist in Ms Ngwanathebe’s entrepreneurial journey, notably the scarcity of dedicated employees within her

line of work.

Reflecting on this hurdle, she urged fellow Batswana, particularly women, to cultivate a spirit of self-reliance and endeavour into entrepreneurship by leveraging government initiatives such as funds from the gender affairs department and Chema Chema.

Moreover, Ms Ngwanathebe’s aspirations extend beyond commercial success; she envisions becoming a prominent figure in the country’s business landscape, spearheading efforts to replace plastic shopping bags with environmentally friendly leather alternatives in major supermarkets.

“Matlalo ke teemane ya bobedi ya lefatshe,” she stated, advocating for a paradigm shift towards prioritising indigenous industries and drawing inspiration from nations that cherished their leather heritage.

Looking ahead, Ms Ngwanathebe reveals plans for expansion, with Tsabong Landboard granting her a business plot.

She said UNDP had agreed to fund her so that she could finally construct her own workshop.

In Ms Ngwanathebe’s journey, the merging of tradition, innovation, and resilience in the leather works industry embodies the spirit of the country’s entrepreneurial landscape, offering a beacon of hope amidst the arid plains of the Kgalagadi. **BOPA**



Ms Ngwanathebe in her workshop, which produces some 5 000 belts per day, among other leather goods. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Sexanana debate rages on in Bokspits

By Taboka Ngwako

BOKSPITS - Bokspits, a village in the middle of the Kgalagadi Desert where tradition and modernity coexist.

It is here that the infamous Prosopis mesquite plant popularly known as exanana has gained notoriety for its ability to withstand harsh conditions.

Originating from South America, it has found home in and colonised the Kgalagadi, Gantsi and Central districts.

Prosopis has since become a topic of heated discussion among locals, environmentalists, and policymakers alike.

The debate revolves around its perceived benefits and drawbacks, highlighting the complex interplay between human intervention, ecological impact, and sustainable development.

Some locals call it the ‘problem tree’, as the plant’s presence has stirred up a myriad of concerns among residents, ranging from environmental to societal and cultural impacts.

One of the primary grievances cited by residents is the plant’s aggressive growth, which has encroached into farmland and natural habitats, and has displaced indigenous flora.

A livestock farmer, Mr Matthys Kamboer, said in an interview that his field used to flourish with staple crops, but now they were being overrun by this invasive plant.

“The tree is shrubby, has long thin multi-branches and the leaves are ever green regardless of the season or climate,” Mr Kamboer stated.

“To stay this green, the plant requires a lot of water and since it rapidly delves to sub-surface areas to retrieve the water, it poses a threat to water supplies in the area and therefore should be eradicated,” he explained.

However, not all residents view sexanana as a problem.

Mr Fredrick Titus, a board member of the Bokspits, Rappelspan, Vaalhoek and Struizandam (BORAVAST) Community Resources Management Trust, sees it as an opportunity for economic growth and cultural revival.

Mr Titus suggested the plant be properly managed instead of being totally eliminated.

He indicated the plant’s potential for providing a sustainable source of income through the sale of its extracts and derivatives. “For instance our trust has a project aimed at developing a management strategy for the plant by producing charcoal and animal fodder from sexanana,” he said.

Mr Titus also highlighted the plant’s medicinal properties, which had been utilised by traditional healers for generations.

“It is believed to have anti-inflammatory effects and is used to alleviate conditions such as stomach pain, indigestion, and even minor infections,” he said.

Meanwhile, forest district coordinator - Kgalagadi District in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mr Tawana Maunganidze said the plant had advantages and disadvantages.

“The Prosopis mesquite or sexanana is said to have been introduced into the BORAVAST

area to address issues of desertification and growing sand dunes,” he said.

Mr Maunganidze said however, the plant due to its invasive nature encroached into other parts of the country and caused unanticipated damage. He said while the tree may possess certain desirable traits, such as resilience and adaptability, its negative impacts could not be overlooked.

“From ecosystem disruption to water depletion and agricultural challenges, the cons associated with sexanana trees underscore the importance of careful consideration and management of invasive species to mitigate their detrimental effects on the environment and society,” he said.

Mr Maunganidze further stated that the tree was notorious for its insatiable water consumption due to its deep root systems.

“In regions already grappling with water scarcity, the introduction of sexanana trees intensifies the problem, further straining limited resources,” he said.

He also said some people had complained of allergies associated with the tree, but there was no scientific evidence that proved that the plant caused any allergic reactions.

Elaborating on the benefits of the plant, Mr Maunganidze said it was a good source firewood.

“The wood is dense and burns slowly, making it a valuable source of fuel for cooking and heating and it is also used for woodwork as it can be crafted into furniture, fences, and other structures,” he said. Mr Maunganidze futher said sexanana pods were edible and

had been traditionally used by indigenous peoples for food.

“The plant is also a good windbreaker and since wind erosion is a problem in this area, sexanana holds onto dust sand, therefore in that instance it is good for the environment,” he said.

Regarding management strategies that his department had come up with to control the plant, Mr Maunganidze said the action plan named the Prosopis Management Strategy was in place. “The strategy involve a comprehensive approach to address the challenges posed by invasive Prosopis species while also leveraging potential benefits they may offer,” said Mr Maunganidze.

He said integrated management strategies that combined various control methods tailored to different contexts, which included mechanical methods to manage the plant especially in areas where it is not needed, could be used.

“We also think we should tap into our research and monitoring division to develop biological control methods or get into partnership with tertiary institutions to research more about sexanana and its management strategies,” he said.

Mr Maunganidze said the department was going to do its best to manage the plant, but not going to eliminate it completely as it had advantages and disadvantages.

As debates rage on about its merits and drawbacks, the village stands as a small-scale version of the broader challenge of balancing conservation with development, in the face of changing landscapes. **BOPA**



Mr Tumaletse

Farmers critical to abattoir sustainability

By Calviniah Kgautlhe

TSABONG - Albeit at a snail's pace, preparations are gradually gaining momentum to get smallstock farmers organised enough to sustainably supply quality stock to the almost complete Tsabong Multispecies Abattoir.

As the state-of-the-art facility, which has a capacity to slaughter either 300 small stock or 60 cattle per day nears completion, eager beavers within the small stock sub-sector are keeping their ears to the ground and positioning themselves appropriately in readiness to supply.

Molopo Smallstock Farmers Marketing Cooperative is one of those that keenly await the take-off of the golden opportunity that the opening of the abattoir will bring about.

The cooperative's chairperson, Mr Leo Tumaletse says it is not rocket science that to get the ball rolling, stakeholders, especially farmers, get their 'ducks in a row' if the national cash cow is to run successfully.

"Behind the scenes, we are organising ourselves as farmers because we know that divided we fall but united we stand," says Mr Tumaletse, highlighting that the common challenges of water shortage to support smallstock rearing and the lack of markets for their produce prompted their decision to work together as a block.

To their cooperative society,

farmers being properly organised is of paramount importance as it gives weight to their advocacy on issues pertinent to the growth and success of the sector.

Mr Tumaletse traces their efforts to working together as a collective to 2007 when local small stock farmers began to organise themselves by forming an association to advocate for the construction of an abattoir.

After their initial efforts resulted in government in 2009 promising them an abattoir, they registered the association as a cooperative society, after which they undertook benchmarking missions to neighbouring countries to learn best practices from those who were doing well in the small stock farming business.

"Assisted by government, we went on benchmarking missions in Namibia, South Africa and at the Botswana Meat Commission to see how small stock abattoirs were operated," he said.

While the Molopo Smallstock Farmers Marketing Cooperative was hopeful that the abattoir would be constructed back in 2019, they accepted as valid circumstances that cropped up along the way such as the need to change the project scope.

Mr Tumaletse recalls how they were expecting a small abattoir to cater just for the district, only for government to bring about a bigger and better project of national significance.

Now a national asset, the

abattoir will address farmers' yearning for better and extensive markets and finally put to bed the challenges that emanated from the absence of slaughter facilities in the district.

"Sometimes we came together as farmers and loaded about 100 sheep and goats to take to market in Gaborone, but it was a challenge as there was no slaughter facility there with a capacity to slaughter 100 animals in a day," he said, recounting how their past efforts to source markets for their smallstock had failed.

Such arrangements often saw buyers take only about 20 animals, forcing farmers to spend days trying to find where else to slaughter the rest of the animals.

With buyers alive to this challenge, many took advantage of the situation by forcing the buying price down, resulting in farmers giving up on pursuing the idea any further due to constant losses.

"It was a nightmare to sell in the city. Sometimes when we took our smallstock there buyers told us that their fridges were full," he recalls.

The unsatisfactory returns compelled the cooperative to then permit members to sell independently while they continued to work with government to ensure that the Tsabong Multispecies aAbattoir came to life.

Nonetheless, Mr Tumaletse looks back with contentment that as they await the launch of the

abattoir in a few months, farmers have risen to the occasion in terms of improving both the quality and quantity of their produce.

That notwithstanding, a few loose ends need tying up before the abattoir starts operating and those include farmers' training on entrepreneurship as well as business and commerce skills.

"We need to impart a change of mindset in farmers in order for them to do farming differently by moving away from conventional ways of doing things to farming in a modern way, where farming is treated as a business," he said.

As part of its strategy to get ready, the association has applied for 25-hectare chunks of land from which mini clusters of farmers would operate.

The land will be used collectively by the small group of farmers as a centre where their smallstock would be collected from for sale to the abattoir and where they shall conduct the rest of the activities relating to their smallstock farming venture.

The strategy, learnt from farmers in South Africa's Eastern Cape region is expected to work successfully for the 80-man strong association.

On the other hand, the relatively new Werda Smallstock Association is also busy trying to position itself to make good use of the Tsabong abattoir.

Its chairperson, Mr Joseph Louw is optimistic that despite having been established as recently as March 2022, the

association is making good progress.

"We are starting to be organised as farmers though we are moving at a snail's pace. This is because to us this is a new concept, therefore it is a learning curve to get properly acquainted with how smallstock associations operate," he said. With 32 members under its fold, Mr Louw is confident that the association will help them speak with one voice, especially with regard to setting the buying price of their animals.

Their findings on smallstock prices in some SADC countries being as high as P2 500 per live goat while locally the price could go as low as P800 forced them to form the association so as to draw strength from their numbers when advocating for better returns for their animals.

For them, the construction of the abattoir in Tsabong brought small stock markets to their doorstep, giving them hope for better prices.

"We need to meet the international market export requirements and such include improving on livestock traceability, which is necessary in order to sell," he said.

The Werda Smallstock Association, which operates under the ambit of the Smallstock Industry Federation of Botswana is also keen on the improvement of the legislative framework that governs small stock associations and sees such a move as a step in the right direction. **BOPA**



UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION FUND

Notice in respect of the Late Dimpho Leah Mautle

The Board of Trustees of the University of Botswana Defined Contribution Pension Fund wishes to advise any beneficiaries and dependants of the late **Dimpho Leah Mautle** who passed away on **19 March 2024 in Gaborone** and laid to rest in **Hukuntsi** on **24 March 2024**, to contact the University of Botswana Staff Welfare and Benefits Office, Department of Human Resources at University of Botswana Administration Building, Block 108. Plot 4775, Notwane Road, Gaborone, Botswana Ms **Lesego Pitso** at **355 2231** or call Ms **Neo Mosime** at **355 5709** or Ms Laviniah Molokomme at **355 2021** by **26 April 2024**.

You are required to provide proof of relationship with the deceased.

PITSO YA BAJA BOSWA

Khuduthamaga ya University of Botswana Defined Contribution Pension Fund e kopa gore baja boswa ba ga **Dimpho Leah Mautle** yo o tlhokafetseng ka kgwedi ya Mopitlo ele lesome le boferabongwe ka ngwaga wa 2024 a bolokilwe kwa Hukuntsi ka kgwedi ya Mopitlo e tlhola malatsi a masome a mabedi le bone ba iponatsa kwa ofising e latelang:

- Staff Welfare and Benefits Office, Department of Human Resources kwa University of Botswana Administration Building, Block 108. Plot 4775, Notwane Road, Gaborone, Botswana.

Baja boswa ba ka leletsa Mme **Lesego Pitso** mo mogaleng wa **355 2231** kgotsa Mme **Neo Mosime** mo mogaleng wa **355 5709** kgotsa Mme **Laviniah Molokomme** mo mogaleng wa **355 2021** pele ga kgwedi ya Mopitlo e tlhola malatsi ale mane ka ngwaga wa 2024.

Le kopiwa go tla ka sesupo sa gore losikana jang le moswi.

VACANT POSITION: VACUUM SEWAGE SPECIALIST (1No POSITION)



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- Verify the accurate of survey data, including measurements and calculations conducted at survey sites.
- Direct or conduct surveys in order to establish legal boundaries for properties, based on legal deeds and titles.
- Record the results of surveys, including the shape, contour, location, elevation, and dimension of land or land features.
- Calculate heights, depths, relative positions, property lines and other characteristics of terrain. Prepare or supervise preparation of all data, charts, plots, maps, records and documents related to surveys.
- Write descriptions of property boundary surveys for use in deeds, leases or other legal documents

Skills & Experience

- BSc Civil Engineering and related work experience may be substituted.
- A surveying program may be offered with a related major such as mapping science or cartography. Some programs offer concentration areas, which might include design or photo surveying
- A positive can do attitude towards work and a strong ability to work in a team environment
- Excellent knowledge of building codes and attention to details is a must
- Atleast five years of experience

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BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT NOTICE



CALL FOR BENEFICIARIES – DEATH BENEFIT CLAIMS

In line with the provisions of the **Retirement Funds Act (2022)** (the Act) which require retirement funds administrators to trace beneficiaries of death claims, **NMG Administrators Botswana** is currently assessing beneficiaries for deceased members of the Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund listed below. Therefore, all possible beneficiaries/dependants should liaise with the Administrator. This is to ensure that all beneficiaries or dependants are known and considered by the Trustees in apportioning the Death Benefits in pursuit of their fiduciary responsibility. The social investigations for the other known beneficiaries/dependants are also ongoing and the already engaged concerned parties should ignore this call.

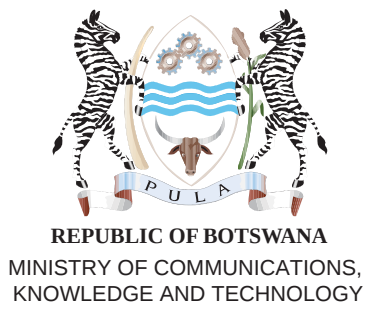
Tsamaiso ya melao ya pension **Retirement Funds Act (2022)** e tlama bodiredi go batlisisa bajaboswa ba maloko a bone. Ka jalo, **NMG Administrators Botswana** ba sekaseka ba ba neng ba tlhokomelwa ke maloko a Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund a kwadilweng fa tlase. Ka jalo, ba bothe baba neng ba tlhokomelwa ke maloko a fa tlase ba kopiwa go ikolaganya le ofise ya NMG Administrators. Se ke go netefatsa gore botlhe ba ba ka nnang teng ba kgone go lemogiwa fa go kgaogangwa madi a penshene. Ditlhotlhomiso mabapi le ba bangwe ba ba itsegeng di tswelletse, mme ba e leng gore re kile ra ikgolaganya le bone ba ka tlhokomologa molaetsa o.

Name Of Deceased Member	Date Of Death	Membership Status
Gaboutwelwe Lerole	12/8/23	Active
Irene Ontse	4/3/23	Active
Itumeleng Sebina	1/27/24	Active
Kelebile Kesekile	2/20/24	Active
Keoleboge Letsweletse	11/8/23	Active
Neo Gabobofane	9/20/23	Active
Othusitse Sebangane	4/4/24	Active
Sylvia Sekaba	4/26/23	Active
Teko Montshiwa	9/9/23	Active
Tsholofelo Boikanyo	1/6/24	Active
Mookami B Mooketsi	1/30/24	Active
Nosizo Lebani	4/3/24	Active

Name Of Deceased Member	Date Of Death	Membership Status
Seanokeng Mosimane	12/9/23	Active
Basadibotlhe M Abotseng	4/4/24	Active
Bonang Richard	8/20/23	Active
Ompatile Mokgwathi	12/29/23	Active
Kembost Choongo	10/23/23	Active
Lesego Chinhoyi	12/18/23	Active
Keolopile Poitshego	8/3/23	Active
Esther Letsebe	9/20/23	Active
Tiharese Letlamma	11/22/23	Active
Kaone N Mathanjane	1/18/24	Active
Janet Matshane	8/8/21	Active
Letshogeng Kelebogile	3/2/24	Pensioner

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Chombo goes commercial

By Bakang Wren

GABORONE - Miss World Africa, Lesego Chombo has announced her plans to commercialise her talents following Miss World competition.

She made the announcement during a press conference held in Gaborone on Thursday.

Chombo indicated her excitement in working with various institutions as a brand ambassador noting, 'I am looking forward to speaking engagements where I can impact and inspire others while also making a living.'

She also mentioned that she anticipated to engage in different activities with the Miss World organisation.

Chombo envisions her endeavours as inspirational and financially sustaining.

She said she would take part at the upcoming Beauty with a Purpose world tour across Africa, Asia, and Europe, arranged by the Miss World organisation.

Now that she has concluded her reign as Miss Botswana, she said she was eager to pursue her interests.

Chombo has again, expressed her desire to collaborate with friends she made at the Miss World platform, including partnering with other world foundations.

At the same press conference, Chombo also introduced the team she would be working with during her reign as Miss World Africa and at the Lesego Chombo Foundation.

"I'm looking forward to working with this team, to ensure a successful reign as Miss World Africa.

That's the main idea," said Chombo and expressed her determination to put to good use her skills.

"Whenever you recognise my eloquence, remember that I am also a speaker in the commercial realm.

Whenever you acknowledge my modeling skills, know that I am a commercial model. I intend to take every skill I possess to the next level," she said.

Regarding the Genesis Project, which stood out at the Miss World competition, she said she planned to narrow down the focus to Ngami region with the intention to grow to other areas in future.

"While I used to work with many children, for the sake of impact, I plan to select a few families

to work with consistently and be accountable for the next few years.

This will be in the Ngami region," she said and added that she was open to partner with other institutions.

She talked about her intention to operate as a brand and be involved in various engagements beyond Beauty with a Purpose and Miss World.

She hastened to explain that operating as a brand, she did not mean that she was unwilling to partner with other institutions because she was very much open to collaboration. **BOPA**



Chombo updating the media on her roles as the reigning Miss World Africa in Gaborone on Thursday. She expressed her desire to collaborate with friends she made at the Miss World including partnering with other world foundations. Photo: Felicity Male

Burkina Faso Queen Esther winner

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - Lauren Traore of Burkina Faso has clinched the Queen Esther International Beauty Pageant 2024 crown on Saturday.

Mo Hong from Vietman and Dasebu Kafui of Ghana followed as first and second runners-up in a highly contested event, which was held virtually.

The event attracted young females from Botswana, Ghana, Uganda, Cameroon, Zambia, Namibia, Vietnam, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso but the Burkina Faso queen stood out after excelling in

her project and questions among others.

The pageant provided a platform for born-again Christian young women to showcase their beauty upholding godly values and at the same time impacting positively on their generations.

Initially, the pageant was held locally but this time around, the executive coordinator of Queen Esther, Vehae Tjiriange decided to spread wings and engage the international audience.

The pageantry is cultivated from the story of Queen Esther in the Book of Esther in the Bible.

Different speakers, who

graced the occasion, hailed the coordinator for taking the pageant to the international space in order to reach out to and empower more girls and young women who could positively impact the world.

They appreciated that the programme focused on training leadership and life skills including political, governance and stewardship leadership skills.

"This is an incredible initiative, which has achieved a lot since its inception in 2010, moulding young women to make informed decision, excel in all aspects of life and speak for the voiceless," said Taboka Rotsi, Ngamiland Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (NCONGO) chairperson.

The pageant, she said had grown in leaps and bounds hence she reached out to the international community to empower more girls and young women.

She appreciated that the pageant offered contestants an opportunity to engage in beauty with a purpose projects aimed to impact positively in the society.

Rotsi said Ngamiland region was marred with issues of child marriages, defilement and molestation especially in hard to reach areas.

Rotsi stressed the need for stakeholders to support such initiatives saying they offered immense benefits to the girl child.

Pastor Melody Banda said the pageantry empowered girls and young women to have a vision in their lives and become more powerful and claim their

freedom.

She said the pageantry had developed young women into change agents, to embrace godly values and live better lives.

In some cases, she said it was worrisome as some parents failed to provide basic necessities for their children, therefore becoming vulnerable and getting exposed to intimate relationships for the sake of putting bread on the table.

Pastor Banda appreciated that the pageantry will teach the girl child to be independent and avoid becoming liability to anyone even men.

Tjiriange said taking the pageantry to the international stage was a dream come true.

Tjiriange said the initiative was to unearth the most inwardly beautiful and talented young women, with outstanding characters to become role models for all generations.

Through the pageantry, Tjiriange offered a training tailored to transform the delegates into influential young women and change agents.

She acknowledged that the pageantry had so far borne fruits saying most of their previous queens were excelling in life amongst them, Miss World Africa, Lesego Chombo.

"My journey in this pageantry has become a testament to the power of determination, purpose and the ability to make a positive impact in the world.

I have groomed powerful women who had rose to the occasion to bring solutions to challenges as well as promote stability and peace in societies," she said. **BOPA**



Traore has clinched the Queen Esther International Beauty Pageant title on Saturday.

Teams sweat for Orange FA last 8 spots

GABORONE - First Division South outfit, UB Hawks has made it to the quarter finals of the Orange FA Cup following a 9-8 penalty shootout against Premier League side, VTM.

The two teams failed to find the back of the net in the allocated 90

minutes, but both scored in extra time through substitutes, Bogosi Mfila of VTN and Mmoloki Kgaswane of the Vasco Boys, as UB Hawks is affectionately known by its supporters.

In a post-match interview, UB Hawks coach Basimanebotlhe

Malete said both teams were equally determined to secure a spot in the last eight of the tournament.

He said despite missing a couple of goal scoring chances in the first half, his team was focused on its approach and directing the opponents.

He said they worked on closing the gaps in midfield, but that VTM was equally determined to win the match.

Despite the opponents taking the lead in extra time, Malete said he remained confident of an equaliser as his team has managed some dramatic comebacks in league encounters.

Malete said a cup game was completely different from a league encounter as teams must focus on finishing the game within 90 minutes.

In another last 16 Orange FA Cup encounter, Police XI narrowly won 1-0 against Nhabe-based second division outfit, City Kings at Kings Arena Park in Gumare.

The Jungle Kings goal came in the 28th minute from a penalty kick that was converted by Ogomoditswe Sitang.

In an interview City Kings coach, Casper Elijah said although

his team was ready for the war, his boys showed signs of intimidation and were timid.

Police XI coach, Nelson Olebile expressed happiness that his team won a tough game and proceeded to the last eight.

In a game played at the National Stadium, Mosha Gaolaolwe's header against Nico United secured Township Rollers a spot in the last eight of the tournament.

Sua Flamingos defeated Pula Roofing 5-4 on penalties. The two teams concluded the match with a one-all draw and the winner was decided by spot kicks.

In another Orange FA Cup last 16 encounter played in Serowe, Jwaneng Galaxy defeated Tsabotlhe 3-1.

Tafic also advanced to the quarter finals after defeating Mbalakalungu 3-2 in a penalty shootout. The two teams were tied 0-0 during regulation time. **BOPA**



UB Hawks goalkeeper, Kabo Ntswaneng saving one of the penalties against VTM during the Orange FA Cup last 16 encounter in Gaborone on Saturday. Hawks won 9-8 on penalties after playing to a 1-all draw.

Photo: Pheny Moalosi

Rakgare applauds BTA for hosting junior championships

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Botswana Tennis Association (BTA) has been lauded for successfully hosting ITF J30 World Tour Juniors Championships that was staged in Gaborone in the past two weeks.

Over 90 athletes and officials from around the world converged in Gaborone for the tournament, which carried international points that would permit players to get to the junior grand slam, junior French open and junior Wimbledon.

Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture, Tumiso Rakgare said BTA's passion and commitment enabled it to stage a well organised event.

"We must congratulate BTA president, Oaitse Thipe and his team for a well-organised World

Tour in Botswana," said Rakgare and added that he was aware that Botswana would be hosting the Davis Cup although their centre was not in a satisfying condition.

"You see renovating stadiums is not an easy thing, but it is important to refurbish them because this is the National Tennis Centre.

We have an increment as the ministry from government from P104 million to P200 million, now from here it is important to ponder that for the 2024-2025-2026 budget what do we do to make sure we have enough for maintenance of our facilities," he said.

Furthermore, he said it was important for the private sector to come on board and assist government.

"I will say this again, it is only in this country where government

does everything in sport.

Show me another country that operates like Botswana. I just want to take this opportunity to appeal to the private sector to help. If you look at Mark Nawa, he has a dream to make it, maybe he is going to be the first Motswana to play a Grand Slam," he said.

BTA vice president technical, Nonofu Othusitse said they were happy with how the tournament was organised.

He said the only challenge was that they had no sponsors, forcing BTA to find alternative means of funding the tournament.

"But in terms of performance, we are happy. Botswana had eight girls in the main draw and seven boys which according to me is a big achievement," he said and added that it was not easy to get so many players in the main draw. **BOPA**



MADRID - Atletico de Madrid's Koke (right) vying for the ball with Girona's Herrera during a La Liga football match in Spain on Saturday. Atletico Madrid came back from a goal down to win 3-1 at home to Girona, who opened the scoring with Artem Dovbyk scoring from close range after good work from Savio and Yan Couto.

Photo: Xinhua

IOC, UEFA to monitor betting integrity ahead of major events

GENEVA - The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) will strengthen collaboration to ensure betting integrity during the Paris 2024 and Euro 2024 competitions, the IOC has announced on Friday.

IOC and UEFA held a workshop with betting entities and International Federations (IFs) at the Olympic House in Lausanne, Switzerland on Thursday to provide an opportunity for sports organisations and betting entities to learn from each other and strengthen collaboration.

The Olympic Movement Unit on

the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions (OM Unit PMC) and UEFA's Anti-Match-Fixing Unit outlined its respective strategies and monitoring systems to detect irregularities and cheating at the workshop.

The betting operators also shared how they cooperate with the IOC on suspicious cases.

"The importance of preventing the manipulation of competitions, not only as a means of safeguarding the credibility of competitions, but above all to protect clean athletes, is part of Olympic Agenda 2020+5, the IOC's strategic roadmap," IOC said. **Xinhua**



GUIZHOU - International students from Guizhou University parading before the start of a friendly football match in Rongjiang County of southwest China's Guizhou Province on Saturday. Football team of international students from Guizhou University played against the Jiangxi Rice Noodle team from Shangrao City. Photo: Xinhua

Nawa reigns supreme

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Local tennis sensation, Mark Nawa is the champion of the ITF J30 World Tour Juniors Championships after defeating South Africa's Siyabonga Jaca in the final. Nawa beat Jaca 7-5, 6-2 at the National Tennis Court on Saturday to become the second Motswana to win the men's World Tour Juniors singles after Botswana's decorated tennis player, Denzel Seetso. For Nawa, the win demonstrated that perseverance and patience could take one far. His unprecedented win was not only special to him but to the whole tennis community as he has featured in four J30 singles finals and lost. It was clear in the final match against Jaca, who had defeated him in the two previous encounters, that he was out for blood. It was not surprising that Jaca started the match fully aware that he was up against his regular prey. Lo and behold, Nawa turned things around and attacked like a wounded lion and eventually defeated his nemesis. Enroute to the final, Nawa had to dig deep to win his matches. His journey was not all rosy, as he had to go past tough opponents in the likes of Great Britain's Aston Joshua and brushed him aside with a 7-5, 7-6 win before proceeding to the quarterfinals, where he met South Africa's Akexander Hristov. Hristov proved to be hard nut to crack, but the determined and results-driven Nawa prevailed with a 6-2, 6-0 victory. His semi final match against Mpho Leshoele of Lesotho was a highly contested nail-biting encounter, which saw the local sensation losing the first set 4-6. Now, driven by the desire to win and to clear a dark cloud that has been hovering over him for long, Nawa had to win the last two sets 6-2, 6-3 to book a berth in the final. Nawa said in a post-match

interview that he was mentally and physically prepared for the final match hence he came out on top. He said his confidence, which was at its peak helped him to claim the title, which eluded him for long.

He said he was charged up and ready to win other tournaments. "I am really proud with my performance this week, and I hope I can carry it into future tournaments," he said.

Jaca, said his knee injury coupled with body feeling heavy contributed to his loss as he could not move as he had wanted. "But to be honest, Mark played very well.

He worked very hard and he was stronger than me," he said. In the ladies singles final, South Africa's Celina Joseph defeated Koronayashe Rugara of United States of America 6-3, 6-1. **BOPA**



Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture, Tumiso Rakgare (left) congratulating Nawa after beating Jaca 7-5, 6-2 during the ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Juniors final in Gaborone on Saturday. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

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