

**INAUGURATION ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA 2009 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 0830 HOURS,**

20 OCTOBER 2009

Your Lordship Chief Justice Nganunu and Mrs. Nganunu
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Balopi and Mrs. Balopi
Former President Mr F. G. Mogae Lady Masire Judge President of the
Industrial Court

Your Ladyships and Lordships Judges of the High Court and Industrial
Court, and your Spouses

Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International
Organisations and your spouses Honourable Members of Parliament and
your spouses Dikgosi le bahumagadi The Right Reverend Bishop Valentine
T. Seane Distinguished Guests Batswana betsho, ke lo dumedisa ka Pula!

1. I once more take the solemn Oath of Office of President with a great sense of humility. I am humbled by the expression of faith and trust bestowed upon me and my Government by the citizens of this country. At the same time, I derive much strength from this show of confidence, and as a result, I take the responsibilities which come with the office with renewed optimism and resolve as I put emphasis on Delivery.

2. I wish to congratulate all members of Parliament and Councillors across party lines for their success. Whilst one party may have fared better than others, the overall outcome is more important, as it reflects the will of the people. We are united in our knowledge that our collective aspirations and destiny as a people are far greater than the individual differences we have at party political level. Team work and collaboration will be crucial if we are to deliver to the expectations of Batswana.

3. We must use this opportunity to count our blessings, and remember that many societies find peace and stability elusive which we take for granted; that horrendous atrocities have fallen upon many countries; and that economic ruin has resulted from poor governance which places sectarian interests ahead of national interest. We must forever remain vigilant and guard our treasure of Democracy jealously.

4. When I took Office in April 2008, I enumerated some of the challenges which lie ahead, and my resolve to harness our collective energies and capacities to overcome them. These challenges, namely, unemployment, poverty, crime, HIV and Aids, shortage of shelter, declining social values, environmental degradation and global competition remain valid today. I am happy to report that we have put in place a number of policies, programmes and projects, measures and initiatives to tackle most if not all of them and will continue to do so in the coming Term.

5. These measures cover a whole range of the development agenda. Particular attention will also be paid to agriculture, education and skills

development, health, housing, youth empowerment, sports, the arts, diversification and sustainable use of resources.

6. I remain committed to turning around the agricultural sector, such that production levels of both livestock and crops is increased significantly. Through commercialization of areas where we have comparative advantage, provision of infrastructure, as well as facilitation of credit, the agricultural sectors' contribution to GDP as well as our food security should improve.

7. Human resource development remains critical. Through our education and skills development policies and programmes, issues of access, quality and equity will continue to be addressed. This is necessary to meet our current and future needs, and for international competitiveness.

8. Closely related to the development of our skills base is the need to move with speed into a knowledge society. Communication, Science and Technology will be key in this. More use of ICT for service delivery, coupled with strengthened research and development, should not only give us greater efficiency, but opportunities for diversification beyond diamonds should be enhanced. Innovation and creativity, especially amongst the youth will be encouraged and promoted. Through communication infrastructure development, access for rural areas and international connectivity, as well as telemedicine will be greatly improved.

9. We have long recognized that the diversification of the economy both within the minerals sector and beyond is a key strategy for our future survival. It is for this reason that considerable investment will continue to go into mineral beneficiation, infrastructure development in all sectors including transport, energy and water. Our research and development institutions therefore, will have a critical role to play in product development.

10. The combined effect of our investments in the various sectors will be job creation as well as poverty alleviation. In this regard, I have decided as I did with employment creation which is coordinated from my office by the Vice President that our poverty eradication strategy will also likewise be coordinated from the Office of the President by the Vice President to ensure we maximize the impact of our various programmes and policies towards the goal of bringing about dignity for those living in poverty.

11. The Youth are our future. Consequently investment in sports, the arts and youth empowerment schemes will remain a key part of our development agenda. I pledge to search high and low for more opportunities for our youth, and we will engage with them to achieve this. I currently have a list of about forty such recommendations for such opportunities from Youth offices which will be considered shortly covering business, employment and social issues.

12. A more comprehensive account on other developments will be provided in the State of the Nation Address which I will deliver in Parliament in a few weeks from now.

13. For us to make notable progress, everyone in the public service, the private sector, in every office, mine, farm, masimo, moraka - must all give

their best. Every student and teacher must remember that a moment lost relegates us to the bottom of the skills and knowledge hierarchy. Every artist and every sportsperson should strive to be the very best.

14. It is only when everyone approaches their pursuits with purpose and determination that ownership of the development path will be achieved. The resources deployed by Government are then optimized for maximum gain.

15. One of our pivotal aspirations is to create a Compassionate, Just and Caring nation, a key tenet of which is dignified living. This aspiration is driven by our respect for human life. Our health care system, poverty alleviation measures, support for the young, the elderly, people with disabilities, as well as orphans, will be driven in this term by this value system.

16. While Government will not shirk its responsibility in these matters, the results will be greater, the reach much wider, and the sense of satisfaction much deeper if everyone, in their different capacities, make their contribution. Those who are more able must lend a hand to the less fortunate. This country needs more acts of philanthropy. The spirit of voluntarism must be shown at all times. We as individuals, in partnership with Government, are ultimately responsible for our own dignity and destiny. And as I have said before, we only have one country to live in and we must all do our best to make it a success.

17. We preach mindset change to the nation. This ranges from improvement in the nations work ethic, for better productivity and thus improved Delivery, prudent use of our scarce resources and elimination of waste, to the acceptance that no nation is self-sufficient in all areas. In this regard, both foreign capital and foreign skills which are complimentary to our own resources will continue to be welcome.

18. Leadership at all levels must attempt to be exemplary and show the way towards changing mindsets as I have described. We must be patriotic towards Botswana and supportive of one another instead of pulling our country and each other down as is often demonstrated by some in our media.

19. While optimistic about our future, I remain conscious of the challenges brought on by the Global Financial Crisis.

20. In this connection, the private sector must redouble its efforts in a spirit of partnership with Government to grow the economy.

21. We remain greatly indebted to the international community and development partners for the support they have given us over the years. We will continue to value this support as we consolidate the gains we have made.

22. Let me reiterate that I as I am sure all of you do, hold dearly the principles and values of democracy and freedom. Adherence to these values allows participation and ownership by our people in the creation of a common destiny. These ideals inform our foreign policy, as we desire for others what we desire for ourselves. We will work with our SADC colleagues

to ensure that these ideals become a culture in our region and the continent as a whole.

23. As I conclude, let me remind the nation at large that everyone must be ready to be held accountable. We need to rekindle our spirit of self-reliance. Like it or not, self-reliance is an issue of willpower and pride, and it requires discipline to stay the course. Our conduct must also be beyond reproach.

24. We should not delude ourselves. All nations which have made great strides place heavy demands on themselves, for they realise that they must create enough for themselves for today with a surplus for tomorrow. Future generations inherit the surplus in order to make a start.

25. I would like to thank everyone, citizen and non-citizen alike, who make this country a place worth living in, and a destination of choice for world travellers and investors alike.

26. I thank you. Pula!
