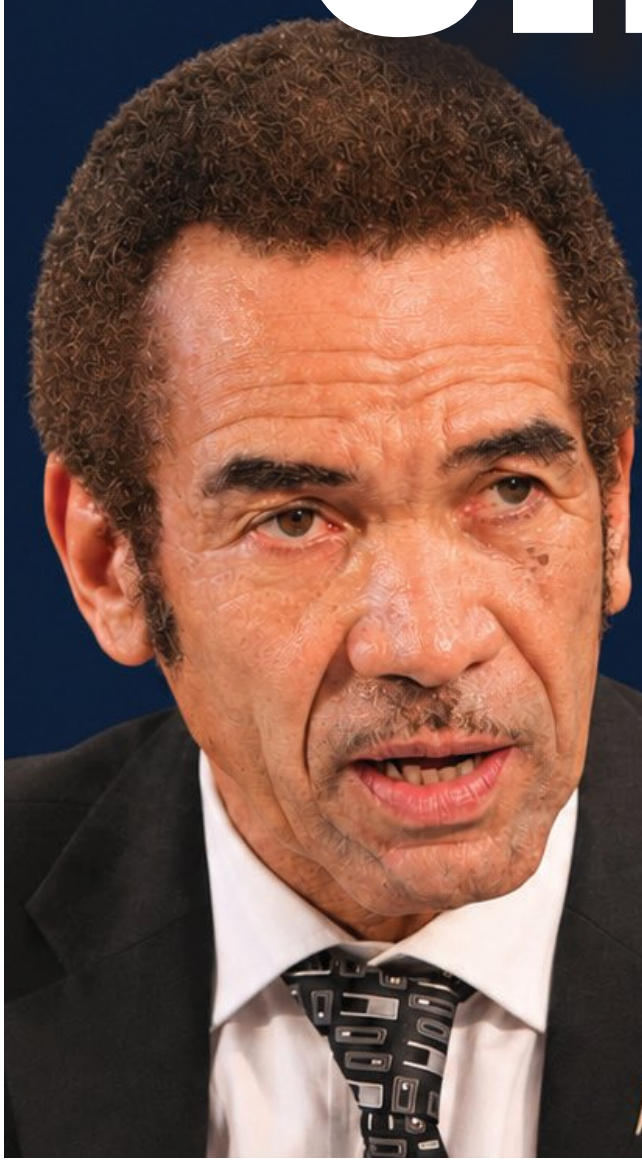
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13.

KHAMA: I NEVER MET CHITUBE



Former President Ian Khama denies links to alleged political fixer Jerry Chitube as scrutiny intensifies over Chitube's reported ties to the Presidency, while his successor Mokgweetsi Masisi remains silent and Minister Pius Mokgware promises to brief the nation

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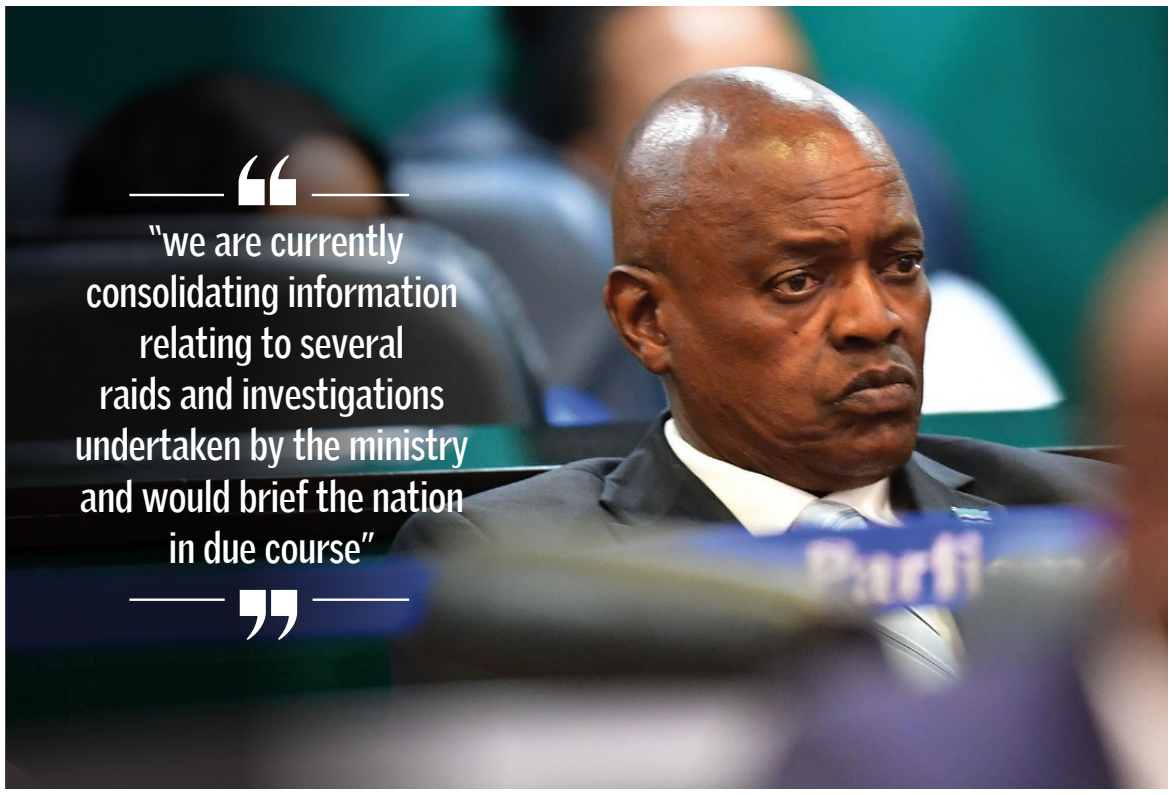


Photo Credit: Social Media



Khama: I Never Met Chitube

Former President Ian Khama denies links to alleged political fixer Jerry Chitube as scrutiny intensifies over Chitube's reported ties to the Presidency, while his successor Mokgweetsi Masisi remains silent and Minister Pius Mokgware promises to brief the nation



GAZETTE REPORTER

Former President Ian Khama has denied knowing or ever meeting alleged political fixer and power broker Jerry Chitube, distancing himself from the controversial businessman whose reported association with the Office of the President has raised questions about his background and connections within Botswana's political establishment.

Khama told The Botswana Gazette that he did not know Chitube and had never met him, dismissing any suggestion of a personal association with the businessman whose name has resurfaced following revelations about his reported involvement in activities connected to the Presidency.

Commenting on the circumstances surrounding Chitube's deportation in 2015, Khama said he could not recall the reasons behind the decision.

"There were some who were recommended for deportation during my time, but it's impossible to remember the circumstances. I don't recall why he was deported," Khama said.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Asked whether Chitube had provided any services to the government during his presidency, Khama denied any knowledge of such dealings.

"I am not aware that he offered or provided any services to government because I never met him or knew him," he said.

MASISI SILENT

Khama's successor, Mokgweetsi Masisi, who worked closely with the Directorate of Intelligence Services director, Brigadier Peter Magosi, whose organisation has been mentioned in the reports, did not respond to this publication's questions about his administration's working relationship with Chitube.

The developments follow renewed scrutiny of Chitube, whose activities have once again attracted considerable attention following reports of an alleged diplomatic passport scheme involving intelligence and immigration officials, and revelations that he works under Omphile Sehurutshe, the presidential adviser on projects. Chitube was arrested last week in an operation expected to have far-reaching implications on his circle of operatives.

> "I am not aware that he offered or provided any services to government because I never met him or knew him."

MINISTER RESPONDS

Asked about the matter, Minister of Home Affairs Major General Pius Mokgware said "we are currently consolidating information relating to several raids and investigations undertaken by the ministry and would brief the nation in due course". Pressed further on Chitube, the minister said he could not give information on an isolated case and urged for patience.

Parliament Demands De Beers Funding Answers

Saleshando is demanding the cost and funding terms of Botswana's proposed bigger De Beers stake, warning that national development priorities could suffer.

BONGANI MALUNGA

Parliament is preparing to put the government's proposed increase of Botswana's stake in De Beers under the microscope, with Leader of Opposition Dumelang Saleshando demanding clarity on how the country will finance the potentially costly acquisition.

President Duma Boko announced during Monday's State of the Nation Address (SONA) that Botswana intends to double its shareholding in De Beers from 15 percent to 30 percent, a move that would make the country the diamond giant's single largest shareholder. Botswana has backed the Global Diamond Consortium as its preferred bidder for Anglo American's 85 percent interest in De Beers.

However, the announcement did not disclose how much Botswana will pay for the additional stake or how its portion of the transaction will be financed. International reports on the proposed transaction have similarly noted that Botswana's funding arrangements have not yet been disclosed. That unanswered question is now set to follow the deal into Parliament.

FUNDING QUESTIONS

Speaking in a post-SONA reaction, Saleshando said legislators will demand the finer financial details of the acquisition, particularly whether the transaction will place additional pressure on the national budget at a time when constituencies are competing for limited development resources.

"We have been wondering how this development would pan out but we want to establish the source of funds for such a transaction. This is not something that will be handed to us on a platter, funds are involved. We have heard of assistance from Middle Eastern countries in the acquisition of an increased stake but how much of that portion is truly ours after the transaction," Saleshando asserted.

"It's still early days but Parliament will seek answers on the whole acquisition process and how the funds were sourced. Can we truly afford this transaction? What will that mean for the average Motswana in Ngamiland in terms of our constituency projects, will this affect the national budget," the opposition leader added.

BUDGET EXPOSURE

The scrutiny also places the government's own stated financing principles under examination. Boko told Parliament that advisors assessing the De Beers transaction had been instructed to consider financial prudence, fair risk-sharing and, crucially, limiting the call on public finances. The government has also assembled financial, legal, technical, tax and diamond valuation advisors to guide negotiations.

The President has argued that the enlarged stake will give Botswana greater influence over a company whose fortunes remain deeply intertwined with the country's economy.

The Botswana Gazette sought comment from the Botswana Government Communications and Information System (BGCIS) on the financing of the proposed increase in Botswana's De Beers shareholding but no response had been received by the time of publication.

This publication asked the government to disclose the estimated cost of acquiring the additional 15 percent stake and how that valuation was determined, identify the source of funding for the transaction and clarify whether financing had already been secured. The Gazette also sought details on any financiers involved and the key terms or conditions attached to the funding arrangement.

> "Can we truly afford this transaction? What will that mean for the average Motswana in Ngamiland in terms of our constituency projects, will this affect the national budget,"

Nasha Warns Boko Over CKGR Costs

Former minister Dr Margaret Nasha says the controversial relocation of Basarwa from CKGR was driven not by hostility towards the community but by the prohibitive cost and logistical challenges of delivering essential public services to the remote area

TEFO PHEAGE

Former Local Government Minister Dr Margaret Nasha has hinted that President Duma Boko's decision to facilitate the return of Basarwa communities to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) could confront his administration with the same financial and logistical challenges that informed their controversial relocation more than two decades ago.

Nasha, who oversaw the relocation exercise in the 2000s, defended the decision as a practical response to the difficulties of providing essential services in the remote reserve, rather than an act of hostility towards Basarwa.

Her remarks come in the wake of President Boko's announcement that his government intends to facilitate the return of Basarwa to the CKGR as part of efforts to address historical injustices and restore ancestral land rights.

"We took that decision based on the circumstances prevailing at the time. Government had to consider the practical realities of providing services in extremely difficult terrain," Nasha said. She emphasised the prohibitive cost of extending infrastructure across the vast reserve, where scattered settlements and difficult terrain complicated service delivery.

EDUCATION ACCESS

Nasha singled out education as a major consideration, arguing that "children growing up in isolated CKGR settlements were being denied opportunities available to their counterparts elsewhere".

"One of the things that informed our decision was the plight of children who were growing up without access to education. When I look back today and see some of those children having passed through university, I feel a sense of satisfaction," she said.

SERVICE COSTS

However, Nasha cautioned that the UDC administration must confront the financial implications of restoring settlements within the reserve, particularly the cost of providing schools, healthcare, roads and other essential services.

"Taking services into the CKGR is an extremely expensive undertaking. These are realities we grappled with during our time, and they have not simply disappeared," she said.

She further argued that the reserve's conservation mandate cannot be overlooked, emphasising that the CKGR was established primarily as a wildlife sanctuary.

"We must also remember what the Central Kalahari Game Reserve was established for. It is a game reserve, and its conservation purpose cannot simply be ignored," she said.

SESANA RESPONDS

However, prominent Basarwa activist Roy Sesana rejected Nasha's justification, arguing that financial considerations cannot override the rights of citizens to live on their ancestral land.

"Government routinely spends substantial resources providing infrastructure and public services to communities across Botswana, why Basarwa should be treated differently? Basarwa are equally entitled to benefit from public resources regardless of where they choose to reside," Sesana said.

Sesana described the proposed return to the CKGR as akin to "going to Canaan".

The controversy dates back to the landmark 2006 High Court judgment in Sesana and Others v Attorney General, which found that the applicants had been unlawfully deprived of possession of their settlements and that refusing their return without permits was unconstitutional.






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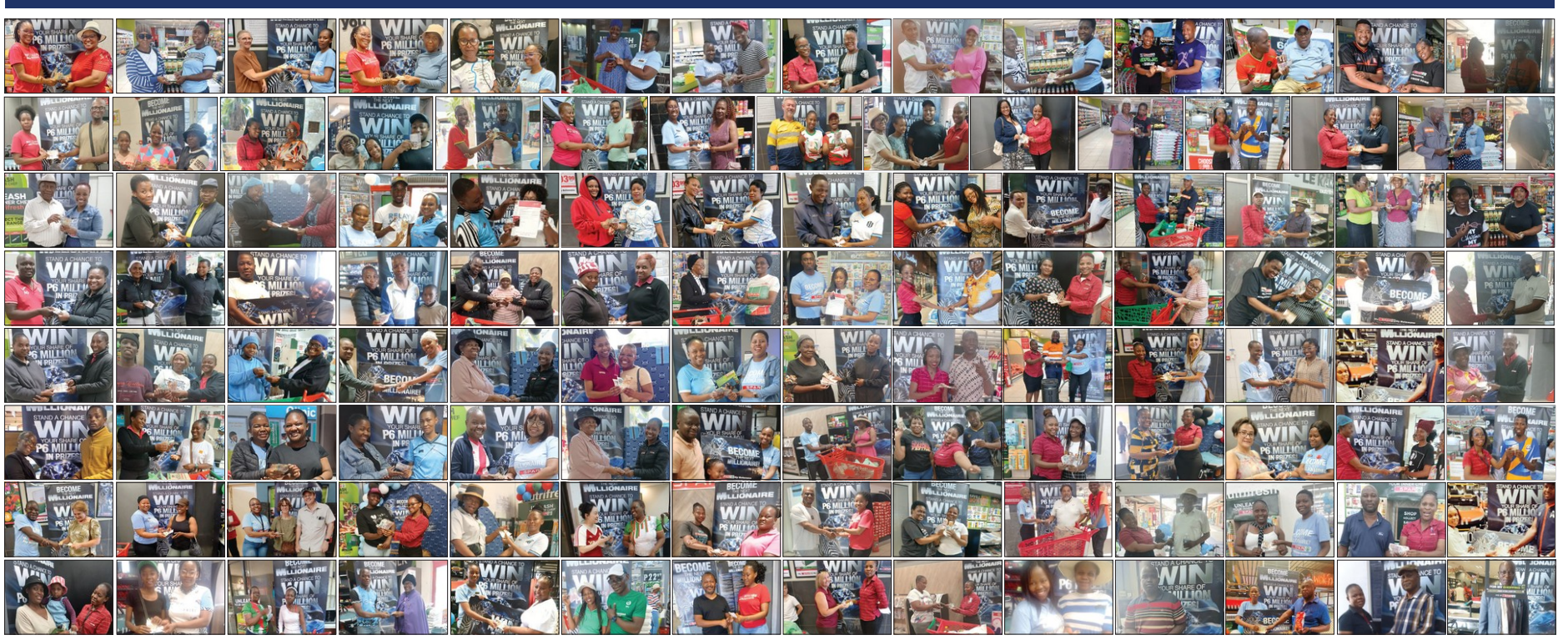
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DPP Warns Female Child Abusers

The prosecutions chief says women who sexually abuse boys will also face the law, challenging perceptions that child sexual abuse is committed only by men.



SESUPO RANTSIMAKO

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Kgosietsile Ngakayagae, has warned female sex offenders that they will not be spared in the government's efforts to clamp down on child sexual abuse.

Women Warned

In a message posted on his official social media page following the sentencing of Pastor Kgosi Mojadigo to 40 years' imprisonment for defilement and rape, Ngakayagae cautioned men against engaging in sexual activity with minors, stressing that children cannot legally consent to sexual relations with adults.

He said government had tightened its grip on sex offenders, warning that the crackdown was not limited to male perpetrators but extended to women involved in the sexual abuse of children.

BOYS AT RISK

Ngakayagae said the warning to female offenders was necessary because it had become clear that women were also participating in the sexual exploitation and abuse of young boys.

His remarks bring renewed attention to the vulnerability of boys, whose experiences of sexual abuse can sometimes receive less public attention because of prevailing perceptions that men are predominantly perpetrators and boys are rarely victims.

Police Figures

Although male perpetrators account for the overwhelming majority of identified defilement offenders in Botswana, police statistics show that women have also been implicated.

According to the Botswana Police Service's 2022 Annual Statistics Report, 1,619 defilement perpetrators were identified during the reporting period. Of these, 1,618 were male and one was female, representing 99.9 percent and 0.1 percent respectively.

CASE BACKLOG

The report further showed that 95.3 percent of the identified perpetrators were aged between 16 and 40, with the 21-to-25 age group accounting for the largest proportion at 536 offenders.

The scale of the challenge is also reflected in figures released by the DPP in April 2026, when officials revealed that 845 defilement cases had been concluded over the preceding five years, while another 1,094 remained ongoing.

CASE BACKLOG

The figures highlight the considerable workload facing prosecutors in dealing with sexual offences against children. However, the DPP did not provide a gender breakdown of accused persons or clarify how many of the concluded cases resulted in convictions.

Botswana's Penal Code criminalizes defilement under Section 147, with the law applying regardless of whether the accused is male or female. Women are therefore equally liable to prosecution when implicated in the sexual abuse of minors.

The challenge for law enforcement is to ensure that all cases are reported, investigated and prosecuted without gender-based assumptions about who can be an offender or a victim.



DEPOSIT RATES

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (Lowest - Highest)	Actual Interest Rate (Lowest - Highest)	Minimum Opening Balance (Pula)
Current	NIL	NIL	
Savings	-	-	-
Sesigo	1.75% - 2.75%	1.76% - 2.78%	P200. 00
Ordinary	1.75% - 5.50%	1.76% - 5.64%	P50. 00
SAYE	1.25% - 2.00%	1.26% - 2.02%	P200. 00
Fixed Deposits			
3 Months	0.80% - 1.00%	0.80% - 1.00%	1,000. 00
6 Months	1.40% - 1.75%	1.41% - 1.76%	1,000. 00
12 Months	1.85% - 2.20%	1.87% - 2.22%	1,000. 00
24 Months	2.25% - 2.55%	2.27% - 2.58%	1,000. 00
Over 24 months	3.35% - 3.80%	3.40% - 3.87%	1,000. 00
PRIME LENDING RATE	8.01% 8.01%	8.01% 8.01%	

LENDING RATES

Lending Rates	Nominal Interest Rate	Average Effective Interest Rate
MoPR	5.50%	5.50%
Prime Lending Rate	8.01%	8.01%
Mortgage Facility	Prime to Prime + 8.00%	Prime to Prime + 8.30%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	N/A	N/A
Credit Card	N/A	N/A
Eezi Auto	Prime to Prime + 8.00%	Prime to Prime + 8.30%
Lease Loans	N/A	N/A
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdraft, mortgage and credits cards)	Prime + 13.99% to Prime + 22.00%	Prime + 14.92% to Prime + 24.36%
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DIAMOND DECLINE SQUEEZES NATIONAL FINANCES

A government economic review warns that sluggish growth, dwindling diamond revenues and eroding financial buffers are deepening the pressure for diversification.

GAZETTE REPORTER

Botswana's economic foundations continue to show worrying signs of deterioration. This is according to the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP) Mid-Year Review which shows how sluggish growth, declining diamond revenues, shrinking financial buffers and mounting structural vulnerabilities are threatening the country's economic future.

The review paints a picture of an economy struggling to escape its dependence on diamonds, despite years of promises to diversify production, expand exports and create alternative sources of economic growth. The review shows that between 2016 and 2025, Botswana recorded average annual GDP growth of a mere three per cent.

The review shows that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the dangers of this dependence when disruptions to mining activity sent shockwaves through the economy. The review acknowledges that Botswana's growth "has remained closely tied to the performance of its mining sector, leaving its GDP exposed to external shocks." The review also highlights the steady erosion of diamond revenues, which have traditionally financed government expenditure and supported the country's economic stability.

DIAMOND DEPENDENCE

Between 2007 and 2025, diamond revenues as a share of government revenue fell from 35 per cent to 24 per cent, underscoring the declining contribution of the sector to the national purse. The consequences are already visible in the country's financial buffers. Between 2007 and 2023, government deposits declined by 63 per cent, while foreign reserves contracted by 25 per cent. The review warns that "declining diamond exports have also weighed on government deposits and foreign reserves, signalling the need to develop new export opportunities and niche value chains."

The review shows that the country's economic troubles extend beyond government finances. It says climate change is emerging as another major threat to economic stability, particularly in agriculture, tourism and mining. By 2100, average temperatures are projected to increase by between 3.9 and 7.1 degrees Celsius, while the probability of drought is expected to rise by 50 per cent.

CLIMATE RISKS

Agriculture remains largely rain-fed, tourism depends heavily on water-based



knowledges that reversing the weakening economic outlook requires "deeper, systemic change". Economic diversification is no longer simply a development ambition, the report says adding that, it is becoming an economic necessity.

wildlife endowments, while mining companies could face higher operating costs as they are forced to drill deeper or invest in expensive water-recycling technologies. The review also raises concerns about the country's ability to attract investment and restore confidence in its economic prospects.

Botswana's sovereign credit rating from Moody's stands at Baa1 with a negative outlook, while its BBB rating also carries a negative outlook. On the World Bank Group's Business Ready Framework, Botswana performs below the global average in two of three pillars: regulatory framework and public services. Its regulatory framework score stands at 64.4 against the global average of 66.3, while public services score 45.4 against 54.0. The BETP ac-

BPOMAS Member Communication and Consent to Marketing Material

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Botswana Public Officers Medical Aid Scheme (BPOMAS) wishes to inform its members that the ongoing KYC Drive has been halted effective 09 November 2026 pending final review of Section 6 of the KYC Form, "consent to receive marketing material", in order to clearly distinguish between Member Benefit Communication (as initially intended by BPOMAS) and Marketing Communication, to particularly provide an option to opt out of marketing communication as well as distribution of the revised KYC Form.

We wish to clarify that:

- Inclusion of the consent provision was not intended to limit the rights of members under the Data Protection Act, and that members are under no obligation to receive marketing communication from BPOMAS.

- In the revised form, the abovementioned Section 6 "consent to receive marketing material" is now Section 7, "Optional Marketing and Promotional Communication" and is optional. Any member who does not wish to receive marketing communication from BPOMAS may opt out at any time without affecting their membership, benefits or access to medical aid services.

- Communication necessary for the administration of membership, healthcare/medical aid benefits, claims processing, regulatory requirements and other service-related matters will continue to be provided for the benefit of the members, as these are not marketing communications.

The KYC Drive will resume as soon as the revised form has been distributed during the week and no later than **13 November 2026.**

Forms that have already been collected through this exercise will be securely and permanently destroyed though a controlled document destruction process. The revised form may be accessed on the BPOMAS Website, www.bpomas.co.bw under *KYC Submissions effective 11 November 2026.*

We appreciate our members' continued trust and assure them of our commitment to placing their interests, rights and privacy at the center of our operations.

For further information or queries, members may contact:
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Khama Urges Patience With Boko

Former President Ian Khama urges voters to allow the UDC more time to deliver, but expects major progress in 2027 as Saleshando rejects any grace period.



SESUPO RANTSIMAKO

Former President Ian Khama appears to have adopted a more conciliatory tone towards the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) government, urging Batswana to give President Duma Boko's administration time to deliver on its campaign promises.

PATIENCE URGED

In an interview with The Botswana Gazette, Khama defended the government's failure to fulfil some manifesto commitments, arguing that the administration needed time to adjust to the demands of governing.

He said Batswana should not be too quick to judge the government, noting that the UDC had inherited a challenging economic situation that could affect its delivery timelines.

"Each promise before it is made should be carefully considered and investigated as to whether it is realistic under the current economic environment. Where it is obvious that some cannot be met, then the nation should be informed transparently as to why," he said.

2027 Test

However, Khama said the government should now be moving towards tangible delivery, having spent two years in office gaining experience and undertaking international benchmarking trips.

"Now two years into their term, equipped with some experience and knowledge and the number of international benchmarking trips, I would say that in the coming year they should have turned the corner towards delivery. Therefore, in 2027, my expectation is to see significant progress in a number of areas and sectors of the economy and with delivering promises," he said.

KEY PROMISES

Khama said Boko had made his campaign promises expecting to inherit a relatively strong economy, but the situation had proved more difficult than anticipated.

He suggested that the President should establish the true state of the economy through an audit and explain his findings to the nation before adjusting delivery timelines.

Among the UDC's major commitments were increasing the monthly old-age pension from P830 to P1,800, lowering the qualifying age from 65 to 60, and introducing a National Community Service programme with a monthly allowance of P2,500.

EARLIER CRITICISM

Khama's remarks come amid growing criticism of the UDC over unfulfilled promises, service delivery and policy implementation.

The former president has himself questioned the government's performance during Ntlo ya Dikgosi proceedings, challenging its failure to fulfil certain promises and its governance record.

Opposition Response

While Khama is calling for patience, Leader of Opposition Dumelang Saleshando has consistently rejected suggestions that it is too early to criticise the government.

Although Saleshando was unavailable for comment, he has maintained that newly elected administrations should not enjoy a grace period free from scrutiny.

In November 2024, shortly after the UDC assumed power, Saleshando argued that the opposition had a constitutional responsibility to hold the government accountable from the outset, warning that failure to challenge those in power could create conditions for dictatorship.

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Bissau Sues Gaetsaloe Over Finance House Deal

A Finance House transaction has landed before the High Court, where businessman Bissau Gaobakwe claims unpaid advisory fees that Permanent Secretary Donald Gaetsaloe and his company deny owing.

TEFO PHEAGE

Businessman Bissau Gaobakwe has dragged Permanent Secretary Donald Gaetsaloe and his company, Confianza Private Equity (Pty) Ltd, before the High Court, demanding P687,000 in allegedly unpaid advisory fees arising from the controversial disposal of Finance House in Gaborone.

The lawsuit has exposed a dispute over a multimillion-pula property transaction, with Gaobakwe accusing Gaetsaloe of reneging on an agreement to share advisory fees, while the latter denies that any such agreement existed.

According to court documents, Gaobakwe alleges that Gaetsaloe engaged him in May 2020 as a co-adviser in the disposal of Finance House, a commercial property in the Government Enclave owned by a subsidiary of Leno Holdings.

He claims the parties agreed to share an advisory fee of P1.374 million equally, entitling him to P687,000, payable in two instalments of P343,500.

Gaobakwe maintains that he fulfilled his obligations by identifying potential investors, facilitating financing arrangements and helping secure a long-term Government lease that enhanced the property's commercial attractiveness.

The transaction was eventually concluded in April 2023 when Associated Investment Development Corporation (AIDC) acquired control of Guantico Holdings, the special-purpose vehicle through which the deal was structured.

AGREEMENT DENIED

However, in their plea filed on 6 May 2026, Gaetsaloe and Confianza deny appointing Gaobakwe as co-adviser or undertaking to pay him any fees.

They contend that his involvement was limited to introducing prospective investors and facilitating engagements, rather than providing professional advisory or refinancing services.

The defendants further question his professional credentials, alleging that financiers were reluctant to engage him because his track record did not demonstrate the capacity to execute the transaction.

They maintain that any compensation should be pursued against Leno Holdings or Guantico Holdings, rather than Confianza.

Gaetsaloe also disputes personal liability, arguing that Confianza is a separate legal entity whose obligations cannot automatically be transferred to its director and shareholder.

DISPUTED EMAIL

Central to Gaobakwe's case is a March 2022 email allegedly sent by Gaetsaloe attaching a draft Memorandum of Agreement identifying him as co-adviser and recording his P687,000 entitlement.

In the correspondence, Gaetsaloe allegedly wrote: "B – please have a read. Once you are happy we can sign. Apologies for the delay."

Although the agreement was never signed, Gaobakwe argues that it merely sought to formalise an existing arrangement under which both parties had operated since 2020.

He further cites correspondence involving CEDA, Bank Gaborone and Stanbic Bank, alongside a November 2022 Government lease addendum bearing his signature as promoter of Guantico Holdings.

PRESCRIPTION FIGHT

Gaetsaloe and Confianza have additionally challenged the lawsuit on prescription grounds, arguing that the alleged agreement dates back to 2020 and the claim is consequently time-barred

Gaobakwe rejects this interpretation, insisting that payment only became due following completion of the transaction in April 2023, when the three-year prescription period allegedly commenced.

He further argues that Gaetsaloe personally negotiated and acknowledged the arrangement as Confianza's sole director and shareholder, justifying his inclusion in the proceedings.

Gaobakwe is seeking P687,000, interest at 10 percent annually from the date of demand and legal costs.


Bissau Gaobakwe

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The position will be responsible for, among others, the following:
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- Ensuring the delivery of high-quality, stakeholder-relevant geoscience products and services.
- Leading the development and execution of long-term organisational strategy, business models and strategic initiatives.
- Advising Government and relevant stakeholders on Botswana's geology, mineral resources, hydrogeology, energy resources and environmental issues.
- Overseeing geological mapping, geoscientific research, information delivery and related technical programmes.
- Promoting world-class standards in geoscientific research, reporting and service delivery.
- Building strategic partnerships with Government, industry, academia, regional institutions and international geoscience bodies.
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PEOPLE CONNECTIONS
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National Skills Strategy Falls Behind

The African Development Bank reports delays and gaps in consultation on a national skills strategy meant to address unemployment and reduce dependence on diamonds.



GAZETTE REPORTER

An ambitious plan to address skills mismatches, graduate unemployment and dependence on diamonds through a 10-year National Human Resource Development Strategy has fallen behind schedule.

This was revealed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) which flagged incomplete work, inadequate participation by young people and the business sector and weaknesses in project administration.

In its latest Implementation Progress and Results Report (IPR) on the National Human Resource Strategy and Plan for Botswana, the Bank says the completion of the draft strategy has been delayed, forcing authorities to revise the delivery timeline with finalisation now scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026.

The strategy, covering the 2026–2036 period, is intended to transform Botswana's human capital development system and align skills development with Vision 2036 and the country's transition towards a knowledge-based economy.

However, the delays raise questions about the country's preparedness to tackle unemployment and the persistent mismatch between the skills produced by its education system and those demanded by employers.

> The AfDB rates progress highly satisfactory even as the final 2026–2036 strategy remains delayed.

The AfDB report says the project's development objective is to evaluate the implementation of the previous National Human Resource Development Strategy covering 2009–2022 and develop a transformative successor strategy, alongside a high-level implementation plan known as the National Action Plan.

DELIVERY DELAYS

While the evaluation report has been completed and approved by the Coordinating Committee, the Bank acknowledges that the second phase has experienced delays in producing the new strategy.

A draft has been produced using consultations undertaken during the first phase, desktop reviews and international benchmarks. It is currently undergoing final stakeholder consultations before the final document is completed.

Despite the setbacks, the Bank rates implementation progress as highly sat-

CONTINUES TO 11

Bomaid
Health & Happiness at heart

Scan to learn more about our benefits

Expression of Interest

Non-Executive Trustee

To serve as a Non-Executive Trustee (1 Position) on the Board of Trustees of Botswana Medical Aid Society

Introduction

Botswana Medical Aid Society ("Bomaid" or "the Fund") invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified candidates for appointment as a Non-Executive Trustee on the Fund's Board of Trustees.

Bomaid History

Established in 1969, Botswana Medical Aid Society (Bomaid) is Botswana's largest not-for-profit open medical aid fund. It is registered as a society under the Societies Act, 2022 (Registration No. CR0104) and regulated by the Non-Bank Financial Institutions Regulatory Authority (NBFIRA).

Board Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are outlined in Rule 19 (A) of the Bomaid Book of Rules, which states:

19 (A) The Board shall be responsible for the sound and proper management of the Fund.
19 (B) IV (b) Members of the Board of Trustees shall have no direct or indirect interest in any institution, firm, organisation or enterprise that supplies medical, dental, optical or pharmaceutical products, or any other medical services, to the Fund.
19 (B) IV (c) The Board shall exercise all functions of the Fund, particularly those required by law, except for functions that must be exercised by the Fund in a General Meeting.

Clause 2 of the Board Charter further defines the role of the Board as follows:

a. Provide strategic direction, approve policy, exercise oversight and ensure accountability in pursuit of sound governance outcomes, including an ethical culture, good performance, effective control and stakeholder legitimacy.
b. In fulfilling this role and discharging its responsibilities, the Board shall apply practices that support the Fund in attaining good corporate citizenship and sound governance outcomes. Board members shall at all times act honestly, fairly and diligently, and in accordance with all applicable laws.
c. Each member shall act in the best interests of Bomaid's customers and have due regard for the interests of Bomaid's stakeholders, the community and the environment in which Bomaid operates.
d. The Board shall promote and sustain a culture within Bomaid that embraces the principles set out in the Board Charter.

Trustees may also be appointed to one or more Board subcommittees, depending on their skills and expertise.

The Role

The Fund seeks a dedicated and strategically minded Board member with expertise in Human Resources (HR). The successful candidate will contribute to the Fund's strategic direction, uphold sound governance and provide effective oversight.

Candidates with expertise in the following areas are encouraged to apply:

- **Human Resources Strategies and Policies:** Advising on strategies and policies that support the execution of the Fund's business strategy.
- **Talent Management and Succession Planning:** Supporting leadership development and long-term organisational capability.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** Advising on fair, competitive and sustainable remuneration frameworks and policies.
- **HR Governance and Compliance:** Ensuring alignment with labour laws, regulatory requirements and ethical employment standards.
- **Culture and Change Management:** Fostering a high-performance culture and promoting effective change-management practices.

Mandatory Qualification

A Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Psychology, Industrial Relations or a related field. A Master's Degree in Human Resource Management, Business Administration or a related field will be an added advantage.

Membership of a recognised professional HR institute will also be an added advantage.

Experience and Medical Aid Affiliation

The ideal candidate should have demonstrated experience in developing and implementing human resource management strategies and policies, together with more than ten (10) years' experience in executive leadership. Candidates must have held an executive-level Human Resources role. Previous Board experience will be an added advantage.

Mandatory medical aid scheme affiliation: Applicants must be members of Botswana Medical Aid Society whose subscription payments are up to date.

Required Skills

- Strategic thinking
- Business and financial acumen
- Leadership
- Change management and organisational culture
- Emotional intelligence and empathy
- Influence and impact
- Governance, ethics and compliance
- Stakeholder management

Applications Procedure

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following:

1. A detailed Curriculum Vitae, highlighting qualifications, experience, areas of expertise and traceable referees.
2. A letter of motivation

Please note:

- Non-compliant submissions will not be considered.
- Submissions which do not meet the required skills, competencies, experience, and medical aid affiliation will be disregarded.
- Late submissions will not be accepted.

For any enquiries and further clarification, please contact the Board Secretary/Chief Legal Officer, Mr Musa Nleya at **363 3287**. All expressions of interest and attachments must be addressed to:

The Chief Executive Officer
Botswana Medical Aid Society
Plot 50638, Fairgrounds
Gaborone

And should be emailed to principalofficer@bomaid.co.bw

Closing Date: 17 November 2026



www.bomaid.co.bw

FROM PAGE 10

isfactory, noting that three of the five output indicators are on track and that the first phase of the project was completed in the second quarter of 2026.

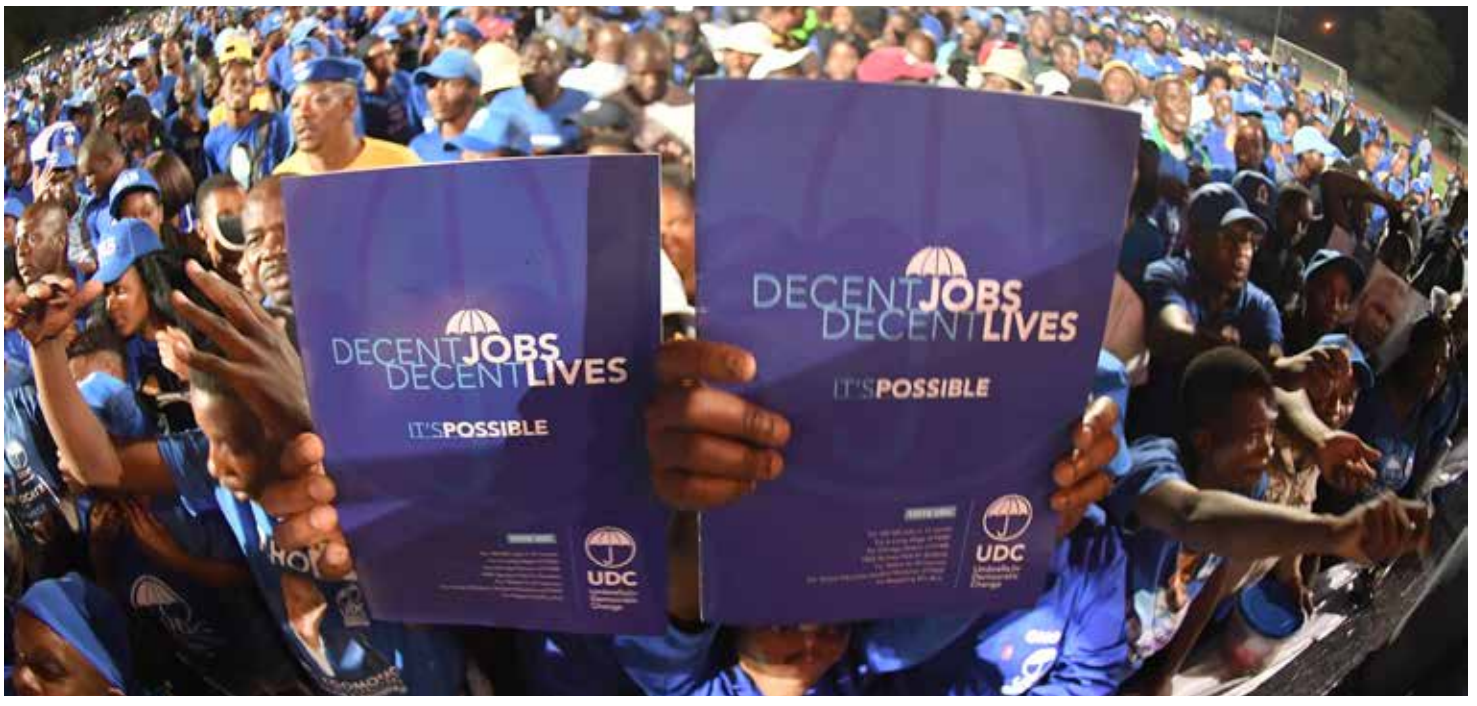
The report maintains that the project has made substantial progress towards its development objective and could deliver significant results in addressing skills mismatches, underemployment and high unemployment.

It says the strategy is expected to position Botswana to diversify away from its "over-reliance on the extractive diamond industry to other sectors that will create jobs."

But the Bank's assessment also exposes shortcomings in project execution. Among the issues identified was inadequate representation of young people and the business sector in consultations. The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) which is responsible for implementing the project, was directed to arrange consultations for special groups. The action was marked completed on May 7, 2026.

CONSULTATION GAPS

The report also identifies delays in the review of reports. This has prompted instructions for regular reminders to members of the project review committee. That corrective action, with an



October 16, 2026 deadline, was still marked as in progress.

Project time overruns were another concern, although the HRDC had been directed to request and process an extension at no additional cost. That action was marked completed on August 3, 2026.

The Bank further flags difficulties in the submission of special account justification reports and replenishment requests by the executing agency, raising concerns about financial administration and the timely processing of project funds. It recommends training for the project team.

The project's outcome indicators include the development and approval of the final 2026–2036 strategy and the preparation of an implementation plan. Both are considered likely to be achieved, although the final strategy remains slightly delayed.

The report also links Botswana's wider employment ambitions to the Bank-supported Skills, Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Acceleration for Job Creation for Youth Programme (SEE4JOBS), which is expected to contribute up to 33,000 direct jobs and more than 60,000 indirect jobs.

The AfDB says additional job-creation investments are planned for Botswana under its 2027–2032 Country Strategy Paper Indicative Operational Programme.

All five project output indicators are considered likely to be achieved before the project closes in March 2027.

Scammers Exploit SIM Registration Loopholes

The communications minister admits that fraudsters are exploiting borrowed SIM cards and mobile wallets despite mandatory registration, as millions of pula are lost to scams.

BONGANI MALUNGA

Botswana's SIM registration regime is failing to completely shut out telecommunications fraud as scammers increasingly exploit numbers and mobile wallets registered to other people, Minister of Communications and Innovation David Tshere has acknowledged.

Responding to a parliamentary question from Shoshong MP Moneedi Bagaisamang on Tuesday, Tshere said mobile network operators have successfully blocked telephone numbers reported and identified as being linked to fraudulent activities.

However, the Minister conceded that SIM registration, introduced partly to improve traceability of mobile subscribers, does not eliminate telecommunications-related fraud.

REGISTRATION GAPS

"SIM registration alone does not eliminate the risk of telecommunications-related fraud but facilitates identification of the identity of the owner of the number," Tshere stated. The admission highlights the limits of registration and Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements when fraudsters can still operate through SIM cards formally registered under different identities.

According to Tshere, perpetrators continue to use different methods to conceal their true identities, obtain personal information



and circumvent safeguards implemented by mobile network operators.

Of particular concern is what the Minister described as a growing practice of people lending their registered numbers and mobile wallets to others, potentially allowing criminals to operate behind legitimate subscriber identities.

BORROWED SIMS

"It is therefore incumbent for the public to ensure that they register their numbers, update their KYC when legitimately requested to do so through formal channels publicised by Operators, and not participate in conduct that would lead to criminal activities, such as lending their numbers and mobile wallets," Tshere stated. "Unfortunately, and with concern, the Authority has observed this as a growing trend."

The warning comes against a backdrop of growing concern from the Botswana Police Service (BPS) over cyber-enabled fraud. Police Commissioner Dinah Marathe told the Public Accounts Committee in June that cybercrime had risen by 25 percent during the year under review, with criminals increasingly using technology for online fraud, identity theft and other cyber offences.

FRAUD LOSSES

More recently, police reported that Molepolole residents alone had lost more than P1.3 million to cybercriminals in 2026, more than double the approximately P638 000 recorded there in 2025. BPS warned that fraudsters were sharpening their tactics as people received money from savings schemes and other financial arrangements.

BPS has also repeatedly warned of criminals impersonating bank employees and other institutions. In October, police cautioned that victims were being contacted by fraudsters claiming banking information needed to be updated before being sent links that ultimately enabled unauthorised withdrawals. Police urged the public not to disclose PINs, passwords, card details or other sensitive banking information and to independently verify unsolicited communications.

REGULATORY RESPONSE

Tshere said the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) will continue engaging mobile network operators, law enforcement agencies and other regulatory stakeholders to strengthen interventions aimed at identifying both perpetrators and individuals who facilitate their activities.

> "SIM registration alone does not eliminate the risk of telecommunications-related fraud but facilitates identification of the identity of the owner of the number."

REGULATORY RESPONSE

Tshere further revealed that scammers also exploit "SIM renting," where fraudsters gain access to SIM cards registered in other individuals' names, making it difficult for investigators to establish the actual identity of the person committing the offence.

The Minister also identified sequential dialling, inadequately protected customer registers, malicious applications, phishing and spoofing as some of the methods through which scammers obtain contact details and personal information.

Tshere said tackling telecommunications fraud will therefore require more than SIM registration, pointing to stronger KYC controls, improved information security, cooperation between service providers and effective law enforcement.

Zotus Cleared, But Project Awaits Approval

BITC confirms international anti-money-laundering screening of the proposed Kalahari City developer, but says the multibillion-dollar project has not received final approval.



Photo Credit: Illustration

BONGANI MALUNGA

The Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) has revealed that Zotus Group was subjected to international anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing screening as part of government due diligence on the proposed multi-billion-dollar Kalahari City project.

Responding to questions from The Botswana Gazette, BITC disclosed that corporate verification and reputational checks were conducted using World-Check reviews against global Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) databases. The screening was aimed at identifying potential litigation, sanctions and reputational risks associated with the developer.

"Corporate verification and reputational compliance checks have been conducted, including World-Check reviews against global Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) databases to identify potential risks such as litigation, sanctions, or reputational risks," BITC stated.

VETTING PROCESS

The revelation offers fresh insight into the vetting process behind the proposed Zotus Kalahari City, which BITC says could attract between US$30 billion and US$50 billion in investment and generate more than 20 000 jobs. The proposed ownership structure envisages Zotus City Development Group holding 51 percent, government 10 percent and strategic investors 39 percent.

> "The accreditation does not constitute final project approval but signifies that the project has advanced to a structured facilitation and due diligence phase under Government oversight."

BITC stressed, however, that its accreditation of the development as a strategic investment initiative should not be interpreted as final project approval.

"Through this process, BITC has undertaken initial screening, coordinated inter-agency engagements, and continued to serve as the central facilitation body supporting the project. The accreditation does not constitute final project approval but signifies that the project has advanced to a structured facilitation and due diligence phase under Government oversight," the agency stated.

UK VISIT

The vetting went beyond database screening as BITC revealed that officials from the investment agency, Botswana's High Commission in London and representatives of Botswana security agencies travelled to Zotus' offices in Manchester, United Kingdom, for a due diligence visit.

BITC said the process remains ongoing and involves several state institutions before binding implementation arrangements are concluded.

"BITC continues to work closely with relevant government institutions to ensure that all due diligence requirements and steps are completed prior to the conclusion of any formal engagement or investment agreements," the agency said.

The scrutiny comes as the government moves ahead with preliminary planning for the ambitious smart-city development, while feasibility studies, regulatory approvals and final land arrangements remain outstanding.

Youth Seek 30 Percent Parliamentary Quota

A democracy forum report places a 30 percent parliamentary quota for people under 35 on the agenda as young Batswana demand greater influence in national decisions.

GAZETTE REPORTER

A report by Democracy International says that young people in Botswana are pushing for a 30 percent quota in Parliament for citizens under 35.

The report, released in November following the 13th Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy held in Gaborone from October 7–10, shows that following the 2024 general elections, the youth are now challenging Botswana's political establishment to move beyond election-time promises and give the younger generation a meaningful stake in decision-making.

The report, titled 'Beyond Elections: What We Learned Together in Botswana,' says a debate on reserving 30 percent of parliamentary seats for people under 35 placed a specific proposal on the table during the international gathering.

The report says the demand comes in the aftermath of the 2024 general elections, which ushered in a historic change of government after the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) lost power to the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) following almost six decades in office.

POLITICAL CHANGE

However, the debate suggests that political change alone may not be enough to address questions of representation, particularly among young people seeking a more direct role in national decision-making.

The report states: "Youth participation brought these questions into focus. A debate on reserving 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for people under 35 put a specific proposal on the table."

It adds that discussions around children's participation and the contribution of Kgotla ya Basha explored alternative ways of giving younger generations greater influence over decisions affecting their lives.

The report says: "The youth contribution to the draft declaration was clear: young people want to be trusted as partners in shaping today, with practical opportunities to develop ideas and make decisions."

> "Young people want to be trusted as partners in shaping today, with practical opportunities to develop ideas and make decisions."

The forum brought together 150 participants from five continents and more than 30 countries. Across 48 sessions and activities, 79 speakers, moderators and facilitators examined ways of strengthening citizens' influence over decisions affecting their lives.

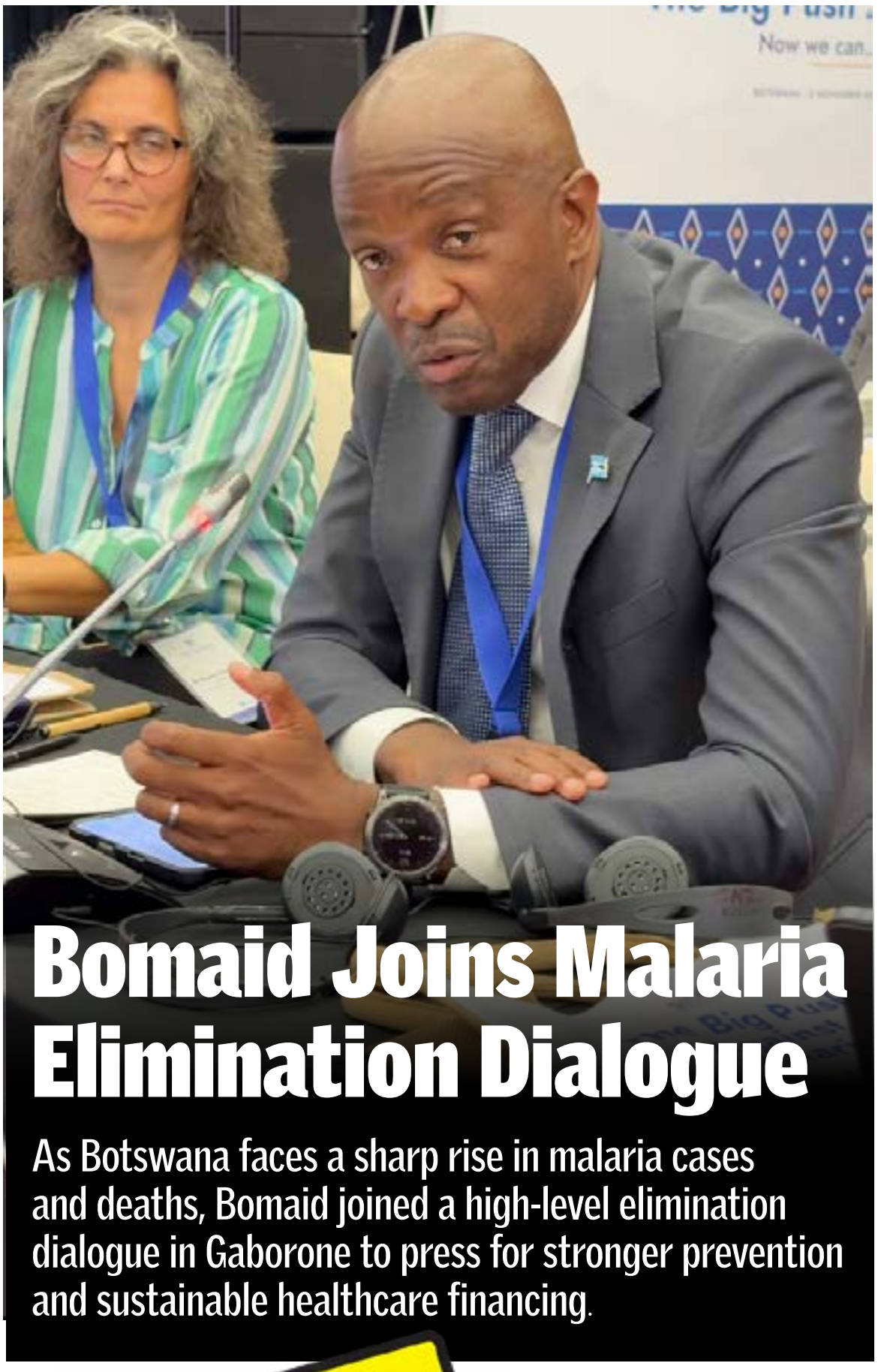
GLOBAL FORUM

Botswana's constitutional reform process also featured prominently with participants examining how citizens could influence both the process and outcome of constitutional changes.

The discussions further explored the country's traditional Kgotla system, including a visit to Mochudi, where participants examined the relationship between community decision-making and national politics.

The report also raised questions about control of natural resources and the distribution of economic benefits, noting that declining diamond revenues are placing Botswana's development model under severe pressure.

"Who decides, who benefits and how can people influence the choices ahead?" the report asks.



Bomaid Joins Malaria Elimination Dialogue

As Botswana faces a sharp rise in malaria cases and deaths, Bomaid joined a high-level elimination dialogue in Gaborone to press for stronger prevention and sustainable healthcare financing.



CLICK WATCH

LEATILE ZACHARIAH

Bomaid participated in a high-level dialogue on malaria elimination in Gaborone on 5 November, bringing the medical aid sector's perspective to discussions on how Africa can finance efforts to defeat the disease.

The dialogue took place alongside the 36th Board Meeting of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership to End Malaria. Bomaid Chief Executive Officer Moraki Mokgosana joined discussions on prevention, collaboration and sustainable health funding.

ILLNESS COST

Mokgosana warned that diseases affect far more than individuals and hospitals, disrupting schools, workplaces and the wider economy.

He said malaria remained a leading cause of absenteeism in many parts of Africa, putting the combined economic cost of malaria and other illnesses in Botswana at between P8 billion and P9 billion.

He argued that investment in prevention should be regarded as a way to protect productivity, rather than simply another health-sector expense. He also highlighted the need for stronger private-sector involvement in tackling public health challenges.

CROSS-BORDER FIGHT

South African singer and humanitarian Yvonne Chaka Chaka urged countries to coordinate their efforts, stressing that malaria does not recognise national borders.

"As advocates and ambassadors, we want to see change and we want to be part of it. We are talking about collaborations and alignment with different countries because malaria does not know borders. We must stand together to fight and eliminate it," she said.

President Duma Boko, who chairs the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), called for sustained political commitment and more domestic financing.

"Malaria elimination is both a health sector aspiration and an imperative for development, prosperity and human dignity," Boko said.

> "Malaria elimination is both a health sector aspiration and an imperative for development, prosperity and human dignity." - President Duma Boko



He said international support should complement, not replace, domestic health funding, and urged neighbouring countries to turn commitments into measurable results.

CASES CLIMB

The calls came amid a surge in Botswana's malaria cases, from 290 in 2024 to 2,451 in 2025, with reported deaths rising from two to 16.

Botswana's National Malaria Strategic Plan 2025–2029 prioritises surveillance, prevention, timely diagnosis and treatment, community participation and regional cooperation.

Three SONAs, Promises Still Unfinished

Boko's third State of the Nation Address reports progress on flagship pledges but leaves major commitments, including student allowances and health insurance, incomplete.

BONGANI MALUNGA

President Duma Boko's third State of the Nation Address (SONA) has provided the clearest evidence yet that several flagship government promises have moved beyond political pronouncements but a comparison with his 2024 and 2025 addresses shows that some of the administration's biggest undertakings remain unfinished.

Economic diversification, employment creation, healthcare reform, constitutional reform, digitalisation and youth empowerment have emerged as recurring themes across Boko's three SONAs, with the latest address increasingly placing measurable outputs against promises first articulated when his government took office.

Boko acknowledged the continuity himself on Monday, stating that the "common thread" running through his addresses since his maiden 2024 SONA has been the transformation of Botswana's economy and upliftment of its people.

UNFINISHED PLEDGES

However, while the 2026 address records significant movement from policy formulation to implementation, several programmes have yet to reach their final promised outcomes.

Among them is the P2500 tertiary student allowance pledge. Government increased the allowance from P1900 to P2200 in April this year, while Technical and Vocational Education and Training students moved from P300 to P1900 and subsequently P2200. Boko nevertheless acknowledged that the final target remains outstanding, telling Parliament that the government still "aims to deliver on its promise to pay a P2500 student allowance."

HEALTH INSURANCE

National Health Insurance presents a similar trajectory. Health insurance and Universal Health Coverage formed part of the administration's reform agenda from its early period in office and remained under development in the 2025 SONA. The latest address confirmed that the National Health Insurance Policy was approved by Parliament in August 2026.

However, the scheme itself is not yet operational, with government now developing the National Health Insurance Bill and accompanying legislative framework.

Constitutional reform has also advanced without reaching completion. The government has secured passage of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which provides for the establishment of a Constitutional Court but the amendment must still be subjected to a national referendum.



REFERENDUM DELAY

This has drawn a sharp rebuke from Leader of the Opposition Dumelang Saleshando, who criticised the delay during his post-SONA address to the media on Monday. Saleshando noted that seven months after the Bill was passed by Parliament, there is still no clear timeline for a national referendum, despite earlier assurances that the process would swiftly follow the Bill's passage.

"The President promised that the Constitutional Review would be in effect six months into his tenure but he has sidelined it for now in favour of his personal favourite, the Constitutional Court," Saleshando remarked.

DIVERSIFICATION DRIVE DIVERSIFICATION TEST

This time, however, the government pointed to tangible projects, including the transfer of all 82 serviced plots at the Sir Seretse Khama International Airport Special Economic Zone to SEZA, the signing of the first investor lease and construction of the P25.5 billion New Airport City.

The Exploration Investment Company Botswana (EICB) has also become operational, while the government has established an export support fund. Yet the latest SONA does not provide a consolidated figure showing how many permanent jobs the broader diversification drive has created against the government's ambitious employment targets.

DIGITAL SERVICES

Other commitments have registered clearer delivery. The national forensic audit, promised as part of the government's governance and accountability agenda, has been completed. According to the President, it identified suspected corruption, fraud, embezzlement, waste and financial mismanagement estimated at P33 billion across 30 institutions between 2014 and 2024.

However, the accountability phase continues as the government says implementation of the audit recommendations will take another two to three years, while a Special Investigations and Asset Recovery Task Force is being established.

Industrial hemp represents one of the clearest examples of a promise progressing from announcement to implementation. After legalisation was announced in the previous SONA, government enacted the Cannabis Act, 2025 and Cannabis Regulations, 2026, established the National Cannabis Control Authority and completed cultivation pilots. By September, four provisional licences representing P290 million in investment had been issued.

> "The pattern emerging from Boko's three SONAs is therefore one of increasing implementation but uneven completion."

DELIVERY FIGURES

Housing and agriculture have also moved into measurable implementation, under the Bonno National Housing Programme, construction of 1366 housing units commenced in September, while 567 previously started units have been completed and handed over.

HOUSING PROGRESS

The 2024 address largely established the new administration's ambition while the 2025 SONA built programmes and policy structures around that vision. The 2026 address has presented the strongest attempt yet to demonstrate results.

However, three SONAs into Boko's presidency, several of the government's most politically significant undertakings remain somewhere between policy approval, institutional establishment and full delivery.

GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK

VACANCY

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING INNOVATION (REMOTE)

Our client, MVF Global, is looking for a Director of Marketing Innovation (Remote). The Director of Marketing Innovation will be based in Gaborone, Botswana. The role is remote and works across the United Kingdom, European Union, United States of America and Asia- Pacific regions.

MVF Global is a customer generation company with approximately one hundred and fifty million British Pounds annual revenue. MVF Global amplifies brand reach and impact by connecting clients with high-intent customers across logistics, accommodation, health, education, food & beverage, business services and more.

Specific Responsibilities

- Set creative strategy for a team of 70+ marketers for lead generation marketing campaigns across image and video (approximately £40m annual spend across 20+ products in Business to Business and Business to Client)
- Lead and develop the Creative Team and Marketing Innovation Team including creative strategists, designers, videographers, producers, editors and campaign managers.
- Lead branding projects and support the development of an Account Based Marketing strategy across LinkedIn Paid Marketing Campaigns.
- Own the strategy and roadmap for AI-enabled creative production tooling, working with product and engineering teams.
- Build and manage relationships with platform partners (e.g. Meta, TikTok, LinkedIn) and advise on adoption of emerging ad formats and channels.
- Appear on camera in brand and creator-style paid social content.
- Report on performance and influence senior stakeholders across the business.

Reports to:
- Managing Director of Paid Marketing

Essential requirements
- Masters degree in any field of study.
- 10 years' experience in performance marketing.
- 10 years' experience managing multi-channel paid media
- Demonstrable senior (director or head-of level) leadership of paid marketing or creative strategy in a performance-driven environment.
- Demonstrable hands-on experience in building or commissioning AI or data-driven creative tools and linking creative elements to performance metrics (e.g. hook rate, Click Through Rate).
- Demonstrable experience in launching new or emerging advertising channels and formats, with measurable revenue results, including LinkedIn and TikTok.
- Demonstrable experience in leading cross-regional, multi-market campaigns.
- Strong senior stakeholder management skills
- Good in written and spoken English.

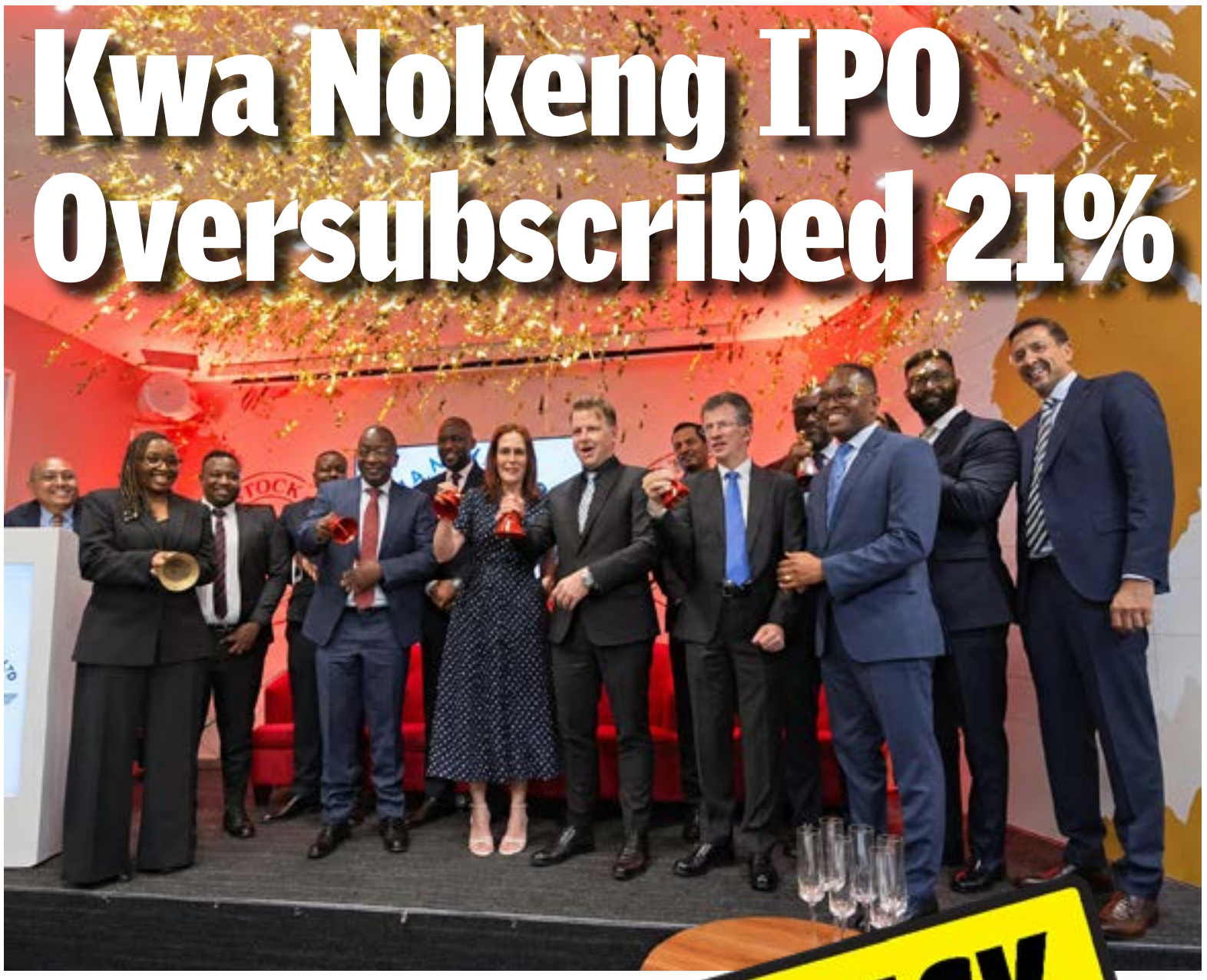
Desirable requirements
- Experience in advising or sitting on platform advisory boards.
- Hands-on content creation experience, including short-form video for paid social (e.g. TikTok, Reels, YouTube Shorts), and comfort presenting on camera in brand or creator-style ads.

How to Apply
Send your application by email to priscilla@kauyaandpartners.org

Closing date
26th November 2026.

Only shortlisted candidates will be acknowledged.

Kwa Nokeng IPO Oversubscribed 21%



The fuel company's BSE debut drew strong investor demand, opening ownership to Batswana after 19 years of expansion from one depot to 14 sites.



LEATILE ZACHARIAH

Kwa Nokeng Oil Holdings Limited has listed on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) following an initial public offering (IPO) that was oversubscribed by 21 per cent.

The bell-ringing ceremony, attended by company leaders, investors, BSE representatives and other stakeholders, marked a new phase in the fuel company's 19-year history and opened an opportunity for Batswana to become shareholders.

FROM ONE DEPOT

Executive Director and major shareholder Clinton Jansen Van Vuuren described the listing as a milestone for the company and the employees who helped build it.

He traced his business roots to his late father, who owned several general dealers in the Tswapong area and introduced him to entrepreneurship at an early age.

From its first depot at Martins Drift, Kwa Nokeng has grown to 14 sites serving the North-South and Trans-Kalahari corridors. The company has recorded average annual fuel sales growth of 25 per cent over 19 years.

It employs 477 Botswana citizens and serves customers in the transport, farming, retail and mining sectors. Its services extend beyond fuel supply to roadside assistance, 24-hour customer support and emergency medical assistance.

Van Vuuren credited the expansion to meeting customer needs, disciplined reinvestment and consistent service delivery. He said it was particularly meaningful to welcome Batswana as shareholders because they understood the country's business environment, challenges and opportunities.

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

FNB Botswana Chief Executive Officer Stephen Bogatsu, speaking at the ceremony on behalf of RMB, said the listing reflected institutional investor confidence in the local stock market and gave investors exposure to an industry previously absent from the exchange.

> "Kwa Nokeng's IPO was oversubscribed by 21 per cent."

He said the BSE offered capital-constrained businesses a way to raise funds and expand, while investment banks connected companies seeking finance with prospective investors.

STRONG IPO DEMAND

BSE Chief Executive Officer Oupa Monyatsi said the IPO was oversubscribed by 21 per cent, with additional applications received after the closing deadline.

He said participation from retail and institutional investors was encouraging for Botswana's capital markets.

Monyatsi described Kwa Nokeng as the exchange's fourth IPO and pointed to a strong pipeline of prospective listings in 2027. He said the BSE had a role in mobilising private capital and giving ordinary Batswana an opportunity to own shares in businesses.



Unions Challenge Poor School Conditions

Teachers' unions say Botswana's education spending has not adequately improved overcrowded classrooms, deteriorating infrastructure or educators' working conditions.



GAZETTE REPORTER

Education unions have launched an international campaign against the government for increased public investment in school infrastructure, teacher support and learning resources.

> "Quality public education begins with quality funding."

In a country report presented during the Education International (EI) Southern Africa Sub-Regional Workshop on the Go Public! Fund Education campaign, the three EI-affiliated unions-Botswana Sectors of Educators Trade Union (BOSETU), Botswana Teachers' Union (BTU) and Trainers and Allied Workers Union (TAWU) warn that government spending commitments have yet to translate into better conditions for learners and educators. They further raised concerns over persistent deficiencies in public schools.

The report argues that quality public education cannot be achieved through budget allocations alone but requires funding to reach classrooms and communities where it is most needed.

Although the government has continued to prioritise education spending and reforms, the unions said policy commitments have not translated into improved working and learning conditions.

They identified inadequate sanitation facilities, overcrowded classrooms, ageing boarding facilities and insufficient maintenance of deteriorating school buildings as some of the challenges confronting public schools.

The unions also warned that an excessive focus on digital transformation and curriculum reform risks overlooking the daily realities facing learners and educators, potentially undermining teaching conditions and learning outcomes.

"Quality public education begins with quality funding," the report states. It emphasises the need for resources to reach schools, educators to receive adequate support and learning environments to be safe and properly maintained.

Botswana allocated the equivalent of 7.1 percent of GDP to education in its 2026/27 budget cycle, demonstrating what the unions described as a significant national commitment to the sector.

However, they maintained that increased funding would have limited impact if implementation remained ineffective and resources failed to reach priority areas.

The report further points to delays in maintenance programmes, warning that these contribute to rising costs and the continued deterioration of school infrastructure.

TEACHER WELFARE

Beyond infrastructure, the unions have intensified advocacy around educators' welfare and professional conditions, with salaries, career progression and teacher welfare featuring prominently in their engagements with government.

One notable development highlighted in the report is the establishment of the Botswana Teaching Professionals Council (BOTEPCO), which was created to address longstanding professional issues within the education sector.

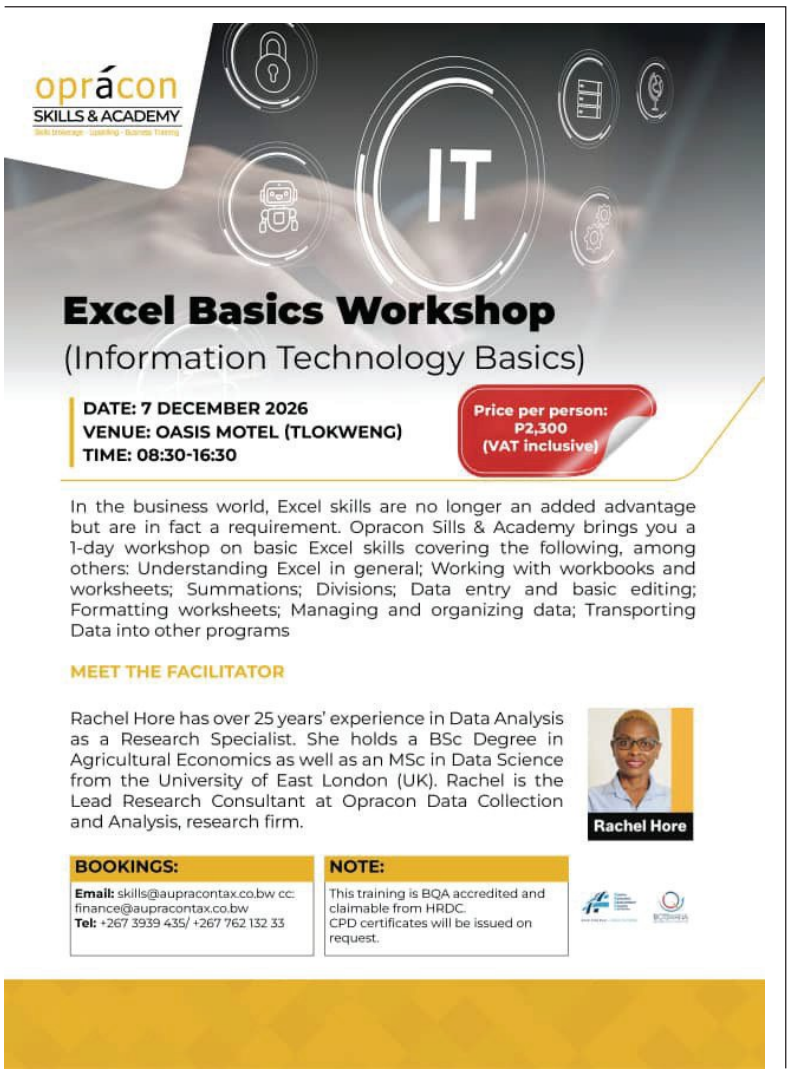
The unions have also used collective bargaining, social dialogue, parliamentary engagement and legal action to push for improved remuneration, working conditions and education policy reforms.

However, the report raises concern over delays in resolving court cases and failures to implement court orders, which it says undermine efforts to defend educators' rights and professional interests.

The unions also acknowledged challenges in expanding membership, noting that some potential members continue to perceive trade unions primarily as providers of financial services rather than organisations fighting for sustainable reforms.

> The unions have also used collective bargaining, social dialogue, parliamentary engagement and legal action to push for improved remuneration, working conditions and education policy reforms.

Despite these challenges, the report says, BOSETU, BTU and TAWU reaffirmed their commitment to fighting for adequate education funding, professional dignity for teachers and improved learning conditions.





Eggs, Cheese and Milk Are on the Menu. Primary Education Is Not

Another day, another food promise from the President. But in an address that counted the year's wins down to the last school repaired, there was nothing on the plate for primary education, not even the P654 million curriculum contract government pushed through over the regulator's objections.

BONGANI MALUNGA

On Monday, President Duma Boko read Parliament the menu. Eggs, cheese and milk, he promised, would be served in public school meals by 2029. Botswana's primary pupils have heard the specials before. Last November, at a rally in Maun, the President promised them breakfast and lunch "next financial year." Last month, at a workshop in Tlokweng, it was "eggs and yoghurt and whatever else." The dishes change. The kitchen, so far, has not.

For the rest of the education course, the President served a school with a swimming pool. The Duma Boko School in Block 7, Gaborone, opened in September with technology-enabled classrooms and room for more than 380 pupils, the first of 100 schools and clinics to be built under a new model of private investment. He added Bula Buka, a programme for young people pushed out of school by "limited school spaces and unsatisfactory academic performance."

Then he moved on. In the prepared text of an address of nearly 7,000 words, the word "primary" does not appear. Neither does "curriculum." The omission is not one of space. The address counts the year's achievements closely, down to maintenance at 11 senior and 11 junior secondary schools. Yet it is silent on the largest education commitment of the year, a P654.4 million contract that the minister responsible says has "overhauled the curriculum completely," and on almost every promise the President made to primary schools a year ago.

"The speech treats basic education as a series of procurement triumphs rather than a human-centered public service," said Caterpillar Hikuama, the Botswana Congress Party MP for Maun West who is also the party's Shadow Minister of Child Welfare, Basic and Higher Education. "Education cannot be modernised by decree while basic infrastructure, teacher welfare, and daily classroom resources remain severely underfunded."

OFF THE MENU

Read beside last year's address, this one leaves a trail of orders that never reached the table. In November 2025, the President told Parliament that 12 new primary schools were under construction. He announced a programme to clear the backlog of classrooms, teachers' houses and toilets. He said a STEAM-driven curriculum, spanning early childhood to senior secondary, would be in place "for the January 2026 academic year," and that teachers would be "up-skilled and retrained" to teach it.

Monday's address returned to none of it. It gave no count of primary schools built or toilets installed, no date for a new curriculum, and no word on whether the promised breakfast and lunch had ever been served. Mr Hikuama described progress on the schools and the backlog as "sluggish and uneven." In rural constituencies like his, he said, "pit latrines, inadequate toilet ratios, and severe classroom shortages remain a daily reality for primary pupils." Not every order has stalled. One went through the kitchen at speed, over the objections of the state's own procurement watchdog.

THE BILL

In August 2025, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority completed an investigation into a P662.6 million direct appointment of Emeritus Training Academy to deliver a national STEAM programme. The procurement was "unplanned, not budgeted for, and poorly conceptualized," the regulator found, and the ministry had not justified bypassing competitive bidding. It ordered the procurement cancelled. In December, the Court of Appeal set aside a related High Court order on procedural grounds, leaving those findings untouched.

Government went ahead. In July, the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education awarded Emeritus a revised five-year contract, again without competition, worth P654,444,869.46. Days before the 60th Independence celebrations, Minister Nono Kgafela-Mokoka launched the National STEAM Project at Marulamantsi Primary School. "We have overhauled the curriculum completely," she said.

Her contractor described something less finished. Emeritus's managing director in Botswana, Peter Nkaiseng, said a review of the curriculum for Standards One to Seven was "about to commence." On 5 October, the regulator told the Gazette the matters "remain under consideration and have not been finally disposed of."

A contract worth more than half a billion pula, which survived a regulator's cancellation order and, by the minister's own account, overhauled the curriculum, did not make the President's address.

Parliament has not seen the bill either. It "has not had sight of the contract terms," Mr Hikuama said, nor of its milestones or value-for-money measures. "It is difficult to justify how the ministry can fast-track a P654.4 million direct-award IT contract while basic brick-and-mortar infrastructure—essential for a safe learning environment—drags on for years under backlog programmes," he said. "A curriculum cannot be successfully overhauled merely by signing a tech contract."

"What we see in most primary classrooms," he said, "is not a transformed digital learning environment, but dedicated teachers improvising under strained conditions, overcrowded rooms, and missing foundational tools."

WHAT'S IN THE KITCHEN

Being in school is not the same as learning. Of the 52,766 pupils who sat the Primary School Leaving Examination in 2025, roughly one in four failed to reach a grade C, according to the Botswana Examinations Council.

The Gazette reported last month on the conditions behind those numbers: a school in Kanye without new textbooks in over a decade, learners elsewhere sharing one book among ten, and teachers untrained in, and uninformed about, the new curriculum. In February, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka told Parliament the ministry had run short of money for textbooks and school maintenance, and could pay temporary teachers for only five months.

The teachers' unions have taken the complaint abroad. In a country report presented to an Education International workshop on its Go Public! Fund Education campaign, BOSETU, the Botswana Teachers' Union and TAWU warned that government's spending commitments had not reached classrooms. They cited inadequate sanitation, overcrowding and deteriorating buildings, and cautioned that an excessive focus on digital transformation and curriculum reform risked overlooking the daily realities of learners and teachers. "Quality public education begins with quality funding," the report states.

Even voices sympathetic to the new curriculum counsel a balanced diet. Kagiso Pearl Kgosiemang, an early childhood researcher who has written to the President on reform, called a STEM-aligned early childhood curriculum "a welcome development," and credited the address with its attention to education infrastructure. But the real test, she said, is in the classroom. "Technology is important and also changes, but children's brains do not change," she said. "It should not be at the expense of foundational child development." Reading, vocabulary and storytelling, she said, "should not be left out."

> "The speech treats basic education as a series of procurement triumphs rather than a human-centered public service. Education cannot be modernised by decree while basic infrastructure, teacher welfare, and daily classroom resources remain severely underfunded."

LAST ORDERS

In January, a new cohort of children will begin Standard One. One publisher told the Gazette last month that no new primary textbooks had been ordered for them. By 2029, if the President is to be believed, they will have eggs, cheese and milk. He has not said what they will learn, from what books, or from teachers trained in what. In Ntlo ya Dikgosi last month, Kgosi Malope II proposed diverting a year's money for new schools to repairing old ones. Otherwise, he warned, "the same problems will persist."

The Botswana Gazette
BUSINESS NEWS

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Botswana Eyes De Beers Tech Dividend

President Duma Boko says Botswana's planned increase in De Beers ownership is as much a technology play as a diamond investment



Photo Credit: BWgovernment

BONGANI MALUNGA

President Duma Boko has positioned Botswana's proposed increase in its De Beers shareholding from 15 percent to 30 percent as a strategic investment in technology, arguing that the deal could give the country exposure to high-growth synthetic diamond applications beyond the traditional gemstone market.

Delivering his State of the Nation Address on Monday, Boko said the expanded stake would make Botswana the single largest shareholder in De Beers and give the country greater influence over the company's strategic direction for decades to come.

"Our investment in De Beers is not just an investment in natural diamonds it is an investment in technology," Boko said.

MAJOR PART OF THE INVESTMENT CASE

He pointed to De Beers-owned Element Six, which develops synthetic diamond technology used in advanced industrial and technological applications, as a major part of the investment case. According to Boko, future demand for high-technology synthetic diamonds is expected to rise as the world expands artificial intelligence infrastructure, superintelligence systems and large-scale data centres.

Boko also revealed that the United States government has approached Element Six to participate in the development of the technology, citing a proposed US$600 million joint facility in Georgia.

PARTNERING WITH THE US

"The Government of the United States has asked Element Six to partner in developing this technology. To this end, President Trump has announced a new 600 million US dollar joint facility in Georgia," Boko said.He added that discussions with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick had opened the door for Element Six to anchor a broader technology partnership between Botswana and the United States.

"In my discussions with Commerce Secretary Lutnick, we agreed that Element Six can stand at the heart of a new technology partnership between our two countries," Boko said. The President also disclosed that Botswana will not pursue the De Beers transaction alone, with Angola and Namibia expected to participate alongside it.

NOT STANDING ALONE

"Botswana will not stand alone, our neighbours and friends, the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Namibia, will take part in this transaction beside us," Boko said. He argued that the arrangement would, for the first time, place major diamond-producing countries from the region together at the ownership table of the company that markets their diamonds.

Boko outlined that if concluded, the transaction would therefore not only deepen Botswana's influence over De Beers but also potentially give the country a foothold in advanced synthetic diamond technology at a time when demand from data centres and emerging computing industries is expected to grow.

France Backs Botswana's Natural Diamond Push

France has backed Botswana's campaign to reserve the diamond name for natural stones, strengthening its fight against synthetic diamond competition

BONGANI MALUNGA

France is set to join Botswana's campaign to reserve the term "diamond" exclusively for natural stones, handing Botswana a potentially significant ally in its battle against the growing synthetic diamond industry.

President Duma Boko revealed during the State of the Nation Address on Monday that Botswana and France are preparing to formalise an agreement supporting the country's position that synthetic stones should not be marketed under the same "diamond" designation as naturally mined gems. Boko also announced that Minerals and Energy Minister Bogolo Kenewendo is expected to travel to Paris in due course to conclude the agreement.

IMMINENT AGREEMENT

"We have argued that they must not be called diamonds. I'm happy to indicate that we will be signing an agreement in Paris where France has come on board with us to defend our proposition that the (term) diamonds be reserved only for the natural diamond," Boko stated.

France's support could strengthen Botswana's attempt to push the natural-versus-synthetic distinction beyond marketing campaigns and into regulatory and consumer-protection frameworks in major international markets.

Given that Botswana's economy remains heavily exposed to natural diamond revenues, the terminology battle carries significant commercial implications. Lab-grown diamonds have increased competition in the global jewellery market, placing additional pressure on natural diamond producers to defend the scarcity, provenance and long-term value proposition of mined stones.

STRONGER DIFFERENTIATION

Botswana has increasingly argued that stronger differentiation is necessary to prevent consumers from treating natural and synthetic stones as interchangeable products.

The planned France agreement therefore represents more than diplomatic backing as it signals Botswana's effort to build an international coalition around stricter product definitions that could ultimately influence labelling rules, retail practices and consumer perception.

France also represents an important strategic partner because of its position within the European Union and its influence in the global luxury goods industry.

Should Botswana secure wider international support for its proposal, natural diamond producers could gain a stronger regulatory platform from which to distinguish mined diamonds from laboratory-grown alternatives.

"I'm happy to indicate that we will be signing an agreement in Paris where France has come on board with us to defend our proposition that the (term) diamonds be reserved only for the natural diamond."



Speaking during the Stanbic Bank Botswana IPO roadshow in Gaborone last Thursday, Chief Executive Officer Chose Modise said the restriction demonstrates the bank's commitment to corporate governance as it prepares to list on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE). *Photo Credit: Stanbic Bank Botswana*

Stanbic Shields IPO From Insider Advantage

Stanbic Bank Botswana has barred its directors and executives from buying shares during the IPO's initial stage, citing governance safeguards and their access to pricing information

BONGANI MALUNGA

Stanbic Bank Botswana has placed its own board members and executives on the sidelines of its landmark Initial Public Offering (IPO), arguing that their intimate knowledge of the share-pricing process could give them an information advantage over ordinary investors.

Speaking during the Stanbic Bank Botswana IPO roadshow in Gaborone last Thursday, Chief Executive Officer Chose Modise said the restriction demonstrates the bank's commitment to corporate governance as it prepares to list on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE).

"Just to demonstrate how seriously we take issues of governance, none of our board members or executives are going to participate in buying shares at this initial stage," Modise stated.

CREATING A FIREWALL

The decision effectively creates a firewall between those who helped shape the transaction and investors participating in the initial offer.

Modise acknowledged that senior officials within the bank had access to information surrounding the valuation and pricing of the shares, making their participation at the initial stage a potential governance concern. "We were involved in the pricing process; we have a lot of information," he added.

The restriction is significant as Stanbic moves to open its ownership structure to the public through an IPO that will see a 20 percent stake in the bank offered to investors ahead of its planned BSE listing.

REINFORCING CONFIDENCE

By temporarily excluding insiders, the bank is seeking to reinforce confidence that directors and senior executives will not use information unavailable to the wider market to gain an early advantage in acquiring shares.

The governance safeguard comes as Stanbic intensifies its roadshows aimed at attracting Batswana investors and widening local participation in the bank's ownership.

The IPO represents a major shift from the conventional relationship between Stanbic and its customers, allowing members of the public to move beyond being depositors and borrowers to becoming shareholders entitled to participate in the bank's future earnings.

Modise underlined that the first test of that broadened ownership drive is ensuring that those sitting closest to the transaction do not get first bite at the shares.

Capital Paradox Tests BDC's P5.5bn Ambition

BDC targets P5.5 billion in priority-sector investments and 25,000 jobs by 2031 but Botswana's savings are still struggling to reach productive businesses

BONGANI MALUNGA

The Botswana Development Corporation's (BDC) ambitious P5.5 billion investment drive is running into a contradiction at the heart of the economy, Botswana has plenty of savings but comparatively little capital finding its way into productive domestic investment.

Speaking at the BDC Investment Forum on Thursday, Managing Director Oteng Keabetswe said the corporation's 2031 strategy aims to deploy P5.5 billion into priority sectors and support the creation of 25 000 jobs.

However, achieving those targets will depend partly on solving what Keabetswe described as Botswana's capital paradox, a financial system sitting on more than P158 billion in pension assets while businesses and alternative investments continue to face limited access to long-term funding.

SAVINGS RICH, CAPITAL SCARCE

"Botswana is savings but capital scarce. Our pension funds sit with over P158 billion in pension assets, these are some of the deepest pension assets per individual savings in Africa, yet only 45% of these assets is invested here at home. Private sector credit sits at about 30% of GDP alongside 55% in comparable economies across the region. Less than 5% of our capital is invested in private equity and venture capital. This is the paradox that we sit with in Botswana."

Despite Botswana's sizeable pool of institutional savings, domestic companies remain relatively underfunded, while private equity and venture capital, crucial sources of patient funding for growing businesses, account for only a fraction of available capital.

Keabetswe's remarks suggest that BDC's 2031 strategy will therefore rely not only on identifying investment opportunities but also on unlocking more domestic capital for businesses capable of expanding production and creating jobs.

A SHIFT IN INVESTMENT RULES

A looming shift in pension investment rules could provide part of that ammunition as Keabetswe said requirements for pension funds to invest about 50 percent of their assets domestically by 2027 could channel approximately P8 billion back into Botswana's economy.

That additional capital could deepen the domestic investment pool but the bigger test will be whether it finds productive projects capable of delivering sustainable returns rather than simply meeting localisation thresholds.

Keabetswe stressed that BDC's P5.5 billion strategy is therefore as much about mobilising Botswana's own savings as it is about investing them, turning accumulated wealth into factories, businesses, jobs and productive assets before 2031.

Investor Screening Gets DIS Security Layer

SEZA brings intelligence services into investor vetting as Botswana moves to detect financial crime, integrity and security threats before licences are issued



Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) Acting Director General - Mr. Aobakwe Monamo and Special Economic Zones Authority (SEZA) Acting CEO - Mr. Goabaone Masike. *Photo Credit: The Projects Magazine*

BONGANI MALUNGA

Investor screening in Botswana's Special Economic Zones has gained an additional security layer after SEZA Botswana brought the Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) into its vetting process, tightening scrutiny of businesses seeking to establish operations in the country.

SEZA Botswana and the DIS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday that will allow the two institutions to collaborate on investor screening and vetting, effectively adding intelligence-based security assessments to the checks prospective investors already undergo.

The arrangement is being advanced as an early warning system, designed to identify financial crime, integrity, reputational and national security risks before potentially problematic investors gain a foothold within Botswana's special economic zones.

THE FULL PICTURE

The agreement also amounts to an acknowledgement by SEZA that conventional information supplied through licence applications may not always provide the full picture about companies and individuals seeking investment approvals.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, SEZA Botswana Acting Chief Executive Officer Goabaone Masike said cooperation with the DIS would strengthen due diligence and help uncover risks that may not be immediately visible from information submitted by applicants.

The DIS will therefore provide an added security assessment where SEZA's own information-gathering and verification capabilities may not be sufficient.

APPROPRIATE DUE DILIGENCE

"Whilst we appreciate that investment attraction remains a central component of our economy and to our mandate, we recognise that it must be accompanied by appropriate due diligence to safeguard the integrity, security and reputation of Botswana's investment environment. It is therefore important that investors and entities seeking to operate within the SEZ framework are subjected to appropriate scrutiny and where necessary during the course of their operations," Masike noted.

The arrangement potentially extends scrutiny beyond the point at which investors first apply for licences. Masike's remarks indicate that entities may also face checks during their operations where circumstances warrant further examination.

ADDITIONAL BARRIER

The intervention creates another barrier for Botswana against investors who could potentially use seemingly legitimate investment structures to conceal financial crime, questionable ownership structures or other integrity risks.

DIS Acting Director General Aobakwe Monamo described the partnership as a preventative security mechanism rather than merely another administrative check. "This partnership is positioned as an early warning system that is meant to detect and deter potential threats that may affect the integrity of investment in our country."

The agreement effectively places intelligence-led vetting alongside SEZA's investment attraction mandate, signalling that attracting capital will increasingly be accompanied by deeper scrutiny of who ultimately stands behind it.

Anti-Competitive Behaviour Framework Under Fire

VP warns Botswana's competition safeguards are failing to prevent concentrated franchise ownership, price collusion and alleged tender manipulation in key sectors

BONGANI MALUNGA

The Vice President and Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe has raised the alarm over weaknesses in Botswana's competition framework, warning that regulatory gaps are leaving room for concentrated franchise ownership and cartels to manipulate prices, markets and government tenders.

Speaking at the Local Authorities Budget Pitso in Maun last Tuesday, Gaolathe argued that stronger institutions and more aggressive enforcement are required if Botswana is to create a genuinely level playing field for businesses.

His remarks put the spotlight on whether the country's existing competition architecture is sufficiently equipped to prevent excessive market concentration and coordinated conduct by businesses that can squeeze out competitors and ultimately leave consumers paying more.

ROBUST FRAMEWORK NEEDED

"If our anti-competitive infrastructure or framework or our institutions' competition boards were robust and capacitated, then we shouldn't have the same person owning the same franchise. We need to make the framework more robust and put more energy in this framework and executing the idea of anti-competitive behaviour. Including mafias in medicine (procurement) because there's a way they collude to control prices, markets and tenders," Gaolathe noted.

While ownership of several units under the same franchise is not automatically prohibited, Gaolathe's intervention suggests that the government is concerned about the broader consequences where ownership becomes heavily concentrated in the hands of a small number of operators.

ACCUMULATING GREATER CONTROL

The concern is that without stronger safeguards, established businesses can accumulate greater control over particular brands or markets, narrowing opportunities for new entrants and potentially weakening competitive pressure.



The Vice President and Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe
Photo Credit: BWgovernment

His warning over medicine procurement was even sharper, pointing to suspected collusion among suppliers seeking to influence prices, markets and tender outcomes.

Botswana already has a Competition and Consumer Authority mandated to investigate practices including price-fixing, market allocation, bid-rigging and abuse of dominance. The Authority can also conduct market inquiries where it suspects competition is being restricted or distorted.

Gaolathe's comments, however, suggest that the government believes the problem may no longer simply be the existence of competition rules but whether the institutions responsible for enforcing them are sufficiently empowered, capacitated and aggressive.

The Vice President's position suggests a shift towards Botswana placing tighter rules governing market concentration, stronger scrutiny of franchise ownership patterns and tougher surveillance of sectors exposed to procurement collusion.

Botswana's Unprincipled Foreign Policy



The UDC promised to put human rights at the centre of foreign policy, yet its words in Beijing and its votes on Ukraine show how readily that promise yields when powerful partners are involved.

DR DOUGLAS RASBASH

In Beijing on 13 October, Botswana declared that it opposed any form of Taiwanese independence and supported "all efforts by China to achieve national reunification". Less than two weeks later, in Gaborone, Foreign Minister Phenyo Butale acknowledged that Batswana had been recruited to fight on Russia's side in Ukraine. Asked about a formal protest to Moscow, he said the government preferred dialogue. In Beijing, Botswana spoke emphatically for a great power's claim. At home, it chose restraint even when its own citizens were caught up in another great power's war.

President Duma Boko and his minister have described their foreign policy as centred on human rights. Minister Butale also made economic diplomacy a priority. Botswana needs markets, jobs and investment, and its government has every reason to seek them. The test of a human-rights policy comes when defending a principle might make a trade or investment conversation uncomfortable.

BEIJING'S ENDORSEMENT

Botswana's longstanding recognition of the People's Republic of China is one thing. The October communiqué did more. As the two governments announced a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, Botswana explicitly endorsed Beijing's reunification efforts. Its endorsement contained no express condition that the outcome be peaceful or that the people of Taiwan consent to it. Taipei strongly rejected the statement the next day.

The question of self-determination is about whose wishes count. Botswana can recognise Beijing as the government of China and still insist that Taiwan's people have a say in their future. Instead, the communiqué gave Beijing the language it wanted and gave the people of Taiwan no voice in the outcome. For an African country that prizes the right to decide its own future, endorsing that imperial claim should require more explanation than the announcement of a strategic partnership.

UKRAINE ABSTENTIONS

On 2 March 2022, Botswana co-sponsored and voted for the first UN General Assembly resolution on the full-scale invasion. Titled Aggression against Ukraine, it deplored Russia's aggression "in the strongest terms" and demanded an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal. On 24 February 2026, Botswana abstained on a resolution supporting a lasting peace in Ukraine.

Botswana's early UN record was mixed. In 2022 it backed the resolution rejecting Russia's attempted annexations of Ukrainian territory and abstained on suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council and on a resolution concerning reparations. In February 2023 it again voted for a resolution calling for Russian troops to withdraw. The more recent pattern after the change in Government in November 2024 is clearer. Botswana abstained on both Ukraine peace resolutions in February 2025, on the return of Ukrainian children in December 2025, and on the February 2026 peace resolution. The texts differed. Across all four votes, Botswana withheld its support.

An abstention does not automatically amount to support for the opposing position. However, it raises questions about the government's reasoning, particularly when the resolutions concern territorial sovereignty, the protection of children and the pursuit of peace. Botswana should be able to explain how these decisions align with its stated commitment to placing human rights at the centre of foreign policy.

The vote on the children drew a challenge from Duma Saleshando in Parliament in March. Why, he asked, had a government that invoked human rights at home abstained on a resolution demanding that Russia return Ukrainian children? He also questioned plans for a diplomatic mission in Moscow. Butale had spoken of opening an embassy and inviting Russian investment in minerals.

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONS

In December 2025, the Ministry of International Relations said two young men had reportedly gone to Russia expecting military training and ended up on the front lines of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine's foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, was more direct. In April he said he had briefed Minister Butale on Russia's recruitment of Africans for its war against Ukraine. Russia's embassy in Botswana told Mmegi that those who joined had done so voluntarily.

By August, Minister Butale was warning Parliament that nearly 22 Batswana had been drawn into deceptive schemes. Then, on 26 October, Kgosi Ian Khama pressed Minister Butale in Ntlo ya Dikgosi on what Botswana had done to protect its citizens, whether it had protested to Moscow, and what principles of international law guided its position. Khama said that a country trying to lure Batswana into its wars "would be an act of hostility".

Minister Butale acknowledged confirmed cases of Batswana participating on the Russian side. Some, he said, appeared to have signed up knowingly. Others had allegedly been deceived by offers of work. The distinction matters for anyone who may face prosecution under Botswana's Foreign Enlistment Act. Of the 27 linked to recruitment, eight were intercepted before reaching Russia, four were repatriated and 15 remained unaccounted for, according to the Gazette's reporting. Botswana had asked Russia to return three injured citizens and was negotiating with Ukraine for the release of one prisoner of war. On a formal protest, Butale's answer was blunt. "We believe in dialogue than protests."



Two days later, Ukraine's Defence Intelligence named 25-year-old Pako Namogang. It said he had been recruited through WhatsApp, signed a military contract in Moscow and was reportedly killed in Luhansk. An investigation by Journalists for Justice documented more than 3,066 Africans from 40 countries recruited into Russia's armed forces since October 2022 and 502 deaths by the end of June 2026. The recruitment figure is cumulative. A continent that fought to end foreign rule should recognise the imperial impulse in Russia's attempt to subordinate Ukraine.

PRINCIPLES AT STAKE

Ukraine and Taiwan present different legal and diplomatic questions. In Ukraine, the UN General Assembly identified an invasion of a sovereign member state and demanded withdrawal. In Taiwan's case, the question raised by Botswana's communiqué is whether the people affected should have any say in their political future. What connects the two is Gaborone's readiness to be explicit when a powerful partner wants its endorsement and cautious when the same standard would require challenging one.

Diplomatic restraint and diplomatic inaction are not necessarily the same thing. The government has practical reasons to keep channels open with Moscow. The families of 15 missing Batswana need answers, and consular work requires access and cooperation. But Botswana can seek the safe return of its citizens and publicly ask Russia to stop recruiting them. It can trade with China and insist on a peaceful outcome in which Taiwan's people have a voice. In neither case has the government shown why pursuing investment requires giving up that diplomatic ground.

Calling this an unprincipled foreign policy is a judgement about the government's choices. The voting record and the Beijing communiqué cannot establish a private bargain. When the government is ready to declare what Beijing wants to hear, yet abstains even on the return of Ukrainian children, what does it mean to say that human rights are at the centre of Botswana's foreign policy?



Has SONA become frugal?

President Duma Boko's new focus on maintenance and household relief raises questions about the fate of last year's ambitious transformation and jobs commitments.

DR DOUGLAS RASBASH

A year ago, the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP) was central to President Duma Boko's State of the Nation Address. It was to help Botswana reach high-income status by 2036, raise per-capita income to P200,000 and create 512,000 jobs. The acronym BETP appeared nine times across seven paragraphs. In the 2026 address it appeared zero times. For a programme given such prominence a year earlier, its disappearance from the speech is astonishing. The President offered neither an account of its progress nor an explanation of where it now fits in government's plans.



What he did offer was a clue to the change in emphasis. Given limited resources, he said, government had become "increasingly frugal". For the A1, he cited P772.4 million approved for urgent maintenance on six sections. The previous year's promise to begin feasibility work on an A1 toll road received no specific update. My reading is that the 2025 agenda exceeded what government could realistically finance and execute, and that this year's speech signals a more prudent order of priorities.



PRESERVING PUBLIC ASSETS

The strongest case for this change is visible in the work itself. Through the skills component of Ikageng, nearly 27,600 young people, 79 percent of them women, were engaged in building and maintaining public infrastructure. The President also reported that the Education Infrastructure and Management Company uses Ikageng participants and technical and vocational graduates in school maintenance. This gives young people a chance to earn and learn while keeping existing facilities in use. The same principle should guide the care of clinics and other public buildings.

Maintenance is a financial decision as much as an engineering one. A road kept in good condition can serve for longer before it needs expensive reconstruction. A school repaired while it is still in use preserves the value of what taxpayers have already paid for. The test of the A1 allocation is how much work is completed, how long the repairs last and how the road performs afterwards. The value of school maintenance is measured in classrooms that stay open and usable.

The shift is clearest in the work described for the near term. The Mmamabula–Lephalale and Mosetse–Kazungula–Livingstone rail links received no specific update. The same applies to the 900 MW solar programme named in 2025 for Maun, Letlhakane and Isang. The 200 MW reported added to the grid came from Mmadinare and Jwaneng. The Trans Kalahari Railway and the Chobe–Zambezi water transfer remain in the speech, with contractor procurement envisaged for 2027/28 subject to successful feasibility work. SONA 2027 should reveal the fate of the remaining megaprojects. Parliament still needs to know which earlier commitments have been deferred, redesigned or dropped. Hopefully Budget 2027 will bring more transparency.

> "For a programme given such prominence a year earlier, its disappearance from the speech is astonishing."

HOUSEHOLD RELIEF

Frugality has a social purpose when it protects the services people rely on and eases the costs they face. The tertiary allowance rose from P1,900 to P2,200. Technical and vocational students moved from P300 to P1,900 and then to P2,200. The promised P2,500 remains the target. The P300 monthly infant grant reached 16,501 eligible infants in their first year, with P34.3 million paid out between July and October.

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PROMISES DASHBOARD

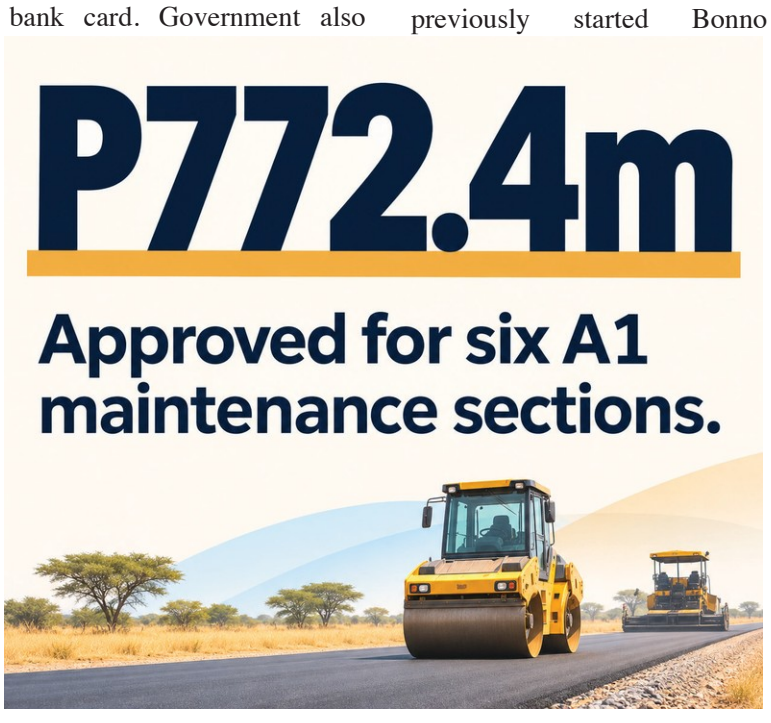
Policy area	2025 promises	Direct updates	New in 2026	2026 total
Social	39	14	8	15
Economic	30	8	8	11
Technical	22	2	9	10
Environmental	9	1	0	1
Government	17	4	5	8
Total	**117**	**29**	**30**	**45**

Sources: Botswana's 2025 and 2026 State of the Nation Addresses and the Gazette commitments crosswalk.



The Basic Bank Account is a practical reform, aimed particularly at people earning below P4,000 a month. It requires P50 to open, has no monthly maintenance fee and offers free deposits, three free withdrawals a month and a free first bank card. Government also suspended the fuel, road and security-of-supply levies for six months, at a reported cost of about P700 million. That cost belongs in any assessment of how government has chosen to provide relief.

The President reported 567 previously started Bonno homes completed and handed over, and construction begun on another 1,366. By 30 October, 5,277 of 8,951 outstanding pension claims from serving and former military personnel had been paid. Serowe's rehabilitation centre opened for outpatient care in its first phase. Parliament approved the National Health Insurance Policy in August and work on the bill began. That is a step towards easing the cost of care. Families still need to know when coverage will start, what it will cover and what they will pay.



THE JOBS GAP

The employment figures cited in the speech add up to roughly 46,000 instances of work, placement or programme participation. They include Ikageng, 4,366 temporary public service workers moved into permanent posts, 804 private-sector internships, and other permanent and temporary employment reported across different periods. The figures may overlap. Insourcing gives existing workers greater security, and public works and internships give people paid work or experience. The speech supplied no national tally of net new, lasting jobs against the 512,000 target announced in 2025. That makes the silence on BETP consequential. Given that reducing unemployment is the number one priority, the need for a jobs barometer should be obvious.

THE DELIVERY TEST

Our comparison found that 29 of 117 commitments from 2025 received a direct update. Another 29 drew related remarks without a specific answer, and 59 received no specific mention. The new speech set out 45 forward undertakings, of which 30 were distinct from the 2025 commitments, 14 renewed or specified earlier ones and one revised an earlier promise. This measures what Parliament was told. An omission leaves the delivery status open.

The same discipline should apply to De Beers. The proposed deal would raise Botswana's stake from 15 to 30 percent if it closes, making Botswana the largest single shareholder and revising the majority-stake ambition of 2025. Greater influence may be valuable. Parliament needs to know the purchase price, how it will be financed and what rights Botswana would secure, especially if diamond sales disappoint.

> "The speech supplied no national tally of net new, lasting jobs against the 512,000 target announced in 2025."



A public delivery ledger would give substance to the President's claim of greater frugality. For each commitment it should show the original target, what was spent, what was delivered and the next deadline. For maintenance, publish the condition before and after the work. For jobs programmes, track how many participants move into lasting employment. For BETP, say which commitments still stand and who is responsible for them. Government has made a plausible case for taking better care of the assets Botswana already owns. The next step is to show what that choice delivers, and to explain what it means for the promises on which Parliament was asked to rely last year.

When Brands Reward Their Own Failure

From sales targets to customer service metrics, poorly designed incentives can make businesses celebrate results that quietly destroy the trust they depend on.



MANUEL VEIRUAPI RUHAPO | THE BRAND PARADOX

Imagine calling a company in Gaborone because a charge on your account makes no sense. The employee sounds helpful, but the conversation ends before the problem is resolved. You call again, explain again and lose another part of your morning.

Inside the company, the first call might count as a success: it was handled quickly. Outside, you are deciding whether this business deserves another month of your money.

This hypothetical encounter captures a danger in brand building. Sometimes the business does not simply fail to deliver its promise. Its own reward system encourages people to undermine it.

THE COBRA EFFECT

The Cobra effect describes an incentive that encourages behaviour which worsens the problem it was meant to solve. Its name comes from a frequently repeated, historically disputed story about a bounty for dead cobras in colonial India. In the tale, people breed snakes to collect the reward, turning an attempted solution into a bigger problem. It is best treated as a parable, not established history. 1

The business lesson is straightforward: people respond to what gets rewarded, not necessarily to what management intended.

A brand wants loyal customers but rewards staff only for new accounts. It wants useful conversations but pays an agency mainly for engagement totals. It wants excellent service but praises employees for ending calls quickly.

These are not automatically Cobra effects. They become one when the response to the incentive actively weakens the relationship the business wanted to strengthen.

The Cobra Paradox is that a company can spend money promoting trust while paying people to behave in ways that make trust harder to earn.

> Reward the behaviour you want customers to remember, not merely the activity you can count

ACCOUNTS WITHOUT TRUST

Wells Fargo provides a documented warning. In 2016, the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said employees, encouraged by sales targets and compensation incentives, opened accounts without customers' consent. Some customers incurred fees. The regulator also identified inadequate monitoring of the incentive programmes. 2

Days later, the bank announced that it would eliminate retail product-sales goals. 3

The important detail is not the size of a penalty. It is the person discovering that a bank had done something in their name which they had never requested.

A customer who asks for help with money should not become a means of improving someone else's sales record. Once that happens, the brand promise and the employee's incentive are pulling in opposite directions.

Misconduct still requires accountability. But dismissing the matter as a few dishonest employees would leave the system that encouraged the behaviour unexamined.

BRINGING IT HOME

Botswana's promotions show why incentives belong in brand strategy, not just the sales department.

FNB Botswana's 2024/25 Swipe & Win campaign rewarded qualifying customer activity. It also included prizes for shop tellers whose assisting details appeared on winning customer receipts. 4

That is not evidence the campaign backfired. It shows that a promotion can influence both customers and the people serving them. The design therefore needs to consider what each participant might do to improve their chances.

The distinction is between encouraging useful behaviour and encouraging activity for its own sake. A transaction is measurable. Whether it helped someone manage their money is a different question.

Consider mobile money. Mascom's MyZaka offers practical services, including buying electricity, paying bills and sending money. 5 Those uses give a customer reasons to keep the service.

Now imagine a mobile-money activation that rewards promoters only for registrations. This is an illustrative scenario, not a claim about Mascom's practices. A promoter could prioritise completing forms over explaining how the service works. The campaign records growth, but customers leave unable to use what they joined.

The brand has paid for a number and potentially created frustration instead of confidence.

THE EFFICIENCY PARADOX

The Efficiency Paradox follows: making the company look faster can make life slower for its customers.

A service team rewarded only for closing complaints could learn to close the record before solving the problem. The customer returns, the workload grows and the relationship deteriorates. What looked like an efficiency measure has helped create more work.

The same risk applies to a retailer pushing redemption totals without ensuring people understand the offer. Or an activation rewarding repeated social-media tagging until a brand's invitation begins to feel like spam.

These are possible consequences of badly designed incentives, not allegations against named Botswana businesses.

Botswana's Competition and Consumer Authority says suppliers must provide accurate, clear and complete information in understandable language. 6 A sales target is no excuse for making that explanation inconvenient.

WHAT IT MEANS

Business owners and executives: Examine what gets bonuses, praise and promotion. Pair sales with evidence of customer consent, suitability and continued usefulness. Do not demand customer care while making it costly for employees to provide it.

Marketing professionals: Before launching an incentive, ask how someone could earn the reward without delivering the intended benefit. Pilot the campaign and follow up with participants. Entries and registrations cannot tell you whether the experience worked.

Brand managers: Follow the customer beyond the winning report. Check whether complaints stay resolved, new customers understand the product and promotional promises are honoured. Give staff credit for preventing a bad sale, not only completing a good one.

The reason is simple: a brand lives in what people experience, not in what the dashboard celebrates.

The Cobra effect warns us that apparent success can carry the seeds of failure. Reward the behaviour you want customers to remember, not merely the activity you can count.



The Brand Paradox is a weekly column by Manuel Veiruapi Ruhapo that explores the counterintuitive truths behind building great brands in Botswana and beyond. Manuel Ruhapo is the founder of Blacmarc Group, a brand strategy consultancy Agencies that helps businesses solve their most complex brand challenges. Contact me on : manuel.ruhapo@blacmarc.co.bw/ruhapo@gmail.comContact me on: manuel.ruhapo@blacmarc.co.bw/ruhapo@gmail.com

Village Oncology Plans Men's Health Run

With prostate cancer accounting for 40 percent of its reported patients, the organisation is turning its attention to awareness and mobile screening.



Village Oncology will host its Blue Run 2026 on 14 November at Village Medical Centre in Gaborone, in an initiative aimed at raising awareness about prostate cancer and men's mental health.

Held under the theme "Step Up, Speak Up," the event will encourage men to seek screening and speak openly about their health. Registration is free, with Dumelang Saleshando participating as Chief Walker.

PROSTATE CANCER CONCERNS

Village Oncology says 40 percent of the patients it has treated since its inception have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, a figure it says has informed its focus on early detection and improving access to screening.

MOBILE SCREENING PLANS

The organisation is also planning to extend screening services to underserved communities through a mobile health unit in 2027, subject to securing sponsorship and other support.

The proposed facility would offer prostate ultrasound screening, mammography, ultrasound and X-ray services, as well as doctor's consultations and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing.

Village Oncology says the mobile unit is intended to address geographical and financial barriers that prevent some people from accessing healthcare services.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

First Capital Bank, Tsetseng Retail Group, Sefalana Retail Group and Medhold are among the organisations supporting the initiative, according to Village Oncology.

The organisation says partnerships with corporate sponsors, community leaders and members of the public will be important in securing the resources needed to establish the proposed mobile screening services.

Kwa Nokeng Oil Makes BSE History

The company's BSE listing marks the exchange's largest-ever IPO, with local ownership increasing to approximately 79 percent.



Kwa Nokeng Oil Limited (KNO) has raised P1.66 billion through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) and listing on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE), in what has been described as the largest IPO in the exchange's history.

Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), the corporate and investment banking division of FNB Botswana, acted as sole financial adviser, bookrunner and receiving bank for the transaction, valued at approximately US$121 million.

The listing is the BSE's first IPO since 2018 and one of the largest completed in broader Africa in 2026.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP INCREASES

Following the IPO, Botswana ownership in KNO increased from 51 percent to approximately 79 percent. The offer was oversubscribed by 1.21 times, prompting the exercise of a greenshoe option to accommodate additional investor demand.

The offering was intended to provide liquidity for existing shareholders, increase local investor participation and establish a public trading platform for the company's shares.

INVESTOR INTEREST

RMB Executive Director Harriet Mlalazi said the transaction created an opportunity for local investors to acquire stakes in a strategically important business.

"The strong demand for the offer demonstrates both the depth of capital available in Botswana and the important role public markets can play in supporting economic growth and broad-based wealth creation," she said.

Chidi Iwuchukwu, RMB's Head of Broader Africa Investment Banking and Sponsor Segment, said the listing reflected investor appetite for investment opportunities in African capital markets.

"The successful listing of KNO highlights the significant appetite for quality investment opportunities across African capital markets and RMB's ability to execute seamlessly across borders," Iwuchukwu said.

TRANSACTION EXECUTION

RMB Senior Transactor for Investment Banking in Botswana, Resegohetse Pheresi, said the listing followed extensive preparation and engagement with investors and the company's management.

"KNO's successful listing is the culmination of extensive preparation, close collaboration with management and strong engagement with investors," Pheresi said.

BoFiNet Joins Cybercrime Awareness Drive

The telecommunications provider is backing a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness about cybercrime and protecting critical communications infrastructure.

Botswana Fibre Networks (BoFiNet) has joined the third annual Twantsho Botsotsi Cybercrime Awareness Roadshow, a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness about cybercrime and promoting safer use of digital technologies.

The campaign, spearheaded by Cybersmart Botswana in partnership with the Press Office in the Presidency, Botswana Police Service, Absa Bank Botswana and other stakeholders, was launched on 26 October at Mochudi Main Kgotla.

SECURING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The launch was officiated by Minister for State President, Defence and Security Moeti Mohwasa and Minister of Commu-

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nications and Innovation David Tshere. The roadshow will extend to areas including Maun and Francistown through Kgotla meetings, school engagements and community awareness sessions.

BoFiNet Head of Operations Hendrick Matlhaku said the company had implemented measures to protect the national fibre network, including anti-Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) systems to monitor internet traffic and detect potential threats.

"Our Tier III data centre has multi-layered security including firewalls that protect our customers' equipment from cyber attacks," Matlhaku said.

VANDALISM CONCERNS

He also raised concerns about vandalism and theft of telecommunications infrastructure, warning that damage to fibre-optic cables could disrupt connectivity and affect businesses, communities and essential public services.

"Communities lose connectivity, businesses suffer disruptions and access to essential public services is compromised," he said, urging members of the public to report suspected vandalism and theft to the relevant authorities.

CYBERSECURITY AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Minister Tshere said cybersecurity required public participation beyond the implementation of legislation.

"Legislation alone is not enough; every Motswana must be equipped to use digital technologies safely and responsibly," he said.

Matlhaku said BoFiNet's participation formed part of its efforts to expand connectivity while protecting the infrastructure supporting the country's digital services.

Continental Re Retains 14.8% Shareholding

The reinsurer has revised its IPO structure, reporting improved interim profits and extending its public offer deadline to November 20.



Continental Reinsurance Holdings Limited has revised its proposed listing on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE), with existing shareholder ACA Cornerstone Limited committing to retain its stake in the company for at least five years.

The changes are outlined in a Supplementary Prospectus approved by the BSE, which also incorporates the group's interim financial results for the six months ended June 30, 2026.

FIVE-YEAR COMMITMENT

ACA Cornerstone, a promoter-controlled shareholder vehicle, will retain all 253,951,336 of its existing shares, representing approximately 11.9% of the company's enlarged share capital following the offer, assuming all proposed new shares are issued.

The shareholder has provided a formal undertaking, subject to specified conditions, not to sell the shares for at least five years after listing.

Group Managing Director Mutsunge Lawrence Nazare said the revised offer followed engagement with prospective investors.

"We have engaged closely with investors and taken on board their feedback," he said, adding that the revised structure was intended to strengthen alignment between existing and incoming shareholders.

PROFITS RISE

The group's profit before tax increased by approximately 352% to P79.2 million, from P17.5 million in the corresponding period last year. Profit after tax rose by 902% to P64.4 million, compared with P6.4 million.

Insurance revenue increased by 2.4% to P1.213 billion, while the underwriting margin improved from 4.2% to 6.8%. Total assets stood at P3.27 billion, with equity of P1.43 billion as at June 30, 2026.

OFFER DEADLINES

The public offer, priced at P1 per share, closes at 15:30 on November 20, 2026. The company is targeting US$30 million in new capital, with listing on the BSE Main Board scheduled for December 10, subject to applicable requirements.

Investors who applied before publication of the supplementary document may amend or withdraw their applications by November 11. The original prospectus and supplementary document are available on the company's website and through sponsor Motswedi Securities.

Shekaka Takes Learning Offline

The Botswana start-up is seeking wider adoption of its digital learning application, targeting schools with limited internet access.

Botswana-based social enterprise Shekaka Gaa Laga Mme Edu-Tech Foundation has showcased its offline digital learning platform, Rotlhe Adventure, as part of efforts to expand access to technology-based education, particularly in underserved communities.

The platform was demonstrated during a market activation supported by the Botswana Digital Innovation Hub (BDIH), which is working with the enterprise through its Commercialisation Centre to support the development and commercialisation of locally developed innovations.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Founded by Tumelo Tricia Mokanye, Shekaka focuses on education technology, indigenous language inclusion, digital skills development and women's empowerment.

Rotlhe Adventure is an Android-based, offline-capable learning application designed to support curriculum-aligned education through gamification, African indigenous languages and locally relevant content.

The enterprise also offers a proposed solar-powered Lab and Library on Wheels to deliver digital learning resources to rural schools, as well as Skills for Her, a 90-day entrepreneurship programme for young women.

BDIH said the initiative had onboarded Solomon Dihutso Primary School in Mogoditshane, registered 35 users on the platform and reached another 64 learners through group sessions.

TEACHERS REPORT POSITIVE RESPONSE

Teacher Benjamin Ntsayakgosi said the platform had helped learners engage with STEM subjects through interactive lessons and locally relevant content.

"In our environment, where internet access is either a luxury or completely non-existent, 'offline-first' isn't just a technical feature, it's a lifeline," the educator said.

Ntsayakgosi said the application complemented classroom teaching rather than replacing educators, adding that its visual learning features helped explain complex scientific concepts.

The platform underwent pilot exercises at Solomon Dihutso Primary School in May and August 2026, with feedback from teachers and learners informing subsequent improvements.

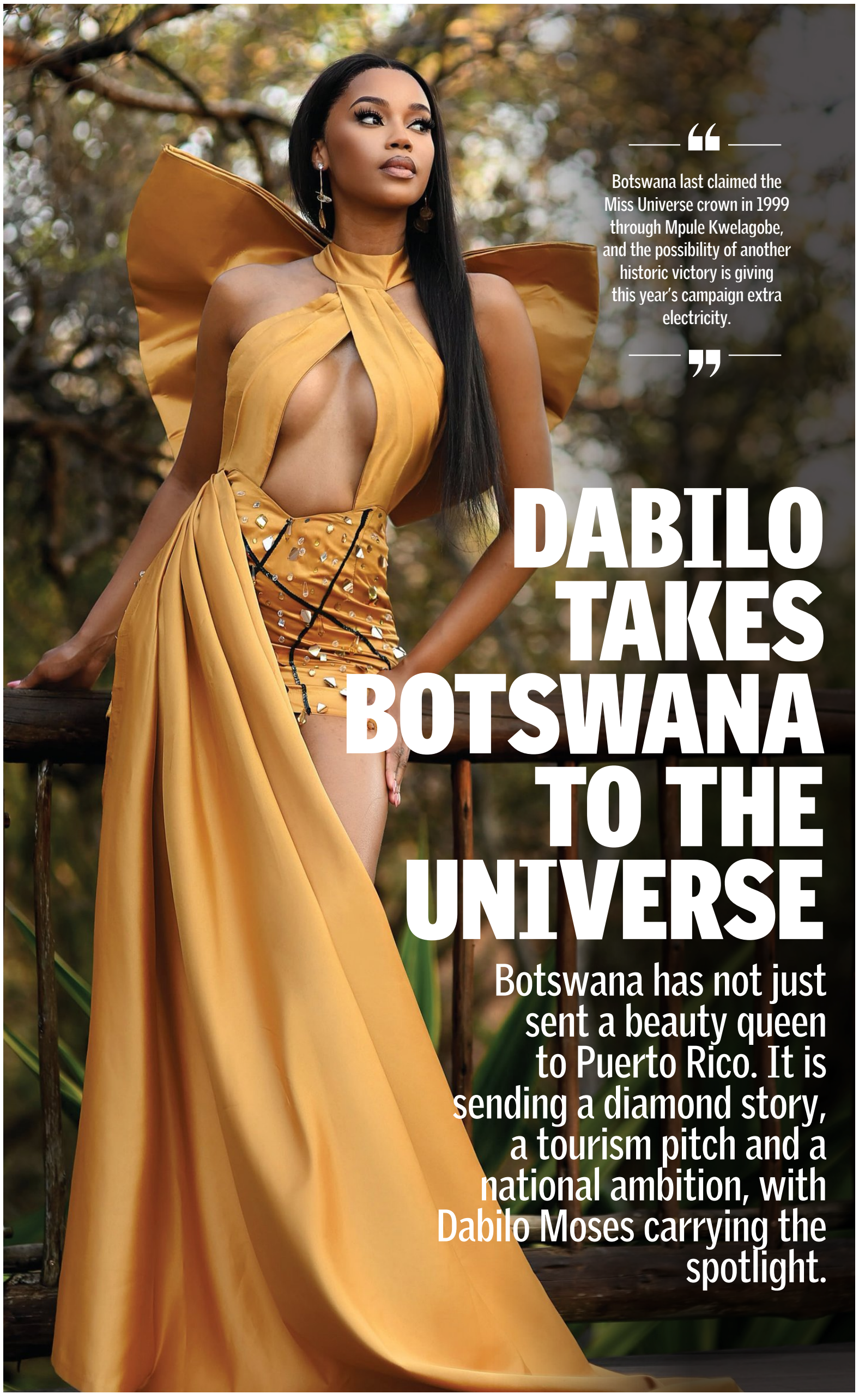
START-UP SEEKS WIDER REACH

Shekaka participated in the 2025 MIT Kuo Sharper Early-Stage Entrepreneurship Development Programme and is receiving mentorship and commercialisation support through BDIH.

The market activation is intended to gather feedback from schools and other stakeholders to assess the platform's suitability for wider adoption



The Botswana Gazette
TIME OUT
THE BOTSWANA GAZETTE
WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2026



DABILO TAKES BOTSWANA TO THE UNIVERSE

Botswana has not just sent a beauty queen to Puerto Rico. It is sending a diamond story, a tourism pitch and a national ambition, with Dabilo Moses carrying the spotlight.

> "Botswana last claimed the Miss Universe crown in 1999 through Mpule Kwelagobe, and the possibility of another historic victory is giving this year's campaign extra electricity."

GOSEGO MOTSUMI

Botswana is dreaming big, and the reigning queen Dabilo Moses is carrying the sparkle. Miss Universe Botswana has touched down on the road to Puerto Rico for the 75th Miss Universe competition, with a country already rallying behind her and ambitions that stretch far beyond the crown.

With at least 130 countries expected to compete, the stakes are global. But Botswana is arriving with a particularly shiny talking point: its diamonds.

MORE THAN A BEAUTY CROWN

This year's Diamond Jubilee edition offers Botswana an opportunity to turn the international beauty spectacle into a marketing platform for its natural diamonds, tourism and investment prospects. According to the Miss Universe Botswana Organisation, the competition's global audience of more than two billion viewers presents an opportunity to tell a bigger story about what diamonds mean to the country's development.

"You buy a Botswana diamond, you fund education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and so on," the organisation said.

The message is deliberate. Botswana wants the world to see its diamonds not simply as luxury commodities, but as natural, traceable and ethical resources with a tangible contribution to national development.

THE QUEEN IS ALREADY MAKING NOISE

Moses is also generating attention before the final curtain rises. Her feature, Miss Universe Botswana Discovers Puerto Rico, shared on the international Miss Universe social media platforms, reportedly attracted stronger reactions and reviews than entries from several global pageant heavyweights, including all participating African countries.

It is an encouraging early signal for a country that knows what it takes to win. Botswana last claimed the Miss Universe crown in 1999 through Mpule Kwelagobe, and the possibility of another historic victory is giving this year's campaign extra electricity.

The 75th Miss Universe competition runs from November 8 to 26, 2026. For Moses, the mission is clear: compete for the crown, command the global stage and make Botswana impossible to ignore.

Nnunu, Mpho Sebina Take on Artistry

Johannesburg is calling, and Botswana is answering in song. Mpho Sebina and Nnunu Ramogotsi are set to take their original sounds to Artistry in Sandton next March, with ambitions that stretch well beyond one night on stage.



GOSEGO MOTSUMI

Botswana's musical ambitions are getting a Johannesburg address. On March 26, 2027, songbirds Mpho Sebina and Nnunu Ramogotsi will descend on Artistry in Sandton for a showcase that promises more than a meeting of two musical identities. It is a chance to put Botswana's sound in front of a new audience and test its staying power in one of the region's toughest music markets.

For Ramogotsi, the invitation is both a career milestone and a potential breakthrough in her South African ambitions.

"It is great mileage for us, especially looking at the fact that we are cracking the South African market, which is very hard to penetrate," she told Time Out.

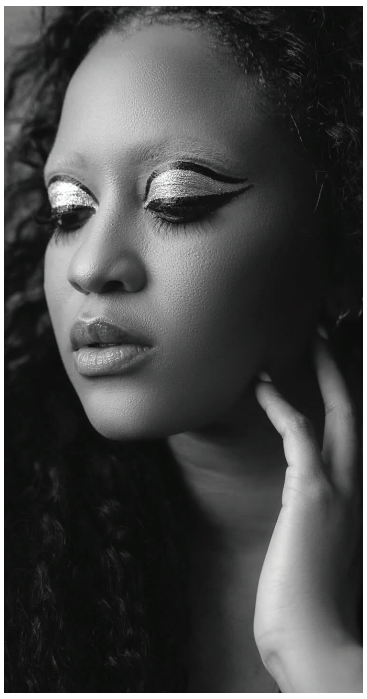
TWO VOICES, ONE STAGE

The showcase falls under the Music & Diplomacy initiative, which uses music to connect artists, audiences, cultural institutions, diplomatic communities and businesses. Its bigger ambition is to turn performances into cultural exchange, industry relationships and opportunities across borders.

"It is great mileage for us, especially looking at the fact that we are cracking the South African market, which is very hard to penetrate."

Both artists will perform their original material live. While a joint musical collaboration is not confirmed, Ramogotsi hints that exciting possibilities are brewing.

"Of course, there are collaborations looming from home and internationally. Keep posted," she says.



NNUNU'S JOHANNESBURG HUSTLE

The Sandton appearance comes as Ramogotsi builds momentum behind her album *Sephonono*. Her recent accolades include Best Jazz Album of the Year 2026 and Best Achievement Award under BOMU, alongside recognition at The No.1 Music Award from Sir Alexander McCall Smith.

Her growing South African footprint has been driven by deliberate hustle. She recalls flying to Johannesburg to find agents, eventually connecting with Peo Seed. The move opened doors to venue visits, media engagements and an appearance at the ACCES Music Conference.

She also landed an interview with VOW FM at Wits University, where *Sephonono* received airplay.

MORE THAN A GIG

For Sebina and Ramogotsi, Artistry is an opportunity to introduce Botswana's original music to fresh ears and build relationships that could take it further.

The real headline may not be who takes the stage, but how far the music travels after the final note.

Why Sparkle is Favorite Personality of the Year

Forget the perfectly curated influencer playbook. Tsaone Sparkle Bedi is building something bigger than a social media following, and her biggest selling point might be her refusal to pretend she has life figured out. Voted Favourite Personality of the Year 2026 at the Woman Awards Botswana, she is turning relatability into influence and personality into potential business empire.



GOSEGO MOTSUMI

In an internet crowded with people selling perfect lives, Sparkle Bedi is making a different proposition: you can have the beautiful life, chase the big money and still be a girl figuring things out. Apparently, Botswana is buying what she is selling.

The corporate professional, entrepreneur and content creator, whose real name is Tsaone Sparkle Bedi, has been voted Favourite Personality of the Year 2026 at the Woman Awards Botswana. Interestingly, her winning formula is not one particular achievement. It is the combination.

"I don't believe in being confined to one box or having to choose just one identity," she told Time Out.

NOT YOUR TYPICAL INFLUENCER

Bedi calls herself the girl next door, but there is nothing particularly ordinary about her appetite for possibility. She moves between corporate responsibilities, entrepreneurship and content creation, sharing the wins alongside the messy business of building a life.

"I want people to feel inspired by my journey, not intimidated by it," she says.

That distinction matters. Her content celebrates beautiful things and life's milestones without suggesting that success comes without uncertainty, setbacks or the occasional need to disappear and recharge.

INFLUENCE IS BIGGER THAN LIKES

For Bedi, the real currency of influence is not follower counts or engagement statistics. It is what happens after someone puts down their phone.

Whether inspiring someone to apply for a job, start a business, pursue a master's degree or simply believe in themselves a little more, she believes influence should translate into action.

"I would rather be real than be perfect," she says, a philosophy that also allows her the freedom to evolve without becoming a prisoner of public expectations.

THINKING BEYOND SPARKLE

The award could easily be a career highlight, but Bedi is already looking beyond the social media spotlight. She sees her personal brand evolving into a multimillion-pula business ecosystem that creates opportunities and has a legacy beyond online visibility.

It is an ambitious proposition, but perhaps that is precisely the point. Her appeal lies in showing that a woman does not have to choose between being relatable and being ambitious.

For now, Botswana has voted for the personality. Bedi is busy building the empire.

Eight Nations, One Punchline

From a visually impaired local comedian marking a decade in stand-up to a Ugandan pioneer reinventing silent comedy, HICOFEST is proving that laughter speaks every language.

GOSEGO MOTSUMI

Comedy is having its own continental moment in Gaborone. For one night, eight African nations will trade cultural differences for punchlines as the Heavyweights International Comedy Festival (HICOFEST) celebrates its 12th edition, with a bigger idea than simply making Botswana laugh: building an African comedy community that travels beyond borders.

Under the theme "Bridging Cultures, One Joke at a Time", the November 19 show at Oasis Hotel Gaborone brings together 15 comedians from Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

But beyond the impressive passport collection, two headliners make this edition particularly interesting.

FROM FIRST-TIMER TO HEAVYWEIGHT

For Thapelo Malani, this is a full-circle moment. He first took to the HICOFEST stage in 2016, and returns a decade later as one of the festival's headliners.

Visually impaired and raised in Maitengwe, Malani has built a comedy career that has taken him to eight African countries. His journey is also a reminder that talent does not need perfect circumstances to command an international stage.

THE MAN MAKING SILENCE FUNNY

Uganda's Okello Okello brings a different kind of innovation. The comedian introduced silent comedy to Uganda through Comedy Black Friday in 2019, a format in which audiences listen to performers through headphones.

The concept has since evolved to include live sign-language interpretation, opening the experience to deaf audiences. His appearance alongside Malani also continues a relationship built through previous performances in Kampala.

MORE THAN A NIGHT OF JOKES

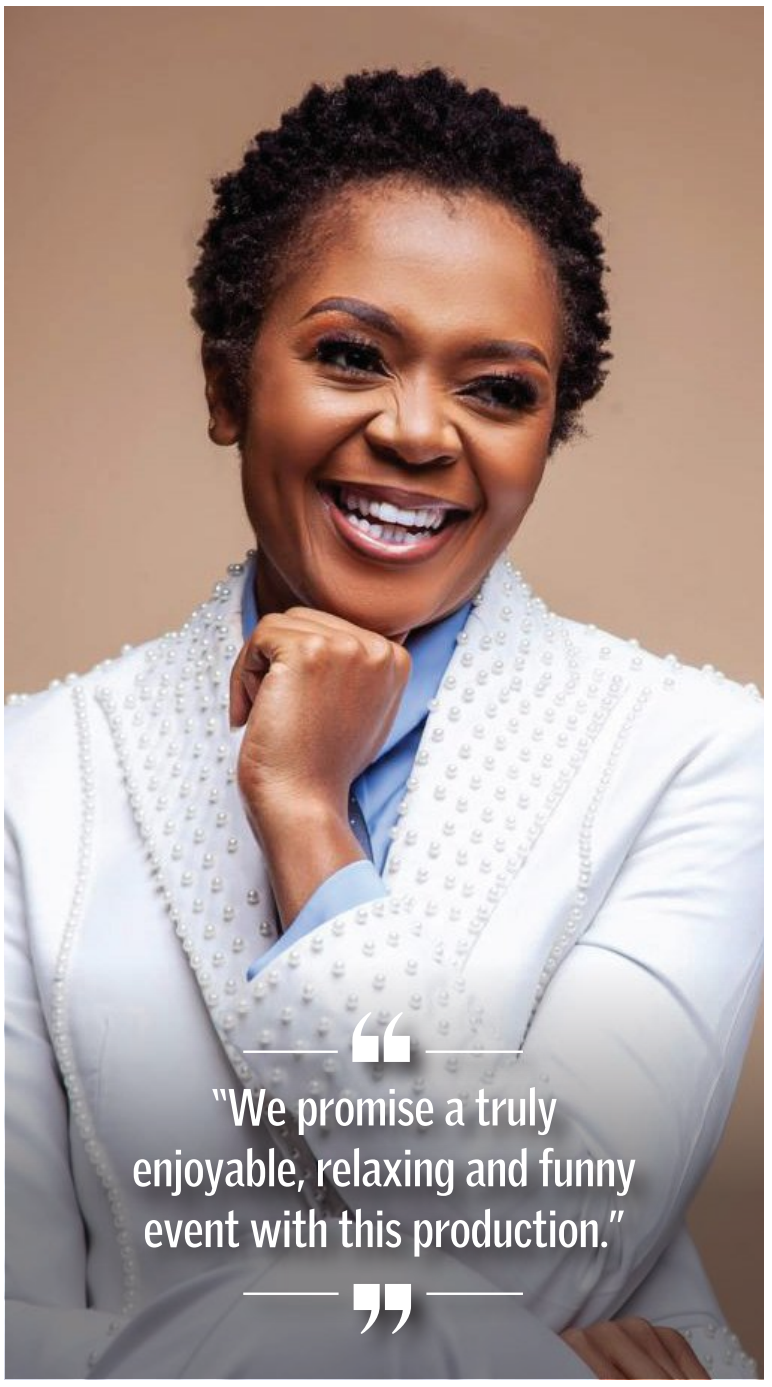
HICOFEST's real currency may be the connections it creates. Over 11 editions, it has welcomed comedians from 16 countries and attracted more than 5,000 festival-goers. Its exchange culture has also seen Botswana performers invited to festivals across the continent.

This year's local contingent includes Lebo English, Mawee, Re Kunde, Maatla Ephraim Basha and OD Brooks, who will host.

As events coordinator Gaolatlhe Kediemetse puts it, the promise is a fresh line-up and entertainment from beginning to end.

"We have had tremendous support for our past shows from both the public and the media alike. We are thankful for our venue sponsor Oasis Gaborone Hotel and our transportation partners. We promise a truly enjoyable, relaxing and funny event with this production," he said.

Tickets start at P200 single and P300 double, available through Webtickets and Spar outlets. The show starts at 8pm.



Paradise in Peril Gets the Nod

Two award nominations, one powerful opportunity to put Botswana on the global filmmaking map. For Paradise in Peril, the real prize is not just recognition, it is getting the world to listen to the people behind the country's conservation story.

GOSEGO MOTSUMI

A local documentary has earned international recognition, but its biggest achievement could be what happens beyond the awards stage. *Botswana: Paradise in Peril* has secured nominations for Best Editing and Best Cinematography at the 2026 Kingdom in the Sky Conservation International Film Festival (KITS-CIFF), giving local filmmaking and community-centred conservation storytelling a valuable global platform.

For producer Moabi Mogorosi, the nominations matter because they put Botswana's creative capabilities and the people whose lives shape the documentary in front of international audiences.

MORE THAN AN AWARD NOD

"For me this nomination means that the film gets visibility, which is good for the work and the people in it," Mogorosi said in an interview.

Commissioned by the Botswana Wildlife Producers Association (BWPA) and produced by local company ABI Films, the documentary examines the successes of Botswana's wildlife conservation efforts alongside the challenges faced by communities living with wildlife.

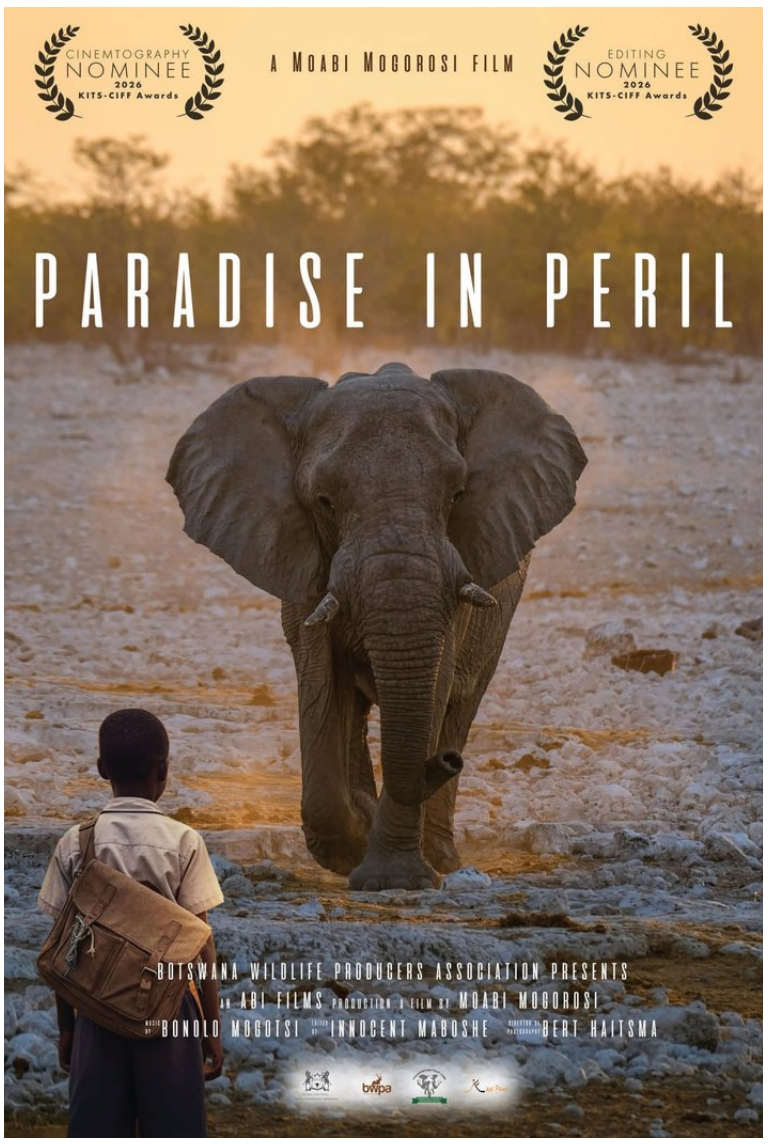
It explores the role of marginal areas in conservation, including regulated sustainable hunting, and how rural communities benefit from these programmes. It also enters the international debate around hunting as a conservation tool, challenging calls from anti-hunting lobby groups for blanket bans.

A REASON TO KEEP TELLING STORIES

Beyond international exposure, Mogorosi sees the recognition as encouragement for Botswana filmmakers to pursue advocacy-driven productions rather than take the easier creative route.

"It's also an encouragement to the makers that they must continue in doing works of advocacy that speaks for the people because its easier to take a simpler route," he said.

That message gives the nominations significance beyond the technical categories. KITS-CIFF celebrates filmmaking around environmental protection, climate action and conservation, making the documentary's recognition an opportunity to amplify a distinctly Botswana perspective.



"For me this nomination means that the film gets visibility, which is good for the work and the people in it."

For Mogorosi, the nomination is proof that local stories deserve international consideration. And perhaps that is the bigger victory: Botswana is not simply providing the scenery for the world's wildlife documentaries. It has stories, filmmakers and perspectives worth putting centre stage.

TWO SIX SEVEN TAKES THE CROWN

Gaborone's dining scene has a new reason to raise a glass as Two Six Seven Kitchen + Bar earns national recognition at the World Culinary Awards.

Two Six Seven Kitchen + Bar has added a major accolade to its name after being crowned Botswana's Best Restaurant 2026 at the seventh annual World Culinary Awards.

Situated in the heart of Gaborone, the restaurant has built its identity around good food, thoughtfully crafted drinks and hospitality that brings people together. Whether it is a leisurely lunch or an evening out, its appeal lies in making dining as much about the experience as what is on the plate.

The World Culinary Awards celebrates excellence across the global culinary industry, recognising standout restaurants, hospitality brands, culinary hotels and destinations. It operates alongside the World Travel Awards, extending the recognition of excellence into the food and hospitality space.

For Two Six Seven, the win puts Botswana's restaurant scene firmly on the international culinary radar.



ONE LAST GIN AFFAIR

The weather brought the drama, but the gin brought the party as the Grand Palm wrapped up its final Gin Experience of 2026.



A little rain was not about to spoil Gaborone's cocktail plans. Gin enthusiasts turned out at the Grand Palm Hotel for the third and final Gin Experience of 2026, swapping the gloomy skies for premium pours, music and good company.

Running from 15:00 to 23:00, the outdoor gathering offered patrons an opportunity to explore the history of gin, discover distilling methods and sample an assortment of brands. Hendrick's, Inverroche, Beefeater, Cruxland and Tanqueray were among the gins available for tasting.

The scheduled tasting session ran from 15:00 to 19:00, with an additional 15 minutes thrown in, giving guests a little more time to enjoy their favourite pours.

Beyond the drinks, the experience brought together cocktails, live entertainment and social connection in a relaxed setting.

> "A little rain was not about to spoil Gaborone's cocktail plans."

The event forms part of the Grand Palm's wider entertainment and lifestyle programme commemorating decades of hospitality, with support from partners including Benju, Lengau, Heineken Botswana and SMC Brands.

TIRED OF SHARING?





The Great Writers' Escape

Who said writing inspiration must come with fluorescent lights, conference tables and endless PowerPoints? Botswana's literary minds are taking their pens, publishing ambitions and unfinished manuscripts outdoors for an afternoon of fresh ideas, honest conversations and networking.

GOSEGO MOTSUMI

Forget boardrooms and stiff literary conferences. Botswana's writers are trading four walls for fresh air, picnic blankets and conversations about getting that book out of their heads and onto the shelves. The Writers Picnic is bringing the literary community outdoors, and procrastinators might want to pay attention.

Scheduled for November 15, 2026 at Joy City Park, the gathering is the brainchild of author and organiser Oduetse Tebogo, who wants to give aspiring, emerging and established writers a different kind of meeting place.

"As an Author, I realized that most of the forums are done in closed environments, formal set-up, not in a relaxed manner; so, I wanted to take our discussions outdoors," she tells Time Out.

LESS BOARDROOM, MORE BOOKS

The idea is simple: sometimes a change of scenery is exactly what a creative mind needs. But this is not just a leisurely afternoon of literary small talk. The programme tackles some of the less romantic realities of being a writer, from battling writer's block and self-doubt to researching, publishing, marketing and selling books.

Writer and communications practitioner Makarov Abotseng will explore how to turn an idea into a manuscript, while Bame Bame will unpack consistency, relevance and research. Kabelo Nkwane will tackle publishing opportunities on platforms such as Amazon and Kindle.

FROM MANUSCRIPT TO MONEY

Author branding, advertising and profiling will also get attention through Henny Maruapula, while J.B.S. Mothowadimo will share lessons from his six-book journey. Gobotsamang Leshetla brings culture, history and heritage into the conversation, highlighting the importance of preserving roots through writing.

Among the day's themes are finding your voice, finishing what you start and navigating the literary industry's stumbling blocks. Bryan Saudu will facilitate proceedings.

> "Sometimes a change of scenery is exactly what a creative mind needs."

PENS, PRINTS AND PICNIC VIBES

Beyond the discussions, authors will exhibit their books, giving attendees an opportunity to discover local titles and connect with fellow literary enthusiasts.

The gathering starts at 11:00. Ladies are encouraged to wear floral dresses, while men should bring their brightest colours. Entry is P150, covering snacks, discussions and networking.

For once, the assignment is not to stay indoors and finish the manuscript. It is to get outside, meet other writers and perhaps finally figure out what to do with that brilliant idea.

FINAL LIQUIDATION AND DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT
Master's Reference: ESHGB-000064/25

IN THE ESTATE of the late **OLORATO MHOTSHA** who died at Princess Marina Hospital, Gaborone,Gaborone District,Botswana on **31st December 2024.**

THE FINAL LIQUIDATION AND DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT in the Estate will be open for inspection at the offices of the Master of the high court at Gaborone for a period of (Twenty –One) **21** days from the date of publication hereof.

Any objection to the Estate Account may be lodged with the Master within the **21** days stated above.

DATED AT GABORONE THIS 28TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2026.

……..
Executor Dative
Matlotlo Kemoreng
C/O Leburu Legal Consultants
P O Box 46132
GABORONE
TEL: 73597019/71864736

TRANSFER OF PLOT LOT NO 32274 LODUBENG WARD IN KANYE FROM **THATO OTLOGETSWE TO NOKUTHULA KHUMALO**

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You Can Dislike Good Wine

From famous labels to club tastings, a developing wine palate is about knowing what you enjoy, not agreeing with everyone else.

There is a particular kind of pressure that comes with drinking wine. Someone pours you a glass, you take a sip and immediately realise that you do not particularly like it. Perhaps the tannins make your mouth feel as though you have been chewing a particularly dry piece of furniture. Then somebody at the table announces, usually with considerable confidence, that it is an excellent wine. Suddenly, you are faced with a decision: do you trust your own palate, or do you assume that your tongue has somehow failed an examination?

For reasons I have never fully understood, many wine drinkers seem to believe that developing a palate means eventually learning to like everything. After enough tastings and conversations with people who can say things such as "tertiary characteristics" without blinking, you are apparently expected to admire every glass. Rubbish. Developing your palate does not mean training yourself to enjoy every wine you encounter. It means learning to understand what you enjoy, what you do not enjoy and, perhaps most importantly, why.

TASTE VS QUALITY

Saying 'I don't like this wine' is an expression of personal preference. Saying 'This is a bad wine' is a judgement about the quality of the wine itself. Those are two entirely different things, although they are often confused.

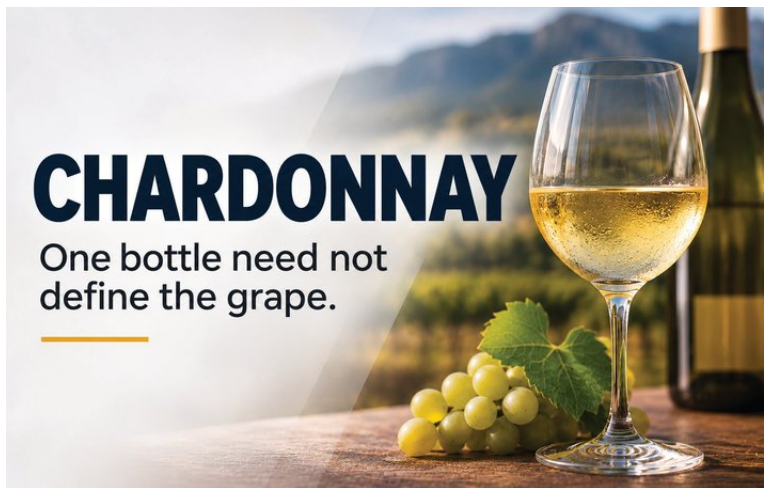
You may be drinking a technically excellent, beautifully made and highly rated wine that simply does nothing for you. It may have balance, complexity, a long finish and a pedigree capable of making collectors slightly emotional. Yet, after tasting it, you may simply not enjoy it. That is perfectly fine.

The opposite can also be true. You may love a wine that a critic considers simple, unremarkable or not particularly distinguished. If it gives you pleasure, works beautifully with the food you are eating and makes you happy to pour another glass, then it has succeeded in one of wine's most important functions. Your palate is not defective simply because it disagrees with someone else's opinion.

FAMOUS BOTTLES

We are particularly vulnerable when a wine arrives with a reputation. Give a bottle a famous name, an impressive price tag and a story about limited production from vines that have apparently been surviving heroically since before modern plumbing, and people approach the wine with an entirely different mindset.

The danger is that we become afraid to admit when we do not like what is in the glass. I have watched perfectly intelligent people drink wines they clearly did not enjoy and then describe them positively because everyone else at the table appeared impressed. There is usually a great deal of nodding in these situations. Serious nodding.



> "Your palate is not defective simply because it disagrees with someone else's opinion."

But personal enjoyment is not a democratic vote, and you do not have to support the winning candidate simply because everyone else does. One of the most useful sentences in wine is: "I can appreciate why this is a good wine, but it isn't for me."

GROUP OPINION

At the Gaborone Wine Club, one of the things I enjoy most is disagreement. Yet put the same bottle in front of the room and you will receive remarkably different reactions. One person loves it, another is unconvinced, somebody else is already trying to find out where they can buy a case, and there will occasionally be one person looking around the room as though the rest of us have collectively lost our minds.

The most interesting conversations often begin when someone says, "I don't get it." That is not ignorance; it is an invitation to conversation. Is there something about the style that does not appeal to you? Is it too heavy, too acidic, too sweet or too dominated by oak? Sometimes you may simply agree to disagree. Both outcomes are perfectly acceptable.

PALATES EVOLVE

There is also a persistent misconception that developing a palate means moving in one direction, usually towards increasingly dry, expensive, complex or obscure wines. This is how people eventually find themselves apologising for liking sweet wine.

A wine journey is rarely a straight line. You may begin by enjoying Moscato and later discover Cabernet Sauvignon. You may spend several years convinced that powerful, structured red wines are the pinnacle of civilisation, only to find yourself drinking Chenin Blanc with alarming enthusiasm every weekend. You may dismiss Pinot Noir for years and then encounter one bottle that makes you reconsider every confident statement you have ever made about the grape.

You may eventually discover that you do not dislike Sauvignon Blanc; you simply prefer a different style of Sauvignon Blanc. You may realise that your issue with Chardonnay was not Chardonnay at all, but a particular winemaking style that tasted as though someone had fermented a particularly enthusiastic piece of oak.

The point is to keep tasting with enough curiosity to allow yourself to change your mind.

> "One disappointing bottle is not enough evidence to dismiss an entire grape variety, region or style.

TRUST YOUR PALATE

Of course, acknowledging personal preference does not mean pretending that quality does not exist. Wine is made by skilled people, and a poorly made or badly stored wine can have genuine faults.

That does not mean closing yourself off from wines you have previously disliked. One disappointing bottle is not enough evidence to dismiss an entire grape variety, region or style. Do not swear off Chardonnay because of one unfortunate experience that tasted like somebody had placed a tree in a blender. Explore again. Try another producer. Taste the grape in a different region or style. You may change your mind, or you may not. Either is fine.

So, the next time someone hands you a famous, expensive and critically acclaimed bottle and asks what you think, do not panic. Taste it properly. Think about it. Give it time in the glass. And if, after all that, you still do not like it, you are perfectly entitled to say so.

You can even do it without apologising. "It's a good wine. It's just not for me." Then, with a clear conscience, pour something you actually enjoy.



Phenyo Motlhagodi — formally trained wine enthusiast (trained at the Cape Wine Academy); Chartered PR Practitioner (Chart.PR) with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations; and founder of a pan-African boutique PR, Influence & Reputation Management consultancy. Instagram: @phenyomotlhagodi.

TIRED OF SHARING?



Why Familiar Brands Win Repeat Business

In a fiercely competitive marketplace, attracting customers is only half the battle. Discover how brand recognition, customer satisfaction, strategic promotions and innovation can turn first-time buyers into loyal, repeat customers.



By Katlego Pearl Lekwale | Research Consultant

As a research firm that focuses on market research, polls and surveys, among other services, we aim to share useful insights that help businesses grow. In today's article, we look at how brand awareness influences customers' buying decisions and encourages them to buy from the same business again.

Brand awareness refers to how well customers know a brand and how easily they can recognise or remember it. When customers need a product or service, they are more likely to consider brands they already know. Some customers may also ask their colleagues, friends and family for recommendations before making a purchase. Therefore, brand awareness is important for every business, whether it is a start-up or an established company.

To improve brand awareness and encourage repeat purchases, businesses should consider the following:

BRAND VISIBILITY

For a business to attract customers, people need to know that it exists. With so many businesses competing for customers, being visible helps a brand stand out from its competitors.

Businesses can improve their visibility by advertising on platforms where their target customers spend time, such as radio, television, newspapers and social media. Another option is to work with brand ambassadors, such as celebrities and social media influencers, who can introduce the brand to their followers.

SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

Customers are more likely to return to a business when they are happy with the service. Businesses need to make an effort to give customers a good experience every time they interact with the brand. This includes offering quality products, treating customers well, providing reliable service and addressing complaints. Satisfied customers can become valuable promoters of a brand by sharing their positive experiences with others.

SALES AND PROMOTIONS

> "Customers should have good reasons to choose a brand beyond its low prices."

Sales promotions help businesses attract new customers and encourage existing customers to buy again. Some common methods include offering discounts, giving free samples, providing free gifts and selling products in bundles.

Businesses can also work with other brands to offer combined products or special deals that benefit customers.

However, promotions should be planned carefully. While discounts may encourage customers to buy, businesses should avoid depending on them too much. Customers should have good reasons to choose a brand beyond its low prices.

FIRST-MOVER ADVANTAGE

When a business introduces a new product to the market, it has an opportunity to build a strong connection between the product and its brand. Customers who become familiar with the product early may continue to associate it with that brand even when competitors introduce similar products.

Colgate provides an interesting example. Although Colgate did not invent toothpaste, it began selling toothpaste commercially in 1873. Today, the brand is widely recognised, and some people use the word "Colgate" when referring to toothpaste in general.

This shows how a brand name can become so familiar that people use it in everyday conversations when talking about a product. However, being first to market does not guarantee lasting success. Businesses must continue to meet customer needs and maintain the quality of their products to remain competitive.

BRAND AWARENESS SURVEYS

Brand awareness can help businesses attract customers, encourage repeat purchases and compete in the market. One way to understand how customers view your brand is to conduct regular brand awareness and customer satisfaction surveys. These help businesses understand the market positioning of their brands.



OUR SERVICES

We offer a range of research services, including market research, surveys, polls and feasibility studies. To date, we have supported large businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including one of the country's largest banks, a global audit firm and large parastatals.

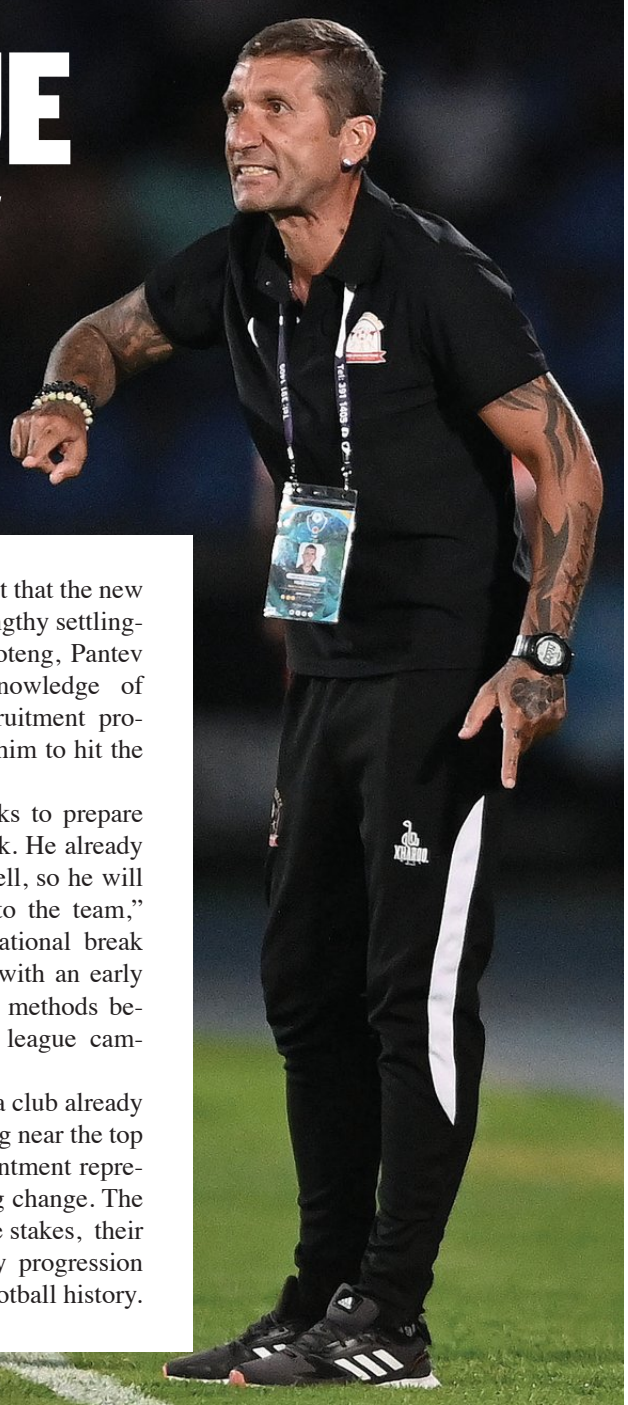
> "Satisfied customers can become valuable promoters of a brand by sharing their positive experiences with others."

If you want to understand your customers better and make informed business decisions, we can help. Please contact us on +267 7668 5116, +267 39 39 435 or research@aupracontax.co.bw for research or related services.



TONOTA CHASE LEAGUE GLORY UNDER PANTEV

Tonota FC have entrusted proven winner Dimitar Pantev with leading their ambitious push for a historic FNB Premiership title triumph



(Pic:Monirul Bhuiyan/PRESS PHOTO)

BONGANI MALUNGA

Tonota FC have set their sights on FNB Premiership glory after appointing proven title-winning coach Dimitar Pantev, with club chairman Tumelo Toteng declaring that the Bulgarian's pedigree matches the club's growing championship ambitions.

Pantev was confirmed last weekend as the permanent successor to Thaloba Nthaga, and Tonota believe his arrival can transform them from early-season contenders into genuine title challengers. Speaking to Gazette Sport, Toteng said the club targeted a coach with a winning mentality and a track record of developing young players to match their vision.

A WINNER

"We believe he is a winner. We saw what he achieved at Gaborone United when he joined them mid season but still led them to league glory. We have ambitions of becoming only the second club from the North East region to win the Premier League in Botswana. He knows how to develop young players into formidable professionals, he has a good track record in fast tracking young players to the first team and we believe a lot of our young players will benefit from this," Toteng told this publication.

Tonota's ambition carries a strong regional undertone as the club is seeking to become only the second side from the North East region to win Botswana's top-flight championship, following Ecco City Greens' historic league triumph in 2007.

IMMEDIATE EXPECTATIONS

That target places immediate expectations on Pantev, whose previous success at Gaborone United has strengthened Tonota's belief that he possesses the experience required to manage a title race.

The club is also confident that the new coach will not require a lengthy settling-in period. According to Toteng, Pantev demonstrated detailed knowledge of the squad during the recruitment process, potentially allowing him to hit the ground running.

"He will have two weeks to prepare over the international break. He already knows our players very well, so he will not struggle to get used to the team," Toteng added. The international break therefore presents Pantev with an early opportunity to impose his methods before Tonota resume their league campaign.

Toteng believes that for a club already showing signs of competing near the top end of the table, the appointment represents more than a coaching change. The club has publicly raised the stakes, their target is no longer merely progression but a place in Botswana football history.

Botswana Hardens Anti-Doping Fight

New legal framework places greater responsibility on government to enforce clean sport standards as Kelebeng warns political will must match legislation

BONGANI MALUNGA

Botswana has tightened its fight against doping in sport, placing greater legal and institutional responsibility on government to protect athletes and ensure compliance with international anti-doping standards.

The country's Anti-Doping Act, which came into effect this year, gives domestic legal force to the UNESCO International Convention Against Doping in Sport and strengthens the mandate of the Botswana National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO).

Botswana had already adopted the World Anti-Doping Code but the strengthened legal framework takes the fight beyond rules governing sporting organisations by providing a basis for government intervention through legislation, institutional support and enforcement.

POLITICAL WILL NEEDED

Minister of Sport and Arts Jacob Kelebeng has warned, however, that legislation alone will not clean up sport, stressing that political commitment, capable institutions and international cooperation will determine whether Botswana's tougher framework works in practice.

Speaking during the three-day UNESCO Regional Capacity Building Programme for African States Parties to the International Convention Against Doping in Sport in Gaborone last week, Kelebeng said doping posed a threat extending beyond competition results.

"Doping cheats clean athletes, endangers health and erodes public trust. By protecting sport, we are therefore doing so not just as a job for sport organisations



(Pic:Monirul Bhuiyan/PRESS PHOTO)

> "Botswana acceded to the UNESCO Convention in August 2009 but its domestication through the Anti-Doping Act represents a significant step towards making those international obligations enforceable under domestic law."

alone. It demands government leadership, strong institutions, sound law and international cooperation," Kelebeng stressed.

STRONGER MECHANISMS

The new framework gives Botswana stronger mechanisms to regulate anti-doping activities, including testing, reporting of violations, therapeutic use exemptions, result management and appeals. It also provides NADO with statutory powers as Botswana seeks to build an anti-doping system capable of meeting international compliance requirements.

Kelebeng's remarks place the spotlight on implementation, particularly whether Botswana will provide the institution with adequate technical expertise, financial resources and operational independence.

STRUGGLING WITH COMPLIANCE

The minister told the workshop that African countries have previously struggled with compliance because of weak coordination, limited capacity and gaps in their legal and operational frameworks.Botswana acceded to the UNESCO Convention in August 2009 but its domestication through the Anti-Doping Act represents a significant step towards making those international obligations enforceable under domestic law.

The challenge now shifts from having anti-doping commitments on paper to demonstrating that Botswana can effectively police them as its athletes increasingly compete on major international stages.

Botswana Gets Additional World Athletics Nomination

Botswana's historic home World Relays triumph is among three moments competing for World Athletics' inaugural Moment of the Year award

BONGANI MALUNGA

Botswana's record-breaking men's 4x400m relay triumph on home soil has earned another shot at global recognition after being named among the three finalists for the inaugural World Athletics Moment of the Year award.

The memorable victory at the World Athletics Relays in Gaborone will go up against Josh Kerr's world mile record and Sabastian Sawe's historic sub-two-hour marathon when the winner is announced at the World Athletics Awards in Monaco on November 29.

Botswana's nomination adds another dimension to an already strong presence at this year's awards after Collen Kebinatshipi was nominated for the Men's World Athlete of the Year accolade.

NOMINATED ON TWO FRONTS

Kebinatshipi was therefore in contention for recognition on two fronts. He was part of the relay quartet whose Gaborone heroics have reached the Moment of the Year final, while his outstanding individual season earned him a place among the 10 nominees for the sport's biggest individual honour. The Moment of the Year nomination stems from one of Botswana athletics' defining performances of 2026.

Lee Eppie, Letsile Tebogo, Bayapo Ndori and Kebinatshipi stormed to victory in the men's 4x400m final at the National Stadium on May 3, clocking 2:54.47. The performance set a World Relays championship record and improved Botswana's African record as the hosts defeated South Africa, who finished second in 2:55.07, while Australia took third in 2:55.20.

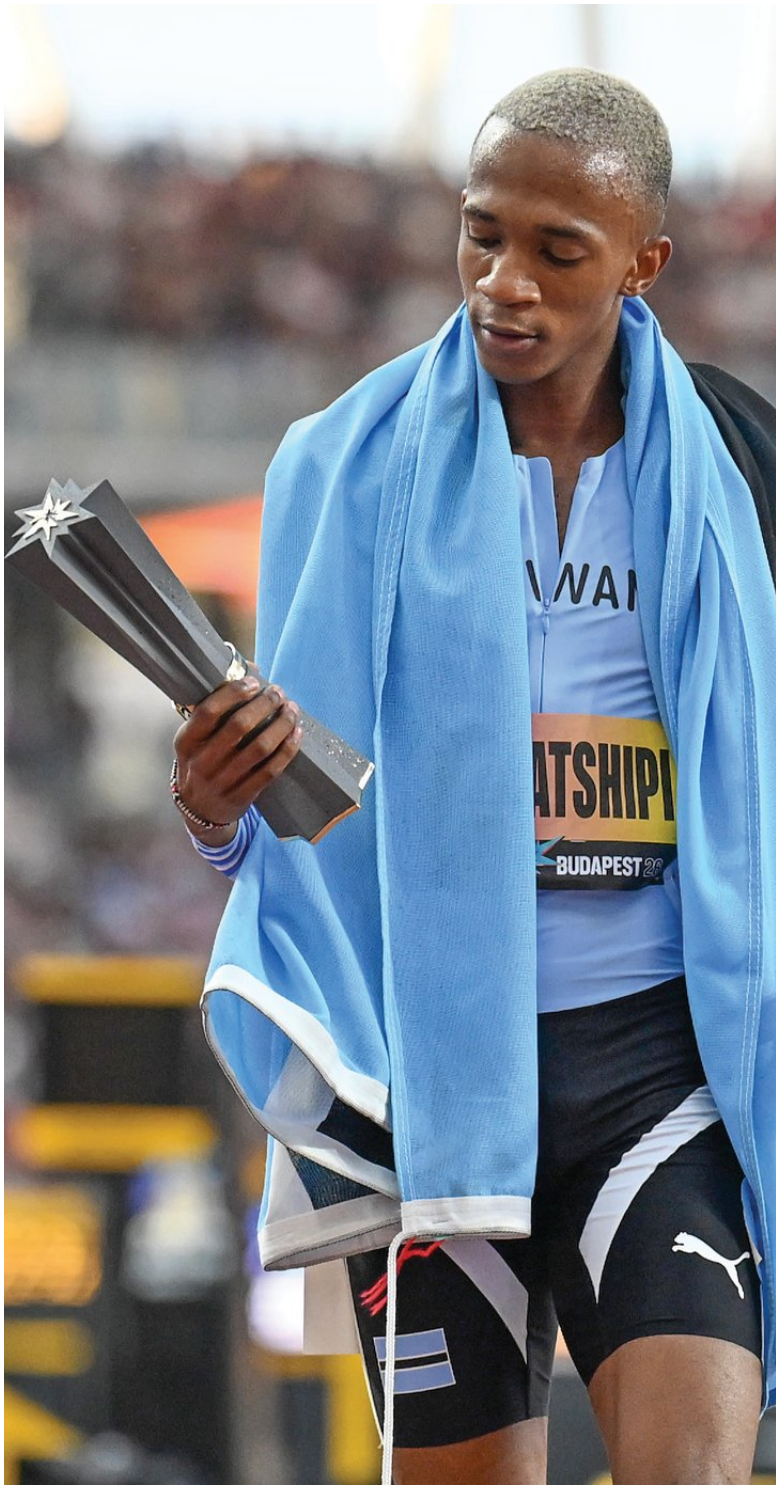
Kebinatshipi produced a blistering 43.09-second anchor leg to complete the home triumph, after Eppie, Tebogo and Ndori had kept Botswana firmly in contention.

ELEVATED INTO THE FINAL THREE

The performance initially joined 17 other contenders on the Moment of the Year longlist, but a public vote through the World Athletics app elevated Botswana into the final three. Botswana now faces two landmark individual performances for the prize. Great Britain's Josh Kerr is nominated after smashing the world mile record with a 3:42.66 performance in London.

Kenya's Sabastian Sawe completes the shortlist after becoming the first man to break two hours in a record-eligible marathon, producing a world record 1:59:30 in London.

World Athletics created the award to recognise a moment capable of generating emotion and inspiration beyond an individual performance, a description that places the electrifying scenes surrounding Botswana's victory before its home crowd firmly in contention for the accolade.



Dolphins Believe They Belong Among Africa's Best

Historic Elite 16 qualification has the Dolphins believing they can challenge Africa's established powers but Ndawanyana says physicality, rebounding and shooting must improve

BONGANI MALUNGA



Basketball Africa League Qualifying Tournaments

Dolphins captain Kesaobaka Ndawanyana believes the club's historic march into the Road to BAL Elite 16 has shattered any lingering doubts about whether Botswana basketball belongs at the higher end of African club competition.

Dolphins became the first Botswana basketball club to reach the Elite 16 after emerging from a demanding five-game qualification campaign in Lusaka with a 3-2 record. Their next assignment will be the East Division Elite 16 in Nairobi, Kenya, from November 23 to 29.

In an interview with this publication Ndawanyana indicated that the achievement carries greater weight because of what players had to overcome away from the court.

LONG JOURNEY

"This has been a long journey, full of sacrifices, sweat and tears. Being committed to sports and living up to professional standards as players is very difficult, especially where some guys don't work, some have demanding jobs. I applaud my brothers for making history against all the odds," Ndawanyana told Gazette Sport.

The qualification has also changed the way Dolphins see themselves, rather than arriving in Nairobi merely grateful to be there, Ndawanyana says their performances in Lusaka showed that the gap between Botswana clubs and some of the continent's established teams is not as wide as previously assumed.

"We realised that we're good enough, sometimes even better than the so called powerhouses. We've got good basketball players and the overall Basketball environment and competition has improved in the Country and This qualification is representation of this growth."

CALCULATED PUSH

Dolphins built their campaign around a calculated early push, they beat Harare Kings 77-72 and Bravehearts 78-74 before later defeating Soweto Panthers 63-56, while losses came against Munali Suns and Ferroviário da Beira.

"The fixtures were very friendly with us to be honest.. the first 2 games were a must win. We were still fresh both mentally and physically. We stout to win the first 2, and chase 1 last win with the remaining 3 games. The strategy worked perfectly. We would've preferred to win all the games we played, but having this strategy made planning and distribution of minutes easier."

Ndawanyana averaged 8 points, 3.8 rebounds and 1.8 assists across the five games. He made his biggest scoring impact early, posting 17 points and five rebounds against Harare Kings before contributing 13 points in the comeback victory over Bravehearts.

BEYOND THE MILESTONE

The captain is already looking beyond the milestone. Nairobi will expose Dolphins to bigger, stronger and more athletic opposition, and he has identified three areas that could determine whether their historic run ends at the Elite 16 or develops into something bigger.

"African basketball is very physical, we get to play against really big and athletic bodies. We need to match the physicality and intensity, while also adding our own identity which is playing fast and with flair. We need to shoot the 3point shot better because we're going to need it alot. Our rebounding was also below average so that also has to improve. We take care of this and we'll stand a chance to continue the fairytale story."

ZEBRAS FACE UGANDA'S HOME FORTRESS TEST

Uganda's strong recent home record stands between Botswana and a potentially decisive result as the Zebras resume their 2027 AFCON qualifying campaign



(Pic:Monirul Bhuiyan/PRESS PHOTO)

BONGANI MALUNGA

Botswana will walk into one of their toughest assignments of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers when they face Group H leaders Uganda at Hoima City Stadium on Saturday, 14 November.

The Cranes have made home advantage increasingly difficult to overcome and enter the encounter unbeaten in their two home matches played in 2026, having beaten Libya 1-0 in their opening home AFCON qualifier before holding DR Congo to a 1-1 draw in an international friendly last month.

Uganda's home strength stretches further back to the 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign last year, the Cranes recorded convincing home victories over Mozambique and Somalia, winning 4-0 and 2-0 respectively. They also beat Guinea 1-0 at home in March 2025.

UGANDA'S RESILIENCE

Their latest competitive home appearance underlined that resilience as Arnold Vula's first-half goal secured a 1-0 win over Libya on 29 September at Hoima City Stadium. That result followed a 1-1 away draw against Tunisia and propelled Uganda to the top of Group H.

The Zebras, however, arrive in Uganda still unbeaten in the qualifiers themselves. Botswana collected two points from a difficult opening international window after drawing 2-2 away to Libya before earning another 2-2 draw against Tunisia.

Those results placed Botswana second in the group on two points, level with Tunisia but ahead on the current standings, while Libya sits bottom with one point, Uganda lead with four points.

STRIKING DISTANCE OF THE SUMMIT

The table leaves Botswana within striking distance of the summit since a victory in Hoima would take the Zebras to five points and above Uganda after three matches, while defeat could allow the Cranes to open a five-point gap over Botswana.

The qualification equation carries an unusual dimension because Uganda are already guaranteed a place at AFCON 2027 as co-hosts alongside Kenya and Tanzania. Botswana, Tunisia and Libya are effectively fighting for the group's other qualification ticket. That makes Botswana's back-to-back meetings with Uganda particularly significant. After Saturday's encounter, the two sides will meet again at the National Stadium in Gaborone on 17 November.

The Zebras also have recent unfinished business against the Cranes, Uganda defeated the Zebras 1-0 in Gaborone during the 2026 World Cup qualifiers in October 2025, adding another psychological layer to a fixture that could heavily influence Botswana's AFCON qualification prospects.

ROAD WARRIOR BAGWASI FACES UNBEATEN TODUA

Kagiso Bagwasi's history of winning on foreign soil will face its sternest examination when he challenges unbeaten Georgian Givi Todua

BONGANI MALUNGA

Botswana's Kagiso "Reptile" Bagwasi will have to summon his proven ability to spoil homecoming parties when he challenges unbeaten Georgian Givi Todua for the World Boxing Federation (WBF) World Middleweight title in Tbilisi, Georgia, on December 11.

The world title assignment presents Bagwasi with familiar territory in one sense, fighting away from home. However, Tbilisi represents a considerable step up from the South African venues where the Motswana has previously built a reputation as a dangerous traveller.

The WBF currently lists Bagwasi's professional record at seven victories and one defeat, with four wins coming by stoppage. Todua, meanwhile, boasts a perfect 7-0 record, with five knockouts, giving the Georgian a 71 percent stoppage rate.

IMPOSING RECORD

Todua's record is made more imposing by what he has achieved in Tbilisi, the 21-year-old captured the WBF Interim World Middleweight crown by stopping Thailand's Phumiritdet Chonlathondamrongkhun and retained his position in May this year with an emphatic second-round stoppage of experienced Filipino Elmo Traya. Todua improved to 7-0 with five stoppages after the latter victory.

Home advantage therefore goes beyond crowd support. Todua has already turned Tbilisi into a productive hunting ground for championship victories.



Professional Boxing Association Botswana

BAGWASI'S TRAVEL RECORD

Bagwasi, who fights under the DTCB Boxing Club under renowned boxing coach Thebe Setlalekgosi, has compelling evidence that travelling does not necessarily diminish him. In March 2025, he travelled to Sandton, South Africa and demolished previously unbeaten South African Almighty Moyo by first-round TKO. Three months later, he returned to Sandton and produced arguably his finest professional performance, knocking out Boyd Allen in the sixth round to claim the IBO All-Africa junior-middleweight title.

His South African record stretches further back as Bagwasi beat Tankiso Qelo in Polokwane in 2018 and later defeated DR Congo's Kiabua Mafisi on points at Sibaya Casino in KwaZulu-Natal.

That travelling record is not spotless as Bagwasi's unbeaten professional run was finally halted at Emperors Palace in Johannesburg last November when South Africa's Roarke Knapp overwhelmed him before his corner withdrew him after four rounds. Knapp's body attacks and sustained pressure gradually drained the Motswana before the stoppage.

CONFIDENCE IN BOTSWANA BOXING

Bagwasi has featured in several bouts promoted by Scud Missile Promotions, and the stable's promoter, Thuso "Scud" Khubamang, believes the boxer's ascent from locally staged fight nights to a European title bout reflects growing international confidence in Botswana's boxing profile and capabilities.

"He is well prepared and will be in the best possible shape for his December bout. Last year he won an IBO title fight which helped him gain good global rankings, the ratings enabled him to be on the radar of the WBF. We are grateful as a nation that he is in a WBF approved fight in an international setting. We want to see local boxing commanding the same global attention as athletics, we believe we are on the right path," Khubamang told Gazette Sport.

TIRED OF SHARING?



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35.

TONOTA CHASE LEAGUE GLORY UNDER PANTEV

Tonota FC have entrusted proven winner Dimitar Pantev with leading their ambitious push for a historic FNB Premiership title triumph

Photo Credit: Social Media



ZEBRAS FACE UGANDA'S HOME FORTRESS TEST

37.



ROAD WARRIOR BAGWASI FACES UNBEATEN TODUA

37.