



**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS
TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT**

Theme: Transforming Botswana for inclusive growth

BY

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. **Mister Speaker**, Honourable Members of Parliament, and esteemed citizens and residents, I extend my warm greetings to each and every one of you, **individually** and **personally**. May I request at this point that we pause and observe a moment of silence, in remembrance of all our departed friends, relatives, fellow citizens and residents, including former Members of Parliament.

May their souls rest in peace and in their memory, let us forge ahead with renewed purpose, working hand in hand to create a legacy of hope for generations to come. Amen...!

2. **Mister Speaker**, the State of the Nation Address is more than a ceremonial occasion; it is a moment when our nation stands united to celebrate triumphs, confront obstacles, and chart a bold course for the future.
3. This annual address transcends reporting on government performance, it is a call to action that embodies the dreams and aspirations, of our citizens. We gather here today, to not only reflect on our past but also ignite our collective vision; to open and reveal a whole new spectrum of possibilities and ambitions, and thus set an agenda that will shape our socio-political landscape for years to come.
4. I stand before you today with a heart full of gratitude and pride as we celebrate the outcome of a democratic dispensation that binds us together. Botswana has just gone through a successful general election that stands out as a blistering testimony to the maturity of our democracy. The outcome of this election represents patent testimonials of the eloquent outrage of our citizens. The peaceful and orderly manner in which the process was conducted is a hallmark of our political culture.

For all that, I want to extend my sincere thanks to each and every one of you for your active participation in the elections, in which you handed the **Umbrella for Democratic Change** the mandate to serve you and our Country.

5. We must consider ourselves a lucky generation, having had the privilege to witness a historic change of government following the rule of one party for nearly 6 decades. This change is further made special by the manner in which it happened, including the smooth transfer of power. For this, I must, on behalf of Botswana, thank my immediate predecessor, His Excellency Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi. He accepted the people's verdict. He gracefully passed on the baton. Indeed, he is a true statesman. This smooth transition marks a recasting; a deepening of the contours of our democratic vision.
6. Botswana's commitment to upholding democratic principles and maintaining peace and stability before, during and after the general elections process speaks volumes about our collective dedication to the future of our great nation. On my part, as I said during the swearing-in ceremony, I am committed to leading our nation towards a brighter future.
7. **Mister Speaker**, this is the 13th Parliament. Many of the Members of this esteemed house are new here, while some have been here before. Despite this, today, the 13th Parliament of the Republic of Botswana stands freshly assembled. I welcome all of you to this house. Your presence here evidences the trust placed in you by the people. Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in our journey together. This journey will be defined by **unity, resilience**, and a **shared vision**. It is inspired by those redeeming values and virtues that bind our country together.
8. **Mister Speaker**, our founding national principles of **Democracy, Unity, Development, Self-reliance** and **Botho** are not just ideals but essential pillars that have bound the nation together.

Democracy ensures that every voice is heard and valued, fostering a sense of ownership and participation among citizens. **Unity** enables our nation to stand strong and together against any challenges. **Development** reinforces our resolve to focus on enhancing the quality of life and creating opportunities for all. **Self-reliance** encourages individuals and communities to harness their resources and capabilities, to overcome the challenges of our socio-economic existence, thus promoting resilience and innovation. Lastly, **Botho**, which embodies courteousness, humility and respect, nurtures social cohesion, solidarity and mutual support amongst individuals and social groupings that constitute our society.

9. By embracing these principles, Batswana will work together to build a robust economy and a thriving society, reinforcing the fabric of the nation for future generations. That is the cornerstone of our change philosophy. We must embrace opportunities that lie ahead and address challenges with unity and a sense of purpose, as we work towards an inclusive and prosperous nation.
10. True progress, **Mister Speaker**, is only achievable when we come together across communities, generations, and ideologies. We need to work hand-in-hand to build a society where innovation flourishes, education empowers, and everyone has a seat at the table. We, together, will transform challenges into opportunities and dreams into reality.
11. **Mister Speaker**, the 12th Parliament witnessed a series of challenges.
 - (i) The COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed the lives of many Batswana and brought almost everything to a halt for close to two years;
 - (ii) The drought that has affected the country over two consecutive years;

- (iii) Declining diamond revenues due to global market conditions;
 - (iv) High unemployment levels with overall unemployment at 27.6 percent, and youth unemployment of 38.2 percent as at 1st quarter of 2024; and
 - (v) The country going through the most painful and harrowing experience on the 28th of March 2024, when 45 Batswana perished in a road accident near Mmamatlakala in the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa. Let us also remember that prior to this, dozens of other lives had been lost on the A3 road.
12. **Mister Speaker**, these and other issues add to the litany of accumulated grievances that the 13th Parliament of the 2nd Republic must wrestle with.

B. TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

13. **Mister Speaker**, it is with great humility and a deep sense of responsibility that I address you today to mark the beginning of what, in my solemn undertaking, will be a transformative journey for Botswana. Robert Lee Frost tells us about two roads that diverged in a yellow wood, and how he looked down one as far as he could. And of the two roads he took the one less travelled. For me personally, in my own political journey, two roads diverged in front of me I looked down both as far as I could. I took neither the beaten path nor the one less travelled. I elected rather to take the road unseen and therefore never travelled. Reminding myself every step of advance of the words of Arthur Schopenhauer "Talent is like a marksman who hits a target others cannot hit. Genius is like a marksman who hits a target others cannot see." As a Country we must strive along the road unseen.

14. As your President, I am aware of the challenges facing our country. We are looking economic uncertainty dead in the eye. Diamonds continue to account for about 80% of our foreign earnings. But we shall overcome. The already high 27% unemployment rate continues to worsen, but we shall overcome. The declining birthrate creates an existential threat to our future, but we shall overcome. We have only 78 years of coal reserves left at the current usage rate, but we shall overcome. The Government is facing cashflow problems, but we shall overcome. We have to wrestle with social and infrastructural issues. But we shall overcome. **Mister Speaker**, I have no doubt, that we shall overcome.
15. Though the two paths in front of us lead to either ruin or disaster, at this crossroads, **Mister Speaker**, walk with me, will you, as we take the path unseen and therefore never travelled. With me as your President and this Nation by my side, **Mister Speaker**, I say to you, we shall overcome all the odds.
I've said it before and I will say it again, I've been down so many times down don't bother me no more.
16. We have inherited challenges, left for us to resolve by the 12th Parliament. Together, we will resolve them and build a stronger, inclusive and more prosperous future. I have seen the bravery and might of Batswana firsthand. Lesego Chombo dared to dream and came home wearing the crown of Miss World Africa. She now sits in these hallowed chambers wearing the mantle of Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs of the 2nd Republic. Letsile Tebogo and Ross Branch dared to dream and came home champions of the world. They dreamt big dreams. Dreams of immensity. Dreams of intensity. There is nothing, I repeat, nothing, that Batswana cannot do.
17. **Mister Speaker**, this moment demands both **immediate solutions** to stabilize our economy and **long-term reforms** that will lay the foundation for sustainable growth.

It is a journey that will require bold leadership, strategic action, and the unity of every Motswana. I take you into my confidence. I share with you a vision for the future. I map out the concrete steps we will take towards a future that offers prosperity, opportunity, and dignity for all.

C. THE FIRST 100 DAYS

18. 100 days is not a long time. 3 months and some change. That puts us in February 2026. Already I have heard questions about what this 13th Parliament will do to fulfill our pledges and promises, and we made many. You want to know what this new chapter in the History of Botswana means for you. I treat these first 100 days with the courage, vigor and seriousness they merit. As it is with any new relationship, first impressions matter, but unlike a fleeting dance under the moonlight, for this union to see the light of morning, consistency is key. I promise you, that my first 100 days, and my last 100 days, will share at least one thing in common, that is, that each day will be treated with the same level of seriousness throughout.
19. The first 100 days present an opportunity to demonstrate swift, decisive action while laying the groundwork for long-term transformation. The first 100 days is a period of **Renewal** and **Restoration**. In the first 100 days we focus on three interconnected pillars: **Restoring Trust, Revitalizing the Economy** and **Building Equity**.
20. **We will Restore Trust and Good Governance by:**
 - **Undertaking a Financial and Forensic Audit:** I have heard your voices. I have seen your messages. You want to know where your tax money has been spent. We will find that out and report back to you. We do so not to subject anyone to targeted demonisation. We do so to probe and examine the functional efficacy of our existing systems and institutions.

Because these institutions are human artifacts, we can remake and improve them.

We must design and roll out a robust institutional repertory properly suited to the demands and challenges of the unfolding future.

- **Strengthening Anti-Corruption**

Institutions: You want to know that your tax money is safe with us and that we will protect your money. We will fashion a robust, independent **anti-corruption agency** with the authority to investigate, prosecute, and eliminate corruption at all levels. Additionally, we will create **digital transparency mechanisms** to enable citizens to track public spending.

- **Increasing Transparency in Government**

Expenditure: You want to know that your money is being used to better the lives of all Batswana, not just a few. We will publish a comprehensive review of public finances to identify waste, corruption, and inefficiencies, followed by a plan for corrective actions.

- **Respecting Human Rights and Upholding Dignity:**

One of our people is unable to rest, far from his home. Country road hear him yearn. Please take him home; to the place he belongs. These words hit my soul like bolts of lightning and now they leave my lips and they will carry the soul of a son of the soil home to CKGR where he can finally be at peace.

- **On International Human Rights Day.**

10th of December 2024 the body of Pitseng Gaoberekwe will be buried in the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve. His ancestral home. Your government that under color of Court Judgments denied him the dignity of a burial in his ancestral land has now taken the bold step of abandoning all those judgements and burying him. In this ceaseless quest to uphold dignity, we are unshakeable.

- **Civil Service Reform:** You want a trustworthy, dynamic and agile civil service that serves your needs. We will implement a code of conduct for public servants and we will train them in accountability and performance.

ECONOMIC REVITALISATION

21. We Will Revitalize the Economy and Attract Investment by:

- **Establishing A Legal Reform Task Force:** Foreign Investors want to come here. Botswana has the highest credit rating in Africa with a BBB+ long term and A-2 short term Standard and Poor rating. The only reason that they are not here yet is that there is unnecessary bureaucracy in doing business in Botswana. This legal task force will draft key legal reforms to make Botswana an attractive environment for foreign and domestic investment. It will do so in the shortest possible time as time is of the essence.
- **Creating Economic Incentive Packages:** We will announce a set of incentives to attract investments in high-potential sectors, such as renewable energy, agriculture, tourism, and technology. We are committed, as the Government of Botswana, to participate in Meetings Incentives Conference and Events (MICE) and will ensure that there is positive impact for Botswana.
- **Fast-Tracking Key Infrastructure Projects:** We will identify and begin the implementation of strategic projects in transportation, energy, and digital connectivity to boost employment and economic activity. We are committed to working with local and global technology companies to rapidly prepare Botswana for the future.
- **Engaging International Partners:** We will make our international partners aware of the reforms, opportunities, and new commitment to transparency and growth.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

22. We Will Build Equity and Social Infrastructure by:

- **Kicking-off a National Housing Program:** We will lay the foundation for an affordable housing initiative by mapping housing needs, identifying sites, and commencing pilot projects in urban and rural areas.
- **Expanding Social Services Access:** We will launch immediate improvements in healthcare and education, starting with the most under-served communities. This will include mobile clinics, teacher training, and school refurbishments.
- **Implementing Youth Empowerment Programs:** We will create opportunities for the youth through job training, entrepreneurship support, and internships in both the public and private sectors.
- **Strengthening Food Security:** We will partner with local farmers and farming institutions to improve agricultural productivity, including trainings and subsidies for essential inputs and modern farming techniques.
- **Embarking On a National Listening Tour:** I am aware that the people of this Country are smart, creative problem solvers. We will listen to you by conducting a countrywide tour to meet you, hear from you, and adopt your visions and goals and integrate them into your government's agenda.
- **Launching Citizen Feedback Platforms:** We know that inspiration strikes haphazardly, and we will give your inspiration a platform to reach us by launching digital and in-person platforms to gather ideas and feedback from Botswana on reforms and development priorities.

- **Undertaking A National Service Campaign:** We will encourage citizens to participate in community improvement initiatives, such as cleaning public spaces, planting trees, and volunteering in schools or healthcare facilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

23. At the end of these 100 days, this administration will publish a **"STATE OF PROGRESS"** report to the nation. This document will outline what has been achieved, challenges encountered, and plans for the next phase of transformation. Regular updates will maintain transparency and ensure the government stays accountable to the people.
24. I repeat, my first 100 days and my last 100 days will be treated with the same level of seriousness. This first impression will be the theme of this 13th Parliament. This first 100 days will set the standard by which we conduct ourselves. If there is any deviation from this standard, it will only be that we have become better, not that we have regressed. This will not be an administration that delivers in the first 100 days, disappears for a few years, then resurfaces in the next election year trying to buy your loyalty with short terms initiatives. These 100 days of renewal is not merely about quick wins – It is about setting Botswana on a sustainable path to **PROSPERITY, EQUITY AND TRUST.**

D. CONTINUATION FROM THE FIRST 100 DAYS

25. **Mister Speaker,** for too long, Botswana's growth potential has been constrained by outdated legal frameworks and regulatory hurdles. Investors, both domestic and international, require clarity, efficiency, and predictability to commit their resources. Without these elements, we cannot compete with nations that have created more business-friendly environments. In this regard, we will prioritise the following:

- a) **Simplifying Regulations:** Streamlining bureaucratic processes and reducing red tape to make it easier for investors to set up and operate businesses in Botswana.
 - b) **Modernising Legal Frameworks:** Updating commercial, tax, and labor laws to align with global best practices, ensuring transparency and fairness in all transactions.
 - c) **Guaranteeing Legal Protections:** Offering clear guarantees on property rights, intellectual property, and dispute resolution mechanisms to provide investors with the confidence they need.
 - d) **Incentivising Strategic Investments:** Introducing targeted incentives in key sectors such as technology, renewable energy, manufacturing, and agriculture to attract investments that align with our long-term development goals.
26. Attracting Foreign Direct Investment is not just about capital; it is about fostering innovation, creating jobs, and transferring skills to our people. When the world looks at Botswana, they must see a nation that is open for business, fair in its dealings, and ambitious in its vision.
27. Economic reforms must go hand-in-hand with social development. A nation cannot thrive when its people lack access to safe and affordable housing. The absence of a coordinated housing strategy has left many Botswana without stable homes, exacerbating inequality and stifling economic mobility.
28. To address this, we will launch a comprehensive national housing program focused on:
- **Affordable Housing for All:** Working with local developers and international partners to construct housing that meets the needs of low- and middle-income families.

- **Innovative Financing Models:** Establishing low-interest loans, rent-to-own schemes, and public-private partnerships to make homeownership achievable for more citizens.
- **Sustainable Urban Planning:** Developing modern, well-planned communities with access to essential services such as schools, healthcare, and public transport.
- **Revitalising Rural Areas:** Ensuring that housing programs are not limited to urban centers but also extend to rural communities, fostering balanced national development.

29. Housing is more than just a roof over one's head – it is a foundation for opportunity. It provides stability for families, boosts productivity, and stimulates local economies. A strong housing program will also create jobs in construction, finance, and related industries, driving immediate and long-term growth.
30. Attracting investment and improving housing are deeply connected. By creating a legal environment that encourages investment, we unlock the resources needed to fund large-scale development projects, including housing. Likewise, a robust housing sector provides the stability and infrastructure that investors seek when deciding where to place their capital.
31. Botswana's transformation requires bold, coordinated action. Legal reforms will lay the groundwork for economic expansion, while a national housing program will ensure that the benefits of growth reach every citizen. Together, these initiatives will not only transform our economy but also uplift the lives of our people, restoring pride and dignity to our nation.

32. This is the path forward—clear, ambitious, and achievable. With your support and determination, we will turn this vision into reality, building a Botswana that is prosperous, equitable, and prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

E. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION BEYOND DIAMONDS

33. **Mister Speaker**, Botswana's reliance on diamond revenues has been our strength, but it has also made us vulnerable. The decline in diamond revenues by over 60% in recent years is a clear signal that we can no longer afford to depend on a single commodity. To secure Botswana's future, we must **diversify our economy** – focusing on sectors like **tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, information technology** and **health care**. We know that:

- Botswana receives more than 3,200 hours of sunlight annually and averages 21 Megajoules per square meter which is among the highest in the world. The potential of solar energy is abundant.
- Botswana's climate requires robust solutions in the field of agriculture so that there is more food security.
- Botswana needs new industries, in sports and entertainment because Botswana's creativity is infinite.
- Botswana needs factories for manufacturing. We must be able to say we have products and goods proudly made in Botswana, by Botswana for Botswana and for the world.
- Botswana needs to embrace the 4th Industrial Revolution, digitilising access to basic services, enhancing connectivity to all parts of the Country.
- Botswana needs a robust health care system that can compete at an international level and more importantly that is accessible to the citizens of this Republic.

34. To achieve this, this administration will launch several priority initiatives:

- **Establish a National Development Fund:** We will set up a government-backed fund to finance strategic national projects, support key sectors, and act as a key partner for foreign investors. This fund will help us drive economic growth, reduce dependency on diamonds, and build resilience in our economy.
- **Promote Local Industries and Develop Sectoral Strategies:** Through the launch of **National Sectoral Strategies**, we will focus on strengthening our agriculture, food security, and manufacturing. These strategies will promote **agricultural innovation**, develop infrastructure in rural areas, and support local producers. Reducing imports while increasing local production will be critical to creating jobs and fostering sustainable economic growth.
- **Reform Local Capital Markets:** To facilitate financing for both public and private sector projects in local currency, we will launch a comprehensive **reform of our capital markets**, enabling businesses and the government to access affordable funding for critical projects.
- **Expand Infrastructure:** We will update and develop a **National Infrastructure Plan** focused on energy, logistics, and internet connectivity – critical pillars for modern economic growth. These improvements will provide the foundation necessary for private sector development and job creation across all sectors.

F. JOB CREATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

35. **Mister Speaker**, high youth unemployment remains one of our most pressing social issues. To ensure that young Batswana have the opportunities they deserve, we will prioritise **job creation, skills development, and youth empowerment**. Our initiatives will include:

- **Vocational Training and Apprenticeships:** We will launch nation wide **vocational training programs** and create apprenticeship opportunities to empower young people with hands-on skills for the workforce. Additionally, we will provide **small business grants** to encourage youth entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Strengthening Education and Job Market Linkages:** Through initiatives like the **Government and Enterprise National Initiative for Employment (GENIE)**, we will ensure that our education system aligns with the needs of the job market. We will also provide resources for young people to acquire the skills most in demand by employers in emerging sectors.
- **National Social Housing Strategy:** We will launch the **National Social Housing Strategy** to address both housing shortages and youth unemployment. This initiative will employ thousands of young people in the construction sector, while providing much-needed affordable housing to our citizens.

G. PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND EFFICIENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

36. **Mister Speaker**, a strong, effective public sector is essential for the efficient delivery of services to our people. We will **reform public sector institutions** to make them more efficient, transparent, and responsive to the needs of Batswana. In the medium to long term, the following key workstreams will guide our reform:

- **Medium-Term Fiscal Framework:** We will design and implement a **medium-term fiscal framework** to ensure fiscal sustainability. This framework will help us balance government spending with available resources, restore fiscal buffers, and create the financial stability needed for long-term growth.
- **Reform State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs):** A review of key **state-owned enterprises** will be conducted to improve governance and operational efficiency. By enhancing the performance of SOEs, we will reduce fiscal risks to the government and improve overall economic efficiency.
- **Healthcare, Education, and Infrastructure Improvements:** Further action will be taken to improve access, quality, and efficiency in **healthcare, education, and infrastructure**. We recognize that these areas are critical to social development and public trust, and we will invest in improving service delivery for all Batswana.

H. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

37. **Mister Speaker**, in an interconnected world, we must strengthen our national security and develop strategic regional and international partnerships. To diversify Botswana's revenue streams and open new markets for our goods and services, we will:

- **Access International Capital:** We will begin to engage with international credit markets to **raise capital for government development projects**. This will help us address fiscal deficits, finance infrastructure projects, and promote Botswana as a favourable destination for investment.
- **Promote Trade Partnerships:** We will work closely with neighboring countries and international organizations to explore new trade opportunities. High-level government visits will be organized to **strengthen ties with key trading partners** and attract foreign investment to our priority sectors.

I. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

38. **Mister Speaker,** Botswana is blessed. Our natural environment is one of our most valuable assets, and we must protect it. We will prioritize policies focused on **environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and sustainable resource management**. Our initiatives include:
- **National ESG Strategy:** We will launch a comprehensive **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy** that emphasizes green finance and positions Botswana as a leader in **climate action**. This strategy will attract international capital to essential sectors like renewable energy, waste management, and conservation.
 - **Renewable Energy Initiatives:** We will invest in renewable energy projects such as solar, wind, and bioenergy, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and creating new economic opportunities for our people.
 - **Conservation of Natural Resources:** We will expand efforts to protect Botswana's unique wildlife and ecosystems, ensuring that our natural reserves remain pristine for generations to come. Eco-tourism will play a vital role in both preserving our environment and generating sustainable income for local communities.

J. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

39. **Mister Speaker,** Agriculture has always been a cornerstone of our nation's economy, yet it remains underdeveloped in many regions. The challenges we face—from climate change to outdated farming techniques—demand bold and strategic reforms. This administration will focus on **boosting agricultural productivity**, enhancing **food security**, and developing sustainable farming practices that ensure long-term prosperity for all Batswana and bringing in new industries. Our initiatives will include:

- **Modernizing Agriculture:** We will promote the use of **agricultural technology** to enhance productivity. This includes **precision farming, smart water management systems**, soil enhancement technologies, and regenerative agriculture which can help our farmers optimize crop yields, conserve water, and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.
- **Soil Health and Sustainable Practices:** We will encourage sustainable farming practices to improve soil health and ensure long-term agricultural productivity. This will not only help increase yields but also preserve the fertility of our land for future generations.
- **Boosting Food Security:** We will invest in food processing industries to add value to raw agricultural products and reduce our reliance on food imports. By processing local crops into finished products, we will create new jobs, reduce waste, and improve food security across the country.
- **Support for Small-Scale Farmers:** We will ensure that **smallholder farmers** have access to the resources, training, and financing they need to succeed. Supporting rural farmers will be key to improving livelihoods, increasing food production, and reducing poverty in our rural communities.

- **Introducing the Cultivation and Export of Medicinal Cannabis and Industrial Hemp:** Through legalizing and regulating this industry we will birth an industry previously unknown to our Republic except through illicit trade. We **will create jobs** in this industry. This will facilitate the innovative use of hemp-based materials like hempcrete, hemp bricks, and hemp fiber panels. This will significantly reduce our dependency on imported construction materials and lower overall building costs. This will further push for the **diversification** of our economy.
- According to the global statistics, the cannabis market size was valued at USD 43.72 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow from USD 57.18 billion in 2023 to USD 444.34 billion by 2030, exhibiting a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 34.03% during the forecast period. North America dominated the global market with a share of 81.79% in 2022. Our forecast in Botswana is to significantly increase our GDP with Cannabis and hemp related products.

K. MANUFACTURING AND VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING

40. **Mister Speaker,** in order to diversify our economy and create high-paying jobs, we must move beyond simply exporting raw materials. One of the most effective ways to do this is by **investing in manufacturing** and **value-added processing**. This administration will prioritize the development of key industries that process raw materials into finished goods, creating jobs and increasing the value of Botswana's exports. Our initiatives will include:
 - **Encouraging Industrial Growth:** We will invest in infrastructure and training to create a competitive manufacturing sector in Botswana. This will include focusing on industries where Botswana has significant potential to add value.

- **Incentives for Local Manufacturers:** We will introduce incentives for local manufacturers, particularly those that utilize locally sourced raw materials. This will include tax breaks, subsidies, and market access support to encourage businesses to establish production facilities in Botswana.
- **Export Promotion:** Through the National Export Strategy, we will help local manufacturers reach international markets, further diversifying our economy and increasing our foreign exchange earnings. Through strategic partnerships and support for export-oriented businesses, we will aggressively push for the **Made-in-Botswana brand** to make our products stand out from the rest.

L. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

41. **Mister Speaker,** Government is committed to working with local and global technology companies to rapidly prepare Botswana for the **Fourth Industrial Revolution** and drive meaningful economic transformation for our Nation.
42. We have further engaged SpaceX and Starlink to accelerate efforts to extend affordable connectivity options to the entire country. With affordable, high speed internet access across Botswana, citizens will have greater access to remote work opportunities, innovative educational content, and high-quality medical care, among others.
43. This will lead to direct and indirect employment opportunities and a better quality of life for our people, whether they live in cities or the most remote villages.
44. Starlink's planned infrastructure investment in Botswana will help transform Botswana into a digital hub for the entire SADC region, leading to increased employment opportunities, attracting further investment from global technology companies.

45. Based on the commitment to enhance access to quality education, this Government will accelerate the implementation of school connectivity projects through the village connectivity program. By the end of November, we will have connected 100 rural schools, with plans to connect 300 more in early 2025.

M. HEALTH CARE

46. **Mister Speaker**, our physicians, nurses, allied health care professionals and administrators are often overlooked. Yet day by day they dedicate themselves to serving our people in their most vulnerable moments.
47. **Mister Speaker**, I want them to know that we value them, we appreciate them, we love them. This Government is committed to providing them with the support they need to better serve the nation. Together we will build a system that not only treats illness but promotes health through predictive and preventative care.
48. We will roll out multiple initiatives to realize this vision:
- **A National Mandatory Health Insurance Scheme.**
 - **A Universal Health Coverage Plan for ALL Citizens.**
 - **A National Health Digitisation Roadmap to Modernise our systems.**
 - **Investment in Infrastructure**, Capacity Building, Human Resources Development and Public Awareness.
49. The goal is to design, develop and implement a sustainable health safety net that leaves no one behind.

N. COST CUTTING MEASURES

50. **Mister Speaker**, it is our considered view that our country loses billions of Pula to wastage, due to poor management or negligence, let alone subtle and clear-cut corruption. Consequently, the Ministry of Finance will at the appropriate time announce rigorous cost saving measures including:

- **Wastewater Treatment:** Water bills for senior schools exceed P300 million per annum. By implementing wastewater treatment plants, water substitution, and recycling, we can significantly reduce these costs. This estimate excludes savings from fixing leaks in pipes and storage tanks. Expansion of these measures to other institutions – such as the BDF, prisons, police, and hospitals—could further reduce expenses.
- **Procurement Costs:** This government will ensure fair pricing for basic goods and services. No mark up on procured goods will exorbitantly exceed the price of the goods from the supplier. Establishing standard pricing for essential items will control procurement costs.
- **IT Systems:**
Assess the cost of government IT systems, including implementation, maintenance, and licensing. We will explore opportunities to empower local youth to develop and manage these systems, reducing reliance on expensive external providers. Implementing a pay-per-transaction model for system development, where service providers receive payment based on usage, such as with the driver's licensing system. This will incentivise system developers to maintain high service standards and ensure the system's sustainability until fully paid off.
- **Development Manager Model (DMM):** The application of this model may have resulted in inflated projects construction costs. This model will be reviewed to ensure fiscal sustainability.

- **Rented Properties:** The government is not paying market value for rented buildings. A review of rental agreements and renegotiations will yield substantial savings.
- **Agriculture Programmes:** We will review Temo Letlotlo, Thuo Letlotlo and Maja-a-ikgorosa programmes to ensure value for money.
- **State Owned Enterprises:** We will minimize wastage within State Owned Enterprises, strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to attract external investment including equity-based investment.
- **Solar Farms:** Implement grid-connected solar systems for institutions to produce their own power. Leverage Impact Funds, to finance solar initiatives, reducing the need for direct government funding.
- **Artisan Workshops and Facilities Management:** We will develop low-cost workshops for artisans to provide services to government institutions, creating jobs and supporting local economies.
- **Private Sector Involvement:** Encourage private sector participation in infrastructure projects, such as roads, where investments generate revenue. The SADC House model is a successful example of such partnerships.
- **Budget Review:** Conduct a thorough review of existing budgets to identify essential expenditures. Assess each project to determine which should be government-funded and which can be self-financing.

O. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

51. **Mister Speaker,** Government is firmly dedicated to fulfilling its international obligations and remains committed to its membership in regional and international organizations such as SADC, the African Union, and the United Nations, among others. In this spirit, I would like to remember and express my profound gratitude to the men and women who served under the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique, working tirelessly to establish peace and stability in the region. I also wish to pay tribute to those who lost their lives during this noble mission.
52. We will enhance collaboration with our regional partners to ensure that Botswana's voice is heard in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union, further strengthening our role in regional and continental diplomacy.
53. We will refocus our foreign policy to ensure that our advocacy voice is heard in the promotion of human rights, democracy, justice, good governance, peace and security. The capacity of our diplomatic missions will be strengthened to effectively advance Botswana's national interests on the global stage.

P. CONCLUSION

54. **Mister Speaker,** as I conclude, let me remind Botswana that we have set ourselves a lofty goal of becoming a high-income country by the year 2036, and we are left with only 12 years to achieve this goal. We were well aware of the commitment and demands it will take to achieve this goal and as you all know, change does not happen on its own; neither can it just be wished.
55. As we develop our National Development Plan 12, we will begin the transformation journey enunciated in our manifesto. The Plan will reflect our intent and demonstrate our willingness to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve our ultimate goal.

56. As a society, we must be prepared to do things differently if we are to achieve different results. Let us remember that what kept us at upper-middle income will not necessarily take us to high income. We will, therefore, put in place systems and processes that engender a culture of meritocracy aimed at transforming our government to become more agile and accountable.
57. I appeal to every citizen and resident of this country to commit towards putting our nation, our Botswana first in everything we do. Equally important, is for the private sector and civil society to take their rightful role to become the drivers and guardians of our development, respectively.
58. The challenges we face are significant, but they are not insurmountable. By embracing bold reforms, driving economic diversification, investing in our people, and ensuring transparency in all government actions, we will build a Botswana that is resilient, sustainable, and prosperous. This is the Botswana I see, a nation where opportunity is abundant, where young people have the skills and jobs they need, and where our natural beauty is preserved for future generations. Let us come together, as we always have, to build a brighter, stronger future for our nation.
59. Bagaetsho, we have the responsibility, to ourselves and to each other, to make our aspirations a reality. On my part, I commit to spearhead the transformation of our government, society and economy. This is therefore a clarion call for national transformation. Fatshe leno ke la rona rotlhe bagaetsho, a re le tshwaraganeleng. God Bless Botswana.
60. **Ke a leboga..... Pula!!!**

