

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MESSAGE BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOKGWEETSI E. K. MASISI
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE

2020 BOTSWANA DAY

30th SEPTEMBER 2020

Bagaetsho, a ke le dumedise ka Pula!

1. I am delighted to address you today as we celebrate our 54th Anniversary of Independence. This is the first Independence celebration since the General Elections that were held in October 2019. I therefore wish to thank you once again, for your participation in this important National Exercise during which you chose your political leadership which will take our country to the next level of development.
2. As you all know, traditionally this day is characterized by pomp and ceremony. During this time of the year many of us visit friends and families to celebrate our National Day. It is indeed a special day on which many of our people are filled with joy, pride and a sense of patriotism.

3. However, this year, we are marking our National Day in a more sombre mood. We all know that the reason for this state of despondency and disruption is occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on the economy as well as the wellbeing of the people of this nation. It is indeed sad that the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise rapidly in Botswana.
4. I am fully aware that the stringent, yet necessary measures that are being implemented by Government to contain the spread and transmission of COVID-19 have had unintended consequences on the entire country. Indeed, businesses have been brought to their knees and consequently many people are likely to lose their jobs.
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I also observe that the impact of COVID-19 is even more excruciating for the already less privileged members of our society. The small businesses in our neighborhoods which have over the years sustained the livelihoods of those in the informal sector are suffering due to depressed business environment.

6. While COVID-19 has presented challenges that the global community could not have planned for, we have to be optimistic about the future. In this context, I want to assure you that my Government will continue to work hard to protect the welfare of the citizens of this country.
7. This pandemic has also pushed our people to realize their innovation capacities and abilities as demonstrated by the development of equipment and the provision of services related to COVID-19. These equipment's and services have gone a long way in

assisting Government in its efforts to contain the pandemic.

8. We must also use the opportunity presented by COVID-19 to explore other avenues to diversify our economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore, the need to move with speed as a country to ensure that our National Development Agenda is fully implemented for the benefit of our citizens.

9. **Bagaetsho**, at this stage I am gratified to inform you that the last meeting of Parliament has approved the mid-term review of the Eleventh National Development Plan. The approval of the Midterm Review is a significant milestone which will facilitate Government to effectively implement the National Transformational Agenda of this country.

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Government has also approved the Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan which is expected to provide direction on ways to boost the economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to cushion the economy from the unprecedented shock brought about by the scourge.

11. I would like to sincerely express my appreciation to the political leadership of this country, the private sector, individuals and the international community for their invaluable support to Government in its fight against COVID-9.

12. It is my intention to continue to rely on the political will of the men and women from across the political divide, to act in unity for the survival of our country. Let me assure you that the promises which this Government has made to you, including job creation particularly for our young people and achieving a

knowledge-based economy still stand and will come to fruition.

13. Bagaetsho, on another note, due to the effects of drought in some parts of Botswana, Government is providing, as appropriate, measures to support farmers across the country. This support includes insurance cover for seasonal loans to cushion losses due to crop failure and the provision of a 20 percent livestock feed subsidy.

14. I therefore encourage all of you to make use of this support for food production in your areas. I also urge you to take advantage of the rainy season to plough well on time to produce food for our people.

15. In conclusion, I wish you all a very Happy 54th Anniversary Celebrations of our independence. Please stay home with your families and continue adhering

to the health protocols of social distancing, washing your hands frequently, sanitizing and wearing your masks properly in public.

16. May God bless you and remember, together we will defeat COVID-19.

PULA!