

Botswana National Day

A society beyond diamonds

Jacob Dickie Nkate
AMBASSADOR OF BOTSWANA

On behalf of H.E President Ian Khama, the people and government of Botswana, we convey heartfelt greetings and wishes of good health, peace and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan.



This year is a special year for Botswana as we reflect on the founding of our country 50 years ago. Since independence in 1966 Botswana has progressively developed; moving from being one of the poorest countries in Africa and the world to becoming a middle-income country. This has been achieved through the four principles of self-reliance, unity, democracy and development with which our founding leaders bound us together as one nation.

The founders of our nation, in their great wisdom, made decisions that have bound our individual tribes into one proud and united nation. One such decision

was that all the natural resources of the country, irrespective of where they are found, would be used equitably for the benefit of all citizens. The newly formed nation adopted the first National Development Plan (NDP), which was then called the Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development in 1965. As Botswana is a vast country of 582,000 sq. kilometres and sparsely populated, the challenge of development was immense. Notwithstanding, the young government was determined to equitably distribute developments around the country regardless of location or tribal identity. The country has since gone through nine successful development plans and we are currently implementing NDP 11.

For the past 50 years, Botswana has also been synonymous with peace, stability, social progress, prudent economic management, multi-party constitutional democracy and free and fair elections, which are held every five years, the last of which was in October 2014. This was only possible due to our traditional values of botho (compassion), tolerance and consultation. To this end, Kgotla (the tradi-



This 1,111-carat gem-quality diamond is the largest ever to be recovered through a modern processing facility. It is the world's second-largest stone and the biggest ever to be discovered in Botswana. LUCARA DIAMOND CORP.

tional consultative meeting or gathering) has played an important role in conflict resolution, informing the public about developmental projects and giving the citizenry a platform to exercise their democratic rights.

Botswana's post-independence economic performance has been the basis for countrywide social development and progress. National revenues derived from various sectors have been used to fund extensive social programs. Compared to 1966,

many achievements have been made in universal primary and secondary education, healthcare, access to clean water, roads and other infrastructure. These have contributed to a steady reduction in poverty. Botswana has earned a reputation as the best-performing economy in Africa over a 30-year period. This prolonged growth took the country from the humble beginnings of being one of the poorest countries in the world in 1966 to middle-income status by the 1990s. Botswana is the world's second-largest producer of diamonds by value. While in some parts of Africa and indeed the world, diamonds and other natural resource wealth have proved to be curses; in the case of Botswana, these natural resources have been used as the transformational engine of a very poor country to the current modern Botswana. Various international institutions have acknowledged our economic success. Since 2001, sovereign credit rating agencies such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's have given

the country, including growth in the private sector. ESP is therefore a bold blueprint with the aim to stimulate the economy, create special economic zones and accelerate job creation.



Traditional dance BOTSWANA PRESS AGENCY

Botswana the highest credit ratings in Africa. These high ratings reflect Botswana's strong financial position, well-managed growing economy and political stability.

For our country to achieve progress in the next 50 years, it will have to prove that the success of the first 50 years was not due to good luck, but rather well-planned policies. The 2008 recession undoubtedly proved to the world, and particularly to Botswana, that indeed diamonds are not forever. In other words, we will have to put every effort into diversifying our economy and investing in people and projects that will create future wealth. This includes, diamond beneficiation, industrialization, information technology, urban tourism and the development of financial and business services.

To address this challenge, the government continues to regard education as one of its priorities so as to create a knowledge-based society where the people are empowered to innovate and create new things, thus diversifying the economy and creating wealth and jobs for themselves and each other. In this regard, the government has identified the transportation, diamond, health, agriculture and education and innovation sectors as being ripe with opportunities.

It is also in this context that the government has introduced the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP). To this end, the government will use its expenditures to expand the economy through accelerated economic diversification, while creating employment opportunities in

the country, including growth in the private sector. ESP is therefore a bold blueprint with the aim to stimulate the economy, create special economic zones and accelerate job creation.

Japan and Botswana have enjoyed strong ties since diplomatic relations began in 1966. With the opening of resident missions in Tokyo and Gaborone in 1997 and 2008 respectively, bilateral relations have strengthened further. This is evidenced by the commencement and continuation of various projects. Examples include the adoption of the Japanese digital television broadcasting standard by Botswana; the establishment and recent expansion of the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation remote sensing center and financing of the

construction of the Kazungula Bridge. More recently, Marubeni Corp. has been tapped in a deal to expand the Morupule B Power Plant by a further 300 MW. The project is expected to commence this year and be completed in 2020. Botswana also continue to receive training in various fields in Japan.

Botswana is also famous for the natural beauty of its fauna and flora. In particular we would like to welcome Japanese and other tourists to our famous tourist destinations such as the Chobe and Okavango deltas.

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Botswana, it is my honor to invite all to come to Botswana as investors, tourists and development partners.

Pula!



150 years of business. One guiding philosophy.



We have one simple guiding philosophy: business must benefit society. It's kept us successful since our foundation in 1858. Of course, times change, products change, modes of communication and transportation change, but our core principle holds fast. Today, our global business is driven by innovation, but our loyalty remains with the societies we serve.



SINCE 1858

Marubeni

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Botswana
on the 50th Anniversary of Their National Day