

**REMARKS BY HON. BOTSALO NTUANE, SPECIALLY ELECTED MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT (REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA) ON THE LEGISLATORS'
PERSPECTIVE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE POLICY DIALOGUE IN BOTSWANA.
GICC, GABORONE, 9th MAY, 2007**

Director of Ceremonies

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament

The President of BOCCIM

The Chairman of the CIPE Board

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel honoured to have been requested to stand in for my colleague Hon. Keletso Rakhudu, who was invited to make some remarks at this Conference but unfortunately he had to go out of the country to attend the Pan Africa Parliament. For that reason, I will therefore be very brief in my remarks.

The Botswana Parliament or the Botswana Legislative Assembly is a democratically elected House of 57 elected Members and four Specially Elected members of which I am one. The life of the Botswana Parliament is 5 years. Parliament is the voice of the people and legislators make laws and approve the National Budget which enables Government to implement its programmes and to deliver public services to the people.

With regards to Public–Private Policy Dialogue in Botswana, Parliament’s perspective is that it is the ultimate of democracy and good governance. In Botswana, every Member of Parliament who represents a Constituency, has a Constituency Office with a Government paid staff headed by an Administrator who is selected by the Member of Parliament. As politicians we make a lot of promises to the electorate during our electioneering campaigns and the Constituency Office enables the MP to fulfil some of his or her implementable

promises. After Elections, the MP ceases to be an MP for only the people who support him or her or those who supports his or her party, but a Member of Parliament for all the people in his Constituency. All the people who are resident in the Constituency, whether they are citizens or not, have access to the MP's services. In Botswana, the Constituency Office as part of the Public Sector structure, is closest to the people and the staff are less bureaucratic than those in the Civil Service. After all their tenure is tied to the tenure of the life of Parliament. If the MP loses Elections, then the jobs of the Constituency Office staff are also lost. The MP's job and jobs of the MP's staff, are tied on the popular vote of the people in a Constituency. For this reason therefore, the MP and his staff try to go out of their way in trying to fulfil the expectations of the electorate in the Constituency.

This being the case, it is therefore an anomaly that the Legislators are often not part of the policy dialogue machinery. This exclusion, undermines their understanding and appreciation of many policy issues which Government and the private sector are engaged in. This also narrows their ability to debate from an informed perspective, policy issues which are brought to Parliament for debate and consideration. When MPs are less informed, they become bad legislators because they are unable to constructively debate and interrogate issues in Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my fellow legislators in the Botswana Parliament, I am very impressed by a Conference such as this one, where we are trying to find ways and means of making Public-Private Policy dialogue an all inclusive business. After all, democracy is about inclusiveness.

Today, being a Legislator is no longer like yesterday. The electorate is becoming more sophisticated and the demands of the people are also becoming

more complex. This is compounded by the globalisation of the world economy and world politics. Legislators can no longer be just ordinary guys, but men and women to champion the politics and the Voter of the 21st century. The world is becoming very complex and therefore issues brought to Parliament are no longer just bread and butter issues but issues which demand understanding of a wide variety of economic and social and political issues.

I am made to understand that in all countries represented at this Conference, there are Parliament Committees on various fields. My view is that these Parliamentary Committees are yet to be made effective. The question is , Who should make them effective? Do people really know about these Parliamentary Committees? I would like to implore this Conference to come up with Recommendations which will make a difference in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, to me, effective Public-Private Policy Dialogue will serve to pre-empt many of the controversies which , unnecessarily, take a lot of energy from leaders of public and private sectors. PPP to me increases communication among the various stakeholders in any country. However, for PPP to succeed, there should be mutual respect, and mutual understanding and appreciation of the roles of the public and the private sectors in the country. In this 21st Century, countries must be governed as joint ventures between the public and the private sector. The private sector must now cease to be driven only by the profit motive but also to a larger extent, by fulfilling the needs of the people; likewise, Governments must now cease to be motivated by power only, but also by the quality of their services to the people. When the people become the centre of satisfaction by both the Public and the Private Sector, then PPP will have found a role in our societies.

In Botswana , Parliamentary Committees, although they are formed to address various sectors of the economy and other social sectors, their existence is yet to be known and felt by the people. The information about their existence and indeed their roles, is yet to be disseminated and appreciated by the people.

Botswana is yet to institute firm structures of policy dialogue between Parliament and the private sector. The current situation is ineffective and little known by the general public.

Outside Parliament, I am aware that government and the private sector have formalised and effective systems of policy dialogue through the High Level Consultative Council (HLCC) and the biennial National Business Conference (NBC). Formalising these policy dialogue structures has resulted in the Public and Private sector sharing ideas and in the end, owning most of the policies which makes implementation everybody's business. The Botswana Parliament appreciates these developments and is indeed grateful that Parliamentarians are always nominated to participate in the biennial National Business Conference. Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees should be included in most of the relevant structures where policy dialogue takes place between government and the private sector. Unless Parliamentary Committees are involved they will remain ineffective and less known by the general public.

I am convinced that at the end of this Conference, we shall come up with implementable Recommendations which will strengthen policy dialogue between Parliament and the private sector, which will indeed trickle down to the ordinary citizen who is represented by the Member of Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me on behalf of the Chairman of the Botswana Parliamentary Committee on International Trade and Security, thank the Centre

for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) for Sponsoring this Conference and also congratulate the organisers of this Conference for a job well done. This is the first Conference of its kind in this part of Africa and I am looking forward with great anticipation for the outcome of this important gathering of Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Captains of Industry and senior Government Officials.

I thank you.