



**HUMAN
RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL**
of BOTSWANA

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
NATIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) PITSO, 2021**

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY:

Hon. Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe
Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science
and Technology

BOTHO University | 13th October 2021

GABORONE

SALUTATIONS

Thank you Directors of Proceedings,

- **Professor Nelson Torto – Permanent Secretary - Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoTE),**
- **Mr Gaeimelwe Goitsewang – Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Employment, Labour and Skills Development (MELSD),**
- **Ms Sarah Elson – Rogers – UNESCO/UNEVOC Representative,**
- **The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Human Resource Development Council – Mr Meshack Tafa and your Executive Management,**
- **Mr Golekanye Setume – Chairperson, Education and Training Sector, Business Botswana,**
- **Deputy Permanent Secretaries, here present – Ms Tshepo Lorraine Nkwadi and Mr Oupa Masesane,**
- **Mr Peter Reger – Head of Programmes (STER – TVET II) GIZ,**
- **Senior Government *Officials,***
- **Chief Executive Officers of various Parastatals here present or joining us virtually,**
- **Captains of the Industry,**

- **Heads and Representatives of all Tertiary Education Providers (TEPs),**
- **Members of the Fourth Estate,**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning to you all.

1. Honoured Guests, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, Indeed I received with immense pleasure the invitation to perform keynote address for the 2021 ***TVET Pitso*** as it affords me an opportunity to interact with some of the drivers of the human capital development agenda at national level. Human capital development is an area that is close to my heart and dates to my recent past when I was a Lecturer at the University of Botswana in areas of research, science and technology. The legacy continued upon my appointment to head the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology in 2019 by His Excellency the President, Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi.

- 2.** The education and training sector strategic reforms as enunciated in the Human Resource Development Strategy (2009-2022), aims at ensuring that the people of Botswana are afforded an opportunity to realise their full potential. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very much impressed by the organizers of this **TVET Pitso** in their quest to transform the TVET sub-sector and align it to the 4IR.

- 3.** TVET Institutions exist in an ever changing world and at an alarming rate. The 21st Century has been a period of momentous changes in terms of political and socio-economic developments, with a very definite impact on the societies. These changes and shifts in societies necessitate “reforms” or “transformation” of the educational systems to make the graduate relevant to the demands of the world of work and the economy at large.

- 4.** Socio-economic and technological changes have put pressure on the education system including TVET. This therefore, calls for critical review and appraisal of the sector to inculcate 21st Century skills and more importantly, capacitate the TVET sub-sector to keep abreast with the dictates of the ever changing educational trajectory.

- 5.** Ladies and Gentlemen, as we continue to re-focus our approach to skills development, it must not be lost to us that even jobs that were considered as vocational, are now becoming high tech and require specialized skills and competencies of the digital kind.

- 6.** Therefore, our training and skills development must be accelerated to keep up with the pace of technological changes. By embracing education as a life long journey, we will be better prepared to adapt, through technology, to the challenges of this new order.

7. Botswana, like the rest of the world is striving for a knowledge based economy as illustrated in the theme “***Transforming TVET for the 4IR***”. In essence, 4IR is a shift towards automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies and digitalization. I noted with interest the Sub-Theme “***Capacitate TVET Resources to Deliver on 4IR***” and would urge institutions and interested parties to fully exploit the **Atingi Platform** which I am informed is GIZ’s new ***e-learning*** platform and is used internationally. It provides access to training opportunities and courses for entrepreneurs and future-ready workforce. The **Atingi Platform** enable users to access high-quality, locally-relevant, digital learning materials anytime and anywhere.
8. The other critical ***TVET Pitso*** sub-theme is on “***International Perspectives of Collaboration and Partnerships in TVET in the Era of 4IR***”. It is a theme that recognizes the need for enhanced collaboration between Government, education and training institutions, and industry. This is also a call for all society to play its part in creating training, employment and business opportunities for our young people. It is only through collaboration and by agreeing on social compact and dialogue

for skills and jobs that we can reverse the tide of unemployment and deepening poverty that engulfs our society.

9. Through this ***TVET Pitso***, we seek to develop new networks, strengthen existing partnerships and share trends and practices on how, through education and skills transfer, we can create a more humane and equitable world where each individual can realize his or her full potential and enjoy access to available opportunities for self-advancement.

10. Distinguished Guests this ***Pitso*** must be remembered for the Action Plans that the HRDC and its partners will adopt and implement to change the dominant narrative of *poverty, unemployment* and *inequality* that confronts our nation. This ***TVET Pitso*** must also be remembered as a gathering that ventured into solving the skills challenge of our time, and one that offered innovative solutions and concrete areas of collaboration.

11. The key outcomes of this summit must point us to practical and concrete programmes of implementation and deepen collaborative partnerships that allow us to respond more directly to the shortage of critical skills in our economy. It is of interest that this conference will also discuss milestones achieved in implementation of the recommendations of the 2019 edition. It surely is not in the interest of the Ministry or the Nation that resources be channelled towards interventions of this nature if in the end there is no return on investment. It is therefore my expectation that such interventions are results oriented.

12. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to reiterate that this is an important ***PITSO*** that cannot afford to be another **talk show**. Our debate and sharing of best practices must ultimately result in clearly defined plans that will improve the lives of our people particularly, the youth. We must never fall into the trap of meeting to lament on the state of affairs without providing practical and actionable solutions. This ***TVET Pitso***, ought to be a beacon of hope to the youth and rural economies.

- 13.** The adoption of the Tertiary Education Policy of 2008, points to Government's commitment to the development of TVET and currently, the Ministry, in collaboration with its partners, is working on reviewing the learning programmes of our Technical Colleges and I believe the same obtains with the Ministry of Employment, Labour Productivity and Skills Development for the Brigades. There is also the urgent need to revitalise, expand access and equity of TVET provision including re-branding the image of the sub-sector as well as upscaling teacher training and development.
- 14.** Distinguished participants, I think you will agree with me that TVET remains an untapped area despite its potential to support industrialization, job creation and self-employment. Now is the perfect opportunity to bring into focus and re-position the TVET sub-sector.

15. To conclude Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to applaud companies in this country that have partnered with our education and training institutions to provide placement opportunities for internships and learnerships. Their decision is a step forward and will assist in alleviating lamentations that graduates are not work ready.

16. I wish you success in your endeavours to make a positive difference in the lives of Batswana.

Pula!

Pula!

Pula!