

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY

THE PRESIDENT

AT

THE

BDP NATIONAL COUNCIL

Gaborone

13th -15th March 2015

"Moving Botswana Forward"

Salutations.....

Good Morning,

I am delighted to be here with you this morning. This Council meeting has indeed come at an opportune time, a few months post the 2014 general elections. It can therefore in this regard, be rightly assumed that this gathering will accord us an opportunity to reflect on some of the issues in relation thereto, so as to address them, as per our mandate and mission to move this Party forward in preparation for upcoming events and the 2019 general elections.

Let me from the outset, indicate to this assembly that this year, it will not be business as usual within the BDP, given the political challenges and calendar of political activities and program of action facing the Party. The program for the year includes among others, three Congresses, having already successfully held the National Youth Congress in Masunga on 6th February 2015. It goes without saying that this requires of us, Party members to stay focused on the Party interest, rather than personal interests in that we ensure that various elective competitions for Party leadership positions do not lead to

deepening divisions between Party members and a culture of entrenched political rivalry.

We should use the opportunity of meeting at Congress and this National Council, to address past and present challenges, so that going into the future, we have common denominators in the governance of these electoral processes that have always caused divisions. We should work hard to bridge political differences between us emanating from systems adopted to improve and advance our internal democratic processes. Given the outcome of the recent general elections, the Party cannot afford to be divided and needs to adopt a collective political posture in all its operations and outlook. We have without doubt majority support over any combined opposition. However in recent times it is not evident when election results come out, because our members who because of personal differences with other candidates opt to get at them by voting for the opposition.

This National Council and the up-coming Congresses should be used as an opportunity for reconciliation, introspection and extensive debate of the BDP political program and our inter-personal relations in the build-up to the 2019 general elections, which should be informing all the Party work going forward. We

have to go back to the **Basics** of building our structures and ourselves into a Team. We have to reassure Batswana and affirm to them as fact that **there is still no alternative** and that we are still the best placed Party that can **“move Botswana forward.”**

Going forward therefore we must set ourselves the following agenda.

1. Resuscitation of Structures

- We must re-establish and revive the Party's organizational structures. If there are no structures, Madomi then there is no Party. It is as plain and simple as that.
- Everything we are doing in the Party should be based on and be informed by its organisational structures and all planning and implementation of the Party program of action should originate from these structures.
- Political education in these structures should be revived and stepped up as well as Inner Party general membership meetings.

- The Party's founding, but increasingly waning spirit of volunteerism has been overtaken by a culture of entitlement and financial return for doing Party work. We should endeavour to resuscitate the spirit of voluntarily working for the Party and each other. I shall after the Congress embark upon visiting Regions to meet structures and members with some of new members of the Central Committee to kick start reviving structures.

2. Primary Elections Review

- The outcome of the on-going **Siele Commission** on the Review of the **BDP Primary Elections Process** is expected to yield results that will reduce disgruntlement, disunity and disharmony within the Party.
- Our failure to mount a simple fool-proof and cost effective and intact internal election process going forward, may further result in many of our members turning against us at the polls, joining the opposition or standing as independent candidates, as experienced in the 2014 general elections. We must

remove this scenario ahead of the 2019 general elections and as such look forward to receiving at this Council the Siele Commission Report and recommendations in this regard.

- Your contributions and deliberations, fellow democrats, during this Council, will go a long way in achieving the desired results.

3. Unity and Reconciliation

- In the 2013 primary elections, many of our Party members lost the spirit of **tolerance, transparency and botho that the BDP is renowned for.**
- The Party cannot do well in 2019 without the support of everyone who loves our Party. A political party is what it is because of strong and wide membership and following. Attacks on each other is immature. The Bible says in the Book of James Chapter 1 Verse 26 the following: I quote "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." Unquote

- We should not allow our members to continue to increase opposition votes due to intolerance.
- The opposition members never vote for the BDP. But our members might increasingly vote for the opposition if we don't promote the spirit of **Unity** and build ourselves to become a **UNITED TEAM**. What do you all understand is the purpose of this party? I shall put it to you simply by reading another Quote from the Bible that we Madomi, as people of the Faith, and as a party that should do our teachings good work for our fellow citizens, the following from the Book of Peter Chapter 5 Verses 2,3 and 5 - 10 is relevant. I quote. " ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁵Young men, in the same way, be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another because God opposes the proud but gives to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that

he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” Unquote

This is what I have to say to you today, because what I have stated is fundamental for our well being as a party.

In conclusion, allow me to request all of you democrats, to continue serving the Party diligently and tirelessly in everything we set out to do. I should also use this opportunity to reiterate that we have a mandate from Batswana based on the promise of our manifesto. We should, in this respect, continuously ensure that we fulfil these promises and also cascade the manifesto to all our members and Batswana at large. Yes **there is still no alternative** and we are still the only Party that can represent their ideals, and that yes indeed we remain

committed to “**moving Botswana Forward**” as we are the only Party that can do so. Remember what this party stands for. To lift up Botswana and Batswana. To work for them and not your self interest. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who said “It is more blessed to give than receive.”

I wish you all good deliberations during this Council as **WE TAKE BOTSWANA FORWARD! BOTSWANA PELE!**

I thank you for your attention.