

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DR. SERETSE KHAMA IAN
KHAMA AT THE 2016 BDP YOUTH WING COUNCIL
HELD AT MOSU**

12TH FEBRUARY 2016

Your Honour The Vice President and Chairman of the BDP

Honourable Ministers

Kgosi Pemole of Mosu

Secretary General of the BDP

MCC for Central Region

Members of Central Committee

Chairperson of Youth Wing and Members of your Committee

Members of the Women's Wing

Members of the Party Electoral Board

Members of Sub –Committees of Central Committee

Honourable Members of Parliament

Fraternal Guests

Distinguished Guests

Fellow Democrats

A very good afternoon to you all.

1. It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to once again be delivering a keynote address at this very important gathering. The 2016 BDP Youth Wing Council comes at an opportune time indeed. It is the inaugural National Youth Council following the Mmadinare resolution to empower the Youth and Women's Wings pertaining to their processes, so as to enable them to have structures similar to that of the Party. I am sure you will agree with me that this is actually an appropriate time for us **Democrats** to come together in pursuit of achieving the objectives that we promised Batswana to get a fresh mandate and to also reaffirm to the electorate that indeed **there is still no alternative** Party that can **move Botswana Forward**.
2. Mosu holds a special place in my heart. In this regard, let me from the outset thank the people of Mosu,(I also included I guess) for having agreed to host us. Let me also thank them for their wonderful hospitality ever since our arrival here. Perhaps I should, as well, take this opportunity to encourage some of you to, subsequent to this meeting to find time in your schedules to visit some of the historic and scenic sites in the area.
3. I wish to take this opportunity to thank you the Youth for your continued involvement in our democratic processes.

It goes without saying that the future of any organization lies in its ability to invest and nurture its Youth for future leadership positions. Our ability to reinvent ourselves as a Party, especially in this era of the use of ubiquitous equipment (ICTs), so as to stay relevant in the contemporary period and future, is through inter alia, affirming that you play the critical role of ensuring continuous and consistent engagement of the youth in a significant and meaningful way.

4. Our appeal to the electorate, which made them accord us the opportunity to lead this great nation is dependent on how well you, among others, implement commitments we made to Botswana at the last elections. An undertaking you have carried out quite well. Your support and the substantial role that you continue to play in the Party in this regard is furthermore demonstrated by your solid stand in articulating the Party's policies and also defending the Party.
5. In view of the fact that this Council will be considering matters related to the role of the youth within the BDP and their consequent contribution to the growth of this country, I therefore, call on all of you to ensure that the outcome is turned into real action. All resolutions adopted at this gathering should thus, be a product of collective

discussions and transferred into tangible deliverables for the advancement of both the Party and this nation.

6. Government remains committed to addressing issues pertaining to the youth in Botswana, with a view to make them part and parcel of the country's economic progression, as strategic players in this regard. This Government has consistently indicated its commitment to ensure that this promise to the electorate, this objective, is achieved within the mandate period given us by the electorate, thus it remains paramount. The Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) is one such aspect aimed at addressing the matter. The BDP led-Government is keen on ensuring that every aspect of our economy has a fair representation of Botswana youth, whose ideas are incorporated into the final decisions that we make.

7. It is against this backdrop that we have, over the years as Government, put in place various mechanisms aimed at supporting the youth so as to enable them to play a crucial role in this regard. I therefore, wish to once more, urge all of you to take advantage of these programmes, such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF). Moreover, not only should you take them up yourselves, but you should also sell them to the rest of Botswana. Most

importantly, is for you to suggest what more we should be doing for the youth in this country.

8. Employment creation was a mantra during our campaign for a fresh mandate. In this light, it is therefore at the top of the list in our priority areas. It is in this regard that I have asked His Honour the Vice President to spearhead the exercise of ensuring that our programmes are galvanised to ensure success pertaining to this crucial endeavour.
9. The BDP views youth representation at all levels in the political set up as critical. We are thus always encouraged by the figures, passion and enthusiasm of participation from the Youth in the electoral process. We are, of course, also mindful of the numerous challenges they face in this regard, such as limited resources. We therefore, always commend those who were able to make it in the elections process. Over and above the endorsement of candidates by the voters in the last general elections, we took a deliberate decision to appoint nominated councillors to ensure an increase in youth representation at these levels.
10. It is, therefore pleasing to note that we, in the BDP are making progressive strides in the area of youth representation within the leadership pipeline. It is through

your sterling efforts and relentless drive to advance the Party's agenda as the Youth that these young people found the opportunity to step up and be counted upon as your representatives. Your encouragement, solidarity, support and blessings gave them the motivation and belief that indeed it is their time.

11. This is contrary or unlike what we have seen in recent times, where some of our **very old** members, think that leadership is perpetual and thus have found it difficult to accept that democracy is about competition and that there is possibility of defeat, like the former Speaker Mma Nasha. Upon losing she decided to leave the Party, perhaps underlining what everybody always knew.

12. I wish to take this moment to reassure you that we have made great strides in our recruitment drive, led by His Honour the Vice President, also Party Chairman. It is you, the Youth who have underscored to the Party leadership the need for continuous recruitment into our Party so as to grow the Party and bring in some **oomph and verve (energy and vitality)**. You have also rightly pointed out that demographics have shifted, that during the next general elections, a sizable number of the voters would be youth. This therefore requires a different strategy, approach and focus. Thus, I wish to highlight that the

numbers we have been getting in our recruitment drive, as well as the calibre of people is also quite encouraging. These are people who are still very **agile** and have indepth knowledge on how the opposition think and function.

13. In recent times, it has become evident and rather quite noticeable that the opposition have no direction. They have resorted to gutter politics, especially where they would periodically just wake up and state, most of the time through social media, that there are attempts to murder them. It is a pity when people resort to such low levels. It is also a very clear indication that they have no policies and thus cannot be regarded as a government in waiting as they would wish people to believe.
14. Subsequent to the aforestated highlights I have given, let me take this opportunity to thank the current Youth Wing Committee for their efforts in pursuing the objectives they set for themselves when assuming office. I am hopeful that we will each play a role in supporting them to achieve the goals they have set for the Youth.
15. Perhaps to indicate that we cannot focus on positives only, without underscoring to you the youth, the value system that has guided this Party through the years. Allow

me to once again stress that the BDP Youth are Ambassadors of the **ruling Party**, that the Party's integrity should be paramount at all times, lest we become our own worst enemy.

16. Let me reiterate, once again, that I have noted over time with great concern that we still have a few elements in our midst, including youth members, who have made it a habit to write uncouth messages about the Party on social media. Again, let me underline that I strongly believe that social media can be used more positively to promote the Party and its candidates. It can be used as a platform for interaction and positioning the Party in good light to recruit new members, especially the Youth, whilst also reminding Batswana that **there is still to alternative** and we are still the best placed **Party to move Botswana forward**, for **better development** and **better livelihood**.
17. I urge all those who have made it a hobby to use the social media negatively to desist from doing so. As we are all well aware, the Party has structures through which any complaint can be routed. Let us all be encouraged to utilise these structures fully, at all times. We, in this Party, should not allow ourselves to derive any pleasure from admonishing fellow Democrats or the Party itself in public.

18. Since this is the first of many high profile meetings for the Party this year, these views are, in this regard, not reserved for the Youth only. We need to be united and in concert as we advance towards making Botswana have ***better development*** and ***better livelihood***.
19. In conclusion, I wish to request all Democrats, young and old, to continue serving this Party diligently and tirelessly in everything you set out to do. Always remember to familiarise yourself with the Party Manifesto and cascade it to Batswana, highlighting the successes we have had as a Party since inception and the many opportunities that lie ahead of us as a Party and country. Underscore to them that, yes we are still the only Party that can represent their ideals, and that yes indeed, we remain united in our endeavours in this regard, for the advancement of the Party and this great Republic, for ***better development*** and ***better livelihood***. ***There is still no alternative***. We are ***moving Botswana forward***.

I thank you all for your attention.

Tsholetsa Domkrag!!!