

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE BOTSWANA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY, Mr THARI G. PHEKO, AT A NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL BROADBAND STRATEGY

DATE: TUESDAY 9th APRIL 2013

VENUE: GABORONE SUN

Director of Ceremonies

Minister for Transport and Communications Hon. Nonfo Molefhi

Members of Parliament here present

Permanent Secretary

National ICT Coordinator

Chief Executives here present and their respective staff

Captains of Industry

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Let me offer you a very warm welcome to this important consultative workshop co-hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority. It is a real pleasure and great honour to have so many stakeholders here with us today in this fine city of Gaborone.

I would like to thank you all for heeding our call and accepting the invitation to attend despite your busy schedules in your respective businesses. As usual we have a full agenda, and I very much want to make sure we have time for our discussions so I will be very brief.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are living in a digital economy which is driven by high capacity ICT networks. These networks need to be logically linked and coordinated if they are to serve the purpose they are designed for. One thing that is crystal clear is that broadband internet can absolutely transform the way we live and work. I am very pleased with the progress that has been made since last year when we started this project, and we will hear more about this during today and tomorrow's meetings.

We are gathered here today to map the way forward on how to utilise a resource that can get people jobs and start businesses. Our Government has heavily invested in Broadband technology and we should strategise on the use of broadband to stay healthy, get educated and simply stay in touch with family and friends. Broadband adoption is key to unlocking this transformation and it is our shared responsibility to advance and encourage its adoption to give everyone a chance at the benefits this access will bring them.

Globally, broadband continues to be at the top of the global political agenda and this was clear at the World Conference on International Telecommunications, WCIT-12, which took place in Dubai in December 2012. There was universal consensus at that international conference that broadband was the future. I am pleased to note that our Government encourages investment in international telecommunication networks and this will promote competitive wholesale pricing for traffic carried by our operators.

I am confident that investment in infrastructure and capacity development will play a very important role in furthering

broadband rollout around Botswana, and will bring the Internet within reach of the 2 million people who are still offline.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

What we are going to discuss here today should address the fostering of an enabling environment for the greater growth of the Internet. If anything our recommendations should specifically call for greater broadband investment and should express support for multi-stakeholder investment model.

Today is a unique opportunity to air the issues as you see them, and this forum will enable all stakeholders to contribute their unique perspective to the discussions and help Botswana chart a common course forward.

I welcome you all once again Ladies and Gentlemen as I leave the podium to pave way for the Honourable Minister to speak with you.

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