**Welcome Remarks by Mr Martin Mokgware, Chief Executive, Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) at Signing Ceremony of Memorandum of Understanding between BOCRA and CIPA held at Avani Hotel in Gaborone, on 24th September 2019**

Director of Ceremonies

Mr Paul Masena, CIPA Registrar General and Members of your team

Distinguished Guests

BOCRA Management and staff

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this ceremony that officially marks the beginning of a formalised working relationship between the Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA) and Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA). Director of Ceremonies, as I make these welcome remarks, allow me to use the opportunity to share a bit about the mandate of BOCRA and why we consider this relationship important for the achievement of our mandate.

As BOCRA, our vision is to have “**A connected and digitally driven society of Botswana**”. To realise this vision, one of our key objectives is to leverage on Strategic Partnerships with institutions such as CIPA. As registrar and guardian of rights holders of creative works, CIPA is rightly placed to assist BOCRA in facilitating establishment of critical digital platforms for carrying content that will connect Botswana and Batswana. It is important to note that BOCRA has worked with CIPA in many instances. However, as we implement our new Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2024, we have seen it fitting to formalise our working relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The importance of local creatives cannot be over emphasised. In addition to the economic reasons, local creatives play a key role in promoting and preserving our national identity and cultural diversity. BOCRA is charged with the responsibility to regulate the Communications sector. Our mandate as a regulator, is not only confined to “rule setting” and ensuring compliance but extends to facilitating ICT sector development. Inevitably, the Communications Sector, be it broadcasting or telecommunications, thrives on copyrighted content material such as applications, musical works and audio-visual works. You may be pleased to know that BOCRA promotes the use of local content through initiatives such as; licensing, subsidies and local content quotas.

Austrian born American management consultant, educator, and author, Peter Drucker, observed that **“you cannot manage what you cannot measure.”** In its efforts to grow the sector, BOCRA needs to appreciate the quantity, diversity and the rate of growth of local content in order to make appropriate interventions. To this end, BOCRA will benefit from CIPA as the custodian of creative works in the country.

Distinguished guests, BOCRA is awaiting finalisation of the Regulations to the Communications Regulatory Authority Act. Once the regulations are in place, the Authority plans to review local content obligations of licensees to enhance the local content appeal of licensed services and stimulate the local creatives to produce more content to meet demand.

BOCRA requires all licensees to use material which they either hold a copyright to or have been authorised to use by the rights holder. This calls for collaboration between our institutions to ensure compliance and curb illegal use of copyrighted material by the regulated services.

In line with the Government Policy of empowering Batswana, we have certain licenses that require minimum Batswana shareholding. We have, in many instances collaborated with CIPA to ensure that this noble initiative is not exploited by non-law-abiding elements in our society. Our collaboration will certainly ensure issues like these are dealt with timely.

As I conclude, Director of Ceremonies, I would like to thank both CIPA and BOCRA teams for crafting the MOU that we are about to enter into. It is commendable that the teams have been able to make consensus on many issues that were seemingly contentious. This is the spirit I wish to encourage as we operationalise this MOU.

With those few remarks, I welcome you all and wish CIPA and BOCRA a fruitful and ever lasting relationship for the benefit of the economy.