

**Vote of Thanks by Major General Bakwena Oitsile (Rtd), Chairman of Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) during the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2019 Excellence Awards Ceremony. 03 May 2019, GICC.**

Hon. Dorcas Makgato, Minister of Transport and Communications

Mr. Kabelo Ebineng Permanent Secretary MTC

Senior Ministry Officials

Invited Guests

Ministry staff

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude for being afforded the opportunity to interact with the ministry personnel and other stakeholders this evening as we celebrate performance during this Excellence Awards ceremony.

Honourable Minister, in your invitation to me, and those present here tonight, you did indicate that you oversee a very powerful ministry. I fully concur with you and wish to underscore the message that for the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) to realise its full potential and reach for glory, all the constituent parts and stakeholders need to work hard and work together. Each of the constituent parts of the ministry need to implement robust clear strategies to deliver plans and projects that address the very broad mandate of this ministry. Honourable Minister, I cannot overemphasise the point that delivery is paramount. We must deliver on our mandates; we must deliver projects timeously and on budget if we are to sustain the mantle of being a powerful Ministry.

On an annual basis, the Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC) shares with the various sectors of the economy, the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report. The Report assesses a set of microeconomic and macroeconomic foundations that determine the level of productivity of a country. One of the areas the report looks at is Public Sector Performance. The 2018 Report ranked Botswana Public Sector Performance number 93 out of 140 countries. According to the report, Africa’s star performer is Rwanda at 23 with our neighbours South Africa and Namibia at 50 and 66 respectively. This report tells us that for Botswana to attract foreign direct investment, public service performance is critical.

Director of Ceremonies, it is with this context in mind that I wish to thank the honourable Minister, together with the entire ministry leadership for dedicating this evening to recognising the contribution of staff in delivering on the mandate of the ministry and by extension contributing to Botswana’s global competitiveness. This gesture recognises and confirms that employees are indeed the most critical resource of any organisation.

I have been serving on the BOCRA Board for almost four years now. Since joining the Board, I have obtained a greater appreciation of just how critical the ICT sector is as an enabler to promoting or hampering growth of an economy. It is therefore mission critical, honourable Minister, that the staff of this ministry is as agile as is humanely possible to keep pace with fast changing technology and customer demands. I trust that an initiative such as this one will serve to re-energise the staff to put their best foot forward and offer their optimal performance.

I wish to equally thank the staff, not least those who were recognised as worthy of awards, to keep aiming for the stars and galaxies beyond. As you celebrate individual achievements, it is important that you pull your colleagues along such that you become one great team with one vision - to take the Ministry to greater heights. Bo ngwanaka, this country belongs to you and only you can make it heaven for your children. Some of us who were around during our early days as an independent country, know the constraints that the public service faced owing to limited resources and inadequate labour skills. However, we believe that we have built the required runway for you to just take off and fly. As the popular expression goes, the future is literally in your hands and I wish to sincerely thank those who have demonstrated that they are ready to lead the way with enhanced levels of productivity.

Let me also thank you invited guests for gracing this occasion. As a ministry, we do not exist in a vacuum but exist to serve and service you in your various capacities. You are therefore the reason why we exist and the reason why we need to continuously improve our service delivery. Your presence in our midst this evening serves to remind us that we are under surveillance. We thank you for honouring us with your presence.

Finally, let me appreciate, in a special way, the efforts of the team that put together this event. Many of us who come on the last hour only to be told where to sit, when to talk, when to listen, when to eat and when to go home, often fail to appreciate the amount of time and planning that goes into putting together a successful event. I therefore want to say thank you to the organisers for a well put together Excellence Awards Ceremony.

To you members of the media, ours is a love/hate but permanent relationship. We need you in times of celebration such as today and we need you even in bad times for you play a crucial role in holding us accountable. Hopefully you will make us shine in your various media platforms tomorrow but will not take it personal if tomorrow I find you asking us difficult questions about this event. Either way, we thank you for your presence tonight and invite you to continue spreading our messages as the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

I thank you all for your attention.