



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HIS HONOUR THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA,

MR. SLUMBER TSOGWANE

**AT THE PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY OF THE
CEDA/DBSA UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE 2019**

DATE: 23RD JANUARY 2020

TIME: 1800HRS

VENUE: GABORONE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Acting Minister of Investment Trade and Industry, Honourable Karabo S. Gare;**
- **Cabinet Ministers here present;**
- **Members of Parliament here present;**
- **Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Investment Trade and Industry, Ms Keganele Malikongwa;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **CEDA Chairman, Dr Alfred Tsheboeng and members of the CEDA Board of Directors;**
- **Chief Executive Officer of CEDA, Mr Thabo Thamane;**
- **Chief Executive Officers of other Parastatals;**
- **Captains of Industry;**
- **The top 10 Finalists;**
- **Media Houses;**
- **Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good evening.

1. It is a pleasure for me to join you this evening to officially award the winner of the 2019 Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency/ Development Bank of Southern Africa (CEDA/DBSA) University Challenge.
2. This is the third edition of the University Challenge after successful hosting of the last two. Since inception of the University Challenge, two winners have been awarded the grand prize of P200 000 each and both had developed solutions in the Agricultural Sector. One of the winners provided a solution for production of organic fertilizer using worms and the other was for commercial fish farming. Both winners have since then, enjoyed advisory and mentoring support from CEDA.
3. **Director of Ceremonies,** I am informed that this year's prize money has been increased from P200 000 to P300 000, with an additional P50 000 if the winner is female. This is indeed commendable.
4. Like in the past Challenges, students who are at tertiary education level are provided the platform to develop solutions to address the nation's socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment. The winner is given support to develop the idea to address aforementioned

challenges, which is developed into a sustainable business.

5. **Director of Ceremonies**, such initiatives as the University Challenge demonstrate Government's commitment to empower the youth by providing seed capital and mentoring, to develop bankable and sustainable business ideas. It is particularly important to continue pursuing such initiatives as they have the potential to contribute to the transformation of this economy. Such initiatives do not only inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship but encourage innovation and creativity.
6. The University Challenge continues to grow in leaps and bounds. I am told that there was overwhelming response to the call for participants for this year's Challenge, where a total of 218 applications were received relative to 144 applications in 2018. These 218 individuals were inspired to do more outside their everyday lives, by producing business proposals to participate in the CEDA/DBSA University Challenge. Each and every one of these individuals gave the competition their best and this is highly commendable.

7. **Bagaetsho**, even though there will be one winner tonight, you are all victors as evidenced by your resolve to participate in this Challenge. This is indeed a testimony of your commitment and dedication to develop solutions for challenges facing our economy. Additionally, this will contribute towards building wealth for our nation. For those who did not win tonight, I encourage you to pursue your ideas and nurture them to become businesses.
8. The University Challenge is a stepping stone towards the CEDA Vision of building an innovative and competitive SMME Sector. In this regard, Government continues to develop Policies and programmes to support the Sector and render the necessary support to various institutions which participate in the SMME Sector ecosystem, including CEDA.
9. The National Entrepreneurship Policy which was recently approved by Government recognises the need for coordination of efforts by all stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem including the Private Sector, Non-State Sectors and Development Partners. It is in view of the above that Government continues to partner with these stakeholders in delivering various programmes to develop entrepreneurship in Botswana.

10. I wish to pause here **Director of Ceremonies**, to acknowledge and thank these stakeholders for their invaluable support to Government and urge you all to take advantage of these programmes to empower yourselves.
11. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that “in order to utilize young people’s potential as agents of change, Government should involve and empower them in development, policies and supporting their participation at all levels.” This notion is aligned to Government’s resolve to develop from being a resource-based to knowledge-based economy. In this regard, Government together with other stakeholders will support in earnest innovation and creativity which will improve efficiency and competitiveness in the economy.
12. As you are all aware, entrepreneurship provides an alternative source of income other than formal employment. Through initiatives that have been initiated by CEDA/DBSA, it is possible to realise a dream of owning a business. However, this must be coupled with dedication, commitment and hard work in order to succeed. CEDA will provide you with funding and support, and you need to be self-disciplined and persevere to be successful.

13. As Dinesh Paliwal, the CEO of Harman International Industries, once said "Collaboration is a key part of the success of any organization, executed through a clearly defined vision and mission and based on transparency and constant communication." This is clearly illustrated through the relationship established between CEDA and DBSA; this partnership will go a long way in realising the main objective of this Region of achieving economic development, peace and security, growth, poverty eradication and supporting the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration. We applaud CEDA and DBSA for their continued efforts in this regard.
14. Let me take this opportunity to commend the University Challenge Secretariat for once again hosting a successful competition that I was personally following throughout the year in the social and print media. I wish to acknowledge and commend in a special way the panel of judges that was faced with the mammoth task of assessing proposals from equally deserving candidates to the Top 10.

15. **Director of Ceremonies,** as I conclude, I wish to urge potential candidates for next year's Challenge to start their preparations now. I encourage you to learn from your peers and make a conscious decision to produce business proposals that will separate you from the rest and position you to grab the grand prize. The competition has been largely dominated by males, hence, I urge females to participate in large numbers to take advantage of the added benefits.
16. **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,** with those few remarks, I congratulate all the Finalists and in particular, the one who will emerge the winner of the 2019 CEDA/DBSA University Challenge. I look forward to a bigger and better competition in 2020.
17. I thank you all.

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