

Transcript of speech by

His Excellency Mr Festus G. Mogae

President of the Republic of Botswana

At the official opening of Limkokwing University Botswana, 14 May 2007, Fairgrounds Mall, Gaborone

The Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Patrick Balopi, Honourable Minister of Education, Mr Jacob Nkate, Other Honourable Ministers here present, Your Excellency Yahaya Abdul Jabar, High Commissioner of Malaysia, Your Excellencies, Heads of the Diplomatic Corps and international organizations, Honourable Members of Parliament here present, Chairman of the Tertiary Education Council, Mr Swartland, Mr Omar bin Abdul Rahman, Representative of the Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia, Tan Sri Dato' Professor Dr Lim Kok Wing, President of Limkokwing University, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure for me to join you all this morning, for this official launch of the Botswana branch of the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. We are gathered today not only to open this new institution's temporary campus, but are also, I believe, opening a new and exciting chapter in the development of tertiary education in our country.

Until recently, the burden of providing tertiary education opportunities has rested almost solely on the shoulders of the Government. This is a responsibility that we can and shall continue to undertake. But, in car-

rying this burden, we intend to seek enhanced partnership with private-sector institutions such as Limkokwing.

“The energetic expansionary activities of the University continue to bring global respect and recognition to Malaysia for the high standards of its education.

In establishing Gaborone as a regional hub for education, the University will merge Asian, Western and African cultural diversity to contribute towards the creation of a new generation of African graduates with a global mindset. This is significant, because the development of human capital that is skilled, creative and knowledgeable remains the single most critical building block for progress.”

YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi

Prime Minister, Malaysia

6 December 2006

Heretofore, the Government has been providing locally based tertiary education opportunities through Colleges of Education, Institutes of Health, Sciences, that is, the Institute of Health Sciences, the Botswana College of Agriculture, the Botswana Accountancy College, and, of course, the University of Botswana. Altogether, over the past year, a total of 26,553 students were thus placed in local public institutions, while another 7,500 were placed in institutions outside Botswana.



Since 1998 students from Botswana have been studying at the Limkokwing University. Many are now working in their countries using their skills and knowledge to venture into new knowledge-intensive industries.

These numbers will continue to expand. We shall, for example, soon be opening a Technical College in Francistown, which will enrol another 1,200 students and student teachers. Plans are also under way to establish two Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, one at Oodi and another at Selibe-Phikwe, that together will enrol an additional 3,600 students.

We are also currently progressing – albeit too slowly for my satisfaction – with the establishment of our second university at Palapye. The Botswana International University of Science and Technology will ultimately cater for 10,000 students at any one time and I am delighted to hear from Professor Lim Kok Wing that this institution will be working collaboratively with the Botswana International University of Science and Technology, as well as the University of Botswana. For its part, our existing University of Botswana has been expanded and is now meeting the needs of 15,000 students.

Taken together, the above efforts are helping us to move towards the still draft Tertiary Education Policy's commitment to raise access to tertiary education from the current 7%, among the age group of 18 to 24 to at least 17% by 2016. This goal, once obtained, will place our country on par with other leading middle income countries around the world.

Notwithstanding its own efforts, the Government, as I have said, is looking for partners. Simply put, with its many other commitments, the public sector is no longer in a position to provide all the tertiary education opportunities that will be sought in the coming years. It is for this

reason that, in education as elsewhere, we have committed ourselves to the Public Private Partnership approach, which is already being incorpo-

“I congratulate Limkokwing on the establishment of its new campus in Gaborone, Botswana which makes it Africa's first university to be internationally benchmarked for worldwide recognition.

Limkokwing University continues to raise the benchmark of Malaysian education to higher levels using its philosophy of merging the best of East and West to connect with academia, industry, governments and young people the world over.

I fully subscribe to this philosophy in the belief that it will help to create a new generation of global graduates, skilled, knowledgeable and culture-sensitive that will work towards the creation of a more peaceful and safer world.”

YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak
Deputy Prime Minister, Malaysia
20 November 2006

rated into the second university project.

The forthcoming Tertiary Education Policy also recognises that development of tertiary education in this country should be maximized through the combined efforts of public and private institutions.

For some time now, it has been our policy to welcome private-sector initiatives in the provision of educational opportunities. Thus the Ministry

of Education has, over the years, welcomed the establishment of private schools at the pre-school, primary, and secondary levels.

More recently, a total of five private tertiary institutions have been registered by the Tertiary Education Council, in the process creating over 5,125 additional places for students to study in Botswana.

It was in this context that last year the Ministry, working closely with the Tertiary Education Council and the private tertiary institutions themselves, adopted procedures, and set conditions for the sponsoring of students at local private tertiary education institutions.

The development of the local private tertiary education sub-sector is of great strategic importance for Botswana given that the cost of external placement, while desirable for the diversity of thinking that it can provide, is very expensive. Presently, we spend some 280 million pula annually to place students in South Africa alone.

By sponsoring students to study in qualified local private education institutions, such as Limkokwing, whose standards have in each case been vetted by the Tertiary Education Council, we are not only helping develop local tertiary institutions but also increasing access to tertiary education for Botswana. Undoubtedly, it is both financially and socially advantageous to have students, especially at under-graduate level, undertake their studies locally.

There are additional advantages to increasing the placement of students in qualified local private institutions. They include the growth and fur-



The establishment of the Limkokwing University in Botswana has met with great enthusiasm from young Batswana eager to acquire digital skills in new media and knowledge that will get them into exciting 21st century careers.

ther improvement in the quality of the institutions themselves, as well as the creation of domestic employment opportunities in what is internationally recognized as a labour-intensive industry. That is education.

In the process, we are also making significant savings, that can be used to finance other developments in the country.

It is virtually impossible to overstate the importance of quality tertiary education as a prerequisite for any country's ability to successfully compete in today's increasingly knowledge-based global economy. Private providers must therefore always be expected to strictly adhere to truly world-class standards. It was for this reason that, in 1999, the Government established the Tertiary Education Council. Through the Council, all tertiary institutions, that is to say, both public and private colleges, are required to be registered and have all their programmes accredited.

This is, incidentally, done separately from the efforts of the Botswana Training Authority, which is responsible for and empowered to overseeing the quality of advanced vocational training throughout the country.

This country's ongoing initiatives in tertiary education are part of a broader commitment to develop the human and material infrastructure that will enable our country to progress as a knowledge-based economy. While the introduction of new technologies is a key factor in our ability to realize this vision, it will be even more crucial for us to train our youth to be creative, as well as highly skilled workers; and this is what Professor Lim Kok Wing assured me he intends to do, as he has just demonstrated.

Recent studies have tended to describe the workers most in-demand in today's global economy as those individuals who have developed an ability to be flexible, yet work as a team. They ought to be versatile, innovative and creative, as well as disciplined and highly skilled.

These are the qualities that we understand are being instilled in the future graduates of this institution. Let me therefore take this opportunity to congratulate the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology on the establishment of a campus here in Gaborone, Botswana.

I am, indeed, greatly encouraged by Limkokwing's investment in Botswana. The pace that you have been establishing yourselves in recent months is a reminder to all of us of the level of efficiency that we must reach if we are to keep up in this fast-moving world.

For its part, the Government will remain supportive in ensuring that this University and others are given the opportunity to help transform Botswana into an educational hub for our region and our continent.

I have already heard good things about Limkokwing, both here and elsewhere. This institution brings with it an international reputation for being practical trendsetters. We have seen this from the positive example being set by some of the University's local alumni who are already making their contributions to our society. We are, therefore, confident of Limkokwing's continued ability to empower our youths in this new setting.

It is my further understanding that, as a global University, Limkokwing has the capacity to tap into the intellectual trends, as well as resources,

“I am certain that, by choosing Tan Sri Lim to help develop Botswana as a hub for education for Africa and beyond, the Government of Botswana has chosen well. He and his campus in Malaysia have for years been at the forefront of promoting Malaysia as a regional centre of excellence for higher education.”

YB Dato Mustapa bin Mohamed

Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia

extracted from his speech for the official opening of Limkokwing University Botswana

14 May 2007

on three continents.

To those of you who have been selected to build your skills in this University, I would, therefore, advise you to avail yourselves to its opportunities to the fullest.

I have heard it said that ordinary leaders direct, great leaders instruct, but the greatest of leaders inspire. We have just seen an example of how that is done. Our young people as we came through here are so inspired. It is impressive. Well, it is said that words are like leaves and where they are most abundant little fruits of substance reside. Therefore, let me say no more and conclude by declaring this temporary campus of the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Botswana officially open.

I thank you all.