



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

100

• 20TH OCTOBER 2022 •

Years

**Celebrating
the Life & Legacy**
OF THE FIRST FEMALE
**Minister of Foreign
Affairs of the**
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

1984 - 1994

#Flyingtheflag 



100 Years

• 20TH OCTOBER 2022 •

DR. GAOSITWE KEAGAKWA TIBE
CHIEPE



Our foreign policy depends on our domestic policy. Our domestic policy is one of peace, harmony, development, resolution of conflicts by peaceful means and non-interference in other countries affairs ... We carry that into Africa and the rest of the world ... (Moreover), to develop we have to be free and this is why we have been very active in assisting, or supporting all those who needed freedom. Self-determination is very important. Dr Chiepe, Extract from interview in *The Courier* No 121 March-April 1990.

This booklet celebrates the life and legacy of Dr. Chiepe, Botswana's first female Foreign Affairs Minister. We honour her selfless spirit of service to the country and Botswana. Dr. Chiepe, you are an exemplary leader, citizen and patriot.

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A LIFE OF SERVICE IN PICTURES

Her Story

CELEBRATING DR. GAOSITWE KEAGAKWA TIBE CHIEPE

Nation Builder, Inspirational Leader, Role Model, A Woman of Valour ...

EARLY YEARS AND ACADEMIC JOURNEY

Dr. Gaositwe Keagakwa Tibe Chiepe was born on 20th October 1922 in Serowe in the then British Protectorate of Bechuanaland. Her academic journey started in Serowe where she attended primary school, and thereafter she continued her secondary education at Tiger Kloof Educational Institute in South Africa. Subsequently, she remained in South Africa for her tertiary education where she was enrolled at Fort Hare University. At Fort Hare she was the first black African female to graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. An astute scholar, she went on to complete her graduate studies at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom where she obtained a Master's degree.

SERVANT LEADER FOR FATSHE LENO LA RONA

Dr. Chiepe's professional journey commenced with the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government with the Department of Education, as an Education Officer. At the time, she was one of the only two Africans appointed to an administrative position by the colonial government. As a committed and hard-working civil servant, she rose up the ranks at the Department of Education to the level of Director of Education.

In the new dawn of a nascent Botswana Republic, in 1970, Dr. Chiepe was appointed as the Republic's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. In addition to serving in the United Kingdom, she was also concurrently accredited to several countries including Nigeria, France, Denmark, Belgium and Sweden. In her capacity as one of Botswana's leading diplomats, Dr. Chiepe was instrumental

in advancing Botswana's national interests at the bilateral, regional and multilateral platforms including actively participating in negotiations with the European Economic Community (EEC) for market access for Botswana products such as export of Botswana beef to the European market.

As a national leader of many firsts, Dr. Chiepe was appointed as Botswana's first female Cabinet Minister in 1974, serving as the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources. She also held the portfolio of Minister of Trade and Industry. At the Foreign Ministry, she was appointed as the Ministry's first female Minister from 1984-1994. In this capacity, Dr. Chiepe is celebrated for the plethora of contributions she made in spearheading a foreign policy agenda that among others, promoted democracy; good governance; respect for the rule of law and human rights; as well as, advocated for the protection of Botswana's national territory, institutions, and citizens. Moreover, as Foreign Minister, she is remembered for key roles she played such as being Botswana's voice that challenged the apartheid regime in South Africa, and called for the right to self-determination of peoples and independence.

NATIONAL ICON – LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

In addition to being celebrated as a national icon for her life of service to Botswana and fellow country women and men, Dr. Chiepe has also been recognised globally for her work. She is a recipient of national Honours



from the United Kingdom and Botswana, and was named Chief Councillor of the Royal Order of King Sobhuza II (Eswatini). She was also awarded the Presidential Order of Merit and the Presidential Order of Meritorious Service. Other recognitions include honorary degrees from the Universities of Bristol, DePaul, Chicago, and Fort Hare. Further, she has received awards which include the Commander of Royal Order of Polar Star from the King of Sweden, and Membership with the Order of the British Empire.

BOTSWANA'S PRICELESS DIAMOND

For Botswana, Dr. Chiepe is an invaluable national treasure. She is an exemplary citizen and leader whose lived experiences vividly depict her contributions towards the country's nation-building and national development agenda. In marking her centenary celebration, her life story presents Botswana at large, lifelong lessons on service and love for country. Her legacy is one to be much appreciated and celebrated. **Happy 100th Birthday.**

A JOURNEY OF MILESTONES - HIGHLIGHTS OF

Dr. Chiepe

WHILE SERVING AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



- First Lady Head of Botswana Mission in the country's diplomatic history.
- First Lady Foreign Minister of Botswana.
- Strong Advocate for Botswana's foreign policy positions in the global arena including marketing the country as a tourist and investment destination and projecting a positive national image.
- Actively contributed to Southern Africa's liberation struggle by among others, giving voice to Botswana's principled and resolute position against colonialism and apartheid. Accordingly, when the apartheid regime sought to sign non-aggression pacts with neighbouring countries to ensure that those that it deemed as "terrorists" would not enter South Africa, Dr. Chiepe stressed that Botswana was not at war with apartheid South Africa to warrant a non-aggression pact between the two countries.



On multilateral platforms such as at the United Nations meetings, she condemned the apartheid regime earning Botswana global and moral support for her principled position on self-determination, democracy, and human freedoms.



She also advanced the country's economic diplomacy agenda as she explored alternate routes for Botswana beef exports when apartheid South Africa faced the threat of international sanctions.

To buttress some of Dr. Chiepe's achievements noted above, former Senior Diplomats shared the following messages and poignant points ...



... How I wish I could sing. I wish I would join Josh Groban in his melodious voice thus: You raised me up to walk on stormy seas; I am strong when I am on your shoulders; you raised me up to more than I can be.

Yes dear mother, you did. And I am happy to tell it to you, in your living years. How time moves as we celebrate your centenary. I can't but go down memory lane. To that epic period when you marshalled us, your troops, in the war against the heinous apartheid regime, that had unleashed its "total onslaught" on Botswana and the whole of Southern Africa. I fondly recall how you stoically looked Pik Botha and Adriaan Vlok in the eye and boldly told them that Botswana would not be intimidated into bowing down to apartheid, which had been universally declared a crime against humanity.

You told them that truth to their faces, in Pretoria for that matter. In your usual calm but firm voice. We were so proud to be part of your team. The rest is history. Young as I was at the time ... I look back to that era with nostalgia. You indeed contributed immensely towards the peace and security that we currently enjoy, and which unfortunately at times take for granted. I take this opportunity to wish you a happy 100th birthday. I pray the loving God continues to favour you with His grace and more happy returns.

Your son, Ben Mothalamme



Former Botswana High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mr. Samuel Mpuchane, who worked with Dr. Chiepe both at the Foreign Ministry as well as other Government Ministries, described Dr. Chiepe as a calm, seasoned diplomat who played an instrumental role in developing and telling Botswana's positive story.



He recalled that in addition to advocating for an end to the South African apartheid regime; Dr. Chiepe displayed the art of diplomacy and negotiations during her tenure as the Minister of Mineral Resources when she negotiated for the ownership of Jwaneng Mine and the transformation of Jwaneng into a township. As underscored by Rre Mpuchane, through these efforts it was evident that Dr. Chiepe was committed to contributing towards the building of the country and advancing the national development agenda. Through her dedicated efforts she also negotiated and marketed Botswana diamonds for development and spearheaded the setting up of structures such as Orapa House. In concluding on his recollections of Dr. Chiepe's contributions; Rre Mpuchane, concludes that Dr. Chiepe can be celebrated as a humble woman of excellence, an influential leader who was unreservedly dedicated to serving her country - a true patriot indeed.

TRIBUTES TO DR. CHIEPE FROM OFFICERS WHO SERVED WITH HER AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

*Celebrating a consummate diplomat and
champion of Botswana's foreign policy*



Mr. John-Thomas Dipowe, Permanent Secretary -
Government Communications and Information
Systems

*I had the privilege of working closely
with Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe from 1990 to 1992 when
she was the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I travelled
extensively with Dr. Chiepe as her protocol officer
and speechwriter. There were no Private Secretaries to
Honourable Ministers then.*

*Dr. Chiepe is a visionary leader and a perfectionist. She pays attention to detail
and I learned a lot from her when I was a junior officer at the C3 level. It was indeed an
honour for me to serve under such an astute leader, mentor, and mother whose contribution
to the development of this country and the Liberation of Southern Africa is second to none.
She had to travel across the globe in pursuit of our foreign policy interests and the region
at large. She used to say, **and I quote; "I had breakfast in London, lunch in Brussels,
and dinner in Stockholm"** End quote. This illustrates how busy she was at that time
promoting Botswana's strategic interests abroad. The African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) and
the European Union partnership was very important to Africa and other regions hence our
full participation at the organization's meetings.*

*I still have vivid memories of her contribution to debates at the Commonwealth
and the United Nations General Assembly. She used to repeatedly emphasise at these
forums that it is better to jaw-jaw than to go to war. This is one of her trademarks as an
elder statesperson in this country. The promotion of peace and security is the hallmark of
her career as a Chief Diplomat. One of the things that Dr. Chiepe took exception to, was for
women to be treated with kids' gloves because she strongly believes that they are equally
capable if not better than men in contributing to the development of this country.*

*To this end, as Dr. Chiepe celebrates her 100th Birthday, I am very proud of her
achievements and unwavering commitment to the development of the nation-state called
Botswana. She is one of the greatest patriots who has served this country with diligence,
honour, and distinction. **Happy 100 years** of a good life Dr. Chiepe! You are a source of
inspiration to humanity.*



H.E. Mr. Mustaq Moorad, Ambassador of the Republic
of Botswana to France and Permanent Delegate
to UNESCO

*I am honoured to share a couple of
anecdotes of serving the former Minister of External
Affairs Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe.*

*In 1988 during the hay days of apartheid, I recall
being on the Honourable Minister's Delegation that flew to Pretoria to meet with the then
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pik Botha. We flew into Wonderboom airport and then transferred
to the Union Buildings. Upon entering the meeting room, we were confronted with an exhibition
of a picture which ran the whole 3-metre wall of an imaginary border fence between our
countries, and on the floor were several bombs, land mines, guns, etc.*

*Dr. Chiepe immediately told us to ignore this and go outside. The South African
Foreign Minister who was late, came outside to escort us into the meeting. He then wanted
to show us the exhibition to which Dr. Chiepe replied that had she known they were going to
exhibit these so-called weapons of war she could have arranged to display photographs of
our people and property that were victims of South African atrocities committed on our soil.
(Shortly after her comments) we were immediately escorted into the meeting. It was clear that
Dr Chiepe could not be intimidated.*

*In addition, I also had the honour to accompany the Hon. Minister as the Special
Envoy of the President, His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, on a visit to several European
capitals and Japan to announce the formation of the Global Coalition for Africa (GCS) and to
seek their support. We were well received and they did support the GCS financially.*

*Further, I accompanied Dr. Chiepe several times to Addis Ababa to attend the
Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers meetings. We always stayed at*



*the Ghion hotel where she wanted to be briefed every morning before we left for the meetings. At that time, we were
negotiating the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The Delegation was composed of senior officials
from the Ministry of Finance and Development and Planning and our Ambassador in Lusaka who covered the OAU. On
one occasion while in Addis, the Honourable Dr. Chiepe invited Batswana who were studying to be pilots at the Ethiopian
Airways School for dinner. There was a curfew and we had to arrange a special escort. You could hear gunfire outside the
capital as the so-called rebels were entering the city to overthrow the Mengistu regime. **Happy 100 years Dr. Chiepe!***



Honourable Dr. Chiepe

A LIFE OF SERVICE

in pictures

Botswana's celebrated pioneer female diplomat



**Ambassador John Max G. Moreti,
Clerk to Cabinet**

Achieving 100 years of a life well-earned and lived is uncommon to humankind, especially given the many challenges of modern times. Only special individuals like Dr. Chiepe can achieve this very significant milestone.

I was privileged to work for Dr. Chiepe in my very early years as a young and unpolished foreign affairs officer and benefitted immensely from her guidance, encouragement, and steadfast leadership. She is not only knowledgeable, sharp, and witty, but oozes authority and commands respect from all she has interacted with in her long and distinguished career.

In Dr. Chiepe, we have had and continue to have a wise leader, parent, principal, and mentor whose legacy will not have enough pages in our history books for a befitting celebration. Indeed, the Botswana we have today would not have been possible without the hard work and sacrifices made by trailblazers like Dr. Chiepe.

Happy Centennial Birthday achievement to our Honourable Chiepe. You are one of God's chosen few and you will continue to be the benchmark for an enduring and fulfilled life, for consummate but effective diplomacy, as well as for effectiveness and excellence in service to our beloved Botswana and the continent.

May you continue to be abundantly blessed!



**Mr. Tebelelo Alfred Boang,
Director - Department of Europe
and Americas**

I joined the Department of External Affairs in 1991, alongside a group of seven. At that time, we were well aware of how privileged, in addition to the excellent Executive leadership, to have a Minister of Dr. Chiepe's calibre, pedigree, and experience at the helm. That awareness also brought with it anxiety in any novice; on whether they will be up to the task and expectations.

To my and fellow novices' utter and pleasant surprise, our first encounter with Dr. Chiepe was not only sobering but became the foundation for the "successful" careers we have had as professionals.

She, in a straightforward manner, extolled us to avoid any penchant for being "complicated and sophisticated." In paraphrase of her words, the Honourable Minister advised us to follow one simple but productive rule: "to give nothing else but the very best of ourselves in the service of the Republic and People of Botswana." This advice still holds true in every endeavour in that regard. Rea leboga Motsadi. A Happy 100th Anniversary to you Mma!



**Mrs. Masego Gabang, Executive Secretary - Public Diplomacy,
Research and Policy Analysis**

I worked with Dr. Chiepe as a Personal Assistant (1989-1990) immediately after joining the Department of External Affairs which was under the Office of the President.

It was so enjoyable to work with an honourable and loving lady with good leadership skills. I remember one particular statement that she made during a staff meeting which left an indelible mark on me. She stated that "irrespective of one's position one could be guided by anybody... Even as a Minister you may still need guidance and you stand to learn from others, including junior officers. That had a profound impact on me, it was truly liberating. Happy 100 years to you Dr. Chiepe!



Mrs. Phildah Mmapula Moribame, Dr. Chiepe's former Senior Personal Secretary

Let me join fellow citizens in wishing Dr. Gaositwe Keagakwa Tibe Chiepe a fantastic day as she celebrates 100 years.

Turning 100 years old is a huge milestone as not everyone will live to reach that age. You are indeed very blessed! A Modimo a nne a go okeletse masego le matlhogonolo (May God continue to bless you abundantly).

I was a Senior Personal Secretary to Mma Chiepe in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the then Department of External Affairs. I worked with her for roughly 5 years.

I still have fond memories of her. She was a perfectionist who was very particular about the way she wanted things done. Sometimes she would remind me "Mma Moribame, kana I am a very particular woman, ênê wena o a nkitse tota" (and you know me very well).

She did not permit anyone to give me any work and expected me to only perform duties that she had assigned me, and senior management knew this very well.

I remember travelling with her to the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where we would always have breakfast together at the Hotel. I remember she used to love Chinese food and would occasionally go out to eat at Chinese restaurants with other members of our delegation.

Such a wonderful woman to work with ... she was more than just my boss but someone whom I could discuss personal matters with in confidence. Mma Chiepe ene ele motsadi wame tota (Mma Chiepe was truly my mother).

I remember one day just out of the blue she asked me "Mma Moribame, a ko o mpohelele, ke ipotsa gore o kopane jang le Rre Moribame ke lebile gore o tswa kgakala ko Molalatau wena o tswa ko Ramotswa. (Mrs. Moribame, I am curious to know exactly how you met with Mr. Moribame, considering that he hails from as far away as Molalatau and you are from Ramotswa).

*I told her that we met at St. Joseph's College, and that was the end of the conversation. I had satisfied her curiosity. Wishing you a **Blessed Birthday** and many more to come.*



Rre Enoch Mogatusi Lebekwe, Dr. Chiepe's former Chauffeur

Ke berekile le Dr. Chiepe go feta dingwaga di le tharo. E ne ele motho yo o neng a ntshiametse le nna ke mo siametse. Ke ne ke mo rata le ene a nthata. Ke ne ke seke ke mo diegela gope, ba rotlhe re ne re tlotla nako. Ga re ne re dumalane ka nako epe fela ya go simolola mosepele, e ne e ka nna ya bothano mo mosong re ya Serowe kapa kae fela, re ne re emelela ka yone nako eo re tsamaya. Re ne re ratana thata ka lone lebaka leo.

Ga gona nako e a kileng a nthaya a re ke eng ga o dira jaana kgotsa jaana. Re berekile mmogo monate thata eseng go le go nyennyane.

Ga ke bolo go kgaogana le ene mme, nka itumela thata ga nka mmona. Ke a itumela go bo gona le mongwe o nkgakologelwang gore ke berekile le mogaka yo o tshwanang le Mma Chiepe.

Masego le matlhogonolo a dingwaga tse di lekgolo motsadi wame.

(Translation) I worked with Dr. Chiepe for more than three years. She was a delight to work with and was very good to me. She loved me and the feeling was mutual. We respected time and I never kept her waiting. Whenever we agreed on a departure time, it could be 5am travelling to Serowe or elsewhere, both of us would always and without fail, be punctual. We got on exceptionally well because of that attribute.

Never once did she ever reprimand me, not for anything whatsoever.

*It's a long time since I last saw her and nothing will please me more than seeing her one more time. I am extremely happy to be remembered to have worked with a remarkable icon like Dr. Chiepe. **Happy 100th Birthday.***



We salute you

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Department of Public Diplomacy, Research and Policy Analysis
Private Bag 0368

📍 Gaborone, Botswana
✉️ miacpdrrpa@gov.bw
☎️ +2673600755, 3699028, 3699027

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