



**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**OPENING REMARKS  
FOR**

**AMBASSADOR THUSO G. RAMODIMOOSI**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE BOTSWANA-LESOTHO  
BI-NATIONIONAL COMMISSION**

**DATE: 15 June 2025**

**VENUE: GABORONE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE,  
GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**TIME: 0900 HOURS**



- **Ambassador Thabang Lekhela, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Co-Chair of the Senior Officials Meeting, and Head of Delegation of the Lesotho Senior Officials Delegation;**
- **Your Excellencies, High Commissioners of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of Botswana;**
- **Permanent Secretaries; Service Chiefs; and Senior Government Officials;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

A very good morning to you all.

1. It is both an honour and a profound privilege to welcome you to the inaugural Session of the Senior Officials of the Botswana-Lesotho Bi-National Commission (BNC).
2. At the outset, allow me to underscore the historic significance of this occasion. Today marks a defining milestone in the relations between our two countries as we elevate our longstanding cooperation from the Joint Commission on Technical and Economic Cooperation (JCTEC) to a fully-fledged Bi-National Commission.

3. This transition is far more than an institutional upgrade; it is a strategic affirmation of the enduring friendship the Republic of Botswana and the Kingdom of Lesotho, and a testament to our shared commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation at the highest political level.
4. Our two nations share a rich heritage rooted in deep historical, cultural, and linguistic affinities within the Tswana-Sotho family. For generations, our peoples have maintained close bonds through kinship, migration, labour, education, marriage, and social interactions. These enduring connections have nurtured mutual understanding and trust, providing a firm foundation upon which we build this new chapter of cooperation.
5. I therefore consider it a distinct privilege to witness and participate in this important moment, as our partnership assumes a more strategic and structured character under the stewardship of our Heads of State and Government.
6. This development reflects our shared values of solidarity, mutual respect, and good neighbourliness. More importantly, it positions our relationship to deliver tangible benefits for our citizens through enhanced economic cooperation, greater policy coordination, and deeper regional integration.
7. **Co-Chair, Distinguished Delegates**, we convene at a time when the international landscape presents both challenges and

opportunities. The global economy continues to grapple with trade uncertainties, external economic shocks, climate-related pressures, and persistent public health crises. These realities compel us to strengthen partnerships that enhance resilience and safeguard our collective prosperity.

8. Indeed, during the signing of the Agreement establishing this Bi-National Commission in Maseru in July 2025, the President of the Republic of Botswana, Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, judiciously observed that the challenges confronting our nations call for closer collaboration, strengthened solidarity, and innovative approaches. His remarks remain as relevant today as they were then.
9. It is in this spirit that Botswana embraces this new chapter of engagement with the Kingdom of Lesotho. Together, we seek to build resilient economies, expand market access, promote value addition, and create sustainable solutions for our citizens. We are equally committed to advancing regional integration through the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the understanding that our prosperity is inextricably linked to the prosperity of our region.
10. Co-Chair, I am confident that this BNC will serve as a powerful vehicle for translating our shared aspirations into practical outcomes and measurable progress. In this regard, allow me to highlight several

strategic areas of cooperation that will guide our deliberations and shape our collective agenda:

- i. On **agriculture and livestock development**, we seek to strengthen collaboration between the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), the Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI), and their counterparts in Lesotho, to promote value-added meat processing, enhance animal health, and contribute to regional food security;
- ii. Under the pillar of **water and energy security**, considerable opportunities exist to deepen cooperation in the sustainable management of water resources, harness Lesotho's hydropower potential, and support climate-resilient development.
- iii. We shall also explore practical measures to facilitate **commerce**, remove barriers to trade, stimulate industrialisation, and unlock new investment opportunities for the private sector;
- iv. On **natural resource management**, we aim exchange technical expertise and best practices to promote responsible resource governance, mineral beneficiation, and sustainable development;
- v. Furthermore, there remains a critical task before us to deepen cooperation in the areas of **education, gender, youth empowerment, tourism, sports, culture, heritage, and creative industries** to strengthen people-to-people linkages,

expand opportunities for skills transfer and innovation, and foster institutional partnerships that empower future generations;

vi. Last but certainly not least, strengthened **defence and security** cooperation will contribute significantly to the maintenance of regional peace, stability, and collective security.

11. **Co-Chair, Distinguished Delegates,** let me conclude by emphasising that this inaugural Session offers a strategic opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to economic and technical cooperation.

12. Let us approach our deliberations with a spirit of partnership, openness, and shared purpose. Let us identify practical and innovative initiatives that advance our national development priorities while strengthening the bonds between our two countries. Let us build a resilient, prosperous, and mutually beneficial partnership for the peoples of both the Republic of Botswana and the Kingdom of Lesotho.

13. I wish you all productive deliberations and a successful Botswana-Lesotho Inaugural Bi-National Commission.

14. Thank you for your attention.

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