

BOTSWANA FREEDOM DAY

28 SEPTEMBER 2007

THE REPUBLIC KEY NOTE ADDRESS AT THE CELEBRATION OF BOTSWANA 41ST
ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE AT NORTHAM PLATINUM MINES. THABAZIMBI

The honourable. Assistant Minister of Labour
The Constulate General Ms. AM Matsheka and the vices
The honourable. Speaker of Thabazimbi Municipality Cllr. Evodia Hlalele
Honourable. Councilors
Management of Northam Platinum
Batswana ba ba nang le rona ka kwano
Ladies and Gentlemen:

PULA!!!

It is an honour for us to be participating at this august occasion of the celebration of the 41st Anniversary of the republic of Botswana's independence. As Thabazimbi Municipality we feel very honored to be joining Batswana in the celebration of the oldest democracy in Africa.

Batswana encountered encroachment by the Zulus in the 1820's and boers in 1870 respectively that threatened the peace in the region.
The country was declared a British protectorate in 1885 and later gained self governance in 1965 and finally full independence on the 30th September 1966. We wish them a peaceful celebration at the city of Gaborone National stadium and all other parts where celebrations will take place.

With the unemployment rate standing at 23% and 80% literacy rate Botswana remains one of the countries that will continue to supply South Africa with the labour force for certain specialized skills for some time

Still as the largest exporter of diamonds in the world Botswana remains one of the most stable economy in the region.

We are proud to welcome the peaceful people of Botswana as role players in our economy. During my time as a mine worker for 16years I had the opportunity to work side by side with Batswana and also represented them as a trade unionist through the NUM structures.

It is worth noting the role played by Batswana in our struggle against apartheid. During this time the country origin was never significant but together we fought against the evil apartheid systems in strikes and mass boycotts as Africans with one goal in mind that of the liberation of the African people.

This has also transpired within the borders of Botswana when the country changed its policies to accommodate freedom fighters from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Our cadres were housed at camps such as Dukwe where many refugees of 1976 were secured.

In between this time the country endured several brutal military attacks by the South Africans apartheid regime, but the undying spirit of support to our people propelled Batswana to continue support for our people

South Africans still find it easy to travel to Botswana because the country remains the most safest and friendliest in the region.

And due to the co-operation between the two counties we believe that the small communities such as Thabazimbi will begin to benefit especially through the twinning agreement we have with the Gaborone City Council

We wish Batswana a continuous peace and stability.

KE A LEBOGA