



**STATE DINNER**

**HOSTED BY**

**HE LIEUTENANT GENERAL SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**GABORONE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (GICC)**

**MONDAY 08 AUGUST 2011**

**18 30 HRS**

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**SPEECH**

**FOR**

**DR THE HON NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM, GCSK, FRCP  
PRIME MINISTER**

**Your Excellency, Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana,**

**Your Honour, Lieutenant General Merafe, Vice President,  
Distinguished Guests,**

**It is an honour for me and members of my delegation to be with you in Gaborone this evening. Since our arrival in this beautiful country, we have been made to feel at home through the warm and fraternal hospitality so spontaneously extended to us. I would like to thank you and to convey to you and to the people of Botswana the cordial greetings of the people of Mauritius.**

**Excellency,**

**You have spoken so eloquently of our friendship, of the values that Mauritius and Botswana share, of our hopes and ambitions for the Continent including the immense potential for collaboration between our two countries and within the region. We also share a common vision: To take our countries to new heights of development and achieve the status of a developed country.**

**It is no coincidence that my first State Visit on the African Continent since my re-election, is to Botswana – A country admired the world over for its impressive record of economic growth and development and good governance. At the international level, both Botswana and Mauritius are considered African success stories. We remain guided by the rule of law, by our commitment to general principles of good governance such as the upholding of human rights, the conduct of free and fair elections, the independence of our institutions and adherence to rigorous standards of transparency, particularly as regards the financial sector.**

**Our prudent and responsible approach to fiscal management is also widely acknowledged. High on our agenda is the welfare of our people, improving their quality of life by empowering them, investing massively in human capital alongside the development and the upgrading of physical and social infrastructure.**

During the last four decades, Mauritius and Botswana have come a long way despite the tyranny of our geography.

Botswana is land locked !While,  
Mauritius is water locked !

But Mauritius is 285 times smaller than Botswana. I would not be surprised to learn that some farmers in Botswana have farms bigger than my country! But let me add that Mauritius boasts a huge marine territory, nearly 1,000 times the size of the island.

Excellency,

Since Botswana's independence from Britain in 1966, and ours in 1968, both our countries have espoused similar growth and development strategies. The Beef Protocol for Botswana, and the Sugar Protocol for Mauritius, have played important roles in our economies. Today our countries are embarked on the further diversification of their economic bases, strengthening regional integration and adopting innovative and sustainable approaches to development.

Let me, in this context, underscore Botswana's proposed innovation hub project which is expected to place your country at the centre of innovation technology and research. We welcome this as we believe that Africa can only leap-frog development through science and the use of technology.

At the start of my third mandate as Prime Minister, in May 2010, I created a Ministry dedicated solely to Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology with a view to encouraging our students and those of the region to pursue higher learning; and secondly, to create the necessary support for our academics and researchers to improve their capability for research and innovation.

In line with our commitment to being a knowledge hub, Mauritius hosts the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre for Excellence as well as the IMF African Technical Advisory Centre (AFRITAC), both aimed at developing critical human capacity building programs.

Allow me, here, to express my Government's appreciation for the support extended by the Botswana Government for the setting-up of these Centres in Mauritius.

I would like to invite the public and private sector agencies of Botswana to take advantage of the Regional Multi-Disciplinary Centre of Excellence based in Mauritius. For our part, we look forward to the opportunities that will come forth under Botswana's innovation hub project.

Like Botswana, Mauritius is focused on results. I am therefore confident that our two countries can partner to become centres of excellence for Africa.

Excellency, under your leadership, Botswana has maintained a high level of growth with considerable investment in infrastructure, health and education. Sound economic management and human and social development are some of the remarkable areas of focus of your Government.

Just like Botswana, Mauritius has moved from being a low-income, mono-crop economy into a middle-income, diversified and competitive one. Our per capita income has increased from US \$ 640 in 1972 to US \$ 14,746 this year in terms of purchasing power parity. Last year, Professor Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winner praised Mauritius for our policies aimed at fostering, and I quote:

*“higher levels of social cohesion, welfare, and economic growth and a lower level of inequality”.*

Unquote.

But such achievements are only possible , if you have the vision and determinations as well as when the public and private sectors work in synergy.

The business delegation accompanying me includes prominent members of the private sector and I am sure they will have meaningful contacts and establish strategic partnership in areas that can be of mutual benefit to our two countries. Our business

sector not only welcomes foreign investors but is also poised to emerge as a major investor in the region. Last year, Mauritian entrepreneurs invested some US \$ 130 million in the region.

We believe that Mauritius and Botswana can capitalise on each other's strengths. We can be your investment gateway to Asia, through our ancestral links with India and China and our well-established contacts in Singapore and Malaysia. On the other hand our entrepreneurs may wish to join your business community to tap neighbouring markets. I wish to point out that Mauritius is currently engaged, with Singapore, in the development of Special Economic Zones in Congo Brazzaville. Captains of Botswana industry will be welcome to collaborate with us in this venture.

I would like to invite the private sector of Botswana, through you, Excellency, to come and discover Mauritius and particularly its vibrant and emerging economic clusters.

In Mauritius, our quest to keep on improving the business environment is never-ending. Openness, diversification and innovation are the main thrusts of our reform program to keep the Mauritian economy on the path of success and resilience.

This year's World Bank Doing Business Report ranks Mauritius 20<sup>th</sup>, out of 183 countries. Mauritius is now focused on the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of clean energy. We have received international support for our Sustainable Mauritius Project.

Excellency,

Conditions are rife for us Africans to claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as our century !!

And the way forward for Africa is Regional Integration. I recall with great pleasure my visit here, in August 2005, to attend the SADC Summit, and on which occasion I had the privilege to lay the foundation stone of the new SADC Headquarters. These regional initiatives are important building blocks for Continental Integration.

On the sub-regional front, the launching of negotiations by the Tripartite Summit (COMESA- SADC-EAC), in June this year, for the establishment of an integrated market of 26 countries with 600 million people and a combined GDP of nearly 1 trillion US \$ constitutes an important landmark in regional integration.

We fully subscribe to the agenda to focus on industrial development, infrastructure development and market integration as key priority areas that would need urgent attention with a view to leapfrogging trade and economic interaction between the business communities of our respective countries.

Excellency,

The way forward for Africa is also through political and economic stability. In this context, we welcome South-Sudan as a new independent State and as the 54<sup>th</sup> member of the African Union. At the same time, we call upon all parties in Sudan to continue their efforts to resolve the remaining issues.

Nearer to Mauritius, the situation in Madagascar remains a matter of concern. It is crucial that the roadmap proposed by the SADC mediation group and endorsed by the SADC Summit, in Johannesburg, last June, be implemented for an early return to constitutional order. We commend the efforts of SADC mediator, President Chissano but there is need for the active support of the international community to assist Madagascar in the organisation of democratic elections and the establishment of institutions to ensure the stability of the country.

We have been heartened by the significant efforts of the different parties in the Zimbabwe Government of National Unity to implement the provisions of the Global Political Agreement signed in September 2008. We also note the improved humanitarian and economic situation in the country.

**Excellency,**

**As I conclude my address, I would like to remember two men of courage and vision, Sir Seretse Khama and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, your father and mine, who paved the way for our countries to work together. Tonight, let me re-affirm my personal commitment and that of my Government to work with you and your Government to create a strong partnership between Botswana and Mauritius.**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**May I now invite you to join me in a toast to:**

- the health and well-being of His Excellency, Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama;**
- the happiness and prosperity of the people of Botswana; and to**
- the abiding friendship between Botswana and Mauritius.**

**I thank you for your attention.**

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