

FOREWORD

The ninth National Development Plan (NDP 9) marks the first major step towards integration of the long-term vision for Botswana, *Vision 2016: Towards Prosperity for All*, into the development planning process. The theme of this Plan is “*Towards Realisation of Vision 2016: Sustainable and Diversified Development through Competitiveness in Global Markets*”. This calls on every citizen to work hard to help the country forge ahead in the global village. Since Independence in 1966, real per capita GDP has grown from P1 682 to P9 788 in 2001/02. Over the same period, formal sector employment grew from 25 000 to 274 413. In addition, the nation’s infrastructure, such as roads, schools, health facilities, electricity grid, and housing, have grown sharply. Over the same period, Botswana has graduated from being one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world to a middle income country. It is crucial that this momentum is not lost. It should be maintained in order to achieve the objectives of Vision 2016.

Despite all these achievements, the nation faces major challenges, such as HIV/AIDS, as well as the need for economic diversification, public sector reforms, employment creation and poverty reduction, rural development, disaster management, development of science and technology, environment protection, human resource development, as well as continued macroeconomic stability and financial discipline. Other challenges include drought, the outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease, as well as poor

performance of export markets and a slowdown in world economic growth. The implementation of policy strategies for NDP 9, aimed at addressing these challenges, will be critical in achieving a sustainable and diversified development through competitiveness in global markets.

The country’s competitiveness can be enhanced through effective participation in regional and international trade initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of the USA, Cotonou Agreement, the Southern African Development Community Trade Protocol and the renegotiated Southern African Customs Union Agreement. The promotion of exports through institutions such as Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority and Botswana Development Corporation will also continue to be important. Government will continue to encourage citizen economic empowerment, as well as private sector participation. We should ensure that Botswana positions herself to take advantage of the opportunities that are brought about by the rapid changes in the global economic environment.

We should look forward to the next six years with great enthusiasm and confidence that all Batswana will participate actively in the development of the nation and steer the country ‘towards prosperity for all’.

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