

Tautona Times

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**Botswana deserves Kimberly
Process Secretariat**



Tautona Times

During his visit to the Molepolole Prison Farm on the 10th February 2021, His Excellency, the President Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi decried the low numbers of the COVID 19 booster shot uptake. The President reminded the nation that development projects have been put on hold because funds have been channeled towards the fight against COVID 19 and it saddened him that the uptake of the booster shot is below the expected levels.

We want to take this moment to remind the nation that COVID 19 has adversely affected the country's development plans. Development projects that Batswana have long waited for have been suspended so as to deal with COVID 19. As His Excellency pointed out some of the vaccines that have been procured will expire in April and at the rate at which the nation is taking up the booster shot it is clear that millions of Pulas will go down the drain and the impact of this will be severe for the country. Firstly, development projects have not been done and this will be a pain on those that desperately need them. Secondly money that was channeled towards saving the nation from COVID 19 will go to waste as the procured vaccines will be destroyed upon expiry. Thirdly some lives may be lost due to the fact that some people may have not received the booster shot which is needed to help them survive COVID 19. As much as taking the vaccine still remains an individual choice we urge the nation to think deeply about this and make the right choices.

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Remember to tune in to RB 1 every Monday at 0650hrs and Friday at 1710hrs for Tautona Times radio segment.



Batlhalefi David Leagajang
PRESS SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT



HE arrives in Belgium for the 6th AU-EU Summit

Week behind

(10th -18th February 2022)

President Masisi had bilateral talks with the Chancellor of Austria on the sidelines of the Summit

President Masisi being briefed by Botswana's Ambassador to Belgium and the EU, Samuel Outlule and Botswana's Ambassador to the AU Zenene Sinombe ahead of the Summit



HE briefing the media after his meeting with the Minister President of Flanders

President Masisi leverages on AU-EU Summit to canvass for Kimberly Process Secretariat

President Masisi used the opportunity presented by the AU-EU Summit held in Brussels, Belgium from the 17th to 18th February to canvass for Botswana to host the Kimberly Process Secretariat. Botswana is competing for the Secretariat with China and Austria, a European Union member state. President Masisi has strongly argued that Botswana as a leading producer of diamonds who can also be used as a reference point in term of prudent management of natural resources and clean diamond extraction qualifies more than her competitors to host this important institution.

At the Summit, Botswana advocated for more trade, cooperation and investment in Africa by the European nations in order to help develop the African continent. The Africa-EU partnership is multi sectoral and it is aimed at bringing Africa and Europe closer together in strengthening economic cooperation, sustainable development, promotion of peace and security, governance as well as the promotion of human rights.

President Masisi who joined other African leaders at this important Summit took part in some of the Round Table discussions. He participated in the Private Sector Support and Economic Integration Round Table with the Minister of Trade and Investment, Honourable Mmusi Kgafela. The Round Table sought to evoke exchanges on how to support the private sector in better leveraging research and innovation to strengthen the overall innovation ecosystem, promote cooperation between Africa and European private sectors including Micro, Small and Medium scale enterprises to embrace the green and digital transitions to enable businesses to stimulate sustainable growth, and transformation to a knowledge based and innovation led economy. . All this echoes the agenda of President Masisi's road map. Botswana used

the discussions to gauge her progress as well as identify more opportunities for cooperation and investment by the European private sector. The European Union is the biggest importer of Botswana's beef. President Masisi has expressed Botswana's interest to export lamb and chevon to the EU market. President Masisi was in France and the United Kingdom towards the end of 2021 where he held discussions with investors and wooed them to consider investing in Botswana. He presented Botswana as an ideal investment destination. He used the Round Table session at the Summit as well as other sideline meetings to continue pitching for Botswana as an investment destination of choice.

President Masisi and Dr Kwape also took part in another Round Table session on Health Systems and Vaccine Production. Africa wants to develop its own vaccines. The discussions offered Africa an opportunity to seek support from their European allies. The COVID 19 pandemic has illustrated how vulnerabilities in health systems can have profound implications for health and economic progress. This therefore means there is a need to strengthen the capacity of health care systems to enable them to respond swiftly and effectively. The Roundtable was expected to find answers to how the African Union and the European Union can better cooperate to reach the objective of ensuring that at least 60% of the African continent's population is vaccinated against COVID 19. It was also expected to find a solution on how diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccine manufacturing on the continent, including through the African Continental Free Trade Area can be achieved to support greater independence from imports. Page 4



This Roundtable came at the right time for Botswana following the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Botswana and Nantworks in December 2021. Nantworks, an American based company owned by Dr Patrick Soon-Shiong will transfer biological manufacturing technology for COVID 19 and cancer vaccines and next generation cell based immunotherapies; improve health management systems and sustainable water generation at Lobu, a government small stock farm in Tsabong and the development of the Maun Science Park.

President Masisi's participation in the Peace, Security and Governance Round Table strengthened Botswana's position in advocating for the democratization of Africa, good governance, peaceful elections as well as strong advocacy for peace and security in the continent. President Masisi has played a significant role in this respect as the chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation where he led talks on peaceful resolution of the DRC- Zambia border dispute, peace efforts in the DRC and as well as fighting the insurgency in the Carbo Delgado region of Mozambique. This session focused on key priorities such as strengthening the fight against terrorism and maritime security, AU-EU cooperation and support to enhance the capacities of African armed forces at national, regional and continental levels as well as the improvement of cooperation to foster multilateralism in peace and security areas particularly in countering terrorism, preventing and countering violent extremism and fighting organized crime with a specific focus on targeting illicit financial flows and disrupting terrorist networks.

Flanders commends Botswana's good governance, gay rights protection



The Minister President of the Government of Flanders region in Belgium, His Excellency, Mr. Jam Jambon has commended President Masisi for Botswana's good record of good governance, democracy and adherence to the rule of law which he said make a favourable environment for the two countries to work together. He also informed President Masisi that his government has taken keen interest in the LEGABIBO case, the judgment of the Court of Appeal as well as the government acceptance of the judgment and President Masisi's public commitment of government embracing of the judgment. He said this position is a step in the right direction and will strengthen Botswana's standing on human rights issues.

President Masisi reiterated his government's commitment to respect the judgment as well as to protect the rights of people in same sex relations. He said his government decided to appeal the High Court judgment so that the matter may be decided by the highest court in the land thus putting finality to the matter. He said now that the Court of Appeal has made a decision everyone is compelled to respect its decision and the matter must be out to rest. He however acknowledged the controversy surrounding the issue adding that Botswana is a very conservative society and it will take time for many people to accept people in same sex relationships. He however said it is the responsibility of government to help society accept change hence his full commitment to protecting the rights of same sex couples.

On other issues, President Masisi said being a developing economy, Botswana needs all the support she can get from the developed countries in the form of development of human capital, trade cooperation, exchange of knowledge as well as collaboration on research and development.

President Masisi expressed Botswana's desire to cooperate with the Flanders region in areas of innovation as demonstrated by the visit by the Vice Chancellors of the University of Botswana (UB), Botswana University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (BUAN) and Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) who accompanied the President during his visit to Belgium in November 2021. The three Universities signed Memorandums of Understanding with some top universities in Flanders on different areas such as innovation and research. President Masisi also appealed to Minister President Jambon to support Botswana's economy through buying her beef as well as encouraging big businesses in Flanders to consider Botswana as their investment destination outside Europe. He said Botswana and Flanders should also explore areas of cooperation in the diamond space as they both produce diamonds.

The hosting of the Kimberly Process Secretariat was also on the table. President Masisi is using every opportunity at the Summit to meet the EU leaders to canvass for support to host this important entity. His argument is that Botswana being the biggest producer of diamonds by value, having an admirable record of ethical mining of diamonds and pursuing a policy of diamonds for development it is befitting for such an institution to be hosted by a country with a sentimental attachment to diamonds like Botswana. Austria and China are contesting for the Secretariat with Botswana.

Agricultural sector to improve productivity



President Dr. Mokgweetsi E. K. Masisi says his government is committed to support the agricultural sector to enhance productivity that will positively impact on the livelihoods of Botswana through production of quality food.

Speaking at the Rationalisation Tour of the Molepolole Prison, the President said it was the ambition of Government to achieve food security, improve nutrition and create employment opportunities for the youth especially in these challenging times.

He said in order to be productive, the agricultural sector needed to diversify production. "I therefore urge you to explore various sectors of agriculture such as dairy, small stock production, horticulture, and aquaculture in all your prisons country wide" he said. The President added that the Prisons Services could play a vital role in milk production and processing to address local milk production which falls far short of the national demand.

The Prisons' commissioner Ms Dinah Marathe presented initiatives towards the implementation of the Prison Food Security Strategy where they aspire to utilise the land and other resources at their disposal to produce enough food to cater for the prisoners dietary needs and to use the excess production to contribute to the National Food Basket.

The President also took time to address the inmates at the prison. He encouraged them to serve their sentences and look forward to a fruitful life post rehabilitation. The Molepolole Prison was declared in 1983 with a capacity to incarcerate 320 prisoners.

WORDS WORTH REMEMBERING



"I'm a pragmatist, we have a long history of relations with Europe, China and the US, we will manage our relations with whoever and the guiding principle will be our interest, Africa's interest, that's what comes first."

MEK on BBC Africa Interview 18/02/22



His Excellency,
the President Dr
Mokgweetsi E. K.
Masiwiye's departure
and arrival in Brussels,
Belgium





His Excellency, the President Dr Mokgweetsi E. K. Masisi at the Molepolole Prison. The President has toured some of the Prison's projects and addressed inmates



PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Presidential Photographer, Thompson Keobaletswe explains his choice.



President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi addressing members of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry in the review of the Constitution of Botswana after their appointment. I chose this photograph from my files to illustrate the words of a novelist, Alton Fletcher, who once said "In the artistic community, your imagination is a bank of visual wealth, the seed of endless ideas that grow into art. Therefore nurture its individuality and express your imaginative power through the lens".