REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT LIEUTENANT GENERAL SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA AT THE MEETING OF THE HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL,
4 November 2010, BOIPUSO CONFERENCE CENTRE

Your Honour the Vice President,
Honourable Ministers,
BOCCIM President,
BOCCIM Council Members,
Senior Public Officers,
Members of the Private Sector,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this 29th meeting of the High Level Consultative Council.

2. Let me commend the Honorable Minister of Trade, Mme Mma Malesu and the BOCCIM President, Rre Mbaakanyi, for hosting a successful National Business Conference towards the end of September 2010.

3. I trust that the Conference Resolutions will help improve our business environment significantly to allow for meaningful private sector led growth.

4. Bagaetsho, we are challenged to devise means of relieving the government of the heavy burden of being the main driver of economic development. Our non-mining sector survived the Global Financial Crisis fairly well last year with the assistance of judicious government interventions. These are not sustainable in the long term. The private sector needs to become more productive and to this end government has launched the Economic Diversification Drive so that local productive capacity may improve and graduate to export led growth envisaged in the Botswana Excellence Strategy. The Strategy promotes private sector led growth through cross cutting reforms which the government is currently implementing.

5. The Botswana Excellence Strategy also recognizes the indispensable role played by the private sector in diversifying the economy. It is for this reason that I continue to challenge the private sector in particular to be creative and innovative in their operations.
6. I understand that an announcement was made last week in South Africa that their exchange control regime would be relaxed to allow meaningful investment in neighboring countries.

7. Following our recent visit to South Africa, and Japan more recently, and His Honour the Vice President's visit to India, there is evidence of renewed awareness of Botswana. It is for the private sector and relevant government agencies such as BEDIA to now come up with focused strategies to attract relevant investment to complement our development and diversification efforts, preferably in joint venture with citizen companies.

8. I note that we do well in identifying our constraints. Identification of constraints alone will not help us resolve our current economic challenges, but we should rather through our generative conversations come up with solutions, and act on the consensus we reach.

9. To this end, there is need for continued dialogue between the public sector, private sector and civil society. The government continues to call Pitsos to address some of our economic challenges. I trust that resolutions emanating from such meetings, are being attended to by the different ministries and their private sector counterparts.

10. In conclusion, I wish for another fruitful dialogue between the government and the private sector.