

Republic of Botswana TAUTONA TIMES vol. 9 no. 12 (9/6/2011) – The Electronic Press Circular of the Office of the President

“REAL LEADERSHIP FOR REAL DELIVERY”

For more of the latest news and information about Botswana visit: Botswana E-Portal @ www.gov.bw and Botswana Daily News Online @ www.dailynews.gov.bw

ANNOUNCEMENT ON RE-EMPLOYMENT OF ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS -

The Directorate of Public Service Management wishes to inform all former employees in the essential services who were dismissed from the Public Service, and wish to apply for employment in accordance with the statement issued by Government on the 6th June 2011, which also appeared on the Botswana Daily News of the 7th June 2011, should submit their applications to the Directorate of Public Service Management, office No. 423 fourth floor, or Fax them to 3908925. All applications will be attended to expeditiously.

CONTENT

A. The Week that Was – Government Welcomes Back Workers

B. Statements by H.H. the Vice President and Acting President @

1. The Opening of the 2011 Letsema Conference
 2. A Briefing of Members of Ntlo-ya-Dikgosi on the strike, and
 3. The Groundbreaking of Cresta Mahalapye Hotel
- and the Minister of Presidential affairs and Public Administration @**
4. The Russian National Day Reception

C. Press Releases, Notices and Forwarding

1. H.E. the President in USA
2. Cabinet Not Divided
3. Government Welcomes Back Workers
4. Government Processes Employment Applications by Essential Services Workers (3)
5. Government Assures Employee Safety
6. US First Lady Michelle Obama to visit Botswana
7. We Must All Obey the Law
8. Are BOFEPUSO Leaders Impatient?
9. Government concerned about false and alarmist reporting
10. Police Commissioner refutes false reports
11. Police Report on disturbance at Gaborone Mall
12. 16th Session of Botswana-Zambia Joint Commission
13. IMF- Botswana economy shows strong growth
14. Standard & Poors reconfirms Botswana’s “A” Credit Ratings
15. Vice President in Mahalapye

D. Also by others in the News:

1. Monitor Guest Opinion - "Khama will win"
2. Sunday Standard Guest Opinion – "The law is blind, it even eats its owner"
3. Echo Guest Opinion – "The hypocrisy of civic organisations"

A. The Week that Was – Government Welcomes Back Workers

Dear Readers – Welcome to another edition of Tautona Times, your window into issues and events involving the Botswana State Presidency.

The Strike

In the interest of bringing the strike by a segment of public service workers to a conclusion, Government this week announced that it would without condition undertake to pay 3% salary adjustment to all employees in the public service with effect from 1st September, 2011.

In a statement issued by on Monday by Permanent Secretary to the President and Secretary of Cabinet, Mr. Eric Molale, Government also made a commitment that all employees in essential services who have been dismissed for taking part in the strike after their participation was declared by the Industrial Court to be illegal and unprotected, are eligible to re-apply with immediate effect to DPSM for re-employment.

[C3]

For its part, DPSM confirmed that it would do its best to urgently process applications for re-employment. The DPSM subsequently confirmed that there has already been an overwhelming response to its invitation for reemployment by the dismissed employees, further noting that it was receiving such applications mainly from doctors, nurses and other health professionals and support staff. **[C4]** Non-essential workers who have been legally on strike are welcome to return to work by simply reporting to their duty stations.

Government's gesture to end the strike followed deliberations by Cabinet on Monday. In this respect, Government dismissed as false media reports alleging that Cabinet was divided in its desire to end the strike. **[C2]**

Government further dismissed as unfounded one local newspaper's report alleging that H.H. the Vice President, Lt. Gen. Mompoti Merafhe had warned former President Sir Ketumile Masire to reduce his involvement in Government business. The statement noted that such allegations are disservice to the high esteem and good will that exists between the current administration and both past Presidents. It also expressed its further appreciation of the efforts by made Sir Ketumile, along with Church leaders and BOCCIM, to assist in the mediation of the strike.

In light of sporadic incidents of strike related vandalism and intimidation the Office of the President joined other stakeholders in reiterating the need for Batswana to continue to respect one another and the rule of law. **[C7, 9, 10, 11][D2-3]**

H.E. the President

On Monday evening His Excellency the President, Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama departed for Washington D.C., USA, where he received the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award at the International Conservation Caucus Foundation's (ICCF) 2011 U.S. Congressional Member Dinner. **[C1]** The Award recognizes "innovative leadership in the field of conservation by a government leader." Recent awardees include UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, and Philippines President Gloria Arroyo.

While in Washington the President held discussions at the US State Department and Congress.

Today, His Excellency was New York City, where he attended the 2011 Board Meeting of Conservation International, a non-profit organization that empowers communities to preserve nature on a sustainable basis for the well-being of humanity.

The President is due to return on Saturday.

In addition to attending Monday's special Cabinet meeting, in the afternoon prior to his departure, the President joined fellow Heads of State Presidents H.E. Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia (SADC Chairperson), H.E. Rupiah Banda of Zambia and others at talks to resolve the ongoing political conflict in Madagascar, which were hosted in Gaborone this week.

After two days of deliberations there was general agreement among the 11 Malagasy political parties attending on the need to "return of the country to constitutional normalcy as a matter of urgency" through the "holding of free, fair, transparent and credible elections". The mechanism for achieving said outcome, however, remains elusive and will be the subject of further talks to be held in South Africa.

H.H. the Vice President

During His Excellency's absence H.H. the Vice President has been serving as Acting President. In this capacity on Tuesday he gave a background briefing to members of the Ntlo-ya-Dikgosi on the strike. **[B2]** The briefing was a follow-up to a meeting held last week between the President and some Dikgosi, who expressed the need for such a briefing. In this respect it was acknowledged on all sides that the briefing had been overdue.

In addition to chairing Wednesday's regular meeting of Cabinet and carrying out other duties as Acting President, on Thursday morning His Honour opened Letsema 2011 in Serowe, which is a gathering or pitso to bring together stakeholders for agricultural development. **[B1]**

Earlier the Vice President also had the pleasure of being the guest of honour at the groundbreaking of a new Cresta Hotel in Mahalapye, which should be completed by the end of next year. **[B3]** At the event, His Honour reaffirmed Government's commitment to facilitating the further development of the tourism and hospitality industry as an engine of economic and social development.

Also

Also during the week, the Office of the President was pleased to confirm that American First Lady Michelle Obama is scheduled to visit Botswana at the end of this month. **[C6]** In making its announcement of the visit White House noted that:

"Botswana's enduring democracy, bolstered by its commitment to using its vast natural resources to invest in its people and grow its economy, models the potential for good governance, and strong institutions to advance prosperous and stable societies."

Also in the international spotlight were recent IMF and Standard & Poors missions to our country, whose findings suggest continued economic recovery in the coming months. **[C13-14]**

- Dr. Jeff Ramsay, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Government Communications (9/6/11)

Contacts: Office Telephone: (267) 3975338 & Facsimile: (267) 3904019. Cell: (267) 71318598. E-mail: jramsay@gov.bw & jramsayop@yahoo.co.uk

B. STATEMENTS

B1) 9/6/11: KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE ACTING PRESIDENT, LT. GENERAL MOMPATI S. MERAFHE, MP AT THE "LETSEMA 2011 CONFERENCE IN SEROWE

[Salutations]...Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Allow me, Director of Ceremonies, to express my sincere gratitude for having been invited to officiate at this auspicious occasion of LETSEMA 2011 Conference, held under the theme: "Commercialization of Agriculture: Key to Sustainable Development."
2. Let me hasten to commend the Ministry of Agriculture and the farming community for facilitating this historic event, geared towards promoting a dialogue with key stakeholders in the agricultural sector. I must say that Government attaches great importance to the Agricultural sector, which is one of the key components of Botswana's sustained economic growth strategy.

3. As you are aware, Government has come up with Flagship programmes of Poverty Eradication and Economic Diversification Drive in an effort to pursue prosperity, the wealth of communities and the durable future. I am therefore, confident that the tranquil atmosphere prevailing in this venue will contribute, in no small measure, to the generation of ideas, which will translate into real projects and programmes for the fulfilment of the overall aims and objectives of this Conference.

4. Bagaetsho, it is my firm belief that this conference will also contribute immensely to Government's efforts to disseminate information and receive feedback on various Government programmes geared towards improving the livelihoods of Batswana, particularly in the agricultural sector.

5. Bagaetsho, Government's efforts to ensure poverty eradication and sustainable development will not be enough without paying attention to eliminating barriers that constrain Batswana to benefit from a growing economy and to contribute to that growth. In this regard, we would like to make Agriculture, fulltime and more profitable. It should become a business, and not a weekend activity. In essence, the application of modern farming technologies and techniques, coupled with increased productivity levels definitely allows one to make profit out of any farming enterprise.

6. I am particularly impressed that the Ministry of Agriculture has developed technologies geared towards supporting both the arable and livestock subsectors. Over 40 crop and livestock related technologies have been released and recommended for use by the farming community.

7. The Ministry is also on the verge of availing new varieties of maize and sorghum, especially hybrids, which are sought after by farmers because of their inherent superiority in performance and yield. I am informed that recommendations have also been made on the best breeds to cross for beef production. For instance, composite breed is reaching the final stages of development and should be available to farmers before the end of this financial year.

8. The development of farm machinery implements aimed at mechanizing farming operations are also on-going.

9. I wish to note that crop management methods like correct seeding rates to achieve desired stands or populations per hectare, fertilizer use and application rates, and row planting have long been recommended. It is for this reason that the entire agriculture community should be well informed about these positive developments if we are to truly transform the agricultural sector to become profitable and sustainable. In view of this, I therefore appeal to the farming community to redouble our efforts to increase our output and the sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which stands at only about two per cent, a decline from 40 percent at independence in 1966.

10. We should strive to meet the growing demands on agricultural production, driven by rapid population growth in many developing economies. It is, however, worth noting that Government has put in place measures including projects and programmes to address the situation. It must, therefore, be appreciated that programmes such as the National Master Plan for Arable Agriculture and Dairy Development (NAMPAAD), Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD) and Agricultural Infrastructure Development Initiative (AIDI) are worthy of our commendation.

11. Bagaetsho, NAMPAAD was adopted with the aim of transforming agriculture into a viable and sustainable commercial sector by transferring technology to farmers (both small and large) to improve farm productivity and competitiveness. The components of the programme are rain fed arable agriculture, irrigated agriculture and dairy development. I must encourage Batswana to put more efforts and ensure transformation through NAMPAADD.

12. Another key programme, ISPAAD aims at improving arable agricultural production to ensure food security by providing input subsidies to small and large scale farmers. The components of the programme are support for fencing, provision of potable water, seeds, fertilizer and facilitation of access to credit.

13. I am delighted to inform you that Government is in the process of establishing 15 service centres around the country to promote accessibility of inputs to farmers. I must acknowledge the improvements we have realized through this programme and urge all farmers to use it wisely.

14. Bagaetsho, Government has embraced agricultural infrastructure development as a prerequisite for rapid economic growth and poverty eradication. Empirical evidence shows that there is a positive correlation between infrastructure and agricultural productivity. In this regard, Government has embarked on a project for the development of agricultural infrastructure. This project has already identified provision of access roads, irrigation development, electricity and telecommunications as priority areas.

15. I am informed that the implementation strategy is currently being developed, amidst the recent global economic recession. I am confident that with the improvement of the economic situation, the Agricultural Infrastructure Development Initiative (AIDI) will be continued.

16. I alluded earlier to the fact that Agriculture has been identified as one of the sectors that underpin poverty eradication in our nation. In this regard, the Office of the President in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture is taking a leading role in coordinating the establishment of backyard projects such as horticulture, beekeeping and small stock. It is indeed heartening to note that a number of projects have been established nationwide for the benefit of destitute persons and other vulnerable groups.

It is hoped that through this programme, beneficiaries will escape the poverty trap and become confident self reliant individuals who can contribute to national development.

17. Bagaetsho, it is, however, sad to note that whilst efforts are being made to take Agriculture to greater heights, the sector continues to face some challenges that threaten to undermine this progress. For instance, the growing trend whereby crops have been turned into cattle fodder by those farmers who deliberately fail to take care of their livestock is a cause for concern. As you are aware, the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) has been temporarily delisted from the European market. However, Government is working on strategies to resuscitate the market and resume exporting before September 2011. This calls for the need to expeditiously implement the Agricultural Fencing Policy, which will propel us towards satisfying the requirements of the EU market.

18. Bagaetsho, the incessant outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Matsiloje Extension area in Veterinary Disease Control zone 6 and in the Robelela Extension area in the Veterinary Disease control zone 7 have also affected the sector. It is, therefore, fitting for me to personally commend the farming community in the affected areas for their unwavering support to contain the disease and also appeal for more cooperation in this fight against the disease.

19. Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to commend you for ensuring the overall success of the cropping season. I am saying this because you may be aware that a total of 118 024 farmers had planted, and of the measured area, cereals covered over 265 576 hectares, which is 71 per cent of the total area planted.

20. With these remarks, it is now my pleasant duty to declare the LETSEMA 2011 Stakeholder Conference officially open and wish you successful deliberations. I thank you for your attention. PULA!!!

B2) 7/6/11: ADDRESS TO NTLO YA DIKGOSI ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE STRIKE BY HIS HONOUR, THE ACTING PRESIDENT LT. GENERAL MOMPATI S. MERAFHE.

[Salutations]...

1. I wish to thank the Chairman for having accorded me the opportunity to brief Ntlo Ya Dikgosi on the on-going Public Service Strike that commenced on the 18th April 2011 to date.

2. Modulasetilo, in December 2008, Parliament passed the Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008, which establishes a single public service to ensure consistent terms and conditions of employment for all Government employees, and facilitate the establishment of collective bargaining structures.

3. It enables Government and recognised Public Service trade unions to engage in negotiations and bargaining over issues pertaining to terms and conditions of employment including salaries
4. The implementation of the Act commenced on the 1st of May 2010, giving rise to the current public service salary negotiations.
5. Subsequently, since the 1st of February 2011, the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) representing Government as the Employer has been engaged in salary negotiations for the financial year 2011/2012 with five (5) recognised Public Service unions affiliated to the Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU).
6. These unions are the Botswana Land Board and Local Authorities & Health Workers Union (BLLAHWU), Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU), Botswana Secondary School Teachers Union (BOSETU), Botswana Teachers Union (BTU) and the National Amalgamated Local and Central Government and Parastatal Workers Union (NALCGPWU).
7. The Unions made a submission to the Employer indicating that for the past three (3) consecutive years there has not been any salary adjustment to cushion the erosion of their purchasing power. They therefore requested for a 16% inflationary adjustment.
8. The breakdown of their demand was 13.8% for inflationary adjustment and 2.2% for salary increase for the financial year 2011/2012, which made up a total of 16%.
9. In response, the Employer indicated that Government could not afford any salary adjustment, given the current economic situation. This was based on the current budget deficit which had grown over the last 3 years by 68% whilst the revenue had only grown by 17%.
10. As a result, Government deferred development projects, increased Value Added Tax (VAT), and borrowed extensively to fund the national expenditure during the same period.
11. To date, Government spending remains in deficit, with a projected revenue shortfall of P7 billion in the current financial year.
12. Notwithstanding the effects of the economic recession, Government took a deliberate decision to avoid retrenchments and salary reductions in the public service, and even assisted some private sector companies in the mining and textiles sectors to maintain current jobs and incomes.
13. This was only made possible by running a huge budget deficit and maintaining high expenditures despite lower revenues.

14. The intention of Government was to complete on-going development projects, which started before the recession, whilst maintaining economic activity and protecting employment in both the public and private sectors.

15. It should also be noted that Government had incurred additional costs to comply with the provisions of the Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008 by paying all public service employees on Permanent and Pensionable terms on a 22-day month.

16. This resulted in a 10% increase to the Government Wage Bill, which amounted to about P700 million that was not budgeted for in the 2010/2011 financial year.

17. Modulasetilo, it has to be noted that the public sector wages already cost Government P12 billion annually, which is more than the P10 billion allocated for development projects during the 2011/2012 financial year.

18. I must also mention that the demand for a 16% wage increase would result in an additional P2 billion to the Wage Bill.

19. It was on the basis of the foregoing that Government initially proposed that public service salaries should not be increased until the economy recovers.

20. However, the Unions insisted on their demands arguing that the Employer was negotiating in bad faith as she was not offering anything.

21. In an effort to break the impasse in the salary negotiations, the Employer offered a 2% salary adjustment on condition that the economic review would indicate a significant improvement at the end of the first quarter of 2011/12.

22. The Unions however declined the offer on the grounds that the Employer's offer was futuristic and conditional. Consequently, the Union party referred the matter to the Commissioner of Labour and Social Security where the Mediator unsuccessfully attempted to settle the dispute as parties did not shift from their stated positions.

23. On the 5th of April 2011, the Employer indicated that, since the parties were not able to resolve the dispute through mediation, she had reconsidered her offer on salary adjustment, to a 5% salary increase from the 1st of September 2011 on condition that the first quarter assessment of the economy, whose result would be known by August 2011, shows a significant improvement.

24. The Unions declined the conditional offer arguing that it is tantamount to no offer because it lacks the bargaining aspect.

25. The Employer however indicated that she is unable to remove the condition from the offer because the economic performance could not be predicted, resulting in a stalemate on salary negotiations.

26. Considering the way forward, the Employer proposed that the dispute be referred for arbitration, but the Unions rejected the proposal indicating that they have been mandated to opt for an industrial action instead of arbitration. It was therefore on this basis that both parties agreed to proceed in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act of 2003, but remain open for further negotiations without prejudice.

27. The Unions thereafter informed the Employer that they will be embarking on an industrial action for an indefinite period starting from the 18th April 2011.

28. The commencement of the strike resulted in the closure of a number of health facilities across the country and eventually schools on the 9th May 2011. Government was therefore compelled to engage replacement labour before the expiry of 14 days, albeit contrary to provisions of the Trade Disputes Act. The Unions as a result took Government to Court, and Government was ordered to withdraw all the replacement labour.

29. As a counter response, Government challenged the legality of the strike by employees in essential services.

30. The Industrial Court ordered that the strike by essential services employees was illegal and unprotected, thus directing all affected employees to return to work with immediate effect. The essential services to which the Court Order applies were electrical services, fire services, health services, sewerage services, water services and transport and telecommunication services necessary to the operation of any of the foregoing services.

31. The majority of the affected employees in essential services failed to adhere to the Court Order, despite numerous ultimatums by the employer urging them to return to work. This eventually led to dismissals of all employees who had failed to report for duty on the 16th May 2011 and thereafter. The total number of employees dismissed to date is Two Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixty (2, 460). These include, but not limited to, 1, 850 dismissed employees from the Ministry of Health; 58 employees from the Ministry of Minerals, Energy & Water Resources; 252 from Local Authorities, being employees from fire, sewerage and electrical services; 174 employees from the Ministry of Infrastructure, Science & Technology; and 38 Civilian Personnel from the Botswana Defence Force.

Mong wame, Modulasetilo, Beng bame, Maloko a Ntlo Ya Dikgosi,

32. On the 18th of May 2011, the Employer made an unconditional offer of 3% salary adjustment effective 1st of September 2011, and requested the employees to return to work.

33. In response the Unions expressed their willingness to accept the 3% offer on condition that the total value of the 3% be distributed across the pay structure in a pyramid form; dismissed employees in essential services are reinstated; and the 'no

work, no pay rule' is rescinded before employees return to work. However, the Employer maintained the unconditional offer of 3% inflationary adjustment across the board effective 1st September 2011, and urged employees to go back to work while their other demands will be negotiated upon their return.

34. This is the situation as of now. I thank you.

B3) 3/6/11: KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS HONOUR, THE VICE PRESIDENT, LT. GEN. MOMPATI S. MERAFHE, MP, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MAHALAPYE WEST AT THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF CRESTA MAHALAPYE HOTEL, MAHALAPYE

[Salutations]...Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Two years ago when I re-launched the Cresta Brand in Francistown, I emphatically appealed to the Cresta Group to enhance capacities of the rural areas in an effort to deepen, expand and accelerate Botswana's economic growth. Therefore, I am happy to note that the Cresta Group has demonstrated beyond any doubt its commitment to this noble cause.

2. Against this backdrop, I am greatly honoured and privileged to have been invited to officiate at this auspicious occasion of the ground breaking ceremony of the 65-roomed Cresta Mahalapye Hotel. I do so with a sense of duty and delight.

3. I must reiterate that your presence this afternoon is a clear testimony of your unwavering commitment to support Botswana's economic diversification efforts through the expansion of your hospitality franchise, which will greatly contribute to the growth of our tourism industry.

4. As you are aware, Government has identified the tourism industry as one of the engines of economic growth in the country. Tourism has the potential to provide employment and investment opportunities for our people. It is, therefore, a source of encouragement that the development is happening in no sector of the economy than in tourism.

5. Bagaetsho, Government is committed to providing an enabling environment for the private sector, particularly companies such as the Cresta Group and their partners to contribute to the overall socio-economic development of this country. This project will, therefore, contribute in no small measure, to the success and sustainability of our economic growth through poverty eradication, employment creation and investment inflow.

6. I am informed that today's event is a culmination of a number of years of thorough planning, anticipation and optimism to realise Cresta and its partners' dreams and aspirations. Let me hasten to add that the centrally-located and strategic village of Mahalapye avails any investor the opportunity to thrive. In this regard, I am encouraged

to note that Cresta's Growth Strategy has taken into consideration the transformation of Mahalapye as a booming economic zone and an attractive destination for investment.

7. It is our fervent hope that this facility will enable Mahalapye to host various events that will not only make it a viable commercial centre, but also a major contributor to Botswana's tourism sector. I am informed that this project will take 15 months to complete. Therefore, we hope to reconvene here sometime in the third quarter of next year to officially open the state-of-the-art facility.

8. Bagaetsho let me conclude my remarks by commending the management of Cresta Group for having conceived this noble idea of constructing the facility. With these remarks, it is my pleasant duty to declare the commencement of this landmark project. I thank you for the courtesy of your attention. PULA!

B4) 9/6/11: REMARKS BY HONOURABLE MOKGWEETSI E.K. MASISI, MP, MINISTER OF PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION NATIONAL DAY

1. Your Excellency, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Mr. Anatoly Korsun; Honourable Ministers here present; Your Excellency, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps; Members of the Diplomatic Corps here present; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

2. Your Excellency, it gives me great pleasure to join as you celebrate Russian National Day, marking the founding of the Russian Federation twenty years ago.

3. As you celebrate this historic occasion, allow me, Your Excellency, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Botswana, to convey to you and through you to the Government and people of the Russian Federation, our very warm congratulations.

4. Although you are commemorating the 20th anniversary of the declaration of the Russian Federation, it is however, only fitting to note that the history of Russia and its people is centuries old. Your country, Your Excellency, enjoys a rich legacy of historical achievements in many fields of human endeavour including in the areas of arts, science and culture. These achievements have and continue to influence and inspire the world.

5. Russia has over centuries produced internationally renowned literary figures, artists and musicians such as Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Dostoyevsky and Rachmaninoff whose contribution and legacy will forever remain with us. Such achievements could not have been possible without the visionary leadership that characterised the Russian leadership over successive years. The establishment of the Russian Academy of Sciences by Peter the Great is just but one example of that visionary leadership.

6. As you celebrate your National Day, the Russian people have every reason to be proud of the achievements they have made over the centuries. The Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana are equally inspired these achievements.

7. We also note that your Government has harnessed Russia's enormous wealth of natural resources to better the lives of its people. Today the Russian Federation ranks among the ten largest economies in the world.

8. These achievements, Your Excellency, could not have been made without a committed and patriotic citizenry willing to contribute to their destiny and that of future generations. We applaud and congratulate the people of the Russian Federation for these historic achievements. I am confident that your country will achieve even greater things that will contribute to humanity.

9. The Government and people of Botswana are delighted that the Russian Federation has found us worthy of their friendship. We unreservedly reciprocate this kind gesture.

10. Your Excellency, the Russian Federation and Botswana enjoy cordial and mutually beneficial relations anchored on a rock-solid foundation of friendship, shared values and commitment to better the lives of their peoples.

11. Botswana's relations with the Russian people pre- dates the day that we are commemorating today. As many distinguished delegates will be aware, we have had the honour and privilege to train our people in the then USSR in many fields of human endeavour. The Government and people of Botswana are grateful that the Russian Federation has considered it necessary to continue offering us scholarships following her declaration as an independent sovereign state. This decision has provided comfort and confidence to us as well as continuity in our collaboration.

12. We are particularly grateful to you, Ambassador, for the commitment that you have demonstrated to ensure that the excellent cooperation that our two countries enjoy is further enhanced. I am informed for instance that, through your untiring efforts, your Government has offered Botswana fifteen scholarships at Bachelors and Masters' Degree level. I urge Botswana to seize this opportunity with both hands to ensure that this offer is utilised. We should spare no effort, Your Excellency, to utilise all available opportunities to take our relations to greater heights.

13. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation stands ready to work with you and your office to realise this objective.

14. I wish to observe with satisfaction that we have over the years adopted sector-specific agreements and mechanisms to enhance our cooperation. These include:

- The Cultural, Scientific and Educational Cooperation Agreement of 1999.
- The Protocol on Consultations between our Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 2002.

- The Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion
- The Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement; and
- The Visa Abolition Agreement for holders diplomatic and service passports.

15. It is my sincere hope, Your Excellency, that we will actively engage to ensure that these agreements are implemented. These agreements, Your Excellency, create a conducive environment through which people – to – people relations can also be enhanced.

16. It is my hope that during your tenure as Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Botswana, we can have the honour and pleasure to welcome investors from your country.

17. Your Excellency; Distinguished Guests; may I now ask you to join me in drinking a toast to: -

- The good health of His Excellency President Dmitri Medvedev, president of the Russian Federation;
- The continued friendship and co-operation between Botswana and the Russian Federation, and to,
- International peace and security. PULA!

C. NOTICES & FORWARDING

C1) 6/6/11: H.E. THE PRESIDENT IN THE UNITED STATES FOR AWARD; CONSULTATIONS

His Excellency the President, Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama departed this evening for Washington D.C., USA, where he will receive the prestigious Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award at the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) 2011 U.S. Congressional Member Dinner.

The Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award recognizes "innovative leadership in the field of conservation by a government leader." Recent awardees include UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Philippines President Gloria Arroyo, Prince Albert II of Monaco, and U.S. Senator Rob Portman.

The annual U.S. Congressional Member Dinner brings together members of the ICCF supported U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus, whose membership includes over 1/3 of the U.S. House of Representatives and 1/5 of the Senate. **[full list available on request]**

The ICCF is described as the world's leading association of public bodies, private corporations and NGOs with a shared interest in international conservation efforts.

In its efforts ICCF works with the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus and the incumbent Administration in its American lobbying efforts.

ICCF global partners further include key global opinion makers and political and business leaders working for the promotion of sound, long-term policies of sustainable land, water and biodiversity management.

Among the major international conservation organizations belonging to the ICCF are the African Wildlife Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, National Geographic, Rainforest Alliance, Conservation International and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), as well as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). ICCF Corporate Council members include the Areva, 3M, Coca-Cola, Exxon-Mobile, GEF, Hertz, Honeywell, HP, Kraft, Nestle, J.P. Morgan Chase, Starbucks, Toyota, Unilever, Volkswagen and Walmart. **[full list available on request]**

Additional USA Visit Details

While in Washington His Excellency the President is also expected to hold further discussions with members of the American Executive branch and Congressional leadership.

His Excellency will also travel to New York City, where he will attend the 2011 Board Meeting of Conservation International.

Conservation International is a non-profit organization that seeks to empower societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity. Its Board of Directors, to which HE the President has been a member for over a decade, meets annually to carry out the mandate of the organization.

The President is also expected to undertake a number of additional engagements with media and important stakeholders, while in the USA.

H.H. the Vice President, Lt. Gen. Mompati Merafhe, is Acting President.

His Excellency is expected to return on the Saturday the 11th of June 2011.

C2) 9/6/11: CABINET NOT DIVIDED, NO “FALL OUT” WITH SIR KETUMILE

Government has on past occasions expressed its concern about the seemingly growing trend on the part of some segments of the media in publishing unsubstantiated and misleading reports in an apparent effort to tarnish the good name of the political leadership.

In this context we wish to once more express our concern with specific reference to articles appearing in two local publications this morning.

Contrary to what has been suggested in one front page article [**Echo 9/6/11 “Khama, Merafhe differ on strike resolution”**] there is no truth to the allegation that H.E. the President and H.H. the Vice President, along with the Hon. Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration were divided over Government’s latest position with respect to the ongoing strike by a segment of the civil service.

Further to the above, Government’s position, as was communicated by the Permanent Secretary to the President and Secretary of Cabinet on Monday evening, enjoys the unanimous support of Cabinet.

Government also wishes to dismiss as unfounded the front page report appearing in another local newspaper [**Guardian 9/6/11 “Khama, Masire fall out”**], which alleges that H.H. the Vice President gave a so-called “stern warning” to the former President Sir Ketumile Masire.

We are moreover shocked and reject with contempt the allegation that there is any perception whatsoever of the Former President seeking to somehow be “running a parallel government”. This allegation does a great disservice to the esteem and good will that has always existed between the current administration and both past presidents.

Further to the above, Government has been fully informed and appreciative of the efforts by Sir Ketumile, along with Church leaders and BOCCIM, to assist in the mediation of the strike.

C3) 6/6/11: RE GOVERNMENT WELCOMES BACK WORKERS, TO PAY 3%

Government wishes to acknowledge the apology by Unions concerning the on-going strike by public servants, and affirms its desire and commitment to all efforts by the parties which will bring the strike to an end.

The Government therefore wishes to inform the general public that it is prepared to welcome back and to receive at work, all striking non-essential services employees with immediate effect.

The Government has also made a commitment that all employees in essential services who have been dismissed for taking part in the strike declared by the Industrial Court as illegal and unprotected, are eligible to re-apply with immediate effect, to the Directorate of Public Service Management for re-employment.

In this regard, DPSM shall use its best endeavours to have them placed in employment and/or positions in the public service as is reasonably practicable depending, among others, on availability of vacancies, and the interest of the public service.

Finally, as part of the settlement of the strike, the Government undertakes to pay 3% salary adjustment to all employees in the public service with effect from 1st September, 2011.

(Signed) Eric M. Molale

PERMANENT SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY TO CABINET

C4) GOVERNMENT WELCOMES BACK ESSENTIAL SERVICES WORKERS

C4a) 7/6/11: GOVERNMENT PROCESSES EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS BY ESSENTIAL SERVICES WORKERS

Government has begun to urgently process applications for employment by essential services public officers, who were dismissed following their engagement in an illegal and unprotected strike action.

Already twenty-five (25) doctors and sixty-seven (67) nurses have submitted applications to the Ministry of Health. This follows an undertaking by Government yesterday, to welcome striking public officers back at work, and to allow dismissed essential services officers to re-apply for employment.

In addition to the offer of re-employment, Government has offered a 3% salary adjustment for the entire public service effective from September 1st 2011.

In a related development, Government has issued a reminder that assembly points have been designated for striking non-essential services public officers, in the interest of public order and safety, as well as the safety of striking officers themselves.

Government further advises public officers on strike to remain within gazette assembly points, to avoid any danger to themselves and to members of the public. In another development the Botswana Police Service advises that the assembly point in Molepolole has been re-located from the Bus Rank, to the old Molepolole Stadium from tomorrow. The Police say the move is intended to ensure increased public order and safety.

C4b) 8/6/11: DPSM - POSITIVE RESPONSE TO INVITATION TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES WORKERS TO APPLY FOR REEMPLOYMENT

There has been an overwhelming response to the invitation for re-employment in the public service following a Press release that invited former employees in essential services who were dismissed to apply. These applications are mainly from doctors, nurses, other health professionals as well as support staff. Government will conclude processing of the applications shortly.

C4c) 7/6/11: DPSM SPOT ANNOUNCEMENT ON RE-EMPLOYMENT OF ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS

The Directorate of Public Service Management wishes to inform all former employees in the essential services who were dismissed from the Public Service, and wish to apply for employment in accordance with the statement issued by Government on the 6th June 2011, which also appeared on the Botswana Daily News of the 7th June 2011, should submit their applications to the Directorate of Public Service Management, office No. 423 fourth floor, or Fax them to 3908925. All applications will be attended to expeditiously.

C5) 8/6/11: GOVERNMENT ASSURES EMPLOYEES SAFETY

Government wishes to express its serious concern over anonymous threat that circulated yesterday, suggesting that public officers who are on duty will be in danger or unsafe at their work places. The anonymous threat says from Thursday, June 9th 2011, all public officers who are on duty will be doing so at their own risk, and that public officers who are on strike, or stay away from work. Government has, however, given assurance that all precaution has been taken to ensure safe and secure working environment for public officers, and further advises all civil servants to report for duty without any fears for their safety. Government further advises that it is an offence punishable by law for anybody to intimidate public officers on duty or to prevent any public officer from reporting for work at government offices.

C6) 3/6/11: MICHELLE OBAMA TO VISIT BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA

The office of the President is pleased to confirm that earlier this evening the White House (USA) Press Office announced in a press release (below) that First Lady of the USA visit Botswana and South Africa in a visit focused on youth, education, health and wellness. In making the announcement the White house noted that:

"This visit to two critical countries will underscore that the United States has an important stake in the success of Africa's many nations and underscore the historic connections between the American people and those who live on the African continent. South Africa is a vital global partner for the United States, as political leader and economic engine on the continent, and a historic example of democratic transition in Africa and around the world. Botswana's enduring democracy, bolstered by its commitment to using its vast natural resources to invest in its people and grow its economy, models the potential for good governance, and strong institutions to advance prosperous and stable societies."

From First Lady's Press Secretary: First Lady Michelle Obama Announces Visit to Africa Focused on Youth Leadership, Education, and Health & Wellness

The First Lady just announced that she will travel to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa and Gaborone, Botswana during an official visit to Africa later this month. The trip, focused on youth leadership, education, health and wellness, is a continuation

of Mrs. Obama's work to engage young people at home and abroad. Stay tuned for updates on the trip and ways to engage on WhiteHouse.gov.

Here's the full press release:

FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA TO VISIT SOUTH AFRICA AND BOTSWANA

Official visit continues the First Lady's work engaging youth at home and abroad

First Lady Michelle Obama announced that she will travel to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa and Gaborone, Botswana during an official visit to Africa from June 21 – 26 focused on youth leadership, education, health and wellness. The trip is a continuation of Mrs. Obama's work to engage young people at home and abroad, from mentoring students in the United States and encouraging them to gain international experience, to encouraging young people to excel academically, serve, and lead during her visits to Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, India, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Accompanying Mrs. Obama on this trip will be her mother, Mrs. Robinson and her daughters, Malia and Sasha Obama.

This visit to two critical countries will underscore that the United States has an important stake in the success of Africa's many nations and underscore the historic connections between the American people and those who live on the African continent. South Africa is a vital global partner for the United States, as political leader and economic engine on the continent, and a historic example of democratic transition in Africa and around the world. Botswana's enduring democracy, bolstered by its commitment to using its vast natural resources to invest in its people and grow its economy, models the potential for good governance, and strong institutions to advance prosperous and stable societies.

In addition to advancing her international youth engagement agenda, the First Lady's events will amplify the President's support for democracy, development and economic opportunity across Africa. During her trip, Mrs. Obama will deliver the keynote address to a U.S.-sponsored Young African Women Leaders Forum in South Africa. Forum participants include young women from across sub-Saharan Africa who are leading or involved in social and economic initiatives in their own countries. The Forum will build on the Obama Administration's ongoing engagement with the next generation of African leaders and the momentum of the August 2010 President's Forum with Young African Leaders held at the White House.

Mrs. Obama's engagement with the people of South Africa and Botswana, as well as women and youth leaders from across sub-Saharan Africa will further strengthen the already deep connections between the United States and African nations. The Obama Administration has focused on expanding ties across the region's people, based upon mutual respect, mutual responsibility and shared interests. In 2009 in Accra, Ghana, the President highlighted our nation's commitment to Africa's future, underscoring that in this globalized world, Africa's democratic development, health and security is connected to our own.

Africa's future will be shaped by its growing and dynamic youth population. Building stronger and more enduring relationships with Africa's emerging young leaders, tapping the strength and potential of African women, and investing in the health and well-being of its children upholds core American values and advances American interests.

From long standing family and ancestral ties to significant engagement by our houses of worship, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and businesses, the American people have deep ties and enduring relationships with Africa's many nations and a strong interest in the wellbeing and prosperity of its people. In addition, each year more than 30,000 African students study in American schools, colleges and universities, while more than 10,000 American students study in schools across Africa. The United States government also sponsors a range of exchange programs supporting African leadership, economic growth and cultural ties between our two people.

C7) 4/6/11: YES WE MUST ALL UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW BY DR. JEFF RAMSAY FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT.

Article below published as an exclusive in today's Weekend Post. It may of course be freely cited in said context. As part of the Weekend Post newspaper's "Presidential Podium" series this Office now anticipates providing such communications on a monthly basis.

In the interest of outreach and equity the OP Press Office/BGCIS is, moreover, prepared to explore and discuss similar arrangements with other major local publications on a mutually beneficial and non-discriminatory basis.

Exclusive to Weekend Post 4/6/11: Yes we must all uphold the rule of law by Dr. Jeff Ramsay for the Office of the President.

This past week the Institute for Economics and Peace, with the support of its global partners, which include the Economist Intelligence Unit, International Institute for Strategic Studies and various UN agencies, academic centres and additional institutions such as Amnesty International, released the 2011 Global Peace Index (GPI).

The annual survey assesses countries' political stability and wellbeing based on range of "drivers" that include levels of democracy, transparency, education and material wellbeing, respect for human rights and the rule of law, military expenditure and relations with neighbouring states.

As in past, this year's GPI listed Botswana as among the world's most stable societies, as well as number one in Africa. With a world ranking of 35 we were placed ahead of France (36) and well above such democratic friends as Brazil (74), USA (82) and South Africa (118).

The obvious question in light of ongoing events is where will we be next year? While the latest GPI incorporates 2011 findings, it does not factor in the most recent strike related unrest.

The fact that some 25,000 Government workers have been on strike is not, in itself, a threat to our reputation. Strikes are a fact of life in any democracy, which is why, consistent with relevant ILO protocols; our country has laws in place for managing them.

The danger rather lies when the democratic and legal right of workers to go on strike is corrupted by a breakdown in the law such as we have witnessed in the ignoring court orders, vandalising of public property and incidences of violence.

In this respect the Index is a useful reminder of where we have been and should remain. Let us remember that we have come a long way in a relatively short time as a people whose social and economic progress, as well as peace and stability, are rooted in our respect for one another and the rule of law.

Should we fail to uphold these qualities a tarnished international reputation may be the least of our worries. In their struggle to simply survive, one doubts that many Libyans have this week noticed that their country has dropped 83 places in the 2011 GPI to join the likes of Afghanistan and Somalia.

We should remain steadfast in defending our own democratic values by turning our backs on excitable cheerleaders of North African style regime change, while seeing through the opportunism of hypocrites who promote class resentment, while enjoying the pleasures of their own bourgeoisie lifestyles. Let us also be wary of lawyers who are seemingly blind to the meaning of a court order with respect to essential workers or supposed democracy advocates who fail to conceal their admiration for dictatorships elsewhere.

In his last State of the Nation Address President Khama stated that: "Government recognises a continuing need to work alongside the trade unions."

But, he also observed that "for such partnership to succeed, it must be on the basis of institutional accountability and mutual interest and respect", while further warning that "we should all remain focused on the common interests of workers by avoiding extraneous and divisive agendas, including partisan politics. Unions must leave politics to politicians and concentrate on workers welfare."

Six months later we are all paying the price for a failure to heed these words of wisdom. And yet some are still playing political games in the workers' name at the workers expense.

It is sad to hear of instances where striking workers were shocked to find deductions in their pay slips this month given that the "no pay for no work" rule was confirmed from the very beginning of the strike and reaffirmed in communications thereafter.

If employers actually paid people to go on strike how much work would ever get done?

Then there is the unions' response to Government's unconditional offer of a 3% adjustment with the demand that the "distribution of the total value of the 3% across the pay structure in a pyramid form".

According to reports some labour leaders are still promising double digit increases to "B" scale workers. If this be true what will be left for those on the upper "C" and "D" scales? The notion that giving little or nothing to the relative handful of people at the top does not add up, but the onus should be on the unions to explain.

At the end of the day have the doctors who were encouraged to violate ILO guidelines, as well as the Industrial Court ruling and internationally recognized medical ethics, been sacrificed for benefit of others? What is at least clear is that there has up until now been no genuine acceptance of Government's 3% offer, notwithstanding misleading headlines to the contrary.

Having lost direction some are now desperate to blame Government for their own misdeeds. One editorial accuses Government of "having blood on its hands" for expecting educated health professionals to respect the law, if not their own codes of conduct.

But, it is not too late to step back from the brink. Negotiations have been suspended, not terminated. The time has come for those who claim to have the workers interests at heart to put aside politics and focus on what can be reasonably achieved in the context of the existing budget as approved by Parliament.

C8) 4/6/11: BOFEPUSO LEADERS IMPATIENT? BY DR RAPHAEL DINGALO, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

"If the bargaining process is 'frictionless' – by which I mean that neither player incurs any cost from haggling – then each player may continuously demand that agreement be struck on terms that are most favourable to her. In such a circumstance the negotiations are likely to end up in an impasse (or deadlock), since the negotiators would have no incentive to compromise and reach an agreement" writes Professor Abhinay Muthoo in the World Economic Journal. And it is for this reason that the government of Botswana through the New Public Service Act has endorsed the principle of 'bargaining'.

The 'million pula question' however, is whether we can satisfactorily justify to our constituents and the nation at large, that the current service delivery disruptions due to the strike are a product of a serious, sombre and solemn deadlock, or a product of impatience by some in the negotiations?

The bargaining process all started with a demand by Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSO) for a 16% salary increment, which included an inflationary

adjustment. Their argument was that there has been no salary increment for the past 3 years. Government on the other hand, whilst acknowledging that the request for a salary increment was in order, argued that the country at present is facing a budget deficit with a shortfall of P 7 billion in the current financial year. On the basis of the deficit, they could only offer 5% to be effected in September, only if the economy had picked up. In essence there is no fundamental disagreement as to the need for an increment; the only question that remains is when and by how much.

The government's position is informed by the fact that public sector wages already cost Government P 12 billion annually, considerably more than the P 10 billion allocated for development this year. A 16% wage increase would thus add nearly P 2 billion more to the budget deficit, in the absence of deep cuts elsewhere. In a Press Release, at the conclusion of their mission to Botswana from May 18 – 31, the International Monetary Fund pointed out that “the government would need to reduce the size of the wage bill as a share of GDP as this remains rather high relative to comparator countries and is not sustainable. Reducing the wage bill would also require efforts to make the public service leaner and more efficient”.

This is an option that some countries faced with similar problems as Botswana have opted for. In Greece, public sector bonus payments will be scrapped; public sector salaries and pensions frozen for at least three (3) years, and VAT will rise from 19% to 23%. In Spain, Government workers have had their pay cut by 5%. The Government of Botswana however took a painful but deliberate decision not to reduce the public service, nor reduce salaries in the interest of workers.

The 5% offer by Government was rejected outright by BOFEPUSO despite Government's goodwill, who then embarked on a strike from April 12th hence. This was despite the plea to stay the strike whilst negotiations were ongoing, through what T.C. Schelling refers to as ‘commitment tactics’ which he illustrates as follows:

“It has not been uncommon for union officials to stir up excitement and determination on the part of the membership during or prior to a wage negotiation...the negotiators reduce the scope of their own authority and confront the management with the threat of a strike that the union itself cannot avert, even though it was the union's own action that eliminated its power to prevent strike”. In steering up excitement the Union leaders had threatened they were going to paralyse borders amongst others.

After many altercations, whereas some in the essential services have unfortunately lost their jobs, BOFEPUSO is prepared to accept a 3% salary increment on conditions. Had they accepted the offer then there would not have been complications and the “when and by how much” issues would by now be the subject of negotiations by both parties.

By now the said IMF report on Botswana would be music to the ears of BOFEPUSO as they state as follows: “Thanks in large part to good policies supported by a rebound in diamond exports, the Botswana economy is now back onto a strong growth trajectory”.

Then we would all be keeping our fingers crossed that the growth pattern is sustained to the extent it would support an increment.

Could it then be argued that the BOFEPUSO leaders were impatient? The question remains, but they should understand that one of the key determinants of the bargaining outcome is 'patience' whereas the player's bargaining power is higher the less impatient she is relative to the other negotiator; "patience during the process of negotiations confers bargaining power".

Those who argue that BOFEPUSO was impatient maintain that this lack of patience was motivated by what Professor Muthoo refers to as "Populism, public interest litigation and judicial activism". These he argues, can "paralyse negotiations unless bargaining is undertaken in complete confidentiality and the players are well aware of the multifaceted social, economic, political and other aspects of a bargaining situation and the eventual need for accountability and transparency".

It is not somewhat beyond doubt that populism was at play as captured in one of the local newspapers when they reported that "trade unions [BOFEPUSO] are hogging the limelight to the extent that they are now using legislators as political stooges and sponsoring them with questions and motions to table in parliament, sometimes to launch scathing attacks on their rival trade unions".

At the end of it all lessons should be learned from this misfortune. What is coming out is that there is need for the nation to be grounded on 'bargaining', which would probably go a long way in ensuring a win-win situation for all, whereas the nation will not be inconvenienced and the economy will not take a dent. An impasse normally leads to some undesirable elements high jacking a noble cause.

C9) 4/6/11: Government Concerned by false and alarmist reporting; Police Commissioner refutes false reports

The Government of Botswana wishes to put on record its concern about a growing number of misleading and/or false reports appearing in various media outlets in relation to the ongoing strike action by a segment of the public service.

Some of these reports are clearly based on deliberate disinformation, as well as the elevation of unsubstantiated rumour and simple exaggeration, which taken together are seemingly calculated to promote a climate of undue alarm.

Further to the above and contrary to what has been alleged on the front page of at least two newspapers, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Thebeyame Tsimako yesterday held a media briefing during which he issued a statement refuting reports that members of the Botswana Police Service fired rubber bullets at protestors in central Gaborone on Wednesday night, while giving an account of the events of the evening.

In this respect, it may be noted that the front page pictures showing a certain individual with a leg injury portray an injury that was clearly not caused by a rubber bullet or any other projectile fired by Police.

In his briefing the Commissioner also observed that:

"...some of the media houses have published articles and made announcements, suggesting that the Police have acted outside of the law by amongst others; allegedly using rubber bullets to disperse peaceful demonstrators and detaining innocent under-age children. Some of you have even gone to the extent of alleging that a police officer and a teacher were killed during the ongoing strike. These allegations, to my knowledge as the Commissioner of Police are devoid of any truth."

While confirming that the Police Service "have dealt with some ugly scenes which called for our intervention" during the course of the strike, the Commissioner went on to further assure members of press present that:

"the current strike has been peaceful despite these minor incidents and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved, including Union leaders, for having ensured that the strike was held in a peaceful mood. But of course there are those who have tried to provoke the situation by their disorderly conduct."

For media houses who may not have already received it, the full text of the Police Commissioner's statement is reproduced below. **[C 10]**

Government further wishes to refute reports that Ministers were seriously threatened and otherwise had to flee from audiences during their ongoing consultations.

While it is true that a few meetings were cancelled, elsewhere throughout the country consultative meetings have been taking place without serious incident, albeit in some cases with staged walkouts by small numbers of participants

Further to the above it is not true that any of H.H. the Vice President's kgotla meetings in Shoshong and Mahalapye earlier this week were seriously disrupted, much less called off.

While in Mahalapye and Shoshong there occurred a walkout by a handful of apparent strike sympathisers at the start of the consultation, the meetings were otherwise well attended and proceeded without incident as is indeed reflected in other media reports.

C10) 3/6/11: MEDIA BRIEF BY THE COMMISSIONER OF THE BOTSWANA POLICE SERVICE, MR. THEBEYAME TSIMAKO, AT BOTSWANA POLICE HEADQUARTERS

1. Bagaetsho, I have decided to arrange this Media conference to meet and discuss with you media people, about some events associated with the ongoing Civil Servants' strike, that have called for police intervention.

2. Before I talk about particular incident, I would like to state for the record that the Police are not the enemies of the community. The Botswana Police Service is an apolitical institution, whose mandate includes the protection of life and property. This we do without taking sides and always applying our minds to the principles of civility, even in situations that would otherwise require the use of force.

3. This we have ably demonstrated as we deal with matters of public order and security with regards to the current situation of the civil servants strike. As you are no doubt aware, some of the media houses have published articles and made announcements, suggesting that the Police have acted outside of the law by amongst others; allegedly using rubber bullets to disperse peaceful demonstrators and detaining innocent under-age children. Some of you have even gone to the extent of alleging that a police officer and a teacher were killed during the ongoing strike. These allegations, to my knowledge as the Commissioner of Police are devoid of any truth.

4. But having said that, it is true that we have dealt with some ugly scenes which called for our intervention. In the last Press Statement we informed you that we had recorded 18 incidents reported in Gaborone, Gantsi, Hukuntsi, Mahalapye, Mochudi, Mogoditshane, Molepolole, Moshupa, Ramoutswa, Selebi-Phikwe and Thamaga.

5. I would like to categorically state for the record that in all these interactions, the police used minimum or no force at all to disperse or arrest those who were involved.

6. Bagaetsho, as you are aware, the current strike has been peaceful despite these minor incidents and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved, including Union leaders, for having ensured that the strike was held in a peaceful mood. But of course there are those who have tried to provoke the situation by their disorderly conduct. For instance, on Wednesday evening, the situation turned intimidating when some strikers, armed with tree branches and sticks, blocked the roads, threatened motorists and burnt some refuse on the road near the Princess Marina traffic circle. The police were called in to intervene and they used para-illuminating signals to improve visibility as it was dark.

7. On hearing the cracking sound of the lights, the strikers hurriedly dispersed and in the aftermath of all of these, a man was found with a broken leg and taken to hospital. The truth of the matter regarding the Wednesday event is that the police fired warning shots into the air using rubber bullets at a different spot to the one where the injured man was found. It therefore follows that the allegation that the police shot and injured the man in question is false.

8. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my earlier position that as an organization, we will always do our work within the confines of the law. But when the situation calls for our intervention, we shall do so without fear or favour.

C11) 8/6/11: REPORT FROM THE BOTSWANA POLICE SERVICE ON DISTURBANCE AT GABORONE MALL

Yesterday afternoon some of the striking civil servants in Gaborone left the Gaborone Secondary School grounds where they normally converge and crossed to the Civic Centre where they kicked walls, barricaded the road in front of the Civic Centre and acted in a disorderly manner.

The group proceeded into the Main Mall where they smashed windows at Pep Stores, Cash Corp and Botswana Savings Bank Main Mall. In response, the police moved in and drove them out of the Main Mall to avert further damage to property and to safeguard the lives of innocent people.

The striking civil servants ultimately returned to the GSS grounds. Fearing that they might cause further damage under the cover of darkness, the police later dispersed them and the situation returned to normality.

As a result of this development, and taking into account other similar incidents that have been taking place around the country, we would like to urge the leadership of the unions to prevail upon their members to stop these provocative acts with immediate effect because failure to do so shall lead to the use of force to ensure the maintenance of law and order.

As a peace loving nation, we certainly do not want the situation to escalate to this level, but Botswana Police Service shall not hesitate to act appropriately when the situation demands.

C12) 3/6/11: THE 16TH SESSION OF THE BOTSWANA/ZAMBIA JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY HELD IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, FROM 30TH MAY TO 3RD JUNE, 2011

1. The 16th Session of the Botswana/Zambia Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 30th May to 3rd June, 2011.

2. The delegation of the Republic of Zambia was led by Hon. Dr. Kalombo T. MWANSA, MP, Minister of Defence and included Hon. Mkhondo D. LUNGU, MP, Minister of Home Affairs and other senior Government officials.

3. The delegation of the Republic of Botswana was led by Hon. Edwin J. BATSHU, MP, Acting Minister of Defence, Justice and Security and included Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Hon. Letlhogonolo P. SIELE, MP, and other senior Government officials.

4. The Commission reviewed the implementation of the resolutions passed during the 15th Session of the Commission, held from 2nd to 4th November, 2010 in Gaborone, Botswana and noted, with satisfaction, that most of the resolutions had been implemented. The Commission called for the speedy implementation of the few outstanding resolutions.

5. The two delegations re-affirmed the important role of the Commission in resolving security issues along the common border and between the two countries. This had contributed to the existing strong relations between the two countries and the Defence and Security Services, in particular.

6. The Commission noted with concern, however, that transnational crimes, such as motor vehicle thefts, drug and human trafficking, illegal migration, smuggling of goods, poaching, and other forms of crime, had continued to pose security problems for the two countries. For this reason, the Commission challenged relevant security institutions in both countries to map-out joint strategies aimed at curbing these threats.

7. The Commission noted that Zambia was preparing for Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections in 2011 and wished the country peaceful elections.

8. The Commission also noted that Zambia will be hosting the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) Conference in June, 2011 and wished the country success in this important undertaking.

9. The Commission commended Zambia for her efforts in finding solutions to political challenges facing the region in her capacity as Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

10. The Zambian delegation thanked their counterparts from Botswana for accepting the invitation to the 16th Session of the Commission, which underscored the commitment of the two countries to the business of the Commission.

11. The Botswana delegation extended an invitation to their Zambian counterparts to the 17th Session of the Commission to be held on a date and venue to be communicated later.

12. The Zambian delegation accepted the invitation and wished the Botswana delegation a safe passage back home.

13. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere characteristic of the excellent relations that exist between Botswana and Zambia.

C13) 1/6/11: IMF MISSION CONCLUDES – BOTSWANA ECONOMY BACK INTO STRING GROWTH

Please find below a copy of a Press Release issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday reporting on their 18-31/5/11 mission to our country to consult on recent economic developments and prospects. Among other things the mission concluded that: "Thanks in large part to good policies supported by a rebound in diamond exports, the Botswana economy is now back onto a strong growth trajectory."

The mission also praised government's current spending priorities noting that: The mission supports a number of ongoing government initiatives to improve public financial management, including better prioritization of overall government spending, emphasis on maintenance and refurbishment of existing infrastructure projects rather than initiating new projects..."

The mission, however, expressed continued concern about government's share of total GDP. In this respect the mission expressed particular concern about Government's large wage bill which it characterized as being "unsustainable":

"...the mission's view is that wage policy should be prudent and any nominal adjustment made in FY2011/12 would need to be financed by either over performance in revenues or expenditure savings generated elsewhere in the budget so that the budget deficit remains unchanged. Going forward, the government would need to reduce the size of the wage bill as a share of GDP as this remains rather high relative to comparator countries and is not sustainable. Reducing the wage bill would also require efforts to make the public service leaner and more efficient."

Here it may be noted that notwithstanding similar advice from the IMF and others institutions and individuals in the past, Government made a policy decision to avoid radical downsizing of the public service in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 global economic downturn so as to avoid both the social costs of putting people out of work and the economic cost of reducing disposable incomes driving the local retail sector.

Full text of the IMF Press Release -

IMF Press Release No. 11/206: Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Mission to Botswana

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission led by Mr. Lamin Leigh visited Gaborone during May 18-31 to conduct the 2011 Article IV Consultation discussions with Botswana. The mission's work focused on reviewing recent economic developments and prospects and policies to ensure continued macroeconomic stability and growth. The mission met with Minister of Finance and Development Planning, the Honourable O. Kenneth Matambo; Bank of Botswana Governor, Ms. Linah K. Mohohlo, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Mr. Solomon M. Sekwakwa; senior government officials, development partners, and representatives from the private sector and civil society.

At the end of the mission, Mr. Leigh, the IMF Mission Chief for Botswana, issued the following statement in Gaborone today, outlining the mission's preliminary conclusions:

“Thanks in large part to good policies supported by a rebound in diamond exports, the Botswana economy is now back onto a strong growth trajectory. At the same time, however, inflation has edged up in recent months triggered by high international commodity prices which are beyond the authorities’ control. While inflation is currently higher than the Bank of Botswana’s medium-term objective band of 3-6 percent, at this stage, there appears to be no firm evidence of generalized price pressures in the domestic economy. Thus, the mission supports the Bank of Botswana’s neutral policy stance with respect to interest rates as outlined in the bank’s 2011 Monetary Policy Statement. The fiscal policy stance in the FY2011/12 budget should help to contain domestic demand and rebuild the Pula Fund.

“Botswana faces the daunting challenge of reducing the relative size of the government in the economy. The government’s overall expenditure envelope (as a share of GDP) is very high by international standards, thus warranting a thorough assessment of pockets of unproductive spending and ways to increase efficiencies. Moreover, fiscal consolidation is critical given the likely plateau of diamond revenues in the next few years and the need to rebuild the Pula Fund for the benefit of future generations. The mission supports a number of ongoing government initiatives to improve public financial management, including better prioritization of overall government spending, emphasis on maintenance and refurbishment of existing infrastructure projects rather than initiating new projects, and efforts to contain the growth of budget appropriations of current transfers, goods and services, and the wage bill. On the latter, the mission’s view is that wage policy should be prudent and any nominal adjustment made in FY2011/12 would need to be financed by either over performance in revenues or expenditure savings generated elsewhere in the budget so that the budget deficit remains unchanged. Going forward, the government would need to reduce the size of the wage bill as a share of GDP as this remains rather high relative to comparator countries and is not sustainable. Reducing the wage bill would also require efforts to make the public service leaner and more efficient. The mission welcomes efforts by the Botswana Unified Revenue Service to expand the tax base including through the establishment of a Large Taxpayer Unit (LTU) in line with international best practice.

“Despite its upper middle-income status, Botswana faces significant development challenges. In line with the tenth national development plan (NDP10), the mission reiterated that a broad-based and private sector led economy is essential if Botswana is to unleash its growth potential and sustain it. Fostering economic diversification beyond the diamonds sector will demand steadfast efforts to target economic sectors with high income and employment multiplier effects on the economy, albeit avoiding unwarranted tax exemptions that would lead to a narrow tax base. Tackling the high level of structural unemployment is also needed to improve the quality of economic growth. Thus, the mission welcomes the progress being made on the government’s tertiary education reform program and the Human Resource Development Council which should help to address the skills mismatch in the labour market.

"The mission would like to thank the authorities for their warm hospitality, the timely provision of required information, the productive and open discussions, and the excellent cooperation during the mission."

C14) 1/6/11: S&P AFFIRMS BOTSWANA'S "A" RATINGS

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has affirmed its 'A-' long-term and 'A-2' short-term foreign currency sovereign credit ratings on the Republic of Botswana and on the Bank of Botswana, the country's central bank.

"We also affirmed the 'A' long-term and 'A-1' short-term local currency sovereign credit ratings on Botswana and its central bank. The republic's 'A+' transfer and convertibility assessment is unchanged. The outlooks on Botswana and the Bank of Botswana are stable," the rating agency said.

It said the affirmation reflects Botswana's strong public sector balance sheet, even though this recently deteriorated. It also reflects its well-managed minerals-based economy, and long record of political stability. These factors are somewhat offset by the country's narrow economic base, which is vulnerable to shocks; heavy reliance on diamond sector performance, despite efforts to diversify; fiscal challenges; and still-significant development needs.

"Botswana's stable politics, track-record of prudent macroeconomic policies, and high level of transparency are strong by emerging market standards. However, key structural credit constraints are the country's narrow economy, together with income levels that are amongst the lowest in the 'A' category, high unemployment, and the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

"Botswana is the world's top producer of diamonds and the diamond industry remains the country's economic locomotive. Abundant diamond resources, well-managed and exploited, and a social-democratic-style welfare state, have helped Botswana to develop from one of the world's poorest countries to a middle-income country with GDP per capita of about \$7,500 in 2010.

"The global downturn hit Botswana hard, as the country's key commodity markets; in particular the diamond market, contracted sharply and external demand slumped. But since mid-2010, the market has rebounded sharply. Real GDP contracted by 4.8% in 2009, but expanded again by an estimated 7.2% in 2010. Our projections indicate that it should remain fairly strong in fiscal years 2011-2013, provided that the recovery in the global demand for diamonds continues.

"The stable outlook balances the fiscal difficulties the government faces with a strong public sector external balance sheet. The rating could come under pressure if the government suffered further fiscal slippage and did not meet its consolidation plans, due

to weaker than anticipated revenues or to higher than forecast expenditures, which could lead to greater and more rapid dissipation of asset buffers.

"Botswana's creditworthiness could improve if reforms are implemented more quickly, dependence on mining continues to decline, and private sector development broadens. However, we do not expect this to be achieved within the current forecast period," S&P said.

C15) 1/6/11: RE: H.H. THE VICE PRESIDENT'S KGOTLA MEETINGS IN MAHALAPYE

As was previously announced, H.H. the Vice President, Lt. Gen. Mompoti Merafhe, will this morning address the Mahalapye Main Kgotla. Yesterday morning he addressed the Kgotla at Boseja Ward, Mahalapye East.

We are informed that the meeting was well attended. While it is true that a handful of people walked out of the meeting when it began, apparently in protest with respect to the strike, the meeting otherwise proceeded without major incident.

His Honour's Kgotla meeting last Monday was also well attended and proceeded without serious incident following a minor walkout.

D. ALSO IN THE NEWS:

NB: News reports, statements and/or views reproduced below are NOT necessarily those of Government of Botswana.

D1) 6/6/11: GUEST OPINION PUBLISHED IN MONITOR NEWSPAPER "KHAMA WILL NOT LOSE" DR DISANG MORRISON

The recent coup to oust Khama's presidency will come only through convincing the electorate of his lack of leadership or wrong doing.

He was recently elected president through a democratic electoral process and that clearly proves that the electorate wants to keep him in power and those who think otherwise should do so through democratic elections.

What makes Khama to strive and win is his personality, character and legacy which all stand out beyond the usual dirty politicking. Let us see how he is handling the "public strike". From the beginning he has always said that salary increase is not possible during this economic downturn. He was certain of his stand that the government budget cannot accommodate the high salary increases. Even as the public strike intensified and students destroyed what is their future, the president did not bow down. He felt that the right and best thing to do is to tell the truth and nothing else but the truth: that there is no money. He was not afraid that this was unpopular amongst some people and was not afraid to make the correct decision. But a president like any major leader must often

make choices in tough moments, and his choices or priorities are water and electricity over salary increases. The current blackouts in the country due to lack of electricity and other villages which have recently had shortages of water are evident for all to see.

When he was addressing the nation on the public strike his words, tone and expressions showed honesty and sincerity. He was comfortable and sincere in political communication, which is lacking in most politicians.

You could sense his anxiety as he gave the response that we must spread the wealth and stop being selfish. This displays Khama as a strong, confident leader and characteristically considerate with a special knack for making a difference in people's lives. I always wonder because the whole wide world is affected by this economic downturn even the best economies like the USA, UK, Canada, France, Japan etc have had massive job losses and the IMF have recently asked some developing countries like Botswana to consider reducing the number of public service.

I see Khama's personality as a need especially in an era of this economic hardship because he has continued to ensure that there is equity in the share of economic resources by all its citizens. This is the direction and decisiveness that we need; that nobody is left behind. He has shown that he will not compromise his judgment to appease some people at the expense of the majority and the country.

He has been forthright on a host of critical or hot issues like alcohol abuse, customer service delivery, corruption, discipline, crime, race, unemployment, abject poverty, his non-support to increase parliament salaries some years ago, and asking some of his colleagues to respect the president I (referring to Festus Mogae) etc.

We also see this personality trait in the President of the US Barrack Obama who recently said, "The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines. But precisely because of our friendship we have to tell the truth". Israel is a long time friend and ally of the US and the Jewish Americans make a sizable percentage of voters that Obama needs for his re-election for another term. But he realised that it is one thing to be political, and quite another to be a chronic people pleaser. You know swaying to political expediency is not the leadership quality that we need because sooner than later that character flaw will unfavourably affect Khama big time in future and unfortunately, us, too. This is the most critical time in the life of our country and what we need is a leader first and foremost who has all the leadership qualities thinking about how the lowest level person in our society is surviving during this recession when working class people cannot cope.

When presenting his speech I could see that like any other leader Khama is also more concerned about his legacy when he leaves the presidency. He does not want to be like the former president of the US George Bush who left the US in the worst economic recession since the great depression. He said Botswana has enjoyed a good economic management and growth and why should he be the one to spoil it. He is simply saying I

am not one of those politicians who will appease some people and make decisions that will drive the country into ground zero.

Rev Martin Luther King had a beautiful dream and it seems like Khama has a dream too; a big dream for our country that he needs to fulfil. That is what defines him as a president, that is the excitement that wakes him up early in the morning and report to duty at 7am, with a sense of purpose and responsibility.

So up there in the tall building of the No. 1 Office in the country, he seems to look outside the windows and look across the skyline of Gaborone and beyond and he feels so far up and so far away that he cannot feel the people and the community. He does not want to be so up there; he wants to be grounded, helping ordinary people, families and poor communities with challenges that face us as a nation. He wants them to have the same opportunities that some of us have had that made us to succeed: water, food, shelter, education, discipline etc.

That is the excitement that makes our president fully alive, that is the dream for our president, and that seems to be the place in the world that he would want to live, to connect with and help ordinary folks reach their potential.

That is what he thinks about every day that is what he wants for our country while the "Chameleon" Miss K dreams about destroying BOP and staging unsuccessful coups in the form of a public strike to oust Khama.

That is what I call wisdom and successful leadership. That is what makes him keep succeeding - a resilient leader who beats all odds.

D2) 5/6/11: PUBLISHED IN THE SUNDAY STANDARD NEWSPAPER - "THE LAW IS BLIND; IT EATS EVEN ITS OWNER!" BY LEDIRETSE MOLAKE

I came across the above statement in the book, Rules and Processes by J Comaroff and S Roberts. It is a Setswana rule that informs how we relate to the law. It is of particular importance in regard to how we understand the current public sector strike.

In our constitutional set up, approval precedes implementation or execution. Thus in regard to public expenditure the executive presents a budget, which parliament must approve, before the executive can execute. Execution itself is the province of the executive. Parliament having approved public withdrawal of funds from the public purse has no authority to tell the executive when to and how to spend the public funds.

The Sunday Standard editorial of 29 May 2011 puts into proper perspective the relationship of Rre Khama's position that there are no funds for an increase in the public sector wages, and the unions call for parliament to intervene. Those of us who were for sometime involved in the citizen economic empowerment movement were always frustrated by members of parliament who approved a budget that made no provision for

citizen companies, but who then later on complained that government did not cater for citizens companies in the very same budget that they approved.

The position being taken by some of our members of parliament is consistent with this hypocritical posturing. They agreed with the executive that there will be no provision for a public sector wage increase. Now they want to intrude into the sphere of the executive in clear disregard of our constitution. In essence what the unions and members of parliament are saying is that a private dispute between an employer and employees can be used to justify disregard of constitutional process. This is not acceptable. We cannot purport to be in support of the rule of law and in the same breath assume positions that demonstrate otherwise.

Rre Khama has an exit point, September 2011, the unions never had an independent exit point. That is their main weakness. They cannot seek to set aside our constitution to cover up their lack of an exit strategy. The best that parliament and the unions can do is to ask Rre Khama to accelerate his exit point. They cannot however succeed in their request if they place conditions that are otherwise unsustainable. Conditions that are intended to save face.

In criminal law if one assaults a person one is charged with assault. If the victim dies then the charge is elevated to murder. If one goes on strike and it turns out that that such a strike was illegal there is no room to argue that you were absent from work because you were on strike. You were absent from work without lawful cause. The fact that you believed yourself to be on a lawful strike is a mitigating factor. It is not a defence to the charge that you were absent from work without a lawful cause. Again the best that the unions and parliament can do is make a request to Rre Khama, as a leader of a country with high unemployment, to reinstate the dismissed employees. There is no room to put this as a demand.

I have also read somewhere where a union leader argues that if government implements the “no-work-no-pay” rule they the union will implement the “no-pay-no-work” rule. My understanding is that the employer has a duty to provide work and for the employee to work. The employer pays the employee for his labour. If there is a backlog of work arising out of the strike the employer has every right to determine that old work be done when the employee resumes work before new work is carried out. The employee does not determine when work is to be done. There is therefore no room to suggest that employees will not do work that they have not been paid for. The statement is in fact senseless.

The employer may even determine that there is a need to work overtime to make up for lost time. The employee cannot refuse to work overtime to make up for lost production. Where the employee works overtime the law covers the measure of the compensation. It is therefore difficult to see what a trade union leader hopes to achieve by putting forth a position that the employer has solution for.

Why can the P500 million not be used to pay lost wages and the balance given to the lowest paid employees? In my view this is the best way for both parliament and the unions to save face in the interim. The employees who went on strike will then not lose their income and there will be some measure of success in regard to reducing the gap between the lowly paid and the highest paid. Parliament will then be able to withdraw from the dispute with its dignity as regards due constitutional process intact.

One must take note that parliament cannot discuss withdrawal from the public funds unless such a bill is presented by a minister of finance. Parliament's hands are tied. Even if parliament wanted to make funds available for a public sector wage increase it would need the minister of finance to move first. Cabinet can however spend a certain amount without parliament approval. It is to this ability that parliament and the unions may appeal. Trying to exert pressure is not the way to go.

The strike has also allowed us to see developments that a few weeks ago I would not have thought possible. For the past few months I have tried to get our media houses to look at Rre Kwelagobe with an objective eye in much the same way that they look at Rre Khama. I was pleasantly surprised to see the Watchdog Column of The Sunday Standard comparing Rre Rammidi to what Rre Kwelagobe used to be. It made mention that Rre Kwelagobe used to be a politician of a certain calibre before he was taken over by commercial interests. I have never understood why our media houses overlooked Rre Kwelagobe's centrality to some of the failings of the BDP.

If I advice the minister of education to close a school and she fails to do so and riots erupt at the school, how does the media get to know that I had tendered such advice? Surely we do not expect the minister to go to the media to tell them that she had ignored advice. The only plausible source of the information is me. The question then becomes, why is it so important for me to let the media know that I had tendered such advice? The answer is simple, I want to be seen to be relevant. The follow up question is why?

If I have influence on a government I am in a position to sell such influence to the highest bidder. If my prospective buyers see that I have lost influence they will not come to me. This places pressure on me to make moves to demonstrate that I still have influence. One way of doing this is to precipitate a crisis situation. The crisis will allow me to emerge as a saviour. It may even allow me to demonstrate to a sitting president that I have power to bring him down. This is a high risk move for if the sitting president calls my bluff I am finished.

It is also a high risk move for if my supporters in parliament realize that I am actually asking them to risk early dissolution of parliament when the opposition is on a rise they will see that rather than a leadership style being at issue it is really my personal interest which are at issue, and they may abandon me. I am effectively using my supporters as fodder for my own interests. No thinking person can allow themselves to be used in this fashion.

Even if the president does not call my bluff I am finished, for I have given him ammunition to support him if he decides to alienate me. My conduct suggests that the president will be justified in excluding me from important decisions, for his fear that I may sell such information to the highest bidder will be properly founded. If I can conduct myself in a manner that embarrasses my colleagues so long as it serves my own interests, then no president can be called upon to include me in important national decisions.

Within the arena of freedom of expression there are no sacred cows. Media houses that shy away from interrogating certain individuals are in the same class as a public media that gives only a one sided version of events. The private media cannot call upon the public media to be objective when it fails to interrogate certain individuals and the positions that they take or their centrality to BDP failings.

D3) 2/6/11: PUBLISHED IN THE ECHO NEWSPAPER – “THE HYPOCRISY OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS” BY SAMESOSI MOKGETHIWA

Recently we have heard from different civil society organizations making their voices heard at last. While our civic organizations strive to sound reasonable, one cannot help pick some hypocrisy in their statements. Many of them have suggested any viable solutions to the impasse except to urge the “concerned parties” to come up with a solution. The government says if it were to succumb to the union’s demand that would put further strain on our economy. One would have expected these organizations to either urge government to disregard the deficit “nonsense” and add on to it by giving civil servants their 12% or 16%, or reason with the unions to show them what long term effect such a decision would have on the economy of the country and in turn, us as individuals including the unemployed, akere le bo unemployed are stakeholders and entitled to government revenues.

The statement by BOCONGO was most interesting. The call on the government to account on several issues one of which it alleges that the government is now arresting union leaders. If it were not that the statement was issued by one Thapelo Ndlovu, I would be asking BOCONGO what it suggests be done with people who incite violence. In the world of BOCONGO, the unions, and their political masters such people should not be touched. They can go ahead and tell the workers to topple a democratically elected government, kill or injure our law enforcement officers, harass those that have a democratic right NOT to go on strike. That is the world of BOCONGO and the aforementioned. But then I am not so sure if the statement was BOCONGO’s or Ndlovu’s position. The language and rhetoric sounded too familiar, it reminded me of the language that MISA Botswana would churn from time to time while Mr Ndlovu was at MISA. Let’s hope all affiliates of BOCONGO do own up to that press release penned by their own Ndlovu.

All along we have been told that the President refused to meet with the unions. Now it emerges that indeed the President had agreed to meet with the unions during the initial ten-day strike. In an interview with the voice of Friday 27th 2011, the President says he

had agreed to meet with unions before they decided to call the strike indefinite in which case the President also decided to put off talks indefinitely. Makes perfect sense to me. In any case, one would have expected the unions to ask for the President's intervention as a father figure as they like to say immediately after the talks collapsed, and before declaring a strike. Instead they embarked on an ill-defined strike and thereafter demanded the President meet them. I leave that to you the reader to make sense out of it.

Of all the shocks in this saga is the fact that the Union leaders are getting their full salaries from the contributions of the workers while they urge workers to continue with the struggle on no pay. Wouldn't it make sense for bo Rre Motshwarakgole to forego their salaries for the duration of the strike? Somebody is taking the workers for granted I think. My advice to union members is that after all the dust has settled, they should change their leadership. The current union leadership has betrayed the workers and they must go. They are not indispensable after all.

As for other comments by the likes of Sidney Pilane and bo Motswaledi, I wouldn't want to make a lot out of it. After all these are people who are at war with the President as all of us know.

These are their battles and have little to do with the workers. Their foul language, rhetoric, the bile that comes out of their mouths and the disdain they portray for our President is all telling. As for me, I may not count for a lot but I am not going to help these guys fight their wars when I have my own.

May I ask the unions to now give us numbers so that as the public we may gauge the support the strike had. This is important information that the public is entitled to. I know they keep registers of attendance. We were made to understand they had something like 90 000 would close our borders so that the nation is starved of food which, as well all know, is imported from RSA. They wanted to unleash foot and mouth on the ordinary citizens by calling on the veterinary employees to also refuse to work and calling those who chose their democratic right NOT to go on strike Malope. They shouted at the top of their voices and vowed to let the sick die while encouraging the victims to sue the government. Incidentally, did the unions ever think that it is possible for citizens to use the Unions for loss of life and other losses or bone they are immune? Government claims there were 25 000 on strike, what figures does BOFEPUSU feed us?

To the opposition, I believe they are just too opportunistic or their naiveté can only be measured in busloads. I would advise them that strikes are a permanent feature in the social intercourse. If governments were to resign each time there is a strike then the world would have long come to a standstill and they should know they will also face the same the day they are voted to ruin this country.

END NOTE - TAUTONA TIMES

Tautona Times was launched in May 2003 as a means to communicate to the media and other interested stakeholders. It is freely available to any who wish to receive it. But, we have no wish to SPAM. Requests for cancellation will be promptly acted on, as will any complaints about such things as double mailings. For ease of downloading all e-mailed copies of TT are sent in text format WITHOUT ANY ATTACHMENTS.