

**OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH BY ASSISTANT MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE HON MOLEBATSI SHIMANE MOLEBATSI AT
THE AGRITECH WORKSHOP OF THE GLOBAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2023 IN BOTSWANA**

Director of ceremonies,

I greet you all

Director of ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is with great pleasure and honour to be given the opportunity to officiate at this Agritech Workshop which is part of the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023. I fully understand that it has been organized by Pulaspace in partnership with France Embassy in Botswana. I am informed that the theme of this workshop is, "France - **Botswana: Leveraging Opportunities for Cooperation around Technology & Creative Innovation,**"
2. This theme reflects that governments must commit to harnessing innovation to drive sustainable agricultural development through cooperation. This theme is also in aligned with HIS Excellency the President Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi reset agenda under the digitisation pillar. It is evident that our government recognizes that innovation and technology are at the heart of job creation and agriculture industry, guaranteeing food security for our country.
3. As government, we commit to creating an enabling environment for innovators, through development of policy and legislative framework that will allow you to do your innovations and launch your start-ups.

4. Director of ceremonies,

There is no doubt that Agriculture is the backbone of Botswana's economy, and it plays a pivotal role in ensuring food security, job creation, and economic growth of our country. As we gather here today, we recognize the potential of technology to revolutionize the agricultural sector and further make it more efficient, productive, and resilient.

5. This workshop therefore serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and inspiration. I am aware that, gathered here today are experts, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders from across the agritech ecosystem with a common denominator of exchanging innovative solutions and exploring opportunities that can transform the way we approach and live agriculture.

Director of ceremonies,

6. My Ministry embraces and places more emphasis on the use of technology for improved productivity and efficiency. We have been using and continue to use the Botswana Animal Identification and Traceability System for cattle and this has enabled us access to beef export market. In demonstration

of our conviction in technology we will be introducing a crop management system in our new program for arable farming called Temo Letlotlo. This will offer an automated crop management system that streamlines the end-to-end process of crop production.

7. I therefore want to encourage the youth with their creative minds to take advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and come up with innovations that will address challenges that face our farmers. This so because it has the potential to increase earnings and raise our standard of living.

Director of ceremonies,

8. During this workshop, we will delve into topics that highlight challenges within the agritech industry. We will also discuss various opportunities and practical solutions within the agritech industry such as digital agriculture, agri-financing, and sustainable practices. We will also highlight the importance of public-private partnerships and supportive policies to foster a conducive environment for agritech innovation.

Director of ceremonies,

9. I encourage all participants to actively engage in the discussions, ask questions, and network with each other. Let us use this opportunity to learn from each other, forge new partnerships, and identify ways to leverage technology for the benefit of our agricultural communities.
10. I extend my sincere appreciation to the organizers, sponsors, and all those who have contributed to making this workshop a reality. Your dedication to advancing agritech is commendable, and I am confident that this event will yield valuable insights and actionable outcomes.

Director of ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen,

11. As we embark on this journey of exploring the intersection of agriculture and technology, let us remain committed to sustainable development, inclusivity, and the well-being of our farmers and rural communities.
12. I wish you all a fruitful deliberations and a memorable experience during this Workshop.

13. With those few remarks I declare the Agritech Workshop officially opened.

14. I thank you all for your attention.