WELCOME REMARKS
BY THE
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS
MP FOR SEFHARE RAMOKGONAMI CONSTITUENCY,
HONOURABLE DORCAS MAKGATO
AT THE
GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY
OF
THE PAEDIATRIC CANCER AND HAETOMOLOGY CENTRE

Time: 1100hrs
Date: 21ST FEBRUARY
Venue: UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

Values: Botso, Equity, Timeliness, Customer Focus, Teamwork, Accountability
• Directors of Ceremonies,
• Your Excellency The President of Botswana - Lieutenant General Dr Seretse Khama Ian Khama,
• Cabinet Ministers and Assistant Ministers here present,
• The Mayor of Gaborone City, His Worship Kagiso Thutlwe,
• Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation CEO, Giovanni Caforio,
• Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation President, John Damonti,
• Botswana – Baylor Centre of Excellence CEO,
• Permanent Secretary MOHW, Shenaaz El Halabi,
• All Permanent Secretaries present,
• University Of Botswana Vice chancellor, Prof Thabo Fako
• University of Botswana Dean of School of Medicine, Prof Mathew Tanko
• Coordinator Botswana University Hospital, Dr Malaki Tshipayagae
• Captains of the Industry,
• Members of the Media,
• Distinguished ladies & Gentlemen
1. It is a privilege and a humbling experience for me on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Wellness as well as The Government of Botswana to be part of an event of this magnitude.

2. This event celebrates a great milestone in the care of children with cancer and blood disorders in Botswana. As many here may be aware, the Botswana-Baylor Children’s Clinical Centre of Excellence, is a Public-Private Partnership between the Government of Botswana and the Baylor College of Medicine International Paediatric AIDS Initiative. The Centre works closely with my Ministry in providing unsurpassed, comprehensive care, treatment, psycho-social support, health care professional training, and clinical research.

3. Your Excellency as you may know, my Ministry and Botswana Baylor Children’s Centre of Excellence Trust got into a marriage when we signed a Memorandum of Agreement in June 2016 to establish a pediatric cancer and hematology center.

4. Distinguished guests, just a brief history, The Botswana Baylor Children’s Clinical Centre of excellence was registered in 2003 as a Non-Governmental Organization and established a partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The main Centre of Excellence in Gaborone provides comprehensive care for 2
thousand and 400 patients and another thousand through its decentralized outreach sites throughout the country.

5. Your Excellency, The most common types of childhood cancers that we experience are blood cancers, including leukemia and lymphomas. The result which I have been furnished with by my team reveal that an estimated 80 percent of pediatric cancer patients in Southern and Eastern Africa do not survive, resulting in approximately 40 – thousand childhood cancer deaths each year, due largely to a significant shortage of healthcare professionals and infrastructure.

6. Directors of Ceremonies, The new Centre which will be built on this ground, will make Botswana a regional Hub for pediatric oncology training, research and care using the tested Centre of excellence model. We are going to work with Uganda and Malawi and later Ethiopia to train pediatric oncologists, provide support to general pediatric residency, undergraduate medical trainees with the goal transforming pediatric cancer in sub Saharan Africa.

7. This developments ladies and gentlemen will bring to Botswana the latest technology with potential to work with local institutions such as The Botswana Innovation hub and University of Botswana. It will also save our government millions of Pulas while transforming pediatric cancer and general pediatric care
and also generate income through patient referrals from neighboring countries.

8. Your Excellency, Doctors, nurses and ancillary professionals will be recruited from the U.S., South Africa and Europe to provide training to local healthcare professionals and to begin treating children with cancer immediately.

9. Ladies and gentlemen, true friendships and partnerships are as uncommon as they are precious. The partnership between BIPAI, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital, on one hand, and the Botswana Government, on the other, exemplifies this fact. I note with sincere pleasure the presence today of Bristol Myers executives.

10. Your Excellency, your presence here today with some members of your Cabinet, is a sign of your commitment to the welfare of Batswana children. I would like to take this moment to express our sincere gratitude to BIPAI, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital.

11. Your mission to discover, develop and deliver innovative medicines and to share your resources and expertise to help patients prevail over serious and life threatening diseases is commendable. It is through such public private partnerships that we can overcome such challenges. I cannot thank you enough on behalf of Batswana.

12. Ladies and Gentlemen as I conclude my remarks I urge other companies and institutions to borrow a leaf from Bristol
Myers Squibb Company, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital with regard to their corporate social responsibility to the world at large.

13. Distinguished Guests, I Welcome you all to this momentous event and to our partners welcome to our Beautiful Country.

PULA! PULA! PULA!