

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA, HONOURABLE CHRISTIAAN
DE GRAAFF AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD
SECURITY HELD IN ROME, ITALY 16 – 18 NOVEMBER
2009**

Director of Ceremonies

Your Excellency, the Director General – Dr. Jacques Diouf

Your Excellencies-Heads of States and Governments

Representatives of International Organisations

World Food Summit Delegates from various Member States

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great honour for me and my country to be participating in this World Summit on Food Security. I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to Your Excellency, the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Dr. Jacques Diouf for inviting His Excellency the President of Republic of Botswana to this very important occasion. I would also like to thank the host country, the Government and the

people of Italy for the warm welcome and their generous hospitality.

Director of Ceremonies

This Summit comes at a time when hunger continues to be an increasing problem for many people of the world. The need for a well thought-out strategy is therefore an imperative for the leaders of the world. The urgency for a comprehensive strategy dictated by the unabated increase in the number of those who suffer from hunger cannot be overstated.

At a global level, your Excellency, the number of the hungry now stands at beyond a billion. A number of factors are attributable to this unacceptable state of affairs: decline in agricultural growth, natural disasters and policy failure being among the main reasons. These are the areas that we need to focus on and provide resources to turn agriculture around.

My country Botswana is one of the countries that has witnessed massive decline in agricultural growth with agriculture which

was contributing 40% of GDP at independence now contributing only 2%. Although other factors are also responsible for this decline, it is also testimony to the fact that agriculture has not grown with the economy.

Notwithstanding the above, agriculture continues to play a pivotal role in the area of food security, employment generation, the provision of certain raw materials as well as the economic development in general of the country.

Director of Ceremonies

As population growth accelerates and many developing countries experience phenomenal growth, the demand on agriculture is also rapidly increasing. This has put a lot of pressure on productive and delivery systems. In view of this situation, my Government has put in place measures including projects and programmes to address the situation. These projects and programmes include inter alia;

- **NATIONAL MASTER PLAN FOR ARABLE AGRICULTURE AND DAIRY DEVELOPMENT (NAMPAADD)**

The aim of the master plan is to transform agriculture into a viable and sustainable commercial sector through the transference of technology to farmers (both small and large) to improve farm productivity and competitiveness. The components of the programme are: rainfed arable agriculture, irrigated agriculture and dairy development. Although the implementation of the master plan is not without challenges, it has yielded positive impact in the areas of dairy development and arable agriculture.

- **INTEGRATED SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR ARABLE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT (ISPAAD)**

The objective of this programme is to improve arable agricultural production to ensure food security. The major aspect of the program is provision of 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. Government is to establish

service centres as vehicles for promoting accessibility of inputs to farmers.

- **AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (AIDI)**

Director of Ceremonies

The agricultural sector competitiveness is constrained by poor and in some cases lack of agricultural infrastructure. The Government of Botswana has embraced agricultural infrastructure development as a prerequisite for rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. 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. The implementation strategy is currently being developed. However the implementation of this project will be severely affected by the current global economic recession.

Finally, Director of Ceremonies

The programmes I have alluded to above will only succeed if the world stands together and we support each other in the different ways as we are able. Let me conclude by saying that we support the principle of a global approach to fighting hunger and malnutrition and ensuring food security at individual country level.

We recognise the collective global action and appreciate the long term financial commitments for developing countries to invest in economic growth and development and food security programmes in particular. This would in the long term contribute towards strengthening the global reaction mechanism to reduce global hunger.

We would also like to confirm that the growing consensus on a number of approaches and strategies to deal with global challenges is a source of great inspiration and hope. We applaud the readiness of donors, bilateral and multilateral, to pledge

support for the current efforts to make life worth living for the majority of the world populace. This support is crucial for without it not much can be achieved especially by many developing countries. We can only hope that all donors will continue to meaningfully translate their pledges into actions that mitigate the impact of food insecurity particularly in the less privileged countries.

Thank you.