



**SPEECH BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DEBSWANA DIAMOND
COMPANY**

MR. ANDREW MAATLA MOTSOMI

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

BIUST CLASS OF 2023 GRADUATION

ON THE

22nd SEPTEMBER 2023

AT

THE BIUST CAMPUS, PALAPYE



1. The former President of the Republic of Botswana, former BIUST Chancellor, His Excellency, Dr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae;
2. Minister of Education and Skills Development, Hon. Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe;
3. Member of Parliament for Palapye, Hon. Onneetse Ramogapi;
4. The Acting Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms. Matshidiso Kole;
5. Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary, Tertiary Education, Ms. Neo C. Sebolao,
6. District Commissioner – Palapye, Mr. Goabaone Mompoti- Ntapu;
7. Mothusa Kgosi wa ga Mmangwato, Kgosi Serogola Seretse;
8. Palapye Kgosi, Ms. Martha Lebang;
9. The Acting BIUST Council Chairperson, Mr. Edwin Elias, and Council Members;
10. The Senate;
11. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo;
12. The Diamond Sponsor, Stanbic Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Chose Modise and your team;
13. Vice Chancellors and Leaders of Academic Institutions;
14. CEOs and Captains of Industry;
15. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Development and Innovation, Professor Abraham Ogwu;
16. Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Professor Elisha Shemang;



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17. Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration, Mr. Davies Tele;
 18. Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
 19. Leaders of the Security Services;
 20. Heads of Departments;
 21. BIUST Deans and Directors;
 22. The SRC President Mr. Kitso Aboneng and your Cabinet;
 23. ALUMNI President Mr. Obuile Morewane;
 24. BIUST Staff, Graduands and Parents;
 25. Members of the Media Fraternity;
 26. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;
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1. It is my singular honour and privilege to stand before you today as the Managing Director of Debswana, and as the Guest Speaker at the 8th Graduation Ceremony of the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). This occasion marks a significant milestone in the lives of our Graduands, and I congratulate each and every one of you on your remarkable achievement.
 2. This year's Graduation ceremony theme, "**Re-setting, Re-adjusting, Re-claiming: Driving Change Through Science, Technology & Entrepreneurship,**" resonates



well with the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in this dynamic and ever-evolving world. It is in sync with the current and future strategy of Debswana, where we see more of these factors being incorporated. It is a theme that underscores the imperative of adaptability, innovation, and collaboration as we navigate a future that is both uncertain but full of promise.

3. When we refer to “**Re-setting**,” it is an acknowledgement of the need for a fresh perspective – a willingness to unlearn, reevaluate, and re-imagine. In the context of rapid technological advancements, the ability to embrace change is critical. The world we live in is constantly evolving, and we must be prepared to let go of outdated paradigms and embrace new ways of thinking and doing things.

“**Re-adjusting**” highlights the importance of resilience and flexibility. The journey of innovation is seldom linear; it requires constant recalibration and course correction. As you, the graduands, step into the world beyond these walls, remember that setbacks are not failures but they present opportunities for growth. Embrace challenges, learn from them, and use them to propel yourselves forward.

“**Re-claiming**” speaks to the idea of taking ownership—of your education, your aspirations, and your contributions to society. The wealth of knowledge and skills you have acquired during your time at BIUST are powerful tools. Deploy them to make a positive impact, not just for yourselves, but for your communities and the world at large and leave a legacy.



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4. As we contemplate driving change through Science, Technology, and Entrepreneurship, it is essential to recognise that these three pillars are inextricably intertwined.

Science provides the foundation of knowledge; Technology acts as the enabler of transformation, and Entrepreneurship drives the application of these advancements to create value and effect change.

5. In the realm of Science and Engineering, we find the key to understanding the natural world and addressing pressing challenges. From climate change to healthcare, from Energy Sustainability to Food Security.

Graduands, as you move forward, consider how your expertise can contribute to solving these global issues through Science and Engineering.

6. In this era of rapid Technological Advancement, we find ourselves at the cusp of a transformative journey; that is, “The Fourth Industrial Revolution.” This is a journey characterised by the fusion of digital, physical and biological systems, and it has the power to reshape our society, economy and way of life. It is a revolution that presents boundless opportunities for progress and innovation. And it is the youth who will be at the forefront of this revolution, leading the advancement towards a brighter future.

7. However, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is not a journey to be embarked upon alone. It is a collective effort that requires collaboration and inclusivity. I call upon all stakeholders, from the Private Sector, Civil Society, Government Agencies and Educational Institutions to work hand in hand with our youth.



Let us create an ecosystem that fosters innovation, provides the necessary infrastructure and equips our youth with the skills they need to thrive in the digital era by providing them with opportunities to practise acquired knowledge to drive innovation as contribution to economic diversification.

8. Entrepreneurship, which is the engine of innovation, bridges the gap between ideas and impact. It is the spirit of entrepreneurship that turns scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements into practical solutions that drive progress. Whether you choose to start your own ventures or join existing ones, remember that entrepreneurship is about more than just profits – it is about creating value, making a difference, and leaving a legacy.

We must cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship and create an environment where startups and tech-driven enterprises can flourish, supported by access to funding, mentorship, and resources. Debswana is committed to assisting both existing businesses and startups through the Citizen Economic Empowerment Programme (CEEP) wherein qualifying entities with commercially viable business propositions are assisted with mentorship and access to funding through the strategic partnerships that Debswana has established with some of the financial institutions across the country. For those who succeed in these programmes, these constitute a springboard and a gateway into the Debswana supply chain where they can compete with other established suppliers for uptake of their products and services. We have partnered with BIUST on the Entrepreneurship Challenge to create awareness and contribute to this critical capability.



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9. As we celebrate this great milestone today, we need to remember that the new Botswana Reset Agenda encourages us all to engage in re-engineering of government entities through forward-thinking and to recalibrate our approach to development, considering the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Distinguished guests, at Debswana, we understand that human capital is our most valuable asset. It is our roadmap blueprint to building a prosperous and inclusive Botswana for future generations. We are committed to empowering young people and ensuring they are part of the high impact initiatives that will contribute to the country's Socio-Economic Development. In line with the recent renewal of the Government of Botswana and De Beers Agreement, we look ahead with optimism and pride, to the establishment of an Academy where young people will be trained in the Diamond trade.

This will ensure that young Botswana become knowledgeable with relevant, quality education that is outcome-based. This is consistent with Botswana's Vision 2036 of a knowledge-based economy.

We recognise the importance of Technical and Vocational skills, as well as Academic competencies and Debswana is committed to providing education with a strong emphasis on technical skills. This is evidenced by our long-standing practice of providing Apprenticeship training in technical areas where we have a training school that absorbs young people who then join our mines upon successful completion of their studies.

We have launched comprehensive initiatives aimed at nurturing talent and fostering innovation. Our Graduate Development Programme not only provides



employment opportunities for recent graduates but also equips them with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving industry. Through mentorship, on-the-job training, and exposure to cutting-edge technologies, we prepare our graduates to be leaders and change-makers in the world of scientific advancement.

- 10.** Our collaboration with BIUST, through a Memorandum of Understanding has been instrumental in shaping the future of Science, Technology, and Entrepreneurship in Botswana. We recognise the importance of Academia-Industry partnerships, and our engagement with BIUST is testament to that commitment. We look forward to further growth of this partnership as we build on successes to date.

Through joint research projects, internships, and knowledge sharing, we have worked hand in hand to bridge the gap between academia and industry. This partnership not only benefits our two organisations but also contributes to the growth and development of the nation.

- 11.** Turning my attention back to the distinguished Graduands, you are uniquely positioned to drive change not only through your individual pursuits but also through collective action. Collaboration across disciplines and borders will be instrumental in solving complex challenges. Embrace diversity of thought and work together to create a more sustainable and equitable future.



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12. I urge you to embrace the power of re-setting, re-adjusting, and re-claiming. Embrace the power of science, engineering, technology and entrepreneurship. Use your knowledge and skills to drive change, to challenge conventions, and to make a positive impact on our society.

13. Together, let us build a future where innovation knows no boundaries and where the spirit of entrepreneurship thrives.

14. The world is eagerly waiting for your brilliance, your creativity, and your unwavering commitment to driving change.

I would like to conclude by expressing gratitude to the parents, guardians, families, lecturers and BIUST administrators for the support and guidance you have rendered the graduands throughout their studies. You have collectively nurtured and provided support to the brilliance that the world is waiting for. Once again, Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2023. May your journey be filled with purpose, passion, and success!