

***ASSISTANT MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION HONOURABLE
THATO KWEREPE***

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS HERE PRESENT

YOUR WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF GABORONE

***PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF BASIC
EDUCATION, MRS BRIDGET JOHN AND YOUR DEPUTIES***

BOARD CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS

COUNCIL AND BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

CHAIRMAN OF UMALUSI, PROF JOHN VOLMINC

***CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF
EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT, DR MAFU RAKOMETSI***

OTHER PERMANENT SECRETARIES HERE PRESENT

***CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF EXAMINATION BOARDS OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA***

OTHER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS HERE PRESENT

***HEADS OF PARASTATAL ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS HERE PRESENT***

MANAGEMENT OF THE BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

***INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND SPONSORS OF THE
CONFERENCE***

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDIA

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

The day has finally arrived, and it is with great delight that I stand before you to make a few remarks about the 13th Conference of Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment., of which the Botswana Examinations Council is member. We at the BEC have long looked forward to this day. I see many familiar faces in the room and wish to thank you all for travelling hundreds and thousands of kilometers to be with us today

Director of Ceremonies, when I joined the Botswana Examinations Council a few years ago I was immediately appointed to the Executive Committees of the SAAEA and the AEAA. My first interaction with the two organisations was at their annual research conferences. I was surprised that both organisations could hold research conferences every year. But deep in my heart I wondered if I would be able to host one before I left the Council, as I was here on loan from the University of Botswana.

Finally in 2017 at the 11th SAAEA Conference hosted by Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB), the Executive Committee of SAAEA approved Botswana to host the 2019 Conference. The preparatory work for the Conference started immediately thereafter although we knew fully well that the target date for the event was two years down the line. We assembled a strong team of men and women to constitute the Local Organising Committee. The team was later augmented with representatives from our parent Ministry of Basic Education. They made it possible for the 13th SAAEA Conference to take place. SAAEA as an organisation has no resources to fund its conferences and relies on sponsorships from its partners, and it is the LOC that has to run around to mobilise this support. The LOC has done a fantastic job and I would like them to stand wherever they are to be recognised.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as SAAEA we select conference themes around the educational challenges that we face in the region. We therefore engage within our countries before we finally agree on a theme and sub-themes. The same methodology was followed in determining the theme for this year. We hope that the discussion and findings from the conference will deepen our understanding of assessment and indeed education in our respective jurisdictions.

We also try to ensure that our discussions are enriched by experiences from elsewhere. We have therefore invited prominent scholars and experienced individuals to serve as keynote speakers and panellists. At this conference we are pleased to have Prof. Peter Rule of Stellenbosch University, South Africa and Dr. Cyprian Cele from Uganda as keynote speakers. Dr Cele is no stranger to Botswana, he previously served as Director of Research at BEC. I thank them most kindly for agreeing to be of service to SAAEA.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the cost of assessment continues to rise causing those who fund us to complain. The cost goes up because we have to run the examinations under very secure environments. The cost of security printing, transportation of examinations materials to centres across our vast countries, employments of large numbers of examiners, the pricy technology that we use in processing examinations is ever rising. In short, the cost of integrity is very high. We have therefore identified a panel of three experienced scholars and individuals to help us understand this issue under the topic '**Cost Effective Assessments**'. These include Prof John Volmink, Chairman of Umalusi, South Africa; Dr Michael Chilala, CEO of the Examinations Council of Zambia; and Dr. Olefile Molwane,

Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at the University of Botswana. They have agreed to discuss and give their perspectives on the topic '**Cost Effective Assessments**'. Thank you gentlemen for agreeing to discuss this important topic at this conference.

Last but not least Ladies and Gentlemen, I earlier indicated that we have a good number of loyal international partners who continue to support the work of SAAEA. These are listed in the conference book, but I think it is also appropriate that I should also recognize them. These include RM Results (UK), DRS (UK), Benchmark (South Africa), Cambridge Assessment International Education (UK), Stephen Austin (UK), Botswana Educational Research Association (Botswana), CSX (South Africa), Smith and Ouzman (UK), and Botosoft (UK). They are represented at this conference and I hope you will interact with them.

Thank you all for listening.

PULA!!!