

PRESS RELEASE

BOTSWANA BUREAU OF STANDARDS (BOBS) HEADQUARTERS OPENING CEREMONY

Mrs Maureen P Mutasa – Director General of the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) in her capacity as Chairman of ISO Policy Committee for Developing Countries (ISO/DEVCO) recently attended the opening ceremony of the prestigious new Headquarters of the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS). The ceremony was held on 28 April 2006 in Gaborone, Botswana and was attended by more than 200 delegates including several Government Ministers, Members of Parliament, the Mayor of Gaborone, BOBS Standards Council members, representatives of national standards bodies from SADC, industry representatives, etc.



Part of the delegates who attended the BOBS Headquarters opening ceremony

The ceremony started off with welcome remarks by the Chairman of the BOBS Standards Council – Mr T Lebang who outlined BOBS' achievements over the last 10 years since its establishment. This was followed by the official opening address by the Honourable Acting Minister of Trade and Industry – Mr Nkate, who outlined BOBS' history from inception, achievements so far and government's support up to where BOBS now is. He also outlined the government's objectives of diversifying the economy and reducing the country's dependence on the mining sector and the role that the BOBS is expected to play in achieving these objectives. He ended his address by thanking the Republic of German for the technical assistance given in establishing BOBS and the Swedish Government for its support to the SME programme currently underway and being executed by the Centre for Development of Enterprise (EU), the

Botswana Export Development and Investment Promotion Organization in conjunction with BOBS. He also challenged BOBS to utilize the facilities provided by Government in the implementation of economic diversification strategies and for the benefit of the business community, the country as a whole and for the SADC region.



Mr Nkate – Honourable Acting Minister of Trade and Industry

The opening address was followed by goodwill messages from ISO delivered by Mrs Maureen P Mutasa – ISO/DEVCO Chairman and Mr Chowa Chanda from the SADC Secretariat, vote of thanks by the Acting Managing Director of BOBS – Mrs Masego Marobela and ended with a guided tour of the facilities.



***Mrs Maureen Mutasa – ISO/DEVCO Chair and SAZ Director General
Delivering goodwill message to BOBS ceremony***



Mrs Masego Marobela – Acting Managing Director BOBS



Tour of the facilities

Botswana Bureau of Standards was established in 1995 by an Act of Parliament and became operational two years later in 1997 as a parastatal organization under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Work on the BOBS headquarters project started in 2002. The complex, which has been built at a cost of P175 million, consists of laboratories (testing and calibration), administration block, which comprises offices, an information centre, conference hall, cafeteria, consultation meeting and training rooms and a video conferencing room. The Botswana Government has allocated P26 million for the procurement of laboratory equipment. Equipping of the BOBS laboratories is already underway.

The ceremony, which was very well organized, received a lot of publicity nationally on television and in the press. Mrs Mutasa's attendance at the ceremony was not just acknowledged in her capacity as ISO/DEVCO Chair, but also as Director General of SAZ from whom BOBS has benefited immensely in terms of skills transfer. SAZ and BOBS signed a skills transfer cooperation agreement in 2001 and this was followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2005. The SAZ will, in June 2006 be running various training programmes in Gaborone, Botswana in cooperation with BOBS. Recently three auditors from BOBS were on attachment training at SAZ. Mrs Mutasa also paid a courtesy call at the Zimbabwean Embassy in Gaborone and met with his Excellency the Ambassador – Mr T Mandigora to brief him about her attendance at the ceremony.

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