

Press Release-For Immediate Release
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**BDC empowers youth entrepreneurs through its CSR programme - Sponsors the African Youth
Entrepreneurs Summit (AYES)**

Gaborone-In line with its mandate of Industrialising Botswana, Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) continues to play an important role in the development of entrepreneurs, especially youth, through its Corporate Social Investment programme. BDC has partnered with the African Youth Entrepreneurs Summit (AYES) which aims to bring together young African entrepreneurs under one roof to share their business acumen also giving them an opportunity of fostering partnerships.

This year the summit (AYES) was held at Travel Lodge on Thursday 21 February 2019 under the theme; “Disruptive Innovation in Today’s Versatile Business Jungle” to celebrate and develop young sharp minds that are driving African countries to economic diversity. The summit which is in its second year following its launch in 2018, is an annual event that intends to have a combined voice and representation to connect youth owned business ideas and reinforce the entrepreneurial desires of young African entrepreneurs. As a leading investment arm of government, BDC took the opportunity to sponsor AYES’s looking at its mandate as the “Leading provider of information in Innovation, Trading, Investments and entrepreneurial basics” because the Corporation aspires to cultivate Botswana entrepreneurial space to support its own mandate of developing the commercial and industrial sectors in Botswana. BDC and AYES’ partnership will also support a BDC CSI project where young entrepreneurs will be supported financially and mentored according to the viability of their pitched business ideas.

Ms Boitshwarelo Lebang, BDC Head- Corporate Affairs and Strategy addressed the audience on the subject of “**The Future of Global Finance; Where trends are leading to in the Financial Services and Sector**”. She said in a nutshell, “Inclusion through the use of Technology” is the future of the Industry. “FinTech is the future, with the likes of Crowdfunding, B2B funding etc” she said. She also shared information on “**Sectors that Investors are Hungry for**” which she said includes: Technology, Healthcare, Energy, Retail. Mr Modise Mokone, BDC investment principal spoke on the BDC funding model as well as educated the entrepreneurs on the importance of scalability in business to compete globally.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

ABOUT BDC

Botswana Development Corporation Limited, or 'BDC,' is the country's main agency for commercial and industrial development. Established in 1970, the organisation is 100% owned by the Government of Botswana. Its primary mandate is to work towards assisting in the establishment and development of commercially viable businesses in Botswana.

BDC does this through a number of different platforms and channels. Amongst these are the provision of financial assistance to investors with commercially viable projects; supporting of projects that generate sustainable employment for Botswana and add to the skills of the local workforce; and encouraging citizen participation in business ventures.

BDC supports the development of viable businesses that perform one or more of the following functions:

- Pioneer new industries
- Unlock value in existing industries
- Stimulate private sector growth and linkages
- Drive diversification and exports
- Create significant employment
- Generate wealth from outside the country

BDC is looking to invest in un-tapped and under-invested sectors such as Energy, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology as well as Agriculture locally. BDC also has a mandate to invest internationally.

Throughout, BDC intends to promote best practices in business, governance and environmental standards in the funds or companies they choose to invest in. BDC Invests in commercially viable projects in all sectors of the economy except large-scale mining. The types of businesses owned by the Corporation include: Industry/Manufacturing; Agriculture; Services; and Property.