

For Immediate Release

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BDC Celebrates Ground-Breaking of New and Transformational Medical and Industrial Gas Manufacturing Plant in Selibe Phikwe

Gaborone – At a ceremony hosted on the 24th of June 2022, Botswana Development Corporation ('BDC') celebrated the ground-breaking of a specialised warehouse facility for Oxygen Gas Pty Ltd ('Oxygas') project in Selibe- Phikwe. Oxygas is a 100% citizen-owned company that has been set up to manufacture medical and industrial gas and is one of the trailblazers in this field, in Botswana. The ceremony was officiated by the Honorable Minister of Health, Dr Edwin Dikoloti.

In his remarks, BDC Managing Director Mr Cross Kgosidiile highlighted that the ceremony meant far more than the literal breaking of the ground and that it represents ground-breaking into a sustainable manufacturing industry, which requires rich resources and thrives on a conducive business environment. He further noted that it emphasised the ground-breaking synergy between Oxygas, BDC, Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency ('CEDA') and Selibe Phikwe Economic Diversification Unit ('SPEDU') that will make a unique contribution to Botswana's economy and stakeholders' ground-breaking wisdom in choosing to invest in the future and for generations to come.

"BDC remains fully committed to fundamentally contributing to the development of a viable, competitive and profitable manufacturing industry. Through Oxygen Gas (Pty) Ltd BDC will be fulfilling its mandate of Promoting Citizen Economic Empowerment; Creating sustainable economic diversification; Promoting a self-sufficient supply of medical gas, which is key to saving the Botswana population from Covid-19; Creating jobs for Botswana; Promoting real growth of the economy; and assisting in placing the private industry in the forefront of economic development" – Said Mr Kgosidiile.

When delivering his keynote address, Hon. Minister of Health Dr Edwin Dikoloti remarked that the project is a demonstration of the Government's dedication to the implementation and achievement of the 2020/21 – 2022/23 Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan (ERTP) and the Reset Agenda championed by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi. He further noted that through Oxygas, Botswana would be able to meet the national demand, significantly reduce its current dependence on imported medical and industrial gases and increase export potential. When achieved these would contribute to the accomplishment of strategic goals in self-sufficiency and reduction of the import bill as well as job creation. He went on to commend BDC, CEDA and SPEDU for their collaborative efforts in bringing a project of such national importance to fruition.

The Hon Minister also pledged Government's support to Oxygas in order to reduce the health sector's dependence on imported medical gases, particularly oxygen – whose shortage during the Covid-19 pandemic proved to be a threat to the survival of Batswana as a people.

Oxygas has been co-funded by BDC and CEDA. Through its nominated 100% owned subsidiary Western Industrial Estate (Pty) Ltd (WIE), BDC will construct the required specialised warehouses and ancillary buildings at an estimated cost of **P42,6 million**. CEDA will finance the purchase of the plant, specialised equipment, and initial working capital. This project is of utmost importance to the country and the SPEDU region as it strives to bring diversity into the economy and manufacturing sector, achieve import substitution, contribute to the economic resuscitation efforts for Selibe Phikwe and create much-needed employment for Batswana. It is anticipated that the project will create **230 jobs** at full operation, with **200 jobs** being created during the construction phase. - Ends

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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, under the Companies Act, BDC is a Company Limited by Shares and fully owned by the Government of Botswana. BDC is mandated to provide, facilitate and support the funding of commercially viable enterprises that contribute towards building a sustainable and diversified Botswana economy; to stimulate the growth of the private sector; to invest in the region and internationally; whilst generating wealth for the Shareholder.

The Corporation invests in commercially viable projects across all sectors of the economy except large-scale diamond mining. These include Energy, Manufacturing, Industry, Property, Services, Tourism, Innovation and Technology.

Throughout, BDC intends to promote best practices in business, governance and environmental standards in the funds or companies it chooses to invest in. BDC conducts its business on a commercial basis and exercises special care and regard for economic and commercial merits.