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Botswana resolute



WASHINGTON DC - President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi addressing a session on Partnership for Sustainable Health Cooperation and Health Security on the sidelines of the US-Africa Leaders' Summit on Tuesday. He said Botswana was resolute about becoming a vaccine, medicine and other health-care products manufacturing nation. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe

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Graduates aim to transform economy

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - The first batch of young Batswana, who went for training with diamond processing specialists HB Antwerp, are back home ready to transform the diamond industry. Fifteen of the 30 arrived in the country after a three-month stint of intensive training at HB headquarters in Belgium. They not only trained for the processing of diamonds, but were also offered managerial training to equip them for the employment market as they pioneer HB Botswana.

Three of them being Katso Golekanye, a 22-year-old Computer System Engineering graduate from Botswana Accountancy College; 25-year-old Ms Natasha Majuta, a Chemical Engineering graduate from BIUST and 28-year-old Tlotlo Oletile also a Chemical Engineering graduate from BIUST shared their experiences and their vision with BOPA recently.

The trio said they learnt of HB Antwerp either through a friend and/or social media and when they arrived in Belgium for further studies, they either continued with what related to their course of study or shifted to learn new things.

Ms Majuta, who is in the diamond architecture, said there was no direct relation between what she studied and what she learnt in Belgium regarding her career at HB, "but I would say it was a stepping stone in what am doing and has given me the platform to be able to grasp and understand concepts quicker now".

For Golekanye and Ms Oletile there was a correlation. Ms Oletile, who is in the data team, said "I worked with data a lot and I have also worked as a technician for three months whilst at BIUST, so for me it was just a continuation of what I learnt at school". She is also pursuing her Master's degree.

"In my case, it integrated well with my degree because I got to work with all systems," Katso noted. He said with information technology at the forefront of every company, he had to further learn more on information systems.

"But also as engineers we are taught processes and we do not have to be focused on our core degrees to perform our duties, but be able to follow process and do diligent work," he said.

Sharing their experiences regarding culture of work and living in Belgium, the trio said the language and way of life were challenging, especially that they only had three months. They noted that it was even harder as HB was a multilingual setup, as most people were not all from Belgium. They said the cultural diversity was not all a hindrance, but also an opportunity to learn new skills and diversify their talents through interacting with the other talented

trainees they met.

"Working with diverse people like that also gave us an opportunity to experience how it is to work with different characters, something which we will be now smoothly transitioning into here at home," said Ms Oletile

Further, they said they learnt and appreciated was the work ethic, which the trio described as being totally different from what they know of in Botswana.

"Whilst in Belgium, as a trainee I was taught and given an opportunity to sit in the boardroom and experience and observe how decisions are made, it is something which as a junior, let alone a trainee, in Botswana, you can never

experience," stated Ms Mojuta.

She added that private companies and government alike should give the youth a chance to lead. She said Botswana youth were ready to transform the economy but they only needed to be given opportunities.

Ms Mojuta said they were ready to take the responsibility to lead, something which she said they had been afforded at HB. "At a stage where I am, I would be lucky to even get internship, but here I am at HB, I have been given a responsibility to lead and make decisions, after intense training," she said, adding that many youth lose hope after graduation as they roam the streets for a long time without jobs or not even given a

chance to prove their worth and capabilities in the workplace as they are subjected to internships.

Sharing the same sentiments, Mr Golekanye said there was need for a robust mind-set change regarding giving youth responsibilities in both the public and private sectors. He said the world is run by the youth and economies are transformed.

He said as Botswana was turning digital, the youth were the answer as they were in-sync with technology and they would be able to transform the country into a healthy competitive luxury economy. HB Antwerp Co-founder and Managing Partner, Mr Rafael Papismedov, who is already in

Botswana to see to the launch and operations, said they were currently setting up machinery. During a tour of the facility, he said they were also bringing in experts from abroad, who would transfer skills to their graduates.

He said skills transfer was important to them as a company as they believe in development and local empowerment. Thus, he said the experts who would be assisting with setting up the machines, and will go back after their work was done.

Furthermore, Mr Papismedov noted that in January 2023, 15 more graduates from BIUST would be going for a three-month training in Belgium. **BOPA**



HB Antwerp supply chain coordinator, Ms Tlotlo Oletile (left), BOPA reporter, Ms Ketshepile More (second left), IT support engineer, Mr Katso Golekanye (centre), Diamond rough planner, Ms Natasha Majuta (second right) and Mr Papismedov during an interview in Gaborone recently. Mr Papismedov said they were planning to train and employ more young Batswana in the diamond industry.

Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

IMF, Ghana approve economic reforms

ACCRA - A visiting team of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday announced a three-year preliminary agreement with the Ghanaian government to help the west African country revitalize its economy.

Stephane Roudet, the team chief, made the announcement in a press release after ending the discussions with the Ghanaian authorities, civil society organizations, and the business community. During a joint press conference between the government and the IMF team, Ghanaian Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta said the preliminary agreement is only a first step towards reaching an agreement with the IMF executive directors and management.

He said Ghana will capitalize on an economic reform program backed by the IMF to reduce inflation and control currency depreciation, which will assist

Ghana's efforts to restore stability and strengthen its currency.

The proposed reform program, backed by a US\$3 billion-Extended Credit Facility (ECF), aims to restore macroeconomic



Ofori-Atta

stability and debt sustainability while laying the foundation for strong and more inclusive growth.

Ofori-Atta said the key requirements of the IMF-backed program included preparing a post-COVID-19 programme for economic growth, a medium-term macroeconomic framework, and debt sustainability analysis with a debt management strategy. The minister pledged that Ghana will also undertake structural reforms to address structural bottlenecks, improve competitiveness, and promote efficiency and effectiveness.

"Ghana stands ready to complete all prior actions before the end of March 2023. But more importantly, Ghana is committed to the IMF program as a whole," Ofori-Atta said.

According to the IMF team release, "the Ghanaian authorities have committed to a wide-ranging

economic reform program, which builds on the government's Post-COVID-19 Program for Economic Growth and tackles the deep challenges facing the country."

It further disclosed that the government's economic reforms would rely on front-loaded measures to increase domestic resources mobilization and streamline expenditure.

"In addition, the authorities have committed to strengthening social safety nets, including reinforcing the existing targeted cash-transfer program for vulnerable households and improving the coverage and efficiency of social spending," the release added.

It said the government would introduce structural reforms to underpin the fiscal strategy and ensure a durable consolidation.

The country began discussions with the IMF on July 1 for a bailout package. **Xinhua**