



Republic of Botswana



**Key Note Address by the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs,
Honourable Anna Maria Mokgethi, at the Official Opening
of the Pan African Forum on Migration (PAfOM-8) Conference**

Royal Aria Convention Centre (Gaborone)

31st October 2023



- **Chairperson of the Conference**
- **Deputy Minister from Liberia**
- **Chairpersons of Regional Parliaments**
- **Secretary General of the SADC Parliamentary Forum**
- **Honourable members of the Pan African Parliament**
- **Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Heads of Missions here present**
- **Council Chairman**
- **Heads of International and Regional organisations**
- **Outgoing Chair of PAFOM**
- **Senior Government Officials**
- **District Commissioner**
- **Members of the Press**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

A very good morning to you all! Bonjour! Bom Dia! Dumelang!

1. It is an honour and privilege for me to stand here today and deliver a key note address at this PAFOM Senior Officials conference. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are here today to mark the official opening of the 8th Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFOM 8). Delegates, allow me to welcome you to the Republic of Botswana and to wish you the best of your stay in this country right from the onset. We are here today because we all strive for a “united and strong Africa”. We are here today because we strive for achievement of the aspirations of the Africa Agenda 2063; **the Africa we want!** ...and what is a better way than doing it through discussing and shaping our common integrated aspiration of an orderly, regulated migration of our people that will unlock trade opportunities.
2. **Chairperson,** there is need for African leadership and technocrats to invest in creating awareness of our people of the vast opportunities which can be brought by orderly migration. This will unleash unprecedented and sustainable economic growth. As Africans, we are connected by a common thread in our population structures known by all as **Migration.**

3. Our history tells a story of people who move from one end of the continent to the other for various reasons. Amongst these reasons is the quest for secure and sustainable economic advancement at personal or/and at national level. This phenomenon dates back from time immemorial. Unlike in our current arrangement, in the past, these movements were irregular and without framework for facilitating it.
4. According to the African Union (AU) publication on politics in Africa of December, 2021, the level of intra- African migration rose from 13.3 million to 25.4 million between 2008 and 2017 and the causes of such massive movement of people range from economic reasons to the need for security. The United Nations journal of international trade and economic development has also proved that there is a link between migration and trade.
5. The theme for PAfOM-8 **“Unlocking integration for Africa”** and the focus of the Conference **“bolstering free movement and trade in line with the African Continent Free Trade Agreement: optimising the benefits of migration, labour migration, and development”** cannot be more relevant.

6. This theme is also aligned to the African Continent Free Trade Agreement which is a flagship project of the African Union Agenda 2063 aimed at creating a single African market for goods and services facilitated by free movement of persons, capital, and investment to deepen economic integration.
7. As you may be aware, Ladies and Gentlemen, Africa is the largest free trade area bringing together **55** Countries, the majority of which are represented here today. Africa also has a relatively large population as it has about 1.3 billion people, occupying an area of around 30 million square kilometres; as such it has a great demographic opportunity for sustainable development.
8. We however, cannot talk about sustainable development without talking about **migration** and **trade**. To put it simple, migration influences economic development through facilitation of trade, to the extent that without people, goods and services would not be able to cross borders and contribute to formal economic growth. Free movement of goods and people (including labour) and capital is a powerful facilitator for sustainable development.

9. It has however, been noted that not much has been achieved to mainstream the fourth African Continent Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) pillar focusing on free movement of persons, migration and labour migration hence this year's theme.
10. **Chairperson,** free movement of labour is required to boost productivity in various industries such as manufacturing sectors across African Countries. The free movement protocol clarifies that movement of persons, capital, goods and services will promote integration in health, science and technology, foster tourism, promote mobility of labour, create employment and improve the standards of living of the people of our nations.
11. It is extremely appreciated that the African Union Commission has organised this Conference with the underlying principle of bringing the attention of the African Union Member States and key partners to the fact that migration, including labour, affects trade and key factors in domestic, regional and international economic relations.

12. I believe it is in order for me to remind member states, dignitaries, and delegates about some of the key objectives of the African Union which are to:
- Accelerate the political and social economic integration of the continent;
 - Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies and to;
 - Coordinate and harmonise the policies between existing and future regional economic communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the region.
13. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** PAFoM-8 is very much aligned to these objectives. That is why in our midst today we have legislators from all the African regions, experts on migration, trade, labour, employment, women, youth, the academia, civil society, Journalists, African Union organs as well as the international community. The Conference has brought together all the brains on matters relating to migration and trade. I am confident that its objectives and outcomes will be realized.

14. This 8th Pan African Forum on Migration Conference has the following objectives:

- Promote an improved understanding of the nexus between migration-labour migration, free movement and trade by unpacking socio-economic benefits and positive multiplier effects of this relationship,
- Advance dialogue to deconstruct barriers towards advancement of free movement of people in Africa,
- Facilitate discussion to highlight the impact of legal identity and border management on free movement and AfCFTA,
- Explore digital technological advancement for gathering of accurate data and information to generate critical statistics in contexts of free movement, labour migration and migration for development,
- Engage the continental and regional Parliaments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on facilitation of migration, labour migration and trade in AfCFTA.

15. The outcomes of the Conference will therefore be:
- Documented experiences and lessons learnt and best practices on migration, human mobility and trade nexus initiatives.
 - Increased awareness and understanding of the connection between migration, human mobility and trade and how it can contribute to the broader integration agenda for the continent of Africa.
 - Strategically positioning AU Migration Governance Policies and their strategic role in attaining regional integration and promotion of AfCFTA in line with AU 2023 annual theme.
 - Documented parliamentary and Regional Economic Communities (RECS) resolutions on movement of persons and trade in AfCFTA.
16. As you are aware, prior to the free movement protocol, various Regional Economic Communities and other organisations have been created with the aim of removing barriers to trade and free movement of goods, capital and people and have introduced rules for movement of nationals between their member states.

17. The Regional Economic Communities include among others; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which Botswana is a member.
18. **Chairperson,** since Botswana has been accorded the privilege to host this Conference on Migration, allow me to share initiatives by Botswana which we believe other member states can benchmark on to ensure free and safe movement of people, goods and services;
- The Government of the Republic of Botswana together with the Government of the Republic of Zambia have established the Kazungula one stop border post where there is single processing of both people and goods by the two Countries.
 - The Republic of Botswana and the Republics of South Africa and Zambia have adopted the use of border passes to facilitate free movement of communities that live along their common borders for purposes of family reunification, accessing of health facilities and services in general. In this case community members cross the border at designated community crossings using border passes. This is in view of the fact that communities who live along the borders are related in one way or the other, or amenities across the

border may be closer to where they are than at the designated borders.

- The Government of the Republic of Botswana together with the Government of the Republic of Namibia have established 24 hour operations at Mamuno border post and last but not least;
- Introduction of the use of the National Identity cards to cross the borders between the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia;

19. It is therefore evident that the criticality of Africa investing on issues of migration, labour and trade as well as legal identity cannot be over emphasized.

20. **Chairperson**, my role was to set the tone for the Conference. I am looking forward to the resolutions of PAFOM-8 as I am of the view that the outcomes will go a long way in improving migration and trade as well as addressing migration challenges experienced at both the regional and continental level.

21. Let me assure you of your safety and hospitality that my Ministry and stakeholders have put in place for your convenience and comfort as you are here to charter a sustainable framework for the Africa we want in shaping migration to facilitate trade in the African continent. In Botswana you will home away from home.

22. **Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,** it is my singular honour to declare the Pan African Forum on Migration (PAfOM-8) Conference officially opened, here in Botswana.

I thank you for your attention!