

**Welcome address by Dr. Rajesh Ranjan, High Commissioner of India
to Botswana on the occasion of ITEC Day
on 31st January 2019 at India House, Gaborone**

- **Hon. Ms. Gladys K.T. Kokorwe, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Botswana**

- **ITEC Alumni**

- **Protocol observed**

- **Media Personnel**

- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Evening,

Dumela,

1. **At the outset, I would like to thank Hon. Ms. Gladys K.T. Kokorwe, Speaker of the National Assembly for joining us today at India House to celebrate ITEC DAY.** I would also like to welcome you all. As most of you would know, we celebrate this every year to give us a chance to bring all ITEC Scholars together and interact with them about their experiences in India. I trust that all of you had a pleasant stay in India and would share tonight amongst yourselves and with us your memories of the course and of India. There are also scholars here tonight who are leaving soon for their ITEC courses in India. I am sure they would like to learn from the experiences of those who have already been there.

2. More than 5 decades the ITEC Programme has been a model of South-South cooperation. This programme has extended the linkages between our two countries, beyond that of historical and cultural ties to closer technical and economic cooperation.

3. Our development partnership with Botswana is guided by the priorities of Botswana and one of the important aspects of our cooperation is people to people contact. The main aspect of cooperation is capacity building which focuses to enhance the local capacity and local opportunities as possible for Botswanan talents and skills in a wide range of specialized areas such as public sector administration, banking, finance, entrepreneurship, women empowerment, ICT, etc. You would also have seen in media reports that the Vice President of India visited Botswana in October to strengthen relations between our two countries. We signed a number of cooperation agreements.

4. The ITEC Programme, commenced almost 50 years ago in September 1964, is an important cooperation programme of the Government of India for delivering technical assistance, technology transfer and capacity building for our developing country partners. Through this programme, India shares its experience and expertise in various fields with around 158 developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Pacific Island States. Training or capacity building is one of the major activities under ITEC, whereby we offer unique training courses, both civilian and defence, in different centres of excellence in India. There are currently more than 50 empanelled institutions conducting 280 short-term, medium-term and long-term courses every year in a wide and diverse range of skills and disciplines.

5. As you all know, ITEC is a fully funded scholarship programme. We cover your cost of international travel, course fees, accommodation, books and medical expenses in India and also pay a substantial amount to meet your other expenses.

6. The ITEC Programme forms an important part of our bilateral relations with Botswana. It has been going on for almost 5 decades. In recent years, the uptake has been very encouraging and from last year, the annual number of Botswana candidates that we take in has been increased to 200. Over the last five years, more than 600 participants have attended and benefited from this programme.

7. I am sure that you have all benefitted from the knowledge and experience you gained in India, and consider the ITEC programme that you attended as a useful addition to your professional development, adding to the value that you undoubtedly bring to your organization and to your employer. This in turn would be contributing positively to the development, progress and prosperity of Botswana.

8. Partnering with our fellow developing countries such as Botswana is an important pillar of India's foreign policy and approach to inter-State relations. In our own limited way, we share with you our technologies, academic knowledge and experience to assist you in your march to national development. Because each of you has personally been a part of this caring, sharing and learning, I am sure that you have also imbibed a greater understanding of India and will act as a bridge to foster even closer bilateral relations between India and Botswana.

*****Thank you*****