

**LINKZ Challenge 2019 – PRIZE DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY
by BOTHO UNIVERSITY
October 11, 2019**

Address by High Commissioner

1. Today, I feel very privileged and honoured to stand here in front of you all and acknowledge the achievements of the brilliant students who have made both the school and their parents proud. LINKZ challenge is always held to recognize the young talents and encourages excellence.
2. These brilliant students exhibit such qualities that will not only help them in achieving their goals, but also bring glory of success to the society.
3. Today, we have gathered here not just to celebrate the achievements of students, but also to give due regard to our values and morals which these winners exemplify, like discipline, compassion and zeal for learning.
4. LINKZ Challenge is a way to encourage good behaviour and inculcate competitive spirit. This is the reason why the Botho University organizes this challenge every year to encourage students.
5. Today, I am glad to be amongst this young audience from Gen Z, most of whom were born after the world had ‘interlinked’ in a unique way, the world of ‘INTERNET’. You live and breathe in the digital world.
6. A technological world which is probably changing at such a rapid pace that even Moore’s law which predicted doubling of computer power every two years, may become obsolete. The computers are now not only faster but they are becoming smarter too. The combination of neural networks and learning

algorithms enabling “learning machines” is going to be a great opportunity. And, it is this combination of human intelligence with the speed of processing and learning that new machines are capable of, which opens up new possibilities in all fields.

7. A rapid transformation is expected in the world economy, as the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence should permit enhanced use of various sensors and machines that may have capability of ‘self-improvement’ by utilizing the immense data collection / computing faculties of huge interconnected servers. From taking suggestions on a restaurant, hospital, bank branch, or map in our daily lives to remotely spraying insecticides, operating machines in fields or constructing houses, the power of technology is slowly unfolding. IT gives a chance to design, develop and manage the complex computer-based information systems our world depends on.

8. Millennials and your generation are very amenable to embracing this technological evolution as it has percolated to everyday life, deepening its connections and having a world without IT as unthinkable in near future. The future of technologies, as far as, a layman sees it; lies in the immense potential offered by data science, blockchain, virtual reality and other smart tech that will evolve and open up new vistas for today’s budding Gen Z.

9. I applaud the initiative of Botho University in linking the GenZ with this ICT challenge, through LINK-Z platform, giving a competitive outlet to the creative energies of young Batswana and other international students; allowing them to immerse themselves in this festival of the future.

10. India has become the digital capabilities hub of the world. India's IT & ITeS industry grew to US\$ 181 billion in 2018-19. The exports from the industry increased to US\$ 137 billion in FY19 while domestic revenues (including hardware) advanced to US\$ 44 billion.

11. In the various segments of emerging e-world, according to KPMG's estimates, the Indian e-commerce market is expected to reach \$150 billion by 2022; Digital payments are to \$1 trillion by 2023; the cyber security market to \$35 billion by 2023; and digital health market to grow at 35 percent CAGR during 2019-25. The National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) transactions in India have increased from \$141 billion in 2016 to \$2.57 Trillion in 2018; and its \$1 billion online grocery market is growing at approximately 71 percent CAGR which is expected to reach \$5 billion by 2020.

12. The convergence of technological solutions with data analytics, cloud computing, telecommunications, and wireless technologies is improving accessibility, bringing involvement of society and thus a deeper embedding of technologies in our lives. Innovation has been one of the biggest drivers in India's digital growth story. Start-ups in all sectors have gained traction with customers and investors, bringing in a new innovation based industry in play. Applications of Augmented reality and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) in retail, auto, healthcare, gaming and entertainment, defense and training sectors are at the forefront of AR/VR adoption all over the world, not just in India.

13. The education sector in India is estimated at US\$ 91.7 billion in FY18 and is expected to reach US\$ 101.1 billion in FY19. The Number of colleges and universities in India reached 39,050 and 903, respectively in 2017-18, with

36.64 million students enrolled in higher education in 2017-18. The country has become the second largest market for e-learning after the US. This sector is expected to reach US\$ 1.96 billion by 2021 with around 9.5 million users. This is the fuel to the growth of innovation making India a leading ICT power in the world.

14. Information technology is a huge industry, and some of the roles/careers defined at present are as: IT security professional, Network support engineer, Server/system administrator, Application developer, Database designer, E-commerce specialist, Software engineer; with numerous careers yet to be unveiled in this fast evolving field which is defining its own contours.

15. Some prominent sectors mentioned by experts are Cybersecurity, e-Commerce and digital payments.

16. ITES-BPO (Information Technology Enabled Services – Business Process Outsourcing), Healthcare IT - remote diagnostics and telemedicine solutions, Blockchain, Industrial automation including IoT and Industry 4.0 and obviously Artificial Intelligence (and its applications to Robotics).

17. I would like to address those students who have not won any prize and say that do not lose hope as this is not the end of everything and there will be many more opportunities knocking your way to prove your mettle. This award ceremony is just a beginning.

18. I firmly believe that all of you, as participants in this global e-revolution, will participate to the fullest by developing your capabilities and make your educational institutions and country proud of your achievements.

19. I once again congratulate Botho University for promoting this interlinkage between the High Schools and Tertiary schools of Botswana Student community in field of IT. This will not only ignite their passion for this new neural infrastructure of global community and industry; but also prompt them to become innovators in their own right, bringing prosperity to the society and the nation in their wake.
