

CONNECTING RESOURCES AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE PHILIPPE MELLIER CLOSING REMARKS

[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

- All protocol observed
- Ladies and gentlemen, it has certainly been an insightful couple of days examining the lessons learnt from Botswana's development journey.
- We have shared some very valuable discussions about the foundations of success in Botswana and there are some clear ideas emerging about what has facilitated this economic growth success story.
- We have looked at the importance of shared objectives and collaboration, yet recognised the necessity of each partner focusing on its own role. We have talked about the requirement for the corporate partner to make long-term investments that support development, but also noted the importance of the government partner providing security of tenure. And we have thought about the crucial role that revenues from primary mining activity plays, while also examining the substantial impact that vertical linkages in the value chain can have.
- We have looked at the challenges and opportunities in the Partnership's history from a number of angles and through a variety of lenses, and we have extracted some valuable insights into what has driven economic and social progress in Botswana over the last 50 years.
- But of course, looking at the past is only worthwhile if it makes a positive difference to the future.
- We must remind ourselves that we have much further to go and that we still have a great deal of work to do in the years ahead.
- The conference has given us the opportunity to explore how we at De Beers can continue to support our Government partners in shaping a sustainable, diversified economy in the coming decades and how to nurture a positive post-diamond landscape.
- Undoubtedly there will be a wide array of challenges in moving away from an economic dependency that has lasted for so long and been so successful in driving development, but the Government is once again showing its wisdom by establishing the right structures and encouraging the right conversations.
- As a corporate partner, we at De Beers will focus on how we can increasingly support the growth of smaller enterprises through programmes such as Tokafala. We will look at how we can continue to drive economic benefit through to all levels of society through the provision of employment and training opportunities. We will continue to seek greater efficiency and sustainability in beneficiation. And we will investigate the most effective ways for downstream activity to generate value for Botswana so that there is more capital to invest in the growth sectors of the future.
- And while we have taken away a number of lessons about Botswana's future, the conference has also provided a window into how we might consider resource-driven development in other countries, in other environments and with other products.

- We have learnt that while the Botswana-De Beers partnership may have some unique foundations, it also has a number of elements that we can look to apply elsewhere.
- It is my hope that this insight may help to show other resource-rich countries how they can move along a development path that reduces long-term economic risk and shapes a society to be alive with opportunity.
- And I also hope that what we have discovered here will spark more discussion and lively debate in the weeks ahead, and that layers of additional insight can be applied to enrich the framework we have developed from Botswana's experience.
- But I believe we have extracted some material that really will enable us to progress the resource development debate and I hope that this represents just the end of the beginning of this conversation, rather than the beginning of the end.
- So I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of those that have enabled us to have these important conversations.
- First, my sincere thanks to all of the Honourable Ministers and other representatives of Government for dedicating so much of their valuable time to participate in these discussions; and to the country of Botswana for welcoming us so warmly.
- I'd also like to thank Dr Alex Vines at Chatham House for such a well thought-out agenda, prompting honest and open dialogue amongst such an eminent array of speakers and delegates.
- And my thanks to all of you who have participated in debates and discussions or have travelled from around the globe to help share the lessons of Botswana's success with those who may benefit from it in the years ahead.
- Ladies and gentlemen, there can be no doubt that this great country stands out in Africa - and the world - for its unique record of success in transforming its natural resources base into sustainable, broad-based development.
- For those of you who are lucky enough to call Botswana home you will know that it is perhaps one of Africa's best kept secrets as a tourism destination of choice. And for those of you who live elsewhere, I wish you a safe journey home, but hope that you will also choose to return one day soon to see even more of the wonders that this fantastic country has to offer. And with the tourism sector in Botswana set to continue its growth, you will be playing your part in the next stage of the country's development story.
- So thank you again for your time, your views and your wisdom. We hope you enjoy the visits to some of the enterprises around Botswana this afternoon and we very much hope to see you again soon.
- Thank you.