

BALANCING FINTECH OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS: IMPLEMENTING THE BALI FINTECH AGENDA

Welcome Remarks

by

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Governor

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It is with great pleasure and honour to warmly welcome you all to this small but vibrant city of Gaborone; the capital of Botswana, ranked the 48th largest country in the world (approximately the size of France, Kenya, Madagascar or Texas) but with a population of just over 2.3 million people – Our Pride, Your Destination. Allow me to extend a special welcome to the delegates, moderators and other resource persons to this important and timely two-day high-level conference on **Balancing Fintech Opportunities and Risks: Implementing the Bali Fintech Agenda.**

While encouraging you to work very hard over the next one and half days, those from outside Botswana please do not forget that, once back home, you will be invariably asked about the City of Gaborone's landscape of shopping malls and other social amenities. I have no doubt that it will be an incomplete story and a big disappointment if all you can say is that the Conference was successful.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to start, first, by acknowledging the presence of the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Kenneth Matambo, who has kindly

agreed to perform the official opening of this Conference. In many respects, Honourable Minister Matambo leads the infusion and integration of modern technology in the provision of financial and government services. He has also lived through and witnessed the evolution from brick and mortar as well as paper to virtual and digital channels, both as a professional in various positions in the Public Service of this country and as a consumer of services. It is, therefore, fitting that he will perform the official opening of this Conference and give insights and inspiration on prospects for Fintech and its potential impact on the development agenda of our region.

Second, we are also pleased to have amongst us the First Alternate Executive Director for Africa Group I Constituency at the International Monetary Fund, Ms Ita Mannathoko who, incidentally, is a Botswana citizen; Deputy Director, Monetary and Capital Markets Department at the IMF, Mr Aditya Narain; Division Chief in the African Department of the IMF who is also the Mission Chief for Botswana, Mr Papa N'Diaye, together with all the staff of the Fund and the World Bank Group here present. Let me say to you, individually and collectively, that your participation in this Conference is highly appreciated. We look forward to your wise counsel, guidance and infusion of expertise during the Conference.

Third, I wish to welcome and appreciate the efforts of those that will moderate and lead the discussions during the Conference. I expect that their preparatory work, effective leadership of sessions, and animated dialogue on the relevant issues will stimulate and contribute

to beneficial sharing of expertise and perspectives on both the benefits and challenges of harnessing Fintech.

To all delegates, local and from outside Botswana, I have no doubt that the diversity in this room will surely enrich and add to the value and benefit of the Conference in terms of both inputs into the deliberations and implementable takeaways for policy and regulation, as well as ideas for innovation, with respect to business development and service provision.

Indeed, the idea of the Conference is to propagate and entrench, globally, the broad themes of the Bali Fintech Agenda, which you will get to hear about over the next one and half days. For this reason, similar conferences, led by the International Monetary Fund, are being held in other regions. The cross-participation by policymakers, regulators and private sector practitioners in these conferences also enriches networking and the sharing of ideas; thus a common view, globally, about the prospects for Fintech and, where there are potential systemic and global challenges, inculcate forward-looking preparations for both localised and coordinated, cross-border mitigation approaches.

In this regard, I wish to note that, as a practical approach, the SADC region has established a Fintech regional monitoring group comprising representatives from the respective central banks. This is intended to build institutional knowledge of Fintech developments on an ongoing basis and, therefore, continually provide the SADC Committee of Central Bank Governors with a comprehensive picture of existing and emerging technologies, the application and market penetration of

these technologies, as well as the attendant risks. We, therefore, look forward to hearing your thoughts on the broad range of areas that are relevant for balancing Fintech opportunities and risks.

I acknowledge and fully appreciate, in this respect, that the effort by the International Monetary Fund to lead the integration of Fintech into the global development and policy agenda provides for a useful, knowledgeable and accessible partner to support the domestication of this agenda. Having said that, I take it you will agree with me that, while policy and regulation can guide and safeguard, at the end of the day, the more impactful and beneficial aspect of Fintech should be on private business activity and associated adoption by customers, such that there are clear benefits in terms of productivity social and welfare enhancement. Even then, conferences, such as this one, are valuable for policy makers to reflect on prospective opportunities and vulnerabilities and to deliberate on responsive growth strategies.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, for this purpose, there is no better qualified person than the distinguished Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Matambo to break the ground for this Conference and lead us in navigating the linkages between Fintech evolution, economic growth dynamics and benefit risk equation.

Please joining me in welcoming, most warmly, Honourable Minister Kenneth Matambo to officially open the Conference.

Thank you for your kind attention. Minister Matambo Sir!