



African Development Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

ADF Delegation Visiting Gaborone to Sign New Partnership Agreement with GOB, Confer With President Mogae on Expanding U.S. Support for Development in Botswana

GABORONE – January 22, 2004 – A leadership delegation from the African Development Foundation (ADF), a United States government agency that supports community-based development programs in 15 African countries, will arrive in Gaborone on January 22 to renew a five-year strategic partnership agreement with the Government of Botswana. They will also confer with H.E. President Festus Mogae and senior government ministers on new goals for the partnership, which has provided mutual support for a wide range of development projects across Botswana over the past five years.

The new strategic partnership agreement will be officially signed by Mr. S.G. Tumelo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), and ADF President Nathaniel Fields in a ceremony at the MFDP buildings on January 22. The ceremony will be followed by a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Joseph Huggins and a meeting at State House with President Mogae.

The new agreement, which will provide GOB-ADF financial support to a wide range of development projects on a 50/50 basis between 2004 and 2008, builds on the success of a five-year working partnership between GOB and ADF that provided an estimated P15.7 million (US\$ 3.4 million) in funding and technical support for 19 projects between 1998 and 2003.

“Botswana has played a key role in helping ADF develop a new strategy to leverage increased financial support for community-based development. By providing mutual support for ADF-sponsored projects in Botswana, GOB has dramatically increased the total resources available to ADF’s country program and expanded outreach to many more Botswana,” said Fields.

“The success of the GOB-ADF partnerships has also allowed ADF to launch strategic partnerships with national and regional governments in Namibia, Ghana, Nigeria and other nations. We look forward to building on what we have already achieved in Botswana through this new partnership with GOB and with expert technical assistance provided by our local partner organization, Action for Economic Empowerment Trust.”

Action for Economic Empowerment Trust (AEET) in Gaborone works with ADF as its local technical assistance provider, helping groups develop viable funding proposals and assisting grantees during the term of their projects. Its services are available to a wide range of international donor agencies and non-governmental organizations.

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Beyond official meetings, the group will tour two projects. On January 23, the delegation will fly to Seronga to visit the Okavango Polers Trust, an eco-tourism project that has provided a group of 75 local residents of the Okavango Delta with resources to develop a first-class lodging facility focused around guided *mekoro* tours of the wetlands region.

The project has allowed the polers to purchase their own fiberglass *mekoro*, construct high-quality overnight accommodation for guests complemented by solar-powered lighting and hot-water bathing facilities, and conduct marketing outreach to tourist agencies and via the Internet.

Many polers have more than doubled the annual incomes of their families since GOB-ADF support for the project began, a factor that provided dozens of families with essential resources to negotiate drought and the economic impact of a local lung sickness epidemic.

On January 24, the ADF delegation will travel to Otse to meet with the management and staff of Godisa Solar Hearing Aids, a community trust that produces low-cost hearing aids recharged by a palm-sized solar battery. Godisa has expanded its sales across the developing world in recent years by providing a low-cost product that does not require direct access to electricity. Godisa has also established Botswana as the first producer of high-technology solar hearing aids on the African continent.

More than half of Godisa's staff are hearing-impaired persons who were recruited from Ramotswa CJSS, one of two government schools in Botswana that provide teaching facilities for the deaf and hearing impaired.

Mr. Fields is accompanied on the ADF trip by newly appointed board members Mr. Jack Leslie and Dr. Ephraim Batambuze. Mr. Leslie is chairman of Weber Shandwick, one of the world's leading public relations agencies and a division of The Interpublic Group of Companies. He also serves as chairman of USA for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (USA for UNHCR), and he has participated in UNHCR missions to Afghanistan (1998), Kosovo (1999) and Tanzania (2001).

Dr. Batambuze is a cardiologist who practices medicine in Illinois. Born and educated in Uganda, he received political asylum in the United States when rising political violence under the military regime of Idi Amin prevented him from returning home. Dr. Batambuze is ADF's first Africa-born board member.

The ADF visit to Botswana is the third leg of a four-country tour that will visit Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana and Uganda from January 14 to January 29.

The African Development Foundation (ADF), a U.S. government agency established by the United States Congress in 1980, is the only federal agency working solely at the grassroots level in Africa to alleviate poverty and promote broad-based sustainable development. Over the last 20 years, ADF has funded more than 1,500 community-based projects, with 250 projects currently receiving support. ADF supports programs around trade and investment, small and medium enterprise development, HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation, and community grassroots empowerment. In 2004, the Foundation will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its community-based grant program. To learn more about ADF and its initiatives, go to www.adf.gov.

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