

**OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH BY MR C M LEKAUKAU,
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF BOTSWANA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY AND CHAIRMAN OF
THE COMMONWEALTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION (CTO) COUNCIL DURING THE WORKSHOP
ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUSINESS SIMULATION –
GRAND PALM GABORONE 20 – 24 JANUARY 2003**

Master of Ceremonies

**It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the
Telecommunications Business Simulation Workshop
for Eastern and Southern Africa under the auspices of
CTO. I would like to take this opportunity to express
my gratitude to the Commonwealth
Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) for choosing
Botswana for this workshop. The event is being
organized and sponsored by the CTO through its
Programme for Development and Training.**

**2. The CTO's new remit in accordance with the
recently adopted constitution is a partnership
between Commonwealth governments, development
partners and the telecommunications industry meant**

to promote Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the interest of stakeholders, that is, consumers, businesses and social and economic development. It works with countries outside the realm of the Commonwealth league as well. Its focus has recently changed into three strands, namely, Communications Policy and Regulation, Communications for Social and Economic Development and Communications Business Development. It is also an important provider of technical cooperation and expertise.

3. The rapid technological development calls for a sound expertise in the field of communication if countries have to flow with the telecommunications tide that has enveloped the whole world. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) studies indicate that in most countries, competition, liberalisation and convergence of the communications

technologies are increasingly a common feature of a variety of telecommunication service markets.

4. The number of countries embracing competition in the provision of basic fixed line and wireless telephony has risen throughout the late 1990s into the 21st Century. Regardless of this trend, only a handful of African countries have a second fixed line carrier to compete with the incumbent operator. However, the magnitude of this international liberalisation process is such that Africa will also need to introduce competition in the fixed line service market soon. What is important therefore is that existing telephone service providers, particularly incumbent fixed line operators, should brace themselves for competition. In addition to that, new entrants and newly established regulatory bodies should also be fully conversant with the competitive telecommunications terrain they are operating on. It is with this in mind

that I say the CTO has decided to hold simulation workshops to address the changing environment of the communications industry, particularly to retool the minds and attitudes of incumbent fixed line operators to be conversant with a competitive environment.

5. At the CTO Council Meeting in 1999, the CTO was given the remit by its Board to change the mindset of monopoly telecommunication staff in CTO member countries as the incumbent operators move into a liberalised and competitive telecommunication environment. As you may be aware, telecommunications has become a very competitive industry in this century as well. In Botswana, there is one fixed line operator, two mobile operators and 12 Internet Service Providers. However, it is in Botswana Telecommunications Authority's plan this year to undertake studies in order to assess the ramifications of the introduction of the second fixed

line operator. Stakeholders feel that this is now overdue.

6. Allow me to give you a synopsis of the Telecommunications Simulation workshops that have been conducted by the CTO in the past. I have been informed that the first workshop of this nature was held in April 2001 for Asia/Pacific nations and the evaluation report of the said workshop indicated that it was a success. In 2002, similar workshops were held in Malta, Trinidad & Tobago, Ghana and St Lucia. The evaluation reports show that the workshops were very useful as well.

7. The Telecommunications Business Simulation workshops are structured in a manner that reflect the current operating environment of the telecommunication market and these cover marketing and sales, quality management and customer care,

networks and finance; hence the need for various communications companies, like telecommunications fixed line and mobile operators, the regulatory bodies and Internet Service Providers to be involved in this exercise. The objectives of this Telecommunications Business Simulation workshops are, among others, to show how the various constituent parts of a telecommunications business interact and to widen the appreciation of the business out of the participants 'traditional hierarchy'. Therefore, different business strategies will be tested in this workshop.

8. I am positive that at the end of this workshop, participants would have a broader appreciation of the telecommunication business. May I therefore call upon you all to take this workshop seriously and pass the fruits of this exercise to your respective organizations back home.

9. I look forward to a very open and frank exchange of views to make this workshop a success. I wish you a pleasant stay in Botswana but also feel free to spend a few days in Botswana to enjoy our tourist destinations – amongst the best in the world anyway.

ENDS