

News flash



Botswana

UNDP supports the garment industry

Gaborone: 6 May 2005: UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade & Industry conducted a one day seminar to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing by stakeholders of the textile industry from Ghana and Botswana.

Officially welcoming participants of the seminar, UNDP Acting Resident Representative, Ms Viola Morgan said the seminar was designed to facilitate discussion between those who direct policy, those who implement sector strategies and entrepreneurs in the garments industry.



UNDP Acting Resident Representative, Ms Viola Morgan, officially welcoming participants at the seminar

The seminar which was run on the last day of a week-long garment exposition

between Botswana and Ghana, was intended to support “broader objectives of strengthening bilateral trade and investment relations between the two countries as well as to promote cultural ties between them”, explained Ms Morgan, adding that the garment industry is one of the several areas in which the two countries could cultivate strong mutually beneficial partnerships.

Morgan explained to participants that the garments sector occupies a special position in UNDP’s development work in Botswana.

“Through our cooperation with the Government of Botswana on poverty reduction, we are engaged in efforts to support the development of the sector in Botswana to create jobs, reduce poverty and empower women economically”, she explained.

She further noted that while the textile sector may currently be experiencing painful adjustment due to an influx of low-priced garments in the regional market from East Asia, among others, still the sector offers unique opportunities for employment, especially women.

Earlier on, when giving a synopsis of the garment industry in Botswana, the Deputy Permanent secretary in the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Mrs Masisi noted that earlier attempts at bolstering the industry failed due to a number of reasons. Some failed due to lack of access to financial facilities by entrepreneurs while others such the Small and Medium Microenterprises (SMME) did not achieve intended results due to lack of business know-how and the abuse of grant schemes.

The recently created Local Entrepreneurship Authority (LEA) is hoped to address issues of training business skills and on how to survive in the market, she said.



Seminar participants attentively listening to deliberations

The seminar was attended by among others textile entrepreneurs from both Botswana and Ghana. Well known garments houses from Ghana and Botswana also made presentations in the seminar. Local entrepreneurs included Premier Clothing, Ike Fashions etc also made presentations.

When giving a synopsis of the local garment industry, Mr Mohammed Adam of Premier Clothing emphasised the importance of doing market research before one can venture in the industry. He also stressed the importance of

quality garments in order to retain one's markets and expand it.

Mr Adam who started his company in 1982 with about 35 employees now boasts of an expanded company which currently employs over 300 people and produces about 40 000 garments a months.

He urged both prospective and current entrepreneurs to be familiar with the trade policies, noting that the existing policies are not favourable for small companies to export.

One of the elderly participants from Mahalapye expressed happiness that her privately small owned company would benefit tremendously from such interactions they benchmark and compare notes as colleagues in the industry.

For instance she mentioned that before attending the seminar she did not know what kind of assistance her company could get from the Ministry of Trade and Industry.



An elderly participant from Mahalapye expressing her gratitude about her learning in the seminar

