Morupule B: Light at end of tunnel

When in full operation, the multibillion Pula Morupule B Power Station near Palapye is expected to produce 600 Mega Watts electricity. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

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Morupule B: Light at end of tunnel

By Baleseng Batlotleng

A fter several months of despair following frequent power cuts across the country, Botswana may now be on the edge of hope that change from the dark times is about to happen.

Allegorically speaking, the once almighty power plant, as the Minister of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, Kito Mokaila would put it, is off the “life support system” although remaining “critical.”

“Morupule B is an issue of hope, which can only give us encouragement that we are heading in the right direction as stability is currently maintained,” said Mokaila in his latest routine visits to the power plant in Morupule, on the outskirts of the semi-urban village of Palapye recently.

Since early 2013, the country experienced frequent power cuts, which included prolonged periods without electricity supply.

When the multibillion Pula Morupule B Power Station project started in 2008, it was supposed to be fully operational by 2012 producing 600 Mega Watts (MW) electricity into the national power grid.

This was seen as a positive response to neighbouring South Africa’s reduction of power to Botswana and the rest of the South African Power Pool owing to increased domestic demand there.

Mokaila said there were certain interventions that were made and currently all units were up and running.

“Unit 1 has been deliberately taken down for some maintenance. As you might be aware, we did some analysis which informed us what we should do to address the tube leaks in the Fluidized Bed Heat Exchangers (FBHE).”

“We have been doing modifications trying to address that and the machine has not run long enough to say we are happy, but there is progress and a bit of reliability as experienced by the current hours of running without cuts. There is still need to do major replacement of the FBHE,” he said.

Morupule B Power Station boilers employ a circulating fluidised bed (CFB) technology with external FBHE.

The boiler comprises of the furnace, cyclones, sael ports, FBHE’s, induct burners and the convective section, which will constitute different refractory layers for heat isolation and protection of boiler pressure parts against abrasion.

Since commissioning after a diminished period of time, the boilers have been experiencing refractory failures in more pronounced areas of the cyclones, sael ports and the induct burners leading to abrupt shut down and resulting in frequent power cuts.

Mokaila said they were now looking at taking out one unit at a time to do the repairs and redesigns of the boilers to give out the envisaged 30 to 40 years of operations. This was seen as a positive response to the government’s bid to get out of the entire emergency power supply during system contingencies, which could arise from the prevailing generation constraints.

Mokaila said they were now looking to address the tube leaks in the Fluidized Bed Heat Exchangers (FBHE), “we are heading in the right direction as stability is currently maintained,” he said.

The minister said they were at the final stages of identifying a preferred bidder for the extension of Morupule B Unit 5 and 6.

Quick facts on Morupule B Power Station Project:

- Morupule B is a 600MW coal fired power plant with 4 units of 150MW each. The last unit was taken over from the contractor in May 2014 and currently, the plant is under defects labelling period.
- The Plant was constructed by a consortium led by state owned China National Electric Equipment Corporation (CENECO) with a financing of the power plant was through a loan from Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) to BPC as well as equity injection from the government.
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Matshelagabedi Emergency Power Plant: Another effort to keep lights on

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Power supply: A regional challenge

By Baleseng Batleliteng

The Southern African region has experienced power shortages as the generation surplus capacity has diminished, while demand grows at an alarming rate.

In that regard, Botswana like many other countries in the region recorded to various coping mechanisms that included load shedding as well as other demand-side management measures, while longer term solutions were being sort to alleviate the situation.

According to available information, the power capacity shortfall of the region stands at over 6000 mega-watts, while the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) members plan to commission only 2700Mw of power this year.

The SAPP is a cooperation of the national electricity companies in Southern Africa under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The members of SAPP had created a common power grid between their countries and a common market for electricity in the SADC region.

Speaking to BOPA on the sidelines of the just ended 4th SAPP meeting in Gabon, SAPP coordination centre manager, Dr Lawrence Musaba explained that a lot of resources needed to be pooled together to cut down the deficit.

Dr Musaba also stressed the need to engage independent Power Producers (IPPs) as government alone could not handle power generation.

However, Dr Musaba admitted to the fact that funding remain a challenge for most member states as they were running on tight budgets.

In Botswana, government has issued tenders for the supply of power from IPPs and in a recent interview the Minister of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources, Kito Mokalaka announced the expression of interest for the 50MW for the Lozi area and 50MW for the Northeast solar energy projects.

Botswana is endowed with ample solar energy potential. The country has abundant solar energy resources, receiving over 1,200 hours of sunshine per year with an impressive average irradiation on a horizontal surface, one of the highest rates of irradiation in the world.

Also, in a recent renewable energy workshop, Minister Mokalaka told delegates that the energy Policy was being drafted and was expected to be finalised and be ready for approval by 2015.

The energy Policy would provide a policy framework to guide effectiveness and sustainability in energy planning, development and provision.

One of the benefits of regional cooperation has been the establishment of power trading platform where one member state with surplus power could channel it to others who were in short supply.

Statistics indicate that power trading has increased significantly over the years, soaring to more than 450,000 megawatt hour (Mwh) in February this year.

All power utilities in mainland SADC except Angola, Malawi and Tanzania were interconnected to the regional grid through SAPP allowing them to sell electricity to one another.

However, the SAPP plans to fast track the implementation of the priority regional transmission projects in order to connect the three non-operating members of the pool through projects such as the Zambia-Zambezi-Rwanda-Kenya interconnector, M ozambique R io-bu ique-M alaui o-A ngola interconnector and Namibia-Angola interconnector.

Mokalaka says Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) was talking to Mozambique’s publicly owned electricity company, Electricidade de Mocambique (EDM) and Zimbabwe Power Corporation (ZPC) on buying their electricity.

The local power utility has also revealed plans to extend their long standing supply agreement with South Africa’s Eskom.

In an effort to generate its own power and in future export electricity to the rest of the SAPP, Botswana has embarked on a number of projects amongst them, the transmission grid extension and network reinforcement’s projects such as the North West Transmission Grid Connection, which extends the grid to the North West, Chobe and Ghanzi Districts.

Also, Mokalaka said the second south bound, Monapule-Malawi-400kv line, would be constructed as part of the transmission infrastructure requirements for implementing the planned generation expansion at Monapule B (Units 5 and 6).

Meanwhile, as part of efforts to provide sufficient, reliable and least cost effective energy services in the SADC region ministers responsible for the energy sector had recently approved the Revised Regional Indicative Strategy Development Plan and Implementation Framework of 2001-2020 and also the SADC Interconnector Strategy Road map and Action Plan, the two strategic documents that could facilitate the creation of the main drivers of economic growth in the region.

According to available information, the growth in the region has experienced growth opportunities.

The clients, he says are frequenting the business in large numbers to have a look on what kind of business they do. "They must not forget that you can be successful. You are not patient, you are a heavy weight rapper, Tupac Shakur, his famous lyrics once said, even when the road is high never gives up, just keep your head up."

These words resonate well with Kabilo Kediseng, road to business. He had to hail before realising his business ambition.

His financial assistance from the Youth Development Fund (YDF) programme came at a very huge price.

He remained patient and hopeful after his business went down four times.

This is the price that most of today’s youths are not willing to pay every time they are in pursuit of their ambitions in life, making it hard for them to succeed in whatever they are doing.

Kediseng’s patience was stretched to the limits many times but he never gave up. He remained very hopeful and courageous that one day he will sell.

YDF turned him down in four occasions leaving him desperate and miserable at some stage but his burning desire and the passion he had to have them going.

Today, he smiles pleasantly as he sees his name in YDF books. “It really feels good and greatful that at my patience and hard work brought me far. I am extremely overwhelmed,” he said.

Twenty-eight year old, Kediseng who benefited from the programme in April, this year runs an advertising agency called Crown Star Publishing and Advertising. It offers graphic design services like magazines layout, flyers, invitation cards and many others. The business also does video productions such as wedding videos, funeral videos, events coverage and many others.

In the advertising side of business, they do TV adverts, vehicle branding, animation, radio jingles and many others. According to him, the business is still on its infancy stage but relationship has been established with clients.

“We are only a few months old and honestly speaking, nothing much can be said in this short period of time. But what impresses me the most is that there are good signs of growth opportunities.”

The clients, he says are increasing the business in large numbers to have a look on what kind of business they do.

He praises YDF for giving the golden opportunity to the youth interested in entrepreneurship to utilise the YDF programme because it will lift them.

Kediseng, who came at the right time and helped when he was needed the most. He is much grateful to government all who are given the responsibility to drive government policies.

The youth, he says should be given platforms such as YDF to showcase their potential.

“YDF is a very good initiative and wishful to appeal to all the golden interest to venture in a business of his interest and isadik. It is a Good Samaritan, who came at the right time and helped when he was needed the most. He is much grateful to government all who are given the responsibility to drive government policies.”

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Poverty eradication: past, present, future

...How the narrative unfolds

From the infant days of Botswana as an autonomous republic, poverty eradication has always been a theme transcending national development plans, echoing in every budget proposal and rehashed in one way or another through policy. BOPA reporter, Rebaone Tswiio, highlights how this determination has transformed the semantics that label the policy documents.

In just four years of independence, the new government got the shock of a lifetime; a sad reality that some sections of the nation were not at par with the majority in as far as development was concerned. For a race to be fair, all athletes must have the same opportunity. Unfortunately, this was not the case upon independence; some athletes, it would appear, needed prosthetics to be able to start and finish the race for survival in the new Botswana. Research had been done, evidence was abundant, scales were heavily tilted against Basarwa hence an immediate jump start was inevitable.

The attempt was a document titled Basarwa Development Initiative aimed at helping them adapt to the rapidly evolving economy of post-independence Botswana. That was actually to be a defining moment of policy development during the 1975 National Development Plan (NDP) where implementation of the first robust policies was to be rolled out.

Several unforeseen realities had necessitated a Basarwa specific policy in an effort to be more inclusive as a government on a learning curve of economic growth. Having rolled out the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP), government had become alive to the fact that under-development was nonetheless life among Basarwa.

Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili, in his state of the nation address of 2003, emphasized the need for a Basarwa specific policy. Owing to historical reasons, TGLP ended up intruding into Basarwa communities, who in government circles were until recently referred to in the vernacular as “batho ba teng.”

In strict terms, TGLP had literally robbed wealth from the country's rural areas, most of whom were Basarwa.

TGLP was fundamentally a livestock expansion exercise where a farmer with a sizeable herd was allowed to fence a vast ranch for better breeding and management. Owing to historical reasons, TGLP ended up intruding into Basarwa communities more than any other government initiative hence the need for a special programme aimed at accelerating their living standards.

A closer look at the 2009 RADP blueprint indicates that government had in 1985 reviewed the programme and renamed it Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP) in 1987. Out of that document then emanated a special rural development programme in 1989.

The special programme limited itself only to seven districts being Kgatleng, North West, Kweneng, Central, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Southern and Kgoteng.

The main objective then was to create permanent settlements, foster economic activity and provide public services with a view to improving living conditions of remote area dwellers.

It was during the implementation of National Development Plan 7 (NDP 7) that a revitalization of the RADP was proposed to incorporate political, social and economic empowerment.

The 1990 review had identified the main challenge as predominance of poverty, insecurity, inadequate education and negative public attitudes towards the programme and its beneficiaries.

A conclusion was also reached that the RADP was a very long term development programme, cumbersome and very complicated.

One shift had to be done, according to the review: in spite of all that had been done under ARDP.

Policy surgery occurred in 2001 when RADP was reviewed with the aim of producing a comprehensive blueprint that will be implemented in line with the national Vision 2016 plus other national policies such as the settlement policy.

The review was also meant to suggest feasible ways of graduating both remote area dwellers and target population from assistance to self-sufficiency, a shift which had been well and truly identified the main challenge.

Crunch time came in 1979 when a slight shift in policy was effected which culminated in the dumping of Basarwa Development Programme in favour of a more broadly Rural Area Development Programme (RADP).

Government had redoned in 1977 that there were many other ethnic groups who also needed economic support equal to that enjoyed by Basarwa, and therefore RADP expanded its scope to all remote area communities.

Semantics changed, yes! And so the scope was also broadened to impact a larger footprint. RADP seemed to have sharper teeth than its predecessor as it also introduced the Economic Promotion Fund aimed at facilitating employment creation in identified areas.

So far the position of government in defining remote area communities has always been limited to settlements with between 250-499 people, having inadequate water and no or few land rights.

The RADP has been a pivotal component of government’s drive to provide basic social services such as schools and health facilities for remote area communities, who in government circles, were until recently referred to in the vernacular as “batho ba teng.

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Ka Kathrine Simane

M

Go abilwe

Dikhamphane le Batswana ka bophara ba inaakantse le go thusa bangwe ka bone gore ba kgone go
dikgakgake gore ba kgone go thusa bangwe ka bone.

Puso e butse dikkoro ka mananeo a faro-
lanyo a lefatshe. A re e le ngwana wa ga mmaggo ga a kake a go thusa jaana

Dikhamphane le Batswana ka bophara ka bika bolelife ke ltleba go thusabangwe ka bone gore ba kgone go thusa bangwe ka bone.

Batwana a ne atlela inaakantse a lefatshe ka thupa ka lalela ga lopa, borokgolo gore ba lefatshe gore ba thupana, lesi bokgolo gore ba lefatshe gore ba thupana.

A re e khalapane a bone. Puso e butse dikkoro ka mananeo a faro-
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Disability is not inability

By Mulobogo Leboka

F or many years, people living with disabilities have been segregated in the background with fewer opportunities afforded them. Today, government has availed a number of opportunities to exploit and already some have started successful businesses of any kind.

One such a person is Phatsi Banda, who runs a screen printing business and is doing a diligent job despite his disability.

Banda, who runs Sphassion Sweggah screen printing business in Lobatse, is a Youth Development Fund (YDF) beneficiary who has been previously funded by Lobatse Social and Community Development (LSCD) with P25,000, which was not sufficient to start a business.

Banda, who did his primary and secondary education at Matlapaneng Primary School and Lobatse Junior Secondary School respectively, was troubled by numerous problems, which ultimately led to his disability. However, he did not allow his condition to demoralise him. In fact, he became determined and creative.

With a solid marketing business plan, his company Sphassion Sweggah screen printing business was born.

His company specialises in services such as vinyl printing, heat press printing and cup press printing.

He says it was not easy to start up a business, but with the vast knowledge on business management learnt at Sand Sledge College, he managed to overcome challenges encountered.

Banda intends growing his business by increasing client base and increasing staff to create more employment opportunities for other young Botswanans for them to lead a dignified life.

Already, he has government departments, parastatals and individuals as his clients.

While he sources his printing materials from Arrowsa, he is at times forced to buy from South Africa, but the cost.

For marketing their products, he says they depend on pamphlets, door to door marketing and at times, attend trade shows.

Despite the growth in business, he desires lack of office accommodation in Lobatse and high rentals.

The challenges, he says, stem from the young Botswanans who were determined to venture into entrepreneurship.

Also, he says some suppliers provide them with poor materials, which they believe is to demoralise them.

"Virtually they are faced with many problems because of the markets," he says.

The applying government for a number of programmes put in place to uplift the lives of youth to live dignified lives and in the process promote economic growth of the country.

Banda is also a man of many talents, as he has already written a Setswana novel called Tshwane a khotlhe (a which is still under review at Macmillan Publishing Company.

He has one employee, Dilokware Mphologwe, a graduate from GUPS armed with Diploma in Business Information Technology.

For his part, Mathokgwane is not a stranger to the world of printing. While he sources his materials, he is at times forced to buy from South Africa, but the costs.

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Utlwang defies odds

By Lucretia Chima

The saying that to be born poor does not mean one will live and die poor, defines Nkgowa Utlwang’s life story. The Rakops, single mother of three, knows well what sleeping on an empty stomach means, as she was never employed, save for the on and off Ipelegeng jobs she used to secure. Despite her humble background, Utlwang's children were doing well at school, and that challenged her to look for something sustainable to support them.

Her turning point came in 2013, when her son lost books at primary school and was denied to get his certificate unless he paid P900 for the lost books.

“I ran to the social workers to assist me, but when they looked at me, they disqualified me from destitute programme, but advised me to consider venturing into one of the poverty eradication projects instead,” she says.

Although disappointed, little did she know that her life was about to change in a big way. She considered their offer and opted for a tailor and leather works project.

She attended a course, passed and later government bought her the machinery and other necessities for the business. Her NU Tailor shop was born.

Indeed, being delayed is not being denied, because a short while after acquiring her machines, she won a tender to design decorating accessories for some of poverty eradication beneficiaries; that she says exposed her business to the masses.

As she did not have a habitable accommodation, she used part of the proceeds from the tender to lay a foundation for a two and half house.

“Since I saw that the business was viable, I invested part of the money on the business and since then I never experienced hunger in my homestead,”

Some months later, she participated at Lethakane Agricultural Show, where she scooped first position on one of her outstanding bags. The show also scored her new clientele who were not aware of her business.

The proud owner says she has acquired more skills in her business as she also designs patchwork apparatus using leather, belts among other things.

“People should not shun poverty eradication projects, as it has turned my life around.

I have a home and can provide for my children such as any other parents.

It has removed me from a pathetic lifestyle of sleeping without food,” she says.

Through this project, Utlwang says she has learnt that life takes one's determination, and that success will not be given on a silver platter.

Despite her positive story, the budding entrepreneur reveals that business has its trials such as market, among others.

“Our business is more domestic, and normally, people realise that they need to fix something late, and I should be available to render my service”.

She applauds government for what is doing for the disadvantaged people like her, saying some her trips to attend business activities such as trade fairs are made possible by the council. These sojourns are worthwhile, as she has been able to sell more creations.

One of her clients, Kehilwe Singh who runs a curio shop in Shorobe says she buys her wares as tourists love locally-made goods.

Singh who runs a curio shop says the business is good and capable of changing lives.

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