

**Remarks by Ambassador Michelle D. Gavin
Scout Investiture Ceremony
November 24, 2012**

As prepared for delivery

REMARKS

- It is a distinct honor and a true pleasure to join you today. I would particularly like to thank District Scout Commissioner, Maikano Bolokwe, and Peace Corps Volunteer Tom “Kabelo” DeFayette for inviting me.
- Empowering youth and building their capacity to become the leaders of tomorrow are the key to a brighter future, and I firmly believe that Scouting is perhaps one of the world’s best platforms for achieving these goals, so I genuinely thank you for asking me to participate in today’s event.
- As Botswana attempts to diversify its economy and address socio-economic problems such as poverty and unemployment, HIV and gender based violence, youth empowerment and developing youth leaders is critical to in achieving this country’s vision for its future.
- There is a wonderful Setswana proverb that says
- “Lore lo ojwa le sa le metsi” (You bend the stick when it is still wet)
- This illustrates precisely the impact that Scouting can have on youth – an impact that lasts for life.
- To those dedicated individuals who are reinvigorating the Scouting effort in Botswana, do not doubt the tremendous and positive impact that you will have on this country.
- The Scout investiture ceremony we are witnessing today is an important milestone. It provides an opportunity for these young Scouts to publicly announce their commitment to the Scout law and promise.
- Each of you this morning is promising to do your duty to God, to Botswana, and to be of service to Ramotswa community.
- I am happy to witness the birth of Troop #1, Kelemogile, which joins thousands of other Scout troops throughout the world. These are the not just the future leaders of this nation, but through Scouting, they are exhibiting leadership today!
- Scouting affords our youth the opportunity to be all they can be at an early age, thereby setting a strong foundation for a successful life.
- I would like commend Glory Moepi, who is only 15 years old and is the senior patrol leader. She now has the privilege and responsibility of leading 21 other youth in her troop. Only in Scouting can youth assume such an important leadership role at such a young age.

- Today's ceremony points to a revitalization of Scouting not only in the South East District but throughout Botswana.
- In his remarks at the opening of the Botswana Scouting Association's Annual General Meeting, Botswana's Scout Patron, His Excellency Lt Gen Seretse Khama Ian Khama, emphasized the importance of reviving Scouting in order to address social ills and instill values and responsibility on our youth.
- Scouting teaches many things, but much of it can be boiled to the simple fact that it instills a clear sense of right and wrong.
- If young people have Scouting as an option for their free time they are more likely to withstand peer pressure and less likely to be involved in negative, illegal, immoral, and unethical behavior.
- They are less likely to engage in such dangerous activities as underage drinking, unsafe sexual behavior, and use of illegal drugs. They are less likely to become HIV infected.
- Instead, their time will be filled with learning new skills, community service, and excitement and fun.
- Scouting is not just for young people – it is a lifetime commitment.
- There are needs – and opportunities – for adults and institutions to become leaders and supporters in this important effort.
- Scout Troops need dedicated adults as Troop leaders – this is an exciting chance for adults in the community to give of their time and ability to help build this nation's future.
- I would also like to encourage business leaders to sponsor Scout Troops to grow and sustain this important effort.
- And I encourage community based or public sector organizations to consider starting their own Scout Troop to expand the reach of this valuable platform.
- Finally, I would like to encourage families to support Scouting by volunteering when possible to help with Scout activities.
- Scout Troops are a source of pride for communities.
- Parents and community leaders can take great pride in seeing youth engaged in such a rich program of learning, fun, and empowerment.
- In turn, Scouts have promised to support their community and country.
- A community with successful Scout programs will see a tremendous return on this social investment as Scouts "give back" through community service projects and less youth-related challenges.

- Congratulations to the new Scouts, their families, and the South East District Council.
- You are taking an important step forward in building a brighter future for Botswana. Thank you.