



**Federal President Frank Walter Steinmeier  
at the state banquet during his state visit to Botswana  
Gaborone, Botswana,  
21 November 2018**

I am so happy to be with you as your guest here in Botswana!

On the flight here, I was amazed by the sweeping expanse and the beauty of your country. I am curious to get to know it better. I am also pleased to be one of the first state guests that you, Mr President, have welcomed in your new function. My wife and I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you have accorded all of us here in Gaborone!

Mr President, three years ago, the second-largest raw diamond of all times was extracted from a mine here in Botswana. It is believed to be several billion years old. The people in your country helped decide what it should be called and gave it the lovely name of "Lesedi La Rona"; "Our Light" – our light as a symbol for your country.

It seems a very fitting name to me, both literally and figuratively, as Botswana is not just one of Africa's most beautiful countries, but also one of its oldest democracies. You are an important partner for Germany. Your nature and fascinating animal kingdom attract many German visitors every year, and we help protect and conserve this nature through our financial cooperation. However, above all, Germany and Botswana feel committed to the same values: democracy, respect for human rights and the rules governing multilateral cooperation.

In the 52 years since attaining its independence, Botswana has succeeded in overcoming grinding poverty and setting up a stable parliamentary democracy. The country's political leaders have played a key role here, as have, above all, the people in Botswana, who never tired of advocating peaceful co-existence with their neighbours.

Of course, your country faces major challenges time and again. You felt the impact of the AIDS pandemic and you are feeling its consequences to this day. Your country and its people are suffering from the impact of climate change and recurring drought. And

Botswana is a destination for people from other countries who are fleeing conflict and crisis or searching for a better life.

Back home in Germany, people sometimes think Europe is the only direction for migration. Your country, Botswana, has itself taken in a great many people and I would like to voice my respect for this effort.

Mr President, Germany and Botswana, Europe and Africa – we need each other! Only together with African countries can we find solutions to global challenges – I am thinking here of the impact of climate change and of economic and trade relations, but also of migration.

Your country is also a reliable partner when it comes to multilateral cooperation. You are active in many different ways: in the Southern African Development Community, which has its headquarters here in Gaborone, in the African Union and in the United Nations. I believe multilateral cooperation will become even more important. I know that by far not all global leaders share this view today – but I am glad that we do!

Let us work to shape globalisation rather than lamenting its consequences. In these times of major changes and irritations around the world, friendships like ours are valuable! So please join me in a toast to your health, Mr. President, and that of your wife, to the well-being of the people of Botswana and to the friendship between our two countries.

To friendship! Pula!