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NEWLY LAUNCHED FRANCISTOWN ACADEMIC HOSPITAL PROPELS BOTSWANA'S HEALTHCARE SECTOR AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) has partnered with Botswana Investment & Trade Centre (BITC) and global healthcare group, Indus Healthcare to launch Francistown Academic Hospital (FAH), at a ceremony officiated by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Honourable Mmusi Kgafela on the 22nd of June 2023 in Francistown.

BDC commissioned an investment of approximately BWP 50 million for the establishment of the hospital facility in Francistown. The facility has been able to employ 150 people during construction and currently has a staff complement of 184 medical and non-medical. The hospital is a 59-bed facility (150-bed at full capacity in the long term) developed to service the Botswana market and the region. The hospital is poised to provide 9 key specialities including Orthopaedics, Joint Replacement, Arthroplasty, Gastroenterology; Gynaecology; General Surgery; Specialised Surgery; and General Medicine and Critical Care.

Francistown Academic Hospital was also facilitated by BITC through work and residence permits, stakeholder engagement, and export promotion & development engagements for access to the Zimbabwe market. Furthermore, BITC continues to assist the hospital with Government authorisations, - Emergency Permits, Exemptions, and Section 23 (11) for key technical staff.

During the official opening ceremony, BDC Managing Director noted in his remarks that the establishment of Francistown Academic Hospital forms part of the Corporation's strategic mandate to pioneer industries and unlock value in existing ones. He further noted that BDC remains fully committed to being an investment partner of choice that creates tangible and sustained value for the Government and the nation. "We continue to prioritise aligning project ventures to stay focused on delivering significant contributions that prepare the economy to become export-led, in line with Vision 2036," said Mr Kgosiidiile.

While delivering his keynote address, Honourable Minister of Trade & Industry Mmusi Kgafela emphasised the urgent significance of investments into large-scale projects such as the healthcare sector for the Botswana Government. "These investments improve lives by granting access to quality medical care, create job opportunities, and open avenues for local businesses to trade and supply products and services to such facilities," said Hon Kgafela. He highlighted that public-private collaboration remains a key objective on the national developmental agenda, driving socio-economic development, diversifying the economy, and fuelling the Government's commitment to exploring avenues for collaboration.

The official opening was also graced by the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Edwin Dikoloti. He noted in his remarks that government will continue to work closely with the private sector to improve access to healthcare for all citizens while ensuring that health policies and strategies align with the broader goal of providing affordable and quality healthcare to all. He added that “according to the World Health Organisation, at least half of the world’s population lacks access to essential health services. By establishing the Francistown Academic Hospital, we are taking a bold step towards bridging this gap. This modern facility is equipped with the latest medical equipment, advanced diagnostics, and treatment technologies. It will serve as a centre of excellence, attracting medical professionals from within and outside our borders to collaborate, learn, and provide the best possible care for our patients.”

In his closing statement, BDC Board Chair Mr Maleho Mothibatsela remarked that the hospital stands not only as a testament to the financial investment made into the project, but also as a testament to the power of collaboration, dedication, and a shared commitment to improving the well-being of our community. He further commended Honourable Minister of Trade & Industry – Hon Mmusi Kgafela and the Honourable Minister of Health Dr Edwin Dikoloti, for their visionary leadership and relentless commitment to the fruition of Francistown Academic Hospital to fruition.

To date, Indus Health Care (PTY) Ltd has made a further investment in Botswana through the expansion of the facility to increase the specialist medical services offered. The company has a dedicated Public Private Partnership team working with the Ministry of Health to deliver Private Specialist Care through the optimisation of Ministry of Health facilities in Mahalapye, Molepolole, and Serowe.

Among its manifold benefits, the Francistown Academic Hospital will:

- Foster local job creation and skills development, offering opportunities to train Botswana students and cultivate a skilled workforce to cater to the local market.
- Curtail government spending on sending patients abroad for specialized procedures and reduce expenditures on basic medical training.
- Facilitate the integration of Botswana’s healthcare system into regional markets, establishing a benchmark for expansion into the SADC region and beyond. Future target locations include Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Namibia in the long term.
- Solidify Botswana’s position as a leading healthcare destination in the SADC market, enhancing the country’s brand and reputation in the region.
- Elevate the appeal of Botswana, attracting investors to consider the Northern region for business and residency, thereby stimulating investment in the local economy – **Ends** –

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

ABOUT BDC

Botswana Development Corporation Limited, or 'BDC,' is the country's main agency for commercial and industrial development. Established in 1970, under the Companies Act, BDC is a company limited by shares and fully owned by the Government of Botswana. BDC is mandated to provide, facilitate and support the funding of commercially viable enterprises that contribute towards building a sustainable and diversified Botswana economy; stimulate the growth of the private sector; to invest in the region and internationally; whilst generating wealth for the Shareholder.

The Corporation invests in commercially viable projects across all sectors of the economy except large-scale diamond mining. These include Energy, Manufacturing, Industry, Property, Services, Tourism, Innovation and Technology as well as Agriculture locally.

Throughout, BDC intends to promote best practices in business, governance and environmental standards in the funds or companies they choose to invest in. BDC conducts its business on a commercial basis and exercises special care and regard to economic and commercial merits.