



Citation

of the **First Chancellor** of **Amref International University**

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. F.G. MOGAE

FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

His Excellency Festus Gontebanye Mogae was born on 21st August, 1939 at Serowe in the Central District of Botswana. He attended various educational institutions before his graduation at Moeng College, an institution built in the 1930s and 1940s through community efforts in the then British protectorate of Bechuanaland. He thereafter attended the Universities of Oxford and Sussex in the United Kingdom where he trained as an Economist. He started his career in Botswana as a Planning Officer progressing to become Director of Economic Affairs, and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. He then proceeded to become an Alternate Governor for Botswana before later serving in Washington as an Alternate and Executive Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Anglophone Africa and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He then came back to Botswana to take up the position of Governor of the Bank of Botswana and later Permanent Secretary to the President, Secretary to the Cabinet and Supervisor of Elections. He was appointed Minister of Finance and Development Planning in 1989, Vice President in 1992 before his election as the Third President of the Republic of Botswana in 1998.

Health service provision was a key priority for President Mogae's tenure from 1998-2008. Among his achievements, he rolled out a grassroots focused health system strengthening programme that ensured that citizens, even in the remotest part of the Botswana had access to a health centre in their community. He is particularly remembered for his response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Notably, when many countries in Africa were either silent or in denial about the spread of HIV/AIDS, he dealt with the challenge head on. In his landmark speech at the UN General Assembly special session on AIDS in June 2001, he noted that the unchecked spread of the pandemic posed a serious threat to the goal of reducing global poverty by half by the year 2015. He could foresee that if unchecked, in the context of the world becoming a global village, no country would be safe from the ravages of the pandemic.

He then appealed that "it is in the interest of each and every one of us to ensure that we do everything in our power to eliminate the spread of HIV/AIDS in the quickest possible time and in the most effective way. Traditional, cultural and religious beliefs, as well as practices that inhibit the fight against the pandemic, must also be dealt with decisively". He then went on to put in practice in Botswana what he preached to the world - practical prevention and control community based prevention strategies such as house-to-house counselling and free ARVs.

The investment of Botswana as the first African country to avail free ARVs paid off as the country is one of the few that is close to achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals where 90% of the population know their HIV status, 90% of those infected are on ARVs and of these 90% have viral suppression.

In addition to an illustrious service in Botswana, he also served as Chairman of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers, Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Member of the Parliamentarians for Global Action based in New York and the Global Coalition for Africa based in Washington D.C.

His national and international service has not kept HE Festus Mogae away from community service. He has been involved with Kalahari Conservation Society and Botswana Society (*a research Organisation*), and served as President of Lions Club of Palapye, President of Botswana Society for the Deaf, Patron of Junior Achievement Botswana and Chairman of National AIDS Council.

At the end of his presidential tenure, concerned that with availability of ART, the momentum of HIV/AIDS prevention and control would slow down, HE Mogae founded the Champions for an HIV-Free Generation. He now spends his energies in leading the group of Champions who include: First President of Zambia HE Dr Kenneth Kaunda; Former President of Mozambique HE Joachim Chissano; Former President of Tanzania HE Benjamin Mkapa; former President of Nigeria HE Olusegun Obasanjo; former President of Namibia HE Hifikepunye Pohamba; former President of Mali HE Alpha Oumar Konare; former President of Malawi HE Joyce Banda; former Vice President of South Africa Kgalema Montlanthe; former Vice President of Uganda Dr Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe; Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu; former Constitutional and Supreme Court Judge of South Africa Edwin Cameron and our very own Prof Miriam Were, former Chairlady of the National AIDS Control Council of Kenya as well as Chair of the Amref International Board.

President Mogae has been the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Change; Chairman of the Commonwealth Observer Group for Elections in Nigeria, Kenya and Lesotho; Member of the UNAIDS-Lancet Commission "Defeating AIDS - Advancing Global Health; African Union Commission High Level Panel in Support of a Peaceful & Inclusive Transition and the Restoration of Constitutional Order in Egypt; Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation

Commission (JMEC) for South Sudan, and Commissioner on the World Health Organisation Independent High-Level Commission on Non-Communicable Diseases. Currently, he is the Chairperson of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA), and a Board Member of the MasterCard Foundation, a member of the Commission on HIV Prevention of UNAIDS and Commission on HIV and the Law of UNDP, co-Chairman of the High Level Review of the Fiduciary Controls Panel of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Married, and a father of three daughters and grandfather to one granddaughter, His Excellency has received many honours. These include Naledi Ya Botswana, the highest honour awarded by the Republic of Botswana; l'Order Nationale du Mali, The Knight Commander of the Most Courteous Order of the Kingdom of Lesotho and The Commander of the Legion d'Honneur Grand Croix of the Republic of France. He also has received recognitions from universities by award of honorary degrees including Doctor of Laws (University of Botswana); Doctor of Laws (University of Howard Washington DC, USA); Doctorate of Humanity (University of Limkokwing, Malaysia); Doctor of Letters (University of Sussex) and Doctor of Humane Letters (University of Southern California). He is also an Honorary Fellow of the University College, Oxford and a Visiting Public Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC, USA. He has also been awarded the AIDS Leadership Award by Harvard AIDS Institute; the Africa-America Institute National Leadership Award - New York, USA; and last but not in any way the least, the coveted Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African leadership for ensuring “stability and prosperity”

Today, Amref International University is privileged to welcome His Excellency Festus Gontebanye Mogae, a renowned statesman and community health leader into the Amref family. It is now my humble duty to present HE President Festus Mogae as the first Chancellor of Amref International University.