
Citation

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Pelonomi Venson

Minister of Education and Skills Development, Republic of Botswana

Outcome-driven lady of passion and purpose

Anyone meeting Pelonomi Venson for the first time will feel her resilience and sense of purpose without her having to say one word. It is in the sharpness of her eyes and the way she carries herself. She is direct, outspoken, a person who does not mince her words. There is no mountain high enough, nor ocean deep enough to stop her when she is bent on achieving what she wants.

From young she has been marked as a person who will make a difference in life. A gifted writer she sought the help of famous South African-born writer Bessie Head to polish her skills in creative writing while she was still in high school. By the time she was 19 she was already the editor of the newspaper Mmegi.

She left the newspaper world for a career in the civil service where she spent 20 years of her life building a formidable reputation for her ability to plan, strategise and implement. In the course of the two decades with the Botswana Government she picked up a number of qualifications to enhance her ability to administrate culminating in a Master of Science in Administration from the Central Michigan University in the United States of America.

A distinctive 20-year career in Botswana civil service

She was 42 years old when she left to assume the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Kalahari Conservation Society and after a year's stint she moved to Cape Town, South Africa as Managing Director of the Institute for Local Government and Development. Two years later she established her own consultancy providing her expert services to the local government in Cape Town. She returned to Botswana in 1999 to plunge into political life and became a specially elected Member of Parliament.

When most women are contemplating settling down to enjoy their grandchildren and take a more leisurely pace of life Pelonomi Venson did just the opposite.

Outstanding leadership skills in nation building

At the age of 50 she turned up the pressure level to take on the post of Minister in the Cabinet of President Festus G. Mogae, heading the powerful Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology. During her tenure she worked to build partnerships with hardware suppliers, internet service providers and financiers to expedite the widespread use of IT amongst the people of Botswana. And when she became Minister of Education and Skills Development she focused her attention on building the skills needed as the country embraced new technology through its e-government initiatives. Even as Minister of Communications, Science and Technology she had advocated for the development of young people into engineers and technologists. Later as education became her portfolio she was energized by the prospects of harnessing the creativity, imagination and originality of young people to apply them to create a new future as Botswana diversified its economy.

Today the Honourable Pelonomi Venson is highly respected as one of Botswana's most outstanding women leaders. She is one of only four women in the cabinet of President Seretse Khama Ian Khama and among his most trusted confidantes.

The Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, through the conferment of the Doctorate in Human Capital Development pays tribute to one of Botswana's renowned women leaders and applauds her for the outstanding work she is doing in human capital development.

