



**Small Middle-Income Countries-Raising the Bar  
Gaborone International Convention Centre, Grand Palm Hotel**



**AGENDA AND SUMMARY**

**Gaborone, Botswana, January 29, 2016**

**Conference Agenda**

- 0845hrs - Opening Remarks: Hon. Minister O K Matambo (Botswana)
- 0920hrs - Keynote Address: "SMICs: Taking Development to the Next Level" - IMF Deputy Managing Director, Mr. Min Zhu
- 1000hrs - **Session 1: Living in a more challenging external environment: A Small Middle-Income Country (SMIC) perspective on recent external developments and best policy responses**
- Panel: Deputy Governor Ms. 'Mathabo Makenete (Lesotho)  
Ms. Fundi Tshazibana (Alternate Executive Director, IMF Executive Board)  
Mr. Woury Diallo (Alternate Executive Director, IMF Executive Board)
- Moderator: Ms. Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, Deputy Director, African Department
- 1115hrs - Coffee break
- 1130hrs - **Session 2: Labour markets, structural constraints, and reform options**
- Expert address by Dr. Graham Scott: "Motivating and Implementing Deep Structural Reforms – The Experience of New Zealand."
- Panel: Assistant Governor Mr. Mfan'fikile Edward Dlamini (Swaziland)  
Mr. Raj Makoond, Director, Joint Economic Council (Mauritius)  
Dr. Graham Scott (Former Treasury Secretary, New Zealand)  
Dr Jay Salkin (Advisor, Monetary and Financial Stability Department; Bank of Botswana)
- Moderator: Prof. Happy Siphambe (Economics Department, University of Botswana)
- 1300hrs - **Lunch**
- Lunch Address: Professor Andre Sapir: "The Political Economy of Structural Reforms—Lessons from Europe."

1430hrs - **Session 3: Financing for development: fiscal challenges and financing options for SMICs**

Panel: Deputy Governor Ebson Uanguta (Namibia)  
Mr. Bertrand Belle (Special Advisor, Vice-President's Office, Seychelles)  
Professor Andre Sapir (Universite Libre de Bruxelles)  
Dr Wilfred Mandlebe (Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; Botswana)

Moderator: Mr. Lamin Leigh (Coordinator, IMF AFRITAC West)

1545hrs - Wrap-up: Mr. Min Zhu, Deputy Managing Director (IMF)

1830hrs - **Dinner**

Concluding Remarks: Governor Linah Mohohlo (Botswana)

**SUMMARY**  
**SMALL MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES CONFERENCE—RAISING THE BAR**  
**GABORONE, BOTSWANA, JANUARY 29, 2016**

In recent years, small middle-income countries (SMICs) in sub-Saharan Africa have enjoyed stronger growth and economic development than most other countries in the region. More recently, however, a number of external developments have led to headwinds and a slowdown in economic activity. As a result, SMICs in the region need to adjust their policies to preserve stability and restore growth, while at the same time decide on the structural reforms that would set the basis for long-term growth and transition to high-income status. This high-level conference aims to take stock of recent developments and provide a forum to policy makers to exchange views on the above challenges and the policies needed to confront them.

Against this background, the conference will comprise three sessions. The sessions will deal with the following themes:

- **Session 1. Recent developments and prospects.** What are the main economic challenges and prospects for SMICs in the region given the decline in commodity prices and the slowdown in China's economy? How does a normalization of monetary policy in the US affect them? For countries that are close trading partners with South Africa, what are the potential spillovers from the slowdown in growth, lower customs revenues, and the depreciation of the rand? What is/has been the response with respect to monetary, fiscal, and exchange rate policies? Should the policy mix be adjusted? How do these developments impact on growth and development objectives in the medium-term?
- **Session 2. Labor markets, structural constraints, and reform options.** High unemployment persists in many SMICs, with youth unemployment remaining a serious challenge. What policies should governments pursue to foster job creation? To what extent should governments be directly involved in absorbing the unemployed? How can the private sector best create jobs? How to address the youth unemployment challenge and skills mismatches?
- **Session 3. Financing for development: fiscal challenges and financing options for SMICs.** Several SMICs are facing worsening fiscal pressures from reduced revenues and high capital and social spending needs. How should countries address these challenges? What can be done to mobilize more revenue and protect the budget from revenue volatility? How can countries meet their social spending and investment needs? What are the constraints and challenges to the development of the financial sector? How can SMICs better leverage financial markets, both locally and internationally?