

REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY**

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**DURING THE**

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL  
FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF)  
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNRs)**

**19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017, NEW YORK**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. Botswana is greatly honoured to be participating at this year's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and also to be one of the forty-four (44) countries to showcase at the voluntary national reviews. This demonstrates our full commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its underlying 17 Sustainable Development Goals. I believe we all recognize that this global agenda is very bold and stands to tackle the ever-changing world order that confronts humanity today.
2. The extent to which we achieve the targets of this ambitious agenda largely depends on the political will, strong leadership to drive implementation and the well thought out yardsticks to constantly monitor and evaluate our progress.
3. Efforts have been employed in Botswana to align these transformative sustainable development goals (SDGs) with the country's development frameworks namely, National Development Plan Eleven (11) and the Vision 2036. This was further extended to the sub-national development frameworks, that is; the District Development Plan Eight (8) and Urban Development Plan Four (4). On the other hand, the current draft framework for the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) seeks to provide an opportunity to ensure that the sustainable development approach guides these national frameworks.
4. I wish to further confirm to this forum that all the necessary institutional mechanisms have been established for effective coordination of the implementation of the SDGs in Botswana. A multi-sectoral National Steering Committee assisted by the Technical Task Force, is in place to drive the SDG agenda. The already existing Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that operationalize all government programming throughout the economy are being taken on board in order to facilitate implementation, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

5. One of the first tasks of the Steering Committee was development of a plan of action in the form of 'a *Roadmap*' that focuses on (1) Coordination, Ownership and Leadership, (2) Implementation, building on existing structures, as well as (3) Data, progress and reporting. The roadmap has been adopted for a coherent and well-coordinated approach towards implementation of the SDGs and through it, a countrywide SDG advocacy has been intensified.
6. We recognize that the SDGs are the business of all stakeholders; Governments, private sector, civil society, Communities, Development Partners including the UN system and other Non-State Actors.

**Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates;**

7. I find the theme for this forum, "***Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World***" fitting as Government of Botswana has a long history of prioritizing improving the quality of life of its people. This commitment is demonstrated by the fact that, the newly adopted national frameworks alluded to earlier, adopted themes that specifically address both "*poverty eradication*" and "*promoting prosperity*." We further recognize that poverty eradication is central to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
8. I am pleased to inform you that, in the spirit of *leaving no one behind*, the coordination of poverty eradication is housed in the Office of the President since 2010, in order to focus more on eradicating abject poverty among the 6.4% poorest segment of the population, that lives on less than 1.25 dollar (\$) a day. Currently, a Presidential Task Team has been set up to review the whole poverty eradication programme with a view to ensure that among other objectives, poor households actually graduate into being economically independent.
9. Overall, poverty incidence is pronounced among female-headed households and more in rural than urban areas, yet it is these areas that also experienced the most poverty declines, accompanied by decreases in inequality levels. Provision of agricultural inputs subsidies

and various government socio-economic initiatives to the rural dwellers played a significant role in significantly reducing rural poverty.

10. However, the challenges of a narrow economic base that is over-dependent on revenues from diamond mining, the capital-intensive nature of the industry and delays in diversifying our economy away from mining, did not create the much desired employment opportunities. Rather it contributed to the growth of high-income inequality and poverty levels not befitting an upper-middle income country. While Botswana is free from hunger, stunting and malnutrition among children under five, are still worrisome, particularly in rural areas. However, several interventions are in place to support an average of 95% of beneficiaries on a monthly basis, making the poor and vulnerable families to be food secure.

### **Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates;**

11. During the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) era Botswana reduced child mortality from 56 to 11 deaths per 1000 live births between 2001 and 2011, following long periods of stagnation. Government also continues to show commitment to achieving universal access to HIV treatment, care and support which saved many lives. The country has achieved a significant reduction in Mother to Child transmission of HIV as less than 3 percent of children born to HIV positive mothers are infected.
12. We, however, face the challenge of reducing maternal deaths as the number of such deaths continues to fluctuate. During the SDG era, particular attention will be paid not only to improve maternal health but also to improve the entire primary health care infrastructure, which seeks to leave no one behind.
13. Botswana government recognizes that Information and Communication Technology (ICT), water, energy, roads, agriculture and industrial infrastructure have high propensity to impact greatly on poverty alleviation throughout the country. In this regard, I can confirm that the bulk of the infrastructure budget for the next six years (in NDP 11),

focuses on water, energy, tourism, agriculture, education and health with emphasis placed on maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure.

14. Through the Industrial Development Policy (2014), diversified and sustainable industries that stand to benefit locally available materials and access to markets for youth, women farmers and small-scale manufacturers, will be established. Government intends to develop a National South-South and Triangular partnership strategy whose main objective is to attract technological development and capacity building opportunities through strategic partnerships.
15. Significant progress has been made in uplifting the status of women and enhancing their access to economic opportunities through various policy instruments and programmes. Gender parity has been achieved within the entire education system and there is substantial representation of women in decision-making positions in various sectors. On the contrary, women's representation in Parliament is very low as it stands at 6.3% and Gender Based Violence still persists. Uplifting the status of women and young people still remains Botswana's priority in the advent of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates;**

16. The Botswana Voluntary National Review Report for this year's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) demonstrates how managing the tensions between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development is key to dealing with the above challenges bedeviling the country. Further interrogation of the important linkages between poverty eradication and other goals like good health and nutrition, gender parity and the provision of efficient infrastructure, is necessary in order to facilitate our country's development trajectory.
17. This calls for concerted efforts in improving the country's means of implementation by way of enhancing governance, accountability as well as monitoring implementation of the SDGs. The role played by all the

Development Partners in this ongoing discussion cannot be over-emphasised. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (2017-21) for supporting government programmes, identified implementation bottlenecks, policy development as well as data revolution as priority areas to tackle for the next five years.

18. We also believe that "Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. In this regard Botswana commits to Paris Agreement on Climate Change and a collective action is required if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
19. Our commitment to the implementation of the SDGs and the principle of leaving no one behind, cannot be over-emphasised, recently during the United Nations Public Service Awards, under the category on "reaching the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and participation" Ghanzi District Council, under my Ministry scooped position 2 for innovation and excellence in public services supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
20. Let me conclude by re-affirming Botswana's commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its underlying Sustainable Development Goals. I can assure you that our national strategy office and the national statistical office continue to work towards setting up a robust monitoring and evaluation system that seeks to integrate targets and indicators of the national development frameworks with those of the SDGs.

**Thank you for your attention.**

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