



UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

BOTSWANA

Voluntary National Review 2017
Executive Summary



1.0. Introduction

Botswana has embraced sustainable development as its development approach, and is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its principles, goals, targets and indicators. This report provides an overview of Botswana's progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since their adoption, with a particular focus on the theme - "Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World".

This report has been prepared with the full participation of Government, private sector, civil society, local authorities, development partners, UN, academia and other interest groups. Data was collected through workshops, focus group discussions, key informer interviews and literature reviews. The main report will highlight the positive experience to date and the challenges encountered in the efforts made to eradicate poverty.

2.0. Botswana Development Context and the SDGs

Botswana's economy rose from being one of the poorest in the world at independence in 1966 to an upper-middle income status in the 1990s. This result was due to the discovery of diamonds and the government's good management of this resource together with the focus on developing Botswana as a democratic state.

The focus of the country's development for the past five decades has centered on four key pillars being i.e. Sustainable Environment, Rapid Economic Growth, Economic Independence and Social Justice. These are much akin to the dimensions of Sustainable Development and laid the foundation for a seamless transition to adopting the SDG agenda.

Through the implementation of her national development frameworks Botswana made big strides in terms of economic growth and at one point was the fastest growing economy in the world. However, the capital-intensive nature of diamond mining, its vulnerability to external shocks and the exhaustible nature of the commodity created an economy with structural rigidities that restricted significant employment generation. Government's major shareholding in diamond mining, increased its revenues significantly through diamond export earnings. Consequently, this allowed the government to invest heavily in development projects and recurrent expenditure. This constrained private sector growth which itself is heavily dependent on Government spending. Unfortunately, this fast economic growth did not provide the many jobs expected. Rather it contributed to the growth of high income inequality and poverty levels not befitting an upper-middle income economy. Given this development, Botswana embarked on a programme to address these inequalities and especially poverty reduction. Within this context the SDGs are very relevant to Botswana.

3.0. Towards SDGs Implementation

Botswana's SDGs implementation process can be captured in four distinct phases as follows: First, the process began with a strong campaign to ensure ownership of SDGs at all levels. Second, the goals were integrated into national development frameworks, programs and sector plans. Third, institutional mechanisms were established for their effective coordination. . Fourth, a plan of action (Roadmap) to rollout SDGs was approved. Simultaneously, the country embarked on developing a sustainable development framework that will set out how the country will implement all its programmes using a sustainable development approach.

3.1 Creating Ownership at all levels:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been promoted through awareness campaigns undertaken for the Government, Local Authorities, Civil Society, Academia, Parliament and Development Partners. The roll out of the pilot programme for Mainstreaming Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) and the private sector-oriented initiatives have also assisted in this process. The SDGs have also been translated into the local language by civil society.

Several private sector entities are embracing the SDGs either as part of their existing business sustainability strategy processes or as a deliberate response to the local and global SDGs awareness campaigns. These include the Botswana Stock Exchange (signed up for the UN Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiatives), the Green Building Council (brings together players in the construction industry to promote sustainable buildings and reduce carbon emissions), Debswana (developed a sustainability strategy and mapped SDGs on their value chains) and some financial institutions.

3.2 Alignment of SDGs with the National Vision and National Development Plans

Botswana's overall approach is that its development frameworks should drive Sustainable Development. Therefore, Botswana underwent a lengthy consultation process in the development of its national Vision 2036 (2017-2036), National Development Plan 11 (2017-2023) – and the associated District and Urban Development Plans, to ensure that these key documents were aligned to the SDGs.

Both Vision 2036 and NDP 11 were formulated at the same time that the SDGs were being finalized, giving Botswana the opportunity to embrace them at planning stages. Consequently, NDP 11's overall theme of "Inclusive Growth for the Realization of Sustainable Employment Creation and Poverty Eradication" seeks to capture the spirit of the SDG agenda, acknowledging the "development challenges facing the country, and the need to align the focus of the Plan with global, continental and regional initiatives." The stated national priorities of NDP 11 mirror those of Vision 2036 and very closely relate to the SDG agenda. These are: (i) Developing diversified sources of economic growth; (ii) Human capital development; (iii) Social development; (iv) Sustainable use of national resources; and (v) Implementation of an effective

monitoring and evaluation system. Similarly, Vision 2036 is also anchored on the principles of Sustainable Development, and is committed to align its implementation to the SDGs.

In addition, prior to the SDGs adoption in 2015, Botswana initiated a broad-based consultation around defining what sustainable development means for the country. This led to developing a draft National Framework for Sustainable Development. The framework defines a broad-based approach to sustainable development and the building blocks for Botswana's transition to a sustainable development pathway including the domestication of the SDGs. This sustainable development approach was adopted as the guiding approach in NDP11 and Vision 2036.

Through the leadership of the national statistics office, Statistics Botswana, the country has mapped all SDGs indicators relevant and measurable in Botswana, and aligned them to the country's Vision 2036, NDP11 and the African Union Agenda 2063. The country is now on course to compile a full baseline of those indicators that are applicable and whose data is readily available

3.3. Institutional Mechanisms for SDG Coordination

Given the importance of SDGs, the country established a National Steering Committee (NSC). The NSC drives policy agenda and is co-chaired by the Government and the United Nations. Its membership is derived from Government, Private sector, Development Partners, Youth Groups, National Assembly, Ntlo ya Dikgosi (formerly House of Chiefs), Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions and other Non-State Actors.

At a technical level the NSC is assisted by a Technical Task Force (TTF) whose membership is also multi-sectoral. These committees are serviced by SDGs Secretariat in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED) supported by the UN.

The SDG rollout process will be further supported by four Thematic Working Groups (TWGs). These are (i) Economy and Employment, (ii) Social Upliftment, (iii) Sustainable Environment, and (iv) Governance, Safety and Security. Each TWG comprises a cluster of related sectors whose membership is derived from state and non-state actors.

For data and progress tracking, Statistics Botswana is the institutional entity charged with the responsibility to set up a system that aligns the SDGs indicators with the NDP11 and Vision 2036 indicators as well as monitor progress in SDGs implementation in conjunction with the National Strategy Office (NSO).

3.4. The SDGs Roadmap

Following the adoption of the 2030 agenda, the NSC put together a National SDGs Roadmap. The document provides a coherent and well-coordinated approach to the implementation of the SDGs. It identifies broad areas to be covered in the medium to long term. The Roadmap sets out three areas of focus; (i) Coordination, Ownership and Leadership; (ii) Implementation, building

on existing structures; and (iii) Data and progress tracking and reporting. It also includes a plan of action for the next five years which will be broken down into annual workplans.

4.0. Status of selected SDGs in Botswana Related to Poverty

Botswana's Voluntary National review (VNR) will focus on SDG 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere. The goal on ending poverty is also related to several other goals through forward and backward linkages i.e. eradication of poverty drives other SDGs while ending poverty also depends on progress made in other goals. This report therefore reflects these linkages, and, in addition to SDG 1, it will set out progress in SDGs 2, 3, 5, 9 and 17.

SDG1: Poverty Eradication through Economic Growth- the Botswana Experience

Background

Progress towards SDG 1 started way before the era of the SDGs. The country managed to reduce its head count poverty rate from 47 percent in 1993 to 30.6 percent 2002/3 and further down to 19.3 percent in 2009/10 (Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey, 2009/10). Poverty incidence decreased faster in rural areas than it did in cities and towns. However, this poverty level is still high for a middle-income country. Botswana's Gini coefficient decreased from 64.7 to 60.9 during the same period, but remains high.

Botswana's shared prosperity rate, measured by the growth rate of the per capita consumption level of lowest 40th percentile of the population, stands at 4.9 percent, above the global median of 3.9 percent, and higher than those of South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mauritius.

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 1

Botswana's flagship programme towards SDG 1 is the Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), introduced in 2010, with the objective of economically empowering the poor and to capacitate beneficiaries to live a dignified life. It targets those with monthly income of less than P300 (US\$30) per month, destitute persons, people living with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable individuals, thus assisting them to graduate from extreme poverty. This is done through sustainable income generation projects and employment creation initiatives, capacity building and skills development and the provision of social services for daily survival.

SDG2: Ending Hunger and Increasing Access to Nutrition and Linkages to Poverty

Background

While the Government of Botswana had declared the country free of hunger, malnutrition still remains a challenge particularly in rural areas. . Botswana has experienced a slight improvement in Under Five malnutrition levels. Underweight rates decreased from 13.9 percent in 2007 to 13.1 percent in 2014. Stunting decreased from 25.9 percent to 21 percent while wasting fell from 7.6 percent to 7.3 percent (Botswana Family Health Survey, 2007; Determinants of Malnutrition Survey, 2014).

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 2

Botswana is implementing several interventions to address malnutrition. These include the *School Feeding Programme*, the *Letlhafula Programme*¹ and the *Vulnerable Group Program*. An average of 95 percent of beneficiaries registered under these programmes are supported on monthly basis, making the poor and vulnerable families to be food secure. These programmes have introduced food baskets with locally-sourced foods, enhancing their multiplier effects.

SDG 3: Ending Poverty and Ensuring Healthy Lives and Well-being

Background

The main health issues under SDG 3 in Botswana are Maternal mortality, HIV and TB related deaths, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and substance abuse, but there is lack of data that links them to income status. The country has achieved a significant reduction in Mother to Child transmission of HIV. One of the key challenges Botswana faces in promoting healthy lives and well-being is inability to significantly reduce maternal mortality, perpetuated through-out the MDGs era. This is still a challenge in the advent of the SDGs. Almost all (99 percent) maternal deaths in Botswana occur in health facilities. Deaths arising from abortion account for only 15 percent of the total maternal deaths. While poverty is hard to pin to these deaths, maternal mortality could increase poverty levels where a single mother dies leaving children without income. It should be noted that 64.4 percent of women who died between 2012 and 2014 were single mothers, most of whom left orphaned children in poverty.

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 3

Botswana has adopted a primary health care and social determinants approach to health, which addresses causes and cost cutting measures across sectors to improve universal health coverage, leverage resource efficiencies and innovative financing to reduce the cost burden on families and the economy, leaving no one behind. The country has adopted a multi-pronged multi-sectoral approach to NCDs which is anticipated to reduce the economic burden on families in due course. In 2016, Botswana launched the HIV “Treat All Strategy” that promotes universal health coverage and ensures that all those who test positive get treatment no matter their viral load or CD 4 count.

SDG 5: Gender Equality and Poverty

Background

Most of the poor households in Botswana are female headed, creating a strong link between gender and poverty. Gender-based violence (GBV) is still a challenge for Botswana, with a

¹ This a programme that was introduced in primary schools where children are provided with locally harvested fresh agricultural produce like watermelons for nutritional support. The programme also provide market for small scale farmers to help improve their socio economic status.

prevalence rate of 67 percent. Furthermore, national HIV/AIDS prevalence is skewed towards women, with the 2013 rate amongst women standing at 19.2 percent and 14.1 percent for men (Botswana AIDS Impact Survey, 2013). This differential could be a result of women being exposed to violence related sex. The ratio of women in Parliament and Cabinet are 10 percent and 17 percent respectively, while 47 percent of senior government positions (Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Director and Head of Department) are occupied by women. On the other hand, women occupy 30 percent of senior positions in the private sector and parastatals (CEOs, Management and Board of Directors). This is partly due to the gender parity achieved at all levels of education prior to the MDGs era.

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 5

Botswana has made significant progress in uplifting the status of women in the society and enhancing their access to economic opportunities through various policy instruments and programmes. For instance, the government passed a Domestic Violence Act and developed a National Strategy for ending Gender Based Violence (2016-2020). The Dikgosi (Chiefs) Action Plan for Mainstreaming Gender into Customary Justice System and Addressing GBV was also developed. The main national framework is the National Policy, Strategy and Operational Plan on Gender and Development providing policy direction, strategic orientation and establishing linkages with other strategic frameworks. Institutionally, Botswana has elevated the gender mandate from departmental to ministerial level.

Other efforts include capacity development of legal practitioners, law enforcement officers and traditional leaders on gender sensitive case management. Furthermore, capacity development of health and psycho-social support providers on gender sensitive management of GVB cases and the ongoing National GBV National Study all add to major breakthroughs in awareness.

SDG 9: Ending Poverty through Resilient Infrastructure, Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Innovation

Background

The Botswana Government acknowledges that infrastructure contributes to employment creation and poverty alleviation through employment generated during its construction phase and through the facilitative role it renders to other production activities. The ageing of existing infrastructure is acknowledged in NDP 11. The country has made significant progress towards improving its infrastructure, particularly in the road, water and sanitation sectors, and has increased rural access to power and mobile telephone sectors (World Bank, 2011). Inadequate infrastructure in tourism, agriculture and Information and Communication Technology is however a significant impediment to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 9

The Government has decided that during NDP 11 it will place emphasis on maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure. The bulk of the NDP11 infrastructure budget focuses on water, energy, tourism, agriculture, education and health. Botswana will use the Industrial

Development Policy (2014) to establish diversified and sustainable industries which will benefit locally available materials. Through the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD) initiative, 'youth, women farmers and small scale manufacturers' will have access to markets. The Public Private Partnerships (PPP) business model proved to be viable for some of these major projects.

SDG 17: Ending Poverty through Strengthening Means of Implementation and Revitalization of Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Background

Botswana success in reducing poverty can be attributed to the many Government subsidies including the agriculture sector. However, any slight shock to the economy due to internal or external factors significantly reduces the Government's ability to support such subsidies, leading to a reversal in terms of achievements made in poverty reduction. At the same time, the upper-middle income status of the country limits its ability to access external grants (estimated at 5 percent of the NDP 11 budget).

Key Interventions Supporting SDG 17

Botswana aims to access available global resources more through non-financial sources such as South-South and North-South cooperation mainly for skills, knowledge and technology transfers drawing from technology banks and personnel experiences. The country has established institutions and infrastructure through which it can access and adapt to such technology. These include the Botswana Innovation Hub (BIH), Botswana Technology Centre (BOTEC), the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) together with other local institutions of higher learning.

Private sector growth and participation in the implementation of the SDGs will be key to poverty eradication, but requires conducive policy environment and genuine partnerships with government and non-state actors. Government-business platforms such as the High Level Consultative Council (HLCC) chaired by the President, are key entry points for SDGs partnerships. On the policy front, the Botswana Government has created a conducive macroeconomic environment to encourage local and foreign private sector investment. These include the Trade Policy for Botswana (2009). The country has also set up the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) aimed at attracting investment and promoting exports. Initiatives to promote economic activity and foreign investment in specific areas include the establishment of hubs to promote economic growth in the agriculture, diamond, education, health and transportation sectors. Additional investment opportunities in Botswana include large water, electricity, transportation, and telecommunication infrastructure, where possible utilizing the PPP approach.

4.0 Conclusion

Botswana has undertaken significant steps to ensure government and citizens are aware of what SDGs are all about. The government has developed a national Vision (2016- 2036) that is aligned to SDGs. The National Development Plan 11 (2017 – 2023) is also aligned to SDGs. Many sector plans are now beginning to integrate SDGs. A national structure was established to coordinate SDGs implementation to ensure an “all of government approach” to SDGs and a Roadmap for their rollout has been developed. There is a recognition that the SDGs are not the business of government alone, but involve all players, including the private sector and all communities. The main challenges the government face are related to the shortage of financial resources and the absence of high quality disaggregated data that can enable it to design targeted programmes to address poverty. Nonetheless, the building blocks for Botswana to increase the pace of SDGs implementation not only for poverty but for all other goals, are firmly in place.