

**EPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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STATEMENT

BY

**HON. MR. ONKOKAME KITSO MOKAILA, MP.
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND TOURISM**

AT THE

**14TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
IN NEW YORK**

THURSDAY, 11TH MAY 2006

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

1. The delegation of Botswana is pleased to join the rest of the international community to review progress in the fields of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and the atmosphere and climate change. This gathering not only provides a forum for the exchange of information and experiences but also serves to constantly remind us of our inherent oneness as human beings and our interconnectedness as citizens of planet earth.
2. Issues of sustainable development are central to our ability to secure our common future on this planet whilst ensuring improvement of the human condition in a more just and equitable world order. We have a window of opportunity to protect our ecosystem and build better standards of life for ourselves and future generations. We must not squander this opportunity.
3. Botswana is firmly aligned to the full implementation of global initiatives outlined in Agenda 21 and in particular Chapter 9 on the protection of the atmosphere. We have ratified the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. We have also embarked on activities aimed at phasing out the use of ozone depleting substances including the dissemination of information to raise the level of public awareness.
4. As part of our concerted efforts to implement the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, a Multi-Sectoral National Committee on Climate Change has been established, with a mandate to, inter alia, advise Government on climate related issues.
5. We are currently preparing the Second National Communication which will address cross-cutting issues such as poverty eradication, health and sustainable development, gender equality, education and loss of livelihood. These are critical issues which are at the core of our efforts to improve the living standards of our people.
6. Mr. Chairman, one of the challenges with which we must contend is that whilst industrial development is important for employment creation and income generation it is accompanied by a growing pollution problem. We are therefore committed to the search for a balanced approach to prevent, control and monitor pollution. In this regard, we have intensified our pollution monitoring network to include a wider coverage in the urban centres and other major settlements.
7. The monitoring stations provide data on air quality with respect to the different parameters in the atmosphere such as sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone. We are therefore committed to playing a constructive and dependable role in regional initiatives aimed at addressing transboundary air pollution. The AIR Pollution Information Network for Africa (APINA) is a vital mechanism for the exchange of scientific information and knowledge by scientists, policy makers, industries and other stakeholders. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region we have successfully co-ordinated the phasing out of leaded petrol.

8. Mr. Chairman, with respect to energy matters the economy of Botswana relies on a limited basket of energy resources. The rest is imported from neighbouring countries. The majority of our people, about 90%, in the rural areas, continue to depend on fuel wood and other solid fuels. The challenge for the country therefore is to urgently provide alternative energy sources.

9. In its efforts to address this challenge, the Government of Botswana has made a commitment to provide rural communities with conventional energy sources that are cleaner and efficient. This led to the establishment of the Rural Electrification Programme whose objective is to electrify at least 15 rural villages per annum. Government has established a revolving fund to provide households access to subsidized loans for grid connections. Some of the major strategies undertaken to use cleaner, renewable and affordable sources of energy include phasing out leaded petrol, beneficiation of locally mined coal and, a Government subsidized photovoltaic programme. We have also embarked on a public awareness exercise to sensitize consumers on the need to promote energy efficiency and conservation.

10. Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by reiterating that issues of sustainable development are an integral part of the challenges of this millennium. We cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals if we fail to implement Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). We have noted gaps and challenges in the implementation of Agenda 21 and our success in addressing them will depend on partnership, support and co-operation. We therefore look forward to consistent and assured support in the areas of research needs to enhance knowledge on pollution exposure, dose-response relationship and indoor air pollution; capacity building and technology transfer; public awareness on the effects of air pollution; and research and development in cleaner technologies.

11. These challenges require commitments from all of us because it is our united and collective efforts which will enable us to succeed at the country, regional and international levels. Botswana is prepared to assume its responsibilities and welcomes the support of development partners in the search for effective and sustainable solutions, for an equitable, sustainable common future.

I thank you.