

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MOKGWEETSI E.K. MASISI

PRESIDENT

OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**27 SEPTEMBER 2018
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**



Please check against delivery.

**Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly for the first time in my capacity as the President of the Republic of Botswana, after assuming Office on 1st April, this year.
2. I succeeded former President Lt. General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, who retired at the end of his term of Office. This was the fifth time that Botswana witnessed a smooth transfer of power since her independence in 1966.
3. Allow me to join other delegations in paying tribute to the Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who passed away on 18 August 2018. Mr. Annan will be remembered as an international statesman and icon who devoted his entire life towards serving humanity. He was relentless in championing peace and prosperity for all.

Madam President,

4. Let me also join other delegations in congratulating you on your election as President of the Seventy-Third Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

5. It is particularly noteworthy as this is only the fourth time a woman has held this esteemed position since the founding of our world body Seventy-three (73) years ago, and the first woman from the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.
6. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation, as you discharge your mandate and wish you success.
7. Let me also seize this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, who competently presided over the deliberations of the Seventy-Second (72) Session.
8. I also wish to thank our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his outstanding leadership and stewardship of this Organisation. I wish to principally commend him for the reforms he has initiated, which are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations.

Madam President,

9. My delegation welcomes the theme for the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, namely "**Making the United Nations Relevant to All**

“People: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies”.

10. We are particularly pleased to note that it builds on last year's theme which focused on people, and also emphasised the nexus between peace and a decent life for all. This evidently shows the United Nations' steadfast commitment to ensuring sustainable development for all.
11. This theme no doubt further inspires us to take collective responsibility towards the attainment of the lofty purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as, the universal goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These global fundamental blueprints succinctly outline the conditions necessary for building peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.
12. Clearly, the principle of leaving no one behind should remain our lodestar and long term aspiration. This is a clarion call for us to end extreme poverty and ensure provision of quality education, health care, infrastructure, housing and employment for all.

Madam President,

13. I am pleased that the Sustainable Development Goals Report of 2018 indicates that more people are living healthier lives than it was the case a decade ago. That notwithstanding, we should be reminded that much more still needs to be done to achieve prosperity for all. This is in view of fact that an estimated **783 million** people live in extreme poverty and **2.3 billion** people still lack access to basic level of sanitation service, while **4 billion** people are without social protection.
14. It is therefore apparent that none of us, whether big or small, can overcome these gigantic development challenges alone. Consequently, we need to act together to strengthen multilateralism, as well as, to honour and implement commitments made by this General Assembly and global partnerships for sustainable development.
15. It is also imperative that the global community should continue to support individual countries given their unique development challenges. For instance, while Botswana is classified as an Upper Middle Income country, it is still confronted by many development challenges comparable to that of the less developed countries. However, we are reassured by the words of the UN Secretary-General when he opined that the United

Nations: "***stands ready to work with all Member States to make the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for everyone, everywhere***".

16. In view of the development challenges facing my country, I wish to reiterate our appeal for continued support in human capital, infrastructure and capacity development for the private sector and technology transfer.

Sustainable Development

Madam President,

17. Botswana reaffirms her commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, we have aligned our Vision 2036 to this Global Agenda. At the regional level, we are also pleased that the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Integration Agenda is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
18. What is common about these development agendas is that they are both aimed at eradicating poverty and creating inclusive, prosperous and peaceful societies. In this respect, we are pleased to note that extreme poverty continues to

decline globally, even though we still have a long way to go given that **35%** of the African population, or **395 million** people, still live in abject poverty.

19. As we begin the third year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, my Government remains steadfast in her resolve to improve the material and social well-being of our population. Our National Development Agenda places **People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership** at the heart of sustainable development. In this regard, our National Vision 2036 is anchored on four pillars of **Sustainable Economic Development; Human and Social Development; Sustainable Environment; and Governance, Peace and Security.**
20. In addition, we have six national priorities that are aligned to our National Vision pillars, namely, **Developing Diversified Sources of Economic Growth; Human Capital Development; Social Development; Sustainable Use of National Resources; Consolidation of Good Governance and Strengthening of National Security; and Implementation of an Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System.**

21. In this way, our sustainable development pathway strikes a balance between social, human, economic, environmental and governance dimensions.
22. The implementation of our National Vision 2036 and Eleventh National Development Plan is underpinned by a robust monitoring and evaluation system to ensure effective delivery of goals and aspirations.
23. Additionally, we have established a National Steering Committee to effectively coordinate implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. We have also developed **Botswana SDGs Roadmap: A Guide to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals**, covering the period from 2017 to 2023.

Madam President,

24. My Government has adopted a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals. This was aimed at ensuring broad ownership and leadership at local, community and national levels and to break silos across the development spectrum through forging strategic partnerships between Government, academia, Civil Society Organisations, community based

organisations, Development Partners, Private Sector, Non-State Actors and the UN system.

25. In pursuit of these goals and aspirations, we have prioritised economic diversification, sustainable economic growth, employment creation and investment in human capital for building a prosperous and inclusive society.
26. In particular, focus is on our young people, who constitute 60% of the population of Botswana. To this end, our ultimate goal is to attain universal access to pre-primary, primary and secondary education. We are also expanding access to tertiary, technical and vocational education and training.
27. In addition, we are developing a National Employment Policy whose objectives are to assist Botswana to achieve gainful and productive employment and decent work for all.
28. Above all, the Government of Botswana has developed several policies, programmes and strategies, such as; the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD), Citizen Economic Empowerment Policy, Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) and the Youth Development Fund (YDF), to support sustainable economic development and employment creation.

Madam President,

29. To ensure that development is a benefit for all, my Government continues to make substantial investments in the provision of health care, decent housing and shelter, through interventions such as, the Treat All Strategy, Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Self-Help Housing Agency (SHHA) Housing Scheme and Destitute Housing programme.
30. Additionally, the Government provides social protection to vulnerable groups such as children, youth, persons living with disabilities and the elderly, through the Out of School Children Policy, Orphan Care Programme and the Old Age Pension Scheme. Other development interventions aimed at increasing access to economic and social opportunities include poverty eradication, women and youth empowerment, and National Policy on Gender and Development.
31. Furthermore, we have prioritised investments in research and development, science, technology and innovation in order to transform Botswana into a high-income status nation and knowledge-based economy. Investment in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is undertaken to promote growth and economic diversification and to support e-Government service and innovation in the economy.

32. Let me take this opportunity to thank the UN Secretary-General for establishing the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and appointing Honourable Bogolo Kenewendo, our Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, as a member of this Panel. We are confident that it will help devise ways on how new digital technologies can be used to deliver on our development goals.

Madam President,

33. We note that the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development faces immense resource and capacity constraints. In this respect, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations to address these challenges through the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 72/279 on Repositioning of the United Nations Development System in May this year.

34. This Resolution is vital in that it aims to support countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is our firm conviction that strengthened United Nations country teams and reinvigorated Resident Coordinator systems will contribute significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

35. Equally, Botswana welcomes the signing of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Agenda 2030, to ensure effective coordination, execution, monitoring and reporting on these two development agendas.
36. This coordination will hopefully ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, thus allowing for the effective use of our already limited resources.

Madam President,

37. In order to demonstrate our abiding faith to Sustainable Development Goal No. 17 on Partnerships for the Goals, my Government has developed the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy. I therefore wish to express our profound gratitude to the United Nations for its assistance and contribution to the development of this Strategy.

Human Rights

Madam President,

38. Botswana remains committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, which are critical to sustainable development, prosperity, peace and security.
39. In this connection, we continue to support efforts to fight impunity and the principle of responsibility to protect populations from atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this regard, we reaffirm our full support of the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.
40. This year, the International Criminal Court achieved a milestone when it commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute that founded this Court. Since its formation in 2002, the International Criminal Court has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the international criminal justice system through prosecution of grave international crimes.

41. We are also pleased to note that this year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. These two Declarations stress the importance of protecting and defending human rights.
42. In this respect, it is disheartening to note that approximately **1, 019** human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were killed in 61 countries since 2015.
43. We warmly welcome the appointment of Her Excellency Dr. Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Her appointment is yet another testament of the Secretary-General's commitment to gender parity in senior leadership positions.
44. I pledge my country's full support and commit to cooperate with her Office. I also thank her predecessor, H.E. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, for his tireless and courageous leadership in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

International Peace and Security

Madam President,

45. Botswana remains deeply concerned about the protracted conflicts in Afghanistan, Mali, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. It is estimated that over the past decade, violent conflicts have led to forced displacement of over **68.5 million** people. Studies show that conflicts contribute to the rise in slums, hunger and food insecurity, thereby worsening any humanitarian crises.
46. We therefore urge all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligation to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law. We also wish to stress that dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts are critical to the maintenance of international peace and security.
47. Botswana welcomes and applauds the efforts made by the United Nations to deal with threats to international peace and security, particularly terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organised crime and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

48. We also commend the Secretary-General for initiating reforms in the peace and security pillar aimed at strengthening the United Nations capacities in conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and development, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
49. To bolster international peacemaking efforts, African leaders have committed themselves to fund **25%** of peace support operations in Africa by 2021 and silencing the guns by 2020.
50. I therefore wish to applaud Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for adopting the Lomé Declaration on Peace, Security, Stability, and the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism, in July this year. We firmly believe that this Declaration will go a long way in addressing peace and security challenges in the Central and West African regions, particularly terrorist threats in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel-Saharan region.

Madam President,

51. Botswana further welcomes the signing of the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of

Ethiopia and President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea in July this year, aimed at normalising relations between these two neighbouring countries. It is our hope that this Declaration will herald peace, stability and security in the horn of Africa. It was indeed a momentous occasion when direct flights between the two nations' capitals were launched.

Madam President,

52. I am pleased to inform that Botswana has adopted a broad and holistic approach to amend all relevant legislation such as Counter-Terrorism Act, Financial Intelligence Act and Arms and Communications Act with a view to strengthening measures aimed at countering and combating international terrorism, as well as combating money laundering.

International Migration

Madam President,

53. Migration is critical to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. Sustainable Development Goal 10, Target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda calls on United Nations Member States to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through

the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies."

54. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of the intergovernmental negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in July this year. Botswana supports this first, inter-governmentally negotiated Agreement that provides a holistic and comprehensive approach to manage international migration. We look forward to its adoption in Marrakesh, Morocco this year.

Corruption

Madam President,

55. As the global community we need to address the problems of illicit financial flows, money-laundering and corruption, which are haemorrhaging the resources needed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.
56. Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for, among others, substantial reduction of corruption and bribery in all their forms, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets

and developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

57. In accordance with this global commitment, African leaders in January of this year, declared 2018 as the Year for Combating Corruption, with the theme "**Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation.**" This was an opportune theme to mark the 15th Anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Most importantly it was an opportunity for a renewed commitment in the fight against corruption.
58. Botswana continues to intensify efforts to prevent and combat corruption through its Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC). In order to strengthen the anti-corruption legislation, my Government is at an advanced stage of finalising the draft Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Bill, which we believe will enhance integrity, transparency and accountability in Government. This Bill will complement the Whistle Blowing Act and the Proceeds and Instruments of Crime Act.

Conclusion

Madam President,

59. In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Botswana's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
60. Let us not falter, but move forward towards attaining sustainable development. We should not allow whatever challenges that cross our path to deter us, as we know, Rome was not built in a day.
61. Our actions should be bold and transformative as we build a better future for our nations succeeding generations. We should stand firm towards our mantra of "leaving no one behind". Let us not be hesitant in demonstrating global leadership, collective responsibility and collaborative partnerships involving all countries and peoples of the world.
62. The future is in our hands

I thank you for your kind attention.

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