

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E MR. CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON
AGENDA ITEM 4:
“GENERAL DEBATE ON NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POPULATION
MATTERS: ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT”

**DURING THE
47th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**10TH APRIL, 2014
NEW YORK**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me start by congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Commission which is a fitting tribute to you personally and the esteemed Government of your country. My delegation has full confidence and trust in your abilities to steer the business of the 47th session to a successful conclusion. I also wish to commend your predecessor for the excellent manner in which he guided the Commission through the 46th Session.
2. Botswana reaffirms her commitment to the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) where the global community reached a consensus on how to address challenging population concerns. Botswana takes note of the various comprehensive reports which are the basis for our deliberation.
3. Our commitment is further demonstrated by our contribution to the report on the implementation of the ICPD at national level and participation in regional consultations at various levels including the African Regional Review on ICPD, which adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) consultations which also adopted an Outcome Document.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Progress made by Botswana in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the past twenty years is reflected in the following highlights.
5. In the area of poverty, it is worth noting that the decline in global poverty emphasized in the Secretary General's report is synonymous with the situation in Botswana where poverty declined from 47% in 1993/94 to 30.6% in 2002/03 and further down to 19.3% in 2009/10. Despite this decline, poverty and inequality remain major development challenges.

6. In this regard they continue to be top national priorities as evidenced by the various Government policies and programmes, targeted at the most vulnerable population groups including women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

Mr. Chairman,

7. On matters pertaining to demographic variables, it is worth mentioning that the global fertility levels mirror the situation in Botswana as the country experienced gradual declines over the period under review. Statistics show that the average number of children born to a woman during her reproductive period has decreased from 6.5 children in 1971 to 3.3 in 2001 and reached 2.9 children in 2011. While Botswana reached the target of 3.0 children set in the maiden National Population Policy of 1997, new threats of population decline and ageing population have emerged.
8. Indications are that the level of fertility could reach the below the replacement level (estimated at 2.1 children per woman). It is for this reason that the 2010 revised National Population Policy, calls for the close monitoring of the pace of fertility decline in the country and the introduction of appropriate measures to guard against negative population growth.
9. It is also worth noting that Botswana made positive gains in the reduction of infant and child mortality from 56 to 11 infant deaths per 1000 live births in 2001 and 2011 respectively. A corresponding decline has been experienced in maternal mortality from an estimated 326 to 147.9 per 100, 000 in 2011. Life expectancy at birth has increased from 55.5 years in 1971 to 65.3 years in 1991.
10. Although Botswana has made significant strides in the fight against HIV and AIDS, the epidemic remains a major challenge for our country and the Southern African region. According to Botswana AIDS Impact Survey IV of 2013, the national HIV prevalence rate stands at 17 percent.

11. Government in collaboration with development partners continues to intensify efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. Key strategies and programmes put in place include National HIV and AIDS Control Strategy, universal access to the PMTCT and the ART Programmes, Routine HIV Testing and Behavioural Change Intervention and Communication. These have remarkably reduced AIDS related mortalities.

Mr. Chairman,

12. On matters pertaining to issues of young people, Botswana has a youthful population structure. We recognise that the **“Youth Bulge”** could create a window of opportunity for the country’s future economic growth and sustainable development. This has galvanized Government to take full advantage of its **“demographic dividend”** through further investments in youth-focused strategies.
13. Consequently, Botswana currently implements a number of youth empowerment programmes, in addition to other economic programmes that youth already participate in. These include Youth Development Fund (YDF), the Young Farmers Fund (YFF) and Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES).
14. Furthermore the Government is committed to the promotion and protection the rights of children and her fulfilment of obligations in accordance with the relevant international conventions and instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

15. With regards to issues of gender and the empowerment of women, Botswana has ratified a number of international and regional instruments supporting gender equality and has ensured that gender equality is protected by legislation. In addition, Botswana has committed itself to a number of Declarations and Protocols aimed at full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people, including the goal of equality between women and men. These include, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW,

1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and the Abolition of Marital Powers Act.

16. The priority areas for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment include; increasing women's participation in the formal and informal economy; ending gender based violence; ending child marriage and forced marriage as well as improving the welfare of the girl-child.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Regarding sustainable development, Botswana recognizes the need to balance the requirements of a growing population and the need to promote sustainable utilisation of its natural resource base.

18. In a bid to economically empower rural and remote area communities to play a significant role in natural resources management, Government introduced policies and initiatives such as the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) in 1989. Furthermore, Government is in the process of developing a National Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Chairman,

19. In conclusion, we look forward to the successful outcome of the review of the PoA of the ICPD and the Special Session of the General Assembly in September this year. In this connection it our wish that the aspirations of the ICPD will be well articulated in the Post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

20. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.