

REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY**

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

***ON AGENDA ITEM 3 (A): "ACTIONS FOR THE  
FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME  
OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE  
NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS"***

**DURING THE**

**50<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (CPD)**

**3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2017, NEW YORK**

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**Madam Chair,**

1. At the outset, we join in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Commission during this session. My delegation pledges its full support and cooperation to you in the discharge of your onerous mandate.
2. We also thank the Secretary General for the various informative reports on this subject matter.
3. Botswana welcomes this year's theme, namely, "**changing population age structures and sustainable development**". The theme underscores the importance of population dynamics in the global development processes. It is only when we appreciate different components of the population such as its composition in terms of size, sex and age structure and distribution that we can better incorporate population dynamics into our development agenda.
4. Botswana continues to make progress in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights; fight against poverty; provision of sexual reproductive health services; enrolment of students into both basic and tertiary education; creation of employment and protection of the environment including water and energy sources.

**Madam Chair,**

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls upon countries to harmonize the implementation of their policies and programmes in order to leave no one behind. Our country is pursuing this vision through the Revised National Population Policy; Poverty Eradication Strategy; Economic Empowerment initiatives; Sexual and Reproductive Health framework; Botswana National Statistics Development Strategy; National M&E Strategy and the Botswana Vision 2036.
6. Botswana conducts Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs) after every 10 years and through them, we have been monitoring population trends overtime and realized declines in fertility and mortality resulting in changing population structure; higher life expectancy and an increase in the economically active population.

7. The significant decline in fertility and mortality in Botswana in the last five decades resulted in its age-structure shifting from one with more child dependents to significantly more people in the economically active ages. The census in 2011 estimated that the country had a dependency ratio of 0.6.

8. Key factors that led to the decline in Botswana's total fertility rate are: a strong and comprehensive family planning program; improved child survival; increased age at first birth; increased female education; and increased women's participation in the labour force. These generated an economic benefit that is a result of an increase in the ratio of working-age adults relative to young dependents that results from rapid fertility decline mentioned above.

**Madam Chair,**

9. Botswana has been identified to be deep within reach of harnessing the demographic dividend. By 1990 it was already benefiting from the changes realized as a result of the abovementioned investment. However, the contribution of the demographic dividend to economic growth peaked in 2008, contributing to an estimated 1.5 percent increase in the standard of living for Botswana. Projections under the current labour market conditions and fertility changes show that the impact of the demographic dividend on socio-economic development is still significant but is on a gradual decline, projected to become insignificant by 2050.

10. Favourable labour market conditions can shift this trajectory to enable the country to maximize its demographic dividend over the next few decades. These interventions are required now since Botswana, unlike most countries in the continent, has little leeway for long-term planning to harness the demographic dividend.

**Madam Chair,**

11. Challenges that Botswana face include the high youth unemployment rate which is fundamental to the achievement of a larger demographic dividend; the twin priority challenges of inadequate skilled human capital and job creation. The large youth cohorts joining the labour market in the

country require to be sufficiently skilled yet the quality and relevance of education and skills training they are receiving are not satisfactory. On the other hand, the economy of the country is too reliant on the diamond industry. There is urgent need to diversify the economy of the country to reduce over dependency on diamond revenue. This would help create employment for the large numbers of youth joining the labour market each year.

**12.** In light of these challenges, Botswana introduced initiatives that are aimed at stimulating employment creation through diversification, entrepreneurship and private sector development. Over the years, we have embraced citizen economic empowerment and a number of programmes and policies aimed at supporting the schemes have been implemented. These include localization policy; preferences under the public procurement; privatization policy; Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency; Local Enterprise Agency; Agricultural Development initiatives and active labour market programmes.

**Madam Chair,**

**13.** Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action requires support to effectively monitor identified gaps and shortfalls for each of its pillars. Botswana has dedicated programmes for the protection of women, adolescents, youth and children, older persons, rural communities and people living with disabilities against abuse, exploitation and violence. Botswana has committed to providing services that would improve the livelihoods of its population by making efforts to create employment, educate young people and ensure high quality health services.

**14.** We are aware that attainment of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 and the 2030 Agenda will depend largely on development of policies that would enable us to seize the demographic dividend.

**15.** In conclusion, **Madam Chair,** I wish to reaffirm Botswana's commitment to the effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**I thank you for your attention.**