



**STATEMENT
BY
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BOTSWANA YOUTH DELEGATES TO THE 64TH SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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NEW YORK**

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We address you today as the Youth Delegates of Botswana to the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
2. Our mandate is simple. It is to deliver a message of Botswana youth's solidarity with the young people of the world and to join the international community in reflective discourse on the issues and problems affecting young people globally today.
3. In this regard, we note the Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the World Program of Action for the Youth: under the theme "Progress and constraints with respect to the wellbeing of youth and their role in civil society".
4. We appreciate the time and resources invested in coming up with this useful analysis of the situation of the youth globally.
5. The two clusters mentioned, namely, Youth at Risk and Youth in Civil Society are of paramount importance to our Delegation. The problems and challenges of youth in Botswana echo those of youth all over the world.

6. Youth unemployment is a big challenge in Botswana. Poverty also remains a problem especially in rural areas, affecting particularly women, youth and the elderly.
7. Though there has been a decline in HIV/AIDS prevalence, the scourge remains a problem to the youth and Botswana as a whole. HIV/AIDS has had a negative impact on productive labor, bread winners and talented young minds while also leaving behind orphans and destitutes.

Chairperson,

8. Botswana was able to graduate from being the 3rd poorest country in the world in 1966 to becoming a middle income country today, through collaboration with governments and multilateral agencies from all over the world.
9. Benchmarking with the best in the world is a long established institutional tradition in Botswana. In developing her youth organizations, Botswana is interested mainly in the areas of management and administration, substantive ideas and resource mobilization. Botswana is also interested in youth economic empowerment partnerships, mentoring and private micro enterprises; youth community projects, establishment and equipping of business clinics as well as peer counseling projects.
10. In this regard, we also wish to express the readiness of Botswana to actively collaborate with youth departments and organizations across the globe in the areas of youth programs, internships, cultural exchanges and other fields of youth involvement and empowerment. Our aim is to learn as well as share our experiences with others.
11. We are not oblivious of the fact that the success of the overall national development program depends on the success of youth empowerment and development initiatives.
12. Chairperson, Allow me to highlight some of the practical interventions made by the Government of Botswana which have a bearing on youth development.
13. Over the years, 30% of the annual national budget has been consistently allocated to education programs. A sector where the majority, if not all the youth are beneficiary.
14. Substantial national resources are being invested in provision of credit facilities for young people in the areas of agriculture and small business enterprises.

15. A National Internship program has been established for University Graduates to provide work experience and to serve as a bridging program between tertiary education and the job market.
16. Moreover, Youth Officers have been appointed in all Ministries in order to address and facilitate youth specific issues most of which are cross cutting in nature. This is an effort to engage the youth in governance and inclusive decision making.
17. Last but not least, Botswana is making significant investments in sports infrastructure and the promotion of community level participation in various sporting codes.
18. What better way can Botswana youth cement appreciation of the work of their Government as well as gain first hand awareness of how to benefit more from existing programs than through active collaboration with young people from around the world.
19. In her effort to empower the youth and create networking opportunities Botswana saw it fit to send Youth Delegates to the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly to reiterate the message that Botswana extends an open invitation to the global community to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships in the area of youth development.
20. In conclusion Chair, we would like to encourage more nations to facilitate the participation of youth delegates as it would be, at a practical level, planting the seeds of global integration and lasting friendships among nations, at the same time providing useful training to the leaders of tomorrow.

We thank you Chairperson