



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

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DURING THE

**GENERAL DEBATE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
12TH UNCTAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

**24 April 2008
Accra, Ghana**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies Ambassadors,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to address this august assembly. I would like, on behalf of my delegation, and indeed on my own behalf, to express our appreciation to the friendly people of Ghana for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to us since we arrived in this beautiful city of Accra.

I would also like to express our profound appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the UNCTAD Secretariat for the excellent arrangements made to facilitate our work during this important Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Four years ago, when we met at Sao Paulo in Brazil to map-out the future-work programme of UNCTAD, we were unanimous in the realism that, in the forty years since the establishment of this organization, the relationship between trade and development had become more important with the deepening of globalization.

We reflected carefully in 2004, as we do again today, that when it was created in 1964, UNCTAD had the primary objective of providing a platform to help integrate developing countries successfully into the world economy.

It became apparent to all of us that, while globalization presents opportunities for economic growth and development, most developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, remained on the margins of this globalization process.

Mr. Chairman,

It is on that background that I believe we are meeting this time around, under the theme: *Addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development*. It could, therefore, not have been most appropriate and timely that this conference takes place on African soil – in Ghana.

The chosen theme and the four sub-themes fundamentally underline our progress for the next four years. If successfully addressed, they should assist all of us, particularly African countries and the least developed countries in maximizing the benefits and opportunities of the phenomenon of globalization, and minimizing its costs, for development.

Globalization is multi-faceted, with many important dimensions ranging from the economic and social, to the political and environmental, among others. These affect us as world populations

in many different ways. It has been established today that the implications of globalization range from the trade and investment flows to changes that we see in our everyday lives. This is in the context of the balance in multilateral trading system, on the one hand, and the trade and development related consequences of climate change and migration, on the other.

Mr. Chairman,

Botswana is affected by globalization in a number of ways, including international trade, international flows of finance and capital, as well as the impact of globalization on our neighbouring countries' economies. This is for a multiplicity of reasons, including the fact that we are landlocked.

Consequently, my Government has adopted a number of measures to address these effects.

Most importantly, we have undertaken economic diversification initiatives based on further processing and value-addition to major export products such as diamonds, leather, soda-ash, copper and nickel, among others, in order to effectively participate competitively in the global economy.

To facilitate private sector investment in these sectors, my Government has undertaken to remove identified regulatory and administrative barriers to establishment of business.

We have also adopted policies aimed at supporting the private sector, including institutionalizing consultation with the private sector and other stakeholders at the highest level of decision making.

Mr. Chairman,

Coming from a region best described by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as “*the epicenter of a development emergency*”, Botswana firmly endorses the efforts of the United Nations leadership, particularly aimed at assisting Africa in reaching the MDGs target by 2015.

We are also most encouraged by the declaration made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, making *2008 a year of the bottom-billion*. These initiatives require our collective support, and Botswana stands ready to contribute in a meaningful way to realizing these ideals aimed at re-integrating economies of African countries into the global economy, and thereby assisting us in realizing sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

As a landlocked developing country, Botswana is convinced that she stands to benefit greatly from initiatives such as Aid for Trade. This initiative should present a useful tool for our country in addressing supply-side constraints, and market access challenges, particularly in respect to infrastructure constraints, trade policy and negotiation skills constraints, low competitiveness of exports, as well as a lack of adequate regional trade facilitation measures.

I wish, therefore, to call for special attention to be given to the problems and challenges of landlocked developing countries. For a country like Botswana, which is classified as middle-income, we remain marginalized in the multilateral trading system, largely because of our geographic position.

In his address to this conference earlier this week, Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra, the Under-Secretary-General and Special

Adviser for Africa in the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries; Landlocked Developing Countries; and Small Island Developing States, echoed the appeal for assistance to be extended to landlocked developing countries.

Special attention should also be paid to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, which clearly enunciates the needs and challenges of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

While we echo the calls for the conclusion of the Doha Development Round at the earliest opportunity, I wish to emphasize that Aid for Trade needs to be operationalized as a matter of urgency, if it is to help developing countries like Botswana to integrate into the world economy. This process should not be made contingent upon the conclusion of WTO negotiations, because Aid for Trade is not a part of the single-undertaking.

It is in this regard that we welcome the efforts already underway by the United Nations Development Programme to assist developing countries in identifying and prioritizing projects and programmes that can qualify under the Aid for Trade initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

Botswana attaches great importance to UNCTAD's work in assisting developing countries, as outlined in its three pillars – namely, intergovernmental consensus building; technical assistance; and research, policy analysis and data collection.

My country has benefited from assistance offered by UNCTAD in a number of areas and related services, including the Investment Policy Review, the development of the FDI Strategy and Law, Competition Policy and Law, as well as capacity building in negotiation of bilateral investment treaties.

Mr. Chairman,

We are optimistic that UNCTAD XII will result in renewed international collective efforts and commitment to ensure that prosperity for all people in developing countries is realized.

The reality we all have to contend with is that globalization is here to stay. There is need, therefore, to strengthen our resolve as we decide on the future work of this organization, to ensure that developing countries are carried on-board this globalization process.

As this conference takes place on the backdrop of the on-going process for reform of the United Nations system, we call for the strengthening of UNCTAD to enable it to effectively address the trade and development mandate for the benefit of developing countries.

In conclusion, strengthening of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD deserves greater priority at this conference, particularly in as far as the work of the Commissions is concerned. Moreover, it is important to ensure that UNCTAD work feeds well into the work of the United Nations General Assembly, as it is one of the largest United Nations agencies.

I thank you.