



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR
HONOURABLE MMUSI KGAFELA
MINISTER OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY,**

**LLDCS MINISTERIAL MEETING ON TRADE TO BE HELD IN THE
MARGINS OF THE 12TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

**“THE ROLE OF TRADE IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AND
RESILIENT COVID-19 RECOVERY”**

4TH NOVEMBER 2021



Madam Moderator, Her Excellency Ms. Battsetseg Batmunkh,

Director General of the WTO, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala;

Honourable Mr. Bakhyt Sultanov;

Mr. E. Courtenay Rattray;

Honourable Ministers here present;

Distinguished delegates,

Good morning to you all,

1. To the Governments of Mongolia, Kazakhstan, UN-OHRLS and to WTO, for organizing this meeting, I say thank you.
2. **Madam Moderator**, we are challenged. We are land locked. We are remote from international markets. Transport and transit costs are consequently high. The covid 19 pandemic has made it worse. Our preexisting vulnerabilities have consequently been triggered. Our humanitarian and socio-economic conditions have thereby been devastated.
3. Governments are using their trade policies to respond to the outbreak of the pandemic. It is important that they do so to mitigate cross border trade challenges.
4. Recovery has not been uniform. Our countries have fared the worst in terms of vaccine accessibility. LLDCs remain way behind therewith. Distribution thereof is concentrated in the developed part of the world. We have made appeals for a multilateral approach in the previous

fora. There are Intellectual Property related restrictions. They hinder global and diversified production of vaccines and therapeutics. We still canvass support to date, to resolve this.

5. Without aggressive and concerted interventions, the socio-economic ramifications of this pandemic remain immeasurable.

6.

6.1 to reduce the complexity of international trade;

6.2 to provide more opportunities for our small businesses;

6.3 to spread innovation and boost employment;

6.4 stemming the decline in foreign investment, which threatens development gains;

Madam Moderator, implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement should be the core of our developing economies, Our governments must work towards streamlined, transparent and predictable cross border procedures.

Botswana's Experience

7. Allow me to share Botswana's experience

8. In April 2020, we had declared a State of Public Emergency. Extreme social-distancing measures, restriction of movement including closure of borders were in force. Consequently, the manufacturing industry was devastated. They could not import raw materials or had their raw materials stuck at Sea Ports.

9. We are actively pursuing strategies for regional cooperation on infrastructure development and integration as a means of creating more active trade routes and expanding market access.
10. The joint Botswana and Zambia Kazungula Bridge project has a One Stop Border Post facility. It was officially commissioned in May 2021. Goods and persons along the North-South Corridor will move. Trade among the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and East African Community (EAC) regional economic communities will occur.
11. The development of the Trans Kalahari Rail line to Namibia is envisaged. It will link to Zambia via the Kazungula road and Rail Bridge. This should reduce transport costs and link Botswana to regional and global markets.
12. Lastly, Botswana has launched the **National E-Commerce Strategy in October 2021**. UNCTAD assisted therewith. Its objective is to significantly boost economic growth and facilitate achievement of socio-economic growth and raise Botswana's competitiveness in the global economy.
13. As I conclude, Madam Moderator, our trade policies must benefit our stakeholders that have long been side-lined, The poor, women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, and Indigenous people. Their interests must be considered in the development, implementation and monitoring of trade rules, and in domestic policies.
14. I thank you for your kind attention.