



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
FOOD SECURITY**

DURING THE VIRTUAL

**UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS PRE-SUMMIT
26TH -28TH JULY 2021**

**ROME, ITALY
26TH JULY 2021, 12:30**



- His Excellency Dr. Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic;
- His Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations;
- Her Excellency Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General;
- Her Excellency Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the 2021 Food Systems Summit;
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

1.0 A good morning to you all!

2.0 I wish to begin by expressing our deepest gratitude to the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic Dr. Mario Draghi for hosting and organising this hybrid Pre- Summit. I equally extend our heartfelt gratitude to the United Nations Secretary General for his commitment to using our global food systems to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.0 I also wish to commend the UN Food Systems Summit for giving us an opportunity to comprehensively dialogue on and understand the intricate components that define food systems. The Summit recognises that food systems are complex in nature and that they are not just consumables. They are an integration of an array of elements such as water, health, forestry, financing, infrastructure and climatic change. Mr. Secretary General, I therefore applaud you for this broad and holistic interrogation of our global food systems.

- 4.0 This Pre-Summit comes at a very difficult time. The world is currently battling the economic and social impacts of the COVID -19 pandemic. Botswana has not been left unscathed. Our recent wave has been devastating and people's health and livelihoods, including food security have been gravely compromised. This is concerning for us all.
- 5.0 However, humanity is indivisible and through solidarity we can overcome this common enemy. This is why I stand before you today with great optimism and conviction, knowing that through our shared knowledge and experiences we can find solutions if we all work together. We ought to have frank conversations that will allow us to launch new coalitions of action and mobilize new financing and partnerships so that no one is left behind.
- 6.0 Ladies and Gentlemen, I am glad to share that Botswana is actively involved in making sure that we add our voice to the solutions of the Summit. As the National Convenor, I lead a team that is representative of the people centric and solutions orientated vision of our gathering.
- 7.0 Our diverse team is made up of government officials, research institutions, cooperatives, Non-Governmental Organisations, the private sector, farmers, millers and youth. Together, we have already initiated a number of dialogues focused on all Action Tracks because we see that there is still a need to address all of them.

- 8.0 A youth focused consultation has been held and a number of expert-led dialogues have also been done. One of the key conclusions has been the desire for indigenous foods to be formally recognised for their nutritional value and as viable solutions for food access and food security.
- 9.0 Other key conclusions were the challenges posed by inadequate hard and soft infrastructure, underdeveloped value chains, climate change and increased prevalence of malnutrition, non-communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiencies. We must find solutions for these challenges.
- 10.0 Our dialogue outreach is working closely with District Commissioners and our District Agricultural Coordinators. Together we are committed to holding food systems consultations throughout the ten agricultural districts in Botswana to ensure that we engage at grassroots level.
- 11.0 Ladies and gentlemen, with the dialogue spirit of the Summit in mind, I wish to take a moment to share some programmes, policies and strategies that the Government of Botswana has implemented to transform domestic food production and to develop our agricultural value chains.
- 12.0 The Youth Development Fund (YDF) is a socio-economic programme for youth start-ups and expanding business in numerous sectors including agriculture. It is accessible to all citizens of Botswana aged between 18 and 35, and provides a 50% interest free loan and 50% grant. The disbursements range from \$10 000 to \$45 000 and it aims to curtail the lack of financing instruments for our youth.

- 13.0 We also have the Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) Programme which was launched in 2010 to improve the productivity of the livestock subsector through provision of financial and technical support to farmers. It is aimed at improving food security and poverty eradication and has benefited over 46 thousand individuals in indigenous chicken, small stock, animal husbandry & fodder support, establish of cooperative poultry abattoirs as well as borehole drilling amongst others.
- 14.0 Another solution we have engineered is called the Integrated Support Program for Arable and Agricultural Development (ISPAAD) which was launched in 2008. Through this programme arable farmers have access to funding facilities and decentralised agricultural service centres for cluster farming, provision of portable water, access to inputs such as draught power, seeds, fertilisers and herbicides.
- 15.0 The above is a list of only a few of our solutions. We have a range of tested initiatives that we can share with our global partners through South-South and Triangular cooperation. We are willing, ready and available to engage on this issue.
- 16.0 Botswana also continuously seeks financial assistance, technical support and partnerships through initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) which will jointly invest \$97.6 million over a period of eight years, to build livestock resilience in Botswana through ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-responsive rangelands management. We welcome, appreciate and

commend the GCF's innovative partnership model and its support towards ensuring that no-one is left behind.

17.0 Before I conclude, I also wish to take this opportunity to affirm Botswana's commitment to the UN Food Systems Summit and to Agenda 2030. I equally affirm my country's support for the Africa position on the United Nations Food Systems Summit as it encapsulates the challenges, ambition and needs of the African continent.

18.0 Ladies and Gentlemen, the time for us to work together and take action is now. We need to work hand in hand to transform the way we produce, consume and think about food. If we commit to taking action and supporting it with political will, I know that we can build back better and stronger.

I thank you for your kind attention.
