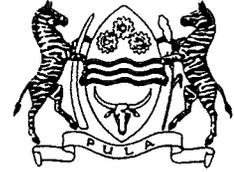


REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY THE

**HONOURABLE EDWIN JENAMISO BATSHU, MP
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 57TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

**06 MARCH, 2013
NEW YORK**

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Chairperson,

1. From the onset, please allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to sincerely congratulate you and other Members of the Bureau on your election, and on the very effective and able manner in which you are guiding our deliberations.
2. We are confident that under your leadership, we will achieve a successful outcome of this Session of the Commission.
3. To this end, I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your mandate.

Chairperson,

4. My delegation aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Chad on behalf of the Africa Group.
5. We also thank the Secretary General for his very incisive reports submitted in respect of the agenda item under consideration and we take due note of the recommendations contained therein.

Chairperson,

6. The Constitution of Botswana, which is the supreme law of the land, proscribes all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed, religion or sex. Men, women, boys and girls enjoy equal protection under the law.

7. In this regard, I wish to re-affirm Botswana's commitment to the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other related international instruments.
8. There is a sustained effort to review laws that discriminate against women, coupled with enactment of gender responsive ones. Regulations for the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act of 2008 are also being formulated.
9. In order to consolidate national efforts to fully meet the requirements of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Botswana has commenced the process of domesticating the Convention.
10. Furthermore, in an effort to facilitate women's access to justice, the Government of Botswana has established a Legal Aid Service, including for survivors of Gender Based Violence. Legal literacy is also provided particularly for relevant service structures.
11. In addition, significant efforts have to date been made to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women in the country's national development agenda.
12. I am pleased to report that we are currently finalising the National Policy on Gender and Development and its operational framework.

13. While Botswana has made significant progress in achieving the goals of her National Vision 2016 and the Millennium Development Goals Targets, the twin problems of violence against women (VAW) and HIV and AIDS remain daunting challenges and serious threats towards the achievement of these goals.

Chairperson,

14. It has been observed that Gender Based Violence (GBV), particularly Violence Against Women and Girls has recently been on the increase in Botswana. In 2012, the Government of Botswana in partnership with Gender Links, a regional NGO, conducted a national indicative study on this phenomenon.

15. The study established that the prevalence of violence against women was at 67.3% and that 62.3% of the women in the sample experienced abuse within intimate partner relationships.

Chairperson,

16. Botswana accords a very high priority to the fight against Gender Based Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls in particular. His Excellency the President has since called for the development of a comprehensive National Response to Gender Based Violence, which has stimulated a multi-sectoral response with key focus on prevention and mitigation strategies.

17. In order to enhance the sensitivity and diligence of the Botswana Police Officers in handling Gender Based Violence cases, both pre- and in-service training programmes have a strong Gender Based Violence component.

18. Training and support is provided on a continuous basis to Botswana Police Gender Focal Persons across all Police Community Service Centres in order to strengthen gender sensitive reporting and analysis.
19. Furthermore, given the impact of violence against women and girls on health and specifically sexual reproductive health, the Ministry of Health through the Male Involvement in Sexual Reproductive Health Programme, is spearheading the Health Sector Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence.
20. The Health Sector Policy Framework for Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence as well as Protocols and Service Delivery Guidelines for Health Care Workers have been developed.

Chairperson,

21. The Government of Botswana, in partnership with other stakeholders, including the civil society, parastatal and private sector organisations and the media continues to design policies, programmes and projects as well as support interventions to address Gender Based Violence, in particular violence against women and girls.
22. Activities here have included conducting awareness raising campaigns; such as engaging local communities in national activities to mark 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children.

23. Other achievements include the establishment of Gender Committees at district and community levels, community policing programmes on domestic violence, engagement with faith based organisations and local councils on the roll-out of the Gender Based Violence prevention programme to the districts.
24. In recognition of the key role of traditional and community leaders, Botswana has made deliberate efforts to engage the Customary Justice System and other custodians of culture in the prevention and elimination of all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls.
25. The 2012 forum for Dikgosi (Chiefs) and other significant contributors in Botswana made a commitment and a declaration to "*Uphold the dignity of Chieftainship in Botswana by being role models of culture in promoting gender equality and ending gender-based violence in their communities*".

Chairperson,

26. Botswana fully recognises the importance of economic empowerment of women as a key strategy for prevention of violence against women. Consistent with corresponding responsibility, Botswana recognises the critical role that income generation can play in eradicating poverty and breaking the cycle of dependency of women on males.
27. Evidence of political will and commitment in this regard is that His Excellency the President has created a platform where he is directly updated on progress made on gender programme implementation on a quarterly basis.

28. As a further demonstration of commitment, in 2011, His Excellency the President committed 5% of the Alcohol Levy to increase the existing budgetary allocation for economic empowerment of women.

29. It is anticipated that the support for the establishment of income generation projects by women will impact positively on the prevention of violence against women and girls over time.

30. In conclusion, Chairperson, permit me, once more, to re-affirm Botswana's support for the international community's efforts towards the eradication and prevention of violence against women and girls, with a view to guaranteeing a safe and secure world for both present and future generations of women and girls.

I thank you for your attention.