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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by

Mr. Leutlwetse Mmualefe
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Botswana to the United Nations

on

"Women and Peace and Security"

Open Debate at the Security Council

New York, October 24, 2000

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Mr. President,

My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, and the Security Council not only for recognizing the various factors that relate to women and peace and security, but for emphasizing the importance of women's increased participation in all aspects of the process of conflict prevention and resolution. Among the several documents before us, the Security Council document S/PRST/2000/25 in particular, attest to this fact. Also, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 contributed in no small measure in capturing the world's attention to the agenda of women, peace and security. We also thank the various United Nations bodies that continue to highlight the subject of women, peace and security.

Mr. President,

Unfortunately, violence against women is still the norm in some parts of the world. There is definitely a need to strengthen or enact legislation to censure or punish domestic violence, including the sexual abuse of women and girls.

In cases of peace operations, violations against women must not be tolerated. They must be punished. Peace support operations must include well-staffed and integrated gender units, and gender advisers. It should not be forgotten that the effects of gender inequality, discrimination and violence, affect women more than men. Field operations should pay particular attention to affected women, especially refugee women and girls.

In the case of Botswana, it is generally understood and slowly accepted that violence against women, in particular domestic violence, is not a family matter but a serious crime. Laws are therefore expected to change to punish the crime. In 1997, there was a review of all the laws that discriminate against women.

Mr. President,

In war and conflict situations, the under-representation of women in decision-making at all levels is one of the major problems. In most cases, the very men who make war, make decisions related to conflicts and yet, it is women who have to take care of the war victims, both emotionally and physically. For the women to contribute effectively to the maintenance of peace and security, their economic and political empowerment is very crucial. This fact is well illustrated in the Windhoek Declaration which was adopted during the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia on 31st May, 2000.