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STATEMENT BY

**HON. MAJOR GENERAL MOENG R. PHETO
ASSISTANT MINISTER
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS**

HEAD OF DELEGATION

TO THE

**FORTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**ON AGENDA ITEMS 3a:
THE ROLE OF MEN AND BOYS IN ACHIEVING
GENDER EQUALITY**

AND

**3b: WOMEN'S EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN
CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND IN CONFLICT PEACE-BUILDING**

3rd MARCH, 2004 – NEW YORK

Chairperson,

Allow me to join those who have spoken before me in congratulating you and members of the bureau, on your election. I assure you of my delegations' full support in carrying out your responsibilities.

Botswana associates itself with the SADC statement and that of the Group of 77 and China.

Chairperson,

The themes before us today are a challenge, as well as a commitment to the continued implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The platform for action remains a universal framework for the promotion of gender equality and the enhancement of the status of women.

We are committed to gender equality and true partnership in carrying out our social development programmes. Botswana has achieved 35 percent for females serving at senior level such as legislators, judges and in other fields.

Chairperson,

As we deliberate here today, conflicts continue to ravage some parts of the world. And in all these situations, it is the women and children who are adversely affected. This is why the theme "Women's involvement in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution and in Post-Conflict Peace Building" becomes more pertinent.

It is the view of my delegation that in order to strengthen women's participation in peace processes, it is important to enhance their capacities through comprehensive educational programmes.

The Botswana educational policy provides for a ten-year basic education for children irrespective of gender. This is why, Chairperson, I am pleased to inform you that there is no significant disparity in enrollments between males and females at primary, secondary and university levels in Botswana.

Chairperson,

Poverty is another major cause of conflict that deserves international attention. Botswana has made notable progress by reducing poverty levels significantly over the years since independence. We have put in place poverty eradication strategies which aim to reduce poverty, promote sustainable livelihoods and stimulate rural employment. In addition, my country will host the Women in Business SADC Fair on the 21 to 27

June, 2004 which is aimed at promoting women entrepreneurs access to markets and in sharing experiences.

Chairperson,

Coming from a country which is amongst the most affected by HIV/AIDS, we strongly believe that the disease is a major threat to peace, security and development worldwide.

We recognise that the fight against HIV/AIDS can never be effectively won without the full partnership of both women and men, boys and girls.

My country has instituted programmes aimed at educating boys and girls in schools on Gender and HIV/AIDS. We hope that this will change their attitudes and perception towards gender issues and thereby work towards eliminating the gender stereotypes prevalent in our culture.

In this regard, gender-based education programmes are being main-streamed to different organizations and communities. This is intended to eliminate violence, promote advocacy and human rights.

We have now adopted routine voluntary HIV/AIDS testing intended to promote full utilization of existing HIV/AIDS Programmes such as Anti-Retroviral Therapy and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission.

Chairperson,

Allow me to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues, Ms. Angela King, for the sterling job she has done over the years in advancing gender equality around the world. Her legacy will remain a source of inspiration for us all. We wish her well in her retirement.

In conclusion, Chairperson, allow me to once again re-affirm Botswana's commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to the Agreements we will make at the end of this session on the two themes under consideration.

Thank you.
