

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 28:
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN:
THIRD COMMITTEE, 67th SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

1. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the incisive reports submitted under this agenda item and take note of the recommendations contained therein.
2. We also thank Representatives of UN-Women, UNFPA and the CEDAW Committee for their introductory Statements.
3. Botswana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Algeria on behalf of G77 and China, Cameroon and Malawi and on behalf of the Africa Group and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) respectively.

Mr. Chairman

4. The adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reflects the global commitment to achieving the goals of equality, development and peace for women throughout the world. Since its adoption in 1995, gender equality and the empowerment of women have gained ground worldwide.
5. Despite this momentum, there is still a long way to go before women and girls can be said to enjoy the fundamental rights, freedom and dignity that guarantees their well-being and the realisation of their full potential.
6. Recognizing that improving gender equality and empowering women are pathways to making sustainable human development and to achieving other MDGs, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to strengthening efforts to foster equality, justice and peace among our people.

7. In this regard, Botswana continues to strive for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs and objectives relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women; elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and gender based violence; mainstreaming gender perspective in our policies and programmes; enhancing education and training opportunities for women and girls, and most importantly, increasing their participation in leadership and decision making.

Mr. Chairman,

8. We note the significant progress achieved by Member States which demonstrates their ongoing commitment to addressing violence against women. As indicated by the Secretary General in his Report, many States took actions to prevent and address violence against women including the enactment or amendments of laws to criminalize acts of violence against women, strengthening of national legal and policy frameworks as well as enhancing prevention and protection measures, among others.

9. Despite efforts made by many countries, we note with grave concern that the prevalence of violence against women is still very high.

10. We are also concerned about violence against women with disabilities which largely remains unreported. As stated in the Secretary General's Report, women with disabilities continue to experience a high rate of violence by different actors and in different settings.

11. Gender based violence remains the major impediment to the attainment of gender equality in most countries including my own.

12. As indicated by the recent study conducted in the country, over two thirds of women in Botswana (67%) have experienced some form of gender based violence in their lifetime including partner and non-partner violence.

13. To address this problem, we agree with the Secretary General's conclusions and recommendations that prevention strategies and activities should address the root causes of violence, including by strengthening women's economic independence and eliminating discrimination against them in law and in practice.

Mr. Chairman,

14. At the national level, in March 2012, the Gender Based Violence (GBV) Indicators Study Report was launched by the Women's Affairs Department. The purpose of the Study was to establish the extent, drivers and effects of GBV and to assess the effectiveness of the responses of the criminal justice system, health and other social services in Botswana.

15. It is our hope that the report will provide comprehensive data and recommendations on effective strategies for preventing and responding to GBV by Government and all relevant stakeholders.

16. Other efforts aimed at addressing issues of gender equality include the development of the 2012 National Policy on Gender and Development which is expected to be tabled before Parliament at its November sitting. Botswana has also made strides in developing the gender based violence referral system.

Mr. Chairman,

17. With regard to eliminating discrimination against women, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and continues to make strides in this regard.

18. Botswana has taken cognisance of the provisions of the CEDAW which has led to a comprehensive review of some laws and incorporation of provisions of the CEDAW as appropriate. However, we recognise the need to fully domesticate the Convention in order to strengthen the legal framework for the promotion and promotion of women's rights

Mr. Chairman,

19. Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, constitutes a serious threat to human dignity, human rights and development.

20. In July 2010, the international community reaffirmed and renewed its commitment and determination to prevent and end the heinous crime of trafficking in persons, by adopting the Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons.

21. Botswana continues to be guided by the relevant UN Conventions and the Global Plan of Action in her efforts to prevent and combat trafficking of persons in and through Botswana. In this regard, the Government has in partnership with UNICEF launched its first anti-trafficking awareness campaign. Botswana is also working with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to train officials and formulate anti-trafficking legislation whose draft is yet to be finalised.

22. While States have made significant progress in prosecuting and punishing traffickers, many critical challenges still remain. To this end, effective international cooperation and coordination of efforts at the national, bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international levels, especially among countries of origin, transit and destination cannot be overstated.

23. We therefore look forward to the appraisal of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons in 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

24. Cognizant of the significant role of women in all aspects of development, Botswana joins others in supporting the inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as an integral component of the post-2015 development framework.

25. We also look forward to the discussions by Member States on the joint proposal by the Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly for the 66th Session for a UN World Conference on Women in 2015 that would possibly examine the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

26. In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate Botswana's commitment to the advancement of the status of women and the promotion and protection of their rights.

27. I thank you for your attention.
