



**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY**

**HIS HONOUR LT. GENERAL**

**MOMPATI S. MERAFFE, MP.**

**VICE PRESIDENT OF THE**

**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**TO THE PLENARY OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK**

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**Mr. President,**

1. **It is with infinite pleasure that I join other distinguished speakers, who preceded me, in expressing our felicitations to you on your election, to the Presidency of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly.**
2. **We owe an immense debt of gratitude to your great country, the State of Qatar, for making you available to the service of the international community.**
3. **We are confident that under your guidance and leadership, the 66<sup>th</sup> Session will achieve a successful outcome, and one which will make a difference to the lives of multitudes of disadvantaged people around the world.**
4. **May I also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, whose effective and exemplary stewardship of the 65<sup>th</sup> Session has earned our deep respect and admiration.**

**Mr. President,**

5. **As the world problems have in recent decades become increasingly more numerous and complex, so, too, have been the challenges and responsibilities of the UN Secretary General – the head of our grand institution.**
6. **In this regard, I am pleased to state that our Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki - Moon has acquitted himself extremely well, at times in very difficult circumstances.**
7. **We specifically wish to commend him for his concerted efforts, particularly in raising alarm bells on conflict situations and emerging threats to international peace and security.**
8. **Allow me, therefore, to seize this opportunity to sincerely congratulate Secretary General Ban Ki - Moon on his well deserved election for a second term.**

**Mr. President,**

9. **My delegation is of the conviction that all problems and challenges confronting humanity are capable of being resolved within the letter and spirit of the UN Charter and international law.**
10. **In this connection, we must each do our part and work together to improve the lives of our people, by conquering hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for human rights and freedoms as well as respond to natural disasters and different humanitarian situations.**

**Mr. President,**

11. **Once again this year, the world has experienced a number of natural and manmade disasters, including violent senseless attacks which have claimed numerous lives, left many homeless, caused massive destruction to property and caused intolerable pain and suffering.**
12. **My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to all those countries that have been victims of these tragedies.**
13. **In this regard, our profound sympathies and heartfelt condolences go to the Government and people of Japan for the unfortunate Fukushima incident, triggered by a massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck that country early this year.**
14. **We also wish to join in conveying our condolences and sympathies to the Government and people of Norway on the recent senseless and horrifying attack that left many people dead.**
15. **The humanitarian situation in the horn of Africa equally deserves our attention. We commend the UN for calling the attention of the international community to the plight of the victims of this disaster.**
16. **We in Botswana have made our modest contribution to this relief effort.**
17. **To this end, we express our sincere appreciation to the UN system and the international community as a whole for their generous and timely response, to these tragedies.**

**Mr President,**

18. **At the inception of the United Nations, the international community pledged a solemn determination to safeguard “succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”**
19. **In the intervening period, the world has seen monumental changes with profound effect on humanity.**
20. **The end of colonialism and the cold war, the defeat of the inhuman system of apartheid, the institutionalisation of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms around the world, and the strengthening of collaboration between the UN and regional organisations in dealing with conflict situations, come to mind in this regard.**
21. **For decades the people of South Sudan have been engulfed in a seemingly endless bloody conflagration, accompanied by heavy loss of human life, destruction of property and condemnation of the South Sudanese to untold misery and suffering.**

22. **However, we are delighted that the people of South Sudan, with the assistance and support of the international community, have realised their long cherished dream.**
23. **They now face a new dawn of freedom and nationhood.**
24. **Allow me therefore, Mr. President, to pay a fitting tribute to South Sudan on the assumption of her rightful place in the comity of nations as a sovereign and independent State and the UN's 193<sup>rd</sup> Member.**
25. **South Sudan will obviously need the full support of the international community in addressing the plethora of challenges of nationhood, including outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement such as the future of the Abeyei region, and other "Separation Issues" that could easily undermine this fragile transition.**
26. **My country Botswana, will employ the best endeavours, within the limit of her resources, to assist our brothers and sisters in South Sudan, translate their political freedom into tangible social and economic benefits.**
27. **The situation evolving in Cote d' Ivoire is also a cause for optimism.**
28. **While many security concerns remain, we believe President Ouattara and his Government have put in place the necessary measures to consolidate peace, build confidence, promote national reconciliation and set the country on the path to normalcy, reconstruction and sustainable development.**
29. **We urge the international community to remain actively engaged in supporting this process.**

**Mr. President,**

30. **While notable strides have been made towards resolving some conflicts, regrettably, the same cannot be said of many other conflict situations such as in the Middle East, Somalia and Syria where, peace remains elusive, with attendant hardship and misery.**
31. **On Somalia, my delegation takes note of the conclusion of the recent Kampala Accord between the President of the Federal Transitional Government and the Speaker of Parliament, which is a welcome move towards improving the political situation in that country.**

**Mr. President,**

32. **We, however, remain concerned about the deteriorating security situation and the growing humanitarian crisis in that country, and call on all parties to remain engaged and to fully honour their obligations under that Accord.**

**Mr. President,**

33. **On the Middle East, Botswana shares the general frustration at the prolonged impasse on the situation in that region.**
34. **We call on both the Palestinians and Israelis to remain engaged in the negotiations on the basis of a Two - State solution, in which the two peoples will live side by side in peace and harmony.**

**Mr. President,**

35. **On other emerging threats to international peace and security, my delegation is deeply concerned about States that continue to violate with impunity, their obligations under their constitutions and international law, of protecting their citizens from any armed conflict.**
36. **This very Organisation is founded on the premise that Governments have the primary duty and responsibility to do all in their power to safeguard the legitimate aspirations of their people for a better life, including ensuring their safety and security.**
37. **It is therefore imperative that Governments provide a conducive environment to address legitimate concerns and grievances of their people through inclusive dialogue and mutual understanding.**
38. **Consequently, it is not acceptable, under any circumstances, for any State to use military force against its civilian population, the very citizens it has sworn to protect.**
39. **I believe we all agree that this is a clear violation of human rights and international law and an infringement of our common value system enshrined in the UN Charter.**
40. **Our view is that any leader who sanctions such use of force on his people forfeits the legitimate right to be recognised as representing the interests of his people.**
41. **The international community should therefore spare no effort in applying all the necessary measures at its disposal, to protect civilians from such repressive governments, and to hold them accountable for their atrocities.**
42. **In this regard, support for the ICC is crucial to realise the full implementation of the Rome Statute.**
43. **We commend the Security Council for its swift and resolute action on Libya, under resolution SC 1973, which authorised NATO to protect civilians in that country. We however remain concerned about the delay and procrastination on a similar situation in Syria.**

44. **The Council's condemnation of human rights violations and the military assault on civilians by Syria came rather too late.**
45. **It failed to convey a clear and unequivocal message of revulsion to the Syrian authorities, and to urge them to respect international humanitarian law and human rights.**
46. **Crimes against humanity have been committed in Syria and the leadership in that country should answer for such crimes through the ICC.**
47. **It is important that the international community remains vigilant against any breach of international peace and security, and also responds in a decisive, consistent and timely manner to any such instances.**
48. **We find it unacceptable that such countries as mentioned can continue to belong to a community of peace loving nations.**

**Mr. President,**

49. **As Botswana, we recognize the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Libya as the Interim Administration until there is an elected government.**
50. **We therefore welcome the NTC into the UN family to represent the Libyan people during this Session.**

**Mr. President,**

51. **Your chosen theme for this Session, namely, "The Role of Mediation in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes", is both timely and pertinent.**
52. **It is timely, given the multiplicity of mediation efforts which the international community is currently engaged in as part of an effort to find a peaceful solution to raging conflicts in various parts of the world.**
53. **It is pertinent in that forging international peace and understanding is the *raison d'être* of this very august body.**
54. **In order to maintain momentum in governance, my delegation believes that countries emerging from conflict should also commit to strict observance of human rights, national and international humanitarian law, as well as values of accountability and transparency guided by effective application of the rule of law.**
55. **In this respect, I wish to reiterate my country's support for all efforts geared towards assisting countries emerging from conflict to make successful transitions to post conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic recovery.**

**Mr. President,**

56. **Allow me now to turn to another critical pillar of the United Nations mandate, namely, – sustainable development and poverty eradication.**

**Mr. President,**

57. **Our global citizenry is now, more than ever before, demanding practical actions to address the global challenges we face.**
58. **They believe, and rightly so, that collectively, we are equipped with enough resources, institutions, policies and lessons learnt to effectively respond to existing and emerging global challenges.**
59. **They therefore expect us to muster the requisite political will to find durable solutions to these challenges.**

**For them,**

- **It is no longer acceptable for children to die from HIV and Aids or any other preventable disease just because Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) hinders access to affordable treatment or that over a 113 million children have no access to primary education.**
  - **It is certainly no longer acceptable for people to die from cholera and other water borne diseases, when affordable technology for clean water and sanitation exists.**
  - **Or to continue to be exposed to the dire consequences of climate change, while we debate endlessly instead of concluding a comprehensive, legally binding climate change regime, to curb global warming and its effects.**
60. **In other words, our people want us to do more with the collective resources we have at our disposal.**

**Mr President,**

61. **The residual effects of the financial and economic crisis, coupled with ongoing uncertainties in the global economy, prevailing high cost of energy and food, have compounded the setbacks experienced in the implementation of internationally agreed goals and commitments, including Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).**

**Mr. President,**

62. **We must also ensure that sustainable development in all its three pillars, namely social, economic and environmental, remains the key framework for attaining a balanced approach towards development in our countries.**

63. **In this context, poverty eradication should remain the centre-piece of all our policies and programmes.**
64. **As we prepare for a common global policy on sustainable development in Brazil, in June next year, we are increasingly concerned about the negative trend the negotiations are taking.**
65. **The ongoing climate change negotiations, the failed 19th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the ongoing discussions on the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO + 20), continue to expose deep divisions among our countries.**
66. **This unfortunately undermines implementation of existing commitments, and threatens prospects for an effective global sustainable development regime.**
67. **We believe that the Rio + 20 processes, present an excellent platform for all Member States, individually and collectively to muster their resolve towards the attainment of sustainable development.**
68. **Similarly, the Climate Change Meeting - COP 17 to be held in South Africa later this year, also offers the international community yet another valuable opportunity to reverse the harmful effects of climate change on our planet.**
69. **We must forge the spirit of cooperation and partnership including through South-South Cooperation, public private partnership, resource mobilization and technology transfer as well as capacity building, to assist countries such as my own, to exploit the abundant coal reserves for sustainable energy production in a less harmful manner to the environment.**

**Mr. President,**

70. **In this respect, significant progress was made last September, when we resolved to take effective measures to further strengthen support and meet the special needs of regions and countries struggling to achieve economic and social development, including middle income countries.**
71. **Recent experience has shown that even this category of countries which had made small gains in poverty reduction, are still vulnerable in the event of further global economic and financial upheaval.**
72. **The limitations imposed by our fragile economy and the landlocked position of my country, Botswana, also call for the speedy implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, accompanied by renewed efforts to level the playing field in international trade, including the political will to conclude the WTO Doha Round of Trade negotiations as soon as possible.**

**Mr President,**

- 73. **We as nations, individually and collectively, face the greatest challenge of our time – the upliftment of human kind.**
- 74. **In fulfilling this mammoth task, our greatest optimism lies in our ability as leaders to summon our courage and political will, to do what is right.**

**Mr President,**

- 75. **Let me conclude by, re-affirming Botswana's commitment to working with you, in our common endeavour to put our Organisation at the service of humanity.**
- 76. **I thank you for the courtesy of your kind attention.**

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