

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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**DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**1 OCTOBER, 2013
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Mr. President,

1. Allow me, on behalf of Botswana delegation, to join previous speakers in congratulating you most sincerely on your assumption of the Presidency of this august Assembly.
2. Your election demonstrates the confidence and high esteem by which you personally, and your great country, Antigua and Barbuda are held by the Member States of this organisation.
3. We particularly admire your deep passion and proven record of leadership here at the United Nations on issues of sustainable development and climate change.
4. We are therefore confident that the vast knowledge and experience of multilateral diplomacy which you bring to this position will contribute significantly to the success of this Session.
5. May I also congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Vuk Jeremic, for his effective guidance and sterling leadership of the 67th Session.

Mr. President,

6. My delegation fully endorses the theme you have proposed for this Session, namely, ***“Post 2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage, overcoming Poverty and Insecurity, as well as ensuring Sustainable Development Goals”***.
7. This is quite relevant and fitting given the fact that the international community is on the brink of two major interrelated developments in the global arena – the imminent target date of 2015 for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and the evolution of Sustainable Development Goals, which will constitute a significant part of the post – 2015 development agenda.

8. We therefore pledge our full support and cooperation to you in your efforts to usher in a new development paradigm.

Mr. President,

9. There is no doubt that the challenges of extreme poverty, disease, lack of access to affordable energy, potable water and sanitation, climate change and gender inequality will continue to haunt millions of our people, especially in developing countries.
10. It is on account of this that my delegation is of the strong view that, the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals should be predicated on the outcome of the current Review of the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.
11. To this end, we believe that Sustainable Development Goals should complement, rather than replace Millennium Development Goals wholesale.

Mr. President,

12. Botswana has made impressive achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and we have mainstreamed them into our national development planning process.
13. A substantial portion of our national budget is allocated to health, education, infrastructure, human resource development, women and youth empowerment.
14. I am proud to report that we have achieved universal primary education, as well as universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support services. We have drastically reduced Mother-To-Child transmission of HIV. We are working tirelessly towards the achievement of zero new infections and zero HIV/AIDS related deaths by 2015.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Central to our efforts is the commitment to ensuring respect for human rights and expanding access to prevention, treatment and care support services to affected populations including those most at risk.
16. In addition, we remain committed to providing quality life for all Botswana. In this regard, utmost priority is given to the implementation of poverty eradication programmes, with particular focus on vulnerable communities and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, the aged and persons with disabilities.
17. Despite all the achievements we have made to-date, serious challenges remain.

Mr. President,

18. Permit me to briefly address the vexing subject of Climate Change and the situation of Countries in special categories, including Middle Income Countries.
19. Botswana is among sub-Saharan African Countries that suffer most from the adverse impact of climate change. Some of the notable manifestations of climate change are extreme temperatures, shortage of water, land degradation, desertification and persistent drought.
20. Climate change also adversely impacts on health and food security. While it is gratifying that progress continues to be made in many countries in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), my delegation believes that more needs to be done particularly to assist vulnerable countries in semi arid and arid areas and landlocked and transit Countries such as my own which are also susceptible to drought and desertification.

21. Financial support, technology transfer and capacity building need to be generously extended to this special category of countries in order to assist them with adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change.
22. Last year Botswana hosted the Summit for Sustainability in Africa the outcome of which was a Declaration which called upon governments to ensure that the contributions of natural capital to sustainable economic growth, maintenance and improvement of social capital and human well being are quantified and integrated into developments and business practice.
23. We wish to commend the work done by Non-Governmental Environmental Organisations worldwide in their relentless efforts to save the planet from climate change and its negative effects.

Mr. President,

24. Botswana welcomes the adoption earlier this year, of the long overdue Arms Trade Treaty.
25. The Treaty establishes common international standards for the regulation of international trade in conventional arms, ammunition, parts and components for the purpose of contributing to international peace and security.
26. In this regard, I am delighted to report that arrangements are underway to facilitate the signing and ratification of this vital instrument in the very near future.

Mr. President,

27. Botswana remains firmly committed to a strong and effective international criminal justice system – hence our continued strong support for the mandate and work of the International Criminal Court.

28. We believe that the Court has a vital role to play in the fight against impunity, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.
29. It is in this regard that in April this year, Botswana hosted a Regional Workshop for African States Parties to the Rome Statute.
30. This workshop was aimed at encouraging African States Parties to ratify the 2010 Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute dealing with the specific question of the Crime of Aggression.
31. I am pleased to state that following this Workshop, Botswana became the first African State Party to ratify the Kampala Amendments.
32. We can only hope that other States Parties will follow suit in order that we can secure the requisite number of ratifications for the Amendments to enter into force.

Mr. President,

33. Now turning to issues of international peace and security, it defies logic that throughout the course of history, mankind has unleashed untold suffering on mankind.
34. Conflict is raging in many parts of the World where innocent lives are being lost needlessly.
35. My delegation wishes to reiterate the point that States have a duty and a Responsibility to Protect their populations against impunity, war crimes and crimes against humanity.
36. In situations where it is clearly evident that States have failed or are unwilling to exercise their Responsibility to Protect, then it is only fair and proper that the international community should intervene. Here of course I refer mainly to the responsibility of the UN Security Council.

Mr. President,

37. It is now slightly over two years since the people of Syria have been engulfed in a brutal civil war, whose end seems not to be anywhere in sight.
38. We remain deeply concerned that Syria continues to be soaked in the blood of its citizens.
39. We therefore wish to register our disappointment with those Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, who continue to frustrate resolutions aimed at interventions that could find a lasting solution to the ongoing carnage in Syria.
40. Despite the ever worsening humanitarian situation in that country, it is extremely saddening that the international community continues to turn a blind eye to that situation.
41. If this state of affairs continues, we fear that a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions will unfold and haunt humanity for many generations to come.
42. In this regard, we wish to reiterate our position that punitive action in whatever form should be taken against Assad's regime for committing crimes against humanity.
43. We once again, appeal to the Security Council, as the body with Charter responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to take decisive action, once and for all, to end the human suffering in Syria.
44. We equally wish to commend those countries in the region, especially Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon for accommodating and positively responding to the needs and plight of refugees from Syria.

45. Let me take this opportunity to commend all credible human rights and humanitarian organisations for their efforts to relieve human suffering around the world.

Mr. President,

46. The political upheaval in Egypt is also a cause for grave concern. Of course we believe that former President Morsi contributed to the present crisis due to his undemocratic and divisive agenda which resulted in the unfortunate military coup.

47. Urgent action is therefore required to restore constitutionality in that country.

Mr. President,

48. We note with deep concern, that shortly after celebrating the second anniversary of its Independence, Africa's newest sovereign state, South Sudan, witnessed developments in relations with Sudan which seriously threatened its security and territorial integrity.

49. We, at the same-time, remain deeply concerned about the increasingly deteriorating political and humanitarian situation in Darfur.

50. We therefore appeal to the international community to assist in all possible ways in restoring peace and stability in that region.

Mr. President,

51. My Government strongly condemns the recent spate of terrorist attacks in Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan, which have resulted in the loss of many innocent lives. We wish to convey our sincere condolences and sympathies to the affected countries and the families of the deceased.

52. These acts of terror are a threat to international peace and security, and also militate against the international community's efforts to build a secure, peaceful and prosperous world.
53. These terrorist acts are transnational in nature and therefore, call for a global response. To this end, we appeal to the conscience and resolve of all Members of the international community to remain united and steadfast, if we are to win this fight. There can be no doubt that, if left unchecked, international terrorism has the potential to undermine our global development agenda.

Mr. President,

54. We find it opportune to commend the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon for the vanguard role he continues to play in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as addressing issues of human suffering across the globe. The United Nations Secretary General also needs to be applauded for his continued efforts to coordinate international efforts to advance the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

55. Let me conclude by re-affirming Botswana's continued commitment to playing her part in the quest for international peace and security as well as in the international community's unrelenting efforts towards making this world a safer, peaceful and more prosperous place for both present and future generations.

I thank you all for your attention.
