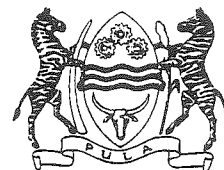


REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

**HIS HONOUR MOKGWEETSI E.K. MASISI, M.P.,
THE VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 70TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**01ST OCTOBER 2015
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery.

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana, Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, allow me at the very outset, to join other delegations in extending our heartiest congratulations to you on your election to the Presidency of the 70th Session of this august body of the United Nations.

2. Your election bears testimony to the excellent credentials you bring to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and which should greatly support the execution of your mandate during this historic year on the UN calendar. We wish to assure you of Botswana's unequivocal support throughout your term of office.

3. My delegation and I take this opportunity to also recognise, with appreciation, your predecessor, His Excellency Sam Kahamba Kutesa, whose leadership and purposeful endeavors as President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly was significantly evident in international efforts to address the global challenges confronting the world today. The High Level Events he convened in this regard demonstrated his genuine commitment to sustainable development, peace and security as well as human rights and human dignity.

4. We are confident that your efforts will further, and firmly guide the general membership of this Assembly onto a path which ensures the full and effective implementation of the historic Post 2015 Development Agenda which the world leaders adopted only a few short days ago.

5. It would be remiss of me not to seize this opportunity to commend the Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, whose passion and dedication has been, and continues to be instrumental to the work of this noble Organisation.

Mr. President,

6. This year, 2015, marks an extraordinarily momentous year in the history of humanity. Not only is it the 70th Anniversary of the naissance

of the United Nations, it is also notably the 70th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War; the 20th Anniversary of the World Summit on Social Development; the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and the 15th Anniversary of the Millennium Summit; to mention but a few.

7. The list of the global milestones is by no means exhaustive but demonstrates the resolute and enduring commitment of the UN to champion the cause of humanity.

8. The significance of this year impels us to pause and recall the purpose, ideals and founding principles of, and upon which the United Nations was established. It is imperative that we reflect on the history of this eminent Organisation and take account of what we, the international community, have achieved and can still achieve, to safeguard the aspirations and integrity of the founders of the UN as well as uphold the absolute primacy and veracity of the UN Charter.

9. It is furthermore, an opportunity for us to admit our failures and draw attention to the areas where we have fallen short of fulfilling our individual and collective responsibility to deliver on all three anchors of human development: peace and security, development, and human rights.

Mr. President,

10. Your choice of this year's theme, "**The United Nations at 70 - A New Commitment to Action**" is therefore fitting, being a most pertinent context for our deliberation and reflection at this critical juncture in our lifetime.

11. Fifteen years ago, following the Millennium Summit of 2000, the largest gathering of World leaders in history adopted the Millennium Declaration, which inter alia, espoused the need for a people-centered framework for global development. That framework gave birth to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

12. The MDGs were a landmark set of eight time-bound targets aimed at addressing extreme poverty and social inequalities. For the first time, there was a clearly codified global agenda focusing nations globally on priority areas for meeting the needs of the world's poorest people and liberating them from the dehumanising conditions of abject poverty.

13. The Secretary General's final Report on the MDGs illustrates that significant progress has been made in realising those goals.

14. These notable achievements notwithstanding, the somber truth is that progress has largely been uneven across and within countries and regions.

15. We continue to see multitudes, especially the poorest, vulnerable and marginalised in our societies, subjected to unacceptable living conditions. Social exclusions and inequalities still present a significant challenge in most countries, with women and girls; the youth bearing the heaviest weight of those circumstances.

16. The situation varies from one nation to another due to their different national realities and capacities, requiring more focused and targeted interventions to effectively address and ensure the sustainability of the developments achieved.

17. In Botswana, we are proud of the tremendous strides we have made in the implementation of the MDGs, particularly given the enormous resource and capacity constraints we faced, and continue to face as we implement our development programmes and prepare to domesticate the new agenda.

18. Poverty eradication, gender equality, the empowerment of women, girls and the youth, job creation, as well as equal access to health and other social services remain high on our national agenda.

19. We however march on with steadfast determination to ensure that every opportunity is seized, every effort galvanised and every

resource employed to ensure the inherent dignity and fundamental freedoms of all citizens of Botswana. This includes paying due attention to the needs of the aged and to people with disabilities. In this regard, the Botswana Government is currently at the final stages of finalising the country's National Vision 2030 and National Development Plan 11 in order to ensure firm alignment and complementarity between national aspirations and the building blocks to deliver them.

Mr. President,

20. As dusk descends on the MDGs, the Government of Botswana has enthusiastically begun to prepare for the dawn of the new global development framework.

21. Botswana therefore welcomes the highly anticipated adoption of the profoundly ambitious and transformative Sustainable Development Goals of "The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development", which come as a culmination of over two years of exceptionally intensive and, widely extensive negotiations. The Agenda represents a global vision for the sustained prosperity of humankind and the living planet, wherein universal peace and security form the foundation for sustainable development across all nations.

22. We look forward to the effective implementation of the integrated and indivisible 17 goals and 169 targets arrived at through the all-inclusive intergovernmental process as mandated by the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference of 2012. The Botswana Government embarks on this new course with increased optimism that we shall indeed realise "The Future We Want".

Mr. President,

23. In December this year, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will convene in Paris to adopt a universal legally binding agreement on climate change. The importance and urgency of agreement on this framework cannot be over-emphasised.

24. Climate change is arguably the greatest environmental challenge the world continues to face, with potentially catastrophic consequences for our planet and future generations, if left unchecked. We continue to witness a dangerous rise in sea levels, melting glaciers, severe decline in agricultural output, changing weather patterns and health challenges caused by the change in climatic conditions. Climate change also presents a serious security threat, displacing millions and condemning even greater numbers to sub-par living conditions. We extend our condolences to all those who lost loved ones and the destruction of property caused by natural disasters.

25. Developing countries are the hardest hit, with limited capacities to respond to these effects and, therefore require much assistance in the development of climate-smart technology in order to reduce their vulnerability and transition to low-carbon growth paths.

Mr. President,

26. The Botswana delegation believes it is critical that in our pursuit of global development that leaves no one behind, particular focus be given to countries in special situations, and the very specific support they require to build their economies.

27. In November of last year, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) met in Vienna to adopt the Vienna Programme of Action on Landlocked Developing Countries which has six priority areas that range from infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation to structural economic transformation.

28. Botswana, like other LLDCs will require substantial augmentation of its capacity to implement any one of these areas. This holds true for Middle Income Countries (MICs) too, a category of countries to which Botswana belongs.

29. Figures show that 75% of the world's poorest populations live in Middle Income Countries. The clarion call is therefore to explore mechanisms by which these countries can be assisted in order to address such entrenched and widespread poverty. The scale of the required assistance goes well beyond the obvious need for infrastructure development, strengthening of institutions, access to technology, skills development, development of social protection floors, amongst others.

30. Critically important is the need to extend financing for development in order to address the specific needs and challenges of the individual MICs rather than employ a "one size fits all" policy framework. Failure in this regard would be detrimental to the development trajectory of MICs, with a real possibility that they could relapse to LDC status.

Mr. President,

31. Discussions have commenced at various UN platforms on how the Organisation should itself transform to be better structured, better equipped to effectively and efficiently carry out its mandate and better serve the best interests of its Member States.

32. Botswana believes that chief amongst the scores of considerations should be the coordination between and amongst the UN agencies for strengthened system-wide coherence which extends to improve cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations. We believe that this would go a long way towards enhancing international efforts aimed at addressing the myriad of challenges to development, durable peace and security.

Mr. President,

33. We cannot speak about development, peace and security without consideration of the increasingly disturbing phenomenon of migration trends. The flow of international migrants continues to show

exponential growth since the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in New York in September 2013.

34. Conflict, political instability and poverty are the main push factors of migrants from the developing to developed countries, as evidenced by the thousands that continue to cross the Mediterranean into Europe in search of economic opportunities. The grave conditions that the migrants are exposed to, including what they contribute to the unprecedented levels of humanitarian crises, is a cause of great concern. It is wrong to blame any single country in Europe on its policy towards immigration as every country has to assess its own ability to accommodate such influx. It is also not Europe's fault about the tragedy of the drownings in the sea, but that of the countries they originate from.

35. In this regard, Botswana believes that the issue of migration warrants urgent attention by the international community, with a view to developing a comprehensive and lasting solution to it. The imposition of quotas to make it mandatory for countries to accept migrants or refugees is not the best solution. Instead, consideration should be given rather to reward and support the countries accepting these migrants or refugees by setting up a Special Fund under UNHCR, that Europe or preferably the entire international community should contribute to annually; based on an assessment of their economic status and whether they themselves are playing host to refugees. If anything should be mandatory, it should be this approach. In summary, the more refugees you take, the bigger the reward or support and the less contribution you make to the Fund.

36. We welcome the Secretary General's initiative to convene the first ever World Humanitarian Summit next year, which should not only enhance existing and new efforts to address the issue of migration, but to also ensure comprehensive, coherent and cohesive approaches to respond to the critically urgent issue of the global humanitarian architecture.

Mr. President,

37. Botswana remains gravely concerned about the serious threats to international peace and security in many parts of the world, which arguably present the greatest challenge to human development. We are witnessing an alarming rise in instability, insecurity and violent conflict, causing untold devastation and human suffering. The unrelenting loss of innocent lives and escalating humanitarian crises have reached tragic levels, making it imperative for the international community to take urgent and decisive action. We take this opportunity to commend all humanitarian organisations and Human Rights Organisations for the good work they do for humanity.

38. Deeply troubling is the increasing involvement of non-state actors and radical extremists in most of these conflict situations. Activities by these entities introduce additional layers of difficulty to conflict management and resolution processes. Terrorism, including the emergence of abductions as one of its many forms, further complicates the complexities of responses to conflict in areas of unrest.

39. In a world where borders are porous and nations evermore inter-dependant, threats to security in any region have consequences for us all. The only difference is the degree of the impact.

40. In Africa, the situations in Somalia, Libya and South Sudan, to mention a few, are a current preoccupation and cause of deep concern for the Continent. The African Union, through its regional mechanisms and international support, is, however, actively engaged in efforts to resolve the conflicts and Botswana remains fully supportive of these ongoing efforts. It is our hope that lasting solutions can be found before there is any further loss of innocent lives and instability becomes entrenched in those societies.

41. In other parts of the world, we remain deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has remained unresolved for several decades, without any real promise of

it ending in sight. Botswana continues to lend unequivocal support to the two state solution and we join others in calling for constructive dialogue by the parties involved.

42. Of particular concern in the Middle East is the political crisis in Yemen and the protracted war in Syria. The latter especially, has wreaked unprecedented havoc on a people to the extent not seen since the Second World War.

43. Botswana is profoundly troubled that the United Nations Security Council however seems paralysed by the hard divisions amongst its members to uphold its Chapter V Charter responsibilities, and take decisive action against the Syrian government. Despite the carnage and destruction of property of unspeakable proportions that has raged in that country since 2011, there are members of the Council still obstructing initiatives intended to end the war and alleviate the desperate plight of the Syrian people.

44. Horrified by the torment visited upon Syrians with appalling impunity by their government, Botswana joined 58 concerned members of the international community in 2013 to petition the Security Council to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court. It is a matter of deep regret that action on this matter continues to be frustrated by divisions in the UNSC.

45. In light of such challenges, Botswana continues to firmly support the initiative by France calling for the permanent members of the Security Council to refrain from using their veto powers in situations involving mass atrocities. The UN which promotes democracy around the globe should itself lead by example. The UN Security Council is not an example of democracy where permanent membership is limited to five countries which further have a veto. There should be no permanent members and no veto at all. The practice of might is right, is actually wrong.

46. Whilst in the main, it is indeed the primary responsibility of states to ensure the protection of their people, the reality is that some, like

Syria, are manifestly failing to do so. Instead, they violate international humanitarian law with shameful impunity. Clearly this should necessitate the application of Pillars II and III of the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P): yet, nothing is happening.

47. Is it perhaps time that R2P is made a formal agenda item for debate by the General Assembly? Perhaps such a debate could provide sufficient impetus for the Security Council to carry the full mantle of its mandate, including improving its relationship with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in order to facilitate investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

48. Botswana's commitment to a strong and effective international justice system remains resolute. Our belief in the ICC, as the only standing international criminal tribunal for war crimes and crimes against humanity, is unwavering.

49. The Botswana Government regrets that non-cooperation by some State Parties still plagues the Court, making allowance for continued impunity and escape from accountability for crimes committed against humanity.

50. We therefore urge all Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC to stand fully behind the Court. Cooperation is vital for the assurance of the Court's integrity and effective functioning.

51. My delegation and I are hopeful that as we commemorate 70 years of the United Nations, we can have unanimous agreement that judicial accountability, inclusive governance and the protection and promotion of human rights are essential elements for peaceful societies. This should not be seen as the preserve of the ICC or Security Council alone, but rather as a shared responsibility of the global community.

Mr. President,

52. Finally, the sooner the world is rid of the feeble leadership of Sepp Blatter at FIFA, the better. The corruption, poor governance and a leader who has gone well beyond his sell by date is almost a mirror image of that organization being linked to a failed state. Good governance should not apply to politics only, but to all institutions, especially international organizations.

53. Let me conclude by re-affirming Botswana's commitment and abiding faith in the purpose and founding principles of the United Nations. We are strongly committed to a world that nurtures and sustains all life within the natural limits of the living planet, leaving absolutely no one behind. Botswana is truly optimistic that with genuine political will and concerted collective effort, it can be done. I thank you for your kind attention.

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