



STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**DURING THE 55TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

28th FEBRUARY 2011

NEW YORK

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STATEMENT

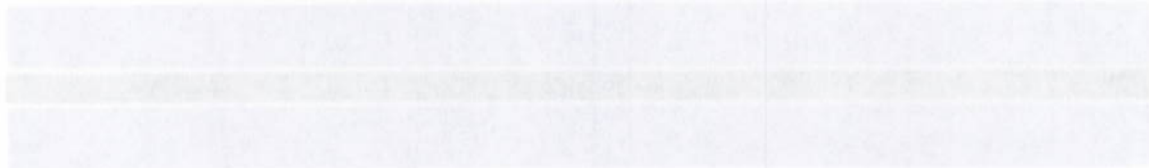
BY

THE SECRETARY FOR
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
DURING THE 22ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

18 FEBRUARY 1971

NEW YORK

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Mr President,

My Delegation and I wish to join other delegations in congratulating you on your election. Allow us to pay our sincere tribute and respect to Maria Michalina Rebal, the Head of UN Women. My delegation, including Botswana, as well as so well articulated in the 'United Nations Millennium Goals' and 'Sustainable Development Goals' takes this opportunity to reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's vision on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to the bold leadership step taken by the Secretary-General His Excellency Ban Ki-moon to facilitate and lead in the establishment of the on 'World Women's Day'.

This year's theme 'Access and Participation of Women and Girls in Education, Training, Science and Technology' including for the Promotion of 'Women's Equal Access to Fair Employment and Decent Work' is indeed a very important one as all countries are hopeful, and are expecting a slow, but certain emergence from the economic downturn of the recent past. In this context, gender equality and equity in education and employment are top most priorities. Infrastructure, telecommunication and ICT are emerging as large employers in both primary and secondary industries. However, for many young girls and women, there are still constructive and systematic barriers that hinder their access to these practices, policies and legal constructs.

Mr President,

The theme challenges us to examine the role of science and technology as a means and an end to the empowerment of women and girls. It challenges us to have a commitment to achieve this through both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The impact of science and technology on the lives of women, especially in developing countries, include: basic education in terms of digital knowledge, architecture in research and innovation, and sustainable learning, e-services and health, especially HIV and AIDS and malaria.

In the context of decent work, equal pay for work of equal value, job security, and decent pay and collective bargaining, women are often employed in jobs that require skills acquired by women in science and technology. Women, in high risk jobs, including heavy lifting and machinery, or even working underground in mines. This phenomenon brings to the fore the need to re-orient the 'Decent Work' programmes and 'Global Jobs Pact' to be consistent with the International Labour Organization (ILO) with a view to go away with gender science stereotypes and the enhancement of women workers' related rights.

Mr President,

In specific reference to Botswana, I am happy to report that we have taken bold steps to promote participation of girls in science and technology from the national and regional perspective where Government is collaborating with NGOs and the academic institutions. For example, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development

in 2010 with the Forum of Women Engineers and Girl Scientist in Africa (Forum-WEGA) that is hosted by the University of Botswana on a Girl Scientist Mentorship programme. One of the key initiatives at the national level established:-

- secondly, conducting mentorship programmes under the name "Adopt A School" where each woman engineer and technologist is encouraged to take responsibility for at least one secondary school, as a mentor and role model for young female aspiring scientist and engineer. The woman engineer also maintains a close liaison between her adopted school and an engineering industry e.g. mining, geology, diamond cutting and design, telecommunications, etc.

- thirdly, establishing school science clubs which will provide mentoring and handholding programmes for young scientists and girl scientists.

- A sports-based mentoring programme for increased learning of science and technology, known as Science Boot Camps are being intensified with a view to expose girl students to science and engineering through fun learning.

- The National Internship programme introduced by HES Excellency the Minister of Education has already provided an opportunity for young female university graduates to experience practical transition from university to the world of work.

At the grassroots level, the encouragement of the learning of science and technology by the semi skilled and skilled, several avenues have been opened to expand access for women to science and technology education, primarily, increasing access to skills training and vocational training, the inter community based basic education and skills training, and vocational training schools. In the 1990s Botswana Government through the Ministry of Labour and Human Affairs introduced craft competency based modules and training for literate and semi literate learners. These programmes mainly aim to effectively enable young girls to access to artisan skills trades, such as leather making, wood work, metal work, plantain and machinery repair and related skills, to thereby increasing their employability.

It is important to mention that in ICT, where we see an almost equal access to ICT learning, there are no gender disparities in terms of qualifications between boys and girls. While boys tend to choose to study computer engineering and software design, girls choose to study in greater numbers network design, systems integration and data management which provides a higher level of competence. The pay structure between men and women in ICT.

In addition, Botswana Government has during the current National Development Plan (2016-2020) increased the state's financial support to technical and vocational education, including provision of bursaries, scholarships and student loans with flexible repayment terms as a way of encouraging girls to opt for vocational and technical education as an alternative to university education. Botswana has also made a deliberate decision to build a specialised university of science and technology, to offer degree and post graduate programmes at the Botswana College of Agriculture as well as the establishment of the Innovation, Industry and Food

Research and Technology Centre under the Ministry of Infrastructure, Technology. The expected access, and encouragement of young girls to learn science and technology, including research and innovation...

Mr President,

In terms of public infrastructure, Botswana has developed the National Human Resource Development Strategy, whose implementation is led by a multidisciplinary Council, which I am privileged to be a member of, with special focus on building science and technology. In Botswana, we expect to develop local capacity in research and innovation to improve the quality of life for all humanity.

The legal environment has also been reformed to remove any impediments to gender equality. The Botswana Mines and Quarries Act was amended to allow women as equals to men to work in mines and quarries. The Employment Act was amended to ensure equal work for women, and rights. Finally, Botswana signed the Decent Work Agenda Programme with the ILO on the 17th February 2017 which will be implemented through the tripartite structure, thereby ensuring equal access to work, equal pay and social protection for women and men. Botswana will in the implementation of the Programme give the necessary attention to the elimination of gender based stereotypes.

With these remarks, Botswana supports the implementation of the outcome of the 55th session of the Commission, as added strength to the Beyond 2025 Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

I thank you, Mr President.

Research and Technology Centre under the Ministry of Infrastructural Science and Technology. The expected outcomes of these national initiatives are increased access and encouragement of young girls to learn science and technology, including research and innovation.

Mr President,

In terms of policy infrastructure, Botswana has developed the National Human Resource Development Strategy, whose important policy areas include: a Council, which I am privileged to be a member of, with special focus on building a science and technology human capital in Botswana. In the long term we expect to develop local capacity in research, and to come up with innovations that will enrich humanity.

The legal environment has also been reformed to remove any impediments to gender equality. The Botswana Mines and Quarries Act was amended to allow women as equals to men to work in quarries and underground in the mines. The Employment Act was amended in 2018 to among other things, enhance conditions of work for women and rights. Finally, Botswana is a signatory to the African Union with the ILO on the 17th February 2017, which was implemented through the legislative structure, thereby ensuring equal access to work, equal pay and social protection for women and men. Botswana will in the implementation of the Programme give the necessary attention to the elimination of gender-stereotypes.

With these remarks, Botswana supports the implementation of the outcome of the 25th session of the [High Level Panel of Experts](#) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you, Mr President.