

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. MR. CHARLES M. NYAWA OF
THE AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 26:
ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
(SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS)
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**OCTOBER 11, 2011
NEW YORK**

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H.E. MR. CHARLES T. NYIRAGORE,
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OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS)
IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN:
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 28:

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Mr. Chairman,

Firstly I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports prepared under his guidance.

We also thank the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ms. Sylvia Pimentel, and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, for their reports.

My delegation joins in with the statements made by the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Kenya on behalf of the African Group and also by Argentina on behalf of O77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender equality is first and foremost a human right. Women are entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and fear. The importance of gender equality is further underscored by its inclusion as one of the Millennium Development Goals wherein it is acknowledged as essential for achieving the MDGs. Women's participation in development is therefore an indispensable factor for advancing social and economic development and reducing poverty. It is our belief that equal opportunities and equal opportunity to realize their potential plays a pivotal role in their advancement.

We take note of the laudable efforts taken by many countries to work towards full gender equality. We are, however, concerned that the space for women in leadership, social and political participation, regional integration, and discrimination against women and girls including gender-based violence and economic discrimination, remain the most pervasive and persistent forms of inequality faced by all countries.

It is against this background that my delegation believes that ending gender imbalances must remain a priority for the international community. We are confident that UN-Women will continue to advance the agenda towards a world-wide achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the 1995 Beijing Conference, Botswana has implemented measures to create an environment that promotes gender equality.

Guided by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development as well as our National Vision 2016 among other frameworks, Botswana has taken initiatives to review laws, policies and administrative procedures that have consequently had a

... have significantly contributed to the empowerment of socially, economically and politically. In Botswana, women can be found in positions of power and decision making in all sectors of society, including the public service, politics, the judiciary, corporate world as well as the church.

Botswana has demonstrated a strong political commitment to gender equality as evidenced by appointments of women to Cabinet and senior positions in the public service, and the establishment of a fully fledged department responsible for coordination of the implementation of Government Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The Department has also been charged with the responsibility of facilitating the integration of women in national socio-economic development processes through the promotion of and mainstreaming gender sensitive policies and programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced of the importance of mainstreaming the gender perspective in national development strategies and actions so as to bring about equality for women and men in all fields. However, this is an ongoing process as more work still needs to be done to incorporate a gender perspective across all sectors and all levels of Government, including gender responsive budgeting. Our greatest challenges are lack of adequate skills and experience and the absence of disaggregated data.

Mr. Chairman,

Botswana recognizes the vital role played by women in rural areas despite the multiple challenges that they continue to face in their families and societies. We remain committed to improving the situation of rural women in relation to expanding their access to social services, employment and entrepreneurship, as well as strengthening the implementation of commitments on rural development and women's empowerment and rights, in line with the provisions of CEDAW.

In this regard, Government has introduced a number of policies such as the Policy on Women's Development and Rural Development, and the creation of an enabling environment for women across all sectors, including the informal business sector as well as those in rural settings.

Furthermore, Government has undertaken rural development programmes that seek to reduce poverty within rural communities through economic empowerment and to provide support to sustainable livelihoods with particular focus on women's participation. Special attention is paid to skills training, employment creation, improvement of access to credit, delivery of extension services, increased community participation in planning and implementation of development

programmes and information, negotiation and litigation, SDC through programmes such as the Citizen Financial Empowerment Development Agency (CEDA).

Mr. Chairman,

Violence against women and children, both victims and impair the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This scourge, which continues to be a challenge for every country in the world, inflame and reinforces inequalities between men and women and undermines the dignity and security of its victims. The impact of such violence against women and children can be overstated.

Concerned about the prevalence of violence against women, Botswana strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, and has significantly strengthened law enforcement capacity in this regard.

Ending violence against women is a global moral imperative and one which we must collectively combat. In this regard, Botswana supports United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's UNITE to End Violence against Women Campaign and all United Nations and other initiatives that aim to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender based violence remains a challenge and a grave threat to the attainment of gender equality for all countries including my own. While a great number of victims of gender based violence are women and girls, an increasing trend in Botswana of men and boys also becoming victims of gender based violence. This problem thus, requires a comprehensive solution.

Botswana has made progress in addressing violence against women and children. The adoption of the Domestic Violence Act of 2008 is a reflection of the Government's commitment and determination to eliminate violence against women. The law provides the victims of domestic violence with maximum protection against abuse.

Since the adoption of the Act, the Botswana Police in conjunction with the Women's Affairs Department have strengthened collection of disaggregated data on violence against women in areas such as rape, murder, domestic violence, and threats to kill. In addition, a National Action Plan to implement positive initiatives to end gender based violence was developed in 2007. In the coming, Government intends to create a more multi-sectoral collaboration between the legal, medical, social, and psychological service providers to assist victims and survivors.

Mr. Chairman,

significant measures to address violence against women, we continue to progress legislative and policy reforms which address the implementation of gender-based violence. It is important to turn policies into action by expanding the quality of support for effective prevention and support programmes on the ground. The need for the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems to provide credible information on the magnitude of the problem as well as capacity enhancement programmes for law enforcement personnel are also critical.

During the past year, we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy working in partnership with our development partners in our efforts to address violence against women and girls based violence.

Mr. Chairman,

While our primary focus is on violence against women and girls, we also recognise the need to address emerging issues affecting women, including, climate change and related environmental issues.

and Botswana's commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and CEDAW, for they provide a basis for strengthening our social harmony and cohesion, as well as equity in the process of development.

Thank you for your attention.