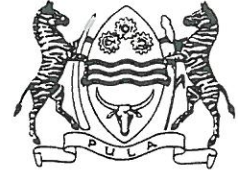


REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

154 EAST 46TH STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017  
TEL. (212) 889-2277

**STATEMENT BY**

**HONOURABLE PHANDU T. C. SKELEMANI, MP  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**DURING THE**

***“29<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT BEYOND  
2014”***

**69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2014  
NEW YORK**

*Please check against delivery*

**Mr. President,**

1. My delegation and I wish to join others before us in expressing our gratitude to the United Nations Secretary General for convening this Special Session of the General Assembly on the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development BEYOND 2014 (PoA of the ICPD).
2. We greatly welcome this opportunity to deliberate on the key issues identified in the findings and recommendations of the operational review contained in the Secretary-General's Report A/69/62 entitled "Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014", as well as the outcome document of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development held this past April.
3. Botswana believes these issues to be critical for the sustainability of the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

**Mr. President,**

4. Botswana was amongst the 179 UN Member States which committed to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action outlining a global consensus on addressing the challenging population and development concerns.
5. It is now 20 years into that commitment, and time could not be more opportune for us to take stock of progress made in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, particularly within the context of the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) which are about to expire and, the Post 2015 global development agenda we are soon to begin intergovernmental negotiations on.

6. In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General as well as the Index Report of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development, both of which highlight the centrality of ICPD issues in a transformative, inclusive and sustainable Post 2015 Development Agenda.

**Mr. President,**

7. Botswana has made considerable progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD. In order to achieve positive results over the last 20 years, it was important to first recognise the necessity for investment in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, as being integral to sustainable national development.
8. The Public health interventions introduced following the 1994 Cairo Conference contributed to the achievement of the objective of the first National Population Policy, of reducing fertility. The levels of fertility declined from 4.7 children per woman in 1990 to 3.4 in 2001 and further down to 2.9 in 2011, thereby surpassing the 2011 target of 3.3 children per woman. As such, the focus of the Revised National Population Policy of 2010 recognizes the importance of monitoring the pace of fertility decline in order to keep its level above the replacement level.
9. Botswana's focus has been on increasing access to general health services whilst also addressing the inequalities in access to sexual and reproductive health services. Additionally, we continue to provide comprehensive sexuality education in schools and up-scaling the integration of sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services countrywide.

**Mr. President,**

10. On the issue of HIV and AIDS, the Botswana Government is steadfast in its commitment to achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
11. The fight against the HIV and AIDS epidemic posed one of the major population concerns since the 1994 ICPD as the prevalence remained high throughout the 1990s before it stabilised in the 2000s.
12. However, the cost of anti-retroviral treatment (ARVs) is unsustainable as it is projected to increase substantially in the next few years. We therefore, continue our engagement with domestic, regional and international partners in both the public and private spheres on issues of resource mobilization, in order to realize our national target of "zero new HIV infections by 2016 and further ending AIDS by 2030."
13. The Government has also committed itself to the protection of vulnerable population groups especially women and children against abuse, exploitation and violence. Increasing gender parity and empowering women to enable their active and effective participation in the formal and informal economy, as well as in the political arena, remains a priority.
14. In 2009, eradication of absolute poverty became a national flagship programme, with the Botswana Government committing itself to total eradication by 2016. Interventions to this end, largely target women, youth, People Living with Disabilities and other disadvantaged segments of the society. The results have been very positive, showing a reduction of poverty

levels from 47% in 1993/94 to 30.6% in 2002/03 and further down to 19.3% in 2009/10.

### **Mr President**

15. Botswana has a youthful population structure. According to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, the population aged between 10 to 35 years accounted for 49.3%, whilst those aged 10-19 years constituted 20.7% of the total population.
16. The challenges associated with this '**youth bulge**' include ensuring provision of quality education and skills development that match the demands in the job market. Whilst there is progress in provision of quality education, the test is in the creation of employment opportunities.
17. On the other hand, Government is cognisant of the opportunity that the "youth bulge" creates for the country's future economic growth and sustainable development. Botswana is therefore, identifying strategies which enable it to take full advantage of this "demographic dividend" through further investments in youth-focused strategies, such as promoting access to information and communication technology (ICT).
18. Within the education sector, Botswana's focus in the past twenty years, has been on increasing access to education and promoting lifelong learning for continuous human development. Of particular concern, though is, the continued high levels of youth unemployment recorded. As such, the Human Resource Development Council has been established to address the mismatch between skills production and the labour market requirements.

**Mr. President,**

19. Botswana is aware of the challenges that still remain in order to protect the environment for succeeding generations. Infrastructural developments as well as sustainable utilisation of the natural capital are amongst the national development priorities.
20. The impact of population factors on economic growth and development cannot be over-emphasised. It requires consistent comprehensive integration of population dynamics into national development planning.
21. At this juncture, let me recognise that, the findings of the UN operational review show that, despite significant gains in poverty reduction and economic growth since the ICPD, many have been left behind lacking fulfilment of basic needs, meaningful work, access to social protection, or public services in health or education. There are still significant barriers for many people to fully enjoy their human rights.
22. These issues, as well as the conclusion that the current state of income and wealth inequality is unsustainable, and threatens future economic growth, the cohesion and security of societies, and the capacity of people to adapt and innovate in response to changing environmental conditions, are also relevant to the discussions that will take place during the Climate Change Summit tomorrow and the general debate that follows.
23. We believe that the development challenges we face require systematic participation of all stakeholders in crafting responses to these challenges, which require partnership and global leadership through the UN.
24. On the other hand, Botswana's middle income status resulted in the declining levels of Donor support. Going forward, a deliberate effort should be made to

galvanize Development Partner support in order to implement the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014.

**Mr. President,**

25. I wish to conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to the ideals of the Cairo Conference and the effective implementation of the new Programme of Action for the ICPD Beyond 2014.

26. We hope that this Special Session lives up to its purpose of having countries pronounce themselves clearly on these very important issues at the highest political level.

27. It is also our keen hope that the aspirations of the new ICPD Programme of Action will be fully incorporated into the Post-2015 Development Agenda for the benefit of our present and future generations.

28. I thank you for your attention.