



Republic of Botswana

STATEMENT BY

**HON. PHANDU T.C. SKELEMANI P.H., MP.
MINISTER OF JUSTICE, DEFENCE AND SECURITY**

IN THE

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

DURING THE

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

OF THE

7TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Mr. President

**Your Excellency the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Distinguished delegates**

It is an honour and privilege for me to address this meeting of the 7th Session of the Human Rights Council. Before I do that, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. President for the able manner in which you presided over the business of the Council. Please be assured of my delegation's unwavering support in the execution of your mandate.

2: The Government of Botswana wishes to commend the strides the Human Rights Council has taken within a very short time, particularly in the area of capacity building. Even at its infancy the Human Rights Council came up with structures such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) programme to help carryout its mandate. Botswana is scheduled for review at the UPR's Third Session and we can assure you that the exercise will be a success. The Emergency Council Sessions held in close succession are a testimony that the Council is now ready to address human rights violations anywhere in the world within a reasonable time frame.

3. It is encouraging to note that the Agenda and Programme of Work schedule of your meetings are publicised well ahead of time for the benefit of all delegations. This is a laudable initiative which affords States and non State actors to fit in their schedules to that of the Council. This also enables, to a large extent, the civil society and other human rights advocates to prepare their views and positions well in advance of the session.

4. Mr. President, Botswana attaches great importance to the Human Rights Council. The developments taking place at the Council serve as an inspiration to us as a young democracy. Our country is a sovereign republic, guided by the principles of democracy. Our democracy was founded on the basis of a Constitution, which continues to guarantee the civil liberties and fundamental freedoms of our citizens, including freedom of association, expression and religion. Our nation's collective progress on human rights issues is anchored on our commitment to work

within the legal framework of our Constitution and the values it upholds.

5. Despite the challenges we face in our development process, Botswana is proud to have made a small contribution towards the course of peace and human rights in the world. We have actively participated in international assignments that include peace-keeping, peace-building and peace-making. In addition, Botswana has, over the past four decades, played host to refugees and victims of civil wars and civil strife in our region. The lessons we learnt from these experiences are that where there is breakdown of law and order, human rights violations are eminent. It is on the basis of our participation in international arena coupled with our natural commitment to democratic principles that our human rights record is the envy of many.

6. Mr. President, Botswana's success story in the area of human rights is no secret. As a nation we promote, respect, cherish and uphold activities that unite us as a nation and discourage those that are likely to tear us apart. With this in mind we produced a common national vision, Vision 2016 which sets out ambitious but achievable goals which every Motswana has to play a meaningful role for its attainment as a national dream. The vision espouses unity of purpose, common values, adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law.

7. As we approach the end of our National Development Plan Nine (NDP 9) we are busy working on national programmes that will go into the next Development Plan period NDP 10. It is our desire that NDP 10 be made to give greater impetus to the road to deliver on our National 2016. We are determined that the following pillar objectives will be attained:

- Prosperity for all
- United and Proud nation

- Safe and Secure nation
- Health for all
- Vibrant and Competitive nation

8. I believe the focus we have as a nation is forthright and in line with the best practices elsewhere in the world. Most important the synergy between Vision 2016 and NDP 10 will inevitably result in the promotion and protection of human rights issues in Botswana. We are always committed to and looking for innovative ways that guarantee our nationals full enjoyment of human rights. We call on the international community to assist willing states like us with the necessary technical and other support to strengthen our implementation and development capacity with respect to Human Rights Instruments.

9. There are environment challenges that we face as a country and these we brought to the attention of the Council at its 4th Session sitting. We then suggested that operational guidelines be put in place for Special Rapporteurs to discourage the negative reporting of

the past. We also called on the Council to consider lessening the burden of reporting human rights to a multiplicity of UN Bodies.

10. Our experience is that political stability is a precursor for economic development and stability and that the reverse is true of political instability. Countries where there is a modicum of peace and tranquility especially in Africa, automatically become hosts to displaced persons. Botswana has carried the burden of providing sanctuary to refugees from within the region and far afield in Africa. We are however concerned that some of the people seeking for a safe haven in our country tend to pose security threats to the vulnerable communities along our boundaries. In this connection, we call on the Council to move with speed and make interventions where large scale human rights violations are reported.

11. Finally we wish the Human Rights Council all the best in its onerous task of restoring sanctity and full enjoyment of human rights to the international community.

12. I thank you.