



**FINAL DRAFT**

**BOTSWANA**

**NATIONAL REVIEW FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION-  
BEIJING+25**

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## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
ALDEP	Arable Land Development Programme
ARVs	Anti- Retro Viral
ARDP	Accelerated Rural Development Programme
APP	Alternative Packages Programme
AU	Africa Union
BAIS	Botswana AIDS Impact Survey
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDF	Botswana Defence Force
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BHC	Botswana Housing Corporation
BOFWA	Botswana Family Welfare Association
BOU	Botswana Open University
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDC	Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CEmONC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neo Natal CARE
DPSM	Directorate of Public Service Management
FHH	Female Headed Households
FSW	Female Sex Workers
GeAD	Gender Affairs Department
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP(s)	Gender Focal Persons
GNI	Gross National Income
HAART	Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
ISPAAD	Integrated Support for Arable Agricultural Development Programme
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIC	Middle Income Country
MLG&RD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MLHA	Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSM	Men Having Sex with other Men
MTCT	Mother to Child Transmission (of HIV)
MIC	Middle Income Country
MLG&RD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	National AIDS Council
NACA	National AIDS Coordinating Agency
NDP 11	National Development Plan 11
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
NGPF	National Gender Programme Framework
NPGAD	National Policy on Gender and Development
NOP	National Operation Plan
NSF	National Strategic Framework
PLHIV	People living with HIV

PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
POA	Plan of Action
PRRR	Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPGD	Strategic Plan on Gender and Development
STI(s)	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

## BACKGROUND

This is the Botswana Beijing+25 Review Report on progress made on the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) and its Declaration. The objectives of this report are to share the achievements, challenges and setbacks encountered during the past five years (2015-2020) of implementation. The Report also shares the Government's renewed commitment through clear sets of priority actions, with timelines, actors and resources for their implementation.

Botswana is a signatory of the new global framework, termed "the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," adopted by the UN member States in September 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets are geared towards addressing the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The new goals are much broader in scope as they seek to 'leave no one behind.' The new agenda still perceives poverty eradication as its overarching goal captured through the five "Ps" of; People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. This in essence represent an integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The SDGs are action oriented, global in nature and universally applicable and take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national policies and priorities. Botswana is also Party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (BPfA), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), and the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (SPGD) among others.

Botswana has adopted frameworks such as the constitution which guarantees equality of women and men before the law. The Government also adopted the eleventh National Development Plan (NDP11) in December 2016 following the country's celebration of fifty years of Independence; the National Vision 2036, which seeks to promote prosperity for all by 2036 expressly promotes equal opportunities for women and men, and boys and girls. The Vision 2036, launched at the same time when the country was celebrating its fifty years anniversary of independence in September 2016, provided an opportunity for the country to define its roadmap for the next twenty years. With an all-encompassing theme of "Achieving Prosperity for All", the Vision provides an inclusive development path to be achieved through the expansion of the domestic economy while empowering Batswana to meaningfully participate in the development of their country. Achieving the goals and objectives of Vision 2036 will require a refocus of the current development model towards an export-oriented, labour-intensive, and private sector driven model.

NDP 11 which commenced in 2017-2023 focuses on six broad-based national priorities of: Developing Diversified Sources of Economic Growth; Human Capital Development; Social Development; Sustainable Use of Natural Resources; Consolidation of Good Governance and Strengthening of National Security; and Implementation of an Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System. These priorities are aligned to Vision 2036 pillars of: Sustainable Economic Development; Human and Social Development; Sustainable Environment; and Governance, Peace and Security. The priorities of the NDP 11 are aligned to the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The BPfA+25 Review comes at an opportune time for Botswana where realignment of the gender development agenda has been closely aligned to the SDGs. The Government of Botswana on the 18th March 2015 approved the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD). This Policy aligns itself with the international and regional protocols in addressing gender and development issues such as the Beijing Platform of Action and Declaration, UN Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 5, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The National Policy on Gender and Development as adopted by Government prioritized the following:

- i. Economic diversification, prosperity and poverty eradication to achieve sustainable development;
- ii. Social Protection and social services (health, adequate sanitation and improved well-being, access to quality education, training and information, safe housing and consideration for addressing issues of energy and climate change for a sustainable environment);
- iii. Political power, democratic governance and decision making;

- iv. Access to justice, protection of human rights and freedom from violence; and
- v. Special measures targeting vulnerable groups of men, women, girls and boys across all the four areas.

This report has summarised the actions being taken by Botswana in collaboration with other stakeholders such as civil society organisations, development partners and the private sector institutions to implement the commitments made through the BPfA. This report is presented in four sections: Section One: Priorities, Achievements, challenges and setbacks, Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern with specific focus on six specific broad areas of ; Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work; Poverty eradication, social protection and social services; Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes; Participation, accountability and gender - responsive institutions; Peaceful and inclusive societies; Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation. Section Three is on National Institutions and Processes and Section Four on Data and Statistics.

The report has outlined the main achievements as well as areas that still need to be addressed to achieve gender equality in Botswana. This review also showcases Botswana's efforts towards renewed commitment and clear sets of priority actions to take to advance the implementation of the BPfA commitments with timelines, actors and resources for their implementation. It is expected through the 25 years review of the BPfA more alignment and synergies with work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be galvanized.

### **Methodology:**

Literature review focusing mainly on national development policies, laws, gender policies, and other government, UN and Gender research studies and reports from the Gender Affairs Department, Department of Administration of Justice and other sources was carried out to obtain initial information for the Botswana Beijing+25 Review. Statistics Botswana and National Statistics in the Office of the President were involved to access high quality data that is up-to-date and disaggregated.

A Technical Working Group led by the Director of Gender Affairs Department was established to coordinate the drafting of the BPfA+25 drafting process at district level. The review Process encompassed a whole-of-government approach with leadership at the highest level. Extensive consultations were held with all the major key stakeholders drawn from Government, Civil Society, United Nations, and other development partners. District consultations were conducted in Francistown, Kasane, Selibi-Phikwe, Ghanzi, Maun, Tsabong and Gaborone. Technical assistance was provided by UN Women. The compilation of this report was coordinated by the Ministry of Nationality Immigration and Gender Affairs led by the Permanent Secretary.

The draft BPfA+25 Review draft Report was presented to a multi-sectoral stakeholders' validation workshop on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in Gaborone that reviewed it and made additional suggestions and inputs with a view to strengthen the report. The final draft of the Botswana BPfA+25 Review report was presented to the Government Inter-Ministerial Committee on Treaties, Conventions, and Protocols responsible for, among others; reviewing all draft reports to the United Nations. The Committee is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

This process demonstrates Botswana's commitment to meaningful stakeholders' involvement during the Beijing+25 Review, an important milestone for gender equality and women's empowerment in Botswana and globally.

## Botswana's Context — Country Profile and Political, Social and Economic Overview



Botswana is one of the world's most sparsely populated countries with just two million people.<sup>1</sup> Landlocked, with a surface area of 582,000 square kilometres, Botswana is surrounded by South Africa in the south, Namibia in the west, Zambia in the north and Zimbabwe in the northeast.

Botswana has a three-tier settlement system made up of nuclear villages, cattle posts, and lands. Traditional gender division of labour prevails with women farming crops and most men involved in livestock production.

The 2017 Botswana Demographic survey estimated a total population of 2,154,863, of which 1,034,578 are males and 1,120,285 females. This is a 6.4 % increase compared to the 2011 population and housing census. However, there is a decline in the number of non-Batswana residing in the country. The figure has dropped from 111,846 in 2011 to 85,414 in 2017.

### Political

Botswana became independent in September 1966 after being a British Protectorate since 1885. Botswana has a stable political environment with a multi-party democratic tradition. General elections are held every five years. Politics of Botswana take place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Botswana is both head of state and head of government, and of a multi-party system. According to the Democracy Index 2016, executive power is exercised by Government. Legislative power is vested in both the Government and the Parliament of Botswana.<sup>2</sup>

### Economic

Botswana is classified as an upper-middle-income and medium human development country by international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>3</sup> Production and export of diamonds have bolstered the economy, leading to high rates of economic growth and per capita incomes. The government has invested the revenue from the mining industry into social services, such as education, health, water and sanitation. However, recently the global economic recession has drastically reduced revenue from the mineral sector, notably, diamonds, impacting negatively on economic growth and investment in key social development areas.

Aware of the dangers of being too dependent on diamonds, the government has diversified the economy over the past ten years, promoting tourism, the manufacturing industry, financial services and other sectors. However, diamonds still are the primary source of foreign exchange, constituting 50% of government revenue, 33% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 70% of foreign exchange.

According to the Botswana Budget Speech of 5 February 2018, the country's medium-term Budget outlook remained uncertain, following the global financial crisis of 2008/2009, which affected the major markets for exports, especially diamonds. Despite the recent signs of recovery in both the global and domestic economies, growth in Government revenues continues to be slow compared to the pressure on expenditure arising from unlimited societal needs. Fiscal spending will continue to advance at today's more-rapid pace, with priority for areas identified in the National Development Plan 11 (NDP11) that focuses in three key areas; i) tackling poverty, (ii) inclusive growth, and (iii) job creation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Central Statistics Office , Population Census, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Democracy Index ,2016

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Human Development Report, 2010

<sup>4</sup> Botswana Budget Speech of 5 February 2018



Botswana has made tremendous progress to address gender inequality with some positive results. Botswana has achieved gender parity in education at all levels. The health system in Botswana has provided high access to health services for citizens including women. Maternal mortality has lowered since the last BPfA report in 2015. Notably, more women have taken up administrative decision-making posts in the public and private sector, about 55% and 40% respectively. However, Botswana's performance in equal representation in the political arena is nominal. Gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS remain big challenges for the country despite investments to tackle them. Women and girls are vulnerable to human rights abuses due to some socio- cultural practices and customary laws that discriminate against them.

## **SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS**

### **Most Important Achievements in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years:**

Botswana has over the past five years achieved significant progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. For the period under focus, the Government of Botswana has sustained advancements made over the decades to improve the socio-economic well-being of women and girls. Programmes and policies to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment have been developed with the aim to reverse gender imbalances which impact negatively on women and hinder their effective participation in the economy.

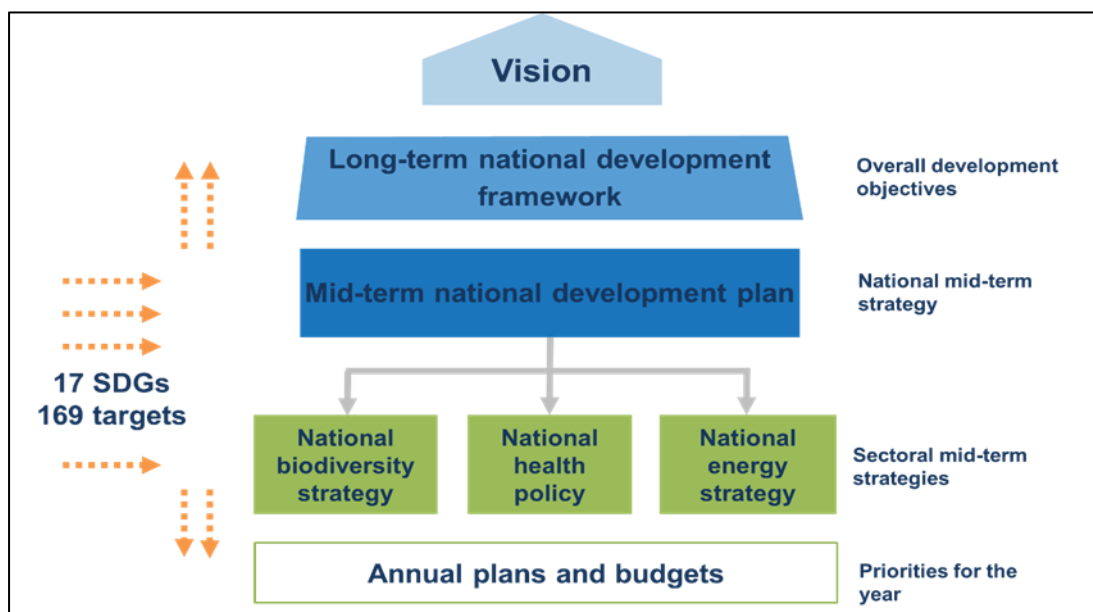


**Figure 1: His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi during the 2018 National Launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence on Women and Children.**

During the past five years under the BPfA+25 review, Botswana has put in place measures and mechanism to facilitate effective implementation of the BPfA through an enabling legal and policy framework. There is also strong institutional mechanisms and structures that provide for the national gender machinery through the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs, National Gender Commission and the Civil Society. Furthermore, there is increased involvement of men and boys as partners in national endeavours towards gender equality. Botswana also registered reversal in maternal mortality. The National Vision 2036: Pillar 2 on Human and Social Development recognises gender equality as central to socio-economic, political and cultural development. The Government of Botswana Vision 2036 and the National Development Plan 11 have both taken the SDG 5 into consideration as gender remains priority for the Botswana development agenda. The 2016 National Policy of Gender and Development (NPGAD) is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular Goal 5 on Gender Equality, the Beijing Platform for Action and its Declaration and CEDAW among others.



**Figure 2: Botswana National Development Framework for NDP 11 aligned to SDGs**



Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2018

The NPGAD addresses the national gender priorities as mentioned above. In line with the NPGAD, Botswana developed appropriate strategies and programmes towards the realisation of BPfA. As a result, Botswana realised the following achievements:

*Botswana strengthened the National Legislative and Policy Framework for gender equality and women’s empowerment for the realisation of women’s human rights:* In Botswana women and men enjoy the same rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Section 3 of the Constitution of Botswana states that “Every person in Botswana is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, irrespective of his or her race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for public interest...”.

Botswana has taken cognisance of the provisions of the BPfA and CEDAW leading to a comprehensive review of some laws and incorporation of such provisions as appropriate. Amendments to the discriminatory laws or provisions of laws were undertaken and these include but not limited to;

- i. The Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act, in 2014, which revised the definition of exploitation and increased fines and prison sentences for human trafficking offences;
- ii. The Married Persons Property Act, in 2014, which allows persons married under customary law to opt for civil law for the administration of their properties;
- iii. The Interpretation (Amendment) Act, in 2013, which sets the legal age of age of maturity at 18 irrespective of sex;
- iv. The Legal Aid Act, in 2013, aimed at increasing access to justice including by women;
- v. The Employment (Amendment) Act, in 2010, which establishes a minimum pay of half salary for women on maternity leave and prohibits discrimination in the workplace.
- vi. Botswana signed the Southern African Development Community’s Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC Protocol) in 2017.

*Botswana strengthened the institutional and policy framework* aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality through the adoption of the following:

- i. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2015) and its National Operational Plan, in 2018;
- ii. The Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan (2017-2020), in 2017;
- iii. The National Development Plan 11 (2017-2023), in 2016, which includes gender mainstreaming and the prevention of gender based violence;
- iv. The National Vision 2036, in 2016, which recognises gender equality as a key element to human social development;
- v. The National Strategy Towards Ending Gender Based Violence in Botswana (2014-2020);

- vi. The Five Year Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control Strategy (2012-2016), in 2012;
- vii. The Affirmative Action Policy on Remote Area Communities, in 2012, which provides poverty eradication alternative packages whose beneficiaries are mostly women;
- viii. The HIV and AIDS Women Sector Strategy (2012–2016);
- ix. The Policy on Inclusive Education, in 2011, aimed at retaining girls and children with special needs in schools;
- x. The Poverty Eradication Framework, 2011, which incorporates a perspective of gender equality;
- xi. The Child Sexual Abuse Communication Strategy, in 2010, aimed at raising awareness among children, families and communities on signs or effects of child sexual abuse and promote accessible support service for children.

*Botswana also strengthened measures for women's economic empowerment:* The Government of Botswana implemented women's economic empowerment programmes through different strategies to contribute to poverty alleviation of women. The women's economic empowerment programme provides grants to women to start or strengthen income generating projects. To strengthen the Programme, Botswana committed additional resources in 2017/2018 by increasing the budget from USD2.5 million to USD5.5 million (63.6%).<sup>5</sup> In addition, a Women's Business Directory was developed to facilitate women entrepreneurs' access to available markets. Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) has over the years disbursed over P818 million as financing to over 2770 women owned enterprises; P175 million was spent on financing 412 agribusiness projects, P408 million on 2046 services projects and another P209 million on other sectors. Further, CEDA financed 82 property projects at P127 million and 194 manufacturing projects at P86 million, all for women from 2001.

The Government has also taken affirmative action to promote economic development in rural areas by provision of funding for livestock rearing and small projects as well as access to productive resources such as land. In addition, the economic development programme also specifically targets women. Furthermore, caregivers of people with multiple disabilities (i.e. people with disabilities who need a care-giver round the clock) are allowed to get economic empowerment support on behalf of those living with disability under their care, including their children.

With respect to ownership of land, women and men have equal right to own land. More women in Botswana own arable land than men at 57.6% and 41.6% respectively. The Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services has aligned their administration arrangements and practice with the law to afford married women equal opportunity to own land. Data sourced from the Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC) indicates that between 2015 and 2019, the majority of urban houses mainly in the cities of Gaborone and Francistown were purchased by men at 51.73% while females followed at 48.7%. Furthermore, as reflected in the Botswana case law, there is progression towards complying with the common law duty of ensuring that the laws continue to move with the changes in the society. This was reflected in the case of *Ramantele v. Mmusi & Others*. Moreover, the Administration of Estates Act also takes into consideration the deceased's lifestyle when dealing with devolution of estate. Under the same Act, where a tribesman dies interstate, the law considers whether such a tribesman lived solely according to culture or modern ways. Where it is found that such a tribesman had a modern lifestyle then the heirs, including females, inherit according to common law administration of estates. Livestock ownership by sub-sector shows that cattle ownership is highly skewed towards men<sup>6</sup>.

*Botswana achieved gender parity at all levels of the education system.* In tertiary education, women outnumber men, however more men than women dominate the STEM related professional disciplines. Furthermore, the Government introduced the back-to-school program effective from 2013 to facilitate re-admission of children and youth who dropped out of school due to various reasons including pregnancy, failure and absconding. The Government also bears the cost of education and parents cover consumables only in public schools. Botswana has invested significantly in education and skills development, with more than 25% of the total government's annual budgets being allocated to the education sector over the past two decades. These investments were made in order to, amongst others, improve the human capital development in the country and achieve sustainable improvements in the

<sup>5</sup> Report , Gender Affairs Department, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Botswana, 2017

quality of education. A lot of progress has been achieved in terms of output indicators, such as rising primary and secondary enrolments and retention for both boys and girls.

*Botswana strengthened efforts to address GBV:* Botswana continues to put in place measures to effectively implement the Domestic Violence Act (2008). Measures have also been put in place to intensify GBV prevention through awareness raising and educational campaigns at national and community levels through cultural and community dialogues, television and radio discussions, seminars and campaigns including international commemorations. Government has led national consultative fora for Dikgosi/Chiefs and for leaders of faith based organisations as partners in the fight against GBV. Botswana is currently piloting a gender based violence referral system in an effort to provide comprehensive service delivery to survivors of gender based violence. In addition, the Government acknowledges that currently there is no specific legislation that addresses sexual abuse. To inform appropriate programming for GBV Prevention and response, Government and civil society partners, conducted a National Relationships Study in 2018 that revealed the status of GBV in Botswana and provided concrete recommendations for implementation.

Botswana’s Parliament adopted a motion to implement a nationwide provision of sanitary towels for school-aged girls. The move installs some dignity to the girl child as they would always be in a position to use medically approved sanitary pads and never miss school during their menstrual periods.

*Botswana strengthened access to Justice for women including those in rural areas:* The Administration of Justice has set up maintenance courts in major centre areas to enable women to access payment of maintenance. Implementation of the Affiliation Proceedings Act has been intensified by ensuring the enforcement of maintenance orders by the police. The Administration of Justice introduced a case management system which was intended to deal with backlog of cases. Statistics reflect that the disposal rate of cases stand at 75–80% on average on yearly basis. Plans are currently under way to introduce case management to lower courts with the Magistrate Court being the first. This will enable litigants who appear in court to access justice faster. Over and above these, the Administration of Justice has also introduced Mobile Courts. Mobile Courts are intended to take justice to the people, particularly in areas where there are no courts.

Improvement of Maternal Mortality Rates: Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio for the period 2013 to 2017 is shown in Table 2. The table shows that Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 156.6 to 143.2 per 100,000 live-births between 2016 and 2017.

**Table 1: Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio 2013– 2017**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Institutional live births</b>	49,771	47,273	57,290	54,159	52,242
<b>Non-Institutional live-births</b>	68	205	190	108	116
<b>Total live-births</b>	49,839	47,478	57,480	54,267	52,358
<b>Maternal Deaths</b>	91	72	73	85	75
<b>Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live-births)</b>	182.6	151.6	127.0	156.6	143.2

<http://statsbots.org.bw/botswana-maternal-mortality-ratio>, 2017

*Government strengthened measures to tackle traditional and cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities:* Botswana continuously engages with Chiefs (Dikgosi) in an effort to achieve gender justice through promotion of equal opportunities and rights for women and men with a particular focus on mainstreaming gender within the customary justice system. The Government had previously formed the view to strengthen the Office of the Ombudsman in order for it to serve as an independent national human rights institution.

*Meaningful involvement of men in Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment:* In December, 2015; Botswana launched the National Champion to drive the HeforShe campaign particularly in sport. Botswana Parliament launched HeforShe in November 2017. The Men Sector also continues with capacity building amongst men and boys.

*Botswana strengthened Gender Institutional Structures* and has demonstrated political commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by creating national frameworks and machineries to ensure the “Guarantee of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms”. To this end, on 1st October, 2016; gender was made prominent within the new Ministry named: Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs. This is anticipated to give the National Gender Machinery visibility and eminence. The National Gender Commission has also been established with a clear mandate to monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender policies. The National Gender Machinery continues to facilitate establishment of Gender Committees for sectors and at district level to support gender mainstreaming and promotion of gender equality at all levels, including at local level.



**Figure 3: BDP Women `s wing during women in politics debate in 2014**

### **Challenges faced in the implementation of the BPfA over the past 5 years:**

- a) *Low representation of Women in Politics:* While Botswana has achieved commendable progress in women’s participation in governance in the public service, parastatal organisations and private sector, women’s representation in political governance remains very low. Currently Botswana has no legislated quotas nor affirmative action.
- b) *High incidences of HIV among women:* Although Botswana has been heralded for the leading HIV response however; pervasive gender inequality, patriarchy and discrimination undermine the progress in the HIV response. Young women and adolescent girls face a heightened vulnerability with 38 weekly infections amongst women aged 15–24. The number of women living with HIV is still higher than men in Botswana.

**Table 2: Men and Women living with HIV in Botswana –source UNAIDS... Bots 2017.**

People living with HIV	2014	2017
People living with HIV (all ages)	300 000 [270 000–310 000]	320 000 [290 000–340 000]
People living with HIV (0–14)	20 000 [18 000–23 000]	16 000 [14 000–19 000]
People living with HIV (women, 15+)	160 000 [140 000–170 000]	170 000 [150 000–180 000]
People living with HIV (men, 15+)	120 000 [100 000–130 000]	130 000 [120 000–140 000]

- c) *Incidences of GBV*: The Botswana National Relationship Study (2018) shows that GBV remains high in Botswana. Thirty seven (37%) of the women interviewed reported experiencing GBV at least once in their lifetime (emotional, physical and sexual) including partner and non-partner violence. Nearly 30% of women reported experiencing violence over the last year. The study places Botswana within the World Health Organisation (WHO) global GBV estimates which indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced some form of violence. The study also reveals that a third (30%) of men reported perpetrating GBV in their lifetime.
- d) *Contradictions between codified law and customary laws*: The contradictions between formal and customary laws that occur often cause women to suffer discrimination due to non-uniform application of law in customary courts. Often customary courts preserve cultural negative cultural practices that disadvantage women.
- e) *Limited funding for gender equality and women's empowerment Programmes*: The current budget for Gender Affairs Department is very low. Although Government has been able to expand the department in the recent past, resources are not sufficient to implement planned programmes.

**The top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in Botswana over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes:**

✓ **Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice:**

Government of Botswana has progressively prioritised reviewing and amending discriminatory laws on account of gender. New laws and policies have also been enacted and developed for the advancement of gender equality and empowerment. These include the following:

- i. The Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act, in 2014, which revised the definition of exploitation and increased fines and prison sentences for human trafficking offences;
- ii. The Married Persons Property Act, in 2014, which allows persons married under customary law to opt for civil law for the administration of their properties;
- iii. The Interpretation (Amendment) Act, in 2013, which sets the legal age of age of maturity at 18 irrespective of sex;
- iv. The Legal Aid Act, in 2013, aimed at increasing access to justice including by women;
- v. The Employment (Amendment) Act, in 2010, which establishes a minimum pay of half salary for women on maternity leave and prohibits discrimination in the workplace.
- vi. Botswana signed the Southern African Development Community's Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC Gender Protocol) in 2017.
- vii. In terms of Policies Botswana strengthened the gender policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality through the adoption of the following:
  - viii. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2015) and its National Operational Plan, in 2018;
  - ix. The Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan (2017-2020), in 2017;
  - x. The National Development Plan 11 (2017-2023), in 2016, which includes gender mainstreaming and the prevention of gender based violence;
  - xi. The National Vision 2036, in 2016, which recognises gender equality as a key element to human social development;
  - xii. The National Strategy Towards Ending Gender Based Violence in Botswana (2014-2020);
  - xiii. The Five Year Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control Strategy (2012-2016), in 2012;
  - xiv. The Affirmative Action Policy on Remote Area Communities, in 2012, which provides poverty eradication alternative packages whose beneficiaries are mostly women;
  - xv. The HIV and AIDS Women Sector Strategy (2012-2016);
  - xvi. The Policy on Inclusive Education, in 2011, aimed at retaining girls and children with special needs in schools;
  - xvii. The Poverty Eradication Framework, 2011, which incorporates a perspective of gender equality;

- xviii. The Child Sexual Abuse Communication Strategy, in 2010, aimed at raising awareness among children, families and communities on signs or effects of child sexual abuse and promote accessible support service for children.
- xix. Ministry of Education and Basic Education has developed a set of Teacher Competencies (2002); Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy Guidelines.
- xx. In 2011, the Ministry developed an Inclusive Education Policy which promotes school cultures and environments that are child friendly, conducive to effective learning and inclusive to all children irrespective of their gender, age, life circumstances or socio-economic circumstances. The policy also aims at retaining girls and girls with special needs.

The Government of Botswana in the last five years made deliberate efforts to intensify access to Justice for all including the poor and rural women. In the quest to implement the Legal Aid Act that was passed by Parliament in 2013, the legal aid programme has been rolled-out nationally to enhance women's access to justice especially to the poor and rural women. Between September 2015 and March 2019, 2,767 applications for legal aid were received and were handled through three possible service delivery mechanisms. Public education on laws that promote gender equality is on-going with a specific target on women, including on free legal aid services through the radio and other communication modes. The Administration of Justice has set up maintenance courts in major centre areas to enable women to access payment of maintenance. Implementation of the Affiliation Proceedings Act has been intensified by ensuring the enforcement of maintenance orders by the police.

Government of Botswana introduced a case management system which was intended to deal with backlog of cases. Statistics reflect that the disposal rate of cases stand at 75 – 80% on average on yearly basis. Plans are currently underway to introduce case management to lower courts with the Magistrate Court being the first. This will enable litigants who appear in court to access justice faster. Over and above these majors, the Administration of Justice has also introduced Mobile Courts. Mobile Courts are intended to take justice to the people, particularly in areas where there are no courts.

The Government continuously engages with Dikgosi (Chiefs) in efforts to achieve gender justice through promotion of equal opportunities and rights for women and men with a particular focus on mainstreaming gender within the customary justice system. This is crucial for increased access to justice for the poor and women in rural areas.

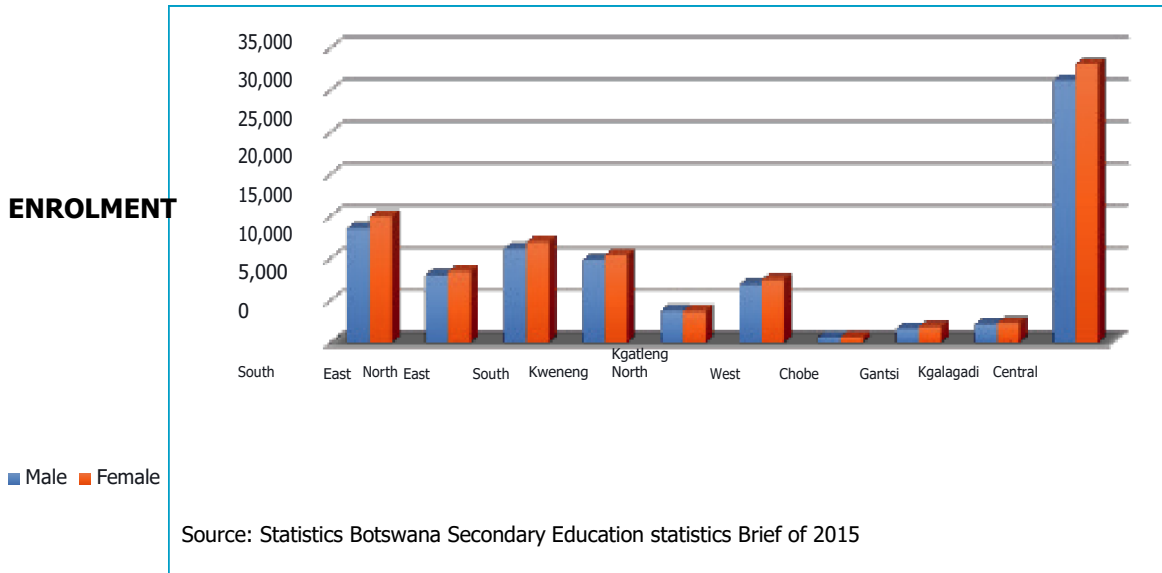
✓ **Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls:**

The Government of Botswana continues to advocate for gender parity at all levels of education by addressing gender related challenges such as access and retention, equity and quality of education. Effective implementation of interventions in Access to Quality Education, Training and Information has contributed to improving gender outcomes specifically on gender equality and equity. Government of Botswana has made commendable progress in ensuring the elimination of gender disparities that affect equal access to educational outcomes at all levels. Botswana has therefore made consistent progress on boys and girls enrolment.

According to Statistics Botswana Secondary Education statistics Brief of 2015, more females than males were enrolled in Secondary School. Figure 2 shows that generally the sex ratio at enrolment into Secondary schools is in favour of female students compared to their male counterparts in all the 10 regions.



**Figure 4: Secondary Schools Enrolment by Region and Sex-2015**





Government of Botswana still maintains the re-entry policy enabling young women to return to schools. Furthermore, the Government introduced the back-to-school program to facilitate re-admission of children and youth who dropped out of school due to various reasons including pregnancy, failure and absconding. There is collaboration with parents on education through the Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs).

The Botswana Education Policy clearly prohibits teachers and other school staff members from having sexual relationships with learners because of their custodial responsibilities and strict penalties are applied for those who violate this provision. The Policy on Inclusive Education (2011) articulates strategies for retaining girl children as well as children with special needs in the educational system.

The Revised National Population Policy (2010) makes provisions for Adolescent Friendly Health Services to ensure access to Reproductive Health Services that can in turn promote the retention of girl children in education. Botswana has recorded a rising adult literacy rate of adults aged 15 and above, respectively 87.12 % females and 86.34 % males. Enrolment at school in rural areas is still affected by high levels of dropout among girls than boys. Of all girls who dropped out of secondary school in 2019 and discernible patterns indicated that teenage pregnancy increased with rural location, poverty and double orphan status.

There has been a deliberate effort over years, by the Ministry of Basic Education to reduce the transition period between primary and lower secondary education level and lower secondary education to upper secondary schools. However, the transition period between lower to upper secondary schools is still a concern. The period consists of some two and half to three months off from school. This period is too long and might predispose girls to pregnancy, thereby keeping them from turning up to senior secondary schooling. Worth also noting is that the Ministry has also established an Education Information Management System which gathers statistics and gender disaggregated data.

Government of Botswana worked closely with stakeholders to intensify advocacy work to ensure equitable and accessible quality education for boys and girls especially in science and technology based fields. Social Protection Programmes were strengthened to create more inclusive opportunities for learning especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and other vulnerable adult groups. During the 2019, International Women’s Day under the theme **#Think Equal, Build Smart Innovate For Change**, the Gender Affairs Department organised a consultative strategy meeting for stakeholders to systematically launch the campaigns. This was aimed at sharing strategic information to advocate for the increased participation of girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as well celebrate women and girls achievements in STEM. The meeting brought about STEM experts and partners from Universities of Botswana, the Botswana Institute of Sciences and Technology (BUIST), Private Sector, and Civil Society. The National International Women’s Day 2019 was commemorated in Jwaneng Town in the Southern District.

Regarding Tertiary education, over the past decade, Table 3 shows that the total enrolment in tertiary education institutions in 2017/18 was 59,243 of which 5,793 was enrolled in skills based institutions (Brigades). Majority of the students (21,966) were enrolled in public universities such as: the University of Botswana (UB), Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) and Botswana Open University (BOU), followed by 11,299 in private universities such as: Botho, Ba Isago and Limkokwing Universities). The total female enrolment was 33,649 being 56.8% compared to 25,594 being 43.2% males. Furthermore, female enrolment in Brigades was 2,503 constituting 43.2% of the total Brigades enrolment. The female enrolment was above 50% across all types of tertiary education institutions except for technical colleges and brigades which stood at 34.7 and 43.2 % respectively. Colleges of education recorded the highest percentage (70.2%) of female enrolment amongst institutions.

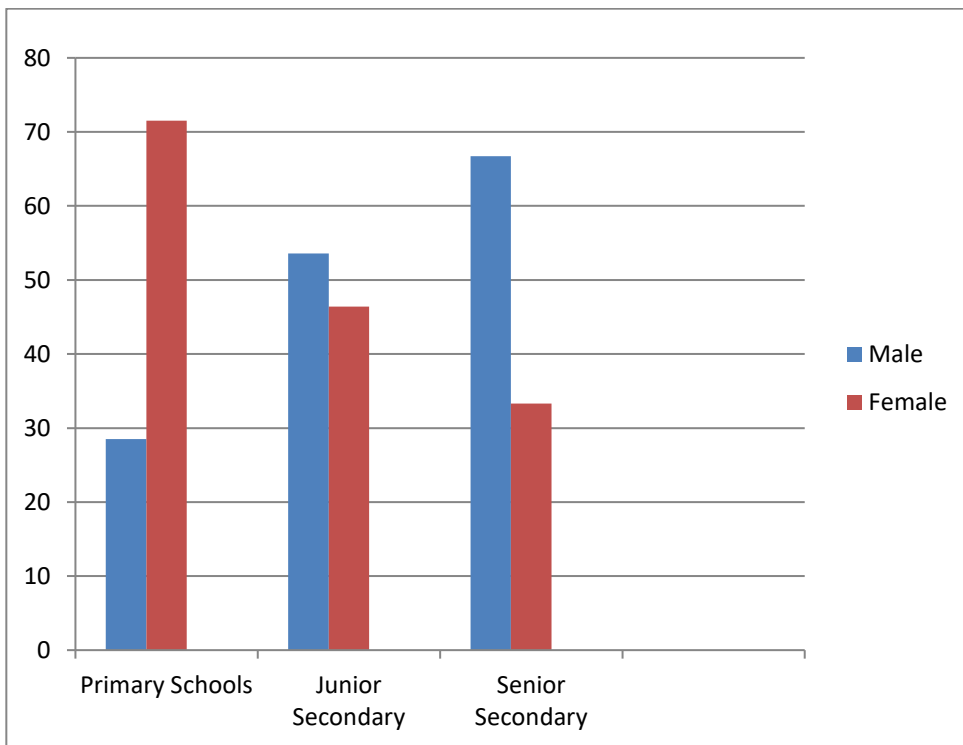
**Table 2: Student Enrolment by institution type and Gender**

<b>Qualification Level</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Female</b>
Private Institutions	5,165	3,297	8,462	61
Private Universities	6,360	4,939	11,299	56.3
Colleges of Education	753	320	1,073	70.2
Institute of Health Sciences	840	488	1,328	63.3
Technical Colleges	976	1,834	2,810	34.7
Public Institutions	4,075	2,437	6,512	62.6
Public Universities	12,977	8,989	21,966	59.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,146</b>	<b>22,304</b>	<b>53,450</b>	<b>58.3</b>
Brigades	2,503	3,290	5,793	43.2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33,649</b>	<b>25,594</b>	<b>59,243</b>	<b>56.8</b>

Source: CSO, Tertiary Education Statistics, 2018

**Comprehensive gender mainstreaming across the education sector:** In order to develop the education sector with gender equality perspective, not only should the focus be on attaining equal enrolment in basic education but should also embrace an approach that promote women’s empowerment through education. This could be attained through promotion of women to leadership positions e.g. promotion of female teachers to school heads and education directors. This would be one of the ways to promote gender equality. The figure below illustrates gender disparities in the recruitment and promotion of school heads.

**Figure 5: Percentage of School Heads by gender per level**



## **Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security:**

The Government of Botswana has put in place a number of measures intended to promote social inclusion, equal opportunities and meaningful participation for remote area dwellers as well as enhancing their capacity and skills development. According to the 2015/16 Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey, overall there is a higher percentage of female headed poor households than those that are male headed. Nationally, fifty five (55%) of poor households are female headed while forty five (45%) are male headed indicating that poverty incidence is higher among female headed households. The proportion of people living below the poverty datum line has dropped by three percentage points from (19.3%) to (16.3%) during the period. The proportion of those living in extreme poverty (below \$1.90 a Day) has also reduced from (6.4) to (5.8) percent.<sup>7</sup>

The survey shows that poverty levels over the past five years declined. The significant decrease in poverty incidence in rural areas followed efforts by government to eradicate abject poverty, with concerted efforts in targeting the very poor in rural areas, directly benefitting women in rural areas. The majority of rural women do not have a partner supporting them with the day-to-day management of the household nor contributing financially to children growth and development. This traditional family construct contributes to the overrepresentation of women among poor rural households.<sup>8</sup>

More women than men in Botswana are engaged in crops and vegetables production, as they own more arable land than men (57.6 % against 41.6 %). However, the dominant production activity in the country is livestock farming, beef cattle production and small stock, and the sector is dominated by men, who represent the majority of livestock owners and managers. Women do however dominate in chicken ownership and production.<sup>9</sup>

Access to water remains a challenge for rural women in Botswana. Although the rights of access to land generally include access to surface water resources, subject to existing rights, women's plots tend to be far from water points access. As water collection is still traditionally the responsibility of women and young girls in rural areas, this imposes a heavy work burden on them as sometimes water points are 25 km distant from rural villages. Boreholes ownership is highly skewed towards men, with women owning 27 % of them versus 73 % of the country's boreholes owned by men. Nevertheless, overall improvements have been registered in water access as about 774,000 people received improved water supply in the rural areas in 2015 as compared to 752000 in 2013. The policy on agriculture and rural development currently in formulation stage, aims to target the issue by prioritizing access to natural resources, particularly water, as a way to improve the situation of rural women in Botswana.

The socio-economic empowerment of women and in particular poverty alleviation through the creation of employment is a critical consideration for special measures that should be put in place. The amendment of the Deeds Registry Act in 1998 and the passing of the Abolition of Marital Power Act in 2004 have created new social and economic opportunities for women. Women married in community of property are now able to register immovable assets in their own names and they have been empowered to conduct business in their own right.

The Government, 'President Housing Appeal', continues to engage in efforts to promote adequate living conditions, particularly with regard to housing. The President's Housing Appeal calls on all who are able i.e., individuals, groups of individuals and companies, to help build houses for the needy. The Government, together with other partners (private sector, development partners, NGOs, etc.) also target improving of

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<sup>7</sup> 2015/16 Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey

<sup>8</sup> CSO, 2015/16 Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey

<sup>9</sup> CSO, Annual Agricultural Survey, 2017

living conditions through community service activities that address mainly housing, sanitation, and water supply concerns. Women and women-headed households, particularly those in the rural areas, have substantially benefitted from such initiatives. As a result, the rural population served with improved sanitation increased from 360 000 in 2013 to 377 000 in 2019 in the rural areas.

### **Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises**

The Government has adopted affirmative action for women's empowerment through provision of both financial and technical support for women's empowerment. The disbursement of grants to Women's Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Groups to enable them start income generation projects which are viewed as a more practical solution to women's poverty, with the potential for addressing their longer term needs. This programme should create employment outside the home for women. It also significantly enhances their ownership rights and participation in decision making as they run these small enterprises.

Government also supports women including the youth, through the National Women's Expositions, the Youth Expositions as well as the Poverty Eradication Fairs. These were initiated in response to the disparities that exist between women and men in the trade and economic sphere. The expositions aim at putting women's effort into the public sphere primarily to showcase women's contribution to national economy- building efforts, and for their work to be appreciated, acknowledged and documented. The participation of women entrepreneurs at international trade fairs such as the Women in Business-SADC Fairs and the Global Expo are viewed as marketing strategies for women's products.

### **Eliminating violence against women and girls:**

Government of Botswana has enacted several laws which protect women and men from Gender Based Violence and Abuse. The main law against violence in the domestic set up is the Domestic Violence Act passed in 2008. The Act provides for support and protection from domestic violence. In the Botswana context "domestic violence" is any controlling or abusive behaviour that harms an individual's health or safety including physical abuse or threat; sexual abuse or threat; emotional, verbal or psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment and damage to property in the scope of a domestic relationship.

Vision 2036 calls for the elimination of gender discrimination and gender based violence in Botswana society. This is critical to achieve a moral, tolerant and inclusive nation. Working towards this Botswana has developed the, National Strategy towards ending Gender Based Violence in Botswana (2010-2020). This strategy has articulated the guiding goals and objectives of the national multi sectorial approach to GBV response. Government in Botswana GBV Strategy focuses on (i) GBV prevention, (ii) protection, Care and Support of GBV victims and survivors, (iii) National capacity development for the GBV Response, (iv) GBV Strategic information and knowledge management and (V) Coordination and management of the national Response.

Government continues to embark on research and data collection to guide GBV interventions that are appropriate and strategic. In 2012, the then Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs in partnership with Gender Links conducted a baseline survey aimed at developing a comprehensive assessment of the extent, effects and response to Violence against Women (VAW) in Botswana. It covered women's experiences, and men's perpetration of violence. Following that, in 2018 Government carried out a National Relationship Study that unlike the previous prevalence surveys that focused on VAW and a few aspects of GBV, the indicators in this study sought to measure:

- i. The extent of violence against women as perpetrated by men and vice versa.
- ii. The social and economic effects of GBV for women and men;
- iii. Response and support interventions as measured by the multi stakeholder National Action Plans to End Gender Violence based on the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development; and

- iv. Prevention interventions that underscore the importance of a paradigm shift towards prevention rather than focus primarily on response.

The Botswana Government requested an increase of the sample size to a more representative national sample that could be disaggregated by districts. The Relationship Study measured the extent, risk factors, determinants, and effects of GBV. Current GBV responses with implications for prevention, treatment, care, support and recovery interventions were also explored. The study covered all the 16 districts of Botswana. The findings from the research will inform and strengthen national, district and local level strategies to end GBV.

The results of the study revealed that thirty-seven % of women reported experiencing some form of GBV at least once while 30% men conceded to perpetrating GBV in their lifetime. Twenty-one % men reported experiencing some form of GBV at least once while 12% women conceded to perpetrating GBV in their lifetime while thirty-seven % of ever-partnered women and 18% of ever-partnered men experienced some form of intimate partner violence. In addition to that Eleven % of women and 9% of men experienced sexual harassment either in school or at work or in public places. Five % of women and 2% of men reported experiencing rape at the hands of a non-partner. The most commonly experienced form of IPV is emotional IPV followed by physical, economic, and sexual IPV. Fourteen % of women and 17% of men reported perpetrating some form of abuse against their partner in the past 12 months. Fifteen % of women who had ever been pregnant reported experiencing abuse at some point during their pregnancy.

Prevention of GBV remains one of the key priorities for Government of Botswana. A series of GBV prevention interventions for awareness raising and sensitization such as community mobilization, advocacy and communication have been implemented during the period under review. The Government of Botswana commemorates the 16 Days of Activism against violence on women and children annually. In 2018 Sixteen (16) Days Campaign was launched by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Botswana Dr Mokgweetsi E. K. Masisi. This is a demonstration of political will and highest level of commitment to eliminate GBV from Botswana society. Government also works in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations. Government continues to support and implement programmes towards protection, care and support of GBV survivors and developing the capacity of key stakeholders such as law enforcement Officers, Health Workers, Social Workers and Chiefs on dealing with GBV in a gender responsive manner.

Government has put in place sensitization and community mobilisation efforts to address the knowledge and information gaps and challenges that exist to prevent GBV. Deliberate efforts have been made to engage traditional leaders, religious leaders and men for increased meaningful involvement in the prevention of GBV. Innovative ways of addressing negative cultural practices that drive gender inequalities and GBV have been explored through radio, social media, and local campaigns.

Government worked with various sectors to respond to and prevent GBV. The Ministry of Nationality Immigration and Gender Affairs strengthened partnerships with the Ministry of Health and Wellness in developing protocols and service standards for prevention and management of gender based violence for health care providers. Government worked with Botswana Police Service in developing a Handbook and Training Curriculum on Effective Police Responses to Violence against Women.

The Government of Botswana adopted a Strategy and Programme of Action for Male Involvement in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights - SRHR (2007 – 2012) to support institutions and programmes in initiatives aimed at reducing the spread of sexual transmitted diseases – particularly HIV/AIDS – and combating gender based violence. With these programmes, the country can better respond to the gender dynamics of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, sexual and reproductive health issues, and gender violence.

**Access to Health Care, Including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRHR):** Government has prioritised SRHR for women and adolescent girls. Government advanced the implementation of the revised National Population Policy(2010) to reduce under five mortality from 68 deaths per 1000 live births to less than 29 deaths by 2020, and to further to increase life expectancy from 50.7 years in 2001 to at least 67.7 years. Available data shows that there have been remarkable declines in both infant and adult mortality over the years, mainly due to reductions in the HIV/AIDS mortality. This shows that Botswana is on course to achieve the targets of the revised National Population Policy (NPP). Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio for the period 2013 to 2017 is shown in Table 3 below which indicates that Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 156.6 to 143.2 per 100,000 live-births between 2016 and 2017.

**Table 3: Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio 2013– 2017**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Institutional live births</b>	49,771	47,273	57,290	54,159	52,242
<b>Non-Institutional live-births</b>	68	205	190	108	116
<b>Total live-births</b>	49,839	47,478	57,480	54,267	52,358
<b>Maternal Deaths</b>	91	72	73	85	75
<b>Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 births)</b>	182.6	151.6	127	156.6	143.2

Source: Central Statistics Botswana, Maternal Mortality Updates, 2017

According to Statistics Botswana, Maternal Mortality Ratio Report of 2017, there were 52,358 live births, of which 52,242 were institutional births, representing 99.8 per cent of all births. The report further shows that maternal mortality ratio which has been fluctuating over the years has declined from 156.6 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016 to 143.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017. Overall, 76.0 per cent of all maternal deaths were due to direct causes, while the remainder were due to indirect causes. Other factors that contributed to the decline of infant and maternal mortality include child vaccinations, use of zinc and oral rehydrant salts. The leading direct cause of maternal mortality was 'genital tract and pelvic infection following abortion, ectopic and molar pregnancy which accounted for 20% of all maternal deaths, followed by 'diseases of the circulatory system complicating pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium at 10.7%, 'severe pre-eclampsia with 8% and rapture of uterus during labour' at 8%.<sup>10</sup>

The Botswana Maternal and Neonatal Health Programme initiated the National Roadmap for Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and New Born Mortality to strengthen institutional mechanisms to address child and maternal mortality. Botswana employed Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and neonatal care to reduce the impact of clandestine and unsafe abortion on maternal morbidity and mortality.

The Botswana Revised National HIV and AIDS Policy takes into account the gender dynamics of HIV and AIDS. The Government of Botswana adopted its third National HIV and AIDS strategic framework (2017-2022) which has effectively integrated gender issues and considered a stand section for gender and women's empowerment. Furthermore, the National AIDS Council has established the Women and Men's Sectors to promote involvement of both women and men in the prevention of new HIV infections.

<sup>10</sup> Central Statistics Botswana, Maternal Mortality Ratio Report, 2017



To address the high prevalence of HIV amongst women and girls, Government provides Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV, Anti-Retro Viral Therapy, Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) including its scaling up. Government has accelerated the implementation of the TB/HIV co infection programmes among women and girls emphasising universal access to an integrated multi sectoral services for HIV, TB and Sexual Reproductive Health. Government has also promoted consistent use of the female condom for empowerment and increased choices for women.

Furthermore, Government of Botswana developed National HIV & AIDS strategies to address the respective vulnerabilities of women and men to HIV & AIDS. Key objectives are to implement the Men and Women Sector initiatives that include enrolling men as partners for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV as well as enrolling prominent males as advocates and creating exclusive platforms for discussing female and male related issues. Advocacy work to ensure equitable distribution and increased coverage of services, accessibility and utilisation of services by women and girls remain priority for the Government of Botswana

Botswana developed the five Year Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control Strategy (2012-2016). This strategy introduces screening and outpatient treatment of cervical pre-cancer in one single visit, commonly referred to as "See and Treat". The Government of Botswana is collaborating with WHO, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Botswana, Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon (PRRR) and World Bank through National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA) to build capacity in this regard. Cervical cancer is a major concern especially among the HIV positive women in Botswana and this strategy facilitates the implementation of the earmarked activities towards the Prevention and Control of cervical cancer. As part Primary Prevention for Cervical Cancer, Botswana introduced Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccine into the national immunisation in 2016 targeting girls in standard five (5) and out of school girls aged nine (9) to thirteen (13) years. Furthermore introduction and scale up of innovations is under way to increase screening coverage and improve diagnosis and treatment efforts.

### **Specific measures taken over the past 5 years to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination**

#### **Women living in remote and rural areas:**

The Government has made significant progress in reducing poverty in Botswana. Women continue to represent a high proportion of the nation's poor, representing 10.7% of the population living below the PDL compared to 8.6% of males. The Government is committed to reduce poverty through its social safety nets, agricultural subsidies and economic empowerment and poverty eradication programmes. The Government financially support women by providing grants to start economic activities in rural areas. These include: the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme, the Poverty Eradication Programme, Youth Development Fund and Citizen Entrepreneurship Funding.

#### **Women living with HIV/AIDS:**

Available evidence (Botswana AIDS Impact Survey I, II, III and IV) show that more women and girls are infected with HIV and shoulder the heavy burden of care and support of people living with HIV (PLHIV). In response the Government of Botswana has put in place key programmes to address women's vulnerability and mitigate the impact of HIV. These include; provision of HAART to HIV positive pregnant women, clinical management of gender based violence, sexual reproductive health/HIV integrated services, cervical cancer screening and treatment for women living with HIV, promotion of female condoms and HPV vaccine for the adolescent girls.

**Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities:**

The High Court repealed the 1965 Penal Code that impose up to seven years in prison for same-sex relationships, stating that it is unconstitutional. The ruling set aside the "provisions and further ordered the laws be amended. The landmark case Letsweletse Motshidiemang vs Attorney General and Another with LEGABIBO as amicus curae witnessed a gay man who challenged the constitutionality of section 164 (a) and (c) and section 167 of the Botswana Penal code. The Court answered the legal question posed before it being whether Section 164(a) and (c)—which prohibits same sex relationships is indeed unconstitutional and should be struck down. This Court decision provides for freedom of expression for women and men in same sex relationships.

**Women in Rural Areas:** Targeted women's economic empowerment programmes for women in rural areas have been established to harness their indigenous knowledge in crafts such as basketry and pottery. Government provides financial support to micro enterprises of rural women including the indigenous women to develop their enterprises.

**Women with Disability:** ALIGHT Botswana, a collaborative project between the Botswana Council for the Disabled (BCD), the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and the Institute of Development Management (IDM) conducted a study that provides evidence on the context of violence against women and girls with disabilities in Botswana and informs the development of a disability-inclusive violence prevention framework and capacity-building approach.<sup>11</sup> With the results from this study, Government of Botswana and other partners have a strategic resource with clear recommendations to roll out initiatives for GBV prevention among women with disability. This has advanced the participation and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in programmes related to the prevention of and response to gender-based and other forms of violence in Botswana.

Botswana has implemented **increasing number of humanitarian initiatives to support people affected by crisis arising from conflict, extreme weather or other elements—affected the implementation of the BPfA:** Botswana is a semi-arid Southern African country characterized by erratic rainfall, recurring droughts, low soil moisture, and extreme weather events such as flash floods which forms a foundation of vulnerability for communities in the country. Frequent drought conditions have had significant impacts on domestic food production. To address these challenges, Government in collaboration with UN have developed long and short term strategies for responding to disaster and other humanitarian risks in Botswana.

The Government of Botswana through the Office of the President, National Office of Disaster Management established programmes and measures to tackle extreme weather and its impacts to citizens especially women who are considered custodians of natural resources at community level. Government in collaboration with UNDP implements Programmes on Environment in rural areas to preserve the environment and natural resources while uplifting their livelihoods of especially women.

The Government of Botswana adopted affirmative action for women's empowerment through provision of both financial and technical support for women's empowerment and programmes. One such programme is the Alternative Packages Program (APP). APP provides financing, training, and equipment for micro-businesses, agricultural activities such as beekeeping and poultry rearing. Since women are the majority (70 per cent) informal sector players, they were the majority beneficiaries of the APP. The Inter Ministerial efforts link towards the support of women especially those affected by poverty such as Gender Affairs Department

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<sup>11</sup> (<http://www.mrc.ac.za/hiv/Alight.htm>).his, Jill Hanass-Hancock, Melebogo Molefhe, Dorcas Taukobong, Nomfundo Mthethwa, Tshiamo Keakabetsa, Agisanyang Pitsane, Alight Botswana, From Understanding the Context of Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities to Actions Study, 2017

women’s empowerment programmes and the Poverty Eradication Programme by Local Government. Such Government Programmes disburse grants to Women’s NGOs, Community Based Organisations who support economic empowerment programmes for women and women farmer groups/cooperatives who work together as income generating groups.

## SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

**Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work** (A. Women and Poverty, F. Women and the economy I. Human Rights of Women and The Girl Child)

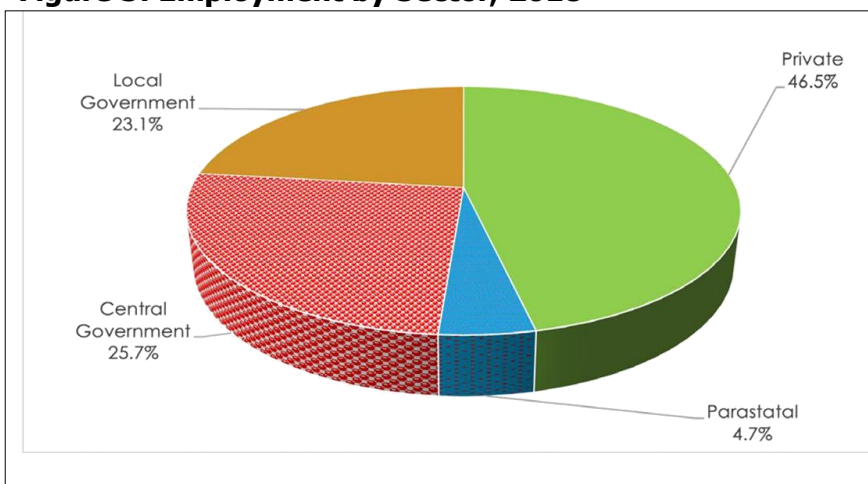
### Action taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women’s role in paid work and employment:

The Botswana Employment Amendment Act 10 of 2010 as amended, Section 23(d) adds gender, sexual orientation, colour, creed, and health status (including HIV/AIDS status) or disability as prohibited grounds on which an employer cannot terminate a contract of employment. A new Section 23(e) was introduced, which provides general protection against discrimination. It states that an employee cannot be fired for “any other reason which does not affect the employee’s ability to perform that employee’s duties under the contract of employment. The Botswana National Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and Employment, and the Code of Good Practice: HIV/AIDS and Employment (Trade Disputes Act), protect the rights of employees with HIV.

The Government of Botswana strengthened/enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation. According to Statistics Botswana Formal Employment Survey 2018, overall employment increased by 0.9 % (3,600 persons) from 417,162 persons in September 2018 to 420,762 persons in December 2018. Local Government recorded the highest growth in employment of 2.3%, followed by Central Government and Parastatal with 0.8% and 0.3% respectively. Private recorded an increase in employment of 0.2 %. In December 2018, a total of 10,629 (2.5%) employees were non-citizens. Out of this total, Private and Parastatal sectors recorded 9,685 employees. It is estimated that total of 420,762 employees were recorded, of which 208,697 (49.6%) were males while 212,064 (50.4%) were females.

Formal sector employment in the economy grew at the rate of 1.5% for the period up to 2015 during NDP 10. As indicated in Table 3.7, all sub-sectors with the exception of the Parastatal sector, experienced a decrease in growth rates, with the Government Sector actually experiencing negative growth rates in 2013 and 2014. However, the non-formal employment Ipelegeng Programme experienced substantial growth of an average of 3.4% between 2014 and 2015.

**Figure 5: Employment by Sector, 2018**

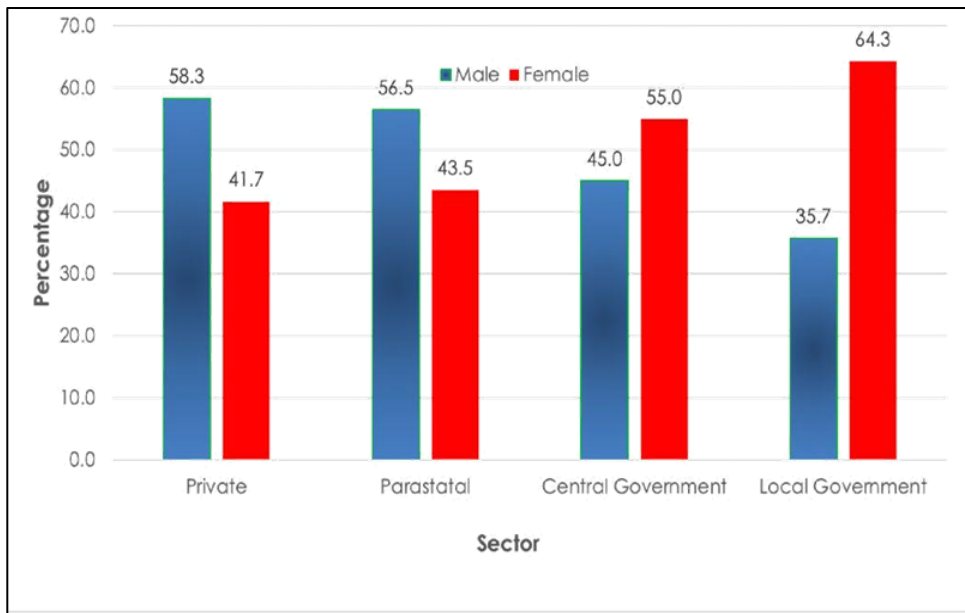


*Source: Statistics Botswana, Formal Employment Survey, 2018*

Figure 3 shows December 2018 formal employment by sector. Private sector had the largest share (46.5 %), followed by Central Government with 25.7%. Local Government and Parastatal recorded 23.1% and 4.7% respectively.

The proportion of male and female employees by sector shows that males dominated their female counterparts in Private and Parastatal sectors with 58.3% and 56.5% respectively. Males constituted 45.0% for Central Government and 35.7 % for Local Government. Female employees were higher in Local Government (64.3%), followed by those in Central Government (55.0%).<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 6: Proportion of male and female employees by sector**



Botswana Government strengthened and enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation. The 2010 Employment (Amendment) Act compels employers to pay employees on maternity leave not less than 50% of their salary. The Botswana Employment (Amendment) Act allows women to work underground in mines if they so choose. The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) in 2007 started recruiting women in the army as female cadets. A challenge experienced by the BDF in recruiting females during 2012 was the lack of adequate accommodation to house the female Officer Cadet recruits.

Botswana has also ensured through General Orders 1996 – Governing the conditions of service of the Public Service that women employed in the Public Service are entitled to 84 calendar days’ maternity leave on full pay for each confinement, up to a maximum of three confinements. Botswana has taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace. According to the Public Service (Amendment) Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment is recognized as a misconduct, which can attract penalties under the Public Service. Botswana continues to monitor progress in the implementation of this Act. An enabling environment to ensure effective implementation is also provided at all levels of the Public Sector to ensure maternity leave.

<sup>12</sup> Botswana Central Statistics, Formal Employment Survey, 2018

**Table 4: Conditions of Employment**

Provision	Yes/No	Provisions
Maternity leave	Yes	Provision is made for 12-weeks maternity leave (6 weeks before and 6 weeks after giving birth). The employer requires a certificate signed by a doctor, medical nurse or a midwife. A woman is entitled to an additional two weeks maternity due to illness. During the maternity leave a maternity allowance of not less than 25% of the employee's basic pay or 50 Thebe for each day of absence, whichever is greater, is payable.
Paternity leave	No	-
Sexual harassment	Some	The Public Service Act covers the public sector, but few Ministries mention sexual harassment in their policies. Some institutions have incorporated sexual harassment policies, such as the University of Botswana and the Bank of Botswana.
Night work		If the working week is five days, then the working day must not be more than nine hours and a one-hour period of rest should be provided during the day. If the working week is more than five days, then the working day must not be more than eight hours or more than 48 hours in a week. A break of at least 30 minutes must be given after five consecutive hours of work. A rest day of not less than 24 consecutive hours, typically including Sunday, must be given in every period of seven consecutive days. Shift workers must be given a rest day of at least 30 consecutive hours in a period of seven consecutive days.

Source: *Employment Act - CAP 47:01, 2009*

On women's economic empowerment, during the past five years Botswana has improved financial inclusion and access to credit with an annual budget of over USD36.77 million towards supporting women and youth to start businesses. In addition, Government supports the transition from informal to formal work, with legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment. To further support women, youth and people with disabilities in accessing markets, Government hosts annual Expositions across the country.

Women in Botswana continue to engage in self-help groups (*Motshelo*) and co-operatives for their economic sustenance. Some financial institutions have commenced to support such initiatives with the aim of encouraging the spirit of saving and growing the money through accumulation of interest. This has been identified as a strategy to promote financial inclusion and facilitate economic and social development of the communities.

The Government has provided a macro-economic policy environment conducive to private sector contributions to the economy and citizen empowerment programmes that stimulate economic diversification and growth. Botswana NDP 10 and 11 emphasise private sector-led growth. However, the macro-economic policies, including citizen empowerment policies and programmes, are not gender-responsive. For example, the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) have no special incentives to promote women's benefit to finance. As a result, women's involvement in these programmes is extremely small compared to men. Government is working to ensure equal access to resources by women.

On Informal Trade, According to the International Monetary Fund (2018), Botswana is the sixty fifth largest informal economy as a %age of its total economy in the world. In a recently released working paper titled,

"Shadow Economies around the World: What Did We Learn over the Last 20 Years?" in which 158 economies were studied, Botswana, with a score of 30.3 %, was ranked the sixty fifth largest informal economy. According to the IMF, Botswana's informal economy which is defined as the non-observed economy grew by 10.4% between 1991 and 2015. The Government of Botswana has supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment. The Gender Affairs Department supported women who operate economic projects in rural areas and organises an annual Women's Expo, an exhibition that provides women with a platform to market their products. Women's NGOs in Botswana, such as WFHB, are working to stimulate women's participation by providing business education and training. Despite this, women continue to be burdened by the multiple roles they have to perform.

On women's representation in economic decision making, the Government of Botswana has a significant representation in managerial positions within Government and the private sector. However, there is still nominal representation of women in economic decision-making bodies such as Ministry of finance, central banks, national economic entities and parastatals. Currently the Minister of Finance and Development Planning is a Male, the Minister of Nationality Immigration and Gender Affairs is Male, The Minister of Trade and Industry is a female, Governor of the Central or Reserve Bank is a male, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank is a Male. The Citizen Empowerment Development Agency – CEO is Male and Local Enterprise Authority–CEO is also a Male.

**Botswana has taken measures to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation. Although Botswana has not yet included** unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts), there are labour laws that protect the rights of domestic workers and other labourers. Botswana has introduced the minimum wage of P1, 000 per month to reduce incidences of abuse and under payment of domestic workers.

Through the NDP 11, Government has expanded child services and made effort to make services accessible and affordable. The Government introduced a one-year reception Programme whose aim was to improve children's readiness for school and to reduce drop-out rates. The Programme started with 112 schools in 2011 and was rolled out to 382 schools with an enrolment of 16 536 children by 2016. As an interim intervention, a six weeks standard - one orientation Programme was introduced in 374 schools, which did not have reception classes. Successful implementation of the Programme is expected to improve Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results. Moreover, this Programme is an opportunity for effective time use for women to do more productive work.

*Austerity/fiscal consolidation measures:*

Botswana has introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years. These include cut in travel and travel costs, as well as shifting funds from the most in need sector to address the emergencies and needs as required. The next steps will be to conduct assessments on the impacts of austerity measures on women and men, respectively.

**Poverty eradication, social protection and social services** (Critical areas of concern A. Women and poverty, B. Education and training of women, C. Women and health, I. Human rights of women, and L. The girl child).

The Government of Botswana promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted. These include: Policies for the

Eradication of absolute poverty: Government promotes policies to stimulate citizen participation in socio-economic activities, aimed at eliminating poverty in all its forms. During NDP 11, social protection systems are strengthened through enhancement of policies and strategies aimed at cushioning vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Implementation of inclusive education policy: More emphasis during NDP 11 is on inclusiveness of the education system by employing strategies that are aimed at improving delivery of education and training for special needs groups. These include access to education and training, starting from early childhood learning to tertiary education.

A new policy shift is that vocational training is now elevated to a level where it can cater for industry relevant skills and effectively prepare the youth for employment opportunities. In recognition of the inadequacy of the current system of vocational training, measures are put in place to improve skills development and vocational training for youth. Retooling programmes have also been introduced for adults. Government promotes access to basic services by citizens, Government has put in place policies and procedures that support the provision of basic services such as water, shelter, sanitation and health. These include laws that govern and encourage investment in the provision of adequate, affordable and quality services. Harmonisation of social protection programmes. Government is embarking on a policy and programmes harmonisation exercise that involves reviewing of existing eligibility criteria. A single social register is now in place to consolidate all social protection interventions and to streamline eligibility criteria, amongst others. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system is also developed to guide future programme development and impact. Botswana has a strong policy framework that promotes women's economic empowerment.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Government of Botswana has taken measures in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls:**

Government implements social protection programmes to strengthen and support women through social benefits, public works and social assistance. Government provides Social security, insurance and welfare programmes focusing on social security (policies and laws e.g., Children's Act; Deserted Children and Spouses Act; Domestic Violence Act); social insurance (cash transfers e.g., disability cash transfer, destitution cash allowance); and social welfare (provision of material benefits e.g., food and clothing). Government also focuses on economic empowerment of individuals and communities e.g., Ipelegeng, RADP projects, disability and women's economic empowerment programmes.

The Government of Botswana provides social Protection Programmes as follows:

**Access and provision of quality basic services:** Government continues to provide communities with basic services such as education, health, shelter, water and sanitation, and electricity for the wellbeing of individuals. Access to these services depends on sustained affordability by Government and individuals. Government has committed to exploring the available natural and community resources to aid sustainability and affordability. Adequate resources are being directed to basic social services. Government has undertaken to review policies in place and procedures that support the provision of these services. These will include laws that govern and encourage investment in the provision of adequate, affordable and quality services.

**Housing:** The programmes to provide basic services through different housing schemes such as Self Help Housing Agency (SHHA), Government Employees Motor and Vehicle Acquisition Scheme (GEMVAS), Poverty Alleviation And Destitute Housing for the low income groups will be continued during NDP 11. Government

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<sup>13</sup> Government of Botswana, National Development Plan 11,2017



has also introduced a housing scheme aimed at promoting home ownership for citizen Public Service employees earning less than P12, 000 per month. The Government also continues to engage the private sector in the provision of housing especially for the needy. Moreover, to enhance the provision of housing, innovative methods of construction will be adapted to the local environment to improve on housing delivery and to reduce costs.

**Water:** Government continues to explore ways of harnessing scarce water resources for domestic, industrial and agricultural use will be continued. Initiatives that will be promoted include harvesting of rain water, construction of community dams, and drilling of boreholes especially, in remote areas. The reuse and recycling of waste water will also be explored to augment available water supplies. The Government continues to provide programmes for improved sanitation funding construction of landfills and waste disposal sites to promote use of alternative sewage disposal technologies, where there is no intergraded sewage network.

**Energy:** The Government of Botswana has developed cost effective sources of energy which are affordable and environmentally sustainable for social and economic development. Government continue to subsidise provision of electricity in low income urban/semi urban and rural areas.

### ***Poverty Alleviation Programme:***



Government of Botswana continues to implement the 2009 Poverty Alleviation Programme that spearheads a number of poverty eradication initiatives which benefit women in both rural and urban areas, under the leadership of His Excellency President Seretse Khama Ian Khama. Public policy is aimed at reducing abject poverty through broad-based economic growth, specifically through employment creation initiatives. This national flagship programme targets rural and remote area communities; of which women beneficiaries constitute about 80%, including women with disabilities. The poverty eradication Programme is funded at around US\$ 23 million. Up to date information on the situation of rural women in the country is included below, under article 14 section. This Programme is operated from the Office of the President and implemented by Local Government structures such as the Social and Community Development Offices to facilitate effective delivery to the citizens.

The decrease in poverty incidences is as a result on numerous efforts that Government continues to put in place to uplift the lives of Batswana especially poor women in rural areas including the following. Women's Economic Empowerment Programme coordinated by Gender Affairs Department aims to advance the through a two pronged strategy namely the Women's Economic Empowerment Fund and the Women's Expositions.

***The Women's Empowerment Fund:*** The Government of Botswana disburses grants to women including Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organisations to support their bussiness initiatives

and strengthen their income generation programmes . To this end, Government has for 2019/2020 released a total of USD238.67million for this purpose. This programme improved livelihoods for unemployed women in order to enhance their livelihoods and economic capacities.

***The National Women's Expositions:*** The Government coordinates and hosts two Women in Business Expositions in the Northern and Southern Parts of the Country. The Business Expos bring women to participate in the national fair to showcase their goods and sell them to customers. The expositions continue to position the business of women for more markets and exposure to new business networks necessary for growth.

***The Local Enterprise Authority (LEA)*** was established in 2007 to support small and micro enterprises through the provision of business development services to facilitate the success of small, medium and micro-enterprises or SMMEs. Since its establishment, the value of investment for import substitution projects by LEA has been over P6 million, with additional funding in the pipeline. Some 7000 customers have approached LEA for assistance, of whom over 70% have passed its screening test and are being assisted.

***Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services:*** With respect to ownership of land, women and men have equal right to own land. The Ministry of Lands and Housing has aligned their administration arrangements and practice with the law to afford married women equal chance with men to own land. There is need to continue public education to promote knowledge on the right to land ownership and strengthen capacity to challenge malpractice in land allocation. Deliberate effort and progressive exposure by Dikgosi to systematically address gender discrimination through the customary justice system have led to narrowing the gap between application of customary and common law. This has resulted in increased awarding of inheritance to women, which would have traditionally been given to men.

Furthermore, as reflected in the Botswana case law, there is progression towards complying with the common law duty of ensuring that the laws continue to move with the changes in the society. This was reflected in the case of Ramantele v. Mmusi & Others. Moreover, the Administration of Estates Act also takes into consideration the deceased's lifestyle when dealing with devolution of estate. Under the same Act, where a tribesman dies interstate, the law considers whether such a tribesman lived solely according to culture or modern ways. Where it is found that such a tribesman had a modern lifestyle then the heirs, including females, inherit according to common law administration of estates.

***Agricultural Subsidies:*** Botswana has a wide range of agricultural subsidy schemes for various levels of farmers that are accessible to women, including drought relief. Women have also benefited from support for arable farming, small stock farming, poultry projects, and horticultural projects. Majority of women in subsistence farming have benefited from financial assistance and extension services especially in the area of small stock. The Ministry of Agriculture established an initiative called the Integrated Support for Arable Agricultural Development (ISPAAD) which replaced the Arable Development Programme (ALDEP), to address the requirement of the subsistence and arable farmers and the food security situation. This Programme has established 15 Agricultural Services Centers, which provide draught power and agricultural inputs to farmers and the facilitation of credit fund through the National Development Bank (NDB) to extend credit to farmers at concessionary credit rates. Women farmers continue to benefit from ISPAAD. This has increased benefit from commercial small and medium scale enterprises.

Livestock ownership by sub-sector shows that cattle ownership is highly skewed towards men. According to the 2017 Agriculture Survey, males are the majority owners of livestock in the traditional sector. They own 73.1% of cattle, 62.1% of goats and 72.7% of sheep. However, ownership of small-stock specifically goats,

although predominantly owned by men, shows a slightly smaller gender gap. Lack of disposable income, animal husbandry skills and the disinheritance of women all combine to reduce women's access to livestock resources.

Government agricultural subsidy schemes such as the Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) have a deliberate window that promotes increased women's access to productive resources including small stock and boreholes. The programme promotes agricultural diversification but could mainstream gender more effectively. Statistical data on the budget should be disaggregated by gender to enable a more in-depth analysis of the budgetary allocations.

**Ipelegeng Programme:** Ipelegeng was introduced as a "flagship Programme" through a directive issued from the Office of the President (CAB 19 (A)/2008). The directive pronounced that Ipelegeng unlike other "normal" government development Programmes, would be constituency-based, as opposed to district-based. The funding and projects allocation are based on the size of the political constituency represented by a Member of Parliament (MP). Government decides and allocates Ipelegeng quotas for each monthly working cycle in each of Botswana's 57 Parliamentary Constituencies. Subsequently, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development allocates monthly quotas to respective Parliamentary Constituencies based on the size and share of the total population of Botswana. (Statistics Botswana, 2011; Office of the President Presidential Directive CAB 19 (A)/2008). Botswana continues to implement the Ipelegeng Programme to eradicate abject poverty and has improved the economic wellbeing of poor households. The program has proved to have absorbed a great number of women and girls especially, to give them a chance to create income and control over their family lives (health/child care and dignity). Beneficiaries have also acquired basic skills in the process of building and construction activities, which they can use in future to improve their lives. The quarterly updates show an increase with an average of 73,813 000 persons from January 2019 to May 2019.

Furthermore, the Affirmative Action Programme provides for the enhancement of Remote Area Communities to access social services, poverty eradication initiatives, community constituency projects and other national development programmes as targeted interventions to address their vulnerabilities". "Majority of beneficiaries of these projects are women and young persons".

### **Actions that Botswana has undertaken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls**

Government strengthened efforts to implement the Public Health Act (Revised 2013), Revised the National Health Policy (2011); Revised the National Policy on HIV and AIDS, which was approved by Parliament in 2013; and developed the Integrated Health Service Plan (2010). In addition Government has put in place resources to drive the implementation of the Maternal Health Road Map and the National School Health Policy. Furthermore Government is implementing the Botswana National Health Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and the Botswana National Health Data Management Policy (2014). In 2018, Government adopted the reviewed National Strategic Framework (NSF) III for HIV/AIDS.

In Botswana, healthcare is delivered through a decentralized system with primary health care being the pillar of the delivery system. Botswana has an extensive network of health facilities (Referral hospitals, District hospitals, Primary hospitals, clinics, health posts, mobile stops) spread over the twenty seven (27) health districts. At national level, 84% of the population lives within 5km radius of the nearest health and a further 11% of population lives within 5 km to 8 km radius, which translates into a total of 95% population within an 8 km radius. A significant 96% of urban residents live within a 5 km radius of the nearest Health

Facility compared to 72% of rural residents. Only 4 % of urban residents live within 5km to 8km radius of the nearest health facility all of whom were found in Palapye and Jwaneng areas. This vast availability of health facilities in Botswana makes health services more accessible to women and girls.

Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio for the period 2013 to 2017 shows that Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 156.6 to 143.2 per 100,000 live-births between 2016 and 2017.

**Table 5: Botswana Maternal Mortality Ratio 2013– 2017**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Institutional live births</b>	49,771	47,273	57,290	54,159	52,242
<b>Non-Institutional live-births</b>	68	205	190	108	116
<b>Total live-births</b>	49,839	47,478	57,480	54,267	52,358
<b>Maternal Deaths</b>	91	72	73	85	75
<b>Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live-births)</b>	182.6	151.6	127.0	156.6	143.2

There were 75 maternal deaths in 2017. The maternal mortality data was classified into direct and indirect causes. This development was initiated with the view to providing information on the underlying causes of mortality, which will further guide the interventions accordingly and give a clear picture on whether there is reduction on maternal deaths or not. The most common causes of these deaths are indicated in Table 5 as thus; Genital tract & pelvic infection following abortion, ectopic and molar pregnancy with fifteen cases in the direct causes, diseases of the circulatory system complicating pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium with eight cases on the indirect causes, Severe pre-eclampsia and Rapture of uterus during labour with six cases each from the direct causes followed by Other immediate Postpartum haemorrhage with five cases in the direct causes. Lastly we have Eclampsia, unspecified as to time period with four cases from the direct causes. Overall, maternal direct causes contributed a higher 76% of total deaths. Additionally, the highest maternal deaths were 24 (32%), reported among age groups 35-39, followed by ages 30-34 (20%), 20-24 with 16%, 25-29 with 14.7% and lastly age-groups 15-19 and 40-44 with a tie of 8% respectively. However, this year (2019) a case of less than 15 years of age was recorded in the direct causes. No case of maternal death was evident for ages 45 and above in both direct and indirect causes.

Regarding the management of maternal health and unsafe abortions, Botswana has improved access to family planning services, contraceptive methods mix and access to emergency contraception and medical termination of pregnancy or legal abortion where eligible as per the Abortion Act 1991. In this regard the country continues to intensify capacity-building for nurses and doctors through the Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (CEmONC) training to improve quality in the provision of comprehensive abortion care to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality.

Botswana has strengthened the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health programme through the establishment of youth friendly communication strategies including "Wise Up" — a social media platform and "Youth Counselling on Air" (YOCA) — a telephonic counselling service targeting youth. Other initiatives include community mobilization, Information Education and Communication, capacity-building, and Youth Friendly Services and provision of contraceptives, prevention and treatment of STIs for the eligible youths.

The country has also developed its second National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework (2010–2016) which has a dedicated section for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The National AIDS Council has established the Women and Men’s Sectors to promote involvement of both women and men in the prevention of new HIV infections. The two Sectors developed national HIV & AIDS strategies to address the respective vulnerabilities of women and men to HIV & AIDS and GBV. Key objectives include enrolling men as partners for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV as well as enrolling prominent males as advocates and creating exclusive platforms for discussing female and male related issues.

In order to meaningfully mainstream gender, the National Strategic Framework (NSF) III National Operational Plan (NOP) has highlighted the pre-requisite activities. These include accelerating gender awareness and education at all levels including interventions that will enhance better understanding and appreciation of the gender concept; conducting training in gender analysis, planning and programming, gender based data analysis, and gender budgeting; establish a Gender Technical Planning Group; reviewing the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and tools to address gender and human rights issues; and advocating for increased funding for gender programmes especially within the context of the NSF and NOP. The Government provides safety nets including food baskets and facilitation of foster care services to curb GBV and HIV & AIDS vulnerability of children from child-headed households.

### **Actions Botswana has taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls**

The Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey 2009/10 indicates that the national literacy rate for those aged 15–65 years is 83.2%, with females at 83.8% and males at 82.3%. As shown in the previous Country Report regarding enrolment, girls consistently enroll in larger numbers than boys in secondary and tertiary education. For secondary education, more females than males were enrolled in 2009. Botswana observes the same pattern on enrolment as confirmed by the African Gender and Development Index Botswana Report of 2012. An analysis of the 2011 Population and Housing Census results reflect that the likelihood of attaining secondary education is 11% higher among men compared to women.

The Government has *taken measures to increase girls’ access to, retention in and completion of education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development Programmes*. Furthermore, the Government continues to implement its 2013 back to school program to facilitate re-admission of children and youth who dropped out of school due to various reasons including pregnancy, failure and absconding. There is collaboration with parents on education through the Parents Teachers Associations; however, the association needs strengthening in some schools. The Government also bears the cost of education and parents cover consumables. Regarding remote area dwellers, the Government fully covers the education cost and provides accommodation for them. Special dispensation is also given to remote area dwellers for entry into institutions of higher learning and employment in selected areas of service such as Police, health and education.

Government of Botswana has *promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls*. Government has established guidance and counselling unit with trained teachers in counselling; however, there are some schools that experience shortage of teachers trained as counsellors. Additionally, each local council has a dedicated social worker to reinforce programming efforts to ensure safety from violence and abuse in schools. There is also a National Life Skills Framework which is used to educate boys and girls on social skills. The Education Policy clearly prohibits teachers and other school staff members from having sexual relationships with learners



because of their custodial responsibilities and strict penalties are applied for those who violate this provision. Furthermore, the ongoing development of the Gender Based Violence (GBV) referral system is intended to strengthen implementation of the Penal Code provision on defilement through networking of key service providers for effective response to this issue.

The Government in collaboration with civil society organisations continues to raise awareness among school going youth through school-based activities aimed at developing self-esteem. Such initiatives include capacity-building for social clubs doing peer counselling and education programmes, experiential learning and reflection on personal experiences in order to bring closure to negative experiences.

The Policy on Inclusive Education (2011) articulates strategies for retaining girl children as well as children with special needs in the educational system. The country is however experiencing challenges in education of children with special needs more especially in the area of early intervention, assessment and school placement. Resources are also still a challenge to fulfil the inclusion mandate; but the Government continues to send a number of people with disabilities out of the country to further their education.

The Government of Botswana *strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood*. The Revised National Population Policy (2010) makes provisions for Adolescent Friendly Health Services to ensure access to Reproductive Health Services that can in turn promote the retention of girl children in education. Information, education and communication initiatives have focused on holistic youth empowerment. HIV and AIDS prevention Programmes continue to emphasise a broad range of choices available to young people. These include Adolescent and Young People Multi-media Campaign for HIV Prevention (Wise Up) and Silent Shout Television Programme which focus on STIs, HIV and AIDS knowledge and prevention. In addition, Ntwakgolo TV Drama which targets all age groups; airs weekly to generate interactive discussions on HIV and AIDS, GBV and other related issues. The adolescent and youth friendly health services are also offered outside of normal school hours to allow for greater access by school-going youth. These strategies have the potential to reduce occurrence of unwanted teenage pregnancy and female dropout rates. The Talk Back interactive television programme also ensures regular discussion on Adolescent Reproductive Health issues among teachers.

**Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**(L. Violence against women, I. Human rights of women, J. Women and the media and K. The girl child)

**In the last five years, Government of Botswana prioritized action for violence against women and girls:**

According to the 2018 Botswana National Relationship Study, 37% of women reported experiencing some form of violence at least once while 30% of men conceded to perpetrating violence in their lifetime. 21% of men reported experiencing some form of GBV at least once while 12% women conceded to perpetrating GBV in their lifetime. Thirty seven (37)% of ever-partnered women and 18% of ever-partnered men experienced some form of intimate partner violence. Eleven % of women and 9% of men experienced sexual harassment either in school or at work or in public places. Five (5)% of women and 2% of men reported experiencing rape at the hands of a non-partner. The most commonly experienced form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is emotional IPV followed by physical, economic, and sexual IPV. Fourteen (14) % of women and 17% of men reported perpetrating some

form of abuse against their partner in the past 12 months. Fifteen (15)% of women who had ever been pregnant reported experiencing abuse at some point during their pregnancy. The government commitment to supporting specific activities to prevent GBV and intimate partner violence, and protect GBV survivors.

Following the closure of Vision 2016, the Government of Botswana adopted Vision 2036, a follow up strategy to propel its socio-economic and political development into a competitive, winning and prosperous nation. The vision came about after an extensive countrywide consultation by the Presidential Task Force. The Vision is that by the end of 2036, Botswana will have achieved prosperity for all. A number of challenges in Botswana's long-term goals for development will have been met.

This 20-year vision has four strategic pillars compared to the previous seven. Under the second pillar (Human and Social Development) Botswana envisages a society that is moral, tolerant and inclusive. All members of the society will contribute to the upliftment of family, community and the nation at large. In the spirit of inclusiveness, each person will get equal access to opportunities and these include material, political and cultural wellbeing.

The human and social development pillar of the Vision 2036 envisages a Botswana in which everyone tolerates each other irrespective of sex, gender, location, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed and disability. It envisions a nation in which everyone has a right to worship and in which there is respect and recognition of one's culture as a form of identity. The pillar is premised on strong family structures, which play a primary role in the upbringing of children and ensuring that their rights and responsibilities are practiced.

The Government of Botswana adopted the National Strategy Towards Ending Gender Based Violence (2016-2020). This is a five-year policy document intended to guide national efforts in managing GBV. The Strategy focuses on two broad areas of: GBV prevention interventions and protection, care and support of GBV survivors and victims. The National Vision 2036 which aims "Achieving Prosperity for All" provides for Sustainable Economic Development, Sustainable Environment, Governance, Peace and Security (Vision 2036) to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and if found guilty, that they are convicted, and afterwards rehabilitated and re-integrated with the society. The strategy also prioritises comprehensive care and support for GBV survivors. Government also focuses on strengthening National Capacity to Address GBV for efficient and effective service delivery is dependent on availability of appropriate institutional capacity, skilled and experienced human resources, strong and functional health, community and social protection systems.

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the coordination and management of the National GBV response: The complexity of the GBV response demands an effective and efficient coordination system. This is necessary not only to ensure equitable distribution of services, but also that the right services are accessible to those who need them most. Strategic Information and Knowledge management: To manage GBV effectively, the Government will generate and manage empirical GBV data and strategic information. This will be necessary to inform decision-making, policy formulation, resource allocation and support programming in the future.



The laws that are primarily relevant to Gender Based Violence in Botswana are, the Domestic Violence Act, the Penal Code, Abolition of Marital Power Act and the Criminal Procedure & Evidence Act. The Domestic Violence Act passed in 2008. The Act is aimed at protecting women in domestic relationships. It defines domestic violence as "any controlling or abusive behaviour that harms the health or safety of the applicant". The Act lists a number of acts that constitute domestic violence and provides remedies available to victims including restraining orders and interdicts. Moreover, the Act confers jurisdiction upon Customary Courts. This is greatly beneficial considering the fact that Customary Courts are found in virtually every part of the country. To this end, victims of domestic violence are assured easier access to a remedy without having to travel long distances to get to the modern courts. A commendable piece of legislation as it is, the Domestic Violence Act excludes marital rape from its list of offences. This is a critical omission, and a missed opportunity.

Furthermore, the Deeds Registry Act was amended to allow women who are married in community of property to register properties in their own names, as opposed to the old position in terms of which such properties could only be registered in the names of the husband. The successful prosecution of perpetrators of gender based violence and a criminal justice system where the victims can be assisted in a conducive environment is crucial. In order to create an environment in which victims of sexual violence are comfortable and able to give their evidence freely, the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act mandates that hearings for sexual offences must be held in camera. Moreover, for the protection of the integrity and dignity of the victims, newspapers are prohibited from publishing their names.

For its part, the Penal Code has provisions that criminalise violence generally as well as sexual offences. Over the years there have been amendments to the Penal Code in order to prescribe stiffer mandatory minimum sentences for sexual offences such as rape and defilement. In relation to rape, the mandatory minimum sentence is 10 years imprisonment and, if the rape is accompanied by violence resulting in injury to the victim, the minimum sentence is 15 years. To protect women from abuse and sexual exploitation in the work place, the Public Service Act emphatically prohibits sexual harassment and prescribes stern punishment for perpetrators. In addition, Parliament amended the Penal Code to raise the age of sexual consent from sixteen to eighteen years. The move was part of Government's efforts to curb defilement in the Country. This seeks to address incidences of defilement, abuse, abduction, assault and kidnapping of children. Through this amendment, Government of Botswana has addressed the general concerns of the public that laws are not deterrent enough by introducing stiffer fines and penalties particularly for the offences of murder, rape and manslaughter and encourage uniformity in sentencing by introducing minimum mandatory sentence.

#### **AMENDMENT OF THE PENAL CODE CAP 08:01 RAISING THE AGE OF CONSENT**

The Honorable Minister of Defense Justice and Security will be tabling before Parliament the Penal Code Amendment Bill, 2018. The Bill will amend the Penal Code to align with the Children's Act by raising the legal age of maturity from 16 to 18 years. The objective is to address incidences of defilement, abuse, abduction, assault, and kidnapping of children. The Bill was made available to the public for their appreciation on 23 February 2017 when it was published in the Government Gazette.

There is an outcry from the members of the public that sentences provided in the Penal Code for offences under Sections 176 to 191 (common nuisance; trafficking in obscene publications; idle and disorderly persons; use of insulting language; nuisance by a drunken person etc.) are not deterrent enough and that there is therefore a need to enhance the penalties.

The Bill will also address general concerns of the public that laws are not deterrent enough by introducing stiffer fines and penalties particularly for the offences of murder, rape and manslaughter, and encourage uniformity in sentencing by introducing minimum mandatory sentences.

The offences of hostage-taking, possession of human flesh or remains and cannibalism have also been introduced.

*Source: Minister of Defense Justice and Security (MDJS) Public Notice (II) - Botswana Government Official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/> Accessed on 26/03/18*

*The Government introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls* – Botswana conducted the Gender Based Violence Indicators Study that guided the development of the National Action Plan for GBV. In 2018, Government commissioned a National Relationship Study that has provided clear recommendations for action and re-programming to effectively deal with GBV in Botswana.

The Government of Botswana *strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice* (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases). Government continues to hold sensitive GBV cases in camera to protect the victims and survivors. Government of Botswana made deliberate efforts to intensify access to Justice for all including the poor, and rural women. The Legal Aid Act was passed by Parliament in 2013 and the legal aid Programme is being rolled-out nationally to enhance women's access to justice.

*The Government of Botswana also strengthened services for survivors of violence* (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, and housing): Government continues to fund and support the work by Kagisano Women's Shelter and Women against Rape (WAR) to ensure shelter and related services to GBV survivors.

*Government strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls* (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys): Government strengthened efforts towards awareness raising and sensitization for the prevention of GBV through targeted radio and TV Programmes, community campaigns and commemorations. Government leads the commemoration of 16 Days of Activism against Violence on Women and Children annually. In 2018, the President of the Republic of Botswana Officially launched the campaign. The Government supports the work of men and boys and the organisations that lead such initiatives.

The Government of Botswana has conducted monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, regarding particular groups of women and girls. Government continues to collect GBV data through the different sources such as the police, health centers and clinics. In 2015 Government introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls through various studies such as the 2012 GBV Indicators Study and the 2018 Botswana National Relationships Study.

## **Strategies Botswana has used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls:**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a human rights issue that affects both women and men. GBV is a serious scourge that presents challenges to realising women's rights as citizens and realising their urgency to participate fully in public and private life. The Botswana Domestic Violence Act, 2008 abolishes spousal exclusion in rape cases. The Act provides a wide range of remedies for abuse and abusive behaviour including "sexual abuse or threat thereof" in a "domestic relationship".

*Government introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation:* In 2018, Botswana's Parliament passed a motion to create a mandatory sex offenders' registry and ban sex offenders from working in institutions that deal with children. This is in line with the practice in most developed countries where the offenders are eventually named and shamed. The register will also make it easy for research on sex offenders. Government of Botswana provides Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) to victims of rape. Efforts have been made towards provision of shelters for survivors of GBV despite limited resources outnumbered by the ever increasing number of survivors and the cyclical nature of violence.

Furthermore, Botswana is currently piloting a gender based violence referral system in an effort to provide comprehensive service delivery to survivors of gender based violence. In addition, the Government continues to collaborate with different stakeholders and partners in efforts to address gender based violence and raise public awareness on the issue. To this end the United Nations and Government of Botswana signed the UN Joint Gender Programme of the GBV Prevention and Response (2018-2022). Through this joint Programme, the UN supports Government in addressing GBV in line with the National Strategy for the prevention of GBV in Botswana.

The Government of Botswana continues to engage in national consultative fora for Dikgosi/Chiefs in 2012 and in 2018 and for leaders of faith based organisations (2016 and 2018 as an effort to mobilise these structures in responding to GBV and supporting gender equality and women's empowerment. The health sector engages communities in the prevention and management of GBV through the District Male Action Group community mobilization strategy. Civil society organisations continue to lead in community awareness raising and sensitisation prevention initiatives such as house-to-house campaigns, radio and TV programmes and trainings.

Training of health care providers on the clinical management of GBV including forensic evidence preservation, collection and reporting was enhanced since 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness with the support from WHO following the development of the Gender Based Violence Health Sector Policy Framework and Health Care Service Providers' Protocols and Service Standards. These Protocols and Service Standards provide for counselling by health care providers and training for hospital based social workers on GBV. The clinicians were also trained in screening skills to identify survivors of GBV. Furthermore WHO and UNFPA supported Government to develop a Manual for Health workers for gender responsive Management of GBV. Representatives of all district Social Workers received training on gender mainstreaming and gender based violence using the developed National Gender Mainstreaming Curriculum. The training enhanced general knowledge on gender and the skills to provide psychosocial support to gender based violence survivors and their families. Capacity building on GBV management and response has been provided to Health Workers, Law enforcement Officers and Dikgosi (Traditional Leaders).

Government has provided financial and technical support to Civil Society Organisations to offer counselling services to GBV survivors and their families. The Botswana Police Service has regularised

inclusion of gender and gender based violence in their pre-service and in-service trainings. Tools to facilitate capturing of gender disaggregated data at service points have also been developed by the police. Although there are no State owned shelters for women gender based violence survivors, the two shelters run by civil society organisations receive financial and technical support from the Government and development partners. Government runs one shelter for vulnerable children and also provides financial support to four others run by civil society organisations.

Public awareness raising activities on violence against women and girls are done through cultural and community dialogues, television and radio discussions, seminars and campaigns including international commemorations. The development of the National Action Plan towards ending GBV is under way, targeting inclusion of all efforts by the different stakeholders and training of the service providers. This plan will facilitate monitoring of interventions to gauge progress and impact.

**The Government of Botswana has taken actions in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images)**

Cybercrime is a global growing threat as experienced with computer viruses such as Melisa and Chernobyl, which have attacked isolated and networked information systems through the internet or through software carriers and devices. Many vital decision-making processes of Government are now ICT based, and therefore vulnerable to this threat. Jurisdictional issues across nations regarding cybercrime still present a challenge. The fact that cyberspace has no borders renders the domestic cybercrime laws ineffective since many cybercrimes are committed outside the jurisdiction of the local law enforcement authorities. During the National Development Plan (NDP) 11, Botswana is engaging other countries with a view to adopting consistent laws and to form inter jurisdictional task forces to deal with cybercrime that crosses national boundaries. Specific measures have been put in place to guide and protect critical infrastructure assets from potential threats and possible breaches.

Furthermore, Government has put in place laws and Programmes to protect citizens from Cybercrime. Botswana enacted an Act to combat cybercrime and computer related crimes, to repress criminal activities perpetrated through computer systems and to facilitate the collection of electronic evidence. This piece of legislation is instrumental in protecting citizens including violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images). Currently Government is planning to establish targeted Programmes to deal with all forms of violence including online sexual harassment, online stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

**Actions Botswana has taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media:**

The freedom of expression to all citizens is guaranteed under the Constitution of Botswana of 1966. The constitution was amended in August and September 1997. Botswana has allowed robust debate in electronic and print media unlike many African countries, where the ruling party bans opposition views and news from newspapers, radio and television. The Botswana Press Council's Code of Ethics and its members recognise that gender equality is intrinsic to freedom of expression; that all women and men have the right to communicate their views, interests and needs, and that "giving voice to the voiceless" is critical to citizenship, participation, and responsive governance. The Botswana Press Council's Code of Ethics developed a gender code of practice.

The Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) conducted by Gender Links and the Media Institute of Southern Africa in 2015 as a follow up to the 2010 GMPS, and the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) found that in Botswana there is a significant increase in the proportion of women sources from 16% in 2003, to 20% in 2010 to 28% this report. This is slightly higher than the regional average of 20%, but lower than the GMMP average of 24%. At 72% of all news sources, men in Botswana still prevail in the news.

The Department of Media Studies at the University of Botswana adopted a strategy to mainstream gender into its curriculum and in departmental practices. A gender-specific module had been developed in the department: The Department of Media Studies at UB had a module titled Gender, Sex and Ethnicity in the Media within its programme prior to the 2008/2009 curriculum review but was not included in the new curriculum. Gender is incorporated into some course content: in the new curriculum, gender will be mainstreamed in nine courses including: Advanced Writing; Cultural Studies; Information Gathering and Writing for the Media; Media Ethics; Media Law; Radio Production and Research Methods. The department believes that gender mainstreaming requires incorporating gender into all courses rather than having a stand-alone module. Government in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations, has conducted gender sensitisation and awareness to the media fraternity to ensure gender responsive reporting.

During the 2014 Gender Links Gender Summit in Botswana, a team of five final year University of Botswana students under the Department of Media Studies won a print media award by Gender Links Botswana.

Botswana has taken action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination:

Programmes have been established for women experiencing Domestic Violence through provision of shelter by Women against Rape in Maun and Kagisano Women's Shelter in Gaborone. These shelters provide refuge for women who do not have alternative accommodation whilst fleeing violence from their intimate partners.

*Women living with HIV/AIDS* continue to face challenges in marriages and relationships as they are often accused to be the ones bringing HIV into the relationships. Botswana Government has increased efforts to promote male involvement for increased health seeking behaviors. Most importantly males are encouraged to be part of the PMTCT Programmes to share the responsibility of dealing with the prevention of HIV infection from mother to child.

To protect women from difficult condom use and safe sex negotiations, Government continues to promote the female condom as part of empowering women to take control and increase their choices in sexual relationships. This is also important for the prevention of sexually related unintended consequences such as the spread of HIV infection, STIs and pregnancy.

The Government of Botswana provides Pre & post exposure prophylaxis in order to prevent HIV infection after unsafe sex, sexual assault, as well as key populations (Men who have sex with men (MSM) and female sex workers. Emergency Contraceptive Pill is also available in private facilities for the prevention of unwanted pregnancy after unprotected sex or sexual assault.

**Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions (Women in power and decision-making, Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women , I. Human rights of women, J. Women and the media , L. The girl child).**

Botswana has no restrictions on women vying for elected political office in Parliament or in the Local Authorities. Historical evidence shows that women have held elected political positions since the country’s independence. Women participation in political life continues to show a stagnated and slow growth and in other instances a decline. Botswana uses the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system, which does not effectively support increased representation of women.

As depicted in the table below, women are under-represented in Parliament and Cabinet.

**Table 6 Women in Botswana Parliament and Cabinet**

	2009		2014		2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Parliament	57	4	56	6	56	5
Cabinet	19	4	20	4	20	5

*Source:* Botswana National Assembly; 2019.

**Local Government**

The structure of the Local Government is made up of District and Urban Councils under the political leadership of Councillors. The Local Government elections and their term of office take place simultaneously with those of Parliament. Apart from the elected Councillors, the Minister of Local Government is responsible for nominating additional Councillors in the different Councils. By the end of the 2016 General Elections, there were 591 Councillors countrywide, comprising of 490 elected and 101 nominated Councillors. Out of the 591, 116 are women representing 19.4% of all Councillors as compared to 80.4% of men. The 116 women comprises of 78 elected and 38 nominated Councillors. Most of the women who became councillors had started their political careers as members or Chairpersons of Village Development Committees. Local Councils very much like Parliament are also dominated by men.

**Table 7: Proportion of women in local councils per district**

COUNCIL	M	F	TOTAL	%W
Gaborone	29	7	35	20
Francistown	15	5	22	22.7
Selebi-Phikwe	13	3	16	18.8
Jwaneng	7	1	8	12.5
Lobatse	8	5	13	37.5
Sowa	4	3	7	42.9
North East	18	5	23	18.2
North West	43	5	48	9.1
South East	19	4	23	18.2
Southern	50	12	62	19.4
Kgatleng	23	4	27	14.8
Kweneng	63	15	78	19.2
Central	134	38	172	22.1
Gantsi	18	6	24	25
Kgalagardi	24	2	26	7.7
Chobe	6	1	7	14.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>19.4</b>

Source: Ministry of Local Government, 2019

### **Women's Representation in the Judiciary:**

Botswana has surpassed the 50% target in the Judiciary with 61% representation of women as Magistrates. By June 2019, there was a total of 31 female Magistrates serving in the Magistrate Courts countrywide. It is at the Magistrate Courts that most cases are heard and determined. However, women are still underrepresented in the High Court as Judges, Registrars and Court Presidents.

Table 8 below, shows the distribution of female Magistrates by rank in comparison to their male counterparts.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Chief Magistrates	3	1	4
Acting Chief Magistrates	0	2	2
Principal Magistrates	5	5	10
Senior Magistrates	8	8	16
Magistrates Grade I	5	4	9
Magistrates Grade II	3	1	4
Magistrates Grade III	4	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Administration of Justice-2019

### **Women’s representation in the Public Service:**

The participation of women in decision making positions in the Public sector and within the NGO sector continue to be at higher levels as compared to other sectors. In 2019 women in the Public sector accounted for 42% of all persons holding positions of Deputy Director to Permanent Secretary Level making Botswana second in Southern Africa with a record of 35% women Permanent Secretaries and 45% Directors.

### **Representation of Women in Diplomatic Missions:**

Botswana has been able to get over one thirds of women representation in its Heads of Missions across the globe.

Table 9: Heads of Missions by Sex

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Heads of Missions	13	8	21
%age (%)	62	38	100

*Source:* Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2019.

### **Efforts made by Botswana to promote women’s participation in public life and decision-making**

Botswana is signatory to the 2017 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which committed the Country to adopt special measures to promote gender parity. The National Policy on Gender and Development (2015) prioritizes Political power, democratic governance and decision making with clear action areas for improved women’s participation and representation in Botswana.

Botswana Government continues to work closely with Non-Governmental Organizations such as Emang Basadi and Gender Links with the support from UN Women, European Union, UNDP and other Development Agencies in training and building the capacity of women, including young women in Leadership skills, decision making, public speaking, assertiveness and negotiation skills. Botswana’s governance policies are progressive and consider all citizens for leadership positions on merit.

The Botswana political system allows women equal opportunities to participate in public events of political, social and economic nature. The opportunities are founded in the democratic culture and participatory processes that are enshrined in the Botswana society. While there are no legal restrictions on women to stand for any elected public office, the reality is that there are many gender related factors limiting women’s advancement in political and all aspects of life particularly in power-sharing and decision-making. Women’s political involvement is to a large extent shaped by the socialisation process and public perception. There is also a need for awareness and sensitization programmes to assist communities change of mindset and perceptions in women’s leadership roles.

One of the success stories in Botswana is the poverty eradication Programmes for both men and women have benefited from the Programme which is an on-going process through agricultural activities among others. This Programme has boosted women economically and given them an opportunity to participate in politics especially at local level. Although the resources are not



sufficient, it has granted them the choice and voice to engage more in civic and citizens' engagements including in politics. There is need to empower women financially specifically for political engagement. Since Political funding is not available in Botswana, women are inherently disadvantaged to fully participate in politics.

In support to the Government Policy on Gender and Development, UN Women worked with some Women in Politics and Political Party Caucuses to inspire them to participate in politics. Women in politics were trained on the gender equality and women's empowerment international, continental regional gender commitments (norms and standards) to expand their horizon on what supporting instruments say about their equal representation in politics.

Civil Society Organisations such as Gender Links, Letsema and Emang Basadi continue to provide training to women in politics and decision making. Gender Links Botswana collects and analyzes data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions. The annual publication disseminates information on the status of women's representation in politics and decision making at all levels in all sectors. This information supports all key stakeholders including Government to strategize appropriately for action on the recommendations for way forward.

Currently the Government of Botswana has not reformed the constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets.

Political parties have the power to increase women's representation and participation in political decision-making positions and government structures. However, in practice women do not form part of the high decision-making positions in political parties and do not influence the nomination of candidates. Only a few political parties have legislated quotas in their constitution including Botswana Congress Party (BCP).

### **Actions taken by Botswana in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

The freedom of expression to all citizens is guaranteed under the Constitution of Botswana of 1966. The constitution was amended in August and September 1997. Botswana has allowed robust debate in electronic and print media unlike many African countries, where the ruling party bans opposition views in the media. The Botswana **Broadcasting Regulations** (2004) stipulate that media practitioners maintain the highest professional and ethical standards and disseminate accurate and balanced information.

The **Botswana Press Council's Code of Ethics** and its members recognise that gender equality is intrinsic to freedom of expression; that all women and men have the right to communicate their views, interests and needs, and that "giving voice to the voiceless" is critical to citizenship, participation, and responsive governance. In 2008/2009, the media council worked with Genderlinks to develop a gender code of practice (see excerpts below):

## **Excerpts from the Press Council of Botswana Gender Code of Ethics**

### ***Preamble***

Members of the Press Council of Botswana recognize that gender equality is intrinsic to freedom of expression; that all women and men have the right to communicate their views, interest and needs, and that "giving voice to the voiceless " is critical to citizenship, participation , and responsive governance. Members shall strive to ensure, through progressive targets, that women's views and voices are equally heard and represented across all media.

Members pledge through this code to strive for gender-balance and to challenge gender stereotypes in and through the media. The Code is informed, among others, by the Constitution of the Republic of Botswana; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; the Windhoek Declaration on Media Freedom in Africa and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and Botswana Vision 2016 and the Code of Ethics.

The code also outlines basic principles which guide the media practitioners as they disseminate information. Media practitioners are required to seek and acquire information on gender issues. In doing so they should be abreast of gender debates/issue. Coverage should be balanced, fair and inclusive of both sexes. Members should ensure that a diverse range of female perspectives is included in stories, including politics, economics and war. Media coverage that is, news highlights, pictures, audio and graphics should not be over simplified and the personnel should not report gender issues out of context.

Members of the press council should use non-sexist, gender-sensitive language. Media practitioners are not permitted to report stories that advocate hatred based on gender, and constitutes incitement to cause harm. In reporting sensitive issues such as gender-based violence, special care must be taken to balance the public's right to know with compassion of those affected. These laws, regulations, and the statutory bodies are meant to provide recourse for people who feel aggrieved by news reports.

The Government of Botswana continues to strengthen the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership to young women and men. The Limkokwing University also provides Bachelor's Degrees on Information technology (IT) focusing on the use of computers to store, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data, or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprise. IT is considered to be a subset of information and communications technology (ICT).

Botswana Open University (BOU) is a result of the transformation of Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) in 2017. The institution provides, offer and accredit university level programmes independently without being tied to collaborating partners and among such Programmes is the Media Studies and Bachelor of Technology in Information Systems (B Tech - IS), a generic Information Systems Degree. The program offers courses in Computer Hardware, Operating Systems, Computer Networks, Systems Security, Database Design & Administration, Web Programming, Visual Programming, Java Programming, Intelligent Systems, Management & Strategic Information Systems, IT Project Management and Entrepreneurship. Although Programmes are available for both young women and men, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related subjects are still dominated by males.

The Government of Botswana has taken measures to increase access, affordability and use of ICT for women and girls and has made free Wi-Fi hubs, and community technology centers. Botswana telecommunications industry owes its success to the intrepid decision and visionary leadership which found it paramount to liberalize the Telco sector to create a uniform environment for all players, culminating in the conception of Botswana Fibre Networks Ltd (BoFiNet). BoFiNet boasts more than 9000km of fiber connectivity based on an SDH and DWDM network. This investment by Government has made access to ICT easier by ordinary Botswana including women and girls.

Botswana continues to support the Women in Media Networks through the work of Civil Society Organizations such as Gender Links and AWON Botswana Chapter. Civil Society continues to lead initiatives to training the media on gender responsive reporting. Trainings are also geared towards equipping them on basic gender concepts, norms and standards as well as positive gender portrayal of women in the media.

### **Gender Responsive Budgeting**

Botswana with technical assistance from United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Centre for Gender and Development, has made efforts to institutionalize gender budgeting within Government Budgets through training of finance and economic planning and mainstreaming gender within the budgeting process. However, Gender responsive budgeting is yet to be institutionalized in Botswana. During the time reporting, the Government allocated 3.5% of the total budget for the Ministry of Nationality Immigration and Gender Affairs. It is unclear how much the national budget funding was allocated to gender related issues across government institutions. Regular briefing sessions with His Excellency the President on the National Gender Machinery's performance created a platform to engage and highlight needs and challenges which resulted in increased support and additional budget allocation.

**Botswana has a national strategy or action plan for gender equality.** The Government of Botswana approved the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) in March 2015. The NPGAD replaced the Women in Development Policy (WID) of 1996. This Policy enables the country to align itself with the international and regional protocols in addressing gender and development issues. The NPGAD provides a framework for including the gender perspective in all activities of Government and other sectors, as well as civil society, thereby promoting the full and equal participation of women and men in a transformative development process. The NPGAD has at its core, a recognition and appreciation of the differences between women and men; differences that are based on physiological and biological; as well as social realities. The long term goal of the NPGAD is to reduce inequalities in the opportunities and outcomes of social, economic, cultural; and legal development for both men and women. The specific objectives of the NPGAD are to;

- Create a conducive environment for gender equality and women's empowerment by addressing factors that contribute to gender inequalities and inequities in Botswana.
- Advocate for the development of an effective National Gender Machinery and ensure that significant partners and stakeholders are enrolled in the programming and activities of the machinery.
- Promote gender mainstreaming in the processes of development planning, policy formulation, legislation and implementation thereof.
- Establish gender analysis as a precursor for policy formulation, programme for policy formulations, programme development and interventions.
- Promote evidence based research to inform programming.
- Establish a framework for implementing and institutionalising gender equality initiatives, with strong mechanisms for coordination, monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

The National Policy on Gender and Development provides guidance, direction, coordination and facilitation on gender and development programming. It is anticipated that this will improve the implementation of Botswana's commitment to international obligations for the achievement of gender equality, objectives of the SDG 5, Vision 2036 and National Development Plans. The approach employed by this policy highlights with greater focus, the expectation of national commitment to provide development and improved wellbeing to women, men, girls and boys on an equal and non-discriminatory basis.

The NPGAD addresses the following priority areas: i) Economic Development, Prosperity and Poverty Eradication to achieve sustainable development; ii) Social Protection and Social Services; iii) Political Power, Democratic Governance and Decision Making; iv) Access to Justice, Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Violence V) Special Measures Targeting Vulnerable Groups of men, women, girls and boys cutting across the areas outlined above.

To fast track the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development in Botswana, The Government has put in place key strategies and guidelines with clear action plans such as the National Operational Plan of the National Policy on Gender and Development. Furthermore, Government has developed the National Response to Gender Based Violence and the framework for the Botswana National Action Plan towards Ending GBV. A process for the formulation of a comprehensive gender in agriculture and rural development policy is also ongoing. These strategies and action plans are complementary to the already existing laws and continuous law reforms that include the amendment of the Marriage Act and the Married Persons Property Act, the Regulations for the Domestic Violence Act, and the Interpretation (Amendment) Act (2013)). Government also continues to strengthen administrative arrangements for the implementation of the Land Policy to promote equal access to land. Affirmative action policy on Remote Area communities (2012); Poverty Eradication Guidelines (2011); Child Sexual Abuse Strategy (2010) among others. All these policies, Operational plans, guidelines are catalytic for the effective implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD).

Following adoption of the National Policy on Gender and Development, Botswana has demonstrated political commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by creating national frameworks and machineries to ensure the "Guarantee of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms". To this end, on 1st October, 2016; gender was made prominent within the new Ministry named: Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs. This is anticipated to give the National Gender Machinery visibility and eminence. Government also established the National Gender Commission with a mandate to oversee the implementation of the NPGD and provide strategic level guidance, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation on implementation.

To ensure adherence to the gender mainstreaming provisions of the BPfA in the entire Public Service, the Government continues to mainstream gender in all social and economic development activities. Capacity-building of sectoral gender focal persons (GFPs) has been intensified through training on gender mainstreaming and application of gender analysis tools. Monitoring and reporting tools are being developed to facilitate systematic coordination and implementation of sectoral policies and action plans to address gender gaps. However, the levels of authority of the officers serving as GFPs in Line Ministries and lack of ownership and support by Ministries leadership undermine the potential for effective gender mainstreaming at the highest level of planning. The National Gender Machinery continues to facilitate establishment of Gender Committees for sectors and at district level to support gender mainstreaming and promotion of gender equality at all levels, including at local level.

Botswana has a NPGAD National Operational Plan (2016-2020) that consolidates the implementation of all International gender equality instruments such as CEDAW, Sustainable Development Goals, Universal Periodic and the Beijing Declaration and its platform of Action. The Botswana National Gender Operational Plan is a five year plan that spells out the modalities of the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development. The Ministry responsible for gender affairs develops Annual Action Plans with a clear budget for the rolling out of the gender plan. The NPGAD National Operational Plan focuses on four core areas namely: (i) Advocacy, Policy, Legislation – creating an enabling environment, (ii) Capacity Development, (iii) Gender Mainstreaming and (iv) Resources Mobilisation.

### **National human rights institution in Botswana:**

Botswana has ratified five of the nine core international human rights treaties, each of which requires a regular report to be submitted to the treaty Committee. Noting the high number of treaty reporting obligations Botswana is currently facing, UNDP Botswana and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme are providing technical support for the timely fulfilment of Botswana's treaty body reporting obligations. The importance of human rights reporting is to ensure Botswana fulfils its obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

Botswana provides a platform for consultations facilitated by the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, UN and other entities to provide specific guidance on the drafting of responses to lists of issues raised by the CEDAW Committee, Human Rights Committee and other statutory reporting entities.

Government of Botswana with the support from UNDP has developed the "Support to the Fulfilment of Human Rights, Access to Justice and Empowerment of Women and Youth Project" (2018 – 2021) ("the Project"). Key initiatives include support for the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution, National Human Rights Action Plan, National Human Rights Strategy and treaty reporting. The Project also includes support for Inter-Ministerial Committee on Treaties, Conventions and Protocols. Currently the Government of Botswana runs a Human Rights Desk at the Office of the Ombudsman. UNDP has also provided technical support to the Office on Human Rights through a Human Rights Specialist.

### **Peaceful and Inclusive Societies (Women in armed conflict, Human Rights of women and The Girl Child):**

#### **Actions taken by Botswana in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda**

Government of Botswana through the National Development Plan 11 has prioritised to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. To address the two national priorities of Good Governance and Safety and Security, undertakes a number of programmes and projects during NDP 11 aimed at improving participatory democracy, transparency, rule of law, as well as territorial integrity and public protection. Some of the major programmes include the Governance sector, improving the rule of law and Productivity Improvement.

Building effective and inclusive institutions at all levels, an empowering legislative framework will be essential for the effective discharge of the mandate assigned to the Office of the Ombudsman. The

existing legislation is being reviewed during NDP 11 to expand the mandate of the Ombudsman to cover human rights, as well as to grant the Office sufficient powers to deliver on its mandate. To improve access to its services, the Office of the Ombudsman implements strategies to take its services closer to the people, such as circuit investigations and setting up offices in strategic places to reduce the time and cost incurred by people in accessing those. The Ombudsman will also partner with other stakeholders to leverage on information and communications technology to improve the speed and ease of service delivery. This would also conform to the Government drive for integrated services (e-Government).

Under the NDP 11, The Government has planned to enhance the rule of Law, through building the capacity Building and Human Quality Dispensation of Justice. The Justice sector has improved access to justice through: (i) extending the reach of Legal Aid Botswana by establishment of offices and satellite offices, gradual and controlled extension of legal aid to the more serious criminal cases in the magistrates' courts, and the extension of the electronic reach of Legal Aid Botswana, augmented by giving basic legal education on their rights and obligations; (ii) reviewing the Bogosi Act to address the shortfalls in the current Act; and (iii) restructuring the Justice System to achieve effective and efficient dispensation of justice during NDP 11 through programmes that include the establishment of the Office of the Receiver and Asset Forfeiture Fund, and the finalisation of the sentencing policy. Furthermore, the Administration of Justice will establish magistrate courts in Serowe and Kasane, whilst the Industrial Court will establish new offices in Selebi Phikwe, Maun and Kanye as well as expand circuit courts to Tsabong and Ghanzi. All these efforts are instrumental in ensuring inclusive and sustainable services that area accessible to all especially poor women in rural areas.

Government enacted the Anti- Human Trafficking Act of 2014, which is being implemented. During NDP 11, Government will set up structures and Programmes geared towards safeguarding the interest of witnesses and victims. The majority of those affected by Trafficking are women and girls.

Government has also made significant progress within the safety and Security Sector Programmes to ensure equal representation of women in the security sector. The Botswana Defence Force Act, Chapter 21:05 was amended in 2008 to allow women in the military. Women have joined the defence force since 2008. Gender, however was not mainstreamed into the Act. In 2008, for the first time the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) recruited female soldiers. In 2011, the BDF recruited another group of women, bringing the total number of women to about 59. The BDF has approximately 100 female officers and now they want to broaden it with having enlisted females. Women comprise 1% of the BDF. The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) has integrated female soldiers into combat arms military occupational specialties, such as infantry and artillery personnel, scouts, tankers, and cavalry and other combat roles. It is difficult to get the exact number of the total BDF. Some female soldiers have been promoted to senior positions. They also participate in all BDF's activities and are trained for combat activities to participate in front-line duties.

The Botswana Police Service (BPS) is guided by the Police Service Act of 1978; and gender is not mainstreamed into the Act. The BPS force is still dominated with 76% male compared to 24% female. The Police Services has however, introduced gender awareness training as a component of their in-service training programme at the Police Training College. In addition, the Police have developed strong partnerships with civil society organisation's including those working with women, youth, children and people with disabilities to develop strategies to combat GBV related crimes.

**Table 10: Women and Men in Decision-Making Positions in the Botswana Police Service**

<b>Position</b>	<b>% Male</b>	<b>% Female</b>
Commissioner	100%	0%
Deputy Commissioner	100%	0%
Senior Assist Commissioner	82%	18%
Assistant Commissioner	81%	19%
Senior Superintendent	74%	28%
Superintendent	85%	26%
Assist Superintendent	85%	14%
Superintendent	83%	15%
Inspector	84%	16%
Sub-Inspector	82%	18%
Sergeant	82%	25%
Constable	71%	29%
Total	74%	26%

The Government of Botswana has integrated women within the peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks such as Permanent Secretaries and Directors at the Ministry of Defense and Security. There is still unequal representation of women across the security sector including representations of women in peace keeping missions.

*The Government of Botswana has taken action in the last five years to enhance judicial and no judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response*

The Government of Botswana strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during disaster and humanitarian crisis response. The Disaster Risk Management Programme prioritized the development of a robust and proactive disaster risk reduction strategy in line with the Sendai Framework for Action. It included, amongst others: review of the National Policy on Disaster Management; enactment of unitary legislation on DRR; and the establishment of a National Command Centre, which will also take advantage of new technologies such as telecasting to enhance early warning mechanisms and other aspects of Disaster Risk Management. Disaster risk reduction policies, Programmes and projects will be gender responsive to address the gender related impacts. Efforts were made to mainstream Gender within the disaster Risk Management Strategy.

Refugee Management: During NDP 11, the management of refugees was strengthened by enhancing the operational efficiency of the Refugee Advisory Committee in the screening and interviewing of asylum seekers to ensure that only genuine refugees are granted asylum in the country. Within the UNHCR and Government Refugee Programmes, gender responsive Programmes are implemented at the Dukwi refugees camp.

## Actions taken by Botswana in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child

Botswana embraces and promotes positive aspects of culture and continues to implement different strategies to address harmful and discriminatory cultural practices. The National Strategy towards Ending Gender Based Violence in Botswana by 2020 highlights key interventions targeting negative cultural practices that impact on gender equality. The Government commissioned national consultations on social values spearheaded by the Chairperson of Ntlo Ya Dikgosi (House of Chiefs) in 2008, 2013 and 2018 to consult the communities on the social ills afflicting the nation, their causes and possible strategies for addressing such. Some key gender issues discussed included child sexual Abuse, domestic violence, cohabitation, rape, partner killings, commercial sex work and payment of bogadi (bride price).

Government of Botswana engaged community leaders and religious leaders as well as the general community to address social, cultural and religious issues that perpetuate gender inequality. This is done through community dialogues, television and radio discussions, seminars and campaigns. There are also community mobilisation strategies by Government institutions and civil society targeting men and boys in addressing gender stereotypes and promoting behavioral change in communities, schools and other social institutions such as churches. Government collaborates with Men and Boys for Gender Equality, and other stakeholders to strengthen greater involvement of men on gender issues such as gender roles and responsibilities, positive masculinities, GBV prevention and protection of women and girls from abuse and GBV.

The Government and civil society organisations conducted outreach mobile stops where key gender information are made accessible to women and men in rural areas. To enhance understanding and support for equality of women and men, the Government has developed public education materials specifically on the concept of gender equality and translated these into the local language (Setswana) for easy understanding.

Media engagement on gender-sensitive reporting continues to be involved to promote positive social and cultural behavior norms and practice that protect women and the girl child from gender discrimination. Government and civil society organisations conduct media briefs, workshops and trainings on gender, GBV and related issues throughout the year. The Botswana chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa developed a gender policy and action plan to mobilize media houses on gender issues, including non-stereotypical reporting.

UNICEF in partnership with other key stakeholders carried out a campaign for the protection of the girl child from sexual abuse. The National Campaign was held under the slogan: "**#EsengMoNgwaneng**" loosely translated "NotOnTheChild". The Campaign was launched by the First Lady of Botswana Mrs. Neo Jane Masisi in 2018. Botswana through various platforms such as traditional set up (Kgotla) meetings, radio show discussions, stakeholder sessions as well as social media dialogued on different issues that contribute to sexual exploitation and abuse within the Country and possible solutions to address the challenge.



### **Actions Botswana has taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies**

The Government of Botswana, through the programme of environmental governance, developed a number of legislations, policies and strategies were reviewed to ensure their alignment with national and international developments, as well as emerging issues. These included: the Forest Policy; Waste Management Policy; Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); National Meteorological Services Act; and the Mines and Minerals Act of 1999.

Furthermore, Government has increased expertise in the area of applied research and innovation to ensure sustainable environment. To ensure sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, as well as prudent management of natural resources, Government is focused on the strengthening and/or development of gender responsive policies, legislation and strategies that address this threat, as well as undertake measures that enhance the state of the environment.

The Government of Botswana strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution). To the extent that infrastructure development is inherently hydrocarbon dependent, during NDP 11, Government has adopted eco-friendly methods of delivering infrastructural projects. A number of programmes are planned under the thematic area of Sustainable Environment to support the implementation of the strategies, with a view to achieving the goal of developing sustainably, i.e., expanding the economic base of the country, while balancing the needs of the current and future generation.

The Government of Botswana in collaboration with Civil Society continue to implement Area specific programmes and plans.

- i. **Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS)** formed in 1982 in recognition of the pressures on Botswana's wildlife and the general environment is the oldest environmental NGO in Botswana and has been effective in undertaking its lobbying activities through advocacy and advising Government on policy development matters.
- ii. **Somarelang Tikologo** focuses on raising awareness on environmental issues through public education, demonstrating and encouraging good practices in environmental planning, resource conservation and waste management in Botswana.
- iii. **Conservation International (CI) Okavango** works with women basketry groups that use mokola palm (*Hyphaene petersiana*) for weaving baskets.
- iv. **Kgetsi ya Tsie (KyT)** is another community project that uses natural resources for the economic empowerment of women in the Tswapong area.

The Government put in place measures for increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources The Government of Botswana has an open land policy which allows both men and women to own land. Government has taken deliberate action for Land boards to secure at least 20% of land for youth enterprises by way of redress to lack of operational space which is a deterrent to the growth of youth owned business.

## **The Government of Botswana has taken action in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation:**

Climate change and resilience programmes are taking gender mainstreaming into consideration at all levels. This is an important measure as women remain the custodians of the environment and natural resources in Botswana. The Government National Strategy for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation has taken into consideration the gender concerns and made special effort to implement gender responsive disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation.

The Government of Botswana through the NDP 11 Programmes integrated efforts in infrastructure planning and design in order to mitigate the effects of climate change that continue to have more impact on women and the poor especially in rural areas. Through the inclusion of thermal comfort technologies within the built environment, the effects of global warming will be mitigated within new buildings. Government further integrated climate resilient buildings in the country's construction landscape through the inclusion of energy efficiency principles in the Building Regulations, and formulation of the National Minimum Energy Performance Standards. This will cushion the impact in climate change on citizens especially women.

## **Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**

The Constitution of Botswana recognizes the equality of women and men before the law. Gender equality is a key principle that is embraced in national policies and planning frameworks. Over the years gender equality has been increasingly accepted as an important development variable by various sectors of the economy. This recognition of the critical importance of gender gained momentum after the Beijing UN Conference on Women which saw the Government of Botswana formulating the National Gender Programme Framework (NGPF) prioritizing Six Critical Areas of Concern for Botswana women. These were Poverty including Economic Empowerment of Women; Women in Power and Decision Making; Training and Education for Women; Women in Health; Violence against Women including Human Rights and the Girl Child as a cross-cutting issue.

The courts of Botswana take matters that seem to be discriminatory against women seriously as it was declared by Dingake J in the Appeal case of *Molefi Silabo Ramantele v. Edith M. Mmusi and Others* in which he declared that "the Ngwaketse customary law rule that provides that only the last born son is qualified as instate heir to the exclusion of his female siblings is *ultra vires* Section 3 of the Constitution of Botswana in that it violates the respondents' rights to equal protection of the law".

In the Court of Appeal in the *Ramantele case* the Court held that there are certain values which are required for a customary rule to receive the status of law and thus be enforceable. These values are that the customary rule must not be inconsistent with the values of or principles of natural justice; must not be unconscionable either of itself or in its effect and should not be inhuman. The Court of Appeal said customary law must be applied with the set principles of mortality, humanity or natural justice with the object of achieving justice and equity between the disputants.

The court based its decision in the terms of Section 10 (2) of the Customary Act and Section 2 of the same Act. The two sections bear quoting in full. Section 2 defining customary law provides: "in relation to any tribe or tribal community, the customary law of that tribe or tribal community so far as it is not incompatible with the provisions of any written law or contrary to mortality, humanity or natural justice." Section 10 (2) provides: "if the system of customary law cannot be ascertained in accordance with subsection (1) of the customary law, the court shall determine the matter in

accordance with the principles of justice, equity and good conscience.” The court in *Ramantele* case then pronounced itself as follows:

“A customary rule that denies those children [a woman] of a deceased parent who played a major role in developing a particular part of the estate for the benefit of the deceased, a right on intestacy to any share of that asset, in favour of child [a man] who has refused to play any part in the building up and maintenance of that part of the estate, without any compensatory award, goes against any notion of fairness, equity and good conscience. It does not qualify to be given the status of law nor should it be applied or enforced by the courts...”

It is important to also note that the Adoption Act in terms of Section 16 provides that nothing contained in the Act shall be construed as preventing or affecting the Adoption in accordance with customary law of a child who is subject to customary law by a person who is also subject to customary law. The High Court in a number of decisions has held itself as the upper guardian of all minor children and in terms of the Children’s Act which incorporates the concept of the best interests of the child as espoused in the Convention on Children’s Rights. The High Court is enjoined to ensure that the best interests of the child are of primary importance.

The Marriage Act applies to all marriages solemnised in Botswana except marriages contracted in accordance with customary law of Botswana, Muslim or Hindu or other marriages. In terms of the Married Persons’ Property Act people can express which proprietary regime (whether in or out of community) they opt for, and failing such expression their mode of life can determine whether or not they are subject to customary law.

### **Customary discriminatory laws**

Whereas some customary laws discriminate against women it ought to be noted that Botswana Government is doing much to rectify the situation. There are measures in place to address discrimination within the customary law. In Botswana the term “customary law” describes the laws of tribes and tribal communities while “common law” essentially refers to all other law, including Acts of Parliament, judicial precedent (decisions of the Industrial Court, High Court and Court of Appeal), and Roman-Dutch “Common” Law which remains in force. Customary law is unwritten, evolves and changes over time, and in principle is a plural body of law in and of itself, in that its content varies among tribes. Although the content of customary law is distinct from common law, the general framework for its application and the structures which enforce it are subject to legislative regulation, in particular through the Customary Law Act and the Customary Court Act.<sup>14</sup>

Although discriminatory and biased customary laws negatively affect women across the entire country, rural women tend to be particularly disadvantaged by their application. This is due to the fact that customary law is particularly enforced in rural areas, where local customs are still very vibrant. This can have great adverse impacts on rural women’s enjoyment of their human rights, particularly in the area of family law, inheritance and land tenure, among others.

The Courts of Botswana play a significant role in addressing discriminatory customary laws as captured in the case of *Mmusi*. To keep customary law in check not to be discriminatory and oppressive to women, the panel of Judges in the *Mmusi* case further quoted section 10 (2) of the Customary Law Act which provides that “if the system of customary law cannot be ascertained in accordance with subsection (1) or if the customary law is not ascertainable, the court shall determine the matter in accordance with the principles of justice, equity and good conscience”.

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<sup>14</sup> Botswana CEDAW Report, 2017

In terms of Section 42 of the Customary Court Act decisions of both the Customary Court and the Customary Court of Appeal are appealable to the High Court. Section 4 of the Customary Law Act specifies that customary law shall be applied in all civil cases between tribal members unless the parties expressly agree, or relevant circumstances indicate their intention to determine the matter under common law. Meanwhile the Customary Court Act provides that if one party to civil or criminal proceedings in a customary court requests transfer of the matter to an ordinary court and the application of common law, the Customary Court of Appeal shall agree to the transfer if it is "in the interests of justice" in terms of Section 37.

Government of Botswana promoted and increased awareness of gender issues among the tribal chiefs and other community leaders, as custodians of customary law, continue to be implemented by the Government together with civil society organisations. This deliberate efforts seeks to avoid the negative gender inequalities brought about by the contradiction by the customary laws and the codified laws.

Government intensified efforts to mainstream gender in the customary justice system and further promoted access to justice by women at all levels of the legal system. Subsequent to the Bogosi Gender Pitso in Selibi- Phikwe in 2018, Dikgosi involved other community leaders at local level in a bid to strengthen consistency of gender sensitive interpretation, judgements and sentencing that protects the rights of women. Other local stakeholders have also been enrolled to ensure strategic alliances in responding to women's legal needs from traditional courts.

### **Sex role stereotypes and cultural practices**

The Government, in collaboration with civil society organisations and with support by development partners, continues to implement initiatives aimed at addressing stereotypes and negative cultural practices that reinforce discrimination against women within religious and community settings. Such initiatives include the "TAMAR Campaign" aimed at addressing violence against women within religious settings; the "I Stories" written by survivors of gender based violence in Botswana; a fatherhood program aimed at encouraging men and boys to be partners with women in parenting and upbringing of children, as well as cultural dialogues with different community groups across the country.

## **SECTION THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES**

### **Botswana's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women:**

Botswana National Gender Machinery is spearheaded by the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs led by the Minister. Government through the National Policy on Gender and Development(NPGAD) has an approved national gender machinery institutional mechanism/ structure that comprises of the National Gender Commission, Advisory Committee on Men's/Boys' and Women's/Girls' Issues, District Development Committees, Gender Affairs Department,

*The National Gender Commission:* Under the NPGAD, the Government established the National Gender Commission that has replaced the Botswana National Council on Women. The Commission is multi-spectral in nature with "16 Commissioners" appointed by the Minister responsible for Gender and Development. The Commissioners are drawn from Government and Parastatal institutions, the Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations. The mandate of the Commission is to provide strategic policy and programmatic leadership, and governance of the national gender response. The Commission is mandated to carry out the following functions.

- i. Advise Government on gender issues and in particular policy development and service delivery.
- ii. Monitor the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development.
- iii. Liaise with the Gender Affairs Department to provide guidance and support within Government and externally, on the promotion of gender equality and gender justice.
- iv. Liaise with the Gender Affairs Department and other stakeholders in Parastatal organisations, the Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations to develop appropriate programmes, strategies and mechanisms for enhancing gender equity.
- v. The Commission shall report to the Minister responsible for Gender and Development biannually, on progress made in the implementation of the NPGAD by all stakeholders. The Gender Affairs Department shall be the Secretariat of the Commission.

**Advisory Committee on Men's/Boys' and Women's/Girls' issues:** A twenty (20) member policy and Technical Advisory Committee is established for Men's/Boys' and Women's/Girls' issues to support the National Gender Commission. Members of the Advisory Committee with pre-requisite technical knowledge and experience on Gender and Development; is drawn from different sectors dealing with policy based thematic areas of concern to men/boys and women/girls. The specific functions of this committee include the following;

- i. Provide technical and policy advice to the National Gender Commission.
- ii. Articulate policy issues and support stakeholders' interpretation of the policy provisions and translation of such provisions into actionable items.
- iii. Support technical initiatives of the Commission including research, and periodic surveys as well as evaluation.

iv. **Gender Affairs Department:** In an effort to consolidate and strengthen the coordination of the national gender response, the Government has renamed the Women Affairs Department (WAD) Gender Affairs Department (GeAD). The core function of the Department is to over time change from implementation to "policy coordination and management", while the responsibility for implementation is vested in other Public and Private sector institutions as well as Civil Society Organisations with the support of Development Partners. The Gender Affairs Department performs the following functions;

- v. Facilitate coordination and management of the implementation of the NPGAD.
- vi. Coordinate and manage the implementation of the national gender multi- sectoral and decentralised response.
- vii. Facilitate the harmonization and alignment of sectoral policies with the NPGAD.
- viii. Facilitate gender mainstreaming in all institutional functions including decision-making; programme planning; policy development; human resource, finance and strategic information management as well as delivery of services.
- ix. Support sectors and other stakeholders in developing appropriate gender mainstreaming strategies, monitoring and data collection tools.
- x. Facilitate strengthening of national capacity for gender mainstreaming.
- xi. Facilitate communication and advocacy on gender issues.
- xii. Facilitate and coordinate the creation of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating performance on implementation of and compliance with the NPGAD.

**District Development Committees:** In the context of the NPGAD, District Development Committees facilitate implementation of the NPGAD at district level. The following are the core functions of District Development Committees;

- i. Coordinate and monitor the multi-sectoral and decentralised implementation of the Policy at district and community levels.
- ii. Report quarterly on district performance to the National Gender Commission.

- iii. Coordinate stakeholders' technical support, networking, and capacity development for gender mainstreaming.
- iv. Facilitate strategic gender information sharing with district committees and other local structures through the District Extension Teams (DET).
- v. Individual sectors and organisations will continue facilitating "sector" specific coordination function based on their mandate and programme focus. The sectors will align their specific coordination systems with national gender coordination systems. The following are key roles and responsibilities for each of the identified sectors.
- vi. **Government Line Ministries:** Each implementing Ministry and its associated Departments and Local Government Authorities, are mandated to undertake the following responsibilities:
  - vii. Integrate gender in their results-based management systems.
  - viii. Develop appropriate indicators for monitoring and appraising service delivery and internal institutional performance.
  - ix. Establish gender focal points to ensure that these actors successfully incorporate gender mainstreaming into the results-based management system.
  - x. Report on all Gender and Development initiatives as guided by the Gender Affairs Department.

#### **Parastatal Organisations and the Private Sector:**

Parastatal Organisations and the Private Sector carry out the following functions;

- i. Develop mechanisms for implementation of the NPGAD.
- ii. Monitor implementation and impact of the NPGAD in the business and corporate sectors.
- iii. Establish Gender Focal Points with access to the highest authority, to facilitate gender mainstreaming in compliance with the Policy.
- iv. Liaise with the Gender Affairs Department to develop gender sensitive measures and tools of appraisal.
- v. Report on implementation results and impact on gender equality on a quarterly basis.

#### **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):**

Civil Society Organisations play a key role in advancing the Gender Agenda by supporting community based initiatives and sustaining national level advocacy. However, given the many and diverse CSOs with different mandates, capacities, and objectives, coordination between them and with the National Gender Machinery should be streamlined and harmonised with the national system without compromising their constitutional independence. The capacity of CSOs is being strengthened to maximise their potential and contribution towards gender equality and equity. In the context of the NPGAD, CSOs:

- i. Undertake gender mainstreaming and assess impact on Gender and Development
- ii. Participate actively in national policy dialogues and lobby the public and private sectors to implement the NPGAD.
- iii. Promote the Policy and sensitise their members on gender specific results.
- iv. Report quarterly to the National Gender Commission on implementation results and impact assessment.

**Development Partners:** The role of Development Partners is to support national efforts through Government and the Private Sector, as well as CSOs in advancing the Gender Agenda, and improving the quality of gender outcomes and accountability. Within the framework of the NPGAD, Development Partners:

- i. Support gender related capacity development.
- ii. Support transfer of knowledge, technical expertise, best practices that are intended to improve the quality of gender interventions.
- iii. Provide resources necessary to accelerate gender service delivery, gender mainstreaming in development projects, and in improving development efficiencies.

**The Media:** Different types of media play an important role in creating broad public awareness of socio-cultural, economic and political development. In Botswana, the media sector includes television, radio, and print. The media play a key role not only in educating and creating public awareness on gender issues but will also support maintaining gender issues on the national socio-economic and political development agenda. Efficient use of the media should expand outreach efforts for targeted population groups. To achieve this, capacity is given to strengthen the media including through developing a better understanding of gender issues and the relationship between gender, socio-economic and political development. Efforts are made to maximise the use of available information and communication technologies (ICT), which has great potential to break the barriers of gender knowledge and open new opportunities for social mobilisation and collective action on gender issues.

**The Head of the National Gender Machinery is a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)? Yes.**

The Ministry of Nationality Immigration and Gender Affairs at Deputy Permanent Secretary and Chief of Gender Officer both sit in the SDG National Steering Committee Chaired and Coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning at Permanent Secretary Level.

### **National process for SDG implementation**

Botswana, as other members of the United Nations (UN), has embraced sustainable development as its development approach is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its principles, goals, targets and indicators. Botswana looks forward to align its work on poverty eradication; environment and climate change; governance, human rights and gender equality and their outcomes even closer to the Botswana Vision Post 2016 and the current National Development Plan as these new global goals are expected to guide and help the country achieve that.

Botswana has therefore, established an SDGs National Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the United Nations, with the Secretariat based in the Ministry's Population and Development Unit. This committee is supported by a Technical Task Force made up of technical officers from government, UN, civil society, academia and private sector and has developed an SDGs Roadmap that forms the basis for coherent and coordinated implementation of the SDGs in Botswana. The Roadmap is a national document that identifies the broad areas that will be addressed over the next five (5) years and the specific actions that need to be taken over the next one (1) year to facilitate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Botswana developed a dedicated and functional National SDGs Communications Strategy to facilitate awareness and advocacy for the SDGs, to ensure that no one is left behind. In addition, to support the implementation of the National SDGs Communications Strategy and the smooth operations of the National Steering Committee on the SDGs and that of the SDG Secretariat, there is a need to have in place a fully functional communications team, to be called the Botswana National Communication Technical Working Group, that will be responsible for undertaking all communications on the SDGs aimed at reaching out to all members of society, using media and languages appropriate for different

stakeholders. Botswana is therefore committed to developing a communication strategy to help achieve the agenda 2030.

Gender Affairs Department, UN Women in Botswana and other UN Agencies are members of the SDGs National Steering Committee of the SDGs coordinated by Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. As part of the preparations for Botswana's participation at the 2017 HLPF, the SDG National Steering Committee engaged a consultant to draft the country report and facilitate a National Stakeholder consultation workshop for the validation of the report. UN Women led and organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs consultations with Gender Stakeholders in Botswana on the 25th April 2017 to consolidate inputs towards the Country report for the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) 2017 session of the HLPF on Sustainable Development. The overall goal of the Gender Stakeholders Consultations was to provide a strategic platform for the Gender Sector to contribute to the consolidation of progress made in the localization and implementation of the SDG5 in Botswana so far with a view to make inputs towards the National Report to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

National Gender Stakeholders Consultations involved the key government and civil society gender stakeholders in Botswana. The main outcome of the meeting was a consolidated draft position paper for Gender inputs to be used at the National Stakeholders Consultations on the Country Report for the VNRs held on the 27th April 2017. The Gender Stakeholders also agreed on the strategies and approaches of engagement at the National Stakeholders Consultations. The participation of gender stakeholders at the national consultations was highly active and proactive.

On the 27th April 2017, Ministry of Finance and Development with the support of UN Agencies hosted the National Stakeholders Consultations on the Country report for the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) 2017 session of the HLPF on Sustainable Development. The consultations were attended by key stakeholders from Government, Civil Society and the private sector. Inputs were solicited from participants to inform the report and working groups were divided according to the SDGs 1,2,5,8,9 and 17. Working Groups also compiled information related to progress made on the implementation of the afore-mentioned SDGs and the clear link of such progress with eradication of poverty and SDG 1. Government working with UN Agencies, Civil Society and other and other members of the steering committee provided technical support to the participants.

**The national Gender Machinery institutional mechanism is used to coordinate the National Policy on Gender and Development which are harmonized for the** implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Botswana National Gender Machinery is the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs led by the Permanent Secretary. The gender equality and women's empowerment mandate is spearheaded by the Gender Affairs Department. Led by the Minister, the Ministry works in line with the approved structure of the National Gender Coordination and Management Machinery as stipulated in the National Policy on Gender and Development. The structure comprises of the National Gender Commission, Advisory Committee on Men's/Boys' and Women's/Girls' issues, District Development Committees, Gender Affairs Department. More effort is invested to strengthen the functioning of all the structures.



**The following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

Beijing Declaration and Pfa	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
✓ Women’s Rights Organizations Civil society	✓ Women’s Rights Organizations Civil society
✓ Women’s Rights Organizations	✓ Women’s Rights Organizations
✓ Academia and Think Tanks	✓ Academia and Think Tanks
✓ Faith Based Organisations	✓ Faith Based Organisations
✓ Parliament	✓ Parliament
✓ Private Sector	✓ Private Sector
✓ United Nations System	✓ United Nations System
✓ Academia and Think Tanks	✓ Academia and Think Tanks
✓ Faith Based Organisations	✓ Faith Based Organisations
✓ Parliament	✓ Parliament
✓ Private Sector	✓ Private Sector
✓ United Nations System	✓ United Nations System

**Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation**

Sustainable Development Goal 5 is an important priority within the National SDG Roadmap. In line with the NDP 11, Gender is a national priority. The Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs sit within the National Programme Steering Committee for the implementation of the NDP National SDG Steering Committee. There is a national Strategy for implementing the SDG and that is the SDG Roadmap.

**SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS**

The top three areas in which Botswana has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level:

The Government of Botswana, in recognition of the importance of the availability of official statistics such as the socio-demographic environment and economic indicators in development planning, Government will undertake a number of measures during NDP 11 to address the data gaps. To this end, the following surveys have been conducted during NDP 10 and 11. ;Botswana Agricultural census; Information, Communication & Technology Survey; Census of Establishments and Enterprises; Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey; Botswana Demographic Survey; Botswana AIDS Impact Survey (BAIS V)& TB prevalence Survey; Continuous Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey; Census Cartographic Work Operation for 2021 Population and Housing Census; Other initiatives that supported development of official statistics include; the development and Implementation of the Botswana Strategy for the Development of Statistics (BSDS),National Accounts Rebasing and e-scanning of questionnaires. To further buttress her commitment to improvement of data collection mechanisms Botswana has moved from paper Assistant Personal Interview to Computer Assistant Personal Interview. All the aforementioned initiatives will be pursued during NDP 11. All the surveys make a good attempt to disaggregate data by sex, however the efforts are still limited.

At National level, The National Statistics Office has therefore formed some collaborations in terms of signing Memorandum of Understanding with Ministries, Departments and Agencies in an endeavor to harmonise IT Systems in ways that may support easier data sharing as well as exploring ways of automating data processing mechanisms at sector level to enhance data production. The use of administrative records presents a number of advantages to a statistical agency and the entire National Statistical System (NSS). Demands for statistics on all aspects of individual, society and economy wide continue to grow. These demands often occur in a climate of tight budgetary constraints as most of the sectors enrolled into BSDS have a limited or no budget for statistics production. Statistical agencies also share with many respondents a growing concern over the mounting burden of response to surveys. Respondents may also react negatively if they feel they have already provided similar information to administrative programmes and surveys. Therefore, inter departmental collaboration will ease the burden of respondents burnout and enhance efficiency to access of statistics.

### **Enhanced quality of statistics under National Development Plan 11**

In this connection, mechanisms to guide the National Surveillance Statistics (NSS) have been put in place, which include the development of the National Data Quality Assurance Framework, a compendium of concepts, definitions, and classifications to harmonise the statistics production within the NSS, as well as enhancing data management processes; and, dissemination and access to statistical information would be enhanced through linkages between Statistics Botswana website with NSS websites, social media platforms and use of data portals which would enable instant downloading of published statistical information.

Botswana has not yet made any significant progress in mainstreaming gender issues into official statistics. However, A national statistics coordination framework is being developed and one of its pillars include: gender mainstreaming into administrative data and official statistics. Currently there are no promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical programme/strategy but a sector strategy is in the process. The Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs has been enrolled into the BSDS in an effort to enhance, among others things, production of official gender statistics within the sector. Botswana has not yet established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee). Government works closely with Statistics Botswana and the National Strategy Office to engage on the importance of gender disaggregated data and strengthening gender statistics. Government has conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics and in particular on gender-based violence. In 2019 Government commissioned the National Gender Based Violence Relationship Study.

The Government of Botswana plans to strengthen this area of work through collaboration and by engaging technical organizations such as UN Women and UNECA in capacity building to strengthen the production and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars) key entities and stakeholders such as Statistics Botswana and Gender Focal Persons in the different Ministries.

### **Botswana's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years:**

- Statistics Botswana has prioritized developing a Sector Statistics Plan (SSP) for Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs as well as creating structure such as technical working group, inter-agency committee for implementation of SSP.

- Following the surveys conducted such as the Botswana National Relationships Study, the Government plans to use the results for more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of Programmes and projects. Collaboration with Statistics Botswana will be strengthened to facilitate re-processing of existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics. Where possible the Government of Botswana will conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability).
- The Government of Botswana will also strengthen the production and use of administrative data at sector level and NGOs to enhance gender statistics. Botswana is currently in the process of defining a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs.

### **Botswana defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs**

The Botswana National Statistics Office started a process of defining a national set of indicators for the SDGs including a set of indicators for SDG 5.

**Data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs** Data collection for SDG 5 commenced since 2017 when Botswana volunteered to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) in relation Goals 1,2,3,5, 9 and 17 which were the SDGs focused on for that year. The Botswana delegation was led by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development Hon. Tsogwane who is now the current Vice President.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Botswana prioritises to advance the implementation of the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in the next five years (2020-2025) through laws, policies and/or programmes in line with the National Policy on Gender and Development, which has prioritised the following;

- i. **Economic diversification, prosperity and poverty eradication to achieve sustainable development;**
- ii. **Social Protection** and social services (health, adequate sanitation and improved well-being, access to quality education, training and information, safe housing and consideration for addressing issues of energy and climate change for a sustainable environment);
- iii. Political power, democratic governance and decision making;
- iv. Access to justice, protection of human rights and freedom from violence; and
- v. Special measures targeting vulnerable groups of men, women, girls and boys across all the four areas.

Through the already established institutional mechanisms for implementing the National Policy on Gender and Development, Government of Botswana will ensure effective and efficient coordination as well as management of the implementation of the NPGAD. All structures on the National Gender Machinery will be strengthened.

## ANNEXES:

- i. Botswana National Policy on Gender and Development
- ii. Botswana National Development Plan 11
- iii. Botswana National Strategy towards Ending Gender Based Violence
- iv. Botswana Sustainable Development Goals Road Map
- v. Botswana National Policy on Gender and Development , Operational Plan(2016-2020)

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