



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS
TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SECOND SESSION
OF THE THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT**

**Theme: *“The Steady Path: Delivering on Our Promise,
One Step at A Time”***

BY

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- **Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse;**
- **Vice President, Mr Ndaba Nkosingithi Gaolatlhe;**
- **Chief Justice, Mr Gaopalelwe Ketlogetswe;**
- **Former Presidents;**
- **Former Vice Presidents;**
- **Cabinet Ministers;**
- **President of the Court of Appeal;**
- **Deputy Speaker;**
- **Assistant Ministers;**
- **Leader of the Opposition;**
- **Members of Parliament;**
- **Ambassadors and High Commissioners;**
- **Chairman of Ntlo ya Dikgosi;**
- **Dikgosi;**
- **Permanent Secretary to the President;**
- **Attorney General;**
- **Judge President of the Industrial Court;**
- **Judges of the Court of Appeal;**
- **Judges of the High Court/Judges of the Industrial Court;**
- **Ombudsman;**
- **Heads of International Organisations;**
- **President of the Customary Court of Appeal;**
- **Commander of BDF;**
- **Commissioner of Police;**
- **Commissioner of Prisons;**
- **All Permanent Secretaries;**
- **Governor of Bank of Botswana;**
- **Mayors and Council Chairpersons;**
- **Councillors;**
- **District Commissioner;**
- **Bishops/Religious Leaders;**
- **Fellow Batswana**

Introduction

1. Esteemed Speaker, Batswana betsho gongwe le gongwe kwa le leng teng, esteemed residents, friends of Botswana, greetings to you all. May I request that we start by rising for a moment of silence, in honour and remembrance, of all those who have departed since our last sitting; fellow members of this house from the previous Parliament, citizens and residents, public servants, including erstwhile Member of Parliament for Kgalagadi South, Dr. Micus Chimbombi, whose services and sacrifices have strengthened our nation.
2. **May God Almighty grant their souls eternal peace, and His might continue to protect and comfort their families and loved ones!**
3. We must express our deepest gratitude to Him who blesses us. In the words of the Roman scholar Marcus Tullius Cicero, **gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.** As such, we thank God Almighty for His grace and blessings. In the darkest times, it is His light that guides us and on the brightest of days it is Him who makes it so.
4. **Batswana Betsho**, I wish to point out that Government has made some improvements to the way you will receive the State of the Nation Address. Notably, copies of this SONA and a more detailed, graphically engaging version of the SONA will be shared digitally to enable richer discourse among society. This is our way of enhancing availability of information and our increased accountability to the nation.
5. The Second Session of the 13th Parliament commences today. We gather here as triumphant champions, makers of history, led by heroes and heroines who carried us to heights never seen before. We are a generation of many firsts. The first Government led by the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC).

The first African country to win in the 4 by 400 meters relay at the World Athletics Championships. We have Botswana's first men's 400m world champion. We have our first Olympic gold medalist. Today, we celebrate what it truly means to be a Motswana.

6. I stand before you at a pivotal moment, which marks another first in this country's history, for the first year of the UDC leadership has come to an end. The gloss and charm of novelty is now behind us. This was an interesting year where the shadow of economic challenges tested our resolve, not just the Government's resolve, but that of the people of this Country.
7. With our hope tested by economic pressures, our resolve crystallised and became stronger. We know where we came from, why we needed change, and where we are going. Though we intend to arrive faster at our destination, we can only walk this journey one step at a time; a journey of a thousand miles.
8. In our words and our work, we honour the power of intention; to build, to heal, to challenge, to uplift deliberately, purposefully and together. Hence my selected theme for this year's State of the Nation Address: - **"The Steady Path: Delivering on Our Promise, One Step at a Time."**
9. This is a philosophy of governance that recognises the depth of our challenges while affirming our unwavering commitment to overcome them. It encapsulates a profound thinking of English playwright, John Heywood, that **"Rome was not built in a day, but they were laying the bricks every hour"**. Hour by hour we lay each interlocking brick. To the untrained eye, it looks like an untidy landscape of bricks strewn all over the place, but with time and patience, it will begin to take shape. You will soon see the skeleton of the colosseum, the concept of the Roman Forum, the inklings of the Pantheon, and a hint of the Trevi Fountain. Slowly, meticulously, our 'Rome' is taking shape.

10. Today, I lay before you the methodology behind the vision. I give **YOU**, insight into the masterplan. I detail the bricks already in place and the ones we are yet to lay.
11. Our economy, long sustained by wealth generated from mining, especially diamond revenues, now faces the sobering reality of global market shifts. Our fiscus is under tremendous strain, bearing the weight of unprecedented global macro-economic challenges. The goose that lays the golden egg is in a critical condition.
12. The UDC government entered office with strained fiscus, depleted coffers, employees owed, contractors owed, farmers owed, a debt of hope to the people, and resentment by its defeated rivals. The resentful pray and hope for the UDC to fail and, as such, pray for the country to fail. But we will not fail. This country will not fail. The doomsayers wrote us off in the lead up to the 2024 elections. The prolific punditry of doubters and naysayers assailed us all. Analysts and prophets, of all colours and hues, foretold our spectacular failure at the polls. We were dismissed with such casual certainty and contempt. We stood no chance.
13. The entire press corps of this country was aroused, mobilised and weaponised against the UDC. They predicted. They “analysed”, rendered opinions, dressed up as fact. They spoke with such authority and confidence. Acres of newspaper space and extended amounts of airplay were devoted to spreading the chronically prejudiced views of our adversaries and detractors. On 30 October 2024, the people spoke. On that day, all the predictions and prophesies of our failure evaporated. It became a day of dissolving certainties. On that day, we experienced the most beautiful symphony of comeuppance ever served. History had been made. And the clock of time continues to chime.

14. I stand here today, bearing the weight of history. I remind us all of 2024; of our struggles and our strivings, as a way of saluting and humbly acknowledging the supreme sacrifices made by our activists and our people. I stand in absolute awe, of the resilience and fortitude of the people of this country. I remind those who cursed and dismissed us, that their negative fetishes and fantasies, did not happen then. They will not happen now. And they will not happen ever. I say this not to mock. I say it because it is the truth served raw. I want us all to know, and always remember, that the UDC is an indelible portrait of courage and defiance in the face of denial, denigration and belittlement.
15. Our central and guiding concern is, and has always been, to transform the lives and livelihoods of the people of this country. From our conjunctural analysis we knew we had to address this concern; achieve this objective, under conditions of uncertainty, with diminished resources, and facing a vicious push-back, even from those yet to recover from the trauma of their failed predictions and prophesies. Undeterred, we made bold promises and solemn undertakings to our people.
16. **WE PROMISED** to cut electricity and water tariffs by 30% and make them affordable for every home – **we have delivered** the 30% reduction in water tariffs and extended a 50% amnesty on outstanding bills for all households. This means the UDC Government forwent monies owed to Government by the people of Botswana so that the people have less financial burden, meaning Government took some of its people's burdens on its own shoulders despite already having an ailing fiscus.
17. **WE PROMISED** to increase old age pension from the then P830 to P1 800 – **we delivered in the first year**, and despite these economic hardships, a 68% increase from P830 to P1 400. This means the UDC Government, in the face of an ailing fiscus, increased its social spending on a vulnerable and marginalised

group of elderly individuals, to make their burdens that much lighter.

18. **WE PROMISED** to increase living allowance for tertiary students to P2 500 – **we have during this economic hardship delivered**, in this first year for the hardest hit segment of the student community, a very significant increase on the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) allowance from P300.00 to P1 900.
19. What do those that resent change publish? They say the UDC Government has outspent previous government's annual expenditure. They omit to tell you that the increase is caused by giving money directly to the people of this country that need it most with a 68% increase to old age pensions and a 533% increase to TVET allowances. Mind you, we intend to spend more on our people, we have more needs from our people that necessitate it. The flashy headlines neglect to mention the people actually benefitting from the increased expenditure.
20. When we give the P300 allowance to nursing mothers, our expenditure will increase. When we attain the old age pension of P1 800, expenditure will increase. When we pay students their P2 500 allowance, expenditure will increase. When we begin hiring for our 24-hour public service economy, expenditure will increase. We have absolutely no qualms of conscience about increasing expenditure for the improved welfare of our people.
21. **WE PROMISED** to deliver a proper constitutional review. In this first year, we have delivered visible progress. The Government has gazetted the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which seeks to establish a Constitutional Court. The Bill is ready for debate in the current session of Parliament, which will pave way for a nationwide referendum on the review of the constitution. Consultations are expected to commence in 2026. We follow the model set by South Africa whereby the establishment of a

Constitutional Court preceded the Constitutional Review such that, thereafter, there is a forum, specially designated to test the rigors of the new Constitution before ratifying it into law. We reaffirm our fidelity to the promise of a comprehensive constitutional review.

22. **WE PROMISED** to deliver a Sovereign Wealth Fund, that will accelerate Botswana's strategic investments across the global economy, ensuring wealth, not just for future generations, but even for current generations. We have delivered on this promise, and the Sovereign Wealth Fund has commenced work.
23. **WE PROMISED** to pay a living wage of P4 000. Not only has the private sector continued to overwhelmingly embrace this development, we too as Government, have reached a historic milestone wherein an agreement was reached between Government and seven (7) Public Sector Unions to pay this living wage effective July 2025.
24. When we were faced with a situation of critical shortage of medicine, your government and through the efforts of friendly nations and international partners, came to swift action on this matter; we managed to purchase and obtain donations of medicines worth over 500 million Pula and still counting. Under pressure of an acute shortage, we could not fully exact the levels of saving we otherwise would have if we were procuring under more hospitable circumstances. The systemic challenges of the current value chain of providing medicines have been entrenched for decades and we are dealing with them boldly to uproot their inefficiencies as quickly as possible.
25. These accomplishments are just the beginning, we can and we will continue to do more as we move into the next year. However, in the face of real economic challenges that our country faces, these accomplishments must not be downplayed. Let us continue to be a nation that possesses the grace of gratitude for

what we have achieved under the circumstances, but without losing hope for better achievements.

26. We have also made good strides in non-financial objectives set out in the last State of the Nation Address. We have begun rebuilding the Nation's trust in its institutions.
27. We have made key appointments to a number of Ministries and statutory entities. We have made meritocratic appointments to the Judiciary. We have made appointments to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. We have welcomed a new commander of the BDF. We have made appointments at the Attorney General's Chambers. We have made Board appointments to parastatals that have begun turning their entities around. We have employed public servants in various positions throughout different Ministries whose impact is felt daily. We will continue to make the right appointments. This government does not discriminate.
28. **WE PROMISED** dignity to all persons in this country and we began by burying a man in his ancestral home as one of this government's first acts in leadership. We upheld freedom of speech and expression and gave Batswana their voice back and we saw an enraged and frustrated population take to the streets on several occasions without fear of police brutality. Most recently we introduced different languages to national news broadcast. This is your Botswana, you are safe here, you are part of this Country's story. When the resentful accuse the UDC Government of trampling people's rights, remind them that for the first time in a long time, the rights we are enjoying in this country are not words on a fading parchment, but are tangible and real. They flow from that grand power of attorney, the Constitution of this Republic.
29. There is no looking back on this journey that we have started together, we march forward, and we aren't tripping though we may stumble sometimes.

30. **Batswana Betsho**, your elected representatives spent a better part of the past few months traversing the breadth and dimensions of our country, listening to you for ideas on how to take Botswana forward. Based on your valuable ideas and insights, we refined our roadmap as Government to building, step-by-step, the Botswana we all envision: that of a nation of shared prosperity, of dignity, and of sustainable growth that leaves no one behind.
31. We have begun shifting Botswana's public service and political culture towards promoting greater accountability, launching with intent, comprehensive economic diversification programmes, renegotiating our position in the global diamond market, and responding decisively to the acute crises, particularly in our healthcare, and education systems.
32. The UDC Manifesto is a social contract upon which Batswana based their decision to appoint the UDC to lead and usher them into a new Botswana of infinite possibilities. Everything that we do, therefore, including especially the National Development Plan and indeed the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP), all draw inspiration directly from, and are anchored on this social compact. As such, my address to you today, aligns with the pillars of this sacred, national social contract.

**BUILDING A DEEP ECONOMY THAT OFFERS EACH
CITIZEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR A HAPPY AND
FULFILLED LIFE**

33. Botswana has experienced challenges before, and each time, we have emerged stronger, wiser, and more united. As the great Nelson Mandela reminded us, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Batswana have always risen, and I declare to you with full conviction and fortified hope: Botswana is rising again, to heights she has never reached before!

34. The steady path we traverse as we navigate our economic challenges, though urgent, is not one of hasty shortcuts. It is a path of hard work and tangible progress aimed at **Diversifying the Economy for Resilience; and Laying the Foundation for sustained Growth** anchored on good **Governance, Security & Institutional Performance** that will endure for generations.
35. In order to address these challenges; the Government engaged in a rigorous process to develop the 12th National Development Plan (NDP 12). NDP 12 emphasises on **inclusive growth** built through a **private sector-led economy**. It buttresses ambitions that refocus the development processes to drive towards our True North; a definition of our core principles and enduring ideals of our government for '**a high – income Botswana that is digitally enabled, export driven and economically diversified, where every citizen is employed, empowered and fulfilled**'.
36. A key driver of NDP12, emphasising economic diversification, job creation, and sustainable growth is the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP). BETP will accelerate Botswana's transition into a high-income economy with per-capita income of P200 000 by 2036. The Programme will reduce Botswana's reliance on diamonds, diversify exports, and create quality jobs for Botswana through inclusive, competitive, and sustainable growth.
37. BETP sets three objectives: achieving high-income status by 2036, generating large-scale quality jobs, and diversifying into new industries and value chains. The four-week Economic and Social Labs process united government, civil society, private sector, academia experts and development partners to design investment-ready projects and remove key bottlenecks.

38. From the voices we heard in villages and cities, from the hopes etched in every household, we shaped and developed a plan and a strategy, not just for recovery - but for "restoration and renewal". The priorities we now pursue - economic diversification, accountable governance, human capital investment, and sustainable innovation – are designed to meet the moment and uplift every Motswana.
39. These are not distant ideals, but practical commitments: to create jobs where they are needed the most, to restore dignity through health and housing, to empower youth with skills and opportunities, and to ensure that our economy grows not just in numbers, but in impact.
40. This is how we walk the steady path, by turning national plans into personal progress, and policy into lived realities.
41. **AGRICULTURE** has been identified as a sector that lays out economic transformation with the greatest prospects, immediate and long term, for sustainable creation of jobs. This sector remains the mainstay of our rural economy, and an imperative for national food security. To ensure attainment of food security, rural development, and agro-processing opportunities we need to raise agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the present levels of 2%, to at least 6% in the immediate term. The sector is already undergoing a bold transformation aimed at boosting productivity, creating jobs, and strengthening food security.
42. Central to this vision is a renewed focus on livestock production, aimed at increasing the national herd from an estimated present level of 1.7 million to 5 million by 2030.
43. Livestock contributes a larger proportion of Botswana's agricultural GDP, anchoring rural livelihoods. Yet the sector faces mounting challenges of disease outbreaks, recurring droughts,

poor land management and production inefficiencies such as low calving rates, high mortality rates and lack of business development, which have eroded productivity and degraded the agricultural value chain.

44. The national cattle herd has declined from 3 million in the 1970's to an estimated 1.7 million, with off-take rates languishing at 6% against a recommended 15%. In response to this decline, Government launched in August 2025 a programme aimed at boosting beef sector productivity through extension support. Services advanced by this programme include animal health inspections, reproductive diagnostics, artificial insemination and farmer training in sustainable livestock management.
45. Furthermore, government through partnership with the Green Climate Fund is implementing the rangeland restoration project that is envisaged to improve rangeland resilience and sustainability. This project was launched in May 2025 in Tsabong.
46. Government will also target communal farmers as part of achieving the 5 million herd target, through restoring rangelands and improving profitability and access to premium markets.
47. I am delighted to announce to you that the turnaround strategy of the Botswana Meat Commission now shows signs of improvement. BMC has improved their payment turnaround times from months to seven days. In Ngamiland government has recently launched the Direct Cattle Procurement Scheme where farmers are paid instantly. This scheme will greatly benefit the Ngamiland farmers who for the longest time have not had market access.
48. On Milk Production, we have developed a focused strategy for the Dairy Sector through Milk Valley, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Botswana Development Corporation. For several years, progress was stalled due to the prevalence of foot and mouth

disease in neighbouring countries, which prevented the importation of biological assets. Currently, our local production capacity for milk and related products stands at 13%, and we are targeting an increase to over 60% by next year.

49. Recently, government completed a mission to Brazil to secure the importation of at least 1 000 Girolando cattle to kickstart this expansion. We are now finalising the necessary import protocols and negotiating technical partnership agreements with sellers to ensure successful commencement of the project. These partnerships will support us over the next two years by facilitating skills transfer to Batswana, who will be directly employed on the project.
50. Recognising that feed availability is essential for successful dairy operations, we are finalising out-grower programme guidelines to engage contract farmers around Lobatse region in support of this project. Additionally, we are identifying other regions across the country for potential expansion once a sustainable business model is firmly established.
51. The 2024/25 season saw a 34.2% increase in planted area compared to the previous season yielding an estimated 144 000 tonnes in production, a massive improvement when compared to only 39 795 tonnes in the 2023/24 season. This is well within the UDC manifesto objective of tripling food production yield and output; **another success milestone delivered!** Drought, pest infestation, floods, and bushfires, account for annual production losses of up to 5 000 tonnes, which is why Botswana is shifting towards climate-resilient farming.
52. Accrued horticulture production rose to 88 670 tonnes from 2 400 hectares, yielding an impressive 77 398 tonnes of vegetables and 11 272 tonnes of fruits, **again evidence of great progress.** This output meets 80% of Botswana's national vegetable demand and 29% of its fruit demand.

53. Recognising the importance of commercial scale farming which would help us achieve the goal of national food security, we, together with a group of Investors, arranged for 16 farmers from across the country, to visit Bangladesh, from 25th to the 30th of July 2025. The team was led by representatives from Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, Letsema Horticulture Market, National Agricultural Research and Development Institute (NARDI) and Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN). The farmers on the other hand included members of Fodder Producers, Fish Farmers Association and the Botswana National Beef Producers Union, among others. These anchor farmers are now being facilitated to start and operate farms that will act as a point of reference and support for other farmers.
54. To diversify the economy through agriculture, government is leading a policy shift which will enable licit cultivation and use of industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis. To begin this programme on a sound footing, Hemp Innovations, a global corporate entity with experience in the field, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Botswana to work alongside BUAN and NARDI to explore and pilot Hemp production.
55. These partnerships will enable research and development for cultivation and processing of industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis. The project will be implemented in phases starting with trials at BUAN and will build up to Botswana farmers with interest in industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis.
56. While the entire legal framework and associated regulations are still being finalised, The Cannabis Act and the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, have been passed into law to facilitate investment in the hemp industry. Pilot cultivation will commence in December 2025, under strict oversight by the relevant authorities in line with applicable laws and regulations.

57. **MINING:** Earlier this year, the Government of the Republic of Botswana and De Beers Group announced the signature of our new agreements which represent a shared commitment to long-term national prosperity, youth empowerment and sustainable economic diversification. Under the new agreements, Okavango Diamond Company (ODC) accesses an increased portion of Debswana diamonds starting at 30%, increasing to 40% and ultimately to 50% over the period of the new agreements. The ODC has announced that it is ready to undertake contract sales as of this month, an important step to diversify its sales model to handle larger volumes of diamonds.
58. The extension of the Debswana mining licences to 2054 will enable Debswana to deliver long-term value from its existing mining assets as well as mine life extension projects. Another key feature of our new agreements is the increased focus on marketing natural diamonds to preserve the long-term value of our diamond assets - a priority that becomes even more critical during periods of market pressure.
59. To this end, Government is now partnering with De Beers to plan, fund and execute strategic marketing initiatives globally to enhance natural diamond desirability and demand. One such initiative is Desert diamonds, recently launched in the United States through a nationwide campaign and partnership with key retailers ahead of the crucial end of year selling season.
60. Further, reinforcing this commitment to promote natural diamonds, Botswana became a founding signatory of the Luanda Accord in June 2025 - a landmark pledge by diamond-producing nations and industry leaders to collaborate through the Natural Diamond Council to boost global consumer demand for natural diamonds. Since signing, Botswana has actively engaged with fellow diamond-producing governments to build support and momentum for this shared vision.

61. While this administration is pushing for diversification of the mining sector, diamonds will continue to be a main contributor of economic growth and transformation for Botswana. It is in this regard that concrete steps are under way, towards the acquisition of Anglo-American's shares in De Beers. Government will leverage a majority stake to align the industry with Botswana's national development goal of economic diversification through beneficiation.
62. As part of Botswana's beneficiation strategy, approximately P1.4 billion will be invested to finance the construction of a plant for production of critical mining chemicals essential to battery minerals sector. The plant, which is to be Southern Africa's first integrated facility, will be developed in Palapye with direct access to a railway line connecting Sowa Town, where soda ash as the biggest input will be sourced, and onwards to regional markets.
63. Our mining sector is evolving rapidly, with new strategic minerals entering the fold alongside diamonds. The Letlhakane Uranium Project, operated by Lotus Resources, is undergoing a major infill drilling campaign to refine its resource and support a P6.2 billion mine plan targeting 3 million pounds of uranium annually.
64. In Kanye, Giyani Metals is developing the K. Hill Battery-Grade Manganese Project, having secured a mining license and a Special Economic Zone Investor License. The project aims to supply high-purity manganese for electric vehicle batteries, aligning Botswana with global clean energy supply chains.
65. Iron ore is also becoming an important resource in the diversification mix, with projects like the Ngamiland Iron Ore Project set to boost Botswana's steel industry. These developments signal a broader shift toward industrial minerals, green steel, and value-added beneficiation. Together, uranium, manganese, and iron ore form an emerging triad of opportunity in Botswana's mining renaissance.

66. Botswana is endowed with a diverse range of mineral resources suitable for small scale mining (SSM) including gold, copper, industrial minerals and graphite. Globally, small scale mining plays a critical role in livelihoods, supporting over 45 million individuals directly.
67. To address existing policy, and operational gaps, Botswana Geoscience Institute is developing a comprehensive and pragmatic Small-Scale Mining (SSM) framework for Botswana. Its overall aim is to facilitate citizen economic empowerment through viable and environmentally sustainable SSM activities.
68. **ENERGY** is still an area where more investment is required. The current national demand stands at 700 Mega-Watt (MW) peak demand and 450 MW nominal demand. About 65-70% of national demand is met through local generation and the deficit of 35% through imports. In order to insure vibrant security supply and attain capacity for export, government has embarked on increasing local generation through renewable and thermal power.
69. In terms of renewable energy, government is currently developing a total of 900 MW of solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation in Maun, Letlhakane and Isang, while 600 MW thermal is being developed at Mmamabula. These projects are expected to clear the energy deficit and serve the export market. It is expected that by December 2025 more than 100 MW of solar PV will be streamed into the grid while the 600 MW thermal is targeted for December 2027.
70. The ongoing remediation of Morupule B (600 MW) has also started bearing fruits with 3 units already running while the other unit is to be completed by December 2025. This will bring local generation of thermal to 720 MW inclusive of Morupule A (120 MW). Government is also working to improve the transmission capacity to amongst others to enable export of power to the

region. The North West transmission grid phase 2 project is intended to improve transmission to the north western part of the country and also provide for export of power to the north.

71. ***Batswana Betsho***, our country is positioning itself to partake in the growing global market for renewable energy certificates. In July 2025, we formally tendered our application to the I-Track Foundation to become an authorised issuer of International Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs). Once approved, this will open a new revenue stream for project developers and corporate buyers seeking to meet carbon neutrality commitments.
72. In order to ensure that security of petroleum products supply is central to sustaining economic growth and national stability, Botswana Oil Limited, through Government funding, is advancing major storage projects to increase this to 90 days. Our strategic fuel stocks currently stand at 15 days of cover. The Expansion of Francistown Petroleum Depot, from 38 million litres capacity to 98 million litres, is 88% complete, while Gantsi depot is at 55% complete and will be commissioned in April and August 2026 respectively.
73. **ON INVESTMENT ATTRACTION**, government is undertaking reforms to unlock land, streamline legal and regulatory frameworks, and fast-track infrastructure to meet investor expectations. Furthermore, government is in the process of establishing a National Retail Payment Switch (NRPS). A special Purpose Vehicle, will this month be established under the Bank of Botswana to procure and implement the NRPS within 12 months.
74. Phase 1 involving mapping of the Switch requirements has been done and technical and Business Specifications have been developed for a Botswana Centric Switch. The switch will significantly streamline transactions, reduce leakages, increase financial inclusion, and ensure that payments for services are transparent and stay within the local economy.

75. With coordinated effort, Special Economic Zones (SEZ) will become engines of inclusive growth, export competitiveness, and long-term prosperity for Botswana. As part of the SEZ facilitated investments, momentum continues with Radisson Hotel. The project, which will begin in April 2026, at an investment value of \$50 Million is expected to create jobs directly during construction and post completion.
76. A licensed SEZ investor is developing a 100 MW solar power station near Matsiloje as a Single Factory. Valued at approximately P1 billion, this project will create 600 construction jobs and 30 permanent positions, advancing our green energy goals.
77. The journey toward industrial transformation requires bold, large-scale projects that generate employment, build manufacturing capacity, and enable meaningful technology transfer. The Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) has stepped up to meet this need, driving strategic investments across high-impact sectors.
78. Since the time when you gave this administration the mandate to govern, we have worked hard to change laws in a concerted effort to achieve a well-regulated, integrated, development-friendly investment framework to raise levels of productive capital inflows into the economy, as part of the process of diversifying the economy and stimulating employment through smart partnerships. Some of the smart partnerships created are with CCI Global, a leading Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) company headquartered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to establish its presence in Botswana. CCI Global has approximately 10,000 employees across 5 continents, including Africa, Asia and North America servicing major offshore markets in the USA, Europe, and the Middle East.
79. I am pleased to share with you that CCI Global began its local operations at the Botswana Digital Innovation Hub in October 2025. This initial operational phase has already generated 51

full-time jobs toward a targeted creation of 720 jobs over the next 12 months and 3000 jobs within 36 months of operation.

80. In an effort to strengthen the position of Botswana as an attractive destination for investment we continue to take progressive steps. It is in this spirit that we are establishing the **Botswana International Financial Centre (BIFC)** — a bold national initiative that will position our country as a **well-regulated and trusted gateway for international investment and financial services into Africa**.
81. The Botswana International Financial Centre will operate as an **independent jurisdiction within Botswana**, founded on the principles of transparency, accountability, and rule of law. As part of this broader vision to position Botswana as a hub of opportunities and innovation, I am also pleased to announce the launch of the **Impact Citizenship Programme** — a pioneering initiative that invites a select group of global investors, innovators, and changemakers to join hands with us in shaping Botswana's next chapter of development. To facilitate this, we will be submitting to Parliament a bill aimed at amending the Citizenship Act.
82. This programme is not about selling our citizenship; it is about **inviting partnerships** that make impact — attracting those who share our values and are ready to contribute meaningfully to our national development goals. I acknowledge the concerns that have been raised regarding this initiative. As a responsible government, let me assure you that vetting and thorough due diligence will be an integral part of the application and approval processes.
83. Government has taken a bold decision to establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) for Botswana. The fund will be one of the transformative interventions boosting economic activity in various sectors; diversifying and engendering processing within

the mining sector. The establishment of the Botswana Sovereign Wealth (BSWF) Fund signifies the government's intention to strengthen fiscal discipline, while channelling capital into accelerated economic diversification for job creation and skills transfer.

84. The new vehicle will be a state-owned company operating on commercial lines, with independent oversight and regular public reporting, thereby embodying the Santiago Principles, the sovereign- investor code on transparency and accountability. The BSWF will be independent, ringfenced, development-focused, and benchmarked against global peers.
85. Another historic milestone that government will deliver is the establishment of the **Botswana Mercantile Exchange (BMX)**. The Mercantile Exchange will be a transformative initiative creating a regional hub for southern Africa's commodities, both Soft Commodities in the agriculture sector, such as wheat, sorghum and our beef, to hard commodities, like oil, gold, copper, diamonds and others. The BMX will position Botswana as a regional hub for commodities ensuring that Africa gets full benefit of these natural resources. This entity, operating under the Botswana Stock Exchange, will create a platform where a farmer can list his or her product or commodity on this exchange to be traded with anyone, anywhere in the world, giving immediate value to the farmer, at prices comparable internationally, and thus, giving what we call international commodity. The Botswana Mercantile Exchange will be operational by March 2026.
86. **TOURISM** remains vital in the economy of Botswana. With its extensive value chain and labour absorption capacity, it is acknowledged as a tool for economic development, playing a significant role in responding to the country's socio-economic challenges. The sector is also a significant foreign exchange earner.

87. We are working together with all stakeholders in the Tourism industry to double Botswana's international tourist arrivals in the next 5 years, with a view to create more jobs and increase the sector's contribution to GDP.
88. Our fellow Citizens are becoming active participants in the tourism economy, with concession allocations in Ngamiland and Makgadikgadi serving as instruments of empowerment. Joint ventures in Khwai and Mababe have attracted P72 Million in investment and created 127 jobs, with other communities undertaking expansion projects through their respective community trusts.
89. **SPORT AND THE CREATIVES** industries extend far beyond individual well-being and leisure - they have immense potential to contribute to the economy. This underscores the broader national significance of sport and the arts. We are, therefore, currently updating all the relevant policies and legal frameworks to unlock the potential of this sector and to support its growth. Cinematography Bill, which will modernise Botswana's film industry with clear standards for production, distribution and exhibition, will be tabled before Parliament in the current sitting.
90. The reintroduction of sporting activities in our schools is, therefore, a valuable investment in the future, as it will enable us to nurture elite athletes, performers, actors, and diverse creative talents.
91. I am delighted to announce that Government has taken a decision to avail P200 million from the Alcohol Levy Fund towards procurement of Creative Arts content from our young people.
92. **To the youth** of our great nation - our most precious resource, more valuable than any physical asset we possess - We see your energy, we value your ideas, we admire your courage.

Your talent, creativity, and innovative spirit stand at the very heart of our national renewal.

93. This administration is committed to creating the environment that will nurture your potential, support your entrepreneurial dreams, and harness your digital-native capabilities for national development. We will not dismiss your ideas but develop them; we will not ignore your aspirations but invest in them. The Botswana we build tomorrow will be shaped by your imagination and courage today.
94. Our country faces a pressing unemployment crisis, especially the youth at 38%. Government selected 186 projects across 9 priority sectors and BETP selected projects were partly based on their potential to create employment. BETP intends to create 512 000 jobs primarily targeting youth.
95. Furthermore, my Office has established 'The Presidential Youth Empowerment Campaign' (PYEC). PYEC is a high-level national programme that is designed to coordinate efforts across sectors and has mobilised a task force to develop a coordinated, data-driven strategy in partnership with UNICEF, Office of the Assistant Secretary General for Youth at the United Nations, and the United Nations Commission for Africa.
96. A baseline study will be undertaken to identify 1 000 most promising candidates and produce key deliverables including a Botswana Digital Employability Index, a national trainer registry, and a youth policy brief. These tools will guide future interventions and ensure targeted impact which will be scaled to 10 000 participants.
97. One of the projects to debut the Presidential Youth Empowerment Campaign is the Climate-Smart Horticulture Development Programme which is a targeted skilling and capacity building programme to develop over 500 small-hold farmers organised in clusters.

98. To help young farmers meet buyer specifications, scale production and access start-up funding, a horticulture specific fund in partnership with financial institutions will be established. Through collaborative efforts of various partnership organisations, beneficiaries will be facilitated to access both local and export markets through the programme.
99. Among the initial Presidential Youth Empowerment Campaign projects are the Textile Acceleration Programme, Government Automobile Maintenance Programme, Digital Content Creation Hub all of which have a component of skills development and mentorship for growth of priority industries and employment creation.
100. Initiatives for development opportunities for Botswana youth will be delivered under the new agreements. The recently launched International Graduate Development Programme is the first of such initiatives. This is a rolling 2-year programme where Botswana young graduates will have an opportunity to work across De Beers' global operations developing future fit skills for the diamond industry and beyond.
101. University sponsorships for Masters and PhD studies, and internships with De Beers for students from tertiary institutions across Botswana, will be launched in December 2025. To provide opportunities for growth of skills and participation of Botswana in diamond beneficiation, our new agreements with De Beers provide for a Diamond Entrepreneurship Programme, which is on track to be launched in the coming months. This will develop Botswana entrepreneurs as diamondaires or in diamond-related services through two 5-year programmes. All these initiatives are part of this administration's aggressive response to creating meaningful jobs for our young people.
102. In acknowledgement of the challenges of drug and alcohol abuse that our young people face, government is in discussion

with business partners to help complete and operationalise in the last quarter of this financial year, a 50-bed Youth friendly rehab centre in Serowe with both in-patient and out-patient services. This is but one of many steps that government is taking to wage war against this scourge, so that no young Motswana gets robbed of his or her future by drugs and alcohol abuse.

103. **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT** is critical to attaining long-term economic and social goals. As a “land linked” country, Botswana provides critical connectivity in Southern Africa, being a key transit route to countries such as Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, and South Africa, through the North-South, and Trans-Kalahari corridors.
104. As a transit country, Botswana is poised to play an important role in facilitating intra-Africa trade as the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement has commenced. Our transport legislation and standards are to be reviewed, harmonised and aligned with regional economic communities’ expectation.
105. In line with the commitment of transforming Botswana into a transport hub for the 360 million strong SADC market, the government intends to improve the national roads network through high quality tolled roads to ensure sustainability in the development and maintenance of roads in Botswana. In this regard, construction of the A3 road has commenced, while feasibility for the A1 dual carriage tolled road, spanning over 600 kms is scheduled to commence before the end of the year.
106. Our strategic location positions us as a vital hub for trade and connectivity. Botswana’s position in the Southern Africa region provides a distinctive benefit of being a hub for trade and connectivity. As the country advances economic transformation and integration, rail transport is becoming increasingly critical to unlocking new markets.

107. To support this, government is developing alternative railway lines. The Mmamabula-Lephalale Railway Line and the Mosetse-Kazungula-Livingstone line as part of SADC's Strategic Plan of the North-South Corridor (NSC).
108. Upon taking office, this Government urgently reviewed the Development Manager Model to assess its fiscal sustainability. The review, completed in March and published in August 2025, revealed serious flaws including procedural gaps, weak stakeholder engagement, and misalignment with legal frameworks.
109. Most concerning were the financial implications, as the structure and magnitude of associated fees placed an unsustainable burden on public resources. In response, Government revoked all three Presidential Directives that had approved the model and its governance structures.
110. Sixteen projects already under construction will continue, using alternative delivery or financing methods. This ensures continuity while reducing fiscal risk and improving oversight.
111. For the remaining 132 projects still at conceptual stage, a thorough reassessment is underway to explore better-aligned options. The goal is to ensure value for money and consistency with national priorities.
112. Given the current fiscal constraints, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model has become essential for delivering key infrastructure projects without overstressing government resources. In order to make it more responsive, the PPP Framework is being strengthened through the BETP, to make it more inclusive, transformative, and private sector-led.

113. Over the next twelve months, urgent milestones include tabling the PPP Bill, deploying PPP functions, resourcing the PPP Unit, and operationalising the appropriate governance structure. These steps will ensure that PPPs deliver value, efficiency, and impact.
114. Provision of safe drinking water remains a key priority for this administration. Implementation of water and sanitation projects during the financial year 2025/2026 has mainly been focused on completion of major projects. Projects such as the NSC 2.2 - Palapye to Mmamashia Water Supply Pipeline Contracts 1, 2, and 3, NSC 2.3 - Mmamashia to Gaborone Water Supply Scheme; Lobatse Water Master Plan; Molepolole - NSC Connection (Gamononyane); Moshupa Sanitation; Mmamashia Water Treatment Plant; Tswapong South Phase 2; Goodhope Water Supply Phase 2.2 are all at the stages of wrapping up and consolidating final accounts. The process of concluding the outstanding works has however been affected by delays in payment of service providers.
115. Maun Water and Sanitation project is coming to an end with early beneficiation realised for both water and sanitation. The Kanye Sanitation project that has taken long to conclude is now winding up and most of Government institutions have been connected to the system. Pipeline gaps are being addressed to fully operationalise the entire scheme to enable the Kanye community to be connected. Boteti South-Central Water Supply is 98% complete while Kanye Network Rehabilitation stands at 96% completion. The projects will be completed by end of this financial year.
116. Projects that were in their earlier stages of implementation by beginning of 2025/2026 include the following: Molepolole Water Treatment Plant which is now about 80% complete; Molepolole Water and Sanitation is 22% complete; Werda / Makopong Water Supply is 50% complete; Dimajwe Water Supply is

30% complete and Sowa Water Supply is 9% complete. These projects have been seriously affected by payment delays and have all progressed very slowly.

117. **DIGITALIZATION** is a critical enabler for our bold transformation of the economy. Government through the Ministry of Communications and Innovation in partnership with the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC), Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) and other stakeholders have commenced an ambitious journey to launch and go-live on an ultramodern, secure platform where all government services will be delivered within the next 6 months. This will be backed by improved backbone infrastructure that will ensure reliability and stability of the platform.
118. Procurement has been a major bottleneck slowing down progress in many development initiatives. To address this issue, government shall, this coming month, invite experts to bid for the provision of **e-Procurement services**. This is a bold move that will rid our procurement of corruption, raise the levels of transparency, strengthen and standardise procurement controls across government, while ensuring that government no longer suffers the devastating damage caused by high prevalence of price gauging.

HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND GENDER EQUALITY

119. Government is steadfast in its resolve to ensure that Batswana can access quality health services when they need them, without financial hardships, through Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In our quest to reach the true North for Botswana in Health as enshrined in both the NDP12 and the BETP we have 2 main goals.

120. Goal 1 is to raise the UHC Index from 55 to 75 in the next 5 years. This involves major reengineering of the whole health system. Reforms include digitalisation of the health system, re-orientation of health services towards a more robust Primary Health system which we have already started by relocating primary health care services to local authorities and the National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA) to Ministry of health, re-imagining drugs and medicines supply chain systems to ensure predictable availability of commodities for Botswana and modernising infrastructure.
121. Goal 2. Introducing a sustainable health financing scheme, the National Health Insurance, which will be co-created with Botswana. The process has started, stakeholder engagements are continuing with different groups from academia, policy makers, politicians and Botswana at large. These ideas will be synthesised and culminate in a policy that will be presented to all Botswana for comments and approval.
122. I officially declared a state of public health emergency on 25th August, 2025, in response to a catastrophic collapse of the medical supply chain, which had been building up for decades. At the time of the declaration, critical medicines and medical commodities were almost non-existent. Two months later, though we are not yet out of the woods, most first-line medicines for chronic diseases and those needed for emergency care are now partially available.
123. The availability of critical medicines and medical commodities now stands at 36% while vital, essential and necessary (V.E.N.) medications stands at 63%, which is expected to increase significantly in the next few weeks as supplies that were not readily available, but are still being manufactured, arrive.
124. Government has so far procured over 300 tonnes of essential medical supplies with additional shipments expected soon.

Let me take this opportunity, to express our gratitude to the Governments and the people of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States of America, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Brazil, China and Cyprus as well as the United Nations family, for having pledged or donated medicines respectively. To these Nations as well as local and global entities who have made pledges, we say thank you very much.

125. Government has prioritised transformation of the Central Medical Stores and medicines supply chain to ensure that we will never return to this situation. Through BETP, CMS will be restructured, informed by an evaluation currently underway. This is in keeping with the medium to long term strategies I detailed when I declared a State of Public Health Emergency.
126. Alongside this, government is undertaking necessary reforms that include immediate digitisation of the health system. To further address supply-chain disruptions with medical commodities, Government has implemented several short to medium term measures. These include:
 - a. establishment of Health First Botswana Partnership. This is a fund intended to raise funding to support the Ministry of Health with efficient procurement of healthcare supplies to meet the needs of our people sustainably;
 - b. approval for the use of the Emergency Procurement method, as provided for under the Public Procurement Act, to respond swiftly to the current predicament; and
 - c. The National Steering Committee and the National Task Force, that government created on August 25, both led from the Office of the President, will continue to lend full support to the Minister of Health to coordinate and ensure successful closure of this situation.
127. This administration inherited a health system plagued by non-functional and obsolete equipment requiring significant investment to rehabilitate. We have recently bought two new

state of the art x-ray machines for Princess Marina Hospital and as a medium term intervention, we are deploying three mobile mobile x-rays in Gumare, Gweta and Bobonong Primary Hospitals, which have no radiology services.

128. Laboratory services are also adversely affected due to equipment that is obsolete, and shortage of reagents. To address this challenge and the high cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment, the Ministry of Health will now transition towards equipment placement models for both laboratory and radiology services with both local suppliers and original equipment manufacturers at a cheaper cost than the current. The government will, therefore, only pay for the tests while equipment owners will be responsible for their maintenance and availability of reagents under strict Service Level Agreements.
129. Cervical Cancer remains a leading cause of cancer deaths in Botswana. This is attributed to low screening rates as well as late diagnosis among others. Government has invested in Health Promotion and Education to encourage Botswana to have regular screening, which will facilitate early diagnosis and better clinical outcomes.
130. As part of the global call and sustainable development goals to end malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS by 2030, Government is fully committed to eliminating malaria by the year 2027. In the last decade, Government has made significant progress towards malaria elimination, with a 43.5% reduction in malaria cases.
131. To optimise the provision of specialised care and ensure efficiency, Government approved Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital (SKMTH) to function as a State-Owned Public Hospital. The aim is to create a single pool of medical specialists with similar working conditions to enable realisation of the triple mandate of SKMTH of high-quality clinical services, training and research.

132. I acknowledge that majority of our health facilities are in a state of disrepair across the country. To support implementation of the National Health Insurance, this requires urgent attention. While our fiscal space is limited, we cannot afford to ignore the deteriorating conditions of our health facilities. Thus, the Health First Botswana Partnership that will be sealed during this month between the Ministry of Health and the Botswana Development Corporation will help urgently to address this challenge.
133. I am also delighted to announce that we received a generous grant of USD 50 million, approximately P700 million, to drive our commitment to transform the health system to a primary care focus, with emphasis on promotion of health, prevention, early detection and treatment.
134. **ON SOCIAL PROTECTION** Government is undertaking a comprehensive overhaul of the social protection system with a focus on efficiency and sustainability. This includes the operationalisation of a Single Social Registry (SSR), for beneficiary registration and introduction of Proxy Means Testing to ensure that support reaches those most in need.
135. In keeping with our digital transformation agenda, Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs (MLGTA) is automating key processes to enhance access, transparency, and accountability. These reforms, grounded in a thorough review of existing programmes, will culminate in a unified Social Protection Policy, developed in collaboration with our international partners and the private sector.
136. Government will operationalise the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme as a key strategy to enhance food and nutrition security among learners while boosting local agricultural production. This initiative will provide two nutritious meals per day to support the health and academic performance of our children. Importantly, it will create reliable markets for local

smallholder farmers, fostering rural economic growth and reducing poverty.

137. As a commitment to improving the well-being of vulnerable children, the new Child Support Grant will provide monthly financial support of P300 to children under the age of one starting in the next financial year. This programme is designed to ensure children receive a strong start in life. As of July 2025, records indicate a total of 39 525 eligible children. We are working hard to ensure that all eligible babies are covered.
138. We are transforming the Ipelegeng Programme into a modern, skills-based Public Works Programme to be fully implemented by end of 2025. This represents a shift from a traditional relief work to a model that contributes directly to national development. Participants will gain vocational skills in sectors like the arts, culture, tourism, and environmental conservation, enabling them to transition into formal employment or self-employment.
139. To advance inclusive development, Government has prioritised review of the Remote Area Development Programme and formulation of a Policy for Indigenous People in Botswana. These measures aim to address long-standing social and economic marginalisation, particularly of the indigenous Khoena/ne/n communities, who for generations have faced displacement, exclusion, and limited access to essential services. Through this review and new policy, we aim to promote social justice, affirm their rights, and ensure their full participation in national affairs.
140. We have just written a new chapter of inclusivity and cultural preservation into our history books, a milestone that had seemed out of reach for decades. To ensure all our citizens access vital information and participate fully in our national discourse in a language they understand, this government has introduced programming in SheKgalagari, Ikalanga, Shiyeyi and Naro through our public broadcast platforms. These languages

are being aired now. We intend to expand this initiative by adding more languages in a second phase. This is a concrete step towards reflecting the magnificent diversity of our people and strengthening the bonds that hold us together.

141. For the most vulnerable enterprising members of our society, we have taken concrete steps to deliver on our promise of dignity. We have transformed the Chema-Chema Programme.
142. We have converted the programme into a grant for all recipients who had already signed contracts and received funds. This decision was made to provide real, economically meaningful boost to our hustlers and small entrepreneurs, to free them from debt and empower them to truly grow their businesses.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

143. **EDUCATION** is not only a fundamental human right but also a cornerstone for social and economic transformation. The current focus of Government is to transform higher education and prioritise Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which has been identified as an anchor for economic transformation and job creation.
144. The Government is transforming the education system by adopting a STEAM-driven curriculum through the General Curriculum and Assessment Framework (GECAF). This framework is designed to produce a globally competitive workforce by focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics.
145. To ensure successful implementation of this new curriculum, the Government is prioritising two key areas: teacher empowerment, and infrastructure transformation and digitalisation. Teachers will be upskilled and re-trained to deliver the integrated STEAM

approach effectively. These transformations will target all levels from early childhood to senior secondary and will be implemented to deliver the STEAM curricular in the January 2026 academic year.

146. The Government is aware of unused and underutilised education facilities and is committed to implementing transformative measures where maintenance of facilities will be done through TVET students for cost efficiency.
147. I am pleased to announce that the construction of Maun Centre for Children with Severe and Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities has been completed. It will accommodate children with profound disabilities up to 18 years. This landmark initiative forms part of our broader strategy to strengthen inclusive educational infrastructure and to ensure that every learner, regardless of ability, can access quality education.
148. In our continued endeavour to improve the state of education, the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education in partnership with the Ministry of Finance is in the process of securing a loan from the World Bank amounting to USD 104,423,333 (equivalent to BWP 1,409,715,000). The loan will cover; (1) Refurbishment of schools and expand access to secondary education across the country, (2) strengthen training and support teachers, (3) establish student learning management system, (4) promote Early Childhood Development (ECD), (5) Support out of School Children and Youth, and (6) advance Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM) teaching and learning.
149. To date, 12 new primary schools are under construction. Of these, six schools in Oodi, Gaborone (two), Mogoditshane, Kumakwane, and Francistown are practically complete, while the remaining six are progressing well. Government continues to address shortage of classrooms, teachers' houses, and toilets under backlog eradication programme across all Local Authorities.

LAND, HOUSING ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN ECONOMY

150. **With respect to sustainable environment,** Botswana is committed to the Paris Agreement and global fight against climate change. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles will be embedded into our national development and investment architecture. A comprehensive National Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy is currently being developed and is expected to be completed by end of the financial year. This strategy will lay a foundation for a national framework and action plan that will empower businesses and investors to integrate sustainability in their planning.
151. In parallel, Botswana is strengthening its climate finance architecture. The National Development Bank (NDB) is finalising accreditation with the Climate Change Adaptation Fund, and Government is actively exploring opportunities with the Green Climate Fund. These engagements will unlock new avenues for financing climate-resilient infrastructure, green innovation and sustainable livelihoods, further reinforcing our commitment to a low-carbon, climate-smart future.
152. Botswana is developing a National Carbon Market Framework, supported by the World Bank and GIZ. This initiative positions our nation as a credible participant in the global carbon economy, leveraging our forests, grasslands, and wetlands to drive investment, create jobs, and empower communities.
153. Capacity building is our immediate priority. With support from UNDP, we are equipping government agencies, communities, and the private sector with skills to develop, verify, and trade high-integrity carbon credits. This will ensure our carbon projects meet rigorous environmental and social safeguards. Once operational, carbon markets will accelerate economic diversification, channel resources to rural communities, and generate revenue for climate adaptation.

154. In pursuit of our national commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development, the Government, in partnership with UNDP through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), has commenced the development of a comprehensive Protected Areas Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Partnerships Plan. This initiative represents a bold and forward-looking response to the financial constraints that continue to challenge the effective management of our protected areas.
155. Accreditation of Kasane-Kazungula and Shakawe as wetland cities under the Convention on Wetlands Accreditation Scheme, affirms our leadership in safeguarding globally significant ecosystems.
156. A National Ecosystem Assessment Project is underway, offering a comprehensive evaluation of biodiversity, ecosystem services, and interdependence between nature and society. We are also addressing emerging environmental challenges such as E-waste, guided by a national strategy, and promoting green entrepreneurship through a Waste Value Chain Roadmap and Business Plan. These initiatives reflect our belief that sustainability is a catalyst for innovation and inclusive growth.
157. Botswana is ranked number one globally for megafauna conservation, proudly hosting the most significant African elephant population. While wildlife remains the cornerstone of our tourism economy, and a vital source of rural livelihoods, this success brings new challenges, including poaching and human-wildlife conflict. In response to these challenges:
 - a. A National Anti-Poaching Strategy has been developed, and the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act amended to empower officers with appropriate arms to combat militarised poaching syndicates.
 - b. The National Human-Wildlife Conflict Strategy and Action Plan (2025-2030) has been launched following nationwide

consultations. This holistic framework safeguards rural livelihoods, while promoting peaceful coexistence between communities and wildlife.

158. Botswana remains resolute in its commitment to sustainable utilisation of wildlife resources-guided by science, rooted in sovereignty, and enriched by the wisdom of our communities. At the upcoming CITES COP 20, Botswana will advocate for the resolutions of the 2024 African Elephant Dialogue calling for the removal of restrictive measures on the trade in live elephants.
159. We shall engage decisively with international partners to reaffirm our position: that responsible, regulated trade, anchored in sustainability, scientific evidence, and community benefit, is essential to the long-term viability of our wildlife economy.
160. This commitment is evident through the recently enacted Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) law that decentralises resource management, reinforces governance, and enhances community beneficiation for those who live alongside wildlife.
161. ***Batswana betsho***, we acknowledge that our waste management efforts are inadequate. This is evidenced by the poor state of our environment and habitats. In response, I have taken a decision to institute a national clean-up campaign. In this regard, the second Saturday of every month has been designated as a clean-up day. Every community member will take part in cleaning their respective environment. I call upon businesses, institutions and the informal sector to keep their immediate and greater surroundings clean at all times. Community leaders are particularly important in enforcing this new culture of cleanliness.
162. Furthermore, government has taken a decision to ban single use plastic bags. The industry has advanced to a point where

biodegradable packaging is available, hence there is no excuse. The modalities to implement these necessary interventions will be communicated by the relevant authorities following consultations. The cleanliness of our environment is a personal responsibility that should be engrained in us as a habit.

163. **On Social Housing**, we launched the Bonno Housing Scheme nationwide. This is more than just new houses; it is a foundation for dignity and a stimulus for our economy. Our approach is two-fold: building new units for first-time homeowners and improving access to affordable housing. Against the target of 100 000 units over a three-year period, a total of 31 745 housing units country wide have been contracted with various developers, with construction of 5 880 housing units across the country already having commenced and expected to be completed by end of the next financial year, including the 3 000 being built through the Botswana Housing Corporation in Kgale.
164. In view of the current fiscal constraints, government has come up with a strategy to implement majority of the housing units with private developers through design, build and finance model.
165. Furthermore, as part of our commitment to provide shelter for our people, in July 2025 government acquired 1 223 housing units from the BCL, and were handed over to the Ministry of Water and Human Settlement on the 17 October 2025.

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY

166. **GOOD GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS** are non-negotiable pre-conditions for the transformation we seek. However, corruption remains a significant threat and a persistent challenge to Botswana's socio-economic development and governance. The ongoing forensic audit on Government expenditure, and functional efficacy of

existing systems and institutions over a ten-year period, will undoubtedly culminate in strengthening governance. It will foster a culture of transparency and accountability across the economy. Completion of the audit is scheduled for March 2026. I assure the nation that its findings will be acted upon.

167. In recognition of the need for a modern, independent anti-corruption institution, the government has prioritised review of the Corruption and Economic Crime Act (CECA) of 2013. The revised Draft Bill, currently under legal vetting, proposes to grant the DCEC greater operational independence, including a redefined reporting structure and enhanced protections for the office of the Director General. The CECA Draft Bill will be tabled for approval during the current sitting of Parliament.
168. The delinking of the DCEC from mainstream Public Service has been initiated and submitted for inclusion under NDP12, with a projected budget of P35 million for Development, and P48 million Recurrent. Once approved, this will lay a foundation for a more robust and independent Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC). Stakeholder engagements regarding the project have commenced.
169. Notably, Section 3 (e) of the Employment and Labour Relations Act has officially delinked the DCEC from the Public Service, and implementation is pending the conclusion of the review of the CECA.
170. In line with our efforts to modernise electoral processes, the independent Electoral Commission has successfully developed and installed a new Elections Management System (EMS). The project is currently in the process of migrating data from the old system to the new. The system aims to significantly improve operational efficiency and introduce a dedicated poll staff management module to avert challenges relating to ballot papers for advance poll.

171. The Ethics and Integrity Directorate continues to work closely with key stakeholders to safeguard the interests of our nation. The aim is to establish a top-tier Asset Declaration System that will significantly assist in the monitoring of these interests, income, assets and liabilities to effectively detect corruption, money laundering, and acquisition of property from proceeds of crime. Furthermore, the Directorate, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is in the process of developing comprehensive guidelines on Conflict of Interest.
172. Government reforms remain focused on ensuring that every Motswana, regardless of their economic status, or geographic location, can obtain timely, fair and affordable legal support. Access to justice is not a privilege, but a fundamental right.
173. Legal Aid Botswana (LAB) has begun implementing its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, with specific focus on reaching marginalised and rural communities. In parallel, the national rollout of Criminal Legal Aid Services has commenced, following a successful pilot study, which ended in 2024/25.
174. The ongoing reforms to strengthen the Court of Appeal will ensure that any errors can be corrected promptly, protecting citizens' rights and preventing the appeal process itself from becoming a source of delay. These reforms are a clear signal that, in Botswana, the rule of law is paramount, and we are building a judiciary that is robust, efficient, and worthy of the people it serves, while strengthening investor and public confidence in the competence of our courts.
175. Furthermore, the Judicial Service Commission appointed judges to both the High Court and the Court of Appeal, increasing their numbers substantially.
176. The establishment of a dedicated Criminal Court Division will also allow for specialisation, leading to faster trials, more consistent

sentencing, and a focused attention on cases involving personal liberty and public safety.

177. The primary objective of the Cybersecurity Bill, which was passed into law during the July sitting of Parliament, is to establish and empower a cybersecurity institutional framework that ensures a safe and secure cyber environment. This will protect our Critical National Information Infrastructure, making Botswana a more attractive destination for investment, and fostering trust in digital growth. The Act provides for establishment of a National Cybersecurity Commission, among others.
178. The Public Service (Amendment) Act, 2025 empowers the Public Service Bargaining Council to negotiate Collective Labour Agreements. This reform is a landmark for labour relations, as it promotes fairness, collective bargaining, social dialogue, and a more stable public service environment.
179. During the financial year 2024/2025, this Parliament enacted a total of 24 Acts. These include, amongst others, the Refugees (Recognition and Management) Act, Act No. 20 of 2024, which makes provision for the recognition and management of refugees. This law is also an affirmation of the commitment we made as a Nation under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967, and the Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969.
180. Parliament also passed the Access to Information Act, Act No. 16 of 2024; a salient piece of legislation to make available to the public, information about the operations of public authorities and to ensure that the rules and practices affecting members of the public in their dealings with public authorities are readily available to persons affected by those rules and practices.

181. Since acceding to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), significant progress has also been made from policy and legal reforms to active civil society engagement and enhanced public awareness. Nonetheless, systemic gaps remain, challenging us to strengthen implementation of the Convention.
182. National Defence is the cornerstone of our sovereignty and a fundamental enabler of political stability, economic development, and social cohesion. The military has been crucial in maintaining peace and stability, prerequisites for sustainable growth.
183. I have noted with concern and strongly condemn the recent violence against police officers, which undermines our social fabric. Law enforcement officers serve to protect all of us and they must be respected.
184. Overall crime decreased by 8.2% in 2024 compared to 2023, including violent and serious offenses. Yet, high levels of violence persist in crimes such as rape, murder, and robbery. The Botswana Police Service (BPS) is strengthening community engagement and partnerships to address crime and reduce public fear. The National Crime Prevention Conference in March 2025, themed "Forging Collaborative Pathways Towards Safer Communities," was a key platform for collaboration. The new Police-Public Partnership Directorate is expected to enhance police-community cooperation further.
185. Gender-Based Violence remains a hefty challenge to our nation's moral fabric and social stability. In 2024 alone, the Botswana Police Service recorded 14 020 GBV cases, with 4 468 of these crimes committed against children below 18 years.
186. These are not just statistics; they represent shattered lives, broken families, and a threat to our collective future. To address GBV, Government is reviewing the National Strategy Towards

Ending GBV to infuse emerging issues and trends as well as adopt a human rights approach to the provision of services. Efforts are also underway to establish Gender Based Violence One-Stop-Service Centres to provide comprehensive services for survivors.

187. Integration of Special Constables into mainstream policing is advancing, with 874 undergoing training and expected to graduate by December 2025, completing the absorption process by 2026/27—strengthening the police service.
188. Government remains committed to combating illicit drug use and trafficking. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) leads national drug control efforts, enhancing interdiction capabilities through new detection and testing equipment at border points.
189. The DEA developed a National Drug Control Master Strategy to coordinate multi-sectoral efforts. Due to the challenges of illicit drugs, I have instructed the DEA, in collaboration with stakeholders to devise remedial strategies.
190. To address growing money laundering-related risks and the misuse of emerging financial technologies, Parliament passed the following critical laws:
 - a. The Virtual Assets Act, 2025. The Act provides for the management, mitigation and prevention of money laundering, and financing of terrorism and proliferation risks associated with emerging business practices; and
 - b. The Companies (Amendment) Act 2025, and the Trust Property Control (Amendment) Act 2025, to align the legislation with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on anti-money laundering recommendations.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GLOBAL MARKETS

191. Botswana continues to support conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. We are also playing an instrumental role in ensuring effective implementation of the reinvigorated United Nations Peace and Security Architecture, African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), including the African Union Master Roadmap to "Silencing the Guns by 2030."
192. Since my last address to this Parliament, Botswana established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Oman. Furthermore, Botswana has announced plans to expand its diplomatic missions to other jurisdictions.
193. In my inaugural speech at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, I reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the Government of Botswana to the three pillars of the United Nations, namely; development, peace and security, and human rights. Furthermore, I held a bilateral meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, where I also expressed Botswana's deep concern regarding geo-political tensions that continue to threaten international peace and security, notably the continued Russia-Ukraine and Israeli-Palestine conflicts.
194. In advancing the peace and security agenda, Botswana has presented its candidature to the non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2030 - 2031. As it may be recalled, Botswana has only served once in the Security Council during the period 1995 - 1996. Additionally, as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the term 2024 - 2025, Botswana consistently champions matters relating to constitutionalism, democracy, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and human rights.

195. We showcase ourselves to the international community as a model of democracy, political stability, peace and security, and would like other countries to emulate some of our values, such as tolerance of divergent views, and religions. Botswana remains a strong advocate of free, fair and credible elections, and abhors unconstitutional changes of government.
196. As I conclude, Botswana stands at the threshold of a bold transformation, reforming governance, modernising infrastructure, revitalising education, and diversifying its economy with purpose and precision. From forensic audits and judicial reforms to STEAM-driven learning and inclusive development, each initiative reflects a nation determined to uplift its people and secure its future.
197. Strategic investments in energy, transport, tourism, and financial innovation are unlocking new frontiers of opportunity, while strengthened defence, diplomacy, and social protection ensure peace and dignity for all. This is more than policy; it is a promise.
198. A promise that every road built, every school opened, every law reformed, and every child empowered is a step toward a Botswana where integrity is our foundation, innovation is our compass, and prosperity is shared. Ours is a steady path – taken one step at a time.
199. Kwame Nkrumah’s wisdom echoes across the decades: “The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart.” Our unity – our cherished Botho, our spirit of community and shared destiny - remain our greatest national resource. More valuable than any mineral wealth, more enduring than any commodity price cycle. It is this unity that will see us through the present challenges toward the prosperous future we all seek.

200. We spent the last twelve months fully diagnosing the problems that have held us back; corruption, inefficiency, economic stagnation and the erosion of public confidence. We now know where the weaknesses lie, and we have built the tools to address them. The next twelve months are about delivering more results. We will measure progress not by intentions but by outcomes, by homes built, the jobs created, the youth employed, the farms revived, and the systems reformed.
201. Finally, I want to encourage you, let us stay united *Batswana Betsho* and continue to build together, the Botswana we not only want, but the one we know we can build. As I said in my inauguration address, **I believe in Botswana, I believe in you Batswana** and I know that together, you and I with this government, will deliver a country like no other on the African continent.

I thank you.

PULA !!!

