



STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY
LT. GEN. DR. SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE
THIRD SESSION
OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

5th December 2016

GABORONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Madam Speaker, before beginning, I would request that we observe a moment of silence for those who have departed during the past year.
2. Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, I come before you to once again report on our country's progress over the past twelve months, while further updating this House and the nation about our roadmap for moving forward. Let me begin by saying that having now passed the golden milestone marking our first half century of democracy and development, we will continue to take full advantage of emerging opportunities in our shared journey as a united and proud nation.
3. The advent of our 50th Anniversary, coinciding with the passing of the baton from Vision 2016 to our new Long Term Vision 2036, underscores the fact that we as a nation must remain focused on our national development path. It is therefore appropriate for us to contemplate the extent to which past experience, along with current planning, may assure our future achievement.
4. To reiterate what I said during the Golden Jubilee celebrations, our economic and social growth as a people has been and should remain, rooted in a willingness to collectively overcome any obstacle, no matter how daunting. We can do this through persistence, hard work and mutual support, while at all times placing the interests of Botswana first.
5. This is all the more imperative given that the era of comfortable budgetary surpluses, driven by relatively steady mineral revenues, is behind us. We must therefore emulate our forbearers by doing more to optimise the assets at our disposal.
6. The prime objective of our new Vision 2036 remains the delivery of prosperity for all and ensuring that every Motswana enjoys a dignified livelihood. The quality of our progress in reaching this destination will be measured across four pillars, being:

- Sustainable Economic Development;
 - Human and Social Development;
 - Sustainable Environment; and
 - Good Governance, Peace and Security.
7. Our overarching goal under the Sustainable Economic Development pillar is to see Botswana transformed into a high-income country, where continued growth is underpinned by a more inclusive, diversified and export led economy. This will require us to become more innovative, flexible and productive in our delivery and approach to the world of work. It also calls for an environment in which private sector expansion is not hampered by onerous regulation and an over reliance on the state.
 8. The aim of our Human and Social Development pillar is to build upon our legacy as a moral and tolerant society that is inclusive of all Batswana. Consistent with our longstanding traditions of mutual support we seek a harmonious future that ensures dignity for all by contributing to the wellness and social upliftment of the whole community.
 9. Building a Sustainable Environment is predicated on the optimal use of our natural resources, which we hold in stewardship as God's enduring gift to past, present and future generations. We must know the carrying capacity of the diverse ecosystems within our borders, in order to maximise sustainable yields from our renewable resources.
 10. With respect to Good Governance, Peace and Security, by 2036 we shall have ensured that our Republic remains a bastion of freedom, security and the rule of law. This will require both continuity and evolutionary transformation in our legal and institutional frameworks in response to changing popular expectations for a more disciplined society.
 11. Taken together, the four pillars provide an ambitious but realistic framework for further progress that will be translated into programmes and initiatives with measurable timeframes.

12. The successful implementation of Vision 2036 across the next four National Development Plans (NDP), beginning with the just approved NDP 11, will furthermore be driven by a structured delivery mechanism based on enhanced monitoring and evaluation as well as communications, change management, planning and delivery capabilities.
13. Government's recent decision to rename, rationalise and increase the number of line Ministries was motivated by a need to focus more on key developmental issues as part of NDP 11, while underscoring our intention to align ourselves with a changing world.
14. Enhanced partnership is further required for the delivery of our flagship programmes. In keeping with my Party's 2014 pledge, programmes such as the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD), the Economic Stimulus (ESP) and Poverty Eradication Programmes shall remain as priorities. Job creation through EDD and ESP will be increasingly linked to private sector growth, with Government playing an enabling role.
15. Madam Speaker, as of September 2016 the total number of Batswana who have been employed through ESP stood at 18,867, of whom 8,718 or 46% were youth. Next year will see us rolling out yet another programme, which will embrace every constituency in the country in the form of community projects. It will increase the delivery of infrastructure at local level, while providing further income generating activities and employment opportunities. This supplementary programme will be overseen by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.
16. Additional key priorities in realising our renewed Vision are the eradication of abject poverty and citizen empowerment through expanded educational and training opportunities for the youth and marginalised, including those living in remote rural areas, as well as targeted investment.

Economic Outlook

17. Madam Speaker, while our ongoing economic diversification efforts have resulted in measurable progress, we continue to be largely dependent on mineral, more especially diamond, revenues. As such, the country remains at risk from volatility in global commodity prices.
18. According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) most recent World Economic Outlook report, modest global growth rates of 3.1% for 2016 and 3.4% for 2017 are expected. Recent experience, however, teaches us to treat such projections with caution. Despite initially optimistic projections, our domestic economy last year ended up with a negative growth of 0.3%, having been driven down by a 19.7% decline in mineral revenues linked to weaker global demand, aggravated by drought and the challenges we experienced in our water and energy sectors.
19. We anticipate an overall domestic growth rate of 3.5% for this year and 4.1% in 2017. In this respect, while the liquidation of the BCL Group of companies will continue to have economic and social implications, particularly in the area of employment, it is anticipated that it will have limited direct impact in terms of our exports, Government revenues and overall growth. Government shall, nonetheless, continue to closely monitor developments with respect to the BCL liquidation process with the view of updating our macro-economic projections as may be necessary.
20. The negative effects of the liquidation of the BCL Group may reduce this figure, its medium to long term impact on economic growth, exports and Government revenues should be manageable.
21. Given the difficulties facing the mineral sector, domestic growth is expected to once more be driven by the non-mining sectors, more especially in Trade, Hotels and Restaurants (6.8%), Transport and Communication (6.1%) and Finance and Business Services (4.0%).

Inflation

22. Madam Speaker, I am once more pleased to report that our inflation rate is forecast to remain within the Bank of Botswana's 3-6 % objective range. In the current financial year the rate fell below our target, averaging 2.7% between April and September.
23. In light of the positive domestic inflation outlook, the Bank of Botswana maintained an accommodative monetary policy stance, with the bank rate being reduced to 5.5%. During the coming year we anticipate that sluggish global economic activity with low commodity prices will continue to put downward pressure on domestic inflation.

Trade and Foreign Reserves

24. Trends in merchandise trade as supplied by Statistics Botswana indicate that total exports for 2015 were valued at P63.4 billion, against P76.2 billion in 2014. This represents a 16.8% decrease in exports, mostly due to a fall in the demand for rough diamonds. Total imports increased by 1%, recording P73.2 billion in 2015 from P72.4 billion during 2014. Consequently, the trade balance was in a deficit of P9.7 billion in 2015, resulting in a 2015 deficit of P57 million in the balance of payments, compared to a surplus of P11.4 billion in 2014.
25. As at August 2016, foreign exchange reserves were valued at P83.1 billion, equivalent to 18 months of import cover. Of these reserves, the Government Investment Account amounted to P33.8 billion.
26. The continued goal of our exchange rate policy is to support the competitiveness of local industries. It is, therefore, important that we maintain a stable rate of exchange for Pula against the basket of currencies of our major trading partners. However, volatility of the Rand had, as of August 2016, resulted in an annual 2.8% depreciation of the Pula against major currencies that make up the IMF Special Drawing Rights.

Budget

27. The overall fiscal balance for the 2015/2016 financial year was a deficit of P6.63 billion, which is higher than the projected P4.20 billion. This was an unfortunate necessity, as deficits should be avoided given their potential to erode our foreign exchange reserves; as well as impact negatively on our international sovereign credit ratings, which are critical in driving economic growth and development. Government can therefore not sustain such unbalanced spending, which we will do as a last resort only under exceptional circumstances.
28. Madam Speaker, our prudent macro-economic management has continued to garner international praise for buttressing financial growth and stability. In April, Moody's Investors Service affirmed Botswana's "A2" sovereign credit rating. Moody's analyzed Botswana's credit profile as still stable in the context of the shock to the economy caused by low copper and nickel prices, as well as instability in the demand for diamonds.
29. In its October 2016 review, Standard and Poor's (S&P) Rating Services also reaffirmed its "A-2" sovereign credit rating for Botswana. As with Moody's the latest S&P update reflected the continued downside risks stemming from volatile commodity prices.

Planning

30. Madam Speaker, let me commend the members of this House for extending the last session of this House in order to debate and approve NDP 11, the implementation of which will commence on the 1st of April 2017. The Plan is aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as our new Vision 2036. Consistent with its theme of "Inclusive Growth for the Realisation of Sustainable Employment Creation and Poverty Eradication" it will, in particular, address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and income inequality.
31. To ensure the optimal use of our natural heritage on a sustainable basis, Government, remains committed to the Gaborone Declaration

for Sustainability in Africa. This commitment is being implemented through the global partnership programme on Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES). We have now developed natural capital accounts for water, minerals, energy and compiled macro-economic indicators of sustainable development. The regularly updated data from these accounts is being integrated into the National Economic Accounts to guide policy decision-making. The results from the water accounting exercise are thus already being used to address water use efficiency.

Economic Diversification Drive (EDD)

32. Madam Speaker, since its 2010 inception, the EDD Strategy has led to a significant increase in the value of Government procurement from local manufacturers and service providers; annually amounting to over P 2.2 billion over the past three financial years. To date, 1,896 enterprises have been registered under the EDD.
33. Implementation of the EDD Medium to Long-Term Strategy to develop sustainable sectors for economic growth and diversification is progressing, with implementation of the textile, leather and dairy sub-sector strategies.
34. Under the Leather Sub-Sector, the establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle that will own, build, operate and maintain the Leather Industry Park is progressing. Eight companies responded to an Expression of Interest, which was published in June 2016 to identify potential investors. Once complete, the Leather Industry Park is expected to create direct employment of 6000 to 8000 jobs.
35. Implementation of the Private Sector Development Programme, a joint initiative between Government and European Union (EU) to improve enterprise competitiveness, is being administered by Business Botswana. The Programme has enrolled 100 small and medium enterprises in manufacturing; ICT; agro-industry; hotel and tourism as well as the construction and public works sectors. The Programme is further enhancing the capacities of development institutions such as LEA, CEDA, BITC, HATAB and Community Based Organisations.

36. Implementation of recommendations from the Beef Value Chain Study is being finalised, while six additional value chain studies for horticulture, piggery, goats, honey, morula and tourism have been completed.

Investment and Trade

37. Madam Speaker, during the 2015/16 financial year the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) registered P377 million of investment expansions resulting from their investor aftercare programme, which encourages companies to reinvest locally. FDI attracted through BITC in 2015 amounted to P1.493 billion compared to P1.489 billion the previous year, while domestic investment amounted to P1.253 billion compared to P238.4 million the previous year. In 2015, BITC further facilitated exports valued at P2.2 billion.
38. As part of Government's investment promotion strategy, BITC has been further attracting investment in areas of competitive advantage such as cargo and logistics, beef, coal and soda ash beneficiation, auto components, ICT and leather production.
39. Moving forward, our potential as a centre for trade and investment has been enhanced by the recent signing of the EU - Southern African Development Community (SADC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which accords duty and quota-free market access for Botswana's exports to the EU market. Under this Agreement, our infant industries can be protected against EU imports from established industries. The Agreement also provides for transitional safeguard measures for Botswana's sensitive products.
40. To support industrial development, provision has been made for the application of export taxes on up to eight products from Botswana for a period not exceeding 12 years from entry into force of the Agreement. In addition to benefiting from sourcing inputs for production within the SADC and EU regions, Botswana industries have been also accorded the opportunity to source raw materials and intermediate inputs from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, as well as EU

Overseas Countries and Territories. The Agreement further supports the objectives of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan of poverty eradication and specifically the industrial pillar, where Member States envisage transformation of the region through value addition.

41. Government is considering the enactment of an Investment Facilitation Law, which will establish an investment code for Botswana and stipulate service standards and turnaround times for facilitating investors.

BDC Recovery

42. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) has recorded profits for the two years up to June 2016. Since mid-2015, just over P400 million worth of new investments have been approved, with an additional P800 million expected to be approved for funding both new and expanding businesses during next few months.

Economic Development Initiatives

43. Madam Speaker, a Board for the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) has been appointed and has already engaged a Technical Advisor for the rollout of the zones. Priority is now being given to the development of the mixed use Special Economic Zone at Selebi Phikwe.
44. In addition, Selebi-Phikwe Economic Diversification Unit (SPEDU) has engaged with communities in the SPEDU Region to resuscitate and support development projects in such areas as piggery, fish farming through co-operatives and development trusts. SPEDU is also facilitating the establishment of a Regional Chamber of Commerce and the development of the strategy to incorporate the SMME's into the mainstream economy in partnership with Business Botswana.

45. SPEDU is further facilitating the allocation of land for the establishment of private sector businesses including a pharmaceutical and air separation plants and an Aloe Vera farm and plant. These businesses are expected to be fully operational before the end of the 2016/2017 financial year, while plans to facilitate dam tourism are also underway.
46. From April 2015 to March 2016, 2,657 entrepreneurs were trained and mentored by LEA, of whom 2,033 were youth. As of March 2016, an additional 25,189 were also trained through the Entrepreneurship Awareness Workshops programme, which targets secondary school leavers, vocational education trainees, as well as prison inmates.
47. Government is employing sector specific strategies to promote local industries. A statutory instrument to restrict importation of salt in small quantities has been introduced to promote market access for locally packaged salt. Since its commencement, two salt packaging companies have been established. Restrictions on the exportation of scrap metal are also in place to improve accessibility by local metal foundries.
48. The Gambling Authority has now taken over from the previous Casino Control Board and is in the process of tendering for new licences, which includes casinos, sports betting and the national lottery among others. As this industry diversifies, we expect that this issuance of new licences will create more enterprises involving Botswana as well as external investors.

Cooperatives

49. Botswana's 241 cooperatives continue to contribute to economic, social and cultural development. Government is therefore monitoring the implementation of the Co-operative Transformation Strategy, with a view to resuscitate, revamp and re-direct the development of co-operatives into competitive businesses.

Competition & Consumer Protection

50. The Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) has developed 216 standards in such areas as the construction, chemical, agriculture and food sectors.
51. For its part, the Competition Authority has been overseeing merger applications involving foreign investors, among other transactions. Such cross border transactions can strengthen the capacity of local companies as well as empower citizens through ownership of shares in the merged business. In the financial year 2015/2016, a total amount of P800 million was injected into the local economy as a result of such merger transactions.
52. The Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) remains constant in its support of citizen business start-ups. Since 2008 CEDA has funded 3,289 enterprises with a total value of nearly P2.7 billion. During the 2015/2016 financial year, it further assisted 418 new enterprises with a total monetary value of P400 million, generating 2,952 new jobs.

Labour

53. Madam Speaker, Government continues to review labour laws so as to align them with changing needs. The Trade Disputes (Amendment) Act of 2016 came into effect on the 1st of November 2016, while amendment of the Employment Act and the Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations Act will commence during the last quarter of 2016/2017 financial year. A review of minimum wages is being carried out as part of the Revised National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits, 2005, while a National Policy on Wellness and Disease Management in the World of Work has been developed.

Nationality, Immigration, Civil and National Registration

54. Government has accelerated improvements in the national registers of births, deaths and identity management by intensifying enrolments and improving data integrity. The result is an integrated data set per each citizen from birth to death registration. Our progress in this area has been recognised with international awards, e.g. at the Africa Symposia on Statistical Development in November 2015 and Radiant Vision Award given by the Asia Pacific Smart Card Association in December 2015.
55. To facilitate movement of people across our borders, two pilot border posts have been opened at Tshidilamolomo in the Borolong Area in December 2015 and Mabolwe in Bobirwa Area in June 2016.
56. Since April 2016 Botswana has been a member of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Public Key Directory, which allows for the international authentication of our travel documents along with those of other countries. The arrangement greatly enhances border security. To further manage migration, the computerisation of border posts is continuing: two more ports of entry have been computerized and installation is ongoing at 3 others.

Public Infrastructure

57. Consistent with the relevant legislation, regulatory authorities have been put in place for the self-regulation of quantity surveyors, architects and engineers. A bill is being drafted to further regulate all contractors, which will ensure contractors use registered professionals.
58. To strengthen its capacity, the Department of Building & Engineering Services (DBES) is being transformed into three distinct but interlinked strategic work streams being Project Infrastructure Planning, Infrastructure Development & Management and Building Facilities Management.

59. The Government is further committed to enhancing public infrastructure through ESP projects. At primary school level, construction of additional 122 classrooms, 456 toilets and 125 teachers' quarters started during the current financial year. This is in addition to the 77 classrooms, 216 toilet cubicles and 101 teachers' quarters, undertaken during 2015/2016 financial year.

Minerals

60. The market demand for rough diamonds improved slightly in 2016, increasing the investors' confidence in the diamonds supply. Carat sales and revenue for this year are forecast to be 65% and 27% respectively above 2015 as a result of improved global demand.
61. While the BK 11 mine continues to be under care and maintenance, the Lerala Mine started production in April 2016 and has already made two sales. The Karowe mine has continued to perform well after unearthing the second largest diamond in history, the 1,111 carat Lesedi la Rona.
62. Copper and Nickel prices, however, remained depressed in 2016.
63. The downturn put BCL and Tati Nickel Mines under severe financial constraint, leading to our decision to place the BCL Group under provisional liquidation in October 2016. In taking this difficult step, Government was confronted by the fact that to stay afloat the BCL companies required an additional P2 billion over and above the P1 billion plus Government had guaranteed for a bridging loan advanced by Barclay's Bank in April 2016. These additional funding requirements, on top of the Barclay's loan that must be serviced by Government, had by any measure exceeded our financial capacity for further support; more so that based on medium term projections the mines would continue to incur losses.
64. To secure Selebi Phikwe's future, Government is implementing a robust Economic Recovery Plan, coordinated by the Former Bank of Botswana Governor, Ms. Linah Mohohlo. The plan includes

provision for the accelerated implementation of the SPEDU economic diversification framework coupled with further public and private investment.

65. Our other copper mines also continue to struggle. Boseto Mine has been acquired by Khoemacau after undergoing liquidation in 2015. The mine remains under care and maintenance and will hopefully reopen by end of 2017. Mowana Mine was also put under liquidation at the end of 2015 and is seeking new investors.
66. Notwithstanding these challenges, we continue to view the mineral sector as an area of opportunity for economic growth and diversification through the promotion of further beneficiation as well as the expansion of new, including non-traditional, mining operations. In this regard, I am pleased to confirm that there are some positive developments in the energy minerals sub-sector. For instance, A-Cap Resources was issued a mining licence for uranium near Serule, while African Energy intends to mine coal and generate power at Sese.

Agriculture and Food Security

67. Madam Speaker, over the past year the Agricultural Sector implemented ESP packages to improve access roads to production centres, use of treated sewage water for irrigation, electricity connection to production clusters, improvement of infrastructure at horticulture production areas and commissioning of a National Agro-Processing Plant. These initiatives have contributed to food security and employment creation.
68. The Agro-Processing plant in Selebi-Phikwe has been completed and since September 2016 is able to produce vegetables and associated commercial products for wholesale and retail suppliers.
69. Government is also strengthening its efforts to exploit sewage water for irrigation such as at Glen Valley where 203ha have been allocated to 47 farmers. The Serowe grey water re-use project is also progressing well and should be completed by the end of this month.

70. Crop production was affected by periods of extended heat waves and low moisture levels. The national cereal production for 2015/2016 is 54 374.20 Metric Tonnes, which is 18.1% of the National Cereal requirement of 300,000 Metric Tonnes. A drought assessment tour conducted in February and May 2016, confirmed that though there were late rains in February - March 2016, the rainfall had been poorly distributed and below normal in most parts of the country.
71. In view of this, the whole country was declared drought stricken. Government will be continuing with Drought Relief and special assistance measures until 30th June 2017, except for the 25% livestock subsidy which should terminate at the end of this month.
72. In response to changing climatic conditions, Government is promoting Climate Smart Agriculture technologies such as Conservation Agriculture.
73. The Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) has increased its revenue from 2013 through 2015 by about 20.4%. The BMC has also grown its export to Europe from about 6,000 tons in 2013 to just over 9,000 tons in 2015, while hoping to further increase exports in 2016 to over 10,000 tons. However, production turnover at both Francistown and Maun BMC plants remains low, resulting in greater losses.
74. The dairy industry has improved as a response to the implementation of the dairy development strategy, based on increasing the number of milking cows, availing land to dairy investors and improving milk marketing through EDD. The national demand for milk is 60 million litres. Currently production stands at 4.9 million litres compared to 3.4 million litres produced last year. This represents 8.1% of the national demand.
75. Government continues to implement agricultural support schemes such as ISPAAD, LIMID and Agricultural Service Support Programme (ASSP) to promote food security. In this respect, LIMID has supplied 76,076 small-stock to 5,474 beneficiaries countrywide. The construction of a small stock abattoir in Tsabong has commenced to

further enhance the scheme. The project is anticipated for completion in July 2018.

76. A special ISPAAD programme targeting Kgalagadi, Ghanzi and parts of Kweneng and Southern Districts is being implemented to assist Batswana who could not benefit from the regular ISPAAD programme. Under the ASSP, three service centres are complete, while another three are at various stages of construction.
77. With respect to animal health, the last case of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was reported on 4th August 2015 in the North West District. This opens the door for us to negotiate new markets for beef from this District. The FMD situation in the North East District has stabilized as a result of the continuing implementation of joint control of the disease along the shared boundary with Zimbabwe. This has led to re-listing of the Francistown BMC abattoir for export to the EU.
78. Government will submit applications for FMD free status for zones 3b (Nata-Gweta) and 7 (Mmadinare-Bobirwa) to the World Organization for Animal Health in May 2017.
79. There has, however, been an increase in livestock mortalities, especially cattle, in areas south of the Central District and northern Kgatleng and Kweneng Districts due to plant poisoning (Parvetta, called legonyana in Setswana). Under Agricultural Research and Development, maize and sorghum varieties, which are tolerant to drought, have been released. In addition Musi breed is currently being multiplied.
80. The Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) is also carrying out research in such areas as the utilization of indigenous plants for medicinal and food purposes, Tswana chickens and the genetic identification and characterization of indigenous cowpeas.

Tourism

81. Madam Speaker, through Government support, there has been a general increase in the level of citizen investors in tourism. To date, a total of 1322 operations have been licensed out of which 834 are 100% citizen owned and 251 are joint ventures and the remaining 237 are non-citizens.
82. We will continue to strengthen the Community Based Natural Resource Management programme to support communities in transitioning to non-consumptive tourism. Communities are also venturing into non-traditional tourism areas such as cultural and heritage tourism. These projects contribute to both the diversification of the tourism product and poverty eradication. Government will also develop more monuments and heritage sites to further expand the tourism opportunities.
83. In March 2017, our country will be showcased at the world's biggest travel expo, the Internationale Tourismus-Börse (ITB) in Berlin. We are in this respect the first Sub-Saharan African country to partner with ITB.
84. Madam Speaker, Government continues to promote the diversification of tourism through various special events such as the Qcwihaba Cultural Festival, Khawa Dune Challenge and Cultural festival, Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1000 Desert Race, the Makgadikgadi Epic, the Race for Rhinos and the World Strongest Man, as well as local cultural festivals. The events have continued to grow and improve every year in terms of turn out and value.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

85. Madam Speaker, the implementation of the merger between Botswana Post, BSB and Botswana Couriers & Logistics is progressing with the due diligence study of the affected institutions to be completed this month, which will recommend the most appropriate corporate business model and organisational structure for the merged entities.

86. Government has come up with a Postal Infrastructural Development Programme to upgrade existing and develop new Post Offices in all major villages, towns and cities. The post offices will further accommodate the business, service and customer requirements of Botswana Couriers and Logistics and the Botswana Savings Bank.
87. The listing of BTCL at the Botswana Stock Exchange was successfully implemented through Initial Public Offer, with the sale of BTCL shares receiving an overwhelming public response. Government has approved the Employee Share Option Plan through which BTCL employees will buy additional shares amounting to 5% of the company's total.
88. BOCRA is monitoring the performance of the telecommunications networks, having procured a quality of service monitoring tool to independently assess performance of operators with respect to the quality of service. Operators will also continue to install base stations where network congestion is experienced.
89. We continue to implement our broadband strategy for increased ICT connectivity through the expansion of the national fibre backbone network.
90. Through Botswana Fiber Networks (BOFINET), we are continuing to extend the national fibre backbone network which is expected to be completed by August 2017. Last mile connectivity to customer premises using fibre has been rolled out to a total of 370 business, government and commercial premises. The roll out of fibre will be further undertaken over the next 6 years to enhance connectivity to 38 settlements.
91. BOFINET has also commissioned public internet Wi-Fi hotspots in such areas as shopping malls, airports, hospitals and bus ranks. It is further aligning the roll out of the ICT infrastructure with retail operators. Targets have also been set for Operators to roll out mobile broadband to villages with population of more than 5000 over the next three years.

92. With respect to broadcasting, radio and television coverage is now available to some 97% of the population. This development has been enhanced with the adoption of the ISDB-T standard for digital terrestrial transmission in line with International Telecommunications Union regulations.

Railways

93. Botswana Railways is currently implementing its turnaround strategy to address current and future environmental dictates. As part of this programme, it launched the Passenger Train Service “BR Express” in March 2016, running between Lobatse and Francistown. The teething problems that were experienced at the beginning of the service have been resolved and it is now running smoothly.
94. In addition, Botswana Railways is refurbishing its station buildings in line with the passenger train service. The works for Lobatse, Gaborone and Francistown stations will be completed by end of December 2016.
95. Aged rolling stock continues to be a challenge in meeting the demand of BR services. Intensive maintenance programs are being executed through both outsourcing and in-house programs to improve operations. In anticipation of future coal exports, as well as a recapitalisation strategy to provide better service delivery, BR is procuring eight BD5 locomotives, which will be delivered in October 2017

Roads

96. Madam Speaker, there has been measureable progress in the completion of mega projects. The bulk of the development budget was used for continuation of the following roads infrastructure projects: Tonota - Francistown dual road, Road Sector Investment (Output and Performance Based Contracts), and Kazungula Bridge. The Tonota-Francistown dual carriageway has been completed and opened to traffic. The Thapama Interchange junction is anticipated to be complete by February 2017.

97. With respect to the Kazungula Bridge Project, temporary works on the Zambian side is now complete, whilst on the Botswana side it is at 86%. Overall permanent bridge works are at 13% completion. Construction has also commenced on the Charleshill-Ncojane road in June 2016.
98. ESP implementation in the road sector's primary goal is to decongest public highways, especially the A1. The following roads projects are being implemented under ESP: Duelling of Gaborone–Boatle, Mogoditshane–Gabane–Mmankgodi and Molepolole internal roads, as well as the upgrading of Dibete–Mookane–Machaneng, Mabeleapudi–Serule, Tshesebe–Masunga road and Mmandunyane–Mathangwane roads to bitumen standard. Access roads are also at different procurement stages, such as the Thalamabele–Mosu, Radisele–Pilikwe, Thamaga–Kubung, Moshupa–Manyana and Goodhope–Kgoro–Gathwane roads.
99. Government also continues to reseal/overlay some of our roads that are reaching their end of design lives.
100. Madam Speaker, to provide a more efficient and cost effective integrated transport system, additional areas of implementation are the National Multi-Modal Transport Master Plan and Greater Gaborone Transport Master Plan.
101. In addition, we are developing a Regional Integration Strategy to reduce the cost of trade and movement of people between Botswana, the SADC Region and beyond, while increasing participation of Botswana transport operators and locally based regional operators in the regional transport market.

Aviation

102. Madam Speaker, the new Air Traffic Control Tower and Technical Block construction at Maun Airport was completed and handed over in May 2016, while the Kasane Terminal building project is expected to be completed in April 2017.

103. In December 2015, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) conducted a validation mission, which affirmed that the country had risen from 53.78% to 71.58% of effective implementation of ICAO standards. The new score places Botswana above both African and global averages of 46.39% and 62.68% respectfully. In recognition of our progress, Botswana was one of the two countries in Africa selected to receive the Council President Certificate at the ICAO Assembly in September 2016.

Health and Wellness

104. Madam Speaker, the provision of quality health services is a constant priority. To achieve this, Government is focusing on four areas - organisational transformation, access to quality health care service, prevention with particular emphasis on primary health care and Economic Diversification Drive (EDD).
105. Under Organisational Transformation, a new organizational structure for the Ministry of Health and Wellness is being put in place and will be operational in the coming financial year.
106. Government is in the process of providing specialist medical services in the areas of Paediatrics, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Internal Medicine and Anaesthesiology to seven District hospitals. To date, four hospitals offer all five specialities, whilst three others have two to four specialists.
107. Other specialist services offered on ad hoc basis include heart surgery by the Mauritian Cardiothoracic Team and hip and knee replacement in partnership with WITS University. We also have an ongoing Organ Transplant programme with India.
108. By the end of June 2016, public medical supplies availability had improved to an average of 87% for medicines. Training of health workers in supply chain management, coupled with effective contract management and strategic partnerships with USAID and other development partners continues as we build our capacity for sustainable medical supplies availability.

109. Consistent with EDD guidelines, Government will continue to utilise its purchasing power to negotiate the prices we pay for our health commodities including drugs as well as facilitate private sector investment in health by encouraging local companies to produce health related products.
110. Madam Speaker, Emergency Medical Services are now available in seven centres. The benefits of this have already been witnessed in our evacuation response to road traffic accidents.
111. Adherence to health quality standards and the accreditation of our health facilities will further ensure that the services provided in our health facilities are of high quality. So far, we have fully accredited 5 out of 6 health facilities that were targeted in Phase 1 (Mahalapye and Scottish Livingstone Hospitals, Phuthadikobo, Xhosa and Airstrip Clinics).
112. Our Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets for 2015 galvanized efforts to reduce maternal, infant and under-five mortality. Our immunisation program continues to report coverage above 90% for most antigens. In 2015, we introduced the Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine followed by the introduction of bivalent polio vaccine in April 2016 and the July-August 2016 Measles-rubella vaccine and de-worming campaigns.
113. Maternal Mortality reduction is now an imperative. With improvement in our specialist staff complements, Districts are now clustered into zones under specialists for prompt interventions to address complications and save mothers' lives.
114. Madam Speaker, we are committed to eliminating malaria by 2018. This will be realised if communities in affected areas participate and play their part. This includes allowing our spray teams into homes, sleeping under insecticide treated nets as well as keeping surrounding areas clean. Government extends its gratitude to Global Fund which has availed funding support of approximately P52 million towards malaria elimination.

115. With regards to TB, there has been a decline in TB deaths from 758 in 2005 to 492 in 2015. Despite this progress, TB still remains a major public health concern and requires all the necessary attention and resources.
116. A Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) has been rolled out and is now included in routine immunisation programmes. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Botswana for allowing their young girls to be vaccinated with the HPV. We are proud to have achieved coverage of 97% in our February 2016 HPV initiative.
117. Non-communicable diseases remain our greatest health concern. To mitigate against the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases, Government continues to raise awareness on common risk factors, their consequences as well as focus on preventions; screening/early detection, diagnosis and treatment. This includes an ongoing Breast Cancer Campaign to raise awareness and screen 80% of eligible women.
118. We are also to revitalise and strengthen community health structures and interventions. This includes introducing Primary Health Care guidelines to strengthening services at primary level including integrating non-communicable diseases and addressing health needs throughout the life course.
119. To further address the increasing health security threats, Botswana has harmonised the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Technical Guidelines with the International Health Regulations for ease of implementation. This will strengthen capacities at District level for detecting, confirming and responding to priority public health challenges. The establishment of National Public Health Institute is also aimed at strengthening disease surveillance and outbreak response systems.
120. At the end of September 2016, the alcohol levy has collected a cumulative total of over P2,239,234,660,80. A follow up to our 2012 evaluation of the impact of our alcohol reduction strategies, which had confirmed a reduction in consumption, is now underway.

121. Both domestic and global statistics show that young people, more especially males between the ages of 15 and 35, are most vulnerable to alcohol abuse. Locally, on average, males annually consume over two and a half times the amount of alcohol than females (25 litres versus 9.5 litres)
122. Currently, 15 Non-Government Organisations are being funded from the alcohol levy to offer free rehabilitation services to the public. To further enhance rehabilitation services, the Universal Addiction Treatment Curriculum has been introduced in partnership with International Centre for Certification and Education of Addiction Professionals.
123. With regards to the mobilisation of ESP in the health field, the upgrading of 92 health facilities is being done in a phased approach in which 26 clinics and 5 hospitals are planned for upgrading in 2016/2017, along with the phased construction of 534 staff houses.
124. Madam Speaker, the opening of the Botswana University Hospital was delayed but is now anticipated to finally open in the coming year. Besides being a medical teaching facility, it will further serve as a centre of excellence for treatment. We also continue to explore and benefit from public and private sector partnerships from across our borders. To this end, there are plans to establish in Francistown, a 150 bed hospital specialising in acute care by the Indus Health Care Group.
125. Government is about to complete the third round of the National Health Accounts, which tracks health sector expenditure, including sub-accounts such as HIV/AIDS, Sexual Reproductive Health and TB. We have also been working with Development Partners to develop a Health Financing Strategy, which is expected at the end of this Financial Year.

HIV/AIDS

126. As the HIV/AIDS epidemic remains a major public health challenge, we continue to explore and implement innovative approaches for its control. We are amongst the first countries in the world to have

introduced the Treat All Strategy, which was launched in June 2016. As a result, HIV positive individuals irrespective of their CD4 cell count are now eligible for immediate Antiretroviral Therapy.

127. Botswana is also one of the few countries that are close to achieving the UNAIDS 90:90:90 targets that is 90% of HIV positive people should know their status, 90% of those on treatment should be virologically suppressed. According to the latest data from an ongoing study, our current status with regard to the target is 83% of our HIV positive people know their status of whom 87% are on ART whilst 96% of those on treatment are virologically suppressed.
128. To further assist us in the eradication of HIV/AIDS, we have received a grant of USD 32,172,404 from the Global Fund for Youth Prevention Programmes, Safe Male Circumcision and HIV testing services.

Social Upliftment & Protection

129. Madam Speaker, strategies and initiative to cushion vulnerable and disadvantaged groups against the effect of poverty are being implemented throughout the country. With respect to Poverty Eradication, small and medium size business projects have been introduced to provide income generating opportunities. New machinery and equipment for small scale manufacturing is currently being distributed to programme beneficiaries, who are also being assisted to form clusters and cooperatives to improve business skills and market access.
130. The Affirmative Action Framework for Remote Area Communities under the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) has also progressed. In terms of shelter provision, since the inception of the housing initiative in 2009/2010 financial year, financial provision has been made for a total of 1,395 housing units for remote area communities of which 823 houses are complete and 572 are under construction.

131. On the education front, under the RADP, students were funded and enrolled in different tertiary institutions under the Department of Tertiary Education Financing, while others are enrolled at different Brigades and Colleges.
132. Madam Speaker, I am happy to note that the Revised National Policy on Disabilities 2016 was tabled before this Parliament, which provides a blueprint mainstreaming people living with disabilities in all sectors of society. It has also been just over a year since the implementation of a monthly disability cash allowance. To date, the programme has registered 5,016 people, with 4,412 being currently supported.
133. To economically empower People with Disabilities, Government has introduced a disability entrepreneurship training programme to improve uptake of our economic empowerment schemes.
134. Let me further take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all companies and individuals who continue to economically support programmes and projects that are aimed at empowering People with Disabilities. It is my wish that such philanthropic partnerships between the private sector and Government will be sustained.
135. Additional social welfare programmes continue to assist different targeted groups, including destitute persons, community home based care clients, needy students and orphans and vulnerable children, World War II Veterans and Old Age Pensioners, as well as people living with disabilities. As at September 2016, a total of 35,713 destitute persons, 105,754 Old Age Pensioners, 1,795 World War II Veterans, 1,303 Community Home Based Care patients, 29,828 orphans, 34,264 needy students and 2,263 needy children were being supported on a monthly basis.
136. The Supplementary Feeding Programme continues to be provided in the 755 Primary Schools with an enrolment of 341,864 pupils and 966 Health Facilities with a total of 299,096 beneficiaries. In line with our drought declaration, Government is providing a second meal at primary schools in Remote Area Communities and rural districts. Provision of

double food ration for other vulnerable groups, such as under 7 year olds, TB outpatients, lactating and expectant mothers, is also being implemented countrywide.

137. The pre and primary schools menu is under review to move from supplementary to full feeding. This will include food commodities that provide wholesome nutrition with the Home Grown School Feeding initiative of purchasing food commodities found in their localities.
138. Government continues to procure agricultural produce for primary school pupils. This Initiative began in 2009 as a way of promoting agricultural production and livelihoods amongst subsistence farmers. During the harvesting season, from April to June, P9,348,495 was disbursed this year for the procurement of fresh agricultural produce from a total of 1,027 farmers.
139. The Ipelegeng Programme continues to provide temporary relief to unemployed Batswana across the country. The approved budget for Ipelegeng Programme for the 2016/2017 financial year stands at P612,964,318. Given its labour intensive nature, P434,186,112 or 91% of the budget has been allocated for payment of beneficiaries.
140. Projects undertaken in this programme include environmental cleanliness, minor construction and maintenance of public facilities throughout the country. The Programme also supports various initiatives such as Crime Prevention Volunteers and Special Constables under Botswana Police Service; Wildlife Volunteers, Waste Management Volunteers and Monuments custodians. As of July 2016, a total of 63,688 people were engaged in this programme.

Rural Development

141. Diversification of the rural economy can foster job creation by creating resilient communities. In this regard, our rural areas are being transformed through the provision of social and physical infrastructure such as roads, schools, health facilities, water and telecommunications. Continued support for such transformation is being driven by the Rural Development Council.

Gender

142. Government continues to give priority to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment by, among other things, the domestication of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. We have also adopted the National Policy on Gender and Development which promotes gender mainstreaming for sustainable development. To facilitate effective implementation of the policy, the National Gender Commission has been established and launched in September 2016.
143. We further recognise the need to be proactive in eliminating Gender Based Violence. To this end, we have piloted a Gender Based Violence Referral System, which allows referrals to be made electronically, relieving survivors the ordeal of having to repeat their story to each and every service provider assisting them.
144. The Women Economic Empowerment programme has expanded over the years from a budget of P300,000 per year which supported 20 women organisations and businesses to a total of over 30 Million Pula supporting over 600 beneficiaries. To date the programme has graduated 25 beneficiaries who are able to independently compete in the market. To support beneficiaries in accessing markets, the women's expositions have continued. This effort is augmented by the recently produced Women's Business Directory (Catalogue), which facilitates other government initiatives such as local procurement and citizen economic empowerment.

Skills Development

145. Madam Speaker, Government has further prioritized Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to drive the economy through the provision of requisite skills. Associated initiatives include the development of a Policy Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and review of TVET curriculum to revitalize quality of training.

146. To specifically reduce unemployment and shortage of skills amongst the youth, more youths are also being enrolled in various apprenticeship programmes through Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (MTTC). These apprenticeships expose learners to real work experience that increases their employment prospects as well as skills to become self-employed.
147. In addition, the Construction Industry Trust Fund (CITF) continues to target unemployed and unskilled youth, school leavers and disadvantaged groups to enable them to acquire practical competencies in building and construction trades. During 2015/2016, 1,346 completed training at the Gaborone Main Centre of whom 1,050 secured employment in various building, construction and allied trades.
148. Another 330 completed training at the CITF Kazungula Mobile Training Unit, two thirds of whom have already secured employment. Due to the high demand of semi-skilled and skilled artisans in the building, mining and energy sectors, additional skills training programmes are being introduced.

Basic Education

149. Madam Speaker, the first phase of the conversion of two junior secondary schools, at Tsabong and Mahupu, into unified schools has been completed, with the admission of a total of 480 form-four learners. The new Maitlamo Junior Secondary School in Maun, which opened in 2016, admitted a total of 360 Form 1 learners.
150. In line with our Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP), we have also extended pre-primary education to an additional 107 primary schools. This brings the total number of participating schools to 382, which are catering for 16,536 learners.
151. Government continues to upgrade internet access in schools. This has included the introduction of Wi-Fi and mobile devices to some schools. So far 60 schools have benefitted from the provision of 50 tablets each, while 84 secondary schools now have Wi-Fi footprints. We are further assisting teachers to integrate ICT in the classroom.

152. Through ESP, progress has also been made with respect to provision of additional educational facilities in the form of teachers' houses and classrooms. A total of 292 teachers' houses and 32 classrooms are currently being constructed, while more projects will continue to be awarded in the coming financial year.

Tertiary Education

153. Madam Speaker, as part of ETSSP implementation at tertiary level, Government is rationalizing public institutions in order to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.
154. A decline in Government sponsored tertiary education enrolment and participation rate has been observed during the past year, down from 60583 (21.3%) in 2014/2015 to 56447 (19.9%) 2015/2016. This is due to the limited Government financial resources for sponsorship. Given the exponential growth in demand for tertiary education, Government is therefore exploring options for sustainable funding including cost sharing.
155. In order to reduce graduate unemployment, Government is engaging employers to identify marketable skills. In this regard, specific sector plans have been developed for the agriculture, tourism, minerals, energy and water resource sectors.
156. As a way to further close skills gaps, Government introduced the "Target 20,000 Initiative" for the rapid up-skilling of unemployed youth. This programme commenced in 2015/2016 financial year, when 13,410 students were enrolled in 24 institutions, with course durations ranging from short term up to three years. As of August 2016, 1,372 students had completed their programmes.

Youth Empowerment

157. Madam Speaker, Government continues to support youth industries by financing of start-ups through the Youth Development Fund, which has an annual budget allocation of P120 million. During the last

financial year a total of 1,032 projects were funded to a tune of P107 million creating 1,613 jobs. In addition, as a deliberate policy change to improve the sustainability of youth businesses exemptions and quick-wins were introduced as part of our affirmative action in favour of youth businesses.

158. Government remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting positive attitudes among young people to be responsible and self-reliant individuals with sound morals. To assist in this effort, we are collaborating with relevant youth organisations, to promote such positive behaviour.

National Service and Internship

159. Madam Speaker, in the spirit of self-reliance the Botswana National Service Programme continues to attract young Batswana to serve in their communities. In 2015 the programme's average monthly enrolment was 10,500, while as of June 2016, the numbers had increased to 13,474.
160. The National Internship Programme was introduced to help unemployed graduates to develop workplace skills and experience. Enrolment levels in the scheme stand at 3,452.

Archives and Records Management

161. Madam Speaker, the level of compliance to records management standards and procedures across ministries has improved with an increased transfer of records to the records centres. There has also been a 10% growth in the acquisition of archival collections. To increase uptake and access to the nation's documentary heritage, a social media platform, linked to BWgovernment, was developed and has been well received.

Library and Information Services

162. Madam Speaker, public use of our libraries has risen to an annual average of 280,000 visitors. An attraction has been the provision of free public access to computers and internet within libraries, which has bridged the digital divide for many. Studies indicate that 12% of library users in rural areas first accessed the internet through libraries, while 33% of users with a disability first used the internet in a library. Currently 66 public libraries have internet and a total of 67,089 members of the public have been trained on Basic ICT skills. The 24/7 availability of Wi-Fi access within a radius of 300 metres of libraries has been a success.
163. The Robert and Sara Rothschild Family Foundation continues to support the construction of local libraries. The programme's 14th library is under construction at Charleshill and should be operational by the end of this financial year.

Water

164. Madam Speaker, Government has established a Programme Management Office (PMO) to oversee the implementation of major energy and water projects. The design of the project management methodology and processes has been completed, whilst institutionalisation of the methodology is ongoing.
165. Government has further finalised a comprehensive assessment of the national water supply. Implementation of the associated infrastructure for both Dikgatlhong and Lotsane Dams has also been completed while the associated infrastructure component for the Thune Dam which includes the construction of a Water Treatment Plant and distribution pipelines to ten villages in the Bobirwa Sub District is progressing.
166. The connection and supply for villages in the Bobirwa Sub District is being implemented with the second phase of the North South Carrier Scheme. The section of the pipeline that terminates in Palapye is complete and is being trial operated. So far the reliability of water

supply to the Greater Gaborone catchment area has considerably improved. The tender for the construction of the pump station near Serorome Valley on the NSC-1 Scheme has also been awarded and is expected to be completed in 2018.

167. Over the years water demand in Greater Gaborone area has greatly increased due to development. This has necessitated the connection of major villages surrounding Gaborone to the NSC Scheme; including the Mmamashia-Kanye NSC Connection project which commenced in August 2014 and will be completed in February 2017.
168. Other initiatives to improve water supply and sanitation in the country include Maun Water Supply and Sanitation Phase II project, Kanye and Molepolole Sanitation project, Seronga/Gudigwa water supply project, and Shakawe Water Treatment Plant project.
169. The Maun Water Supply and Sanitation Phase II project is progressing and should be completed in April 2020. In the meantime, remedial works to mitigate the current shortages have been awarded for short term initiatives due for completion in May 2017.
170. Construction of the Shakawe Water Treatment Plant is scheduled for completion in April 2018, while the Seronga/Gudigwa project is scheduled for completion in May 2017.
171. Masama West groundwater development project is expected to be completed in March 2017. The Due Diligence and design review processes for the Chobe–Zambezi water transfer scheme will also be completed by the end of the current financial year.
172. Government is also exploring the potential of water transfers with neighbouring states. The Lesotho Highlands Feasibility Study's findings confirmed that it is viable to transfer water from Lesotho to Botswana. Both countries, along with South Africa, have agreed that further investigations to determine the possible options for the transfer, as well as related socio-economic and environmental issues, should be done. We are also exploring the feasibility of drawing water from aquifers along our borders with Namibia and South Africa.

173. Government is also undertaking the development of the National Waste Policy to review, strengthen and consolidate existing efforts.

Energy

174. Madam Speaker, transitioning Botswana from an energy dependent to energy surplus nation is being given extra impetus through the new Ministry of Mineral Resources, Green Technology and Energy Security.
175. The Botswana Energy Regulatory Authority, which should become fully operational in the coming financial year, has been established to facilitate further expansion and diversification of the energy sector. Already, Independent Power Producers are being procured for the development of an additional 300 MWs by extending Morupule B with units 5 & 6. We are also in the process of refurbishing Morupule A plant. Meanwhile, as the existing Morupule B is still undergoing remedial works, our energy supply is being supplemented by the Orapa and Matshelagabedi Diesel Peaking Plants.
176. Moving forward there will be a greater emphasis on the expansion of solar power and other green technologies to meet our energy need. In this respect, a tender for a 100 MW Solar Power Station is being prepared.
177. It is worth noting that our increased demand for energy has in part been due to the successful implementation of the National Electricity Standard Connection Programme. As of October 2016, the Programme has enabled 94,727 additional households to connect to the national grid. The total number of electrified households now stands at just over 340,000.
178. With respect to the petroleum sub-sector, a quality monitoring program of petroleum products to protect consumers and the environment is in place. The construction of the Tshele Hills and expansion of the Francistown strategic reserves are progressing. Once completed, they will secure our supply with 42 days' worth of additional stocks.

Conserving Biodiversity

179. In implementing its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Government will enhance the mainstreaming and implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD).
180. The Environmental Assessment Act of 2011 is undergoing review to facilitate national development and reduce the turnaround times.
181. The membership of the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa continues to grow with additional member states. It has been adopted by the AU as a vehicle to drive sustainable natural resources and the adoption of natural capital accounting.

Wildlife Management

182. Wildlife poaching remains a scourge throughout Africa, including Botswana. Efforts to strengthen anti-poaching efforts have resulted in the purchase of additional equipment including vehicles and aircraft, as well as the undertaking of capacity building.
183. Thankfully, our rhino population is growing; a fact that has been internationally recognised and contributed positively to local tourism. However, this puts more pressure on our limited resources to further ensure the security of this vulnerable and endangered species.

Climate Change

184. Madam Speaker, Botswana participated in the Climate Change negotiations and the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which was signed in April 2016. Consistent with this, a Climate Change Policy will be tabled before Parliament that will include the use of solar and other clean energy technologies. We will further seek to secure access to climate financing mechanisms. So far, seventeen projects are at development stage and are earmarked for possible funding under the said mechanisms. Private sector and non-governmental organisations will also be engaged in the delivery of our obligations under the Agreement.

185. Through the Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management project, we have also installed a network of fifteen Automatic Weather Stations.

Science

186. To stimulate local innovation, Government has embarked on a campaign to raise awareness on research, science and technology. As part of this process, the Botswana Academy of Sciences was launched to provide an independent and objective advisory platform. The 10th General Assembly of the African Academy of Sciences was held in June 2016, which coincided with the inauguration of the local academy.
187. A Research Information Management System is being developed this financial year to facilitate the management of research data. The system will enable exchange of research information amongst stakeholders to generate research, science, technology and innovation indicators.
188. The Botswana Innovation Hub (BIH) provides critical linkages for innovation and technology commercialisation through the provision of specialised services in technology entrepreneurship and intellectual property support. During 2016, BIH and its partners provided such support to over 6,000 local innovators and entrepreneurs through capacity building programmes. Key BIH services include business mentoring, internet protocol (IP) advice and products development and prototyping. The development of the Science and Technology Park has progressed and is now expected to be operational in 2017.

Radiation Protection

189. Control of radiation exposure to people and the environment, as well as the security of radiation sources and activities continues to be regulated. The number of registered users of radiation sources increased from 270 last year to 292. Currently the radiation inspectorate monitors 1651 occupationally exposed workers, with no cases to date of overexposure.

Research and Development

190. Madam Speaker, Seding solar lights have now been piloted at eight different rural areas, while a plant in Kanye began assembling the lights in August 2016, with the aim of producing 150 lights per week.
191. Following the development of the Kalahari Sand Building Brick (KSBB) technology, twenty-eight locations countrywide were identified for the establishment of KSBB manufacturing depots. A target of eight KSBB depots is to be set as Phase 1 of the program, which is expected to be completed in the current financial year.
192. BITRI has been working with the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency to develop a rapid diagnostic test for FMD, which has resulted in a prototype testing strip that is now undergoing field evaluation. BITRI is further collaborating with the Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) in the sharing of facilities and human and material resources. In addition, BITRI's Mineral Beneficiation programme is setting-up of a laboratory and pilot plant facility for coal to liquid technology.

Land Management

193. Madam Speaker, under ESP Government has been undertaking land servicing and housing development projects. These comprise 4 peripheral and 21 minimal land projects involving the servicing of 37,000 plots countrywide over a three year period, which commenced last year.
194. Work on the Botswana National Spatial Development Framework started in January 2016 and is to be completed in June 2018. This initiative provides sustainable settlement planning to address the socio economic development of people, their location and relationship with the environment.
195. Consistent with the Botswana Land Policy of 2015 and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act of 2013, Government intends to declare the whole country as a Planning Area. Settlement clusters

are thus being progressively declared as planning areas as opposed to single settlements.

196. The Land Administration, Processes, Capacity Building and Systems (LAPCAS) programme is progressing. As of October 2016, a total of 682,902 (or 83%) out of the targeted 826,649 plots have been surveyed. The Deeds Registry has further scanned 199,134 (39%) out of the targeted 503,831 records. Work is also on-going to register customary land allocations at the Deeds Registry. New land title documents with security features will be issued to all land holders during the course of 2017. This will lead to improved security of tenure and access to finance by land holders.
197. In our efforts to avail serviced land for different uses, a number of initiatives and projects have been carried out. The construction of the Palapye Extension 11 project, involving 3,000 plots, is nearing its completion. We are also exploring avenues for greater private sector participation in land servicing.
198. The development of the Land Information System to computerize land delivery processes has progressed with the coming on line of the first four modules: i.e. Deeds Registry, Plot and Plan, Land Applications and Land Transactions. The Land Information System will also integrate with the following Organisational Systems: Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), OMANG/NIS, Government Accounting and Budgeting System (GABS) and Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS).

Land Policy

199. In general, Batswana have responded positively to the new land policy. However, two provisions caused a degree of discomfort, namely allocation of land to married couples and the number of plots that a person is entitled to, in both state and tribal land. Some of the concerns emanate from reconciling cultural practices with individual interests. Having listened to the people's concerns we have thus amended the original policy.

200. Land information is a foundation for development, allowing for effective and efficient management of resources as well as transparent decision making. The country is therefore being continuously mapped and surveyed to identify development needs.
201. Government continues to support the Youth Empowerment Programmes by allocating plots for various uses. From April 2015 to March 2016, a total of 8,144 plots were thus allocated for different purposes.

Housing Delivery

202. Adequate and affordable housing continues to be a core Government priority. We are continuing our implementation of the Social Housing Programme that includes the Low-Income Housing Programme, Instalment Purchase Scheme and Youth Housing Programme, which together provide for low income and less privileged groups. Since November 2015, Government funded a total of 1,546 projects through SHHA Home Improvement loans and 725 of these units have been completed, while 821 are ongoing. On the other hand, the Turnkey Development Scheme funded a total of 2,867 houses. Out of these 1,043 units have been completed and 1,824 are ongoing.
203. The Integrated Poverty Alleviation and Housing Scheme targets people that are below the SHHA threshold. Through it, beneficiaries among the less privileged throughout the country are enrolled into the brick moulding projects and encouraged to save on a monthly basis towards building their own houses.
204. The construction of housing units under the Instalment Purchase Scheme & Youth Housing Programme and Public Officer's Housing Initiatives is ongoing. Over 600 of the planned 750 housing units under these schemes are being constructed in Gaborone.
205. Government has further accelerated social housing through ESP, which is to deliver 4,481 units. This total is comprised of SHHA Turkey (1,500); Public Officers' Housing Initiative (540); BHC Third Party

Housing (904); SHHA Home Improvement (787); and Instalment Purchase & Youth (750) housing schemes. Since the inception of ESP, construction of 3,092 units has commenced, with 508 having been completed.

206. Another programme, the Public Officers Housing Initiative, is also underway to provide 540 units countrywide. These units are being constructed in various remote areas and villages. So far, 465 units have been started on site with some 103 now complete.
207. In addition, the Destitution Housing Programme compliments other social welfare programmes providing decent shelter for the needy. In order to make a bigger impact, the budget provision for this financial year was doubled from P45 million to P90 million. The total number of houses to be constructed is 1000 where 322 houses will be for beneficiaries in Remote Area Communities while 678 will be spread across different villages in the country. Construction of these houses has started and they will be completed by the end of the 2016/2017 financial year.
208. Madam Speaker, Government's efforts to provide shelter for those in need is further supplemented by non-government institutions and individuals. In this context, I am pleased to report that as of last month, 677 houses have been handed over to beneficiaries through the President's Housing Appeal, whilst an additional 25 houses have been completed, thus exceeding its original target of 600 houses. Let me take this opportunity to once more, thank all of those who have generously devoted their time as well as money and resources to this initiative.
209. Moving forward, the Housing Needs Assessment to determine the nationwide demand for affordable housing is underway and should be completed by April 2017. It will provide a basis for future housing strategies and goals.
210. I am also pleased to note that the number of housing related jobs envisaged at the beginning of the ESP was 5,070, while the current employment figures stand at 12,360.

Police Service

211. Madam Speaker, the Botswana Police Service (BPS) plays a pivotal role in the realisation of public safety through its integrated strategy of visible policing and effective stakeholder partnerships. In this regard, the BPS continuously strengthens its Policing Cluster Committees, while engaging Police Volunteers and Special Constables.
212. These efforts have been accompanied by an improvement of service delivery processes such as police response, provision of feedback and investigation of reported crimes. Through these initiatives, the BPS has realised a reduction in violent, intrusive and serious crimes from 94 incidents recorded per 1,000 population in 2011, to 67 per 1,000 in 2015.
213. Policy and law reforms are also fundamental in dealing with society's criminal elements. The enactment of the Forensic Procedures Act has opened the door to modern investigation technologies to aid the detection of crime. The Act also provides for the creation of a database of convicts for offences with a custodial term of not less than 12 months. The bringing into force of other Acts such as Counter-Terrorism, Proceeds and Instruments of Crime and Anti-Human Trafficking has also brought new dimensions in the fight against crime.
214. Madam Speaker, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act commenced on 1st January 2015. Under the Act, there are 7 cases awaiting trial before the High Court, while another 9 are awaiting referral. I can further inform this Honourable House that a draft National Action Plan detailing strategies to combat human trafficking in Botswana is being developed.
215. Madam Speaker, like all other modern day organisations, the BPS is exploring ways to fully benefit from advances in technology. To this end, the process of introducing technologies to policing under the Safer City programme, which uses closed circuit television, is at an advanced stage.

216. A Cybercrime and Computer Forensics Unit has also been established and is already assigned to tackle abuse of social media, fraud schemes and attacks against information infrastructure.
217. Madam Speaker, while it is pleasing to note that road accident risk went down from 41.8 accidents per 1,000 vehicles in the year 2011 to 29.6 in 2015; the safety of road users continues to be an issue of national concern. A total of 17,654 road traffic accidents were recorded in 2015. The principal cause of these was careless and inconsiderate driving, which accounted for 13,204 (74.8%) of the accidents, followed by collisions with domestic and wild animals at 2,012 (11.4%) unlicensed drivers at 721 (4.1%) and alcohol impaired driving at 631 (3.6%). A common denominator in almost all of these accidents is over speeding, which has been identified as the key risk factor in road traffic injuries.
218. For its part BPS will continue to make road policing a public safety priority by targeting the various accident risk factors which also include such additional factors as non-use of protective systems, cell phone usage, and non-observance of road traffic lights.

Justice

219. Madam Speaker, the overarching goal of the Judiciary is encapsulated in its mission statement which is “To uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in accordance with the Constitution”.
220. For the period under review the Judiciary commenced construction of the Kanye Magistrate Court and staff houses and the expansion of Broadhurst Magistrate Court. Both projects are expected to have been completed by June 2017. Courts were also established in Kang, Nata and Shakawe. These new courts have reduced the distance many of our people travel to access justice, while the five Mobile Traffic Courts now reach most parts of the country.
221. The Administration of Justice has also set up the Law Reporting Unit, which should reduce the current backlog in the publication of

the Botswana Law Reports. To improve the transcription of court proceedings, the Judiciary has procured 15 digital stenograph machines, which allows for data networking. This will facilitate real-time court reporting, which will be piloted in 2017.

222. Madam Speaker, Legal Aid Botswana now has five permanent centres in Gaborone, Francistown, Maun, Kasane and Tsabong, from which indigent citizens are assisted in a variety of civil cases.
223. The Attorney General Chambers and Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) have maintained an average success rate above 80%, while continuing to implement strategies to expedite the disposal of cases. The Directorate continues to recruit more prosecutors to relieve the Police of the prosecutorial function.

Corruption Prevention

224. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that for the 20th year in a row, Botswana was cited by Transparency International as being the least corrupt country in Africa, as well as among the least corrupt countries in the world; being ranked 28 out of 168 countries, up three places from the previous year. To further strengthen our zero tolerance commitment to fighting corruption the Whistle Blowing Act was approved in July 2016. The Act provides protection for those who help expose abuses, while providing clear guidance on reporting procedures.
225. To enhance our prevention efforts the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) is constantly examining processes and procedures in public institutions to identify areas of risk and recommend remedial measures. In this respect, it has completed audits of the Health and Education sectors, as well as the Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development and Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development along with the Botswana Power Corporation (BPC). In partnership with the University of Botswana, DCEC has also established a Botswana Business Ethics Forum.

Prison Service

226. Madam Speaker, there has been significant reduction in prison overcrowding; as of July 2016, the average prisoner population was 4,376 inmates against the authorized holding capacity of 4,337 inmates. Prison security has in the meantime been enhanced.
227. Early release programmes which include the use of extra mural labour also continue to yield positive results. Prisoners are engaged through various Government departments for projects such as repair of veterinary cordon fences.

Bogosi

228. Government will continue to enhance and strengthen Bogosi to effectively discharge its mandate. Efforts are, thus being made to improve the working conditions and avail resources to the Department of Tribal Administration. Through ESP, a total of 30 Customary Court offices are under construction in nine Districts across the country.

Ombudsman

229. Madam Speaker, during the 2015/2016 financial year, the Ombudsman received and investigated 882 complaints, while resolving 624. The Ombudsman's office has also focused on the amendment of the Ombudsman Act to provide a functional structure to support its expanded Human Rights mandate. A branch office in Maun was opened in May 2016 to serve the Ngamiland and Gantsi Districts. An additional office in Tsabong is planned for the next financial year.

Civil Society Support

230. Government in collaboration with the EU is implementing "the Empowerment of Non State Actors Programme", to better support civil society organisations. Just over P23.3 million (P23,317,363) was approved as grant support for 42 NGO projects in the 2015/2016 financial year, with implementation of 41 ongoing. The Programme

has also facilitated the design of the National Civil Society Fund. Efforts are further underway to enhancing the legal and regulatory environment for civil society organisations.

231. The NGO Council through the Annual Stakeholder Forum held in November 2015 facilitated a platform for Government and the civil society to discuss emerging issues. The Council has also developed a sustainability plan that guides actions required to deliver on their mandate.

Botswana Defence Force

232. Madam Speaker, the onslaught of non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism and cyber security, has intensified across the globe. In response, the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) shall remain focused on improving its capability to meet these threats both now and into NDP 11. This commitment is reflected in the BDF's now concluded restructuring exercise, as well as ongoing re-equipping. Its key strategic priorities are investing in human capital, maintaining a people-centric force, improving operational capacity, optimisation of infrastructure and improvement of systems and processes. In dealing with poaching, the BDF has leveraged technology to improve its surveillance, target acquisition and response.
233. There have been further efforts by the BDF to respond to its challenges in the areas of accommodation and infrastructure. Accommodation projects have been completed and others are ongoing in different Garrisons and Base Camps, especially targeting soldiers at the lower ranks who have been severely affected in the past. This has been facilitated by ESP.

Disaster Management

234. Madam Speaker, we have also continued to address the high risk of disaster through prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation interventions. This is in line with our Disaster Management Policy, which is implemented by local authorities coordinated by the District Commissioners.

Cultural Development

235. Madam speaker, the President's Day Competitions serve to promote the diverse cultural traditions of our country. The programme currently has 30 major visual and performing arts categories with 27 sub categories. In the 2016/2017 financial year, 18,971 participated in the Competitions as compared to 14,739 in 2015/2016. It is our policy to ensure that these programmes play a dual role of promoting local culture and heritage while generating income for artists. In this regard over P15 million is paid to assist in the form of prize money, performance fees and the procurement of art and crafts.
236. Government also continues to intensify its support to community cultural events which are held in the various Districts around the country. A total of 1,617 artists participated at these events, which offered traditional song and dance, contemporary music, traditional instruments and attire, parades, arts and crafts exhibitions. Some 9,200 people attended the festivals.

Sports Development

237. Madam Speaker, participation in sports competitions has many socio-economic benefits, while further enhancing our national unity and pride. In this connection, we shall continue to fund the promotion of sport excellence and a strong sporting culture for our people. This includes infrastructure development and maintenance, youth in sport programme, and sports competitions at various levels.
238. The 4th Edition of Botswana Games was hosted in December 2015 at Francistown. At the Games, 13 sporting codes, with a total of 2,069 athletes from all the 16 Districts participated. Since its inaugural meeting in 2007, the Games have been a vehicle for identifying and nurturing talent from young age and for building capacity for activities.
239. On the international stage, we have seen Botswana rise from being a sporting unknown to a global player. Botswana athletes continue to raise our flag high in various international competitions. A total of 12

Olympian and 1 Para-Olympian athletes qualified to compete in Rio this year. This record number represents a 150% increase over the previous 2012 games. In July 2017, we shall host the Netball World Youth Cup.

240. To further improve participation in sport, Government has facilitated the development of open air gyms and the improvement of Community Sport Fields. Three such gyms have been completed in Gaborone and Francistown and are now open to the public, while improvements of community sport fields are being carried out at nine centres.
241. Let me further use this opportunity to encourage all Batswana to take part in the National Fitness exercise, which are scheduled for the second week of every month.

International Relations

242. Madam Speaker, Botswana continues to be an active and influential player on diverse issues of national interests at bilateral, regional and multilateral fora. As a member of the community of nations that cherishes freedom, peace, good governance and the full enjoyment of life, it is in our strategic interests to contribute towards addressing the increasing global challenges of climate change, food security, conflict, terrorism and transnational crime.
243. We continue to be deeply concerned by the growing number of armed conflicts in various parts of the world. In the case of Syria, we note that, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, protracted fighting has already caused over a quarter million deaths and 1.5 million casualties, while resulting in the displacement of some 12.5 million people. The escalation of conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, along with the blatant violations of universal values by some, is quite disheartening. We shall, therefore, continue to appeal to others in the international community, particularly at the level of the United Nations Security Council, to step up our collective efforts to bring an end to this ongoing trans-national disaster.

244. We have reaffirmed our commitment to the International Criminal Court and International Criminal Justice system. We are furthermore at an advanced stage in domesticating the Rome Statute, and making it part of our national laws.
245. Consistent with our commitment to uphold international peace and security, in April 2016, Botswana was elected a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council for a period of two years. We were also pleased to have been re-elected as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which is a clear manifestation of the respect we enjoy in the international community.
246. We have further remained engaged in finding solutions to peace and security challenges in our own sub-region. In the context of my chairmanship of SADC, I convened two Summits of the SADC Double Troika which were aimed at addressing instability in the region.
247. As SADC Chairperson, I also convened three ministerial workshops to deliberate on the challenges experienced by SADC relating to food insecurity and poverty eradication; water and energy crisis; as well as curbing illegal trade in wildlife. The workshops culminated in drafting strategies that were subsequently adopted at this year's Summit.
248. Madam Speaker, Government continues to forge bilateral partnerships and broaden cooperation with various nations. Over the past year I undertook state visits to Angola, Mozambique, and the Republic of (South) Korea. I also had the pleasure of hosting the Presidents of Kenya and Namibia. These visits allowed us to take stock of our bilateral relations and reflect the goodwill that Botswana enjoys with other countries.
249. The progress we have made over the past 50 years has been facilitated by the generous assistance we have received from our international partners. I, therefore, take this opportunity to once more acknowledge and thank all of the countries and international organisations, including private institutions and individuals, who have supported us in our journey.

250. Yesterday our hearts were with the Cuban people as they said farewell to their former President Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz; who will be forever remembered for his steadfast support for our region's liberation. We in Botswana shall remain further grateful for the generous assistance that we have continued to receive from the Government and people of Cuba, especially in the areas of medical personnel, sports and human development. This contribution is all the more remarkable given that Cuba itself is a relatively small developing country.

Conclusion

251. Madam Speaker, let me conclude my remarks by once more observing that we as a people are standing on the launch pad to greater heights. Our 50th Anniversary celebrations this year were a reminder of not only past achievement but also our potential for greater things if we remain united and focused in our shared aspiration to build a better Botswana. The domestic impact of the continued volatility in global markets was, however, a stark reminder of the risks we face in our progress.
252. Over the past year, our unity and patriotic commitment as a nation was symbolised by the wearing of our national colours of blue, white and black. Moving forward, I take this opportunity to call on Batswana to continue to make Friday's our National Colours Day, as a reminder of where we have been and where we wish to go as a united and proud people.
253. In achieving our vision of a better future, while overcoming our current challenges, it is not enough that we have sound plans and a practical as well as positive long term Vision. To succeed, we must become much more urgent in our delivery. This is a daily challenge for all of us, both inside and outside Government. Overreliance on the State is not a sustainable, much less optimal path to 2036.

254. As we chart our path forward, let us also be mindful and continue to seek the blessings of the Lord who makes all things humanly possible. As a nation united under God's mercy, I would like to encourage religious leaders to continue to join together in organising common prayers for rains and the wellbeing of the nation.
255. Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish everyone a joyous and safe Christmas Holiday season and a happy New Year to come. May God bless us all.

