



STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

TO THE FIRST MEETING

OF THE

FOURTH SESSION

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GABORONE

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INTRODUCTION

1. **Mister Speaker**, I am privileged to address Batswana this afternoon on this last State of the Nation Address (SONA) to be delivered under the National Development Plan (NDP) 11, which is coming to an end in March 2023.
2. The formulation of the National Development Plan (NDP) 12 has been deferred to financial year 2025/2026 on account of reforms in our planning processes. I firmly believe that democratic ethos compels us to respect the will of our people, such that, the strategic agenda of Government should always be driven by election promises. **These reforms are meant to align national planning with the electoral cycle.**
3. **This means that the Party which wins elections in 2024 will be able to set the development agenda according to its Manifesto. Reset Agenda in action!**
4. Accordingly, a two-year Transitional National Development Plan has been tabled before the National Assembly, for consideration during the current sitting of Parliament.

5. I take this opportunity to extend my profound appreciation to all the Members of Parliament for their cooperation in endorsing this reform process.
6. **Mister Speaker,** we just emerged from the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. I must once again commend Botswana for their relentless efforts and commitment in fighting COVID-19 over the past two years. I also thank our development partners for their continued support in fighting the scourge.
7. **Bagaetsho,** you did not only demonstrate a spirit of unity in adherence to the COVID-19 health protocols. You were also intentional and purposeful in taking vaccines, which resulted in Botswana achieving one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates globally. It is for this reason that the COVID-19 health protocols have since been relaxed.
8. I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to those who lost their loved ones during these difficult times. **Gomotsegang batho betsho.**

9. The key lessons from the devastating effects of the pandemic is that we need to be more resolute and resilient in preparing for uncertainties. In this regard, Cabinet took a decision to promulgate the disaster management legislation to guide our response during emergencies. **Preparedness is key!**
10. **Bagaetsho,** Government is alive to the fact that, COVID-19 aggravated the afflictions of poverty, inequalities and unemployment. We know that the most affected people are the youth. These issues are being addressed through programmes and projects which I will speak to later.
11. **Mister Speaker,** Botswana has successfully conducted the 2022 Population and Housing Census, despite the COVID-19 pandemic challenges. I am delighted that the Census was conducted through the use of technology, which brought about efficiencies in data capture and related Census processes. This is a milestone in the digitalisation of Government services and processes.

12. The Census will provide information on key issues and concerns of our people and their aspirations. This will inform planning, policy formulation and decision making. Hence, the ongoing work of the Delimitation Commission.
13. The preliminary results show that the population of Botswana has increased from **two million twenty-four thousand nine hundred and four** (2,024,904) in 2011 to **two million three hundred and forty-six thousand one hundred and seventy-nine** (2,346,179) in 2022.
14. These numbers show an increase of **three hundred and twenty-one thousand, two hundred and seventy-five** (321,275) persons, which translate into an annual average growth rate of 1.4 percent.
15. The growth signals an increasing demand for services and other life necessities that our economy must accommodate. I wish to thank Statistics Botswana for a job well done and the people of Botswana for their cooperation.

16. **Mister Speaker**, like the rest of the world, Botswana is faced with high fuel and food prices, resulting in the rising cost of living. This is mainly due to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, global supply chain constraints and other external factors.
17. All these factors have placed an enormous strain on families and the economy. Government continues to do all that is within its power to lessen the pain, and we know that there is still a lot more to do.
18. In the light of the foregoing, the **need to reset and transform** has never been more urgent. In October this year, Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries held a Joint Retreat to discuss ways that will redouble efforts to deliver on the promises made to Botswana. The objective was to achieve more efficient service delivery, transformation and to realise more value with limited resources – **That is, doing more with less.**

19. The alignment of the Government machinery, which is one of the cornerstones of the Reset Agenda, has begun. In this regard, Ministries have been reorganised and the rationalisation of some State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) is progressing well.
20. The process is part of efforts to streamline Government into an effective and efficient machinery for better delivery of the national development goals.
21. One of the key changes to note is the establishment of a National Planning Commission, an entity that has combined the functions of the National Strategy Office, Vision 2036 Council Secretariat, Government Implementation Coordination Unit, and the planning function from the then Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.
22. The National Planning Commission will enhance coordination of national planning and implementation, as well as achieve effective monitoring and evaluation of the national development process.

23. Recently, Government approved the upgrading of twenty-two (22) Subordinate Authorities to fully-fledged Councils. Phase 1 of this reform is being implemented, while Phase 2 will be implemented in the next Financial Year.
24. Key to this objective is Government's effort to bring services closer to our people, as well as the promise to enhance local response to challenges and improve participation of local authorities in planning. **This is Reset Agenda in Action!**
25. As you are aware, the process to comprehensively review the Constitution of our Republic started with the appointment of a **Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Review of the Constitution** on 19th December 2021.
26. The Commission was able to gather the views of Batswana on the strengths and weaknesses of the Constitution, as well as register their concerns and proposals for its amendment. I am happy to inform you that the Commission submitted its Report on 29th September 2022.

27. I wish to commend the Members of the Commission of Inquiry for delivering on their mandated task within the stipulated timeframe. **This is a huge milestone in the maturity of our democracy.** I assure you that this process will continue to be undertaken in an open and transparent manner to its final conclusion, up to the supreme law-making body - **Parliament. The Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Review of the Constitution of Botswana will be made public immediately.**
28. **Mister Speaker,** the escalation of crime rate in Botswana is of serious concern. This is eroding the peace and tranquility which our citizens have enjoyed over the years. Consequently, we are enhancing the capacity of our law enforcement institutions for effective response to crime. I urge all of us to complement the efforts of Government and do our part as responsible citizens and residents.
29. **Bagaetshe,** gender equality remains one of the key priorities of this Government. The rising incidents of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which mostly affects women and girls, remains

one of our greatest challenges. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that women and girls are treated fairly for them to reach their full potential.

30. **Mister Speaker,** I now turn to the thematic presentation of my address guided by the four pillars of our Long-Term National Vision 2036, namely: **Sustainable Economic Development; Human and Social Development; Sustainable Environment; and, Governance, Peace and Security.**

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

31. The global economy has been slowly recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Russia-Ukraine war is undermining this progress.
32. The global growth is forecast by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to average 2.9 percent a year over the next two years. It is projected that advanced economies will grow on average by 1.4 percent a year over this period. Emerging and developing markets, including sub-Saharan Africa, are

projected to grow at a much faster rate, averaging just over 4 percent a year.

33. Many households continue to face hardships. The high cost of living is likely to persist for some time with inflation above the Bank of Botswana's monetary policy range of 3 to 6 percent. Inflation increase reached 14.6 percent in August 2022; the highest since the 2008/2009 global recession, although it has started tapering off at 13.8 percent in September 2022.
34. In this respect, Government took a bold decision in July 2022 to cushion households against the effects of the rising costs. We temporarily reduced the general rate of VAT from 14 percent to 12 percent for six (6) months. Another intervention was the increase of the allowances by 18.5 percent for students in local tertiary institutions. The recent decrease in global fuel prices enabled the Government to reduce national fuel prices.

35. Botswana's economy continues to display signs of recovery. This is attributed to successful mitigations and the improved performance of the mining sector, particularly the diamond sub-sector. The momentum of recovery is likely to be sustained in the medium term with domestic economic growth projected to be 4.2 percent and 4.1 percent in 2022 and 2023, respectively.
36. However, it must be noted that this rate of growth falls short of the 5.7 percent required to attain a high-income status by 2036. It is for this reason that we are intensifying our efforts to restructure the economy. This is being done through ramping up industrialisation, development of value chains, diversification and beneficiation of our minerals.
37. In support of our efforts to industrialise and diversify the economy, I am pleased to announce that we are engaging major continental financial institutions to open up our funding options. This is part of our planning reforms to look for alternative finance beyond our Domestic Development Funds.

38. We expect that these resources will support the development of bankable projects in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, including the development of Special Economic Zones and strategic rail and road infrastructure.
39. To grow the economy and create more employment opportunities, Botswana continues to implement the following initiatives and projects:

A. Citizen Economic Inclusion

40. **Mister Speaker**, in April 2022, Government signed into law the Economic Inclusion Bill with a view to making effective participation of citizens in the economy a reality. This law is supported by the revised Public Procurement Law, which was also approved in the same month. The two laws together will complement the implementation of the Reset Agenda.
41. We must ensure that the laws are not only fully implemented, but also complied with by all stakeholders. **Legislation approved! Let us implement.**

42. In the last Parliament sitting Botswana Oil was given a 100 percent fuel import mandate. I am pleased that this initiative is embracing citizen economic inclusion through participation of citizen companies in the multi-billion-Pula fuel and lubricant supply.
43. The partnership between Debswana Diamond Company and Botswana Oil Limited is an opportunity for citizen companies to be part of the entire petroleum value chain, including transportation and logistics. **This is yet another act of responsiveness of Government to accelerate the citizen-centred, private sector-led growth!**
44. To further bolster citizen economic inclusion, Debswana Diamond Company and Morupule Coal Mine are running Supplier Development Programmes (SDPs). Through these Programmes, contracted local suppliers are trained to develop capacity for efficient and sustainable delivery of products and services.

45. I wish to commend the respective mining companies and encourage other business entities to mainstream economic inclusion policies and programmes into their operations.

B. Agriculture

46. **Mister Speaker,** the agriculture sector continues to create more opportunities for food security, diversification of the economy and employment through the development of clusters and value chains.
47. The introduction of import restrictions on some vegetables and fruits to stimulate local production provided a huge market for Batswana. I am aware that consumers continue to encounter challenges of under-supply and increased costs of some fruits and vegetables. There are at times challenges of oversupply which, while beneficial to the consumer in terms of price, negatively affect the producer. As the market matures, this will stabilise.

48. I urge Batswana across the length and breadth of the country to take advantage of the new market opportunities for local produce and expand their production and value-addition. I implore wholesalers, retailers, and consumers to ensure compliance with the new policies of Government with a view to supporting and growing our farmers countrywide and, thus creating employment and putting money in many more households than before.
49. We need to make up for our huge vegetable and fruit import bill and mature to export to other countries. We have spent too many years of post-colonial history of Botswana importing. It is about time we too enjoyed the benefits of exporting and earning hard foreign currency through vegetable and fruit production.
50. **Mister Speaker**, a large-scale citrus project in Selebi Phikwe started in 2020 as a result of Foreign Direct Investment. It employs over one thousand (1,000) people. For the first time, Botswana is expected to generate export revenue from high quality fruits to premium markets. To date, a total of **seven hundred thousand (700,000)** fruit trees have been

planted and additional land is being prepared to accommodate a further **three hundred thousand (300,000)** trees.

51. This investment will also enhance the economic sustainability of the Mmadinare based cooperative society. **This is value chain development and diversification in action to deliver an export-led economy! Promise delivered!**
52. The construction of Tsabong multi-species abattoir will be commissioned in April 2023. The abattoir will give small-stock farmers an opportunity to slaughter animals for local and international markets. Furthermore, the establishment of the Meat Industry Regulatory Authority (MIRA) will be tabled at the next sitting of Parliament.
53. The Meat Industry Regulatory Authority will, amongst others, enhance competition in the meat sector through licensing of abattoirs, managing animal traceability, and promoting the marketing of livestock and by-products.

54. **Mister Speaker**, our initiatives to donate bucks, rams and bulls to Batswana is in progress. To date, one hundred and fifty-five (155) farmers across the country have benefited from this initiative. These numbers will grow as the initiative continues to gain momentum.
55. Government has strategically positioned Ramatlabama National Artificial Insemination Laboratory as a centre of excellence for cattle and small stock assisted reproductive technologies. Semen harvesting technology will be used for semen processing, analysis, packaging, labelling and storage. It will also be used for embryo flushing and will thus take us away from analogue to digitilisation.
56. To date, **two hundred and sixty thousand seven hundred and thirteen** (260,713) cattle semen straws are available at the Ramatlabama Laboratory. The Laboratory is intended to grow this capacity by the millions within the next two years.
57. Of this number, **two hundred and forty-eight thousand five hundred and thirteen** (248, 513) were locally tapped while **twelve thousand two hundred** (12,200) cattle

straws of semen were procured from abroad. The newly revised Artificial Insemination roll- out programme was launched at Dibete nearly two weeks ago.

58. Additionally, we will continue by importing live animals by the end of the financial year. The target is to have thirty (30) imported bulls and thirty (30) females by end of March 2023. This will help us reach a total of 4.32 million semen straws per year, against the current capacity of forty thousand (40,000).
59. A multi-species equipment to be used for tapping and processing semen for cattle and small stock of this magnitude is being procured. Similarly, the equipment to produce embryos is being procured as well as training of the required human resources. All these initiatives are meant to improve the quality of livestock and increase the national herds. I, therefore, encourage our farmers to procure semen straws to improve their herds' genetics.
60. **Mister Speaker,** although the average rainfall was good for 2021/2022 season, distribution across the country was uneven which affected yield. In 2021, the total production

reduced from **one hundred thousand** (100,000) tonnes to over **sixty-six thousand** (66,000) which represents a 34 percent decrease. This undermined our ability to meet the national cereal demand, which challenges us to rethink our food production strategies.

61. Due to operational challenges, Temo-Letlotlo programme which is to replace the ISPAAD programme will now be implemented during the 2023/2024 financial year. To this end, the current ISPAAD programme will continue during the 2022/2023 ploughing season. Temo-Letlotlo is intended to improve productivity and promote commercialised arable farming.
62. **Mister Speaker,** the export of live cattle is expected to continue for the next two years, subject to periodic reviews. Since the inception of this initiative, a total of over **two hundred and five thousand (205 000)** cattle have been sold to some neighbouring countries. This initiative was meant to relieve farmers of cash-flow challenges occasioned by COVID-19.

63. As part of Government efforts to revitalise the beef industry, three private abattoirs have been facilitated to export beef and beef by-products to international markets. This has increased opportunities in the beef sector.
64. As stated in my previous address, the completion of the twelve (12) grain storage silos in Pandamatenga is in progress, although it was significantly affected in scope, cost and time by COVID-19. The project is expected to be completed by March 2023.
65. To further address the challenge of food insecurity, Government is implementing various interventions including:
- i. **The Impact Accelerator Subsidy**, which provides horticulture farmers with a 50 percent grant in an effort to optimise local production, through the National Development Bank;
 - ii. Procurement of semen straws for both sexed female dairy cattle and ordinary dairy cattle and their distribution to farmers at subsidised prices to improve **local production of milk.**

66. The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak incidences continue to threaten the livelihoods of farmers and cause immense emotional pain. It also negatively impacts the economy of the country. Recently, the North-East district experienced an outbreak of the Disease in **Zone 6b**. To relieve the burden of loss on affected communities, Government made a decision to depopulate, restock and compensate affected farmers.
67. I profoundly thank **Rre Benson Samson** of Butale Village for alerting Government about the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Furthermore, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all farmers for their cooperation in containing the disease. In the same vein, I commend public officers who facilitated the containment of the Foot and Mouth outbreak.
68. Another challenge is the outbreak of cattle lung disease in the northern part of Namibia, which borders Ngamiland. As part of strengthening response and control measures, Veterinary Authorities of the two countries continue to conduct fence maintenance, disease surveillance and joint patrols along the common border.

69. I encourage all farmers to be vigilant as the country continues to experience outbreaks of disease variants such as, the Bovine Malignant Catarrhal Fever (*Bolwetsi jwa Dikgokong*) at Gasita Extension Area in the Southern District.
70. With a view to strengthening animal diseases management in the region, Botswana will host a regional conference on livestock diseases in February next year. The Conference will deliberate on livestock diseases and vaccine production with a view to come up with a coordinated sub-regional response strategy.
71. The Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) is expanding its plant capacity to enable product diversification through Research and Development. The facility will more than double BVI capacity to blend vaccines from the current 20 million doses to over 50 million. This will enable BVI to diversify its product offering and deepen continental production on animal health products.

72. Through its new organisational structure, the Institute will undertake targeted research and development towards new products to supply the SADC region, East and West Africa and other targeted markets by 2025. **This is Knowledge-based Economy in action!**

C. Tourism

73. Tourism remains an important sector in the diversification of our economy. A lot has been done to encourage citizen participation with encouraging results.
74. To diversify the tourism offering, Government has identified game farming as an aspect of agro-tourism. Since the launch of the Game Farming Guidelines in April 2021, a total of two hundred and twenty-six (226) or 92 percent of applications, were approved as of July 2022. Of the approved applications, sixty-seven (67) beneficiaries were given animals totalling three hundred and seventy-seven (377). Game Farming is one aspect that also helps Botswana to fully utilise the productive capacity of their land.

75. To augment Government's efforts, funding was secured from our strategic partners for the maintenance of tourism facilities within the Kavango Zambezi Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA). Furthermore, the secured funds were also used to establish a horticulture project for the Nata Conservation Trust, and the expansion of the Lake Ngami charcoal production. Additional funding was secured to support participation of SMMEs in value chains in Boteti, Tutume, Ngamiland, Okavango and Chobe districts.

D. Mining

76. **Mister Speaker,** there are major developments that have taken place in the sector. To extend the life of the mines, Jwaneng and Karowe mines are transitioning from open cast to underground.
77. Morupule Coal Mine's Motheo Open pit and coal washing plant have been fully commissioned and are operational. Premium Nickel Resources Botswana (PNRB) started surface drilling to determine the size and quality of the copper assets at Selebi Mine.

78. In addition, Premium Nickel Resources Botswana completed the acquisition of the Selkirk Mine in August 2022. The Khoemacau Copper Mine which was commissioned at Boseto in June 2021, will reach full capacity and production in December 2022.
79. Tshukudu Metals in Ghanzi has been licenced as a mining operation. As a result, it is constructing a copper mine which is expected to start production during the first half of 2023.
80. With all these developments, the mining sector has to-date created employment of **nineteen thousand two hundred and thirty** (19,230), which is an increase of **one thousand one hundred and forty-five** (1,145) since 2021.
81. Value chains are key to the deepening of economic diversification in this country. In this regard, Government has taken a decision to add value to all its natural resources, including minerals. This will have the effect of increasing the contribution of the mineral sector to the Gross Domestic Product.

82. As part of promoting our natural resources provenance, sustainability and redistribution of value is key for our development agenda. The ongoing negotiations between the Government of Botswana and De Beers Group to renew the contract could not have come at a better time to realise this noble objective.

E. Creative Industry

83. **Mister Speaker**, the National Arts Council of Botswana has been established to unlock potential in the Creative Industry.
84. During the 2021/2022 financial year, **Eighty Million Pula (P80, 000,000)** was disbursed through the Youth Development Fund to support youth entrepreneurship development. This resulted in the creation of **one thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320)** jobs for the youth. In this regard, Government has also developed land parcels for use as incubation sites to sharpen their entrepreneurial skills.
85. The transitioning from the analogue to digital terrestrial transmission has resulted in the establishment of three Btv Channels with a policy of 80 percent local and 20 percent

international content on the channel outputs. Furthermore, funding has been provided to capacitate our people for television and content production, especially for the youth.

86. **Mister Speaker**, the refurbishments aimed at transforming the Mass Media Auditorium into a hub for local film and television production, are expected to be completed by the end of December 2022.
87. The objective is to support and capacitate the creative industry to protect their literary and artistic works; designs; images; creative products; innovations; filming and photography, thereby generating income from their Intellectual Property. The project will also commercialise the creative sector and include Batswana in the wildlife and tourism filming and photography industry.

F. Enhancing Human Capital Development

88. **Mister Speaker**, in our endeavour to pursue an **outcome-based education system**, we have started the review of the different syllabi at General Education, which will be completed during the early years of NDP 12. The Early Childhood

Education (ECE) syllabi for zero (0) to six (6) year olds has been developed. They are currently being used in both private and public institutions.

89. As at March 2022, at national level, 48 percent of children were accessing the first year of the two-year Early Childhood Development programme offered in public schools. The curriculum for primary education is scheduled for review in 2024, whilst that for the Junior Secondary Certificate syllabus has commenced.
90. The recent amendment of the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) Act has transformed the institution into a National Assessment Centre. The new mandate will cover assessment of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes.
91. As part of the digitalization process, we have introduced setting of examinations and marking of scripts online for some programmes at the Botswana General Certificate in Secondary Education (BGCSE) level.

92. As at 30th September 2022, two hundred and thirty (230) programmes for tertiary education and TVET levels had been accredited by Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA), compared to twenty-three (23) programmes in 2021.
93. The Botswana Satellite (BOT SAT-1) in Palapye, has been developed in partnership with the Cape Town University of Science and Technology. A major component of this satellite is the ground communication station which has been completed and ready for commissioning. This ground station will immediately communicate with other orbiting satellites before the launch of our own satellite in 2023.
94. The project will make Botswana one of the few African countries with an orbiting satellite, reflecting our hunger for a knowledge-based economy. Some of the key benefits from this project are water resource management, industrial development, environmental management, land management, food security and sustainable agriculture, among others.
95. The Botswana Satellite will bring Botswana into the global satellite eco-system for research and development in a variety

of disciplines. This is a huge milestone towards a knowledge-based economy. **Reset Agenda in action!**

G. Development of Strategic Infrastructure

96. **Mister Speaker,** Government continues to invest in infrastructure development to support the different economic sectors and improve the country's global competitiveness. Through development and maintenance of infrastructure, we endeavour to promote urban and rural linkages, as well as promote regional integration.
97. In particular road construction and maintenance is meant to decongest existing roads and connect major population centres:
 - i. The three (3) road interchanges in Gaborone, which are partially operational to improve traffic flow, are expected to be completed by the end of the year with the connection and configuration of the field equipment to the Centralised Traffic Control.

- ii. The Amendment of the Public Roads Act to establish toll gates, was passed by Parliament in July 2022, which provides an opportunity for alternative generation of revenue for the maintenance of roads.
- iii. Moheembo Bridge in the Okavango region was completed in May 2022 and is now in use. As is the case with the Kazungula Bridge, this infrastructure facilitates the movement of people, goods and services, and also opens opportunities for other strategic investments.
- iv. In addition, planned developments include road infrastructure to join the Martins Drift Border to the Kazungula Bridge. This will maximise the usage of the Kazungula Bridge to facilitate trade between Botswana, Southern Africa and those countries in the North.
- v. Mmamabula - Lephalale Rail Link will be constructed between 2023 and 2024. The rail link is essential for the transportation of Botswana coal and other bulk commodities to international markets.

98. **Mister Speaker,** to ensure equitable access to **water**, as well as long term water security, and water quality, Government continues to invest in key water projects throughout the country. Government is also pursuing arrangements for cross border water supply. The following are some of the key water projects:

- i. The Mmamashia water treatment plant expansion is in progress and expected to be completed in September 2023.
- ii. The Lobate Water Master plan project, which is meant to improve water supply to areas along the Lobatse – Gaborone corridor will be completed by end of 2023.
- iii. The Gamononyane-Molepolole water pipeline construction is ongoing and will improve water supply in Molepolole, Lentsweletau, Metsimotlhabe, Thebephatshwa, Goodhope and surrounding villages. The project will be completed during the first quarter of 2023.
- iv. A significant number of villages in the Tati district are benefiting from an improvement of water supply. The

construction of a pipeline bringing water from the North-South Carrier to a series of villages in the Tswapong area, is on course.

99. Government also intends to secure trans-boundary water resources on the bilateral and multi-lateral fronts through the Chobe-Zambezi Water Transfer Scheme as a Public Private Partnership (PPP). A feasibility study will be completed by February 2023.
100. **Mister Speaker, energy security** continues to be a key priority for Government. Phase 1 of the Northwest Transmission Grid Connection (NWTGC) which was commissioned last year, has been completed with the construction of Legotlhwane sub-station. Consequently, Ghanzi and surrounding areas, as well as Okavango villages are now being supplied from the national power grid.
101. In line with achieving the 30 percent green energy contribution to the energy mix by 2030, the development of renewable energy sources is in progress.

102. In this regard, a total of six (6) Power Purchase Agreements have been signed between Botswana Power Corporation and three (3) private sector developers. Of the six (6) power purchase agreements to construct Solar Photovoltaic (PV) plants, two are under construction in Bobonong and Shakawe, while the remaining four (4) await funding. Furthermore, seven (7) have been approved for citizen owned companies.
103. Let me remind you that transitioning to energy mix is not a preserve for companies. There is an opportunity for households to save more on their electricity bills and to participate as independent power producers through incorporation of solar panels in their building structures.
104. **Mister Speaker,** to ensure security in the supply of petroleum products, Botswana Oil Limited (BOL) has identified alternative sources and supply routes. To this extent, Government is expanding fuel storage capacity through strategic infrastructure development in Tshele in Kgatleng district, Francistown and Ghanzi. The Francistown fuel storage facility is under construction, while the tender for Tshele has been floated. A tender for Ghantsi fuel storage facility will be floated by the end of the financial year.

105. **Mister Speaker**, with respect to village connectivity, as of November 2022, six hundred and sixty-five (665) premises, being schools, dikgotla, health facilities, and other essential Government institutions, were connected to high-speed internet services and are operational. This is against the targeted **one thousand one hundred and thirty-eight (1,138)** premises for this year.
106. The connected premises and services are in seventy-six (76) villages and towns out of the one hundred and forty-two (142) promised last year. Connectivity to the remainder of the villages and premises will be completed during 2023/2024 financial year. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major cause of disruptions to this programme.
107. A three phased School Digitalisation Plan with integration of ICT in teaching and learning has commenced. Phase 1 of the plan focuses on building of infrastructure, platforms, and capacity building. Phase II of the project will target the provision of ICT devices to Junior Secondary School teachers and learners on an individual basis. The final Phase will provide teachers and learners in upper primary with ICT devices.

108. Mobile ICT labs will be availed for use by lower primary and pre-school learners. The overall objective of the plan is to improve the quality of education and results across all levels.

Digital economy in action! Reset Agenda in action!

109. Of significance to note is that a total of **two hundred thousand sixty-nine and ninety-nine thousand (269 099)** individual Batswana were using the free high speed 100 MBS internet services provided by Government in our school, dikgotla and health facilities. This is becoming the standard in Africa and the developing world.

110. We are making progress in our efforts to become a digital economy. In 2022, Botswana took the biggest leap in Africa in the Global Innovation Index. As a result of our Digital Transformation Strategy, on increasing our innovation capacity, we were able to increase the number of registered innovators from four hundred (400) to over two thousand (2,000) and still growing!

HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

111. **Mister Speaker**, I now wish to address the basic needs of our people that include social protection, inclusion, dignity, quality education, health and shelter. This is in the spirit of Vision 2036, “Achieving Prosperity for All”. This is a subject that is very close to my heart. **We will leave no one behind!**

A. Gender Relations, Equality & Humaneness

112. **Mister Speaker**, as I have always stated, gender equality remains crucial in the development of our country. We cannot “achieve prosperity for all”, if there is no equitable participation of women and men in our development process.
113. Concerted efforts are being made to appoint able and capable hard working women to positions of leadership across Government. I wish to also appreciate the efforts of the private sector in appointing such women to corporate leadership positions. Notable, are the mining industry, the financial and telecommunications sectors.

114. **Mister Speaker**, social ills, particularly tensions in gender relations in our society, are worrisome. We need to introspect whether these social ills are consistent with our cultural values. Our values and norms as a society, in the treatment of girls and women in relation to boys and men, right from the family unit, have eroded.
115. **Keletso ya rona ke go nna Chaba e e boitshwaro jo bontle, le go tshidisanya sentle, go sa kgathalesege gore o motho wa letso le fe, bong bo fe, tumelo e fe kgotsa seemo se fe.**
116. It is disheartening that while we have tried various interventions to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV), there continues to be more reports of horrendous acts of abuse. Children and women are demeaned, bullied, defiled, raped and murdered. The disturbing trends of cyber bullying and rising incidents of missing persons compound the situation.
117. We need to ensure that the perpetrators of violent and intrusive crimes, fully account for their heinous acts. It is imperative that **all of us**, revive the strong family and

community structures and values that produce and nurture responsible citizens who regard and treat others with dignity.

118. To this end, Government continues to strengthen the criminal justice system including stiffening penalties and rehabilitation of offenders to stem the tide of social ills. **But we need to do more and the family needs to do even more.**
119. I take this opportunity to thank the various stakeholders, including the sporting world, that have collaborated in various activities that promote acceptable norms and social behaviour within our society. We are grateful for the partnership between **Mrs Neo Jane Masisi**, the First Lady of the Republic of Botswana and various entities aimed at raising awareness against Gender-Based Violence.
120. I urge all stakeholders to continue such noble efforts towards eliminating all gender-based barriers that limit enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms.

B. Child Protection and Development – E seng mo ngwaneng!

121. **Mister Speaker**, Government is committed to providing a safe and enabling environment for children to grow and reach their full potential. As such, the review of the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Policy framework will be completed during the second Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP).
122. The Child Friendly Police Service Centre established in Gaborone in 2020, has now been expanded to Francistown, Shakawe and Letlhakane. The service will make it easy for reporting of cases concerning the abuse of children.
123. To ensure that no child is left behind in education, Government has since approved the Languages Policy of 2022 which will be used for basic teaching from pre-primary to standard 2. This Policy will be introduced in the following languages, from January 2023: Sheyeyi; Thimbukushu; Naro; Nama; Afrikaans; Khwedam; IsiNdebele, OtjiHerero/OtjiMbanderu; Shekgalagari; Ikalanga; ChiShona; Chiikuhane; and, Sign Language.

124. The agreed orthography and dominance in the regions where the languages are spoken, were some of the criteria used for their selection.
125. As part of the continued effort to improve learner readiness and positive child development outcomes, Government has increased the number of Public Primary Schools offering the Reception Class programme from **six hundred and twenty-nine (629)** in 2021 to six hundred and eighty-three (683) in 2022, representing an increase of 8.6 percent. This is out of the seven hundred and **twenty-seven (727)** public primary schools nationally.
126. Following the 2021 World Children's Day commemoration, I received seventy-five (75) letters from children, citing nutrition as one of the key challenges in child development. This gave impetus to the review of the Botswana School Feeding Programme for all schools. In the spirit of children's rights, **children are not only to be seen but must also be heard. Ke le uzwago batjhwana!**

127. **Mister Speaker,** I note with concern that some parents and guardians choose not to send their children to school, contrary to the best interest of the child. Bagaetsho, no child, under no circumstance, be it yours, those of your relatives, domestic helpers and farm workers, should ever be denied access to education and be subjected to child labour. All of us have an obligation to ensure that children's rights are safeguarded and promoted.

C. People with Disabilities

128. **Mister Speaker,** Botswana is committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, as demonstrated by the country's accession to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in August 2021. A Director for the Department has been appointed following the passing-on of the former Director.

129. A Draft Disability Bill has been developed to be tabled in the next available sitting of Parliament. Enactment of this law will pave way for the domestication of the Convention.

D. Rural Development

130. **Mister Speaker**, in line with the Government's objective of providing access to electricity for all households, eleven (11) villages were connected to the national backbone infrastructure in Sebina-Tutume and Takatokwane-Morwamosu as promised last year. A further Sixty-three (63) villages are being connected and are expected to be completed during 2023/2024 financial year.
131. **Mister Speaker**, the Rural Development Council (RDC) has formed a partnership with Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) to revitalise Rural Industries Programme through commercialisation of Community Based Projects.
132. Our rural communities are custodians of a diverse and vast majority of natural resources endowments, and how they manage and use them resources is critical.
133. The Rural Development Council (RDC) has supported several projects across rural districts. For example, P2.5 Million was disbursed to Kweneng and Central Districts to facilitate completion of Motlhwane Nature Reserve at Letlhakeng in

Kweneng West and the Mokopi Predator Park at Mokoboxane, in Boteti.

134. The improvement of road networks in rural areas continues. Some of the road maintenance projects recently awarded include the Gumare - Sepopa; Sepopa-Mohembo and Sefhare-Mokobeng.
135. A revamped **Ipelegeng Programme** encompassing a skills development component was launched this year. The objective is to empower and equip Ipelegeng with accredited artisan skills and knowledge that will allow them to engage meaningfully in the economy. The new programme has been rolled out to all the districts to undertake public works.

E. Land Management

136. **Mister Speaker**, I am delighted to inform Batswana that the land sector reform, which Government started several years back, has begun to bear fruit. The reform includes changes to land-related statutes, specifically the Tribal Land Act and the Deeds Registry Act, with the goal of ensuring synergy and efficiency in land transactions.

137. I had the honour to officially launch the Secure Land Title (SLT) on 20th June 2022. The Secure Land Title is an economic enabler which guarantees ownership and security of land tenure, thereby facilitating access to secured credit.
138. **Bagaetsho**, we are determined to effectively address the challenge of land allocation to Batswana throughout the country and end the long waiting lists. To this end, we have set ourselves a target to allocate **one hundred thousand (100,000)** plots to Batswana, by end of the year.
139. As of November 2022, the land allocation stands at over **thirty three thousand (33 000)** plots in eight (8) months. This is a huge increase from an annual average of about **eight thousand six hundred and thirty (8630)** plots per year in the last twenty years. I encourage all those who are invited by the Land Boards for land allocation, to heed the call, for the process to be expedited. **Re a lekopa Bagaetsho, fa le bidiwa le tle, gore le abelwe ditsha.**
140. Further to our intention made last year, to fast track the change of land use and sub-division of land for business purposes, Government is in the process of establishing the

physical planning function at the Land Boards. This will mean that the sub-division of land without change of land use and for purposes of 50 percent of farms for ancillary use will become the function of the Land Boards.

F. Health and Wellness

141. **Mister Speaker**, one of the top priorities of the Reset Agenda is to protect our people from COVID-19 by July 2022. **One million five hundred and thirty-four thousand, eight hundred and one (1,534,801)** people are fully vaccinated in Botswana. This translates into 64 percent against a target of 70 percent set by the World Health Organization (WHO) by mid-2022. **This is one of the highest vaccination rates in the world.** Despite this achievement, I urge Botswana not to be complacent.
142. We have prioritised the construction of Rehabilitation Centres in Serowe and Francistown to combat the alarming rates of substance abuse in the country. We are therefore exploring ways to expedite the implementation of these projects. The Francistown Centre is earmarked to offer additional services of restorative care.

143. **Mister Speaker**, the Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital was officially commissioned in September 2022 with its full suite of Radiology services. When fully operational, it will offer high-level quaternary specialised services to be able to offer medical tourism.
144. Government has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Botswana Baylor Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence Trust which also covers the Texas Children's Hospital, for a further period of fifteen (15) years. New areas of partnership include paediatric and adult oncology; haematology; obstetrics; gynaecology and vaccine development.
145. **Mister Speaker**, the many years of the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is anchored on behavioural change, testing, enrolment in Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART), as well as psycho-social support, is starting to bear fruit. Incidence rate for 2013 was 1.33 percent and has since decreased to 0.2 percent in 2021, showing that the rate of new infections is decreasing.

146. The HIV prevalence in 2013 was 18.5 percent and in 2021 it had increased to 20.8 percent, showing the efficacy of our treatment programme. We should jealously guard this positive progress and encourage sustained adherence to treatment in order to contain and reduce the spread of the virus.
147. I am happy to announce that, Botswana has exceeded the World Health Organisation 95-95-95 target. This shows that 95.1 percent of the adult population living with HIV know their status, and that, 98 percent are on treatment, while 97.9 percent of those who are on treatment, are virally suppressed.
148. We have also been effective in reducing Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and have reduced direct transmission from mother to child to 2.21 percent, surpassing the 5 percent global target. In recognition of our achievement, the World Health Organisation awarded Botswana the **Silver Tier Certificate**.
149. Furthermore, Botswana was on 20th September 2022, recognised and bestowed with a “National Achievement Award” by the Africa-America Institute (AAI), for effectively

containing and managing the spread of HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, among other accomplishments.

150. Despite these commendable achievements, our concern is that fewer men compared to women are testing for HIV/AIDS. I, therefore, want to encourage all to proactively test for HIV/AIDS and adhere to treatment.
151. **Mister Speaker,** Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are increasingly becoming a steady silent pandemic. The World Health Organisation statistics of 2020 show that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) account for 46 percent of all pre-mature deaths in the country.
152. Critical risk factors predisposing Batswana to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) include, physical and emotional stress, tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating habits and substance abuse.
153. **Batswana betsho,** deaths associated with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are preventable. I want to encourage you to adopt healthy lifestyles to avert the challenge of Non-Communicable Diseases.

154. The shortage of drugs and other medical supplies in Botswana is of great concern. We are giving this matter our highest attention. As one of the immediate interventions to address the situation, Government has engaged local private entities and pharmacies to help in distributing essential medicines across the country.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

155. **Mister Speaker**, sustainable use of natural resources and the mitigation of the harmful effects of climate change are critical for sustainable economic development.

A. Clean and Safe Environment

156. **Mister Speaker**, one of the challenges that we face as a nation is environmental pollution. It is regrettable that our environment is filthy because of dumping of waste and littering along the roadsides and other public spaces.
157. **Batswana betsho**, we have only one country! Let us keep it clean! **A re phepafatseng bonno le tikologo ya rona ka nako tsotlhe.**

158. In addition, Government is rolling out a Biogas Technology Programme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A total of two hundred and thirty-one (231) bio-digesters have been built and commissioned in the southern part of the country in 2022 compared to ninety seven (97) in 2021. The programme will be rolled out to other parts of the country in 2023.

B. Climate Change, Mitigation and Resilience

159. Government is undertaking measures to reduce carbon emissions to curb the effects of climate change. In this regard, through the Integrated Resource Management Plan, Government is deploying Green Energy Technologies that will help with the attainment of a 30 percent target of green energy contribution to total power generation by 2030.

160. Furthermore, the University of Botswana and the National Agricultural Research and Development Institute (NARDI) continue to collaborate on bio-fuel research. A key outcome of this research is the University of Botswana's production of biodiesel from beef tallow and used cooking oil. The use of this fuel is currently being piloted on some of the University's fleet and at Jwaneng mine.

161. The **Botswana International University of Science and Technology** is undertaking projects including the development of a prototype for conversion of coal to liquid fuel and gasification of coal as a source of energy. A prototype has also been developed on production of sodium hypochlorite, commonly used as a broad-based disinfectant.

C. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

162. **Mister Speaker,** we continue to manage human-wildlife conflict which we take very seriously. To address this, Government employs various co-existence strategies through Community Based Natural Resources Management programmes. These are community owned income generating projects that allow them to be part of the human-wildlife conflict solutions.
163. The utilisation of natural resources, such as mosukujane, sengaparile, firewood, phane and thatching grass contributes to improvement of livelihoods. However, I wish to call upon my fellow countrymen and women to be mindful that over-harvesting such natural resources will lead to their depletion.
- A re gakologelweng gore phiri o rile ga bo se gangwe.**

Ka jalo, a re jwaleng mowa wa tshomarelo ya matlotlo a tlholego.

GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY

164. **Mister Speaker**, good governance, adherence to the principles of participatory democracy and the rule of law, remain central to sustainable inclusive development.

A. Good Governance

165. One fundamental aspect of good governance is equitable access to justice. To facilitate access to justice, Court Annexed Mediation will be introduced to complement Judicial Case Management and improve the efficiency of the Judiciary. This will reduce the backlog of Judgments and Rulings.
166. Legal Aid Botswana will expand its mandate of providing free legal service to deserving citizens. In this regard, it will start offering criminal legal aid as a pilot project through the establishment of units in Gaborone and Francistown.

167. We have strengthened our legislation and institutions to ensure that Botswana is never again Grey Listed. In this regard, Parliament passed 17 Bills. The Acts were to effect the recommendations of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
168. Just last week we launched the National Risk Assessment for mutual evaluation scheduled for 2024/2025 financial year. This is a peer review mechanism that measures a country's compliance with money laundering laws.
169. It is pleasing to note that Botswana has assumed the Presidency of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG). The Presidency of ESAAMLG, through **Honourable Peggy Serame**, Minister of Finance is not a small feat. It takes leadership commitment to marshal the whole Eastern and Southern African Region to implement anti-money laundering standards.

170. I encourage all institutions tasked with ensuring compliance to remain steadfast. I, therefore, thank Members of Parliament for their spirit of nation building, commitment and hard work which enabled us to enact the required legislation.
171. Citizen participation in civic duty goes beyond casting a ballot. I am pleased to report that Parliament rolled out the Community Score Card in June 2022 and the Botswana Speaks interactive platform in July 2022.
172. The award-winning Botswana Speaks platform digitises our traditional kgotla system and connects our traditional democracy with modern proceedings at the National Assembly.
173. The platform has been featured by the World Bank, United Nations, European Union and Inter Parliamentary Union as an example of digital democracy. **A promise delivered!**
Digitilisation in Action!

174. The Score Card is a participatory community monitoring and evaluation tool aimed at promoting accountability by those entrusted with provision of services to the public. Botswana Speaks links constituents with their Members of Parliament.

B. Transparency and Accountability

175. Government remains committed to the fight against corruption and will close all avenues for corruption. However, Botswana's decline in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index of 2021 is of great concern. As a counter measure, stronger inter-agency cooperation is a must to restore the integrity of Government processes and structures.

176. With respect to fighting crime, Government recruited one thousand (1,000) police officers in 2022 to enhance law enforcement and increase visibility. A total of twenty-seven (27) police posts will be constructed during the Transitional National Development Plan to bring public security services closer to Batswana.

177. To further intensify the war against crime, we will take advantage of digital technology using specialised equipment,

such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Technology commonly known as drones.

178. We are making significant progress in reducing rustling of livestock in the Bobirwa area. Following the implementation of some recommendations of the **Presidential Commission on Livestock Rustling** in some Villages in the Bobirwa Constituency in 2021, we have witnessed a significant reduction of cases of cattle-rustling in the Bobirwa area.
179. This initiative will be expanded to cover the entire country through bilateral agreements with similarly affected neighbouring countries. To- date, a Joint Ministerial Committee has been established to deal with livestock rustling between Botswana and Zimbabwe. This is just the beginning.
Re kgathala thata ka matshelo a batho mo magaeng!
180. Problems like these demand cooperation of all members of the community. I urge you to report any suspicious activities to our law enforcement agencies.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

181. **Mister Speaker,** Foreign Policy is integral to the delivery of our Vision 2036 - “Achieving prosperity for all”. It therefore, remains a critical instrument in influencing and shaping the global agenda in line with our national interests.
182. Through our bilateral and multilateral engagements, we have been able to secure the following important strategic roles and partnerships in the global arena:
 - i. **the hosting of the Kimberly Process (KP) Secretariat** which provides an opportunity for our country to become the global focal point of influence for promoting the integrity of natural diamonds for development. The support for us by the international community to host the Kimberly Process Secretariat is a clear indication of the confidence they have in us as a nation to host international organisations.
 - ii. **the hosting of the Forbes Under 30 Africa Summit** in Gaborone and Kasane from 24th to 28th April 2022,

being the first to be held on the Continent. Subsequently, the Forbes Africa Magazine will produce a special feature on Botswana to tell the unrivalled story of Botswana, which will contribute to our efforts to attract Foreign Direct Investment and promote our country as a tourism destination. I am delighted to inform Botswana and our strategic partners that Botswana will once again host the Summit in April 2023. **Ke a le tsamaela! This a real return of investment on our international travel.**

iii. the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the 2022 session. The Presidency of ECOSOC offered Botswana an opportunity to promote the country's national interests in the United Nations system. Through the Presidency, we successfully coordinated a wide range of social, economic and political issues. We used the opportunity to also advocate for the global COVID-19 vaccine equity.

iv. our participation at the Dubai EXPO2020, through which we showcased Botswana's culture and arts and promoted the country's business opportunities. Through the Okavango Diamond Company Botswana was able to

conduct online sale of diamonds resulting in sales of over a billion Pula.

v. the setting up of a vaccine manufacturing plant at the Botswana Digital and Innovation Hub (BDIH).

This is an investment by NantWorks LLC, which is a health and life sciences technology outfit based in California, United States of America. The Botswana company is called **NantBotswana**. Botswana Digital and Innovation Hub is a deliberate choice of innovation space where our youth are incubating their businesses.

vi. the co-hosting of an International Summit on Constitutionalism and Democratic Consolidation in Africa with the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI)- to counter the regression of democracy in Africa. The resultant Gaborone Declaration is a critical reference point in an endeavour to enrich democracy in Africa and respect for presidential term limits.

183. **Mister Speaker,** the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) was extended by the SADC Heads of State and Government for a duration of one (1) year, from 16th July 2022 to 15th July 2023. The Mission has deescalated from Peace Enforcement to a Multi-dimension Peace Keeping Mission.
184. Botswana will continue to promote and support peace and security in the region, hence our being part of the SADC Mission in Mozambique as well as observers at the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

CONCLUSION

185. **Mister Speaker,** I take this opportunity to recognise the remarkable exploits and achievements of our men and women who continue to raise the Botswana Flag high in various disciplines, especially in the international sporting world.

186. Isaac Makwala, you have on many occasions represented Botswana with dedication and pride. You are a patriot and a source of inspiration to many.
187. Our rising star, Letsile Tebogo, you have captivated Botswana and the world, by becoming a new World Under 20 hundred metres record holder, with a time of 9.91 seconds. A bright future lies ahead of you; and I encourage you to nurture your talents to the best of your ability, with character.
188. I recognise you Ofentse Bagwasi, for making us proud by winning the World Boxing Federation Super Featherweight Championship. We shall all stand proudly in his supporting corner as he defends his title in December of this year.
189. To you our very own beauty queen, Miss Botswana 2020, Palesa Molefe, you held your own at the previous Miss World Competition and represented us remarkably. I wish you well.
190. I express my profound appreciation and delight to the "**The Mares**," our Senior Women National Football Team. They competed for the first time at the 2022 Women Africa Cup of

Nations (WAFCON) and reached the quarter finals of the tournament. This is no small feat in African football.

Keep flying the Blue, Black and White flag high!

191. **Finally, Mister Speaker**, we have set ourselves a lofty goal of becoming a high-income country by 2036 – ‘Achieving Prosperity for All’. It is imperative that we change the way we think and act as individuals and as a people. We will be launching a National **Mindset Reset** Campaign in the next financial year. The primary objective of this campaign is to cultivate high performance mindsets and behaviours that are critical for the attainment of our national aspirations.
192. Our National Anthem urges us to stand up and be steadfast in our resolve to preserve and build our nation! **Emang emang.... tlhagafalang... re kopaneleng go direla lefatshe la rona.**
193. **Batswana betsho, dipula tse di namagadi di simolotse go na. Ke nako ya temo. A re yeng go lema, re itirele dijo re le Batswana.**

A PULA E MASUBELELE E LE NELE.