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AS WRITTEN

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 AFFAIRS AND LEADER OF THE BOTSWANA DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL
 CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, CAIRO, EGYPT 5TH - 13TH
 SEPTEMBER, 1994.

Mr. President Your Excellencies, Heads of state and government
 Distinguished Delegates Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me special and privilege to address this historic and
 august conference on an issue that has assumed international
 proportions and has become a great concern to mankind - the issue of
 population and development.

Population is a global issue whose effects and impact have become
 prominent and most heavily felt particularly in today's developing
 countries. It is therefore, proper and fitting that we should be

gathered here to exercise our minds on the demographic trends of the next century and their impact on the quality of life of individual men and women.

Population is not about numbers but about the abilities of our individual countries resources and economic viqabilities to sustain those ever increasing populations.

Mr.president, development is about people and the process of development should start with meeting at least the basic present needs of our people, providing modern safe and effective family planning awareness and services to bring the growth of human numbers more in line with the available and sustainable world resources.

The world population is now estimated at 5.7 billion and is likely to grow at an average of 95 million each year resulting in an estimated world population of 6.2 billion by the end of the century. It is also estimated that of this number 96% will be in the developing countries. If these trends are true as I have no reason to doubt them, then we cannot close our minds and expect nature to provide and give direction to such a complicated situation. We have to take and be seen to be taking steps with a view to giving meaning and direction to this issue.

The corner-stone of Botswana's development policies and programmes has since independence been the alleviation of poverty and the provision of basic social needs of its people. The rapid per capita income growth resulting from the mineral revenue has enabled most Batswana to enjoy improved living conditions.

Along side this economic growth Botswana has witnessed an increased population growth of 3.5% per annum. At this rate the population is expected to double between 1991 and 2011, a period of 20 years.

This short doubling period will obviously put pressure not only on the government and the communities but more importantly on the non-renewable resources to sustain it. This will be happening at a time when the phenomenal growth of mineral revenues which has supported this growth in the past will not be expected.

Indeed, the rapid population growth now being experienced is capable of compromising the country's ability to maintain improved levels of services in health, education, housing and employment sectors. Moreover, it is evident that population growth puts considerable pressure on the nation's fragile eco-system and in particular, on the limited natural resources. Other population growth-related issues of concern to the government of Botswana are the marked increase in teenage and unwanted pregnancies, sometimes ending in illegal abortions and high maternal mortality rates, rapid urbanisation, low health and social status of women, undernourishment among children, deteriorating environment, growing numbers of street children and the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the nation's development initiatives.

It is however my government's commitment to address these concerns. The government has therefore undertaken necessary policy legislative changes to permit, among other interventions, safe abortion under exceptional circumstances where the life of the mother, child or both is at risk. Under Botswana laws, the termination of pregnancy or abortion is carried out by a registered medical practitioner in a government hospital or a registered private clinic for the purpose, by the director of health services, and after two medical practitioners have given

their opinions in writing formed in good faith. The process is therefore performed following the medical practitioners acceptable evidence that pregnancy is the result of rape, defilement or incest and that the termination of pregnancy or abortion is requested by the victim or where the victim lacks the capacity to make such a request it is given on her behalf by the next of kin or guardian or the person in loco parents.

Mr. President, my government wishes to see the current rate of population growth correspond with the future rate of economic growth and, if possible, for the economy to expand at a rate faster than the population growth in order to attain an increased and sustained standard of living for our people. To achieve this objective, appropriate intervention measures are being put in place to check, in a holistic, comprehensive and multi-sectoral manner the negative impact of rapid population growth. Instead of attempting to accommodate the consequences of population growth, as was done in the past, government now wants to influence population growth trends in the desired direction. Hence, the seventh but current National Development Plan (NDP 7) recognizes the need to promote the slow down of the rate of population growth in order to cater for the youth in terms of education, health and other amenities, as well as to provide meaningful employment. Almost half of the population is under the age of fifteen, thus creating a high dependency ratio and posing significant challenges to the nation's future capacity to provide social services, including employment.

Accordingly, Government has decided that a clearly stated policy on population as well as a programme for its co-ordinated implementation is needed before the end of the current plan period in 1997. The thrust of the envisaged policy is to contribute to the reduction of the

high rate of population growth; improvement in the quality of life of families, and strengthening the direction, cohesion and co-ordination of the many efforts in the population field being undertaken by a number of organizations.

To this end, Government established in July 1992, the national council Population and Development (NCPD) as an advisory body charged with the responsibility of formulation an explicit and comprehensive national population policy. A population unit, within the ministry of finance and development planning, has also been established to strengthen national coordination of population programmes and activities as well as provide administrative support to the national council on population and development a parliamentary sub-committee on population and development which includes members of the house of chiefs- the custodians of our cultural heritage, also exists and has a close working relationship with the national council on population and development.

As part of the consensus-building effort to attain broad-based support for the proposed policy ,sensitization and awareness creation, seminars are being organised both at national and district levels respectively, to articulate the population concerns of the nation, and thereby evolve a healthy dialogue between government and the people to identify issues, with a view to incorporating the perspectives and concerns of the various groups into the formulation, design, and implementation of the population , development and environment programmes that affect them.

In the areas of public health care, over the years sectoral planning has affected demographic trends. Primary health care (PHC) has been accepted as the most appropriate strategy for the attainment of

health for all . The central components of the strategy are equity, inter-sectoral collaboration and community involvement . In the past, active development of voluntary family planning ,despite the absence of a comprehensive population policy , has been pursued by government . It has always set targets for contraceptive levels to be attained as part of its health delivery strategy . Since 1973 family planning has become a well-established integral component of the maternal and child health service provision stresses birth spacing as a means of enhancing the health and welfare of the child and the mother.

The programme has made significant progress; infant mortality level of 45 per 1000 live births has been achieved; there is a 95% level of knowledge on modern family planning methods by women and consequently a contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) of 33% had been reached by 1991 . The total fertility rate fell from 6.5 in 1984 to 5.0 in 1988.

With respect to issues relation to women in development a women's Affairs Unit was established in 1981 in recognition of the importance of the contributions by women organisations and non-formal groups to national development . In 1988 government came up with a draft policy document on women in development after some research and wide consultations had been undertaken . the objective is to facilitate the integration of women in national development and to ensure that the incorporation and inclusion of women's needs and concerns in plans, policies and programmes is effected . The strengthening of the women's Affairs Unit will continue during the current plan period. More research into women's issues with a view to removing those constraints which have hitherto inhibited the empowerment of women is being undertaken and a final draft policy on women in development is on the drawing board . The document will serve as a blue print for governmental

& non-governmental organisations efforts towards enhancing women's participation in national development and meaningful decision making.

Basic education is a human right and acts as a major catalyst for change. In 1993 the national commission on education emphasised investment in education and training as a necessary condition for national development since people are the major resource of the nation . It is intended that education will make a major contribution to economic growth, social progress and cultural identity within the context of national development. To empower women to play a greater role in the economy, it is envisaged that training programmes should impart useful skills and work attitudes and “ that a concerted effort will be made to increase situation where according to the 1991 population and housing census nearly one in four of all females working for cash was a domestic worker.

The youth and sports units are set to define national policy in these areas and to support private and community initiatives. A study on the draft policy on youth is currently on - going and will be finalised later this year or perhaps early in the new year . Better coordination of youth activities will become necessary, especially among ministries and government departments particularly those responsible for culture, education, labour , sports and local government. The objectives of youth programmes under the current plan are collection and dissemination of information; improvement of the already-existing national structure to serve young people, promotion of basic facilities for information, cultural development and leisure, including the inculcation of Botswana culture, promotion of youth programmes as well as promotion of formation of more youth clubs and associations within the context of youth mobilization for meaningful participation in national development .

Prior to the conception of a broader framework to deal with children's issues and concerns, the children's act of 1981 has among other purposes been used for handling juvenile delinquents in towns and villages. The government of Botswana is signatory to the declaration on the world summit on the rights of the child the declaration was an urgent universal appeal to give every child a better future, noting that for the majority of children in the world the reality of childhood is subject to many limitations and dangers that hamper their growth and development.

The national programme of action (NPA) for children is being developed by various ministries engaged in children's activities with the support of donors. It is an attempt to translate the world summit for children's goals into action programmes. The implementation of these programmes is expected to cover a period of 10 years. It is worth noting that most of the programmes set out in the plan of action of the world summit are already being implemented and that Botswana has already surpassed many of the goals set. The cost estimate of those activities not covered by the current national development plan over a period of five(5) years beginning 1993/98 is approximately us\$192.3 million.

Population policy formulation and subsequent implementation cannot be treated in isolation from the other efforts of government to develop and enhance the welfare of the population in general. There are a number of population-responsive policies, measures and programmes, such as the national conservation strategy, the rural development policy, the drought relief and recovery programme which are on-going activities focused specifically on environmental preservation and alleviation of rural poverty.

Mr. president, the relationship between development and environment has a place in our priority listing of activities. The conservation of the nation's renewable and non-renewable resources has been another continuing concern of government as it develops and implements its development policies and programmes, especially as development is not sustainable without effective conservation policies. There is a clear evidence in Botswana that resources are under pressure and this has given rise to the concern about the ability of the resources to sustain the needs of the future generations. Many of the nation's resources are being used in ways that are detrimental to their conservation and to the environment. The impacts of these development pressures are manifest by rangelands degradation, the use of trees for fuel-wood without replanting, the mining of ground water, reduction of wildlife species and veld products, the generation of wastes which pollute soil and water, and land erosion.

To address this concern, government established in 1990 the national conservation strategy to accelerate improvements in the management of the nation's natural resources through more coordinated and sharply focused programmes. Amongst a number of detailed development and conservation goals outlined, in the strategy is "the establishment of a balance between population growth and the supply of natural resources". Presently, government requires environmental impact assessment studies of all major development projects, and over the years, many pieces of legislation that bear on conservation matters have been enacted, namely:

- i) Atmospheric pollution (Prevention) act of 1971.
- ii) Agricultural resources conservation act (1974)
- iii) Tribal land act (1970)

- iv) Fauna conservation act (1968)
- v) National parks act (1968)
- vi) Forest act (1968)
- vii) Public act (1968)

These acts need review and strengthening to enhance their impact on the conservation of natural resources and the preservation of the environment.

One of the goals of the national conservation strategy is “ the diversification of the rural economy so as to generate new jobs in this respect, the objectives of governments's rural development policies include, inter alia, to create productive employment opportunities in order to reduce the numbers with no visible means of support, and to improve access to social services such as water, education, and health care, in order to foster healthier, smaller, better educated and better fed families.

Furhtermore, other policies and programmes such as the financial assistance policy , the arable lands development programme and communal development areas programme have all focused on promoting productive employment and the creation of income-earning opportunities since the late 1970's creation income-earning opportunities is also an important ingredient in achieving national households food security through enhanced incomes.

Efforts to promote these policies were inhibited by the long drought in the country which extended form 1991 to 1987.The drought eroded rural household assest and incomes and contributed to overgrazing and environmental degradation.The drought relief and recovery programme

assisted rural dwellers to survive the drought and provided needed relief during the crisis resulting from this exercise, a broader strategy for a more "Drought-resistant" rural economy consistent with the overall rural development strategy has been adopted by government. The main features of the scheme include promotion of both farm and off-farm income earning opportunities in rural areas, giving priority to water conservation and management efficiency, and the development of a rural labour intensive public work programme. Finally, the promotion opportunities will be accompanied by measures of targeted relief programmes for those who do not benefit from the expansion of the rural economy.

Mr. president, with respect to internal migration, it is evident that people tend to move towards areas of economic opportunities; some on a temporary basis during planting and harvesting seasons. but more often in search of more permanent employment. Consequently, settlements grow and decline together with economic opportunities. However, economic opportunities in turn depend on the availability of social and economic infrastructure, as well as access to markets and raw materials.

Mr. president, in conclusion, it is gratifying to note that in spite of lack of a population policy, the government of Botswana has used a variety of sectoral policies measures and programmes to address, albeit, indirectly some of the population concerns of the nation. However, since the inception of the current plan in 1991, attempts are now being made to formulate an explicit population policy, enhance the national institutional capacity for the integration of population factors in national development planning and finally strengthen the information base needed for planning, monitoring and evaluation of ongoing and future population programmes.

Thank you

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