



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT

BY

**HON. DIKGAKGAMATSO N. SERETSE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE, JUSTICE AND SECURITY**

**DURING THE ADOPTION OF BOTSWANA'S FINAL
UPR OUTCOME REPORT**

AT THE

23rd SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**6th June 2013
Geneva, Switzerland**

Mr. President,

1. I wish to start by expressing my sincere gratitude and appreciation to members of the Troika, namely: Austria, Poland and Uganda, as well as to the Human Rights team and the UPR Secretariat for their facilitation, guidance and support during our review process in January this year.

2. Going through the second UPR was fulfilling and affirmative of our commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. The UPR is indeed a unique and effective tool that allows for independent and objective review of the human rights situations around the world, in a constructive, cooperative and equal manner.

Mr. President,

3. During our review process, my delegation and I had the privilege to interact with members of the Human Rights Council and Observer States on the human rights situation in my country.

4. Their comments, commendations, questions and words of encouragement highlighted significant progress made by Botswana in the promotion and protection of human rights since our last review in 2008. This acknowledgement and positive recognition of our efforts is greatly appreciated.

5. The interactive dialogue also provided an opportunity for my Government to take stock of the challenges that the country still faces in the full realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the people. Many of the challenges identified will, no doubt, form part of our priorities during the next four (4) years.

6. Today we are also looking forward to receiving the views and comments of the civil society. There is no doubt that Botswana greatly values the role played by the civil society in the promotion and protection of human rights in our country. While we do not consider today's interaction as constituting another review session, we will constructively reflect on the feedback in our implementation process.

Mr. President,

7. As would be recalled, we received a total of 175 recommendations. We were able to immediately accept 93 of the recommendations, while 39 did not enjoy our support.

8. Forty-three (43) of the recommendations were deferred for further consultations at home.

9. As indicated in the Addendum to our Report, out of the 43 deferred recommendations, we were able to accept 18, partially accept three (3) and 22 did not enjoy our support. On the whole, Botswana accepted a total of 111 recommendations.

Mr. President,

10. In order to promote public awareness on the outcome of the country's human rights review, we held several media interviews and issued a series of press releases with many media houses in Botswana.

Mr. President,

11. Since January, Botswana has started to make steady progress on the path to follow-up and implement the agreed recommendations.

12. We have already started the development of the national human rights strategy and action plan. To this effect, we held a national consultative workshop on the development of same in conjunction with and through the active support of one of the main civil society organizations, Ditshwanelo (Center for Human Rights).

13. The workshop attracted participation from stakeholders within Government, as well as representatives of civil society organizations across the country. The deliberations were open, transparent and widely inclusive, and revealed a great appetite to see this important project succeed.

14. I am confident that this process will be home to purposeful engagement and cooperation between both Government and civil society.

Mr. President,

15. It will be noticed from the Addendum that more than half of the deferred recommendations had to do with ratification or accession to selected human rights treaties, as well as domestication of the Rome Statute. Our ratification or accession thereto will depend on the general framework of our laws, as well as the level of our economic and social development.

16. With regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, I am happy to report that the drafting of a Bill to domesticate the Statute is at an advanced stage.

Mr. President,

17. Let me also take this opportunity to inform that in April this year, Botswana became the first African country to ratify the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute on the Crime of Aggression.

Mr. President,

18. The recommendations that we accepted are those whose spirit we support and consider practicable. Some of them have, of course, been implemented while others are currently being implemented.

19. Recommendations that require or suggest codification of our customary laws and processes have not enjoyed our support. Even if we were to codify as suggested, we are of diverse cultures and traditions, and codification would be undesirable.

20. We have also not accepted any recommendation that is inconsistent with our constitution and is socially repugnant in our country. I comprehensively covered our national position on these issues during the review Session. We, however, remain open to dialogue on them.

Mr. President,

21. In conclusion, let me reiterate that Botswana takes all the recommendations made to her very seriously. We accept that the review process is meant to improve the human rights standards of our people and where practicable, we will continue to reflect on some of the recommendations that have not enjoyed our support.

Thank you and May God Bless You!

