

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE PRINCE MAELE, MINISTER
OF LAND MANAGEMENT, WATER AND SANITATION
SERVICES

DRURING THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT
(HABITAT III)

17 TO 20 OCTOBER 2016

Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the President and the people of the Republic of Botswana. I wish at the inception of my speech, pay tribute to His Excellency the President of Ecuador, Raphel Correa, and indeed the people of this beautiful Republic for hosting this historic conference, UN Habitat 3. The warm reception that my delegation and i received, is clear testimony of a united nation that is in pursuit of improving the lives of its citezens. To this end, I stand here to convey on behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana and the people of Botswana, the message of peace and prosperity. Allow me to also congratulate the secretariat for their tireless efforts in the preparation of this exciting and action packed conference. Preparing for participants exceeding 40 thousand from Governments, UN Agencies, the Private Sector, the Academia and other stakeholders involves an awful amount of time and excellent logistics. To your Exellencies and delegates here present, your resolve to attend this

conference and level of participation is without doubt, a clear demonstration of your commitment and selflessness to humanity.

Mr Chairman,

Urbanisation is increasing at a rapid pace due to migration to urban centres. This is fuelled by economic developments and opportunities in the major centres relative to the hardship of working in the agricultural sector. Botswana attaches great importance and associates itself with the Habitat Agenda. In this connection, we have made significant milestones in implementing this agenda since 1996. Needless to say, we are one of the 120 countries that submitted the national report, in which we outlined our achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of the Agenda. Our national report further covers our Country's urban related priorities, in fulfilment of the guidelines of the Habitat 3 Conference.

As a demonstration of our commitment to the Habitat Agenda and the well-being of our people, Botswana enacted and reviewed various laws and adopted policies which include among others, the National Policy on Housing (2000); The Revised National Destitute Policy (2002); The Rural Development Policy (2003), Revised National Settlement Policy (2004); the Local Government Act (2012) and the 2013 Revised Town and Country Planning Act.

All these laws and policies were enacted and revised by the Government in order to provide decent and affordable housing for all and create sustainable human settlements in an effort to help in particular, the underprivileged and the poor to have access to housing, electricity, clean drinking water and sanitation.

The Government of Botswana has also adopted a wide range of inclusive programmes and key initiatives targeting vulnerable groups among them, women, the youth, destitutes, people living with disabilities and the elderly. These initiatives and programs, amongst other, include but not limited to the following:

- The Destitute Housing Programme which targets the poor who cannot afford to provide shelter for themselves
- The Self Help Housing Agency (SHHA) which targets low income earners
- The Youth Housing Programme aimed at assisting the youth below the age of 35, in accessing decent housing
- The Instalment Purchase Scheme aimed at bridging the gap between those who are assisted through government programs and those who are not able to access loans from financial institutions by subsidizing interest rates
- The Tenant Purchase Scheme aimed at facilitating purchase of government rented houses by sitting tenants who are not able to access loans from financial institutions.

In addition to the above in 2010, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana came up with an all-time popular initiative known as the President's Housing Appeal, an initiative that encourages participation of the public, the private sector, individuals, religious organisations to improve the lives of the needy by partaking and making donations to the Fund which is then utilized for building houses for the needy.

Furthermore, the Botswana Land Policy adopted 2015 addresses issues of land management, security of tenure, access to land and land information systems.

Mr Chairman,

Notwithstanding the solid record of achievements in implementing the Habitat Agenda, Botswana is not without challenges which include shortage of serviced land, high cost of construction and fragmented approach to housing delivery. It is our view that these challenges would be addressed as we implement our priorities for the New Urban Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

The New Urban Agenda which we will adopt at the end of this Conference resonates well with the Government of Botswana's development agenda which has strong emphasis on inclusiveness, justice, equality and prosperity for all. To this end, our development agenda has five key priority areas, and they include;

- National Housing Strategy – which enhances coordination of the housing delivery,
- Housing needs assessment which seeks to close the gaps in housing development.
- Revitalization of cities, there is a general decline in the physical fabric of our old cities, and therefore contributes to the depression of such localities and discourage investment and unlocking opportunities for employment.
- Public Private Partnership in land servicing and housing development entailing provision of infrastructural development to facilitate sustainable human settlements. 1
- The National Spatial Plan which is a 25 year plan that seeks to integrate all other plans that go with development such as provision of sewage, roads, power, water and sanitation services.

In conclusion I wish to I wish to pledge my Government's commitment to the New Urban Agenda. We reaffirm our position to sustainable urban development as an important step towards realising sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated manner. While we embrace it, we however wish to emphasise that effective implementation of our priorities for the new Urban Agenda cannot be achieved without concerted efforts by all stakeholders. For us, the New Urban Agenda is everybody's business. As Botswana our partnership and cooperation with the international community including the UN Agencies, development partners, regional bodies

and other stakeholders is of crucial importance in realizing our vision as espoused in the New Urban Agenda. I wish to reiterate that as we implement the New Urban Agenda, *a robust monitoring and evaluation framework has to be in place so as to monitor progress in order not to leave anyone behind.*

Finally, I wish all of you good health, and a safe journey to your respective destinations. I also wish to take this opportunity to further extent our warmest invitation to you and your families to come and enjoy the beauty of our fauna and flora. I thank you for your attention, and may God bless you all.