

REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY**

**HON. FRANS VAN DER WESTHUIZEN  
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**ITEM 11: HUMAN RIGHTS. DIALOGUE WITH THE  
SPECIAL RAPPOORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**DURING THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE  
PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

**22<sup>nd</sup> April to 03<sup>rd</sup> May 2019  
NEW YORK**

*Please check against delivery*

1. The Government of Botswana welcomed the recent visit of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Dr Fernard de Varennes who was in Botswana from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at the invitation of the Government. While in Botswana, the Special Rapporteur had an opportunity to consult with minority and marginalized communities and a wide spectrum of civil society organisations.
2. Botswana continues to make significant progress in addressing the needs and concerns of marginalized communities, including issues relating to respect for cultural diversity, development programs, social services, land distribution as well as participation and consultation. As a result of our national policies and programmes, we have also seen great improvements in the areas of economic empowerment, access to decent shelter, employment and access to tertiary education, to cite a few.
3. The promotion and protection of human rights remains a top priority for the Government of Botswana. We also attach great importance to the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other regional and international human rights instruments.
4. The Constitution of Botswana guarantees fundamental freedoms and basic human rights. The Government of Botswana will continue to engage with all stakeholders including marginalized communities and their representatives to ensure that they are represented in all decision-making structures.

I thank you for your kind attention