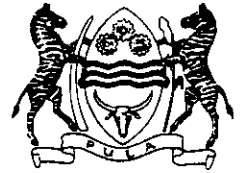


REPUBLIC OF  
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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**MS. HALAKANGWA MBULAI  
DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY  
MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
BOTSWANA**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 4: "HALF DAY DISCUSSION ON THE AFRICAN  
REGION"**

**AT THE  
"TWELFTH SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON  
INDIGENOUS ISSUES "**

**23 May, 2013**

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*Check Against Delivery*

Good afternoon. The Government of Botswana is grateful for the opportunity to share with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, interventions taken to address challenges faced by Remote Area Communities in Botswana.

The Constitution of Botswana protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals; every Motswana, irrespective of race, colour, religion, gender, political opinion or place of origin is protected and guaranteed these rights and freedoms.

Since independence in 1966, the Government of Botswana has made the development of its people a priority in the national agenda, with specific emphasis on the poor and marginalised rural and urban communities. This is evidenced through a number of development programmes, including the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), which was established in the early 1970s

The formulation of the RADP was due to the realization that the remote rural communities (a majority of whom are Basarwa) were a special category who needed assistance to fully participate and share in the social and economic development of the country. The Remote Area Development Programme targets citizens of Botswana who live in settlements located far from centres of basic services and facilities. The targeted people are characterized by severe poverty, lack of incomes and education, have low literacy levels, and depend on a deteriorating ecological resource base. The areas most affected are the western districts of Ghanzi and Kgalagadi, Western Kweneng and Southern district.

The Revised Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) of 2009 lays the foundation for the Affirmative Action for Remote Area Communities. The Programme provides broad strategies that various sectors can pursue to promote affirmative action under the auspices of the Remote Area Development Programme.

Notwithstanding the broad strategies provided under the Revised Remote Area Development Programme, Presidential Directive CAB 39 (B) 2010 has directed that an affirmative action oriented plan on RADP be developed.

This is a demonstration that Botswana Government is fully committed to the concept and practice of equal opportunities for its citizens. The approach provides a foundation for affirmative action in all aspects of employment, training, social and economic development, among others.

The Affirmative Action Framework will be implemented over a period of ten (10) years to allow the Remote Area Communities (RACs) to build their capacity to stand on their own and be able to compete meaningfully for available opportunities. Accordingly, there will be need to review the

framework halfway through its implementation to assess impact and take corrective action.

The purpose of this Affirmative Action Framework is to promote equal opportunities for remote area communities. It has been instituted by Government to ensure that the Remote Area Communities are included in all national programs. This is intended to address the existing imbalances that have been created by geographic conditions.

The Remote Area Communities have not sufficiently benefited from the general prosperity of the country because of geographic conditions within which they live.

The Framework aims to fast-track the development of remote area communities in cognizance of the slow development they have experienced by positively discriminating them to ensure that their standard of living is brought to parity with mainstream society.

The Affirmative Action Framework also recognizes that a majority of the remote area communities were at one stage living a nomadic life and therefore they have not accrued any assets to fall back on in times of shocks and vulnerabilities in their livelihood systems; such as drought and natural disasters.

Essentially, the affirmative action is intended to achieve the following:

- a) To promote social inclusion of people living in remote area settlements, both individually and/or as a family in the development of the country.
- b) To provide development infrastructure in the remote area settlements for the RACs to be able to empower themselves and participate in the economic and social activities of this country.
- c) To enable RACs to build sustainable livelihoods, promote their self-reliance and sustainable utilization of natural resources.
- d) To enhance access to social services, poverty eradication and other national development programmes by RACs.
- e) To facilitate direct participation of remote area communities in issues concerning their development.
- f) To enhance collaboration with NGOs/CBOs, Development Partners and private sector on the development of remote area communities

Although the Affirmative Action Framework, builds on the existing RADP it is different in the sense that it accentuates certain developmental areas for RACs specifically to be enriched and given preferential attention.

The Revised RADP, 2009 provides broad sectoral goals and strategies and also identifies challenges in each sector that the strategies are intended to address. These sectors include; Youth Empowerment; Sports and Recreation; Transport and Communication; Land; Water; Electricity; Agriculture; Employment; Civil registration; Economic Empowerment, Health, Education and Arts and Culture.

(Due to time constraints, I will touch on a few of the initiatives to be undertaken under the following sectors;)

### **Education**

- a) Government sponsorship should be provided to all students from the remote area communities who have been admitted to tertiary institutions and such sponsorship should be provided entirely as a grant.
- b) School fees, transport, uniform and all other related necessities, should continue to be provided for students who are not at tertiary institutions.
- c) At least one day care centre should be established in each settlement.
- d) Efforts should be made and intensified to reach out and enroll all children who dropped out of school or started later than the stipulated entry age into primary education.
- e) NGOs providing skills development to the remote area communities may, subject to assessment, benefit from various grant schemes provided by Government.

### **Health**

- a) Education on health promotion and provision of preventive interventions should be intensified in remote area settlements.
- b) HIV/AIDS prevention programmes should be intensified within remote area communities through peer education and life skills trainings.
- c) Research should be undertaken in the field of traditional medicine with a view to documenting and patenting those that have scientific value, so that they can benefit the RACs.

- d) Traditional health practitioners should be empowered with necessary information and skills and be involved in suitable health procedures, especially those that they regularly perform.
- e) Campaigns against alcohol abuse should be intensified in the remote area communities

### **Arts and Culture**

- a) Cultural festivals are to be encouraged to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of remote area communities.
- b) Financial and other material support should be provided to promote, publish, record, patent and market products made by the remote area communities.
- c) Research should be undertaken to unearth and document the different cultures and indigenous knowledge.

Settlements with potential for immediate establishment of cultural villages should be identified and provided with support to establish such facilities.

This affirmative action will run for a period of ten (10) years, after which all settlements will graduate and be treated like all other villages of Botswana. The affirmative action framework will be reviewed after (5) five years of implementation.

The system has two levels of monitoring that is, implementation monitoring and results monitoring.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Chairperson, the programme shall be coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and progress on implementation will be reported quarterly to the Rural Development Council, the executive leadership across all Ministries **and** Cabinet.

The success of the framework is dependent on the involvement of the entire government, the Remote Area Communities and all development stakeholders, including the private sector.