



**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**STATEMENT BY**

**Ms. MOSADI K. RAMOTSHABI**

**DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE, JUSTICE**

**AND SECURITY**

**TO THE**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**Under Item 3**

**Geneva, 28 Sept. 2009**

**Mr. President,**

1. Botswana welcomes the opportunity to comment on the presentation by Professor James Anaya - Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people regarding his mission to Botswana in March 2009.
2. The country-visit is an attestation to Botswana's long-standing commitment to support for, and cooperation with, this mandate and other United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

**Mr. President,**

3. Botswana Government was happy to receive the Special Rapporteur and facilitate his visit in the country. This visit gave the Government an opportunity to dialogue constructively with him on what Government is doing to address the challenges facing the country's diverse remote area communities. It also offered us an opportunity for introspection.

**Mr. President,**

4. The Special Rapporteur has indicated in his Statement this afternoon that a final Report on his country-visit to Botswana remains in abeyance, as consultations between the Government and his Office continue. We are encouraged to have this opportunity and we believe this is the most constructive way of engagement on human rights issues.

**Mr. President,**

5. My Delegation, however, wishes to underscore Botswana's position that **ALL BATSWANA ARE INDIGENOUS TO THE COUNTRY.** This is a position which is commonly shared in our continent – **Africa**, as elaborated by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) in which it is understood that any African can legitimately consider him/herself as an indigen on the Continent.
6. By this explanation, however, we are not setting preconditions for the Special Rapporteur's work, but rather offering a clearer perspective on what informs Botswana's approach to human development programs.

**Mr. President,**

7. My Delegation is pleased to note that the Special Rapporteur commends Botswana for the long-standing commitment and efforts to address the underdevelopment of remote area communities through various initiatives. He further recognizes our commitment to elevating the economic and social conditions of our people and building a nation in which all are equal. The pursuit of these efforts is, however, not to the detriment of the protection and maintenance of the distinct and diverse cultures existing in our country.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, my Delegation wishes to reiterate Botswana's commitment to the consultation and dialogue that we have had and will continue to have with the Special Rapporteur.

I thank you.