



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS  
BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY LT. GEN. SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

TO THE FOURTH SESSION  
OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**GABORONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Madam Speaker, last Friday was All Souls Day when we remember and pray for those who have died commending their souls to God that they may rest in peace and rise in glory. May I request that we observe a moment of silence for those who have departed from us during the past year.

1. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to once again inform the nation on where we are in our journey to continuously improve the lives of Batswana. But, before I do so, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of the new Member for Mahalapye West, the Honourable Bernard Bolele. You are most welcome sir.

2. Last Saturday's bye-election was of course necessitated by the retirement of the former Vice President and Leader of this House, Lt. General Mompoti Meraphe. One of our nation's true founding statesmen, his five decades of outstanding public service is an example of patriotic commitment.

3. While the development of any democracy is an evolutionary process, today I am pleased to re-affirm that our own progress is on track, being marked by realistic milestones towards realizable goals. Yet, in measuring our path, we are aware that even though we have come far we still have farther to go. As citizens it is our responsibility, as well as our right, to seek a brighter future for ourselves and our children.

4. The roadmap to a better Botswana is contained in our Long-term Vision and the 10th National Development Plan, which are supported by flagship programmes for sustainable economic diversification, poverty eradication and citizen empowerment, including the youth.

5. This administration's implementation efforts are further guided by adherence to the "5Ds", which can be summarised as our pledge to achieve a dignified life for all Batswana through the delivery of sustainable economic development, driven by a culture of democratic accountability and rooted in a renewed sense of social discipline. Here we recognise that sustainable development is not only measured in the delivery of physical infrastructure. More fundamentally, it is about ensuring that our human resources, that is our people, have the skills and opportunities to achieve a dignified life. It is for this reason that poverty eradication and youth development and empowerment are a special priority.

6. By definition, people centred development must be people driven. This is why a vibrant democracy is not just about the details of elections; it is also about constantly engaging the public. By interacting with Batswana through various public fora, including dikgotla and the convening of over 50 dipitso since April 2012, we are able to address their real life concerns. Our interactive commitment is further reflected in our electronic outreach through websites, social media, and the provision of toll free numbers across Government. Consultation through diverse platforms thus remains at the centre of our good governance practice.

7. Our commitment to Dignity is further reflected in our interventions on behalf of those with special needs such as people living with disabilities, orphans and those with chronic health conditions, as well as the less fortunate in general. It also causes us to focus more proactively on the needs of Remote Area Communities.

8. From experience we know that Discipline is a prerequisite to overcoming many of our social challenges, be it the spread of HIV, the damage caused by alcohol and substance abuse, the corrosive effects of crime and corruption or the loss of family and community cohesion.

9. It is in the context of each of these 5Ds then that we also remain firmly committed to our goal of achieving an equitable high income status for our country, devoid of poverty. But as I, and indeed my predecessors, have said we cannot become a prosperous nation for all, in the absence of a greater effort and willingness on the part of all Batswana to sacrifice short term consumption for greater output.

10. Our strengths as a nation are known to ourselves and to others in the international community. We continue to score highly in a wide range of global surveys in such areas as upholding political freedom, human rights and the rule of law, including our zero tolerance for corruption. With our existing strengths, abilities and underutilized capacities, we can achieve our highest aspirations. But in the end neither our potential nor the quality of Government's plans, policies and programmes are sufficient to get us to where we need to go.

11. I say this because it is commonly said that extraordinary achievement is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. It is the simple truth that we can never be at the top of the world if our work ethic is widely perceived, even by ourselves, as lacking. As a small, landlocked

state, we have no option but to compete successfully within a regional and global economy whose playing field does not always favour us. This fact puts an even greater burden on our human resources. Inadequate productivity, by the public and private sectors alike, therefore, remains a key bottleneck to economic growth and diversification.

12. We are mindful that productivity is not simply about doing more. It is rather about focusing on those things that will yield us the greatest return. This in turn calls for discipline both in and outside of the workplace. Achieving our goals through greater productivity also requires a collective willingness on our part to maintain a common sense of purpose, which is rooted in the recognition that our country's success has been about merging individual and community desires to the national interest by always putting Botswana first.

### Service Delivery

13. Madam Speaker, a key instrument in our progress over the years has been the quality of our public institutions. While our public service still compares favourably with others in the region, its standards must now be nothing less than world class. We are, therefore, intensifying and broadening our internal monitoring and performance reviews, in partnership with the private sector through the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM).

14. We have also developed competency frameworks to facilitate recruitment and capacity building. In addition to training at the Public Service College, we have established a public service assessment centre to align civil servants to new and better managed services. We are further streamlining our operations through business process re-engineering.

15. Recognising that poor service delivery can also result from corruption, the DCEC has been brought on board as an integral element of our monitoring and evaluation efforts. At the same time the Anti-Corruption Units I reported on last year continue to be established on a strategic basis in a number of Ministries, while Anti-Corruption Committees have been put in place and have begun to function in all line Ministries with a mandate to reduce areas of potential abuse.

16. Our progress in fighting institutional corruption is reflected in the latest Transparency International Index. Besides being cited once more as the least corrupt country in Africa, I am pleased to note that our

overall standing has significantly improved over the past two years, moving up eight places.

17. While instilling professional discipline, we also recognize the need to reward dedicated public servants. In June of this year, we for the first time locally celebrated Public Service Day, during which 59 public officers were awarded for their exceptional performance. This initiative will be broadened and continue on an annual basis.

18. To more broadly address issues of service delivery throughout the economy, Government has further intensified its partnership with the private sector through BOCCIM's participation in Thematic Working Groups or TWGs, as well as the High Level Consultative Council and its sub-committees in all line Ministries.

19. BOCCIM, along with Government, is jointly coordinating a new Customer Satisfaction Survey of Public Services, whose findings will result in further interventions. Public service delivery must also be about removing any impediments to private sector growth. We have thus invited BOCCIM to identify any 'red tape' bottlenecks experienced.

20. To further enhance delivery, Government also established four new Cabinet Sub-Committees to oversee the work of the consolidated Thematic Working Groups. As the Honourable Members may recall, TWGs were formed in 2008 to engage non-government and intra-Ministry stakeholders in the planning, budgeting and implementation of national development priorities. By including civil society and the business community, they promote greater inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. The four TWG's are rationalised to address projects falling under: "Economy and Employment"; "Governance, Safety and Security"; "Social Upliftment"; and "Sustainable Environment".

### Economic Outlook

21. Madam Speaker, developments in the world economy for the first half of 2012 were generally negative with the overall global economic outlook being much gloomier than it was during the first half of 2011. Advanced economies are expected to register growth of only 1.3% this year and 1.5% in 2013. Given its global linkages the domestic economic outlook is thus uncertain. Our current forecasts are for 3.5% growth in 2012 and 5% percent in 2013.

22. Our slower growth is primarily due to a decline in mining sector output. During the first quarter of 2012 mining output in real terms was 9.5% less than in the first quarter of 2011, and in the second quarter it was 7.6% less than in the same period a year earlier. Prospects for the remainder of the year are also not encouraging. In this context, the global diamond market experienced negative performance during the first half of 2012, with reduced sales volumes and a softening in prices. This reflects constrained global demand, exacerbated by slow growth and uncertainty in the Euro Zone, China, India, and the USA. The recent IMF World Economic Outlook warns of continued weakness in the performance of both advanced and key emerging market economies.

23. Most non-mining sectors have, however, recorded positive real growth rates for the same period, with construction growing by 19.7%, utilities by 11.2%, social and personal services by 10%. These numbers are indicative of modest progress towards economic diversification. But, our agricultural sector has experienced setbacks, which I shall come to later.

24. Inflation has declined, averaging 7% during July-September 2012, down from last year's average rate of 8.5%. The Bank of Botswana has concluded that inflation will continue to be lower for 2012, but still remain above its 3-6% objective. The Bank has therefore maintained its rate at 9.5%, to contain inflation and promote investment.

25. After running budget deficits from 2008/09 to 2011/12, largely due to the economic downturn, we took the decision to balance the budget for the 2012/13 financial year and thereafter achieve moderate surpluses to build up reserves and re-pay debts. This is to buffer the economy from external shocks, while avoiding a debt trap. It is estimated that we will have budget surplus of P1.15 billion this financial year. This follows the reduction in budget deficits from a high of P9.5 billion in 2009/10 to an estimated P2.2 billion in 2011/12.

26. Our total debt ratio as a percentage of GDP stood at 25.4% last April and is forecast to decline slightly by the end of the current financial year. There has also been a small decline in the country's foreign exchange reserves from P60.3 billion at the end of December 2011 to P59.8 billion at the end of June 2012. A portion of the reserves will, however, be drawn upon to repay the foreign debt incurred to finance major projects during the recession.

27. Honourable Members would be aware that the Mid-Term Review of NDP 10 is ongoing, with a draft document currently under review that covers programmes and projects planned for the plan's remaining three years. However, I need to point out that given the continued uncertainties in the global economy the outlook for the domestic economy and government revenues is not encouraging. Preliminary results of the overall revenue projections going forward up to and including 2015/16 show that there will be no substantial increase in income resulting in the possibility no new major projects for the remainder of NDP 10.

28. The draft Mid-Term Review of NDP 10, which incorporates the most recent global economic forecasts, will be given to Members of Parliament. Discussions on the document will take place early next year, following consideration of the 2013 budget. Because there will be no significant changes of policy coupled with the possibility of a limited scope for new projects for the remainder of NDP 10, discussions are likely to be on policies and strategies only, and therefore are expected to take less time than that stipulated in the Parliamentary Standing Orders.

#### Diversification

29. Madam Speaker, even in the absence of the global economic downturn we would be living through challenging times as we wean ourselves away from overdependence on raw diamond revenues. Dependency on anything is never healthy. Besides being vulnerable to market volatility in our case it has also meant that too many of us have been living off the wealth generated by the labour of too few. This has also contributed to our low productivity.

30. It is for this reason that we have adopted a people centred approach to development that, while keeping the door open to large scale capital investment, recognises the need for proactive measures to grow employment and wealth through Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs). One way we have been doing this is through preferential purchasing by Government as part of the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD). Of the 506 enterprises that have been issued with EDD Certificates, 403 or nearly 80% are listed under the small scale category. During the current financial year EDD purchases (in manufactures and services) are expected to reach P2.5 billion. This is an increase from the P1.9 billion in EDD purchases recorded in 2011/12. But, preferential purchasing is only one aspect of the EDD strategy, which envisages

diversification through the nurturing of competitive enterprises that will eventually need little or no Government support.

31. Since its establishment late last year, the National Economic Diversification Council has approved a comprehensive list of priority subsectors for EDD promotion. The Council has also approved a strategy for the leather industry, which recommends the establishment of a Leather Park as a focal point for local production. In addition, the Dairy as well as Textile and Clothing sub-sector strategies are being refined. To further improve the commercial environment, we are continuously reviewing our regulatory frameworks, while promoting exports through the international trade agreements that we are party to. New legislation including the e-Data Protection Bill, an e-Transactions Bill and the Town and Country Planning Amendment Bill have been drafted.

32. Mindful of Botswana's relative lack of progress in recent years in a number of business indices, we have also established a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Doing Business and Global Competitiveness to oversee the work of the National Doing Business Committee. Together, these two bodies are mandated to coordinate applicable reforms. In addition fairer competition is being promoted by the Competition Authority, which ensures that businesses do not engage in price-fixing, market allocation and bid-rigging. As a result we are beginning to see some improvement in our global business rankings.

33. Madam Speaker, during 2011/12 we recorded our highest ever investment and employment figures. Foreign Direct Investment totalled P1.4 billion, while 1583 jobs were added from new investments. In addition domestic investment and expansions totalled some P415 million. Areas of new investment included the manufacturing of steel products, farming, mining, tourism, property development, ICT services and renewable energy and recycling. Meanwhile, the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC), along with the Department of Industrial Affairs, are working to attract foreign investment, while further marketing local products.

34. Madam Speaker, Government continues to sponsor empowerment programmes such as the Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Agency (CEDA), which has funded a total of 702 new projects at a cost of P591 million, generating 3274 jobs. This is in addition to the cumulative total of 4759 CEDA projects reported last year, which had altogether generated some 30 thousand jobs. In addition, the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) currently has 869 active clients, out of which 400 are existing



businesses, 469 are start-ups. To date, 6387 entrepreneurs have been trained by LEA in various courses such as financial management, sales and marketing, customer care and business planning, in the process creating 3,412 jobs.

## Labour

35. Madam Speaker, harmonious industrial relations are a key building block for greater productivity, enhanced service delivery and social stability. There is, therefore an urgent need to address legislative gaps and administrative inefficiencies that undermine the ability of employees and employers to achieve win-win outcomes. In this context Government is preparing amendments to the Trade Disputes Act to overcome unnecessary delays in resolving disputes. We are also developing a National Occupational Health and Safety Policy, which will link increased productivity to improved working conditions.

36. It has become clear that the Public Service Act of 2008 needs to be reviewed. Meanwhile, the Public Service Bargaining Council is fully operational, being duly constituted with 8 employer and 8 union representatives. As such, the Council is now the vehicle for collective bargaining on the terms and conditions of the Public Service. A joint induction and training programme for Council members was facilitated with the ILO and local experts. I am also pleased that the 2012 salary negotiations were recently concluded. Following a successful mediation process, agreement was reached to pay a 3% salary increase to all public officers with effect from 1st October, as well as a temporary recession relief allowance for those at C.4 and below. This reflects Government's commitment to the welfare of public officers even in these difficult times when other more developed economies have frozen wage increases.

## Safety and Security

37. Madam Speaker, our nation's progress has rested on the foundation of "peace, order and good government", words that define the very mandate of this Parliament. It is due to these qualities, which dovetail with our indigenous concept of kagisanyo, that we have long enjoyed levels of stability that are the envy of others. Yet, notwithstanding our continued high-ranking in relevant global indices, here as elsewhere we cannot afford to be complacent. While our country has, for example, moved up in the latest Global Peace Index, as well as the Global

Competitiveness Report's Institutional Index, these same surveys identify crime as a lagging indicator.

38. It is not sufficient that our law enforcement and security agencies, along with the judiciary, have maintained their international reputation for professional competence. They must also adapt to evolving challenges. At the same time we must all appreciate that upholding kagisanyo is our collective responsibility.

39. Madam Speaker, in 2011 a 4% reduction in Penal Code crime was achieved, while a 9% reduction was recorded for violent and intrusive crimes such as robberies, break-ins and burglaries. To fight crime the Police Service has adopted an integrated strategy that entails community participation and collaboration with domestic and international partners. Elements of this approach include undercover operations and the involvement of local authorities and the public in cluster and voluntary policing. The business community has contributed to capacity through its setting up of a number of satellite police posts.

40. I regret to report that traffic accident fatalities increased by 21.7% from 397 to 483 between 2010 and 2011, reversing our previously reported progress. To turn this situation around, an aggressive approach to the implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy is being pursued, through such initiatives as vehicle flagging, sobriety/drink driving monitoring and saturation patrols targeting red-light and speeding violations. A point demerit system will also be introduced with the aim of curtailing the incidence of repeat offences.

41. With respect to drinking and driving, there has been a reported decline in the number of alcohol related road accidents in recent years. This dovetails with additional evidence of behavioural change arising from our campaign to curb alcohol abuse. A recent evaluation of the alcohol levy noted that the average amount of alcohol consumed by Batswana 15 years and over has declined by 12% between 2008 and 2011. This positive trend can be attributed to the levy and additional interventions, including our public awareness efforts. We do, however, recognize the need to do more, such as providing additional support to those who are trying to overcome their overindulgence.

42. Madam Speaker, besides its primary mission to secure the peace, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our Republic, the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) continues to assist civil authorities in such areas as disaster relief, crime prevention, animal disease control and anti-

poaching operations. The BDF has this year further implemented bilateral and multilateral agreements involving joint operations and training with some of our regional and international partners.

43. Overcrowding in Prisons stands at 7.4%. To alleviate this, the Prisons Department, in conjunction with other stakeholders, is piloting the use of low risk prisoners in undertaking public works projects, while under supervision. To further address the challenge of overcrowding, Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, is working on a policy and legislative review on alternatives to imprisonment. Since coming to office I have also reduced the sentences of just over 2000 prisoners, the vast majority of whom have complied with their conditions of release, with only 17 reported cases of re-offenses.

### Immigration

44. Madam Speaker, the tendency by some to harbour and employ illegal immigrants contributes to crime. Law enforcement agencies are working with other stakeholders to repatriate illegal immigrants. This is over and above the repatriation of convicted criminals and other undesirables whom we on occasion must deport. Through our crackdowns on business violators and others we are sending a clear message that all must abide by the law. In collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration, we have further embarked on training of immigration and other law enforcement officers on border management and procedures.

45. Government has also begun onsite registration of births and deaths, at a number of health facilities, and is rolling out the service to other health facilities throughout the country. Implementation of the electronic identity management system (e-ID) has also commenced. Batswana are now using the E-passport to travel, with only those who are not yet in possession of the new passport being allowed to use the old passport solely to return home.

46. The roll out of the Border Control System is also nearing completion, while the automation of work permit processing will commence this financial year. This follows the automation of systems for the processing of visa, resident permit and citizenship applications. In terms of granting residency Government introduced a Points Based System to enhance transparency and standardization of applicant assessment to attract and retain value adding investors and workers. As a matter of urgency, the

system is now undergoing review to address some early challenges that were discovered in its implementation.

## Justice

47. Madam Speaker, we are all indebted to our Judiciary for impartially and effectively upholding the rule of law. The introduction of automated court records management and judicial case management systems in the past few years have increased the efficiency of our courts. More recently we have:

- established additional specialized courts;
- reviewed Court Rules;
- rolled out Judicial Case Management to Magistrates Courts;
- appointed a dedicated judge for the corruption cases; and
- opened the new headquarters in Gaborone.

48. As promised last year, three more stock-theft courts are being established, in Jwaneng, Palapye and Selebi-Phikwe, to supplement the four existing courts, while seven mobile courts have been purchased to facilitate the speedy resolution of cases.

49. Since its commencement last year, the Legal Aid pilot project to assist the indigent has operated from the Attorney General Chambers in Gaborone and Francistown, with an additional office planned for Maun. Demand for this service has steadily increased, with some 11 thousand applicants received by the end of July 2012. We therefore intend to present a Legal Aid Bill to this House for the establishment of a permanent entity.

50. Besides contributing to nation building and cultural preservation, while promoting district development, Dikgosi are responsible for the delivery of justice through the customary courts. To assist them in this function, a Bill to revise the Customary Courts Act will be brought before this sitting of Parliament. To further enhance the delivery of customary law, this year 22 villages and settlements were upgraded from Arbitration level to Courts of Record.

## Local Governance

51. Madam Speaker, turning more broadly to issues of local governance, there is a recognised need to improve performance at District level. The recent passage of the revised Local Government Act has brought rural

and urban Councils under a common framework. The creation of 5 new service centres, to provide for such things as revenue collection, social and community development, supplies, maintenance, licensing, sanitation, and bye-law enforcement has brought those services closer to people.

52. To further enhance community participation in rural development we decided to enhance the mandate and capacity of the Rural Development Council, whose secretariat will be headed at Deputy Permanent Secretary level. In line with our commitment to working with local authorities, portfolio responsibility for the Council has been transferred from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to what shall as from today be known as the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, to reflect its now wider role. The Rural Development Council will be chaired by His Honour the Vice President.

### Eradicating Poverty

53. Madam Speaker, in keeping with our commitment to provide a dignified life for all Batswana, Government shall continue to provide social support to the elderly and those most in need. During the current financial year, we have allocated P308 million for the monthly cash allowances for the benefit of 93,000 Old Age Pensioners and 2662 world war veterans (or their spouses and dependents). Orphans, registered destitute, and Community Home Based Care patients receive monthly food baskets, with destitute persons also being given a small allowance. While extending support to vulnerable groups, it is our aim to graduate from such handouts to those individuals who can sustain themselves.

54. Let me here reaffirm that the eradication of poverty is an ethical, social and economic imperative. For this reason a Cabinet Sub-Committee for Poverty Eradication has been put in place to drive the programme. As at August 2012 a total of 3022 beneficiaries were enrolled in one of the 23 currently available packages, which include among others, laundry, bakery, sewing, small stock, bee keeping, tree nurseries and grain packaging, as well as back yard gardening. It is expected that 7798 backyard gardens will have become operational by the end of this financial year. To achieve these results, funding amounting to just over P40 million has been disbursed to the different constituencies for training and the purchasing of equipment for the various projects.

55. We are also in the process of rolling out Poverty Eradication Training Workshops and Dipitso throughout the country. So far three of these workshops have been held - at Diphuduhudu, Shunou/Motshegaletau and just last week in Struizendam - that have together served some 3000 beneficiaries.

56. Madam Speaker, our country continues to make progress in addressing gender disparities, which is reflected in our international ratings in such areas as educational attainment and the number of women in technical, professional and executive positions. Notwithstanding such positive indicators we are well aware and concerned about the gender disparities that still exist across other sectors. In order to address these, Government has developed a number of interventions. These include, among others, the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme where a total of P14.8 million has been disbursed to 1220 beneficiaries to start income generating projects. This support includes a special dispensation for People Living with Disabilities. We also continue to expose business women to market opportunities at Local, Regional and International levels. In support of this initiative, the national Women's Exposition and Business Forum was held in June 2012.

57. Madam Speaker, P530 million was approved this financial year to provide temporary relief to the unemployed and poor through the Ipelegeng Programme, which also contributes to maintenance of public facilities, environmental clean ups and crime prevention. From April to September 2012, Ipelegeng has engaged a cumulative total of 289,595 beneficiaries (of whom 212079 were females and 77516 males). Ipelegeng's monthly target was increased from 50,000 to 55,000 beneficiaries this year. Notwithstanding some naysayers, Ipelegeng's sustenance initiative has been well received. In August 2012 we increased the daily provision for each beneficiary.

58. We have completed an independent review of Ipelegeng, which confirms that the programme is improving the lives of its beneficiaries. Key recommendations arising from the study include linking the programme with other poverty eradication initiatives, introducing flexible working hours to enable beneficiaries to utilise other forms of assistance and improving the procurement of materials for Ipelegeng projects.

59. Madam Speaker, the empowerment of Remote Area Communities is central in our efforts to build a more equitable society. In that regard, we have a 10 year Affirmative Action Framework to promote equity and

inclusiveness, driven by a Coordinator at Permanent Secretary level and backed by an inter-ministerial committee. As part of the framework youth from these communities will continue to receive assistance and support to enable them to progress with their education and obtain employment. This has resulted in 242 Remote Area youth, along with a 143 other disadvantaged learners, getting a chance to further their education at tertiary level, while 650 are being assisted in finding jobs. A further 1612 Remote Area youth have benefited from out of school training.

60. We are also exploring additional affirmative action measures to assist in the mainstreaming of People Living with Disabilities. To advance this agenda we convened a Disability Pitso in August 2012 to come up with strategic initiatives to ensure that they become full participants in our drive for sustainable, diversified development. But, for such efforts to succeed they must be embraced by society as a whole, including the private sector. In this context, I am especially pleased to acknowledge Mr. Seabelo Tlhaselo's recent announcement that his transport company would provide free services to people with disabilities along its routes.

## Housing

61. Madam Speaker, it is impossible to live a truly dignified life in the absence of adequate shelter. For this reason ensuring that all of our citizens are properly housed is a national priority. During the current financial year P 20 million has been allocated for SHHA loans for 444 beneficiaries, while we are further monitoring 1403 ongoing and 1203 recently completed projects. New SHHA turnkey projects targeting 1000 beneficiaries have been allocated an additional P60 million. This is on top of 1060 ongoing projects. We have also financed projects under the Housing Scheme for Poverty Eradication. In addition to income generation through the commercial production of bricks, this programme has assisted beneficiaries to own homes.

62. In a further effort to provide shelter for the needy, 651 Destitute houses are being built this financial year. Out of this number 222 are for Remote Area settlements. To complement our efforts to assist the needy, we continue to encourage private sector contributions through the Presidential Housing Appeal. So far over 500 houses have been pledged, of which 140 have been built and 60 are currently under construction. Here I wish to thank the many organizations and individuals who have so far come forward to assist in this noble effort.

63. Government is also mindful of the need to ensure decent housing for public officers, more especially those posted in remote and rural areas where there are shortages. While our ability to fully meet this challenge has been constrained by the economic downturn, we are now finalising proposals that would encourage private citizens to provide such shelter with the support of Government guaranteed loans, the details of which will be communicated in the near future.

64. As the Single Housing Authority (SiHA) the Botswana Housing Corporation has been mandated to ensure the coordination of all housing delivery initiatives. This will not affect their affordability as the ceiling for SHHA Loans and Turnkey programmes remains P45 thousand and P60 thousand respectively.

65. A total of 48073 plots, out of a target of 50804 for 2011/12, have been allocated throughout the country for various uses. Our ability to allocate land to Batswana in an equitable manner is, however, undermined by those who unlawfully occupy plots. Illegal land allocations, moreover, complicates not only the servicing of plots but the overall provision of infrastructure in a planned manner. This administration, like those before us, therefore cannot and shall not tolerate the self allocation of land or squatting.

66. Moving forward, a Bill to revise the Town and Country Planning Act to decentralise town planning functions to the Districts will be introduced before the current sitting of Parliament. This is expected to reduce delays in the processing of planning applications. We are also finalising the revision of the Development Control Code.

## Education & Youth

67. Our nation faces no greater task than that of empowering our youth to achieve their aspirations for a productive and meaningful life. Census findings reveal that some 39% of Batswana are aged between 15 and 35. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that this age cohort is better educated than any generation before them, or that many of them also possess additional life skills and talents, such as relatively high levels of ICT literacy, as a group they are struggling. Having come of age in an especially challenging time, our youth deserve our special support. The nation's present opportunities as well as future prospects are at stake. With their energy and innovative capacity our youth are a solid asset, who need to be enabled if we are to be a more prosperous and productive nation.



68. It is for this reason that my administration has introduced and sustained a wide range of initiatives to give our youth a head start, including our continued investment in education and vocational training through our aggressive Skilling the Nation programme. The largest component of this programme is our “Back to School” initiative which is intended to run for the next three years targeting the estimated 50,000 young people that are out of school and unemployed. To date, 1320 young people have been re-absorbed into the school system. A further 9,118 students have been enrolled into tertiary institutions to upgrade their qualifications. It is anticipated that 2013 and 2014 intakes will average 20000.

69. Government has also commenced to incubate youth owned construction companies through mentoring as well as preferential procurement. A construction youth empowerment reservation programme is in place for 15% of government maintenance works, which since its inception has awarded P65.4 million to youth owned construction companies, which includes projects worth P16.6 million from April to August of this year. Where there have been competency constraints, these are being addressed through additional training.

70. There have also been encouraging instances in which local authorities and the private sector have also engaged youth owned construction companies. For example between them the Kgatleng and Southern District Councils, BHC and Barclays have together awarded contracts with a combined value of nearly P9.5 million. I wish to thank them and others for thus contributing to the capacity building of our youth.

71. From its inception the National Internship Programme has catered to 6708 graduates in both public and private institutions, 2090 of whom have since been offered permanent jobs. As of June 2012 the programme’s enrolment stood at 2855 interns. While the private sector has taken in some interns, its uptake has so far been modest. I am also concerned about reports that many interns are refusing to take up duties in rural areas, which is shameful. Such matters will be addressed by the National Internship Policy, which is being developed.

72. Another initiative that we are in the process of implementing is the Youth Empowerment Scheme or YES, which takes an integrated approach in assisting unemployed young people to gain skills and certified experience. At its inception some 30 thousand young people

applied to be enrolled in YES, of whom 985 have so far successfully participated in our first two Boot Camps, with another two scheduled to be held before the end of the current financial year. YES Boot Camp participants are more likely to succeed in businesses as a result the mentorship and skills that have been imparted to them. YES has been designed to interface with other support initiatives, while instilling positive social values.

73. The Youth Development Fund has, since 2009, financed a total of 2276 projects at a total cost of P 202 million, in the process creating 3604 jobs, while further providing business skills training to 807.

74. While Government's commitment to building a better future by investing in our youth is perhaps best reflected in our devotion of substantial resources to their education, training and overall skills development, both in and outside of the classroom; we recognise that our education system must be adapted to meet evolving social and economic demands. Among other things this calls for a review of syllabi and an improved teaching environment. So far we have resolved only some of the issues that concern teachers, but remain committed to finding solutions to those issues that are outstanding, subject to budget constraints.

75. To enhance the provision of technical education, we are developing vocational education programmes to make them equivalent to our senior secondary education, as an option for students with Junior Certificate. In this respect we are finalising a Botswana Qualifications Authority Bill, which will ensure comparability of our academic and vocational stream qualifications.

76. It is our further intention to have certain schools specialise in specific subjects such as performing arts, physical education, fashion and fabrics and design and technology.

77. Achieving higher quality education also calls for partnership with parents, the private sector and communities. A National Parents Teachers Association has been formed. Retired teachers in various communities are also volunteering to be part of our Education Mentors group. Our Adopt a School initiative has also been well received. To date 68 companies and individuals have adopted a school. Besides assisting Government, such support is in keeping with our tradition that the upbringing of any child is a whole community responsibility.

78. Notwithstanding the need for improvement, I am pleased that our public schools are producing students that are doing us proud in top universities around the world through our Top Achievers Programme. I am also pleased to note that one of our students, Elijah Tsheko of Nata Senior Secondary School received a prize for the 2012 SADC Essay Competition. We congratulate him and his teachers for a job well done.

## Agriculture

79. Madam Speaker, let me now turn to specific economic sectors beginning with Agriculture. We are finalising the review of the National Policy on Agriculture Development, which is intended to improve food security through diversification into non-traditional products, while promoting greater productivity and environmental sustainability. The Policy further provides for the mainstreaming of disadvantaged groups. To further increase output, we have already embarked on an exercise to match ecological zones to appropriate agricultural commodities for better results.

80. The Livestock sub-sector, particularly beef, continues to contribute significantly to our GDP. Weaner production is gaining momentum as evidenced by an increased number of weaners available for slaughter at the Botswana Meat Commission. For example, 10039 weaners were slaughtered by BMC during the first quarter of 2012 compared to 6821 slaughtered during the same period in 2011, an increase of 47%. An assessment and registration of feedlots, farms and communal holdings for EU compliance continues. Currently, 16 Feedlots and 164 Farms have been registered as EU compliant entities.

81. Our livestock development continues to be hampered by the outbreak of the animal diseases and drought. This year the country experienced another outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Ngamiland District, starting with a crush near the buffalo fence and later reported in the Kareng Extension Area threatening the Ghanzi District. In the North East the disease was successfully eradicated and only wildlife, pigs, goats and sheep are left in the containment zone. The disease is also under control in the Bobirwa-Mmadinare area, allowing us to look for markets for cattle from the region. Restocking in the zone will be carried out after the drought subsides. The Botswana-Zimbabwe MoU for Joint Cooperation to control FMD has been expanded to include the export of live cattle from Ngamiland, the Northeast and Bobirwa-Mmadinare for slaughter in Zimbabwe. To date, a total of 6200 live cattle have been exported to Zimbabwe.

82. A further challenge has been financial and administrative difficulties at the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), which of course operates as a parastatal under its own Board of Directors. The inability of the Commission to access international markets due to its being delisted, along with the closure of its abattoirs for extended periods due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, resulted in a situation whereby the BMC could not honour its payments to farmers. From preliminary investigations by the Minister of Agriculture it also became apparent that the Commission had internal challenges. Under such circumstance, and at the Minister's recommendation, Government as a matter of urgency found it necessary to step in and assist the BMC in returning to normalcy under new leadership. The Commission was therefore given a loan, while an independent team was set up to look into any deficiencies in its operations, so as to suggest the ways and means to return it to sustained profitability.

83. As if these challenges were not enough, the country has also been experiencing what is so far a partial drought. Government has therefore offered a 25% subsidy on selected animal feeds and vaccines to help farmers minimise its impact.

84. Further efforts are underway to explore private partnerships in the multiplication of the Musi breed to improve the genetic potential of the national herd. We are also facilitating the formation of Cattle Breeding Societies, as provided for by Livestock Improvement Act, which will assist in the identification of animals of high genetic merit.

85. The Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development or LIMID programme has shown positive results. So far 32,572 sheep and goats and 11,940 Tswana chickens have been distributed to a total of 3064 beneficiaries since September 2010, many of whom are young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. But, the programme still has challenges such as shortage of small-stock to supply its beneficiaries and inadequate slaughter facilities. Government Farms will, therefore, be utilized to augment the breeding and supply of small-stock, while the Jwaneng Municipal Abattoir will be upgraded.

86. The dairy industry also continues to face challenges such as high import costs and poor management. Consequently, we import more than 80% of the national demand for fresh milk and most processed dairy products. Government has therefore put measures in place to

resuscitate the industry, including the development of a Dairy Strategic Plan.

87. With the support of the ISPAAD programme, the area planted during the 2011/12 cropping season was 341,000 hectares by 105,000 farmers. So far, just over 73 thousand metric-tons of produce has been recorded, out of which some 42.5 thousand metric-tons is cereals. Collection of production figures from farmers is still on-going and the yield figures are expected to increase. During this year's harvest season P 3.7 million was spent in purchasing produce from 2099 local farmers in order to supplement the daily ration of primary school pupils.

88. Out of a total of 49 horticultural projects approved under ISPAAD, 23 projects are under production with a total yield of 1027 metric-tons from an area of 109 hectares. The total produce for horticulture stands at 15900 metric-tons against a target of 23200 metric-tons. Climatic conditions such as low and unevenly distributed rainfall coupled with high temperatures and in some instances poor management have negatively affected production. Notwithstanding these challenges, there has been improvement in both farm productivity and produce quality, especially in the Tuli Block.

89. Government continues to control crop pests such as Quelea birds, and Fruit Fly. Out of the 73 Quelea colonies identified this season, 60 were controlled. Monitoring mechanisms for fruit fly infestation are in place at Pandamatenga and Tuli Block. There is also a restriction of movement of fruits out of the Chobe area.

## Minerals

90. Madam Speaker, as already mentioned, the global economic slowdown is having a continued negative impact on minerals, which otherwise remain both a principal source of revenue and a primary sector for growth and diversification. During 2012 diamond sales forecast for end of the year is expected to reduce significantly. Carats sales and revenue are forecast to reduce by 13% and 19% respectively. This is mainly due to sluggish diamond markets. As a result the Lerala mine, which had restarted production in February 2012, is now regrettably back on care and maintenance, as is Monak Venture's BK 11 Mine.

91. Nickel and copper prices also declined considerably during 2012 when compared to 2011. As at end of September 2012 the average

price for nickel was 22% lower than the average price for the whole of 2011, while the average copper price was 9% lower than the average price for the whole of 2011.

92. Government's mineral investment promotion initiatives are yielding results as evidenced by the recent commencement of production by two new mines - Karowe diamond mine and Boseto copper and silver mine. Another mine, Ghaghoo diamond mine, is under development, and is expected to start production in 2013. Given the number of prospecting projects that are at an advanced stage the outlook for further mine development is encouraging.

93. The migration of all DTC International sales from London to Gaborone is on schedule for December 2013. DTC International has invested over P170 million in upgrading the DTC Botswana building to accommodate its aggregation and expanded sales activities. The first major milestone towards full migration was achieved in July 2012 when diamonds from De Beers' operations were aggregated in Gaborone for the first time. In order to fully exploit the opportunities associated with this migration, the private sector has been encouraged to become part of the project.

94. In February 2012, Government established the Okavango Diamond Company to buy and sell up to 15% of Debswana's production in accordance with the New Sales Agreement. The company has recently appointed a Chief Executive Officer who, together with the Board, are preparing for the company to commence its buying and selling operations during the second quarter of 2013.

95. The moratorium that was imposed in 2008 on the issuance of diamond cutting and polishing licences has been lifted, resulting in five additional companies being issued with licences this year. In 2011 DTC Botswana sold just over US\$ 600 million [about P 4.739 billion] worth of diamonds to the local industry. For the first six months of 2012 DTC Botswana sold carats worth US\$ 373.84 million [P2.953 billion]. Our medium term annual target is for US\$ 800 million [P6.320 billion] to be sold locally. In addition, Firestone Diamonds has conducted six tenders and Boteti Mining two tenders for the local sale of diamonds from their mines during the first quarter of 2012/13 financial year.

96. With respect to other minerals, Government approved the amendment of Mines and Minerals Act to amongst others improve Botswana's mineral legislation competitiveness by ensuring that mineral

rights are granted through competitive process in an effort to reduce speculation and facilitate early access of prospecting areas by genuine investors, who are resourced to exploit the resources in a timely, efficient and economically beneficial manner.

97. In January 2012 Government approved the establishment of a Coal Development Unit to coordinate the monetisation of Botswana's coal resources, while in March 2012 Government further approved the establishment of a mineral investment company, wholly owned by Government, to manage Government investments in the minerals sector. The establishment of the two entities is currently ongoing.

## Energy

98. Madam Speaker, we are on the verge of emerging from an especially challenging period in terms of our energy supplies. In this respect I must thank consumers for both their forbearance and sacrifice in conserving limited supplies. This has allowed us to progress towards our goal of enhancing the social and economic wellbeing of all Botswana through increased access to reliable and affordable energy services.

99. The 600MW Morupule B Power plant is still under construction. Three units are undergoing various tests before being permanently connected to the BPC system while the fourth unit is still being constructed. While the original schedule was for all the four units to be fully operational by end of this year there have been significant delays such that only three units are now expected to be fully operational by the end of the year and the fourth one is expected to be fully operational during the first half of 2013. To address current power shortfalls, Government continues to meet the operational costs of the two emergency power plants at Matshelagabedi and Orapa, which have a combined output of 160 MW. Government's medium term goal is to ensure that the country meets its power requirements from internal sources of generation. In this regard, plans are at an advanced stage to develop new sources of coal fired power stations with a total installed capacity of 600 MW before the end of the decade.

100. We are also extending the national electricity grid with the target of achieving 80% access by 2016. Twenty-eight villages have been selected for electrification during the 2012/2013 financial year at an estimated cost of P93 million. Increased access has been facilitated by the National Electricity Standard Connection Cost of P5000 and the

National Electrification Fund, enabling an additional 16,888 households to connect to the national grid as of July 2012.

101. Given long-term concern about Green House Gas Emissions, Government is developing a low carbon energy portfolio, through the facilitation of renewable energy technologies. A 1.3 MW Photovoltaic power station, funded through a Japanese grant of about P90 million, was commissioned in August 2012. It is envisaged that Photovoltaic stations will be introduced elsewhere. On a smaller scale, the uptake of solar home systems and efficient wood stoves continues to be promoted by BPC Lesedi. A renewable energy feed in tariff that obligates Botswana Power Corporation, to purchase electricity produced from renewable energy sources at cost-reflective prices, was also approved in June 2012, to be implemented next year.

102. The petroleum sector has ensured that the country has sufficient supplies through the use of alternative routes and increased regional cooperation. A Special Purpose Vehicle to establish a National Oil Company, Botswana Oil (Pty) Ltd, has been approved, whose mandate is to ensure security of fuel supplies, citizen economic empowerment in the petroleum sector and managing government strategic petroleum stocks. Preparatory work in the construction of the 149 million litre strategic storage facility at Tshele Hills is ongoing. To increase the share of bio-fuels in the total energy, with Japanese support, we have initiated a five years research project which started this year on production of biodiesel from Jatropha crop.

## Water

103. Madam Speaker, water is a precious public resource that must be managed with care. It is for this reason that a National Water Policy will be presented during this session as a long-term framework to balance the varying public needs. Meanwhile, our Water Sector Reforms are on schedule to be completed next year. So far 454 out of 540 villages have been taken over. As at the end of October 2012, 342 villages have migrated to the WUC billing system, making it possible for the costumers to pay their bills anywhere where the billing system is connected. In addition, 23 customer service points have been opened. To further facilitate payments, WUC and Botswana Post have signed an agreement to enable 47 post offices across the country to also receive WUC customer payments. This should go a long way in overcoming the existing bottlenecks that too often frustrate payments by customers.



104. Besides payment bottlenecks, aggravated by incompatible billing systems, additional challenges faced during the takeover have included the need to restore or replace infrastructure, inadequate water resources, and incorrect and incomplete customer data. In response, Government availed P362 million for emergency interventions, most of which will be completed during 2013.

105. We are further progressing the construction of strategic infrastructure such as dams and well fields, as well as pipelines and water supply distribution networks including treatment facilities. Both Dikgatlong and Lotsane Dams were completed on schedule at a total cost of P2.1 billion in February 2012 and March 2012 respectively. Construction of 75 kilometres pipeline from Dikgatlong Dam to Moralane is ongoing with 35 kilometres already constructed and the pipeline is expected to be completed in October 2013. The pipeline connecting Lotsane Dam to 22 villages in the Tswapong North Area is ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of this financial year. Construction of the P543 million Thune dam is expected to be completed in April 2013. Besides serving the general public, the three dams will provide water for power generation, mining, irrigation and other commercial activities.

106. Construction to connect Molepolole, Thamaga, Moshupa and Kanye villages to the North South Carrier will begin before the end of the financial year, while the Goodhope Water Supply Phase 1 connection from Lobatse has already commenced and is expected to be completed in December 2013.

107. In order to address the water shortage in areas where surface water is not readily available, Government continues to develop additional groundwater resources in the country. We are also working to resolve Maun water shortages. To cater for medium term requirements we are in the process of constructing a water surface treatment plant at a cost of P60 million, which will treat water from the Thamalakane River from September 2013. The second phase of Maun Water Supply and Sanitation project is scheduled to provide further capacity by September 2016. It is envisaged that this project will address Maun's village water and waste water challenges.

108. We are progressing our cooperation with neighbouring countries with respect to shared water resources. Negotiations have been concluded with the seven Zambezi Commission member states to draw about 495million cubic metres of water per annum from the

Chobe/Zambezi Rivers system. A project to augment water supplies to Middlepits and the neighbouring villages with cross border supplies from South Africa is ongoing at an estimated cost of P60million. Government is further exploring a medium to long term water supply option from the Vaal/Gamara system that could supply the Kgalagadi District and adjacent areas.

109. The alarming rate at which water resources are being depleted, added to the increasing demand for water and the ever unpredictable climate, call for increased conservation. To date, various initiatives are being promoted in areas of grey water recycling, effluent utilization and rainwater harvesting. With the threat of drought looming, the supply authority is to come up with mitigation projects and water restrictions. I urge the nation to cooperate and make conservation a way of life.

### Construction

110. Madam Speaker, Government has had to take strong action in the face of the failure of a number of priority projects to be delivered on time and according to specification. During 2012 the enforcement of adherence to the contracts has resulted in the levying of Liquidated and Ascertained Damage amounting to over P 65 million and termination of two contractors. Project close out or end of activity reports are being submitted to PPADB to enable them to act on cases calling for de-registration, suspensions and/or blacklisting of contractors or consultants who performed below the expected standards.

111. The introduction of quality auditors has already raised performance standards among supervising consultants and contractors resulting in fewer defects at hand-over stage. The Claims Audits have also saved government about P135.6 million, while reducing irregular and corrupt claims.

112. To further root out corruption and improve the delivery of public infrastructure projects, Government is introducing Project and Facilities Management Offices to monitor and ensure compliance with performance contracts. We are also improving coordination through the development of consolidated implementation plans for the delivery of priority projects and are further exploring the possibility of creating an autonomous agency to oversee the work of design auditors.

113. Important national projects have recently been completed and handed over for use. These include the High Court and Appeal Court at

Gaborone, BIUST at Palapye, and buildings for the Serowe College of Education. Village infrastructure projects that were still ongoing at the start of this financial year are also now nearing completion.

## Transport

114. Madam Speaker, the rapidly growing number of motor vehicles on our roads, which have more than doubled over the past five years, is putting immense strain on our road network. As of last month the total number of locally registered vehicles on our roads stood at 433 thousand, including over 28 thousand registered since the beginning of this year alone. At 216 per 1000, our per capita vehicle ratio is now among the highest in the developing world, above even some European countries. In the context of this challenge, the Draft National Integrated Transport Policy has been completed and will soon be tabled.

115. In the case of Gaborone, where traffic congestion is especially severe, Government is in the process of reducing traffic bottlenecks through upgrading intersections, improved traffic signals and establishing a centralised traffic control system. Proposals to carry out the conceptual designs of the interchanges and traffic signals are at evaluation stage. The design work is expected to take up to 8 months allowing for construction next year.

116. The paved road network has been expanded and access improved in many parts of the country, with the completion of over 300 kilometres of local road projects. In addition five new bridges have been completed. Several new projects like Tonota-Francistown Road, Charleshill-Ncojane Road and Thamalakane Bridge are at procurement stage and will also be completed during NDP10.

117. Since last year the new Kazungula Ferry has resulted in a 78% reduction of the average time spent by truck drivers queuing to cross over to Zambia. Having now sourced the necessary finance from the African Development Bank and Japanese International Cooperation Agency, construction on the Kazungula Bridge should commence in January 2014.

118. Madam Speaker, the Central Transport Organisation's (CTO) is developing a Fleet Tracking, Management and Maintenance System and has embarked on the design of Auto and Mechanical workshops throughout the country to address limited workshop space. To meet its challenges, the CTO is also engaging private garages to repair and in

some cases refurbish government vehicles to prolong their lifespan. CTO has also partnered with brigades and technical colleges offering automotive courses in carrying out repairs, while a Quality Inspectorate Unit is being formed.

119. Madam Speaker, the success of Botswana's economy is tied to an efficient air transport. It was, therefore, critical for us to upgrade our international airports in Gaborone and Francistown. Phase II of Sir Seretse Khama Airport Terminal Building project was initially expected to have been completed by the end of last year. But, the Contractor failed to meet extended deadlines, leaving us with no choice but to terminate the contract in July 2012. The process of engaging a replacement is underway, with the expectation that the remaining works will take about 6 months to complete once commenced. The Maun Airport airside works project has been completed and construction of the airport services area will be completed in January 2013, while Kasane Airport's airside works should be completed in May 2013.

120. As a result of the Open Skies Policy, Botswana has negotiated 21 and signed 8 Bilateral Air Service Agreements. Air Botswana's acquisition of new aircraft will enable it to expand into the SADC region and beyond. The airline has successfully completed all the requirements for the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Operational Safety Audit. As a result IATA approved its re-registration as a member in June 2012. This will allow our national airline to forge alliances, as well as compete, with other international carriers

## Environment & Tourism

121. Madam Speaker, several projects are being undertaken in line with our determination to diversify the tourism industry in partnership with communities. These include improvement of Moremi Gorge and Lepokole heritage sites, Tsabong Ecotourism Camel project and Kasane Recreational Park and Traditional Village. Improved access to a hundred monuments has been completed, while the maintenance of trails, campsites and signage is on-going at various heritage sites. In addition, 10 heritage sites were gazetted as new National Monuments in July 2012. Efforts to encourage tourism development at existing Educational Parks, around dams and at Qcwihaba caves are ongoing. I am also pleased to report that the Botswana Tourism Eco-Certification system, which promotes environmentally friendly tourism that incorporates host communities, has been well received by both industry and consumers.

122. More citizens are investing in tourism. As of June 2012, there were 764 licensed facilities, out of which 406 are wholly citizen owned (which is an increase of 45 from the previous year), 141 are joint ventures and 217 are non-citizen owned. Initiatives to further improve citizen participation are being undertaken. The procurement of local arts and crafts at tourist sites and through e-marketing is being promoted as part of EDD.

123. While we work towards diversifying local tourism we appreciate that our wildlife and wilderness areas remain our prime attraction for international visitors. The management of our wildlife, to ensure environmental sustainability while reducing human conflict, however remains a challenge. Ongoing interventions include the drilling of boreholes in protected areas, training farmers on the use of deterrent measures and of course the payment of compensation. Further country wide dry season surveys are ongoing, which will provide undated information on the status of our wildlife populations.

124. Of additional concern is the rise in cross border and domestic poaching incidents and trafficking of live predators, which are the subject of our new and evolving National Anti-Poaching Strategy. At the same time we have reached the decision to stop the commercial hunting of wildlife in public areas from 2014 as the shooting of wild game purely for sport and trophies is no longer compatible with our commitment to preserve local fauna as a national treasure, which should be treated as such.

125. Government in collaboration with domestic and regional partners continues to implement the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development project on behalf of SADC. The project has assisted Botswana with 6 satellite receiving stations, which have improved weather forecasting as well as the detection of bush fires across the country.

126. In preparation for this year's dry season, eleven fire camps were strategically deployed in fire prone areas throughout the country. The annual maintenance of firebreaks was also carried out to improve fire management and prevention. Here I wish to thank Australia for their continued capacity building support. Let me also once more warn those responsible for starting veldt fires that we shall take appropriate action against culprits who risk the lives and property of others.

127. We are also implementing the Makgadikgadi Management Plan, through the setting out of archaeological and heritage trails. The management plans of the Forest Reserves are also being reviewed to open them up for additional economic opportunities. I am pleased to also report that the number of backyard tree nurseries is growing. A total of 173 backyard nursery and landscaping beneficiaries have been mobilized as part of our poverty eradication efforts, while another 87 backyard tree nursery beneficiaries have been trained in six districts.

128. The 21 nurseries falling under the Department of Forestry and Range Resources have meanwhile maintained an annual average production of 500,000 tree seedlings, some 50,000 of which are distributed to the public annually through the National Tree Planting Programme.

129. With respect to the ongoing development of Trans-frontier Conservation Areas a treaty for the Greater Mapungubwe Trans-frontier Conservation Area is expected to be finalised by the end of 2012.

130. The Environmental Assessment Act of 2011 and its regulations came into effect in June 2012. The Act provides for the establishment of the Environmental Assessment Practitioners Board to regulate the conduct of practitioners. This should address public concerns about delays and exorbitant fees.

131. We will be convening a Waste Management Pitso to facilitate the disposal of various forms of waste in an environmentally sound manner with a focus on recovery and reuse. To this end, we have completed a Waste Characterisation Study and Municipal Solid Waste Recycling Guidelines. With regard to development of sewerage infrastructure around the country, expansion of the Gaborone and Kasane Sewer Networks, and Gaborone Treatment Plant are ongoing. We also intend to expand the Molepolole and Kanye Networks.

132. We are also being assisted by the Africa Institute to deal with Persistent Organic Pollutants. In addition vehicle emissions standards are being developed to regulate pollution from vehicles.

## Health

133. Madam Speaker, Government will continue to avail subsidised health care to all citizens. Escalating costs are, however, a constant challenge hence the need for prudent planning and efficient delivery in

line with our Revised National Health Policy, which provides for the separation of regulation, inspection, and implementation roles within the health sector. It further provides for the establishment of a National Health Council to give strategic guidance and oversight, while also making provision for the contributions of non-health sector stakeholders in promoting wellness.

134. The quality of customer care in our health facilities continues to be a priority. We have recently undertaken to train public relations focal nurses to attend to patients and their families during visiting hours. In addition, health districts around the country have reorganised their operations to offer special access in health facilities to those with special needs such as the elderly and the disabled.

135. We are also raising hospital service standards through international accreditation. Four health laboratories have already been accredited and we intend that all the other health facilities that have been enrolled in the accreditation project will soon achieve the necessary standards.

136. To address gaps in emergency medical care, we have established a call centre in Gaborone where emergency calls are routed and ambulances dispatched from a central point. This initiative will soon be extended to Francistown.

137. The availability of medicines has improved to 89% at Referral hospitals, 87% at District hospitals, 89% at Primary hospitals, and 80% at clinics. Our efforts to revitalise the medical supply chain system have resulted not only in improved availability at health facilities, but also in the management of Central Medical Stores.

138. Since my last address four new health facilities have become operational, while an additional five should be commissioned during the current financial year. For remote communities where there are no health facilities or populations are small and scattered, we shall continue to provide mobile services where possible.

139. The implementation of the Road Map on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality is ongoing. Since September 2011, 83 doctors and midwives have been trained on Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care skills. Given that pneumonia and diarrhoea are among the main causes of early childhood deaths, we have introduced appropriate vaccines. This is in the context of our having maintained overall immunization coverage of greater than 90%.

140. In response to the increasing incidence of cervical cancer, Government, in collaboration with the US Centre for Disease Control and the University of Pennsylvania, is introducing a new screening and treatment method for pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix. Also through the US Centre for Disease Control and the World Bank, we have obtained 33 Gene X-pert machines that offer revolutionary technology that reduces the time for confirmation of a diagnosis of tuberculosis from 8 weeks to just a few hours. This technology will be largely deployed in clinics.

141. Madam Speaker, we have continued to provide ARV therapy at considerable cost to some 95% of those citizens who need it. We have also increased the CD4 threshold for initiating therapy from 250 to 350, resulting in individuals receiving earlier treatment. The increase of CD4 cell count to 350 has the potential to significantly contribute to a reduction in new HIV infections from 1.5% to 0.5% in 2015. We have also maintained our commitment in the prevention of mother to child transmission putting us on track to achieving our target of less than 1% transmission from mother to child by 2015. So far 42 thousand have taken advantage of our safe male circumcision programme, which is about 11% of the national target of 385 thousand men of ages 13 – 49 years.

142. As a country we need to explore and overcome all barriers to prevention and treatment. No single strategy can work towards achieving zero new infections. But, as I have said before, it is ultimately not the drugs, but the “A, B, C” of self discipline, that will get us to our goal of an HIV/AIDS free generation. This calls for much less complacency and much greater behaviour change than is currently the case.

143. Madam Speaker, over the years, the Government’s investment in health infrastructure has outpaced our human resource capacity. To address this challenge, we have launched the Specialist Health Services Program, which from this month has placed 53 specialists in the 2 referral and 7 district hospitals in various areas of specialisations such as cardiology, obstetrics and spinal surgery and others.

144. The Specialist Health Services Program is also being utilized to complement the Clinical Centres of Excellence that I reported on last year. To this end, cancer treatment centres have been created at Nyangabgwe and Princess Marina, while the eye and bone surgery



centres at Sekgoma Memorial and Mahalapye District Hospitals have been provided with additional personnel and equipment.

145. Commendable work has also been done by the Palapye and Selebi-Phikwe district health management teams who have renewed the role of their hospitals as acute care facilities by relocating outpatient services such as maternal child health and ARV treatment to the clinics. In this way, their hospitals now have more time to attend to serious inpatient cases. District health management teams across the country have also come up with commendable initiatives such as upgrading busy clinics to 24 hour service. Such initiatives will be rolled out elsewhere.

146. Madam Speaker, over the past 27 years the Government of Cuba has posted teams of its own health professionals to provide specialty care within our health system. This year I am happy to announce that the number of such Cuban specialists has increased from 69 to 102. On behalf of all Batswana, I wish to express our most heartfelt appreciation to the Government and people of Cuba for having afforded us this much needed assistance over the years. No gift is more valuable than the gift of good health.

147. Princess Marina, Nyangabgwe, and S'Brana Psychiatric Hospitals have successfully outsourced their non-core services. Services will also be outsourced in district hospitals, while Central Medical Stores has now outsourced the routine transportation of medicine by rail along the eastern corridor. It is our intention to further outsource the transportation of medicines throughout the country.

148. Through the now upgraded Institutes of Health Sciences in Molepolole and Serowe we have been growing our locally trained workforce. This year the two Institutes graduated 684, as compared to 392 five years ago.

149. The Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Botswana (UB) consists of the School of Allied Health Professions, Public Health and Medicine. The latter now has a total enrolment of 41 in its Master of Medicine class. In addition, the School has initiated 7 post graduate programs in medical studies including: Internal Medicine; Pathology; Paediatrics and Adolescent Health; Family Medicine; Emergency Medicine; Anaesthesia and Critical Care; and Public Health. From February 2014 the Faculty will be supported by the new teaching

hospital on the UB campus, which is being constructed at a cost of P 1.3 billion.

### Science & Technology

150. Madam Speaker, the recently launched Research, Science, Technology and Innovation Policy calls for the coordination, funding, monitoring and evaluation of all science and technology activities in line with national priorities. The merger of Botswana Technology Centre and Rural Industries Promotion Company will further streamline research.

151. The Botswana Innovation Hub is now a fully functional company with a mandate to support scientific and technological entrepreneurship through the creation of an integrated Science and Technology Park. It is to develop a targeted incubation and funding program, while attracting companies for technology transfer and research commercialization.

152. Government continues to license and monitor facilities to ensure their compliance with domestic and international safety and security requirements for using radiation sources. These efforts have become all the more critical in anticipation of local uranium mining. We therefore intend to establish a laboratory for radiological sampling analysis and research.

### E-Government & ICT

153. Madam Speaker, the e-government programme lies at the centre of efforts to achieve greater efficiency in the public sector, while promoting a knowledge economy. Its rollout is now being accelerated in the context of the adoption of the “1 Gov” strategy for moving government services online for greater quality and convenience. At the heart of the strategy is an understanding that, through the integration of digital data, citizens shall be able to access Government services at any locality, as well as online through their mobile phones and PCs. We thus intend to end the absurdity of citizens having to travel vast distances, or shuffle between different Ministries and Departments, to access basic services.

154. Our ability to become globally competitive as a knowledge based economy as well as fully realise the lofty goals of our strategy for e-government requires state of the art Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) along with the human capacity to capitalise on their potential as drivers of sustainable labour intensive growth. As a prerequisite for such transformation the East Africa Submarine System

(EASSy) and West Africa Cable System (WACS) are now both beginning to provide us with enhanced bandwidth capacity for effective global connectivity, while reducing online costs.

155. Parallel to this development, we are upgrading our national fibre-optic backbone and access networks to take better advantage of the additional bandwidth. Government is also in the process of developing Broadband Strategy that will address challenges related to the accessibility and reliability of services. To reduce the cost of ICT services, which remain relatively high, the Botswana Telecommunications Authority has developed infrastructure sharing guidelines that will enable service providers to reduce their service costs, which should translate into lower user charges.

156. Ultimately, we are committed to providing one-stop service centres for the full range of online services from applying for scholarships, to passports and drivers licences to filing land registration requests and making billing payments. A few electronic services already exist such as the dissemination of school examinations results through SMS and the provision of downloadable business forms in some Ministries' websites.

157. In moving forward we are aware that the number of citizens able to access online services has been growing, with recent surveys suggesting that 42% of Botswana now go online several times a week, with an additional 23% making occasional use of the internet. In this context 59% are reported to have visited a Government website.

158. But, from such figures it is also clear that many still do not have online access. In light of this reality we are continuing to rollout community access initiatives. A total of 197 rural villages have also been connected through the Rural Telecommunications Programme with data and internet as well as voice services. The Nteletsa-I resuscitation project, which entails upgrading of older infrastructure to the Nteletsa II standard in 85 villages, is scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

159. The rollout of shared community user information or Kitsong Centres through public private partnerships is also progressing. So far, a total of 248 Kitsong Centres have been delivered, 196 of which are run by Village Development Committees and youth facilitators, while 56 fall under Botswana Post. A total of 312 youths have been trained in business management to run the centres. We are also in the process of

providing internet and computers to 78 libraries across the country, with 38 so far connected.

160. I can also report that the process of privatising Botswana Telecommunications Corporation is finally progressing. Milestones achieved thus far include completion of the legal due diligence, approval of separation model and setting up the Special Purpose Vehicle, called Botswana Fibre Network, which will own and operate access to the domestic dark fibre system, including our EASSy and WACS capacity.

161. Madam Speaker, Botswana Post has taken advantage of opportunities created by ICT to improve customer service and diversification of products and services. An ICT optimization and counter automation initiative has been launched that is already delivering reliable, efficient and cost effective e-services to customers. In terms of its traditional mandate the new Postal Sorting Centre in Gaborone has improved mail delivery. The merger of Botswana Postal Services and Botswana Savings Bank is on-going. Relevant legislation in the form of the Botswana Savings Bank Transition Communications Regulatory and Botswana Post Amendment Acts were passed during the last sitting of Parliament, while the Botswana Postal Services Transition Bill is on the agenda for this sitting.

## Media

162. Madam Speaker, in keeping with our democratic commitment to engage Batswana, Government seeks to connect with every citizen every day through enhanced broadcast, online and print media services. Significant progress in this respect has been made in such areas as our preparations for the Digital Migration of our free to air terrestrial television, expanded transmitter coverage, enhanced satellite capacity and the growing popularity of our e-communications as well as improved distribution of the Daily News. I am also pleased to note that perception surveys continue to confirm that Batswana put their trust in BTV, Radio Botswana and the Daily News for accurate and responsible news and information.

163. With respect to transmitter expansion, three new sites were completed this year, which together have brought Radio Botswana and BTV coverage for the first time to 62 settlements, while enhancing reception quality for up to 350 thousand consumers. Radio Botswana is also now being received for the first time in the remote area settlements of Qangwa, Nxaunxau and Nxainxai.

164. In terms of content, Radio Botswana has increased its share of local music from 65% to 75%, while BTV's local content has also increased from 53% to 57%. Expanded local programming will be critical as we migrate from analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television, which will allow us to deliver more and better quality domestic television. With respect to satellite services we have migrated to the new IS20 platform. The benefits of this move include annual cost savings of about P 6 million, a much wider footprint and increased capacity, allowing for additional BTV channels.

165. The Daily News now reaches 357 villages through direct distribution. While achieving our delivery goal of reaching out to the remaining remote settlements is a challenge, we are looking for partners to get us there. The Daily News, along with Kutlwano, is also in the process of upgrading its online quality and accessibility through new state of the art websites that will be launched this month, greatly enhancing the publications' international as well as domestic distribution.

166. Our commitment to enhanced online communications is further reflected in the rising traffic on the Government e-Portal ([www.gov.bw](http://www.gov.bw)) and associated websites as well as the growing popularity of the Government Facebook Page since its reboot in July 2012.

167. On youth empowerment, I am pleased to report that we have now opened our doors to young aspirant artists to record in our studios as a public service. Already 65 individual and groups have come forward. We are also enjoying success with our initiative to engage young freelance reporters to expand news coverage in rural areas. A total of 97 such freelancers have so far been inducted.

## Culture

168. Madam Speaker, besides enriching our common heritage as a united and proud nation, cultural products are of economic value. Given this fact, we are continuing to document our Intangible Cultural Heritage on a district by district basis, in order to safeguard community claims to their cultural resources. With proper marketing, arts and crafts have the potential to generate greater income, more especially in our rural communities. In this context an art and crafts purchasing and cultural performance centre was opened in Tsabong this year to serve the Kgalagadi region. Similar centres will be established elsewhere.

169. We also continue to celebrate and promote our cultural heritage through the Constituency Art Competitions, which attracted a total 89,498 participants in 2011. A total of 12,652 participants also took part in this year's President's Day Competitions, a slight increase from the previous year. Besides engaging participants and the public, these competitions have now become fixtures on our country's cultural tourism calendar.

170. Government is finalizing the National Arts Council of Botswana Bill, which will improve funding for the arts, while providing a framework for sector self-regulation. To improve stakeholder engagement for participatory planning, since 2010 we have been regularly convening Pitso ya Ngwao. In October 2012 two Dipitso were held, at Tonota and Jwaneng, in order to reach out to more people.

### Sport & Recreation

171. Madam Speaker, Government recognizes that sport can contribute to the employment, as well as the physical fitness and wellness, of Botswana. It is on this basis that the Botswana National Sports Council has launched a new 16 year strategy for sports development, while decentralising its services to six regions covering the country.

172. The Constituency Sport Tournaments continue to grow in popularity especially amongst the youth. Participation rates have risen from just over 28 thousand at the tournament's inception to almost 66 thousand during the competitions that ended in May 2012. These figures include 5,216 individuals from 66 Remote Area Settlements, where a total of 240 teams have been formed. The development of clubs under the tournament further encourages youth leadership development. The tournaments also provide a convenient platform for spreading healthy living messages, including HIV/AIDS prevention.

173. Botswana teams and athletes have distinguished themselves in international competitions. Besides competing for the first time in the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations, the Zebras were named Best Team in Africa for 2011. Various sports codes have also done us proud in their world rankings. At an individual level, we have a growing number of internationally recognised athletes, including of course 2012 international Diamond League champion Amantle Montsho and our first Olympic Medallist Nigel Amos. I therefore invite this Honourable House to join me in applauding our dedicated athletes for their sterling performances.

174. Government is committed to sustaining good performance through the payment of appearance fees and other incentives. I would also like to appreciate contributions that the private sector has been channelling towards local sport.

#### Botswana and the World

175. Madam Speaker, as I have already noted we have no option but to compete in an increasingly globalised world. In so doing there is an obvious need to engage others. As a responsible member of the international community, we are therefore playing an active role in multilateral diplomacy to advance our own interests while contributing to global socio-economic development, peace and security.

176. Our foreign policy must also reflect our national values. As a country which upholds the rule of law and human rights, we will thus continue to take a principled stand on external issues recognising that in today's global village we are all neighbours. In this regard we shall articulate our views on issues of democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights in multilateral fora. As good neighbours we shall also continue to honour our membership and treaty obligations to various multilateral organizations that we are party to.

177. Our membership on the UN Human Rights Council has, in particular, raised our international profile. The number of requests we receive from many countries and organizations to co-sponsor draft human rights resolutions bears testimony to the respect Botswana enjoys in the multilateral fora.

178. As Botswana we thus cannot ignore the ongoing abuses by Bashar al-Assad's shameless bloodstained regime, which as of the beginning of last month had resulted in the slaughter of over 25000 Syrians, with another 330000 living as refugees. Besides being consistent with our values, our expressions of concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria have been in line with our engagement with other nations in the multi-lateral Friends of Syria group. In this context we have joined likeminded countries in voicing our disappointment at the Security Council's inability to contribute to a lasting solution to the conflict, which clearly constitutes an ongoing threat to regional peace and security as well as the wellbeing of ordinary Syrians.

179. In the interest of deepening bilateral cooperation, during the past year I made several official visits to other countries, while hosting official visits by a number of regional leaders.

180. It was my pleasure to host state visits by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, South Africa President Jacob Zuma and Zambian President Michael Sata. During each of these visits progress was made in advancing bilateral partnerships for shared economic and social development.

181. We also had the privilege of hosting a number of international gatherings this year including such high level meetings as last month's the 8th African Governance Forum and the May 2012 African Summit on Sustainability, whose outcome, the Gaborone Declaration, has been widely hailed as a milestone in giving appropriate value to our continent's conservation of its natural wealth.

182. As I pointed out last year, despite the economic challenges that we face, Botswana will continue to contribute towards the common good. To this end, we donated food and medical supplies to Congo-Brazzaville, following a fire disaster, drought relief to Lesotho and tents to Somalia, as well as responded to the UNHCR's call for global support for Syrian refugees. We have further extended our sympathies to our many friends whenever they are struck by disaster and natural calamities.

183. We have extended technical assistance to Liberia, Malawi and South Sudan. Our assistance to Liberia has been focused on training and mineral development. With respect to both Malawi and South Sudan we dispatched high level assessment missions and have since agreed to work together in such areas as finance and human and natural resource management in the interest of development and good governance.

184. Let me also once again acknowledge that our progress as a nation over the years has been facilitated by the generous outside assistance we have received from the international community. I therefore take this opportunity to give thanks to all of the countries and international organisations, including private institutions and individuals, from whom we have benefited.

## Conclusion

185. Madam Speaker, by working harder and smarter together, while maintaining our common sense of purpose, we as Botswana can and



shall continue to advance towards our goal of a more prosperous Botswana that leaves no citizen behind. In meeting our challenges let us be mindful that our greatest source of strength is our unity and resourcefulness as a people. Our journey so far demonstrates that we are a nation capable of exceeding common expectations when we join together as patriots to embrace collective responsibilities.

186. As citizens let us therefore move away from overdependence on Government to greater interdependence on the productive abilities of each other in order to achieve the type of high performance culture that can elevate us to a high income society. This means taking responsibility for those in need as well as valuing what each of us has to offer.

187. Madam Speaker, in the final analysis a nation, like a family, thrives or falls as one. Let us therefore ask ourselves what each of us can do to contribute to the greater good. Big things can emerge from the small contributions of the many!

188. Let me conclude by once again paying tribute to those public servants throughout Government who are leading by example through their monthly participation in Community Service Day activities. So far for this year alone over 100 projects have been undertaken, which have been of direct benefit to literally thousands of fellow citizens in need. Examples include the construction of 18 houses and 41 gardens, the refurbishment and equipping of recreational areas and various donations of cash and materials to deserving NGOs and other institutions, as well as direct assistance to families who need a helping hand.

189. Finally, as we come together to meet the challenges ahead, let us also once more seek the blessings and guidance of the Lord in all of our endeavours. Ever mindful that it is, “ Not by might, nor by power, but by God’s Spirit”, (Zechariah 4:6), we can succeed in our endeavours. God bless Botswana.