

Contribution to the End of Decade Report on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non- Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)

Botswana

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ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT TO PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN OF ACTION ON A
CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD (2001-
2010)

Botswana

2010

1. Introduction

1. Botswana development planning is guided by the five principles of democracy, development, dignity, discipline, delivery and 'Botho' which in Setswana culture refers to a state of being humane, courteous, and highly disciplined in one's endeavour to achieve one's potential while encouraging social justice. (NDP10). While these principles are relevant, Vision 2016 which is an aspiration of what Botswana should achieve by 2016 provides a long term socio-economic planning framework for the country. The Vision aims to transform Botswana into a "prosperous, productive and innovative, compassionate, just and caring, safe and secure, open democratic and accountable, moral and tolerant and united and proud" nation (NDP9). The country has since independence demonstrated its commitment by upholding these values. As a result, it has enjoyed a measure of stability, peace, and economic and social progress over the past four decades

Actions for foster a Culture of Peace through Education

2. Education in Botswana is guided by a number of policies which among others include the Education Act, the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) 1994, Vision 2016 and some International Frameworks such as Millennium Development Goals and Education for All. To achieve human, economic and social development the government continues to invest in education and training in order to provide accessible, equitable and quality education to all including children with disabilities, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, and to build human capacity for driving economic growth.

3. Although Early Childhood Care and Education is still the responsibility of the private sector, the government of Botswana has put in place measures to ensure that children from an early age, develop values and attitudes that would instil in them the spirit of respect for human dignity, tolerance and non-discrimination. In that regard, the government adopted the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (2001), to guide implementation for the pre-school programme. The policy emphasises inclusion of children with special needs and the need to establish pre-primary school education, Day Care Centres and Baby Care units.

4. Based on the integrated model of Early Childhood Development, a curriculum framework for the 4-6 year olds was adopted in 2008. This policy document provides strategic direction in relation to access, coverage, quality and equity. It emphasises development of the cognitive, social, emotional, moral and physical aspects of children. It also promotes national unity, respect for other people's cultures and beliefs by emphasizing important values and attitudes.

5. Physical education and sports both at national, regional and international levels are promoted in the country to develop the psycho-social and physical development aspects of young people. The activities are also meant to instil positive values like team work, discipline and tolerance. In that regard Botswana schools continue to participate in inter-school sports events and regional competitions. In 2010, the country hosted the regional athletics competitions for five countries in the Confederation of Southern Africa Sports Association (COSASA). In addition, the country has acceded to the convention against Doping in Sport. Schools also continue to commemorate annual events that promote human rights and peaceful co-existence such as World AIDS Day, Commonwealth Day, EFA Global Campaign Week and the Day of the African Child.

6. Botswana has made significant progress in achieving basic education and gender parity particularly at the primary and secondary levels of education. The net enrolment for children aged 6-12 years stands at 88 per cent while progression rate from primary to secondary schools is at 97 per cent.

7. The Revised National Policy on Education and Vision 2016 ensures that Education for All objectives is attained. As a result, a number of strategies have been set up to ensure equality of access to education and for women especially girls. These among others include:

- Mainstreaming gender equality in the curriculum at all levels of education as well establishing a Gender Reference Committee in the Ministry of Education to ensure mainstreaming of gender into the policies and programmes of the Ministry.
- Revision of the policy to improve retention of girls in the school system, by allowing the girl child to return to school after pregnancy, thus addressing restrictive policies that excluded pregnant learners from the school system
- Mainstreaming child labour in education; raising public awareness on child labour as well as strengthening existing outreach programmes
- Maintaining flexibility in the admission policy to, enable children from the Remote Areas Dwellers Settlements to start school at a later age than other children of the same age who enter the school system at the official entry age of six years.
- Provision of free primary education; transport for disabled to and from school; sponsorship for disabled learners to access programmes that are not available in the country and provision of social support

programmes for vulnerable children and children from poor socio-economic backgrounds. These initiatives are meant to ensure that both girls and boys are enrolled in schools on equal basis.

- Implementation of the Equal opportunities Policy (1998) in Vocational Education and Training to increase participation of female students into Vocational Education and Training Programmes, especially those that were traditionally designed for males.
- Introduction of the access programmes in vocational education and training such as the hospitality and retail business targeting disabled children in vocational education is also a demonstration of the government's approach to equity, equal opportunities and human rights approach to education.
- Introduction of Circles of Support Programme to track and re-admit learners who dropped out of schools back into to the education system

8. The curriculum especially for primary and the junior secondary levels has been broadened, repackaged and diversified to include more practical subjects and subjects that promote human rights, peace education as well as civic responsibilities. In that regard subjects like Social Studies, Moral Education, Creative and Performing Arts, and Guidance and Counselling are taught in schools.

9. Life skills education is integrated in teacher training programmes so that teachers could be able to apply positive skills for decision making, dialogue, negotiation, assertiveness, reaching consensus and conflict resolution in teaching and learning.

Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development

10. Poverty remains one of the major development challenges for Botswana. Approximately, 30 percent of Batswana live below poverty datum line. In order to alleviate poverty and its impact, the government adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2003. The purpose of the strategy is to link and harmonise anti-poverty reduction initiatives, provide opportunities for people to have sustainable livelihoods through expansion of employment, improve access to social investment and to monitor progress against poverty. The strategic pathway of poverty reduction includes:

- Promotion of broad-based economic growth
- Enhancing access to quality education
- Health and nutrition for the poor

- Enhancing effective response to HIV and AIDS
- Participation of the poor in the development process through decentralized planning process
- Strengthening the national development management capacity for effective poverty reduction.

11. This strategy is supervised and monitored by the Rural Development Council which ensures its effective implementation.

12. Some programmes have been introduced to improve the livelihoods and empower the different groups including women and youth. The government through the Ministry of Agriculture introduced Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) and Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD), to support agriculture and to cater for poor farmers including women and everyone who qualifies for such programme. The National Master Plan for Arable Agriculture and Dairy Development programme was developed to strengthen support through commercialisation of the agricultural sector initiative. It has always been the government commitment to support the Remote Area Development Programmes through other initiatives such as Arable Land Development Programme, Accelerated Rain-fed Agricultural Programme Service to Livestock Owners in Communal Area and Livestock Water Development programmes.

13. The young Farmers Fund and the provision of grants to women, women's organizations were also introduced to empower and encourage women and youth to participate effectively in the economy of the country.

14. The government through the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has introduced an entrepreneurship programme called, **Know about Business**. The purpose of this programme is to develop early orientation to self employment and independence for senior secondary school leavers. This programme is being cascaded to Teacher Training Institutions.

15. Consultative structures have been set up at village, district and national level to ensure inclusive and participatory approach to national developments. Key among these are:

- **Kgotla Meeting (Public gathering)**, where community members assemble to deliberate on development and other important issues of cultural/national interest
- Village Development Committees, which is a key structure for coordinating development activities at local level
- District Development Committee, where district developments are consolidated

- National District Development Committee
- Other structures are; Local Authority Consultative Forum, Biennial Business Conference, High Level Consultative Council.

Actions to promote respect for all human rights

16. Consistent with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and Vision 2016, Botswana has ratified these conventions:

Civil and Political Rights

- Declaration of Acceptance on the obligations contained in the charter of the United Nations Admission of States to Membership to the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter: Resolution 2136 (XXI) Adopted October 2000
- Protocol to the African Charter on Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of African Courts on Human and Peoples' Rights: Signed 9 June 1998
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Ratification 8 September 2000

Prevention of Discrimination

International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women: Accession 21 February 2007

Rights of Children

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: Accession 24 September, 2003
- Convention on the rights of the child: Accession 14 March 1995
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: Ratification 10 July 2001
- Amendment to the Convention on the Right of the Child (Article 43 paragraph 2): Acceptance 6 March 2002
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Right of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict: Ratification 24 October 2004- Declaration: item 4

Torture

Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: Ratification 8 September 2000

Trafficking in Persons

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime: Ratification 29 August 2002

17. The National Plan of Action for Children (2006-2016) has been adopted to promote human rights and holistic development of children. The plan emphasizes education and training, health, nutrition, children and HIV and AIDS, Sports and recreation, child protection, environment and safety as well as policy legislation.

18. An Inter-Ministerial Committee on Treaties and Conventions has been established to advise government on ratification and accession to international treaties. The Committee is also mandated to monitor implementation, reporting obligations and domestication of International treaties. (NDP9)

19. Human Rights Education is integrated and infused in the curriculum as well as teacher training programmes through various subjects. Some of these subjects are; social studies, cultural studies, moral and religious education, languages and Guidance and Counselling. Most of these subjects focus on topics which promote human rights, and civic responsibility, governance, citizenship and peace education. They explore issues such as abuse, conflict resolution, peace, violence, good citizenship, tolerance and social responsibilities.

20. Guidance and counselling which is now a component of the primary and secondary education curriculum assists learners to develop life skills. This enables all children right from an early age, to benefit from education in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours required to make decisions and resolve differences and conflicts. The subject also addresses issues of gender stereotypes through career fairs and other related activities.

Item 4: Actions to ensure equality between women and men

21. The Government of Botswana endorsed the *“Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”* in September 1995. Since then, Botswana has made a commitment towards developing mechanisms and strategies to implement the prioritized six critical areas adopted from the Beijing Platform for Action. The six critical areas are; Women and Poverty including Economic Empowerment; Women in Power and Decision Making; Education and Training for Women; Women and Health; Violence against Women including the Rights of Women; and the Girl Child. In 1996 Botswana acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) The Convention has since been translated into the

national language-Setswana. The "*National Gender Programme Framework (NGPF)*" was also adopted in August 1998.

22. Several laws have been amended to align them with CEDAW provisions. The Marital Power which treated the husband as the heads of the family and gave him power over his wife on legal representation and administration over her property was abolished in 2004, to give persons married in community of property the legal power to dispose of assets held in joint estate.

23. The Deeds Registry Act was amended in 1996 to allow women, whether married in community of property or not to register their property with the Deeds Registry without their husbands consent. It should however be noted that the abolition of Marital Power Act does not apply to persons married under customary law. Consultations are ongoing to address disparities and extent of the application of the Act to these marriages (Botswana's Human Rights National Report, 2008).

24. The Citizenship Act was amended in 2003, such that citizens of Botswana who had acquired the citizenship of another country as a consequence of marriage shall upon applying to resume citizenship of Botswana; be re-instated as citizens of Botswana.

25. The marriage Act was amended to, raise the minimum age of marriage from 14 for girls and 16 for boys to 18 years for both.

26. Other laws that were amended include the Penal Code 2004, Public Service Act, Affiliations Proceedings Act 1999, and

27. A deliberate effort has been made to mainstream gender perspectives in all development plans, policies and programmes. **The 365 Days National Plan of Action to End Gender Based Violence** was developed in 2007 and it continues to be implemented. The government also enacted the Gender Violence Act in 2008. A deliberate attempt was made through the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs to ensure that all Ministries mainstream gender issues in their planning processes. In that regard all government Ministries have set up Gender Reference Committees and appointed focal persons to ensure that gender issues are adequately addressed and mainstreamed accordingly. The Ministry of labour and Home Affairs in collaboration with the Botswana Police Service have started establishing Gender Focal Points in police stations to enhance the sensitivity of the police on gender issues and improve their response to gender based and domestic violence, particularly violence against women and girls. The police are continually being trained on gender and gender based violence.

28. The public including various groups such as religious structures, HIV/AIDS Men Sector, Botswana Police Service are continuously sensitized on issues of gender equality and gender based violence and domestic violence through dissemination

of education and information materials and commemoration of international events such as the International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. In addition, the government continues to provide financial and technical support to organizations that provide psychosocial support and places of safety for survivors of gender based violence.

29. In an effort to alleviate poverty, government has initiated some economic programmes that promote gender equality between women and men. As indicated earlier, these include the Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD), Livestock Management and Infrastructural Development (LIMID), Young Farmers Fund, and the provision of grants to women's groups and Women's Organizations.

Actions to foster democratic participation

30. Democratic principles permeate all aspects of the education system. The curriculum blueprints and syllabuses emphasise the use of interactive and participatory methodologies. This is to ensure that the views and opinions of learners are respected. It is also to ensure that learners are involved in decision making processes. The Textbook Development Committee ensures that core textbooks that are recommended for use by schools are strong on learner material interaction and high on syllabus coverage.

31. The Student Representative Council and School Clubs are used to promote the voice and opinion of children in schools. The Pastoral Policy for Secondary Schools has also been introduced to ensure that students participate effectively in school governance.

32. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was established in 1997 to monitor the election process and to ensure free and fair elections. Since then, IEC has increased civic and voter education campaign to educate the nation on democracy and the importance of voting. The IEC has maintained its integrity by adhering to regional and international electoral principles and norms as set out in the Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC and the Parliamentary Forums and Standards in the SADC Region (Botswana's Human Rights National Report, 2008).

33. The Constitution of Botswana guarantees freedom of speech. As a result there has been an increase in the private newspapers and radio stations. The Media is recognised as an important partner in enhancing press freedom and freedom of speech. In recognition of this important role, the government has set up;

- The Media Advisory Council composed of members from the private media and other stakeholders to promote and preserve media in public.

- National Broadcasting Board in 1996 to regulate broadcasting by issuing broadcasting licences, supervising broadcasting activities, monitoring and settling disputes among operators.
- A draft Broadcasting Policy which will among others, pave way for setting up community radio stations.

The National ICT Policy known as Maitlamo was adopted by government in 2007. The purpose of this policy is to enable Botswana to participate in the Global Information Society and to ensure that the nation uses ICT effectively. The components of the policy among others include:

- **School net (Thuto Net)**, this will ensure that ICT is used to educate children in other subjects such as mathematics
- **e-Health**, to provide better healthcare by improving the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare services
- **e- Government**, to improve service delivery and efficiency
- e- Legislation, to enhance private sector participation in e-business.

Conclusion

34. Botswana has made some strides over the past ten years. However the country will continue to intensify its effort through the National Development Plan 10 (2009-2016), to ensure that its national and international obligations are realised.

References

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