



In support of
**UNESCO'S 70th
Anniversary Celebrations**



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

Hon. Dr. Unity Dow

MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

(Ministry Responsible For Relations With UNESCO In Botswana)

at

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President of the General Conference, Chairperson of the Executive Board, Director General of UNESCO, Distinguished delegates from all UNESCO Member States, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, I bring you warm greetings from the Government and People of the Republic of Botswana.

I am deeply honoured to address this distinguished assembly of the 38th Session of UNESCO General Conference. Before I do so, Mr. President, let me join others in congratulating you for your election to the Presidency of this important body. Your visionary leadership, that of the Director General and the entire UNESCO structures presents an opportunity to take UNESCO beyond its 70 years of existence. Mr. President, allow me to share with this Assembly some of our modest achievements across major programme areas:

Education

Let me indicate that Botswana continues to allocate over 20% of its GDP to education. This has led to a number of developments including the recent approval of the national Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP). This strategy is underpinned, by among others, focus on Life Long Learning, developing new and alternative pathways for education; strengthening skills development; and improving quality, relevance, equity and access to education. This turnaround strategy will require both financial and technical



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assistance from partners like UNESCO, whose support we very much welcome.

Following yesterday's adoption of the **Framework for Action 2030**, I want to pledge Botswana's commitment to its implementation by aligning our ETSSP strategy to the Framework. This alignment and mapping will cut across all the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that they are mainstreamed into national development strategies and are effectively implemented.

The Government of the Republic of Botswana appreciates both the technical and financial support to the value of USD 15, 514.00 it received from UNESCO for the support of the national consultations on Education for Sustainable Development, National Education For All Review and the launch of the 2015 Global Monitoring Report. In addition, Botswana received 2 million USD over 5 years from UNESCO in collaboration with the Republic of South Korea through the BEAR Project, whose goal is to address the mismatch between skills training and the needs of the labour market.

Mr President, after many years of hosting the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) Coordinating Centre in Paris, I am pleased to announce that the SACMEQ Coordinating Centre has successfully been relocated to Botswana and that Botswana will host the 10th Session of SACMEQ Assembly of Ministers from 26th – 27th November 2015 in Gaborone.



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On a related matter, Botswana is still committed to the establishment of a Category II Institute for Skills Development and we look forward to UNESCO's support as we work towards concluding this matter.

Social and Human Sciences

Botswana is a State Party to the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport. In this regard, we have received financial support worth 14 810.00 USD from UNESCO to implement the Clean Sport Project. This project aims to educate young athletes on key anti-doping issues. To this effect, a good number of Sport Teachers and Student Athletes have been reached. This has greatly assisted us to raise awareness on the hazards of doping and the importance of clean competitive sport in our country.

Culture:

Distinguished Delegates, it is our conviction as the Government of Botswana that the culture of a people is central to the country's development, hence preservation of culture and heritage is one of the key national priorities. In this regard, Botswana has actively pursued implementation of UNESCO conventions of cultural heritage which has led to the listing of the Okavango Delta as the 1000th World Heritage Site.

Botswana appreciates the financial support it received through UNESCO Participation Programme to the value of 83 000.00USD. This contributed immensely to the



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promotion and protection of natural, cultural and heritage sites including the training of sixty-four young graduates on care and management of World Heritage Sites.

Furthermore, Botswana has made strides in implementing the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), resulting in identification of 472 ICH elements. One of these elements, “*Kitso ya go bopa Dinkgwana tsa Sekgatla*” – a cultural pottery project, has been successfully inscribed under the UNESCO List of ICH in need of urgent Safeguarding. Meanwhile, the results of the second element are expected to be released soon by the ICH Intergovernmental Committee.

Communication and Information; and Natural Sciences

Botswana has embraced innovation as a key driver to achieving a knowledge driven economy. This has led to the development of the 2011 Botswana Policy on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (RSTI) which highlights the demand for technology based solutions and an increase in production of local products and services.

The national RSTI policy is driven by four (4) major directives namely:

1. The development of a coordinated and integrated approach to RSTI planning and implementation.
2. The development of RSTI indicators along the guidelines of the Fractal and Oslo manuals,
3. The start of regular participatory foresight exercises and;



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4. The strengthening of the institutional structures which are responsible for policy monitoring and implementation.

To confirm our commitment to increasing investment in RSTI, the Government of Botswana launched August as a month of Science, Technology and Innovation to be commemorated annually. In addition, Botswana is in the process of establishing national fund for innovation and research.

As part of promoting RSTI in Botswana, the Botswana Innovation Hub has been established as an incubator for start-up companies by providing state of the art facilities to promote RSTI in Botswana. Since its establishment, Hub has continued to approve and register entities that will operate in a dedicated park.

Mr President, while the above does not represent all our achievements, we have deemed it appropriate that we propose to this General Assembly, our commitment to further serve UNESCO through Dr. Gloria Somolekae, as Botswana's candidate to UNESCO Executive Board. Dr. Somolekae is a distinguished woman of repute whose legacy will be felt beyond the tenure of her office.

I thank you for listening.

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