STATEMENT

BY

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BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON AGENDA ITEM 19:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Please Check Against Delivery
Mr. Chairman,

1. I wish to align my delegation with the statements delivered by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China, as well as by Ethiopia on behalf of the Africa Group in that order.

2. Let me begin by acknowledging the importance of the agenda item before us for discussion today and perhaps preface my remarks with a broad commentary on the sustainable development chapter as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

3. In 2012 world leaders converged in Rio, Brazil with a clear intention to renew commitment towards ensuring a future that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable for our planet and for the benefit of both present and generations to come.

4. My delegation, however, remains concerned that the planet’s fragile ecosystems continue to be degraded and depleted at an alarming rate. It is indisputable that the current course of unsustainable consumption and production patterns, stemming from overexploitation of our natural resources, threatens to outstrip the capacity of the planet to continue sustaining life.

5. In Rio, Heads of State and Government agreed that the key solution to the challenges we face lies in the promotion of a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

6. Leaders also agreed that one of the best approaches would be to embrace green economy as one of the important tools that could contribute towards achieving poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, creating opportunities for employment and improving the welfare of people across the world.

7. They also agreed that the pursuit of economic and social development should at the same time strike a balance with the need to promote conservation of biodiversity and regeneration of ecosystems.
8. Rio+20 therefore played a catalytic role, in calling the attention of the international community to the need to reorient its policy-making processes at both national and international level from environmental damage towards resource efficiency.

9. It is gratifying to note that various intergovernmental processes are already underway to prepare the landscape of “the future we want” underpinned by the three pillars of sustainable development.

10. My delegation is confident that as we formulate the new developmental framework, focus will be on key priority areas that can uplift many citizens of the world from the squalor of poverty and diseases and transform their lives from economic stagnation by a good measure. We must always be mindful that there are still multitudes of people struggling to secure the basic necessities of human life, such as food, water, shelter, health and dignity.

11. In Botswana, we have declared poverty eradication a key objective of our National Development Planning process.

12. In this regard, we have to recognise that actions taken at national level alone cannot be sustained in the absence of a supportive global environment. Such an environment must incorporate an appreciation of the critical role played by trade, finance, investment, technology and Official Development Assistance. Essentially, it has to be appreciated that the pursuit of a sustainable development agenda without robust delivery on Means of Implementation will be an exercise in futility.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Now turning to more specific items, allow me to start with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. My delegation is happy that at the September UNCCD (COP11) that was held in Namibia, progress was made in addressing challenges which are faced by countries such as my own which are vulnerable to drought, arid, semi-arid and desert conditions.
14. We therefore welcome the decision to establish the intergovernmental working group to establish a science based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and sub humid areas.

15. We are equally happy with the decision to establish a Science Policy Interface (SPI) to facilitate a two way science policy dialogue. Our expectation is that the issues of Desertification Land Degradation and Drought will be factored in to the formulation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

16. On Biodiversity, Botswana is committed to the protection of our natural environment. Seventeen per cent (17%) of the country's territory has been set aside as national parks, Wildlife Management Areas, game and forest reserves in a deliberate move to ensure the protection and conservation of biodiversity. Botswana is also party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance under which the Okavango Delta has been designated as our first Ramsar site.

17. Regarding Climate Change, our countries, more especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa, continue to face severe threats that not only have the potential to reverse the gains made thus far, but prove that we do not have the means or capacity to effectively adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

18. We therefore look forward to a successful outcome of the forthcoming Conference of the Parties in Warsaw, Poland later this month. The deliberations at this Conference will provide the basis for reaching legally binding agreement by 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

19. With regard to the implementation of Agenda 21, we believe that fulfillment of commitments of the Monterrey Consensus provides the international community with an excellent opportunity to pursue sustainable development efforts and to take Agenda 21 forward. The pervasive financial crisis and the asymmetries in the global trading system remain some of the major impediments for developing countries to realize the full implementation of Agenda 21. We need to address issues of greater market access, technology transfer, enhanced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and capacity building for developing countries.
Mr. Chairman,

20. In conclusion, Botswana is fully committed to the implementation of sustainable development priorities and we look forward to participation in the various negotiations on the development of the Post 2015 Development Agenda

21. I thank you for your attention.