STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. Chairman

I thank you for giving me the floor.

2. Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

3. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the delegations of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Egypt on behalf of the Group of African States as well as Lesotho on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Botswana attaches great importance to the achievement of sustained socio-economic development, aimed at the improvement of the well-being and the quality of life of her people as well as the realization of their aspirations.

5. In recognition of the importance of advancing social development, at the last session of the Commission for Social Development, Botswana renewed her commitment to enhancing efforts in order to accelerate implementation of the social development agenda.

6. We therefore remain deeply committed to addressing the profound social challenges that persist, key among them poverty, unemployment, rising inequalities and social exclusion.
7. Although Botswana has made significant progress since the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, efforts continue to be hindered by the impact of the economic and financial crisis, high volatile food and fuel prices as well as challenges posed by climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Despite progress made in many of our countries in the implementation of goals of the World Summit for Social Development, poverty remains one of the most pressing concerns of the world today.

9. Many of our citizens still have no access to the most basic of life’s necessities such as potable water, sanitation, food, shelter, education and health.

10. We therefore share the Secretary General’s view that empowerment of people remains central to achieving the overarching social development goals of poverty eradication, social integration and full and productive employment and decent work for all.

11. In this regard, our commitment to fight abject poverty as a moral imperative is a re-affirmation of our faith in the worth and dignity of the human person.

12. To this end, in our national development efforts as a country, utmost priority is given to the implementation of poverty eradication programmes, focusing on the promotion of broad-based growth for sectors that create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and emphasis on vulnerable groups in our society.
Mr. Chairman,

13. Unemployment remains a global challenge, with young people being disproportionately affected. As it is the case in other developing countries, Botswana continues to grapple with high unemployment rates, affecting social life of many of our people.

14. This crisis has thus brought to the fore the urgent need for more effective policies and programmes to address lack of employment and improve the quality of life of young people.

15. In this regard, the creation of employment opportunities, expansion of access to quality education and skills training, vocational education and entrepreneurship remain a top priority for Botswana.

16. My delegation welcomes the continued focus on addressing challenges facing the youth and calls upon Member states, the UN system and relevant stakeholders to fully implement the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the 2011 UN High-level Meeting on Youth, which outlined specific areas of action on youth issues.

17. We also welcome the implementation by the UN system of Secretary General’s Five-Year Action agenda and the appointment of the Special Envoy on Youth in January 2013.

Mr. Chairman,

18. As stated by the Secretary General in his report, we acknowledge that social exclusion remains pervasive, with various social groups disadvantaged or marginalized.
19. We therefore also recognize the need for the intensification of efforts to reduce inequality and promote the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals and social groups.

20. Regarding issues of disability, we recognize the importance of mainstreaming disability in our national development processes as a strategy for achieving equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

21. With the increasing recognition of the nexus between disability and development as reflected in the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, Botswana remains committed to the promotion and protection of rights of persons with disabilities and the implementation of the commitments made in the Outcome Document of the just ended High Level Meeting on Disability and Development.

Mr. Chairman,

22. On issues of the elderly, my delegation also remains committed to the protection of the rights and wellbeing of older persons. In this respect, we are currently in the process of developing a national policy for the elderly.

23. Taking note of the outcome of the 2012 review an appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Botswana is following very closely current discussions on strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons including the possible elaboration of a legal instrument. To this end, we are therefore currently considering the Report of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, following its fourth session held in August 2013.
Mr. Chairman,

24. In light of the ongoing discussions on the post 2015 development agenda, I wish to welcome the emphasis placed on the importance of addressing priority areas such as inequality, social inclusion and integration, empowerment and participation, full and productive employment and decent work, and social protection.

25. I wish to conclude Mr. Chairman by a reaffirmation of Botswana commitment to the advancement of the social development agenda.

I thank you for your attention.