STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING
THE PLENARY MEETING
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE
ON AGENDA ITEM 108 AND 109

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Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General for the reports submitted under this agenda item. We also thank the Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for his opening statement.

2. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Angola on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Mr. Chairman,

3. The prevention of transnational organized crime including trafficking in persons, corruption, drug trafficking, countering terrorism as well as the strengthening of criminal justice systems and the rule of law remain key priorities for Botswana.

4. Despite the increasing global attention, high-profile crime and the current trends in transnational organized crime continue to pose serious challenges which undermine security and development of our countries.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Trafficking in persons has become a major social and economic phenomenon facing all countries. Despite its prominence in the international agenda and efforts made to raise public awareness about the problem, we remain concerned about the persistence and prevalence of trafficking in persons, especially of women and girls. The alarming trend of an increase in child victims and an increase in the number of girl victims in particular, is of grave concern to my delegation.
6. Many countries including my own country Botswana remain fertile grounds for traffickers who capitalise on vulnerabilities created by poverty, inequality, unemployment and general lack of opportunities for much of our populations, especially women and the youth.

7. Botswana recognizes the importance of addressing this menace in a well coordinated, comprehensive and holistic manner.

8. In this regard, we are encouraged by the efforts and measures taken by many countries to combat trafficking including the development and implementation of comprehensive national anti trafficking laws, and action plans as well as enhanced cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

9. My delegation also notes with satisfaction the strong focus on trafficking maintained by other parts of the United Nations system including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. We welcome in this regard the work of the relevant Treaty bodies and the Special Rapporteurs as they continue to take into account this issue in their concluding observations and recommendations in their review of reports submitted by States parties.

10. All these efforts Mr. Chairman are indicative of our resolve and determination towards collective action in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

11. As a country, our efforts to combat trafficking in persons continue to be guided by the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and other regional instruments such as the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, SADC Ten Year Strategic Plan to combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2009-2019).
12. Botswana also attaches great importance to the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons adopted by the General Assembly in July 2010, and are proud to have contributed to the appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action in June 2013.

13. Although not an end in itself, the Plan of Action is significant in that it provides all-encompassing measures aimed at addressing human trafficking, and therefore contributes to the implementation of other related international instruments on trafficking in persons. The Plan also puts a high premium on a human-rights based and victim-centered approach.

14. I therefore wish to stress that effective implementation of the Plan of Action by all remains critical for the resolution of the problem of trafficking in persons, lest those responsible for this heinous crime continue to act with impunity.

15. While we acknowledge that in many instances lack of specific legislation criminalising trafficking in persons undermines all the ongoing efforts by Governments, we also note that lack of enforcement of anti-trafficking laws continues to pose a challenge for many States, as demonstrated by the low number of prosecutions where such laws exist.

16. In this regard, Botswana strongly shares the view that priority should continue to be accorded to strengthening of national efforts to prosecute and punish perpetrators and most importantly build the capacity of States, particularly professionals involved in the response to trafficking in persons.

17. In view of the great importance that Botswana attaches to the work of UNODC, my delegation supports calls for strengthening the capacity of UNODC in order to more effectively assist Member States in the implementation of all the four pillars Global Plan of Action.
Mr. Chairman,

18. Concerned about the world drug situation and its linkages to development, Botswana shares the view that countering the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility. In this connection, the importance of international cooperation can therefore not be overemphasized.

19. We welcome the decision to convene a Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in 2016, which would review progress and assess the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem.

20. Botswana looks forward to contributing to the High Level Review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to counter the World Drug Problem to be held during the 57th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2014 and the consideration of the outcome of the review by the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

21. On corruption, we take note of the efforts in the implementation of the Convention against Corruption by its States Parties and the ongoing activities of the UNODC including its participation in the Group of 20 (G-20) Anti-Corruption Working Group and membership of the Business-20 (B-20) Task Force on Improving Transparency and Anti – Corruption.

22. In view of the importance we attach to the fight against corruption, Botswana is supportive of the Secretary General’s recommendations on the accession and ratification of the Convention against Corruption by States that have not already done so and the full implementation of the Convention by the States Parties.
Mr. Chairman,

23. Crime prevention and drug control need to be viewed as a shared responsibility among all States. We believe that the international community has the tools to combat these challenging but by no means insurmountable problems. What is needed is standing united for a common purpose.

24. We also recognise the importance and the need for continuous evaluation and monitoring of our efforts and measures undertaken at all levels in order to assess their effectiveness in addressing these challenges.

25. I wish to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by emphasizing the need for greater political will and commitment, and in this regard, reaffirm Botswana’s commitment to the fulfillment of her obligations pursuant to the relevant regional and international instruments aimed at combating transnational organized crime. We also remain committed to learning from best practices and cooperating with all States in pursuit of making the World safer from crime and drugs as well as human trafficking.

I thank you for your attention.