STATEMENT

BY

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

ON AGENDA ITEM 65: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
PLENARY MEETING OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Malawi on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Mr. Chairman,

2. Recognising that Botswana’s current and future prosperity depends on the well-being of her children, my country attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

3. In this regard, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to the implementation and fulfilment of her obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Accordingly, great importance is attached to the work of the Committee on the Rights of Child.

4. I also wish to reiterate the value that my Government attaches to the work of UNICEF particularly the continued support for our national efforts in the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

5. We wish to further reiterate our support for the mandates and the work of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and for Children in Armed Conflict as well as the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of children, child prostitution and pornography. We are also supportive of other initiatives aimed at child protection and safeguarding of their rights.
Mr. Chairman,

6. We welcome the laudable actions that continue to be taken by many countries to ensure that the world is a better place for children including increased legislative action, policy interventions and information campaigns on the rights of children.

7. We also note the steady progress made over the past year pertaining to violence against children and children in armed conflict, including efforts to combat impunity as well as ending the recruitment and use of children, by government forces.

8. Despite progress achieved, violence remains a serious factor hampering the effective attainment of children’s rights. Children the world over continue to be subjected to all forms of violence, including sexual violence.

9. On other areas of concern, Botswana remains gravely concerned about the impact of armed conflict and use of heavy weapons on children. Millions of children are caught up in conflict, currently ongoing in some countries, in which they are not merely bystanders, but targets.

10. In this context, my delegation shares the SG’s view that the protection of children including those affected by conflict remains the primary responsibility of States. My delegation reiterates its support for the strengthening of child protection systems; children’s access to justice systems, strengthening of national capacities as well as accountability for violations of children’s rights.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Regarding the protection of children’s rights at the national level, Botswana has achieved significant progress and continues to make strides.
12. In this regard, the legislative and policy environment for the protection of children has improved over the years, particularly with the passage of the Children's Act in 2009.

13. Given that education is a vital prerequisite for the promotion and protection of the rights of children, Botswana has made significant and sustained progress in the provision of access to education and the quality of basic learning. Our education system continues to strive for equity.

14. On the implementation of child rights in early childhood, Botswana continues to implement the Early Childhood Development Policy. Programmes aimed at ensuring the protection, survival and development of children are also in place.

15. On health, Botswana has made substantial investment on the general health infrastructure and the provision of access to health care services. The coverage of maternal and child health interventions such as immunization, antenatal and postnatal care, supplementary feeding as well as prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) increased over the years.

16. However, HIV and AIDS still present major challenges to improving the lives of the people thereby diminishing the prospects of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The high prevalence rates therefore make the achievement of the health related goals of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health a daunting task.

**Mr. Chairman,**

17. Despite the gains made, Botswana continues to face the financial and human resource constraints in the implementation of
its child protection and development programmes. In this regard, strengthening partnerships with the United Nations system and development partners remains critical.

18. To this end, we value the continued support of all partners including civil society organisations and the private sector in complementing our efforts in the implementation of the commitments made and addressing the developmental and other challenges facing the country.

Mr. Chairman,

19. I wish to conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and ensuring the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Children and related instruments. We also commit to continue working with all stakeholders in an effort to realise the rights of children as future leaders of our country.

I thank you for your attention.