STATEMENT BY

MR. NKOLOI NKOLOI
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TO CONSIDER THE
DRAFT RESOLUTION ENTITLED
"TACKLING ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN WILDLIFE"
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 13

30 JULY 2015, NEW YORK

Please check against delivery.
Mr. President,

1. Thank you for giving us the floor and for providing us with the opportunity to share lessons, experiences and ideas on this very important subject.

2. Let me at the very outset commend the Governments of Gabon and the Federal Republic of Germany for their leadership and contribution to bring to the attention of the international community the plight of millions of our endangered species on this as well as the challenges facing both by mankind and animal-kind.

3. Botswana wholeheartedly welcomes the adoption, by this Assembly, of the draft resolution entitled "tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife".

4. We believe that this resolution not only reaffirms our commitment to paying respect to our natural capital but also serves to reaffirm the intrinsic value of our biological diversity as well as its contribution to sustainable development.

5. As a country know for its abundance of wildlife and fauna, we place a high premium on strong conservation policies in order to safeguard our natural resources for future generations.

6. In recent times, the world has witnessed rising tides in the illicit trafficking of wildlife, fauna and flora by organized criminal groups and armed individuals.

7. Everyday thousands of rhino, elephants and other precious species are killed, maimed and stolen from their natural habitat by brutal gangs who are driven by profit and greed.

8. Even as we speak today, we remain concerned and saddened by the news headlines bringing to us reports of a rhino, elephant and so on, killed, maimed, its horn decapitated and the animal left for dead.

9. In an endeavor to contribute to international efforts to stem out the illicit transfer and trafficking in endangered species, we have developed frameworks with our regional neighbours to coordinate the protection of rhinos.

10. We have recently collaborated with the Governments of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe to repatriate a few hundred rhinos into Botswana where they can enjoy the peace and tranquility so cherished by our people.

11. Just like violent extremism and terrorism, wildlife trafficking has been on the rise with criminal gangs and cartels harvesting tonnes of tonnes of elephants tasks and rhino horns for profit.

12. Armed poachers have infiltrated our national parks and animal sanctuaries claiming thousands of lives of these majestic animals while causing untold damage to communities.

13. For the most of our countries, fighting this scourge has strained our resources both in material and human terms. It has not been easy to quell these animal traffic and put a strain on our economies.

14. As we look ahead in the coming weeks and months, we must forge resilient partnerships and stand our ground even in the face of armed gangs and criminals.

15. Together we must prevent, combat and eradicate this illegal trade in wildlife - both at supply and demand sides.

16. We are confident we shall win this war.

I thank you.