



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

TO THE FIRST MEETING

OF THE FIFTH SESSION

OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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GABORONE



Introduction

1. Mister Speaker, before I address this august House, I would like to request that we observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those who have departed during the course of the year. Amen.
2. Mister Speaker, may I, on behalf of the nation, and indeed this house, wish our dear Madam Speaker a speedy recovery as she has taken ill. Let me thank you for your diligent commitment to efficiency and team work as you so seamlessly stepped in and up as you stand in for her.
3. Mister Speaker, Honourable Members, this being the first time that I come before you to report on our country's progress over the last twelve months, is an apt opportunity to also update this House and the nation about our roadmap that seeks to take this country to greater heights.
4. During my Inauguration Speech on 1st April, 2018, I made several policy pronouncements which are primarily meant to address, as a matter of urgency, the twin problems of poverty and unemployment particularly amongst our young people who constitute sixty per cent of this country's population.
5. Mister Speaker, in pursuit of these noble development objectives, we continue to be guided by the pillars of our National Vision 2036 which provide for broad based, inclusive, comprehensive and complementary National Development.
6. In order for us to achieve our overarching objectives, Government is in the process of developing a National Transformation Strategy whose key objective will be to unlock the tremendous potential of our human and financial

resources. It will also broaden and deepen the beneficial participation of citizens in all sectors of the economy.

7. Mister Speaker, underpinning the National Transformation Strategy will be the national value system that will promote the spirit of entrepreneurship and commitment to development. In addition, our public institutions will be revitalized and they in turn, will renew their commitment to serve effectively with purpose and agility.
8. In this regard, a National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is also in place to ensure that we achieve the targets that we have and will continue to set for ourselves.
9. Our current National Development Plan 11 (NDP 11) 2017-2023, is due for its Mid-Term Review in the next financial year. It is during this process that most of our transformative adjustments will be effected.

Global Economic Overview

10. Mister Speaker, according to the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook (WEO) update released in October, 2018, global growth in 2018 and 2019 is projected to remain at its 2017 level of 3.7 percent. Growth in the advanced economies is forecast at 2.4 percent in 2018, before declining to 2.1 percent in 2019. Emerging markets and developing economies' overall growth is forecast at 4.7 percent for 2018 and 2019.
11. On the other hand, economic recovery in the Sub-Saharan Africa region is set to continue, supported by the rise in commodity prices. In this regard, growth is expected to increase from 2.8 percent in 2017 to 3.1 percent in 2018, before rising further to 3.8 percent in 2019. The growth momentum in the region reflects improved prospects for fuel-exporting economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to rising oil prices.

Performance and Outlook of the Domestic Economy

Growth in the Real Sector

12. Mister Speaker, after recording a moderate growth rate of 4.3 percent in 2016, the domestic economy slowed down to 2.4 percent in 2017, mainly as a result of the weak performance of both the Mining and non-Mining sectors. In terms of the domestic outlook, the economy is expected to strengthen in the medium-term, driven by positive growth in both Mining and non-Mining sectors. Among the non-Mining activities where such positive growth is expected are the services, in particular the tourism and retail sub-sectors.

Inflation

13. Mister Speaker, Botswana's inflation averaged 3.3 percent in 2017. Since the beginning of 2018, inflation has averaged 3.2 percent for the first half of the year. In terms of outlook, it is projected that inflation will remain within Bank of Botswana's 3 to 6 percent objective range in the short-to-medium-term.

Merchandise Trade, Balance of Payments and Foreign Exchange Reserves

14. Mister Speaker, the merchandise trade balance continues to be driven by trade in diamond, mainly from De Beers Global Sight-holder Sales, which includes a substantial re-export trade for rough diamonds. During 2017, total exports were valued at Sixty Billion, One Hundred and Fifty Million Pula (P60.15 billion) compared to Eighty Billion, Three Hundred and Forty Million Pula (P80.34 billion) recorded in 2016. The decrease was largely due to weaker global demand, which restricted diamond sales from Botswana. Total imports

were valued at Fifty Four Billion, Nine Hundred Million Pula (P54.9 billion), representing a decline of 17.9 percent from Sixty Six Billion, Eight Hundred and Sixty Million Pula (P66.86 billion) in 2016. As a result, the trade balance was in surplus of Five Billion, Two Hundred and Fifty Million Pula (P5.25 billion) in 2017.

Balance of Payments

15. Mister Speaker, the balance on the current account was a surplus of Twenty Two Billion, Two Hundred and Thirty Million Pula (P22.23 billion) in 2017, attributed to improved revenue inflow from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), which increased by 35.5 percent from Twelve Billion, Eight Hundred Million Pula (P12.8 billion) in 2016 to Seventeen Billion, Three Hundred Million Pula (P17.3 billion) in 2017, as well as a modest surplus in the merchandise trade account.
16. Overall, the balance of payments was in deficit of Three Billion, Three Hundred Million Pula (P3.3 billion) in 2017, compared to a surplus of Two Billion, Eight Hundred Million Pula (P2.8 billion) recorded in 2016. The deficit was mainly attributable to Government's financial obligations, including: funding of Botswana's Diplomatic Missions in various countries, payments for imports and external loan repayments, resulting in withdrawals from foreign exchange reserves. Foreign currency revaluation losses, which resulted from the appreciation of the Pula against the US Dollar, also contributed to the overall deficit balance.

Foreign Exchange Reserves

17. Mister Speaker, as at December 2017, foreign exchange reserves amounted to Seventy Three Billion, Seven Hundred Million Pula (P73.7 billion), a decline of 4.0 percent from

the Seventy Six Billion, Eight Hundred Million Pula (P76.8 billion) recorded in December 2016. The foreign exchange reserves have since increased to Seventy Five Billion, One Hundred Million Pula (P75.1 billion), as at the end of July 2018. Of this amount, the Government Investment Account amounted to Thirty Four Billion, Seven Hundred and Fifty Million Pula (P34.75 billion), which represented 46.3 percent of the country's total foreign exchange reserves.

Exchange Rate Movements

18. Mister Speaker, in the twelve months to August, 2018, the Pula depreciated against all major trading partners currencies, except the South African Rand, against which it appreciated by 6.2 percent. In real terms, the Pula has been stable against a basket of currencies of Botswana's major trading partners. This is in line with Government's exchange rate policy of maintaining a stable exchange rate in order to achieve the national objectives of economic diversification and employment creation.

Budget Outturn

19. Mister Speaker, according to the 2017/18 budget outturn, a deficit of One Billion, Nine Hundred and Eighty Million Pula (P1.98 billion) was recorded, representing 1.1 percent of GDP. The 2018/19 financial year is also estimated to record a moderate deficit. Despite the constrained fiscal outlook, Government is committed to the principle of a balanced budget in the medium term, as outlined in the current National Development Plan.

Sustainable Development Goals

20. Mister Speaker, implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Botswana is gaining momentum. A Roadmap was launched in February, 2018 in order to guide the domestication, implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at both national and local levels. Through this process, the relevant sectors should integrate SDGs targets and indicators into their daily work. A National Communication Strategy has also been produced to strengthen efforts on SDGs advocacy and awareness through various platforms, such as Dikgotla; workshops; print, electronic, and social media.

National Employment Policy for Botswana

21. Mister Speaker, Government has recognised the need to develop an overarching National Employment Policy (NEP) for Botswana with implementable solutions to address the unemployment problem facing the country. The goal of the NEP is to assist the country to achieve productive, gainful and decent employment for all, to contribute to the reduction of income inequality and as well as to support Government's poverty eradication efforts. To develop the NEP, Government obtained financial and technical support from the World Bank. The Draft National Employment Policy for Botswana is expected to be delivered by March, 2019.

Financial Inclusion Strategy

22. Mister Speaker, Financial Inclusion is achieved when consumers across the income spectrum in a country can access and sustainably use financial services that are affordable and appropriate to their needs. To achieve this, Government has developed a National Financial Inclusion Roadmap and Strategy that runs from 2015 to 2021. The

strategy provides a holistic outlook of the financial needs of the society, and indicates how the financial sector should be improved to provide better services and financial products that promote financial inclusion. The Strategy is being implemented by various stakeholders including Ministries, Regulators and Financial Institutions, among others, under five priority areas namely: Improvement of Payments Eco-System; Facilitation of Low Cost, Accessible Savings Products; Development of Accessible Risk Mitigation Products; Improvement of the Credit Market and Consumer Empowerment and Protection.

Collateral Registry

23. Mister Speaker, it has been observed that currently the volume of credit to the private sector especially the micro, small and medium enterprises in Botswana is relatively low compared to other countries. This is in view of the fact that access to credit is crucial for economic growth and private sector development. A major hurdle to the flow of credit is that currently financial institutions only take immovable property as collateral for credit. However, through the concept of a Collateral Registry, households and businesses can register their movable assets as collateral to get credit from lenders. Such movable assets include vehicles, industrial and agricultural equipment, machinery, inventory and raw materials, accounts receivables, intellectual property rights, and agricultural products such as crops, and livestock. To this end, Government is in the process of drafting legislation that will establish a Collateral Registry in Botswana. The target is to have the Bill submitted to Parliament in the 2019 July sitting.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Development

24. Mister Speaker, the development of SMEs remains central in Government's development agenda. To this end, Government is undertaking initiatives that will facilitate development of SMEs. Such initiatives include, establishment of Centres of Excellence country-wide, where SMEs productive capacities and competitiveness will be developed.
25. Furthermore, Government is collaborating with Development Partners on the implementation of Enterprise Development Programmes. Some of these include, Tokafala, which is a collaboration with Debswana, De Beers and Anglo American. The Programme is budgeted for Eight Million United States Dollars (US\$8 million) of which, Government's contribution is Four Million United States Dollars (US\$4 million). The Programme will be implemented in three years, commencing in 2019 targeting SMEs across all sectors of the economy.
26. The other initiative is the Supplier Development Programme (SDP), whose objective is to strengthen citizen-owned enterprise competitiveness. The aim of the Programme is to connect small-scale producers/suppliers to local markets as well as abroad. The Programme is anticipated to start in 2019 and will target five (5) priority Sectors of Mining, Agro processing, Leather, Infrastructure projects and Textile, as well to develop their associated value chains.

Economic Diversification Drive (EDD)

27. Mister Speaker, we remain committed to using Government purchasing power to boost local productive capacity and help build competitiveness for our industries in the regional and global markets. To this end, Government through the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD) Strategy with a view

of making it more relevant and impactful. The review is taking into consideration the institutional capacities to effectively implement strategy project policies, programmes and initiatives. The review is expected to be concluded by end of this year.

28. As part of sectoral development and efforts to develop the Leather Sector, preparatory work for the construction of the Leather Industry Park in Lobatse is at an advanced stage. All the preliminary works including, the establishment of Special Purpose Vehicle; approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan; and the appointment of the Project Management Team and the Technical Advisor have been completed. The Leather Industry Park Business Model is currently being updated in line with the current industry landscape. The construction of the Leather Industry Park is expected to take off in 2019.

Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA)

29. Mister Speaker, since the beginning of this financial year, Government through the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) has financed one hundred and sixty seven (167) projects valued at Ninety One Million Pula (P91 million), creating three hundred and ninety two (392) direct jobs. Services received 83 percent of the total funding, while Manufacturing and Agribusiness constituted the remaining 13 percent. Investment in Manufacturing and Agribusiness is expected to grow as the Agency proactively promotes the Sectors. Meanwhile, CEDA is currently undertaking an assessment of investment opportunities in the Manufacturing Sector in Botswana, to unlock sustainable business opportunities. The study will add impetus to Government's efforts of creating employment opportunities and driving economic diversification and growth.

Investment Promotion

30. Mister Speaker, we have recognised investment promotion as key to economic growth and job creation, as it leads to expansion of existing, and establishment of new industries. We have since embarked on a transformation agenda to lure investors to our country through a revamped investment promotion drive which I am leading. These missions are to ensure Botswana's visibility and position us as an investment destination. We are building the goodwill in the global village through Brand Botswana initiatives including investment booths, marketing our arts and culture, cuisine, dance and song.
31. In addition, we are also working on stimulating domestic investment by ensuring that the same red carpet is in offer for FDI is also available for domestic investment. Further, plans are advanced to establish the Economic and Investment Board, which I shall Chair, and which is expected to be operational in 2019. As part of this work, prior key milestones include establishment of an Investment Clearing House to ensure facilitation of ease of investment.
32. In the year 2017/18, through the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC), generated One Billion Eighty-Two Million Pula (P1.082 billion) worth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Two Billion Nine Hundred and Twenty Million Pula (P2.92 billion) from domestic investment and expansions in the country. This points to a notable increase in domestic investment, which underscores the increasing confidence of local investors in the economy. The new investments made in 2017/18 resulted in creation of an additional 3 050 jobs, of which 2 008 jobs were created from FDI inflows and 1 142 from domestic investment and expansions.

33. With a view to enhance export competitiveness of local companies to enable them to compete regionally and internationally, Government is reviewing the Botswana Exporter Development Programme (BEDP). In 2018/19, BEDP will enrol twenty (20) companies to assist them to develop their export marketing plans to enhance their export readiness and competitiveness. The Programme will build capacity for companies to supply both the local and international retail chain stores.
34. Meanwhile, following the launch of the Botswana One Stop Service Centre (BOSSC) in October 2017, investors continue to be facilitated through shortened and simplified administrative procedures and guidelines for issuance of business approvals, permits and licences. The approval rate for BOSSC authorizations for the year under review stood at 81 percent, a significant improvement when compared with previous rates. I therefore, wish to urge the Business Community to take advantage of the streamlined business processes provided by the BOSSC.
35. Mister Speaker, implementation of the SPEDU Revitalization Programme is underway. We have approved a set of incentives for this region which include a 5 percent corporate tax rate for the first five (5) years and 10 percent thereafter. Seven (7) of the eight (8) companies assessed have been approved. The revitalization program in total has resulted in sixteen (16) projects which have created seven hundred and eighty-one (781) jobs in the following Sectors, Agri-business one hundred and ninety-two (192); Manufacturing three hundred and ninety-nine (399); Infrastructure Development one hundred and thirty-seven (137); and Information Communication Technology fifty-five (53). Besides these, a total of eleven (11) potential investors are being facilitated by SPEDU for business start-ups and land acquisition. The number of jobs to be created from these will increase investor confidence, and should itself attract others to follow.

Special Economic Zones

36. Mister Speaker, preparations for operationalisation of the Special Economic Zones is nearing completion with Regulations and Incentives for the SEZs being finalised for consideration by Government this financial year. SEZs are a key component in advancing our goals towards export-led economic growth. It is also worth noting that we will roll-out Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of infrastructure in the SEZs.
37. On another note, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the first company to operate in one of our SEZs will start production during the fourth quarter of this financial year with the potential of making Botswana the largest exporter of processed poultry meat in the whole of Africa. The initial setting up investment capital of the company amounts to Two Hundred Million Pula (P200 million). This investment together with many others will have downstream linkages with local industry and service providers such as in transport and logistics, financial and other related services.

Doing Business And Business Facilitation

38. Mister Speaker, in an effort to continuously improve the doing business environment and the economy's competitiveness, Government continues to monitor and evaluate all the processes and procedures as well as the regulatory instruments. Government has therefore reviewed the Doing Business Reforms Roadmap to take into account emerging issues at home, in the region, and beyond. Implementation of the revised Roadmap should complement our reinvigorated efforts of attracting and retaining meaningful, sustainable and impactful investment. Treat this, Mister Speaker, if you will, as one of the numerous elements in my Road Map to

enable and ease investments which will lead to jobs, and more jobs, being created.

39. This year we have passed a number laws which will enhance the ease of doing business environment in Botswana. Worth noting in terms of completed reforms, is the introduction of the new Customs Management System (CMS) which has improved trade across borders where business can pre-declare their goods and make payments online. The same online system forms the basis upon which a Single Electronic Window tool would be built to further enhance cross border trade.
40. Furthermore, Parliament has passed four (4) Bills on Companies Amendment; Companies Registration; Registration of Business Names; and Registration of Business Names Re-Registration) which have enabled the development of an Online Business Registration System under the Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA). At the initial stage, this System will allow for integration with online systems from BURS and PPADB, thereby facilitating information exchange between these tripartite institutions. This is anticipated to limit unnecessary physical interactions with these institutions.
41. To improve the regulatory framework, Government has engaged an expert to guide implementation of the Strategy for regulatory impact assessment, with a view to remove all regulatory hurdles to business and reduce the cost of doing business in the country.
In our endeavour to support innovation, we will do all in our power to ensure that youth owned enterprises are assisted to harness their potential. This, we intend to do through, among others, making affordable the process of registering patents as a way of utilising intellectual property to grow our economy.

42. It is the intention of my Government to enable and ease patent development and protection as pre-requisites to growing and trading on our knowledge capital. To this end, specialized training will be offered by Government to train lawyers to qualify in the specialities of patent and copyright law. Furthermore, in our quest to enhance our job creation potential and innovative, productive outputs, we shall find a job for our top achievers in their fields of study, through a strategically managed talent and young professionals programme. Efficiency, productivity and competitiveness shall be the guiding values of such a programme.
43. Mister Speaker, as Government continues to work towards a more conducive business environment, it is expected that the private sector will align their investment with key priority areas as well complement efforts to build local productive capacity for SMEs. For instance, Government is working with the Retail Sector to develop the Retail Charter to ensure that Batswana benefit from the retail value chain. Government will also continue to implement sector specific interventions and initiatives to stimulate investment and job creation. This will include deliberate interventions to promote manufacturing of goods in Botswana.

Export Development

44. Mister Speaker, during the year 2017/18, export development and promotion efforts yielded a total of Two Billion Three Hundred and Sixty Million Pula (P2.36 billion) in export revenue against Two Billion Two Hundred and Thirty Million Pula (P2.23 billion) generated in the previous period. This gives comfort that we are moving in the right direction as we strive to being an export-led economy. To this end we will vigorously promote the export of meat and fresh produce to new markets, and in so doing, utilize existing meat export channels to export fresh produce. Furthermore,

we continue to negotiate Trade Agreements which will guarantee us preferential access to third party negotiating partner states.

Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA)

45. Mister Speaker, Botswana signed the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) on the 30th January 2018. The Tripartite Negotiating States are the twenty-seven (27) members of the three (3) regional groupings of SADC, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). The Agreement offers potential access to a market of a population of around six hundred and twenty-five (625) million people. To date, twenty-two (22) States have signed the Agreement, while only three (3) have ratified from the fourteen (14) required ratifications for it to enter into force. Tariff negotiations with Egypt and the EAC are on-going, once the Agreement enters into force we can have preferential access in these markets for our beef, salt and plastic tubes among other products. It goes without saying that our output and efficiency will have to improve to serve such a big market. And here once again, Mister Speaker, is where I place my conviction on the jobs that we will create.

African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)

46. Mister Speaker, flowing from the TFTA and in pursuance of the Vision 2063 of the African Union and Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) Initiative, we are nearing the conclusion of negotiating a Continent-wide Trade Agreement. This is expected to make the movement of goods and services easier across the continent. The AfCFTA will present opportunities to markets of over one (1) billion people living on the Continent with potential value of over 1 trillion US dollars in trade across the Continent. It is envisaged that

the outstanding issues will be resolved at the December, 2018 African Ministers of Trade meeting, thus paving the way for Botswana to sign the AfCFTA at the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January, 2019.

SACU + Mozambique Economic Partnership Agreement with the United Kingdom

47. Mister Speaker, we are currently, together with the rest of SACU and Mozambique, negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the United Kingdom. This Agreement is necessitated by the impending exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU) which means that the former can no longer be a party to the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement. In view of the importance of the United Kingdom market for our goods and services, together with the fact that it has hitherto been the point of entry for our goods into the EU, it was imperative that we conclude the Agreement with the UK to ensure that there are no trade disruptions. Negotiations for the Agreement are at a very advanced stage and it is envisaged that the SACU + Mozambique and the UK EPA will be signed sometime in December, 2018 in Botswana.

Review of the SACU and European Free Trade Association Free Trade Agreement

48. Mister Speaker, Botswana is also part of the negotiations to review the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) we have with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states of Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland. Of particular importance to us is the need to increase the current quota of 500 tonnes of beef and 500 tonnes of lamb that we enjoy together with the Republic of Namibia through our bilateral agricultural agreement with Norway. We are also working at convincing our Norwegian counterparts to transpose the

additional quota of 2700 tonnes for beef that we enjoy under the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) into the FTA so as to offer us certainty that will allow us to plan ahead.

49. In this respect, projects such as the Lobu Farm Cluster Development, for small stock production, in Kgalagadi District will benefit immensely from this guaranteed market once fully operational. Indeed, it also offers an opportunity for all small-stock farmers across the country to expand and grow their production in the knowledge that they will have an all but guaranteed market. It is the intention of Government to replicate the Lobu model, however, to be lead by the private sector, in other parts of Botswana.

Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment

50. The Government of Botswana and the International Trade Centre (ITC) recently signed the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment to adopt initiatives that support women participation in trade.

Alcohol Policy

51. Mister Speaker, Government is about to conclude countrywide consultations on issues relating to the Alcohol Policy. It is important that as we regulate the trade in liquor and address health concerns, we should balance these with needs of the industry so as to create employment and retain the jobs we already have in this sector. To this end, I have tasked a Joint Ministerial Team led by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to conduct consultations and revert with concrete proposals.

52. Further, we are finalising review of the current alcohol trading hours to bring flexibility where necessary after consultations with stakeholders. I expect the new trading hours to come into effect before the festive season. In the meantime, we have decided, as an interim measure, to lower the alcohol levy to 35 percent for both local products and imports. This measure was undertaken urgently to address concerns from the industry.
53. That notwithstanding, the long-term decision on the comprehensive Alcohol Policy will await the outcome of the stakeholder consultations. That being the case, we have hope as Government that the Industry will reciprocate the good gesture by stepping up their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives whether through sponsorships or rehabilitation programmes for those suffering from substance abuse. In addition, I expect that there will be a consequential reduction in retail prices for the benefit of consumers.

Human Capital Development

54. Mister Speaker, one of the key elements of a knowledge based economy is the development of human capital by promoting access to a wide range of skills. Gradual improvement has been observed in the tertiary education landscape as reflected by the continuous growth of public and private institutions locally.
55. This has resulted in the widening of access to diverse training programmes. The fundamental improvement in the development of the tertiary education sector includes the infusion of entrepreneurship, leadership, and business management skills within the various programmes offered by our local tertiary institutions, both public and private.

56. Since its inception in 2010, the Top Achievers Programme has been availed to high performing Form 5 leavers to study at premier universities around the world. Through this initiative, Government intends to provide an opportunity for the learners to bring global experiences into the economy. The learners are also allowed to train up to PhD level to further enhance their capacity.
57. The generation of technical knowledge is particularly important for its potential contribution to productivity growth. Government continues to engage with the private sector through partnerships, particularly in the provision of requisite equipment, sharing of facilities, the use of resources in the form of instructors and guest lecturers from industry, as well as placing trainees on attachment in private companies.
58. The private sector is encouraged to continue taking part in the development of curriculum to enhance the relevance and quality of outputs, particularly from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. All these initiatives are geared towards producing industry ready graduates and eliminating the skills mismatch phenomenon.
59. In an endeavour to promote workplace learning, Government established the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) to be used as one of the instruments to facilitate training. During the financial year 2017/2018, employers undertook various training initiatives ranging from soft skills to technical and vocational programmes. A total of Two Hundred Million Pula (P200 million) was disbursed from the HRDF and over Thirty Thousand (30,000) employees benefited from this programme.

Accreditation Process

60. Mister Speaker, during the current financial year, the focus of activities was on registration and accreditation of Education and Training Providers (ETPs). Sixteen Higher Education Institutions and thirty seven TVET institutions have been registered and accredited, while five awarding bodies have met the registration and accreditation standards.

Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (RSTI)

61. Mister Speaker, in pursuit of the drive towards improving performance in research, science, technology and innovation and building a knowledge based economy, tertiary education institutions, both public and private, have been participating in the knowledge space through presentation of research papers at international conferences as well as participating as international technical advisors, thus exporting knowledge. Local institutions also continue to bring together data professionals and researchers from all disciplines and from around the world through international conferences.
62. I am pleased to report that the Botswana Innovation Fund is now fully operational. The first group of beneficiaries, being seven companies, received their awards last month. More awards will be made before the end of the current financial year. Most of the recipients were young people. We have identified a need to provide more funding for both basic and applied research. In this regard, we have already begun engagement with the different stakeholders, most importantly researchers and the private sector, on this very important matter. It is our plan that by the end of the coming financial year, we should have put in place all the necessary processes and procedures for the establishment of a Research Fund.

63. As previously reported, the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI) has developed a state-of-the art solar powered SEDING® light that has a wide range of uses including in parking lots, gardens, farms, cattle posts, playing fields, clinics, gathering places like the Kgotla, and in numerous other locations. Being solar powered, the light has zero running costs and most importantly it is environmentally friendly.
64. The assembly line for the production of solar street lights has been reconfigured to allow it to double its weekly production capacity and we are preparing to manufacture printed circuit boards locally as our suppliers from outside Botswana have had quality challenges with mass production. This problem will soon be behind us as work has begun on procuring systems and components of the electronics plant in Kanye. The plant will be a fully functional factory of printed circuit boards, key inputs in the consumer electronics industry in Botswana. We envisage that once fully operational, we should be able to produce and export electronic gadgets.

Public Built Infrastructure

65. Mister Speaker, Government continues to implement strategic shifts in policy towards sustaining the delivery, maintenance, and management of built infrastructure. This will enlarge the business space for more private sector participation thereby leading to creation of additional jobs. Government will focus on policy-making, regulatory and oversight functions while the physical infrastructure and services resulting from the implementation of such policies and regulations will be delivered through the private sector.
66. The implementation of the Economic Stimulus Programme has demonstrated the ability of the construction industry to boost employment. Through this programme, Two Hundred

and Eighty-Seven (287) projects have been implemented using eighty nine (89) building contractors, eighty seven (87) electrical contractors and eighty eight (88) mechanical contractors. The majority of these projects were implemented by citizen contractors in the lower grades such as OC, A and B who were on average employing fifteen (15) skilled and unskilled personnel.

67. Furthermore, as part of Citizen Economic Empowerment and Economic Diversification Drive initiatives, Government continues to prescribe domestic sub-contracting of up to 30 percent of contract amounts on works awarded to non-citizen contractors. In addition, emphasis is placed on the procurement of locally manufactured goods in all Invitations to Tender (ITTs) documents.
68. Efforts to improve the performance of the construction industry and the housing sector by creating a self-regulatory environment are progressing well. To this end, Government has established three of the four envisaged construction self-regulatory bodies within the construction sector, namely; the Architects Registration Council, the Engineers Registration Board and the Quantity Surveyors Registration Council.
69. A Construction Industry Authority Bill is being drafted for presentation to Parliament, which will regulate all contractors that wish to practice in the country.

Housing Delivery

70. Mister Speaker, Government continues to ensure that citizens have access to shelter by promoting not only home ownership, but also making provision for rental accommodation through affordable housing initiatives. To this end, a total of Six Thousand ,Two Hundred and

Eighty Two (6,282) Self Help Housing Agency (SHHA) Home Improvement projects with a budget provision of Two Hundred and Fifty Eight Million, Eighty Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty Nine Pula and Sixty Five Thebe (P258,082,929.65) were planned for implementation by Local Authorities since 2008. Out of these, Five Thousand, One Hundred and Fourteen (5,114) are complete while One Thousand, One Hundred and Sixty Eight (1,168) are ongoing and Five Hundred and Seventy Five (575) beneficiaries are to be assisted during the 2018/19 financial year.

71. Since the inception of the Self Help Housing Agency (SHHA) Turnkey Development Scheme, in the 2008/09 financial year, a total of Six Thousand and Fifty Four (6,054) housing projects were funded at a total amount of Five Hundred and Forty Four Million, One Hundred and Eighty Eight Thousand, One Hundred and Ten Pula (P544, 188,110.00). Of the Six Thousand and Fifty Four (6,054) funded, Five Thousand Four Hundred and Sixty Nine (5,469) projects have been completed to date and Five Hundred and Eighty Five (585) are at various stages of completion. During the current financial year, Eight Hundred and Twelve (812) beneficiaries have been funded at One Hundred and Twenty Three Million, Five Hundred Thousand Pula (P123,500,000). Government will continue to encourage the private sector to complement its efforts to house the nation.
72. Furthermore, Government continues to encourage home ownership by public officers at salary scales D4 and below. The programme which started in August, 2016 has been able to complete sixty three units out of the two hundred and three which have commenced. For the 2018/19 financial year, Seventeen Million Pula (P17 million) has been availed for the programme.

Agriculture

73. Mister Speaker, Government continues to assist arable farmers including horticulture through the Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD). During the 2017/18 ploughing season, Sixty Two Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty Six (62, 646) arable farmers planted Two Hundred and Sixty Eight Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty (268, 530) hectares, whereas in the previous year Three Hundred and Thirty Five Thousand, One Hundred and Eighty One (335, 181) hectares were planted by Eighty Six Thousand and Nine Hundred and Eighty Nine (86, 989) farmers the majority of whom continue to be women.
74. The national estimated cereal production for 2017/18 stands at sixty six thousand and ninety three (66,093) tonnes, which represents 22 percent of the national cereal requirement of Three Hundred Thousand Tonnes (300,000 tonnes) compared to production of One Hundred and Twenty Eight Thousand (128 ,000) tonnes in the previous year. The reduced cereal production is attributed to low rainfall during the 2017/18 cropping season which resulted in Government declaring an arable agricultural drought in August, 2018.
75. In an attempt to scale-up utilization of agricultural land across the country, Government has proposed that arable fields within ISPAAD clusters be merged and realigned for ease of infrastructural development. Four crop clusters have been identified in Masunga, Mookane, Leshibitse and Malwele to pilot this programme.
76. From September, 2010 to June, 2018, Thirty Thousand One Hundred and Forty (30, 140) Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development Programme (LIMID) projects have been implemented. A total of Three Thousand, Two

Hundred and Fifteen (3,215) projects were implemented in the 2017/18 financial year at a cost of Eighty Two Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Nine Thousand, Three Hundred and Seventy Four Pula, Forty Two Thebe (P82, 259, 374.42) . A total of One Thousand, Five Hundred and Eighty Seven (1, 587) projects have been implemented from April to June 2018. Five Hundred and Sixty-One (561) of these projects are youth-owned, indicating that youth accounts for 35.5 percent of all the projects.

77. The implementation of the Dairy Development Strategy led to a steady improvement in the dairy sub-sector. In 2017/18, Eight Million, Six Hundred and Fifty Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifteen (8, 657, 715) litres of milk were produced compared to Six Million, Two Hundred and Sixteen Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirteen (6, 216, 813) litres in the previous year, representing an increase of 39.3 percent. Milk imports for 2017/18 financial year are estimated to be Forty Five Million, Five Hundred Thousand (45.5 million) litres at a value of Two Hundred and Fifty Million, Six Hundred Thousand Pula (P250.6 million). The high proportion of imported milk presents an investment opportunity in the area of dairy production.
78. Government is undertaking initiatives to address the challenges facing the beef sub-sector in a holistic manner. In collaboration with stakeholders, Government is working on a project to reinforce the competitiveness of the beef industry through cluster development. The cluster development initiative aims to transform the domestic beef and cattle industry into a viable, competitive and profitable undertaking that will benefit all value chain players and in turn improve the livelihoods of Batswana.

79. As part of the efforts to transform the beef and cattle industry, Government has undertaken to restructure and ultimately privatize the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC). Furthermore, Government is implementing the Beef Productivity Training Programme through development cooperation with the Government of New Zealand, to improve productivity of the beef sub-sector through training of farmers, herdsman and extension staff.
80. Similarly, Government has taken a deliberate decision to resuscitate the Lobu smallstock farm in the Kgalagadi District to enhance the supply of improved genetic material to farmers across the country. Government has also decided to develop Setata Farm No. 65 in the Boteti Sub-District as a smallstock production and training farm.
81. One of the major challenges in livestock production over the years has been the outbreaks of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), especially in Ngamiland. The last two years have seen two outbreaks in Ngamiland with the most recent one occurring on 12th June, 2018. Government continues to prioritize the control of FMD through vaccinations and active surveillance programmes.
82. It is, however, worth noting that Government in partnership with international technical partners has undertaken numerous workshops to capacitate both farmers and extension staff on the concept of Commodity Based Trade (CBT), which provides an avenue for the exportation of meat from FMD endemic areas such as Ngamiland. CBT as adopted by the Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a new opportunity for safe trade in beef and beef products for Ngamiland farmers.

83. It is also encouraging to know that Government continues its efforts to expand the green zones to include zone seven in Bobirwa where vaccinations have been stopped and there has not been any FMD outbreak in five years. Government will soon submit an application to the OIE for FMD freedom status. Our collaborative vaccination programme with Zimbabwe continues to produce positive results as there has not been any threat of FMD along the border in recent years.
84. The increase in elephant populations and their migratory patterns pose a serious challenge, including a strain on resources, for the effective management of disease control infrastructure. Government continues, in the midst of such challenges, to dedicate a budget for prioritized cordon fence maintenance and quarantine station rehabilitation.
85. In an effort to reduce unemployment particularly among the youth, Government has established Botswana Animal Identification and Traceability System (BAITS) Cafés which are run by the youth. Sixty (60) cafés are earmarked for the current financial year and these are anticipated to increase in the next financial year.
86. To alleviate the shortage of livestock feed, Government continues to promote Napier grass production. A pilot project has been established in Molepolole on a private farm and this project is done in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). The project is a demonstration for conservation agriculture technology. Napier grass is also being multiplied at Sebele, Mahalapye, Impala and Kang.
87. The local supply of maize continues to be a challenge, and as the new harvest season has begun, the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board (BAMB) has been receiving

very low quantities of maize. Neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Zambia have reported excess supply of maize and Botswana will likely import from these countries.

Tourism

88. Mister Speaker, Government continues to encourage citizens to participate in the tourism sector by introducing tourism products that they can easily partake in such as agro tourism. Positive results are being realised and currently out of a total of One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty-Six (1, 766) licensed tourism enterprises, One Thousand, Two Hundred and Fifty-Five (1, 255) are wholly citizen owned, Two Hundred and Fifty-Seven (257) are joint ventures while Two Hundred and Fifty-Four (254) are non-citizen owned.
89. To further facilitate an increase in citizen participation in the tourism industry, several categories of tourism enterprise licenses have been wholly reserved for citizens namely, guest houses, bed and breakfast, mobile safaris, motorboats, tourist transfers, camp and caravan sites, and mekoro. Government remains committed to sustainable tourism that places its citizens at the centre. To this end, citizens will be facilitated to enjoy a greater share of the Tourism Industry, and will have their access to the best opportunities and the best sites improved, through allocation of such sites.
90. Government is developing a Tourism Policy which will facilitate the participation of Botswana in the Tourism Sector particularly in the Okavango Delta and the Chobe District. Tourism continues to grow as an important industry in the national economy, with its percentage share on the increase. The key findings of the Tourism Satellite Account 2016 have shown that the contribution of tourism to GDP rose by 3.4 percent from 2005/6 to 4.9 percent in 2016. These numbers are testimony to the immense growth potential of the sector.

91. As a way of diversifying tourism, two site museums are being developed in Molepolole (Ntsweng) and Old Palapye. The completion of the two facilities will contribute to the development of Heritage tourism. Government also promotes game farming as it has the potential to contribute to economic diversification.

Wildlife Management

92. Mister Speaker, efforts to combat human-wildlife conflict have intensified in response to the continued encroachment of elephants into areas where they have not been observed in recent times. Resources, including helicopters, wildlife capture equipment and specialised vehicles, have been procured to facilitate translocation of problem animals from conflict areas. Sixty Six (66) wildlife rangers have been recruited to augment the Problem Animal Control Unit in the Department and additional resources have also been deployed to conflict hotspots to strengthen response efforts.
93. Government has started consultations with affected communities to develop a National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP). It is anticipated that the NEAP will provide strategies for reducing human-elephant conflict while strengthening our elephant conservation and management efforts. As part of the efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict and reduce the impact of elephants on the environment, eighteen (18) boreholes have been drilled and equipped in the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and the Chobe National Park.
94. Following protracted contractual delays, work is expected to resume on the re-alignment of the Makgadikgadi non-lethal game proof fence during the current financial year. Compensation for those who are affected by the fence re-alignment has commenced and will be completed in due course.

95. Funding amounting to Five Million, Nine Hundred and Ninety-Six Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty Nine United States Dollars (USD 5,996,789.00) has been secured through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for a project entitled "Managing the human-wildlife interface to sustain the flow of agro-ecosystem services and prevent illegal wildlife trafficking in the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands." As one of its key objectives, the project seeks to strengthen coordination in tackling poaching, wildlife poisoning and illegal wildlife trade.

Review of the Fishing Guidelines

96. Government is finalising the Fishing Guidelines following consultations with the affected communities.

Review of the Hunting Ban

97. Consultations will be concluded in due course and Government will act immediately on the review of the hunting ban.

Environmental Protection

98. Mister Speaker, Government continues to provide technical and financial support to stakeholders through the National Environmental Fund (NEF). The NEF provides support to Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, research institutions and registered groups of persons with demonstrable community support. Since its establishment in 2010, the NEF has provided financial support to a total of thirty seven (37) projects with a total of Thirty One Million, Two Hundred and Seventeen Thousand, Three Hundred and Seventeen Pula and Nine Thebe (P31, 217, 317.09). The NEF will continue to contribute positively to Government's efforts towards sustainable community livelihoods and conservation.

99. For purposes of improving processes and facilitating development, Government is in the process of amending the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act and its regulations, with a view to reducing the turnaround time of reviewing EIA project documents. This is in line with the Doing Business Initiative of creating an environment that is conducive for investment. Government will continue to strengthen the legislative requirements in the EIA process for purposes of ensuring sustainable environmental management and for the ease of Doing Business in Botswana. The review of the EIA legislative instruments is expected to be complete by the end of the financial year 2018/2019.
100. Botswana has received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for a total of Nineteen Million, Four Hundred and Ten Thousand United States Dollars (USD19, 410, 000) for the fifth and sixth funding cycle which span from 2010 to 2018. Through these funds, the Dry-Land Ecosystem Management project has been initiated for the Ghanzi and Kgalagadi Districts, and Sustainable Land Management projects have been commissioned for Ngamiland and Makgadikgadi.

Clean Environment Initiatives

101. Mister Speaker, in view of the high occurrence of litter in our villages, towns and cities, Government will introduce clean-up campaigns of public spaces through out Botswana coupled with public education on keeping the environment clean.

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation

102. Mister Speaker, veld products or forest and range resources play a critical role in rural livelihoods and poverty reduction. During the 2017/18 financial year, this sector created Ten Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty-Seven (10, 567) jobs.

103. Other poverty eradication packages that can be derived from the sector include, backyard tree nurseries, landscaping, phane harvesting, grass harvesting, and manufacturing of fire beaters, which are implemented by communities in rural areas. Three hundred and eighty (380) beneficiaries were trained on the technical aspects of these five (5) packages, as well as on business management.

Social Upliftment and Protection

Ipelegeng

104. Over the course of the last decade, the Ipelegeng programme has contributed to improved livelihoods and cushioned the negative effects of drought induced economic hardships through the provision of temporary employment to vulnerable rural and urban communities. The programme has provided income earning albeit short-term engagement in the form of labour services. In the process, the programme has enabled the construction and maintenance of various essential public facilities within community areas.

Destitute Housing

105. Mister Speaker, Government has achieved commendable progress in the upliftment of the lives of remote area communities under the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), expedited through the 2014 Affirmative Action Framework for Remote Area Communities. In terms of shelter provision for the disadvantaged members of society, Government aims to provide decent shelter to all deserving beneficiaries by the end of 2019.

Community Development

106. Mister Speaker, Government continues to fund the Constituency Community Development Programme which started in the financial year 2017/2018 with a total budget allocation of Five Hundred and Seventy Million Pula (P570 million), translating to Ten Million Pula (P10 million) per Constituency. This initiative was introduced as a commitment to economically empower communities, create employment and provide services through basic infrastructure and small projects that could not ordinarily be accommodated in the Urban or District Development Plans, and National Development Plans.
107. Projects, which started in the 2017/2018 financial year, include among others tourism ventures, agriculture, fishery, early childhood development, manufacturing, processing, crafts, maintenance and small infrastructure. To this end, most of the maintenance projects are complete while paving and construction projects are still ongoing.

Social Protection

108. Mister Speaker, Government continues to provide comprehensive, holistic and human-centered social protection services in the form of psychosocial support, food security, and decent shelter to vulnerable groups.
109. This includes One Hundred and Nine Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty Four (109, 134) beneficiaries registered under various social protection programmes, namely, Old Age Pensioners, Orphans, Destitute Persons, Community Home Based Care Patients, Vulnerable Children, and People Living with Disability.

110. As a way to support Orphans and Vulnerable Children to successfully graduate from welfare programmes, Government introduced a special dispensation to facilitate access to post-secondary education in 2010. The programme targets Orphans, Vulnerable Children, who are children and dependants of destitute persons otherwise known as needy students, Children with Disabilities, and those from Remote Area Dwellers Programme (RADP) areas. Since 2010, Eight Thousand, One Hundred and Eighty Nine (8,189) orphans and vulnerable children have accessed tertiary education through this programme.

Primary Schools Backlog Eradication Programme

111. Mister Speaker, the Primary Schools Facilities Backlog Eradication Project aims to improve the educational standards according to the Revised National Policy on Education of 1994. Government planned to construct Four Hundred and One (401) classrooms, One Thousand, Two Hundred and Eighty (1,280) cubical toilets and Four Hundred and Eighty-Six (486) teachers' quarters spread across One Hundred and Twenty-Three (123) Primary Schools countrywide for the entire three year period of Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP), which began in 2016/2017 financial year.

112. As at June, 2018, a total of One Hundred and Forty-Two (142) classroom blocks had been constructed, whilst Two Hundred and Sixty-Nine (269) classroom blocks are under construction and due for completion during the 2019/2020 financial year. A total of Six Hundred and Twenty (620) toilet blocks have been completed whilst Six Hundred and Ninety-Six (696) toilet blocks are still to be completed. Furthermore, a total of One Hundred and Thirty-Seven (137) teacher's houses have been completed whilst Two Hundred and Ninety-One (291) houses are still to be completed in the 2019/2020 financial year. The completion

of these facilities will not eradicate backlog and therefore additional facilities would be constructed, funds permitting.

Rural Development

113. Mister Speaker, to realise the Vision 2036 Pillars, Government aims to transform rural economies to become vibrant, productive and competitive.
114. You will also be aware, Mister Speaker, that rural economies are largely dependent on the agricultural sector and drought is a major challenge in the rural areas. Drought is a natural part of the country's climate system and climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of drought in Botswana. It is on this basis that Government has resolved that a drought strategy be developed to classify drought as a permanent feature to be integrated in the normal planning and budgetary process, rather than as an emergency.
115. Furthermore, livestock feed production amongst others, will be integrated into the value chain of the domestic agricultural produce such that Government is able to build feed stock reserves. This will enable farmers to easily access cheaper livestock feed during drought periods as well as help Government catalyse domestic feed production to achieve long term resilience to droughts and help reduce imports.

Bogosi and Nation Building

116. Mister Speaker, the institution of Bogosi is still relevant in the modern democracy and development processes of Botswana. It continues to promote nation building, preservation of culture and delivery of justice within communities through the customary courts system.

117. To this end, a five year Strategic Plan 2018-2023 has been prepared for the Department of Tribal Administration with a view to heighten its value proposition and elevate the powers of Dikgosi to be commensurate with their responsibilities and relevance in the governance structures of the country. In 2017/18, Government took the decision to review the Bogosi Act, and progress has been satisfactory as the Draft Bill is under discussion by key stakeholders.

Village Infrastructure

118. Mister Speaker, I am pleased to report that the construction of Village Infrastructure projects for Tutume, Gabane and Kang Internal Roads have commenced in the 2017/2018 financial year and are currently ongoing. All these projects are scheduled for completion in the next financial year. The completion of these infrastructure projects will facilitate economic growth; create employment opportunities, leading to improved community livelihoods. In addition, alternative investment locations and improved local economies will be realised.

Development of Property Valuation and Rating Regulations

119. Mister Speaker, in implementing the Local Government Act, in 2012 Government initiated the development of the Property Valuation and Rating Regulations to address among other things, the application of property valuation and rates in the rural areas to maximise local economic growth. Drafting of the regulations is ongoing and consultations with Councils are expected to commence during the 2018/2019 financial year, and finalised in the same year.

Waste Management

120. Mister Speaker, Government continues to promote waste management initiatives geared towards improving the livelihoods of Batswana. These initiatives include outsourcing of waste management services to companies owned by locals.

Civil and National Registration

121. Mister Speaker, the year 2018 coincides with the periodic ten (10) year cycle since the inception of Omang in 1988, hence, a significant number of National Identity Cards are expected to expire. Government has therefore intensified the outreach programme to encourage more people to register and renew their cards.
122. Government continues to review legislation governing civil registration to improve efficiency in the delivery of registration services and addressing emerging challenges. The following Acts are currently undergoing review:

- **Marriage Act, 2001**

It has been noted that the Marriage Act among others, does not provide for the registration of religious and traditional marriages. The review of the Act will therefore provide for registration of religious and traditional marriages in the National Register. Following the request to the Attorney General's Chambers for the amendments, the Bill is at the second level drafting stage.

- **Change of Name Act, 1968**

Mister Speaker, the Act will provide for among others; regulation of the number of changes of names, and will give the Registrar of Births and Deaths the powers to assess and effect a change of name; whereby the name of an individual is deemed to be derogatory or demeaning, and give every child the right to a name and that is directly linked to the biological parents in line with the Children's Act.

- **Married Person's Property Act, 2014**

Mister Speaker, during the review of the Act in 2014, a moratorium of eighteen (18) months was given for registration. However, it has emerged that about two thousand (2 000) marriage instruments were not registered during that time, hence, the need to facilitate their registration. The review will, among others, provide for a moratorium for registration of instruments that were not registered during the 2014 amendment of the Act.

Immigration and Citizenship

123. Mister Speaker, as a country, we need to ensure that our systems and processes at entry/exit points are effectively facilitating trade and movement of people, but closed to illegal activities. Movement of people across our borders is increasingly becoming a challenge largely due to advancement in transnational crime, such as human trafficking.
124. To improve on the turn-around time, the Visa and Residence Permits process is continuously being re-engineered. We have reviewed our processes for issuance of permits. In

addition, visa applicants can now apply at our Embassies in their countries, where their applications will be processed without involving Headquarters. This will drastically reduce the turn-around time for such applications.

Botswana One-Stop Service Centre

125. Mister Speaker, Government has introduced the Botswana One-Stop Service Centre (BOSSC) whose role is to expedite issuance of permits, as well as providing information speedily to potential investors. This concept has been particularly introduced to facilitate investors of value who will bring into the country capital investment, as well as, skills and employment opportunities for Botswana. Furthermore, the Minister has the power to grant permanent residence status to investors who will add value to the economy of this country, even before they have reached the minimum five (5) years of residence required to qualify.

Gender Affairs

126. Mister Speaker, Government continues to make efforts to eliminate gender barriers, and remains committed to the continuous interrogation of governance structures and processes to promote gender equity. The country has made progress in that regard, as affirmed by the 2017 SADC gender protocol barometer which notes that Botswana has the lowest pay differential between women and men.
127. Government also continues to commit resources to the National Gender Machinery which has an increased annual budget from Forty Eight Million Pula (P48 million) to Fifty-Four Million Pula (P54 million), with the bulk of the budget Thirty Million Pula (P30 million), going to the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme. Following the review of the Programme in 2015, One Thousand, One Hundred

and Sixteen (1, 416) individuals have benefited from the Programme. Government is currently reviewing the Programme to maximise its benefits.

Education

128. Mister Speaker, our education system has grown from humble beginnings at Independence with just nine (9) Secondary schools in 1966 but today there are Two Hundred and Ninety-One (291) including private schools. This growth reflects an increase in accessibility of education in Botswana. Today we can rejoice in the knowledge that 95 percent of our children aged from six to twelve years (6 to 12 years) access Primary Education.
129. However, the education sector continues to face a myriad of challenges, including the inadequate maintenance of schools, performance of students, as well as conditions of service for teachers.
130. The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP), 2015-2020, is being implemented with a view to identify the unique capabilities of learners and channel them into areas where they can perform and reach their full potential. This entails the adoption of an Outcome Based Education System with the introduction of the Education Pathway Model, offering different pathways to learners at senior secondary education level. As we implement this strategy we are intensifying an upscaling of school leadership, in-service teacher training and monitoring and evaluation, as major focuses of the strategy, along with training and mentoring of school heads across the country.
131. Furthermore, Government continues to partner with the private sector in the provision of pre-primary schooling. The overall objective of this programme is to ensure learner

readiness at Standard One. Government's efforts have seen an increase in public primary schools offering Reception classes from Three Hundred and Eighty-Two (382) in 2016 to Five Hundred and Forty-Two (542) in 2018. There has also been an increase in enrolments from Sixteen Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty-Six (16, 536) to Twenty Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty-One (20, 361).

132. The learning environment and the teacher remain critical to the delivery of quality education and so Government continues to address welfare issues surrounding education. One such issue is the provision of housing for staff.
133. To improve curriculum delivery, continuous in-service training is being offered to upgrade the qualifications of teachers. To date only a few primary school teachers are certified as Primary School Teacher Certificate holders, as more than 98 percent of teachers currently hold Diploma as a minimum qualification.
134. The problems in the Education Sector are deep and broad and they require a robust response. My desire is that the life skills capacitation of every child should result in them being competitive with children of comparable age, in the most competitive countries. Following consultations with stakeholders which will begin in January, 2019, all learners will be taken through experiences which will sharpen their life skills. In that regard, Government-wide involvement, as well as community and private sector participation, will be expected, in support of the Education Sector in moulding, guiding and mentoring learners.

Scaling Up Access to Vocational Education and Training

135. Mister Speaker, to overhaul vocational education and training, Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (MTTC), Construction Industry Trust Fund (CITF) and Brigades have been merged. This has resulted in refocusing the skills development function to ensure relevance, quality and credibility. A blue print for transformation of vocational training has been finalised and is being implemented.
136. Government has aligned vocational training to the National Credit Qualification Framework (NCQF), and relevant qualifications framework for new programmes has been developed. Vocational education training institutions admit trainees with certificate equivalent to level 5 of the NCQF.
137. Mister Speaker, to up skill the youth, the 2018 intake in vocational training institutions has increased from Ten Thousand and Ninety (10, 090) to Thirty-Six Thousand (36, 000). Furthermore, to address youth empowerment, Government has retooled Two Hundred and Eighty Four (284) graduates of Brigades with necessary soft skills which included; Occupational Safety, Estimating and Tendering, and Site Management. These graduates have since been engaged to refurbish and maintain facilities of thirty nine (39) Brigades throughout the country.
138. In order to provide wider access to vocational education and training, four (4) satellite rapid skills development centres have been established at Tsau, Chadibe, Moreomaoto, and Thamaga. Three (3) of them except Thamaga have already enrolled trainees in various vocational programmes. Thamaga satellite is nearing completion and is expected to enrol trainees before the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

Youth Empowerment

139. Mister Speaker, one of my top priorities is to address the problem of unemployment especially amongst the young people, who constitute the majority of our population. As you will be aware, Government annually allocates One Hundred and Twenty Million Pula (P120 million) to the Youth Development Fund (YDF) for the youth to set up businesses and create jobs for themselves and other youth. I have initiated a review of the Youth Development Fund to improve the success rate of youth projects and thus optimize job creation through the programme.
140. Among the proposed changes will be a focus on funding of youth cooperatives and consortia in identified sectors with potential for success. Government has also decided to capacitate the YDF beneficiaries through training in first-level project management as a pre-condition for being funded and there will be consideration for exemption in deserving cases. The proposed changes will be pronounced before the beginning of the next financial year.
141. The Youth Television Channel was launched in March, 2018 to provide young people with a platform to showcase their creativity by tapping into the local film and television sector. The Channel, called Now!, broadcasts 24 hours of local content in a deliberate move to empower citizens in the creative sector. A total of Fifty- Eight Million Pula (P58 million) will be spent on the acquisition of local content during the current financial year.

Sport

142. Mister Speaker, Government continues to improve sporting infrastructure as part of the grassroots sport development programme. This financial year we allocated a budget of Fifty Million Pula (P50 million) for constructing ten (10) Community Sport Facilities, or Mini Stadia, around the country. These will be basic sport facilities for youth recreation, and will consist of a boundary wall, an artificial turf soccer pitch and changing rooms with ablution facilities. The facilities are earmarked for Tonota, Mmadinare, Bobonong, Tutume, Kasane, Good Hope, Kanye, Rakops, Tsabong and Moshupa.

Arts and Culture

143. We continue to develop the Arts and Culture sector which we have identified as a key vehicle towards the promotion of sustainable economic development. In that regard, Government will finalize the creative arts sector strategy at the end of December 2018.
144. It is important that Botswana keeps abreast with the world trends in terms of sustainable development using cultural products and services. To this end, Government has intensified participation in international fairs and exhibitions, and performing arts festivals around the world.

Libraries and Archives

145. Mister Speaker, in an effort to promote a knowledgeable society, access to information becomes paramount and a priority to enhance the quality of the lives of our people. Public libraries are available throughout the country precisely to achieve this objective. The participation levels of communities in the library programmes continue to rise and register, on average, Nine Hundred Thousand (900,000) visitors annually.

146. The National Library Service is leveraging on technology to improve access to information in libraries. So far seventy four (74) out of One Hundred and Five (105) public libraries have internet connection, and over Seventy-Three Thousand (73,000) people have been trained on basic ICT skills.
147. Furthermore, the Robert and Sara Rothschild Family Foundation continues to support the construction of targeted twenty new libraries. The Foundation's 15th Library was officially opened in Hukuntsi in March 2018. Archival materials serve as our documentary heritage memory. The Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) repositories currently hold a wide range of accessible collections. Over Three Thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty One (3, 861) researchers accessed the archival collection last year.

Health and Wellness

148. Mister Speaker, as per the Revised National Health Policy of 2011, provision of health infrastructure must be adequate and equitably distributed in order to meet the unique needs of health services. Furthermore, over and above the need to standardize health facility infrastructure by level of care and local need, there is also a need to ensure progressive continuity of care through effective referral systems, therefore providing a conducive environment for the Health Sector.
149. In an endeavour to achieve this goal, Government augmented its normal budgetary process by introducing the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) in the 2015/2016 financial year. In this financial year, projects that are financed through ESP have a budget allocation of Four Hundred and Fifty-Nine Million, Nine Hundred and Forty Eight Thousand and Ninety Pula (P459, 948,090).

150. Infrastructure projects of less or equal to One Hundred Million Pula (P100 million) are being executed within the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) after the establishment of a technical team at the end of the 2016/2017 financial year. In view of the above, during the 2018/2019 financial year, MoHW is implementing eight (8) projects through ESP. These are the construction and upgrading of clinics and staff housing at Makgophana in Mochudi, Sepopa, Ngarange, Toteng, D'kar, Kauxwi, Borotsi and Dibete.
151. As at July, 2018, staff housing projects have been awarded and contractors commissioned at D'kar, Borotsi and Ngarange. In addition, Kauxwi, Toteng and Makgophana staff housing units were awarded in October, 2018. Sepopa and Dibete staff housing units are at evaluation stages and expected to be complete by December, 2018.
152. Over and above these, design and construction work is ongoing at Moshupa and Shakawe, respectively, for seventy (70) bed hospital facilities. Once all ongoing infrastructure projects are completed and operational, they will significantly improve and increase access to basic health services to within a five kilometre radius.
153. In an effort to decentralize some functions of the health services particularly with a view to revitalising of primary health care services, incorporation of Community Health Workers into the holistic health system, eighteen District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) have been established.
154. While the Ministry Headquarters will focus on policy and the strategic agenda, DHMTs will coordinate and facilitate health care services at District level so that the desired quality health care services are not only accessed, but are also sustained in the short, medium and long term.

155. To improve availability of drugs, medicines and medical supplies in health facilities (hospitals, clinics and health posts) across the country, District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) have been granted authority to procure items that are out of stock at the Central Medical Stores (CMS) from the private market through micro procurement. This has been happening over the past three years and will continue until a permanent solution is found. To this end, the average availability of vital drugs at our facilities as at August 2018 was 84.7 percent against a 97 percent target.
156. As part of the restructuring and consolidation of functions, Government has decided to relocate the National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA) from the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) to the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Governance and Public Administration (MoPAGPA) and its mandate has been expanded to include prevention and health promotion aspects of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). This presents an opportunity for NACA to focus on combating multi-sectoral responses including mobilisation of resources and effective mobilisation of civil society, private sector and communities.
157. Furthermore, Institutes of Health Sciences (IHSs) are being relocated to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology in order to optimise available resources and reduce duplication of efforts.

Health Manpower

158. Mister Speaker, the scarcity of specialists in the health sector remains a serious challenge and this has resulted in increased referrals of patients to other countries especially South Africa. In this regard, Government intends to provide high level services in areas such as cardiac surgery, organ transplant, among others within the country. To achieve

this Government has taken a deliberate decision to increase training of medical specialists as well as providing appropriate medical equipment.

Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital

159. Mister Speaker, Government is committed to establishing the Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital at the University of Botswana to be a centre of excellence and medical hub. This approach will consequently lead to more high level health services being provided in the country and therefore reducing the cost of external referrals.
160. While we acknowledge the challenges faced by Government to fully operationalise the Sir Ketumile Teaching Hospital since its completion in 2014, plans are underway to make it functional by providing some services on a phased approach basis. This is meant to ensure that the equipment does not become obsolete, among other things. The official opening of this facility is scheduled for March, 2019.

Communicable and Non Communicable Diseases

161. Mister Speaker, Government spends substantial sums of financial resources as well as human and material resources towards communicable and non-communicable diseases. In the case of communicable diseases, Tuberculosis (TB) still remains a public health challenge in this country. For instance, in 2017, a total of Five Thousand Three Hundred and Eighty-Three (5, 383) people were diagnosed with TB while in 2015 and 2016 they were Six Thousand One Hundred and Nine (6, 109) and Five Thousand Five Hundred and Forty-One (5, 541), respectively.

162. On the other hand, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are also among major challenges which lead to high number of deaths. NCDs include conditions such as hypertension, stroke, cancers, asthma and diabetes. Their major causes are smoking, harmful use of alcohol and drugs, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.
163. The increasing incidence of people who are overweight and obese among the population has had a negative impact on health outcomes such as reduced quality of life and workforce productivity; chronic health problems such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes; and escalating health costs. Among the contributing factors to the high prevalence of overweight and obesity is the increased consumption of sugar sweetened products, especially beverages. Government will be considering options to reduce consumption of these products. In this regard, Government will be undertaking extensive consultations within and outside government regarding this issue.

Child Health

164. Mister Speaker, the 2011 census results revealed a significant reduction in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) from fifty one per one thousand (51 per 1000) live births in 2001 to seventeen per one thousand (17 per 1000) live births. Similarly, the under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR) has reduced from seventy six per one thousand (76 per 1000) live births in 2001 to twenty eight per one thousand (28 per 1000) live births. However, the country has experienced an abnormally high increase of diarrhoea cases beginning September 2018 among the under-five (5) children. This diarrhoea outbreak has affected over Thirty Thousand (30,000) children across the country, resulting in thirty one (31) deaths. Results from our investigations indicate that the cause of this diarrhoea is Rotavirus which is a common

infection among this age group. The numbers of diarrhoea cases have since decreased, indicating that the outbreak is now under control.

Rehabilitation

165. Mister Speaker, in 2017, Government started the development of a National Rehabilitation Policy and a Rehabilitation Strategy to better guide rehabilitation interventions. Rehabilitation is one of the health strategies meant for all populations. To this end, the National Rehabilitation Policy and Strategic Plan are being developed to guide interventions that are geared towards improving and optimising functional levels of individuals with different health conditions. This policy is expected to be completed in eighteen months.

Mental Health

166. Mister Speaker, regarding the issue of mental illness and improved access to mental health services, the 1971 Mental Disorders Act is under review. Successful completion of its review and implementation will put Botswana at par with current international practices and standards as well as advocacy for the rights of the mentally challenged.

Health Financing Strategy

167. Mister Speaker, in order to ensure that health care services are not only affordable but are also of high quality; accessible; and sustainable, Government has finalised the development of a Health Financing Strategy. This will provide guidance on a wide range of financing mechanisms for the health sector. Furthermore, the strategy will strengthen Public Private Partnerships both in financing and in provision of health care services.

HIV/AIDS

168. Mister Speaker, Botswana subscribes to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted by UN Member States in 2015. Out of the seventeen (17) SDGs adopted, the third SDG commits UN member countries to achieving universal access to health services for their populations and embarking on a journey towards ending AIDS by 2030. Botswana's resolve to achieving the UNAIDS 2020 targets of 90-90-90 and the challenge of ending AIDS by 2030 is unwavering.
169. As at December, 2017 Botswana was rated at 86 percent for both the first and second 90, which respectively, represent people living with HIV and who actually know their status, and those HIV positive who are on treatment. With regard to people on treatment who are virally suppressed, Botswana is rated at 94 percent, meaning that the country has surpassed the global target of 90 percent. In an effort to eliminate mother to child transmission of HIV, we have managed to keep this as low as 2 percent since 2016.
170. These achievements have been possible through the implementation of key national programmes such as Treat-All, Option B Plus for the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), HIV Testing Services and community engagement programs such as Communities Acting Together to Control HIV (CATCH).
171. Over the past three decades, Botswana has made substantial achievements in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This was made possible by and through financial and technical assistance from different partners. As a result, Botswana has positively responded to these forms of assistance by building human capital resources, that is; skills, knowledge and expertise in the area of HIV/AIDS during the same period.

Communications

172. Mister Speaker, in advocating for the development of the national high-speed Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure to enable and facilitate provision of online services, applications and content, the National Broadband Strategy recommends that ICT infrastructure must be shared amongst all operators. In particular, the strategy has called for the rationalisation and sharing of all Government owned ICT infrastructure. The identified assets will be rationalised and transferred from their respective organisations to the Botswana Fibre Networks (BOFINET) for easier management and operations.
173. These will provide infrastructure based services, allowing service providers to share them on non-discriminatory terms and conditions, on fair and open principles, thereby facilitating economic diversification and growth through ICT. The affected ICT assets are:
- Department of Broadcasting Services, Radio and Television Transmission Network and sites;
 - Botswana Power Corporation Fibre Networks; and
 - Water Utilities Corporation Fibre Networks.

International Connectivity

174. Mister Speaker, the capacities in the West Africa Cable System (WACS) and East African Submarine System (EASSy) cable systems, which have a lifetime of twenty years, are currently utilized at about 53 percent since the last upgrade in November 2017, and efforts are being made to increase capacities through the Republic of South Africa and Namibia to be able to cost effectively increase the utilization of the two cable systems through partnerships

with other operators. In order to make BOFINET competitive in this space, BOFINET is partnering with other providers in Namibia and South Africa to develop transit backhaul links on long term ownership basis as well as bringing content providers such as Google, Akamai and Facebook to Botswana.

National Backbone Network

175. Mister Speaker, rollout of network providing connectivity between cities, towns and major villages and linking them to the international connectivity is ongoing. The intention is to roll-out national broadband backbone fibre network to Two Hundred and Six (206) identified villages as per the National Broadband Strategy. The roll out of fibre is progressing successfully, extending broadband infrastructure to the Kgalagadi, Okavango and Chobe Districts as well as the Bobirwa Sub-District.
176. Currently, Two Hundred and Three (203) sites are now connected to the national backbone fibre network since 2014/15. The plan for 2018 is to extend the fibre network from Kang to Kgalagadi South covering four additional localities of Hukuntsi, Tshane, Lokgwabe, and Lehututu.
177. In addition to rolling out the fibre backbone infrastructure, nineteen villages have been connected to the broadband fibre network through high capacity microwave radios. For the 2018/19 financial year, this network will be extended to connect fourteen additional villages, four in the Kgalagadi District and ten (10) in the Kweneng District. For the fibre routes that have been completed, the utilization ranges between 4 percent and 100 percent. This is anticipated to increase sharply during the ongoing roll-out of 3G and 4G networks by mobile operators.

Postal Network

178. Mister Speaker, currently there are one hundred and forty (140) branches and eighty five (85) postal agencies across the country. Almost all the post offices are dilapidated. It is for this reason that Government has developed a Postal Infrastructural Development Program to upgrade, refurbish, remodel and develop post offices in all major villages, towns and cities.

Transport Sector

179. Mister Speaker, Government remains committed to ensuring that the country's public highway network is reliable, safe and secure by adequately providing both routine and periodic maintenance; and that these are achieved by the involvement of the private sector, in particular, citizen contractors with emphasis on giving preference to people living with disabilities, women and youth.
180. There are a number of road infrastructure projects which are ongoing namely, Gaborone-Boatle (20 kilometres) whose physical progress on site is 40 percent against the planned 46 percent Dibete-Mookane-Machaneng (132 kilometres) where progress stands at 20 percent against 53 percent planned, Tshesebe-Masunga (51 kilometres) which stands at 17 percent against 82 percent and Charleshill -Ncojane (109 kilometres) is at 55 percent.
181. The construction of Mabeleapudi-Serule road (61.5 kilometres) was awarded in April, while some roads such as Mogoditshane-Mmankgodi Junction (27 kilometres); Mandunyane-Shashe Mooke-Borolong-Chadibe-Mathangwane (81 kilometres) are at tender document preparation stage; and Mosu-Tlhalamabele (28 kilometres) is at tender evaluation stage.

182. Government aims to design and reconstruct the A3 road from Francistown to Maun, Maun-Mohembo; and some sections of the Nata-Kazungula road; and Palapye-Martins Drift road. The A3 road plays an important role in linking Botswana with Central Africa as we anticipate the increase in freight transport once the construction of the Kazungula Bridge is completed. The Kazungula Bridge project's progress stands at 63.4 percent .
183. The Mohembo bridge project, stands at 25 percent completion, against the planned 70 percent which translates to fourteen months delay. However, Government is committed to ensuring that the bridge is completed on time, as planned. Government has re-committed itself to the implementation of the Botswana Integrated Transport Project (BITP) which is co-financed by the World Bank and the OPEC Fund for International Development, by setting up a dedicated project management team. As a result, implementation is beginning to improve.
184. In this regard, the Design, Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of the New Greater Gaborone Traffic Signalling System Modernization and Provision of a Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) commenced on 20th November, 2017. This project will modernise the traffic signals system in Greater Gaborone to be responsive to traffic changes, resulting in overall improvement in the traffic flow. The design of the system commenced in November, 2017 and is expected to be completed in December, 2018. Installation will commence immediately thereafter.
185. Other initiatives related to improvement of traffic flow in Greater Gaborone include:
 - i) The Design, Build and Transfer for Three (3) Interchanges along K T Motsete Drive ("Western Bypass") .

- ii) The Design, Build and Transfer for Layout Improvements of 40 Intersections associated with the new Traffic Signals System.
186. Output and Performance-Based Road Contracts (OPRC) are ongoing along the Mankodi Junction-Jwaneng road together with associated access roads (Package 1) and Pitsane, Phitshane Molopo-Mabule road, with associated access roads (Package 2). These contracts are of a Design, Build, Maintain and Transfer (DBMT) type covering a range of project activities entailing designs, construction (for rehabilitation & upgrading) and maintenance.
187. Government is currently embarking on transformation that will see the establishment of the Roads Authority. The Roads Authority will consider various opportunities for funding and the entity will be run as a business using business principles where sustainability is fundamental.

Aviation (Maun Airport)

188. Mister Speaker, the first phase of the project is to construct new facilities, so as to decongest the existing terminal building during peak hours by November, 2019. The construction works are scheduled to start in November, 2018. Upon completion of phase 1, Government aims to start the process of constructing the main terminal building, which has been shelved due to budgetary constraints.

Land Governance

189. Mister Speaker, as the policy environment on the use and control over land evolves, particularly in relation to the National Land Policy of 2015, these changes have implications on land use related statutes. To this end, both

the Deeds Registry Act and the Tribal Land Act were amended and approved by Parliament in July, 2017, with the view to facilitate seamless implementation of the National Land Policy.

Land Use

190. Mister Speaker, the National Spatial Plan (NSP), which is a framework and a process that provides a spatial vision to future development and investment decisions in the country, was completed in December, 2017. The NSP will, following Cabinet approval, be mainstreamed into other developmental processes to promote multi-sectoral economic development.
191. The automation of land administration processes, with the view to deriving efficiencies by deploying and harnessing ICT infrastructure to significantly reduce land processing turnaround time, is ongoing. The Land Administration Procedures Capacity and Systems (LAPCAS) project, which will ultimately scan and digitize all Land Board records for input into the Land Information System (LIS), is progressing well through its multi-faceted layers of system development, data capturing, data quality assurance, data migration and systems interface and integration.
192. On System Interface and Integration, Land Information System (LIS) and Government Accounting & Budgeting System (GABS) are expected to be fully integrated by the end of this year. The process of digitalizing allocations in arable (masimo) and grazing areas (meraka) for facilitation of other stakeholders such as the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is currently being expedited by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, through the use of aerial photography and satellite imagery, as an interim solution. Government will come up with regulations to fast

track the processing of applications for change of land use in an effort to empower Batswana to use their land for business purposes.

Water

193. Mister Speaker, maintaining international water relations remains an important element in building and strengthening partnerships. To this end, Government continues to engage and dialogue with partners on riparian water rights and usage under the auspices of the Okavango River Basin Commission (OKACOM), Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission (ORASECOM), Zambezi River Basin Commission (ZAMCOM) and Limpopo Watercourse Commission (LIMCOM). Some of the key initiatives under international agreements include the Memorandum of Understanding for the Lesotho-Botswana water transfer project that was signed in November, 2017.
194. This Memorandum of Understanding has facilitated the commencement of pre-feasibility study for pipelines and dam. The no objection to conduct feasibility for the Dam has been granted by the African Development Bank as the financier. The revised ORASECOM Agreement has been finalised and the signing of the ORASECOM agreement is planned for September, 2019.
195. The Water Allocation Strategy report was considered by OKACOM in June, 2018 with recommendations to proceed subject to undertaking assessments related to groundwater, agreeing on types of allocations and refining the concept of acceptable development space for the basin. Upon conclusion of this, the Water Allocation Strategy can then be finalized. OKACOM has secured funds to implement the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) initiatives.

196. An amount of Six Million, One Hundred Thousand United States Dollars (USD 6.1 million) for four years from UNDP-GEF and Six Million United States Dollars (USD 6 million) from the European Union for three years to support data management issues related to Land Management and Water resources management in the Okavango River Basin is available. The two projects commenced in November, 2017.
197. Government continues to maintain and establish bilateral cooperation on water with neighbouring countries. The existing cooperation is the Revised TSWASA agreement of 2008 between Botswana and South Africa on Cross Border Water Supply. Government is in the process of establishing Bilateral Cooperation on Water between Botswana and Namibia; and a Bi-national Cooperation on Water between Botswana and Zimbabwe.
198. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), Government is engaged in numerous initiatives to ensure achievement of the SDG 6 on access to water and sanitation services by 2030. Government is undertaking several water infrastructure projects to avail water to the population of Botswana which is unevenly spread geographically. Government has also secured a loan amounting to One Hundred and Forty Five Million Five Hundred Thousand United States Dollars (US\$ 145.5 Million) from the World Bank, within the framework of the Botswana Emergency Water Security and Efficiency (BEWSE) Project that aims at urgently addressing immediate water challenges of infrastructure development and upgrade, institutional strengthening and sector reforms.
199. The BEWSE project will improve the availability of water supply and quality of sanitation services in 60 selected villages/settlements. It is estimated that about Four Hundred

and Sixty Thousand (460 000) people in the project areas will benefit from augmentation or rehabilitation of existing water supply systems, and about One Hundred and Seventy Seven Thousand (177 000) people will benefit from improved wastewater treatment and sludge management systems.

Water Security Initiatives

200. Mister Speaker, Botswana is persistently experiencing hydrological droughts that lead to low water security. To further augment our water security efforts, we have embarked on identifying additional water resources to meet the present and future demands which are expected to increase to Three Hundred and Forty Million Cubic Metres (340Mm³) by 2035. We are already in consultations with neighbouring sister countries to access our shared-water courses to develop and secure water security for the country. These projects currently include the Chobe-Zambezi Transfer, Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer Project and Sea Water Desalination from Namibia.

201. With regard to the Chobe-Zambezi Transfer, we have been able to secure an allocation of Four Hundred and Ninety Five Million Cubic Metres per year (495Mm³/year), which will be used to supply water to be used for irrigation at Pandamatenga areas and for domestic supply in Southern parts of Botswana. The anticipated completion time for the scheme is 2025. At the moment, a technical team has been assembled to look into the environmental impacts which may arise as a result of the transfer scheme particularly as to how it would affect the Victoria Falls during low flows. The operating rules and Memorandum of Understanding in this regard are currently being drafted.

202. The Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer which is expected to provide Two Hundred Million Cubic Metres per year (200Mm³/year) of water to the South-Eastern parts of Botswana is also ongoing. The project's feasibility study commenced on the 1st August, 2018 and is set for completion in June, 2020. The scheme involves the supply of water to Gaborone from Lesotho via a Six to Seven Hundred kilometre (600 to 700 km) pipeline. The Draft Inception Report for the project was presented and discussed with the Joint Management Study Committee on the 23rd October, 2018.
203. Botswana and Namibia are ready to sign a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Sea Water Desalination Project. The project is at a tendering stage for procurement of services to undertake a feasibility study to determine the scope and direction of the project. The study is expected to be completed by December, 2019.

Energy

204. Mister Speaker, electricity contributes to productivity, employment creation, promotion of the export potential of countries, and reduction of poverty levels, thus leading to improvement in socio-economic development.
205. The country's total installed power generating capacity stands at Eight Hundred and Ninety Two Megawatts (892 MW) against the power requirement at peak demand of Five Hundred and Eighty Seven Megawatts (587 MW). On paper, this suggests that we are self-sufficient in terms of installed capacity but the situation on the ground portrays a different picture as the Morupule B power station's low plant availability remains a concern. Until the on-going refurbishment at Morupule A Power station is completed and becomes fully operational, the country will continue to bridge this demand shortfall through power imports.

206. Good progress is being made in respect of the extension of the power transmission grid, with the objective of providing grid access in the North Western part of the country where mining investments are suppressed due to lack of electricity. In addition, the transmission grid reinforcements in the Southern part of the country will significantly improve security and reliability of power supply when the ongoing projects are completed.
207. Government is developing an energy policy to address issues of availability, accessibility, affordability and use of green technology. The rural village electrification programme is in progress to address the above objectives. So far, four hundred and two (402) villages have been electrified out of a total of four hundred and ninety two (492) gazetted villages since the inception of the programme. During the 2017/2018 financial year, Government embarked on connection of fifteen (15) new villages and network extension for forty-five (45) villages. Starting in 2018/19, forty (40) new villages will be electrified while network extension will be done in seventy-two (72) villages country-wide. Once the forty (40) new villages have been completed, and network extension done in the seventy one (71) villages planned, household connectivity will rise to 65 percent from the current 58 percent access level. Additionally, the National Electrification Standard Cost will be reviewed to further address issues of efficiency, affordability and access.
208. Currently, 80 percent of villages in Botswana have electricity available and this level is expected to rise to 89 percent upon the successful completion of the additional one hundred and eleven (111) villages. The rural electrification initiative provides jobs for citizen owned companies which in turn provide employment to Botswana.

Green Technology

209. Mister Speaker, Green Technology or Clean Technology refers to technology that is considered environmentally friendly based on its production process or supply chain. This is a technology that may be employed through various means including renewable energy technologies for provision of electricity, climate smart agriculture and green financing among others, to enhance sustainable development and eradicate poverty in our country.
210. In recognition of the abundance of the solar energy resource, Government is committed to tapping into this natural resource. Installed capacity for solar energy installations, when compared to the conventional coal plants, still remains low at approximately 2.15 percent against Government's target of 15 percent by 2030.
211. Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) is currently engaged in a procurement process to develop and operate a One Hundred Megawatt (100MW) Solar Power Plant, and tenders for implementation of the project are expected to be awarded by the second quarter of 2019. The project structuring and financial model are currently being undertaken before the close of the financial year.
212. Government is also going to consider other clean energy sources such as methane gas from dung that is used for heating and cooking, targeting households in need. Other solar power initiatives include electrification of Agricultural Production Zones (masimo/meraka) to make them attractive to farmers, particularly the youth whilst also promoting safety. There will also be training of youth who will not only do installation, but also maintenance of solar systems. It is for that reason that we recently sent thirteen (13) youth, all females to the renowned Barefoot College in India where

they are undergoing training in Solar Power Management - Installation and Maintenance. They are scheduled to return home in March, 2019. We have an agreement through the Human Resource Development Council to send more on an annual basis.

Mining and Minerals Sector

213. Mister Speaker, the minerals sector remains a principal source of revenue for the growth of our economy. Government will continue to grow the economy through mineral beneficiation to maximise the value addition from minerals and to promote development of the private sector to drive beneficiation, despite challenges imposed by depressed markets.
214. Botswana's rough diamond exports fell by 13 percent in 2017 to Three Billion, Four Hundred and Eighty Million United States Dollars (USD 3.48 billion) compared to Four Billion and Twenty Million United States Dollars (USD 4.02 billion) in 2016 due to weak prices, and weaker demand particularly in the second half of the year. The global diamond market has continued to show improvement but still remains volatile, with strengthening competition from other luxury goods and laboratory grown diamonds.
215. I am, however, concerned about the limited participation of citizens in the downstream diamond industry, specifically in the cutting and polishing, and jewellery segments. In this regard Government will enhance citizen participation in the diamond industry through skills development and mentoring, improving access to rough diamond supply and funding. This also includes developments of core diamond technical skills through locally established diamond cutting and polishing schools. The core technical skills will be complemented with commercial and business skills. An incubator and mentoring programme will also be developed to facilitate industry exposure and access to high quality business courses.

216. Government is committed to take beneficiation to the highest level and I therefore appeal to all our partners to support our cause to transform Botswana into a vibrant and active diamond centre.

Base Metals

217. Mister Speaker, Copper and Nickel prices have shown improvement during 2017 but continue to show uncertainty during 2018, thus putting potential base metal investors under uncertainty to invest in base metal projects. Currently the price for nickel is at Five United States Dollars and Thirty Two Cents per Pound (USD5.32/lb) whilst that for higher grade copper is as low as Two United States Dollars and Sixty Seven Cents per Pound (USD2.67/lb) . However, I am happy to announce that a mining license has been given to Minergy (Pty) Ltd, to open a mine near Medie in Kweneng, and Khoemacau is starting a new box-cut near the legacy Boseto mine which was under liquidation. Other mines like Mowana have re-started production albeit with the attendant challenges. Tshukudu Metals are continuing with prospecting for copper near Ghanzi with the hope that mining will start next year.

BCL and Tati Nickel Mines

218. Mister Speaker, BCL mine is under final liquidation whilst Tati Nickel Mine is under provisional liquidation. Liquidation is a judicial process which takes time. However, I am happy to indicate that Government has set-up a technical committee to work with the Liquidator to enable it to have technical input especially in mining matters. We believe this will protect the interests of Government whilst improving liaison with the Liquidator.

Energy Minerals

219. Mister Speaker, the energy sector has shown growth which saw the granting of mining licences to several companies. To be recognised as one of the top ten (10) destinations of choice, realised through private sector investment, investor confidence and the re-emergence of Botswana as a preferred mining destination, Government is undertaking the Revision of the National Geological Map to provide up to date geoscience maps for promotion of mineral exploration and diversification of the mineral sector. Such a map will be digitalised to allow investors to access geophysical information about opportunities for mining, without physically having to come to Botswana.

Independent Electoral Commission

220. Mister Speaker, the Commission has set the General Voter Registration period from the 3rd September to 11th November, 2018. The Commission continues to sensitise citizens on voter registration, and the exercise has been extended to key stakeholders. I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to Botswana to register in larger numbers so that they can vote for their political leaders next year.
221. The interface between the Election Management System (EMS) and the Land Information System (LIS) has not materialised due to the delayed completion of the Land Administration Procedures, Capacity and Systems (LAPCAS) project. The interface was aimed at addressing challenges of voter trafficking, cross border registration, use of non-residential or non-existent plots, as well as oversubscribed plots as experienced in the past during voter registration. The country will benefit from the interface of the two systems in preparation for the 2024 General Elections.

222. The procurement of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was stalled due to the fact that the Electoral (Amendment) Act, 2016, has not been given a commencement date. Furthermore, the Electoral (Amendment) Bill of 2017, which sought to include the use of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) has not been tabled before Parliament. Additionally the serious threats expressed to our peace, stability, and security were taken into account. Therefore, Government took the responsible decision to suspend the use of EVMs for the 2019 General Elections. This decision was arrived at out of the knowledge that it is much easier to destroy than to rebuild.

Ombudsman

223. Mister Speaker, being a democratic state, Botswana has constantly committed herself to the maintenance of high standards of governance and the rule of law. The Government of Botswana has undertaken, under the National Development Plan 11, to strengthen institutions of governance, to provide an efficient and effective service, supported by a robust legal framework and decentralised governance. The Ombudsman Act is being reviewed to broaden the Ombudsman's mandate by conferring on it the responsibility to protect and promote human rights.

Enactment of Laws

224. Mister Speaker, during February and July, 2018, Parliament enacted laws and amended others, to ensure that Botswana does not become, nor be perceived, as a safe haven for money laundering or financing of terrorism. Consequently these new laws have occasioned the need to establish new structures such as the Office of the Receiver, a Drug Enforcement Agency and a Weapons of Mass Destruction Agency.

225. These Acts of Parliament include the Proceeds and Instruments of Serious Crime Act, Trust Property Control Act, the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the Penal Code Act, the Criminal Procedure and Evidence (Amendment) Act, the Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act, the Nuclear Weapons (Prohibition) Act, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons (Prohibition) Act.
226. Parliament also passed the amendment of the Arms and Ammunition Act, the Chemical Weapons Act and the enactment of the Biological Weapons Act and Nuclear Weapons. Accordingly to give effect to these new laws Government will put in place structures as espoused in the respective pieces of legislation.
227. In view of the increasing cases of rape, defilement, incest and other sexual offences, especially against children, I have directed that the drafting of the Sexual Offences Bill be given priority. Among its provisions would be stiffer penalties against these crimes and the establishment of a Sex Offenders Register, which will be a record of the names and particulars of all persons convicted of a sexual offence.
228. The offenders will also be prohibited from working or interacting with children, vulnerable persons or in institutions dealing with children or vulnerable persons. It was also in relation to this that I called for the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. The Penal Code was also amended to protect children by increasing the age limit of defilement from 16 years to 18 years; this was also to align the Penal Code with the Children's Act.

Human Trafficking

229. Mister Speaker, human trafficking continues to pose a real threat to human development. It is for this reason that the Anti-Human Trafficking Act was recently amended to increase fines to amounts ranging from Two Hundred Thousand Pula (P200 000) to One Million Pula (P1 000 000) or imprisonment terms ranging from twenty (20) years to life imprisonment.

Anti-Money Laundering

230. Mister Speaker, Botswana is a member of regional and international bodies whose membership obligations require the enactment of legislation. Botswana is a founding member of the Eastern and Southern African Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) a regional body established in 1999. To this end the mutual evaluation of Botswana for compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations necessitated the enactment and amendment of twenty-five (25) pieces of Legislation, eight (8) of which were directly related to anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.

Administration of Justice

231. Mister Speaker, Magistrate Courts were opened in Nata, Shakawe and Kang. The Broadhurst and Kanye Magistrate Courts were refurbished to increase the number of courts, including children's courts in both of them.
232. As a way of speeding up the justice delivery processes, several strategies will be employed such as the ongoing recruitment of four additional judges; the enhancement of the Court Records Management System (CRMS); the roll out of the real time court recording system, following its

pilot phase in Lobatse; reviewing of the efficiency of the special courts such as the small claims courts, stock theft courts, traffic courts and the children's courts.

Refugee Management

233. Mister Speaker, allow me at this juncture to also appreciate the technical and financial support that we have enjoyed over the years from the United Nations family, in particular the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHRC), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and civil society organisations including Skillshare, with respect to the welfare, education, health and skills training for refugees.

Botswana Defence Force

234. Mister Speaker, since its inception in 1977, the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) continues to evolve in a multifaceted manner that includes infrastructure and human development. Some of the new amendments in the new Botswana Defence Force Act include the re-alignment of the functions of the Defence Council, revised retirement ages of members of the Defence Force and the restructuring of the Military Justice System.
235. To address challenges of the natural obsolescence of equipment, the BDF continues to acquire new and used equipment and refurbish where possible in an effort to boost its capability to defend our country's territorial integrity, sovereignty and national interests. We continue to judiciously evaluate the prudence or otherwise of the type of air assets we will procure.
236. Mobile recruitment centres were set up in Kang, Maun, Francistown, Palapye and Gaborone to increase access and turnaround times for processing the recruitment of young

Batswana so that they could have the opportunity and pride of having been chosen to defend their country.

Botswana Police Service

237. Mister Speaker, the Botswana Police Service remains unchallenged in so far as being number one in Africa as rated by the World Internal Security and Police Index (WISPI) in 2017. Their professionalism, commitment to work, and responsiveness to the needs of the people is commendable.
238. In order to ensure that the Police Service remains relevant and effective in the discharge of its duties within a rapidly changing and complex operational environment, Government has been continuously putting in place the deployment of policing methods relevant to emerging crime situations, such as human trafficking, cybercrime, money laundering and drug trafficking.
239. Such methods and strategies entail organisational review, ICT uptake, cyber security, forensic capability, review of the Police Act, and multi-agency collaboration.

Department of Prisons and Rehabilitation

240. Prisoner rehabilitation programmes are geared towards transforming offenders' behaviour to become law abiding and to empower them through education and training to become productive upon their release from prison. As at 25th July, 2018, Two Hundred and Forty- Five (245) convicted inmates were enrolled in Vocational Skills Programmes, Three Hundred and Forty-Eight (348) in Agriculture, Two Hundred and Twenty-One (221) in Education while One Thousand, Six Hundred and Fourteen (1, 614) were engaged in Psycho-social Programmes. Prisoners enrolled in skills

acquisition programmes have been engaged in maintenance and refurbishment of Prison facilities, Parliamentary Grounds and Gaborone City traffic circles.

241. The construction of the high security fence at Mahalapye is nearing completion. It is envisaged that once completed, more medium to high security prisoners will be transferred to this facility thereby easing congestion at other high security prisons which are currently overcrowded.

Democracy and Good Governance

242. Mister Speaker, as I stated during my Inauguration Address as the 5th President of this Republic, on 1st April, 2018, my Government remains committed to advance our long standing democracy which is enshrined in our Constitution. My Government continues to uphold democracy and good governance, which are the cornerstone of our development endeavours. Without adherence to these ideals the attainment of sustainable development may become an illusion.
243. We should as a nation pride ourselves in the fact that we are a mature democracy owing mainly to our steadfast commitment to upholding the fundamental values that have become the hallmark of our democratic dispensation, which include tolerance, consultation, mutual respect and the rule of law. It is also incumbent upon each and every one of us to demonstrate the spirit of unity and patriotism in order to preserve harmony, peace and stability. We should jealously guard against the erosion or diminishing of the international track record that as a nation, we have earned over the past five decades as a beacon of democracy, peace and good governance.

244. I wish to also assure this august House of my Government's commitment to the respect for the principle of the separation of powers among the three branches of Government, namely; the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. As a functional democracy, it is equally crucial that oversight institutions operate freely without interference.
245. In our continued efforts to advance our democratic dispensation and avoid sitting on our laurels, Government hosted a Democracy Symposium in September this year. The symposium, whose participation included local and international experts, politicians, diplomats, civil society organisations, trade unions, media, the academia as well as senior citizens made invaluable recommendations on how we could improve and enrich our democracy. My Government is currently studying the recommendations emanating from the symposium.

Industrial and Employment Relations

246. Mister Speaker, I wish to re-affirm Government's commitment to the resuscitation of the Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC) to advance the interests of the public sector employees in a fair and transparent manner. The PSBC is the most critical element in fostering good employee relations in the Public Service. It is therefore, imperative that Government and Unions as partners should ensure a resuscitation of this important platform if we are to have a more effective and constructive engagement.
247. Government, started the process of engaging all Public Service Unions in August, 2018. Subsequently, a Technical Committee comprising representatives of the Unions and Government was established to operationalize the Council by collectively agreeing on a new Constitution. The Technical Committee has been engaged in the process of crafting

the Constitution until recently when the process stalled as a result of demands by some unions that one union be excluded from the process alleging non-compliance with the requirements of the Public Service Act.

248. Although the matter is now before a Court of Law, Government remains resolute to negotiate with the Public Service Unions, as partners, in order to improve the terms and conditions of service for public employees. I wish to also urge our union partners that in the spirit of give and take, it is desirable as per our tradition that we should strive to amicably resolve whatever differences that may arise during our engagements and only use the Courts of Law as a last resort.
249. On a related matter, Mister Speaker, I wish to inform this august House that Government has appointed a consultant (PEMANDU Associates SDN.BHD of Malaysia) to, among others, review the current Public Service remuneration system in terms of salaries, allowances and benefits. The consultancy work is expected to be concluded before the end of December this year. Once the PEMANDU report has been finalized, Government will engage Public Sector Unions on the recommendations thereto.
250. I also wish to inform this august House that I have appointed a Commission led by Honourable Justice Monametsi Gaongalelwe to review the conditions of service for the Members of Parliament, Councillors, Ntlo Ya Dikgosi and the Judiciary. The Commission is expected to submit its recommendations in December this year. It is the wish of Government for any recommendations agreed upon to be budgeted for and effected on 1st April, 2019.

Poverty Eradication

251. Mister Speaker, poverty eradication remains one of the primary goals of Government. Since the inception of the Poverty Eradication Programme in 2011, a total of Twenty-Nine Thousand, Six Hundred and Ninety-One (29, 691) beneficiaries have been funded, out of which Twenty-Three Thousand , One Hundred and Forty-six (23, 146) projects are operational thus improving the lives of the poor.
252. The 2015/16 Botswana Multi Topic House Hold Survey by Statistics Botswana, released in February, 2018, shows that poverty incidence in the country has decreased from 19.3 percent in 2009/10 to 16.3 percent in 2015/16. Similarly, the percentage of people living under extreme poverty, below One United States Dollar and Ninety Cents (USD 1.90) a day has reduced from 6.4 percent to 5.8 percent over the same period. Rural areas have the highest poverty incidence at 24.2 percent, with urban centres at 13.4 percent and cities/towns at 9.4 percent.
253. To ensure that “No One is Left Behind”, Government will profile all the poor people in the country so that they are all assisted accordingly to improve their livelihood. In addition, Government is in the process of finalising a National Strategy and Policy with the aim of ensuring a coordinated effort for greater impact.

People with Disability

254. Mister Speaker, Botswana is in the process of ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, having satisfied the necessary local requirements. Furthermore, the Revised Policy on Care for People Living with Disabilities has been tabled before Parliament in July this year. Also worth noting is that the United Nations

Development Programme is assisting Government with One Hundred and Five Million Pula (105 million Pula) for the development of a National Disability Strategy and Disability Legislation to be completed by March, 2019.

Disaster Management

255. Mister Speaker, a review of the National Policy on Disaster Management is ongoing and this is being done in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The review seeks to update and align the policy to the Sendai Framework as agreed by the United Nations in 2015. With the development of a Disaster Command Centre, the Government will continue to improve its capacity in order to prepare and respond to disasters. Additionally Risk and Vulnerability assessments continue to be carried out in the country to determine proper mitigation measures, including public awareness and to better respond to disasters in any given area.

Public Sector Reforms

256. Mister Speaker, Cabinet has approved broad areas that are geared towards improving the ease of doing business in Botswana and one such area is the "One Government" Principle; This principle means that state bodies (central as well as local) should not require applicants/clients whether individuals or businesses, to produce documents that are already in the possession of another Government agency; This will be through the amendment of Acts, Regulations and procedures or practices, as well as interfacing of systems to allow for efficient and seamless setting up of businesses. The reforms will require a complete overhaul and transformation of existing structures. Currently Government has put in place robust mechanisms to coordinate and monitor the rollout of the reforms.

257. This includes the formulation of the Public Service Human Resources Framework whose intention is to enable the Botswana Public Service to manage its human resources effectively by providing a linkage between human resource services with strategic objectives across the Public Service. Furthermore capacity and competency building initiatives are on-going at the Botswana Public Service College (BPSC) for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service, in collaboration with strategic local and international partners.

Anti-Corruption

258. Mister Speaker, Oversight institutions continue to enforce the rule of law as well as to promote integrity in different sectors without fear or favour. These include the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC), the Office of the Ombudsman, the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS), the Botswana Police Service, the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB), the Competition Authority and the Directorate on Public Prosecutions (DPP). Efforts from these institutions have gone a long way in ensuring that public resources are managed prudently. Government is committed to introducing a combination of new legislation and ethical codes, including specific legislation on the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities, to further enhance our transparency. The Bill on Declaration of Assets and Liabilities has been drafted and will be readied for presentation to Parliament.

259. Having identified the need for the country to meet its international obligations under the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), regarding the sharing of information between member states, the Corruption and Economic Crime Act (CECA) has new sections 45(a) and 45(b). The Bill was passed into law by

Parliament on 12th July, 2018. The new amendments deal with issues of disclosure of information by the Directorate to a comparable body in a foreign country.

260. Mister Speaker, out of concern for the speed of effectiveness by our institutions, Government is doing all it can to support and enhance their operations.

National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System

261. Mister Speaker, the Government of Botswana is committed to delivering services to the citizens by constantly reflecting on whether the programmes and projects being implemented are reaching the intended beneficiaries as planned.
262. A decision was taken to develop the National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES) to close the monitoring and evaluation gaps experienced during the implementation of NDP 10. The purpose of the NMES is to move away from the traditional output based monitoring to a results-focused or performance based approach. The system will enable the country to measure what matters most at the right time through the use of performance frameworks. Implementation of the different components of this project has started. The project is being implemented in phases starting with the Central Government, which will be followed by a roll-out to Local Authorities and State-Owned Enterprises.

International Relations

263. Mister Speaker, on the international front, Botswana continues to pursue an active and influential role in the advancement of various issues of national interest at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Our foreign policy seeks partnerships and fosters international cooperation to

advance the national development agenda. Equally, in line with my pledge, we endeavour to do our part to contribute to finding solutions to the global challenges that afflict humanity.

264. I must further affirm that in seeking to achieve these goals, Botswana's policy shall remain fully anchored on the ideals and values of peace, democracy, equality, and good governance. I have thus committed Botswana to vigorously engage with the international community by among others, participating at fora that promote those fundamental principles and values, as well as, issues of strategic interest such as trade and investment, environmental issues, wildlife conservation, and trade and investment, among others.
265. Immediately after taking office, I advanced our foreign policy objectives by paying courtesy calls on my counterparts in our regional organization, the Southern African Development Community (SADC). While these were mostly introductory visits, they served to affirm the importance we attach to our relations with our most vital and critical partners, with whom we share borders, deep historical, political, cultural and socio-economic ties.
266. I am pleased to report that we continue to make headway towards making Botswana a business destination. This is demonstrated by among others, the numerous strategic regional and international meetings that Botswana has hosted thus far since April, 2018. I was therefore honoured to host the 6th SACU Summit during the Botswana's chairmanship, in June, 2018. This afforded us an opportunity to provide strategic leadership towards advancing the SACU Work Programme. Regarding SADC, Botswana as both the founding member and the host of the SADC secretariat, attaches great importance to the work of our regional organisation and continues to contribute to the regional integration agenda.

267. On the continental front, Botswana will continue to play an active role in advancing the transformational agenda as envisioned in Agenda 2063, advocating for a transparent and inclusive institutional reform process of the African Union. In that regard, Botswana has initiated the process to join the African Union Peer Review Mechanism.
268. At the global level, we will continue to actively participate in the work of the United Nations in pursuit of sustainable development, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security. The Human Rights Council remains significant in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which we strongly support. With regard to the International Criminal Court (ICC), its work will remain relevant to Botswana, as we believe it has a paramount role as the only international criminal tribunal for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
269. In a nutshell, Botswana's foreign policy will continue to be guided by the principles of: democracy; development; self-reliance; unity; botho (humility); peaceful resolution of conflicts; peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness; territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations; respect for human rights and rule of law; good governance; a rules-based world order, and adherence to principles of international law. Based on these enduring values, Botswana's foreign policy document is being compiled, and will, once completed, serve as an authoritative point of reference.

Conclusion

270. Mister Speaker, Batswana are all aware that the transition from the previous administration has not been as smooth as expected. However, it ought to be noted, I have in my attempt to smoothen the process engaged senior citizens namely; His Excellency Dr. Festus Mogae, His Honour Dr. Ponatshego Kedikilwe, Honourable Ray Molomo, Honourable Patrick Balopi and Honourable David Magang to assist and lead in smoothening the transition. I regret to announce that their efforts have not borne fruit up to this point.
271. In the true tradition of Botswana, such mediation should be managed, for the benefit of everyone. Worth noting, however, is that there is in place legislation that governs the benefits and entitlements of Former Presidents. I have no intention whatsoever of breaking the law. I intend to apply the law to the letter. The search for a lasting settlement shall continue.
272. Mister Speaker, let me conclude by once more reiterating the fact that my Government places its citizens at the centre of its socio economic development agenda. To this end, we have to ensure that citizens continue to enjoy the economic prosperity of this country as well as their individual and collective freedoms and rights, as enshrined in the Constitution.
273. As a nation that is well known for peaceful coexistence and tolerance for diversity of cultures, we have to continue to work together to achieve our common goals. This is the only practical way we can achieve the aspirations of our National Vision 2036 which are aimed at **“Achieving Prosperity for All”**.

274. Finally let us seek guidance from the Lord in our efforts and commitments to contribute to the development of this great country. I urge you, Fellow Citizens, to register for elections honestly to enable us to vote for our sustained peace, tranquillity, and sober prosperity as a nation and a people.

275. Ke kopa Batswana gore ka Sontaga yo o tlang reye dikerekeng gongwe le gongwe fa re tlaabong rele teng go rapelela Pula, ka gore ke yone, e re e solofetseng go lema, go nosa leruo, le diphologolo tsa naga le go tlatsa matamo a rona.

Ke le leboga ka Pula.