



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

REMARKS

BY

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ON THE OCCASSION OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

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- **Ambassador _____ (President),**
- **Distinguished delegates,**
- **ED Fore and colleagues,**

1. Thank you for the kind invitation to join you at this Executive Board session, which considers the new Country Programme Document of Botswana for the period of 2022-2026. This panel's focus – nutrition - is highly relevant to Botswana. To reach our SDG 2 targets, we are cognizant that malnutrition is strongly associated with poverty, unemployment, low education of parents, rural-urban disparities, and inhibitive social norms and practices; and, therefore, requires a multi-sectoral approach, addressing all forms of malnutrition.

2. As we work through the 1996 National Plan of Action for Nutrition, we need to reprioritise the following: (1) Botswana must accelerate progress towards achieving the Global Nutrition targets; yet insufficient, incomplete or out-dated nutrition data continues to hamper our ability to assess progress. (2) We continue to grapple with the effects of climate change, especially cyclical drought, like other countries in Southern Africa. (3) Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed underlying vulnerabilities of children and young people, especially those living with HIV.

3. A particular nutrition challenge associated with Botswana's upper Middle-Income Country status is the double-burden of childhood undernutrition and overweight/obesity. The prevalence of overweight increases with age, more prominently among girls and women. Growing urbanization, increased access to processed high calorie foods and obesogenic environments contribute to this situation. The Government of Botswana is promoting healthy lifestyles and an enabling environment through its policy actions, such as targeted levy on sugar sweetened beverages and greater access to affordable healthy food and increasing budget allocations for nutrition overall. Further, Botswana continues to scale up implementation of double duty actions to combat all forms of malnutrition, such as support and protection for breastfeeding, improving complementary feeding practices and school food and nutrition.

4. The new Country Programme of Cooperation with UNICEF addresses Botswana's nutrition challenges, under the Botswana National Development Plan 11's overall theme of "Inclusive Growth for the Realization of Sustainable Employment Creation and Poverty Eradication", with a focus on human capital and social development. From 2021, the President of Botswana is designated a Champion and Leader on Generation Unlimited in Botswana and SADC region, a reflection of Botswana's commitment to transform the livelihoods of young people. By addressing adolescent and young people's health, nutrition,

skills and employability, while sustaining the gains made in child development and continuing to address protection concerns for girls and women, the Government of Botswana remains committed to work towards achieving the SDGs, "leaving no- one behind".