



BOTSWANA COUNTRY STATEMENT

ON TAKING STOCK AND PLANNING FOR FUTURE – COUNTRY
ACTIONS FOR HIV PREVENTION 2021 - 2025

PRESENTED BY

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18 NOVEMEBR 2020

Executive Directors, Honorable country Ministers and all delegates here, present, allow me to say 'Protocol Observed'.

I am happy, on behalf of Botswana, to form part of the team that is taking stock and planning for the future in HIV Prevention for the period 2021 – 2025.

We note that Botswana will not meet the 2020 target of reducing new infections by 75% from 2010; by the end of 2019, our new infections were estimated to have been reduced by 27% from 2010, among the adult population, 15 years and above.

As has been guided by the facilitators of this meeting, I will highlight **the key Achievements and good practice examples** in HIV prevention my country has realized over this period of HIV Prevention Agenda.

1. Botswana has done well in Condom Programming. You will realize, ladies and gentlemen, that we have been able to meet the condom distribution need target of 100%. This may be associated with the implementation of:
 - Condom Estimation Tool (2018 – 2022) that has calculated the condom needs for the country in order to fast track meeting the 75% reduction in New HIV Infections in the shortest period possible.

- Integrating Condom Programming in the HIV & AIDS Basic Package of Services, Essential Health Services Package and Key Populations HIV prevention minimum package and
- Implementing Standard Operation Procedures for Condom Programming targeting Service providers.

2. Although there still is opportunity to improve, Botswana has made remarkable progress in Antiretroviral Drug Based Prevention, being Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). This achievement may be associated with the following strategic moves that Botswana is implementing, guided by global and regional strategic documents on HIV Prevention, which have been cascaded into Botswana National Strategic Framework III (2019 -2022). These include, among others:

- National HIV Treatment Guidelines (including PrEP)
- PrEP Implementation Guidelines
- Social Contracting of CSOs to improve on population specific programming for Key Populations and Young People

In addition to the above, my country is committed to leveraging on developments in addressing social and structural factors that drive New Infections such as Addressing Gender Based Violence, making developments to Policy deficits and increasing funding on HIV Prevention Interventions at all levels.

Moving on to **key actions that Botswana plans to implement to overcome identified gaps in HIV prevention;** allow me to note that we have prioritized, for presentation today, the following thematic areas for action:

➤ Legal and Policy Barriers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Botswana strives to implement a balanced approach to Bio-Medical, Socio Behavioral and Structural Interventions' HIV response. We currently are working with CSOs and development partners to conclude the development of the Comprehensive Plan to Remove Human Rights and Gender Related Barriers to HIV and TB Services (2019-2024), which will guide the programming for key and vulnerable populations despite the Legal and Policy Barriers; and progress the country to Policy development on deficits identified. Among others, Botswana is conducting the following:

- i. Human Rights trainings and collaborative service delivery with human rights NGOs at various levels
- ii. Sensitization of the law enforcement officers on punitive aspects of the Penal Code (sections 164, 167 which criminalizes aspects of sex and same sex sexual behaviors and how they impede access to services for key and vulnerable populations
- iii. Anti-Gender Based Violence cycling campaigns which are led by the First Lady of the Republic of Botswana, Mrs Neo Jane Masisi.
- iv. Establishment of the GBV section across all police stations to particularly deal with reported cases of GBV.

➤ HIV prevention pillars' Coordination Mechanisms

Botswana has planned to revive the coordination structures of the HIV and AIDS response through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach and leverage on community engagement in the HIV prevention response. A deliberate action to strengthen coordination and monitoring & evaluation around HIV Prevention pillars programming

Chairperson, I conclude by listing, among others, the list of activities/strategies that we deliberately embarked on during the COVID – 19 Response period to mitigate potential setback:

- We have listed Sexual Reproductive Health services and specific HIV services as essential and therefore service provision on this must and has not been interrupted.
- Implemented the Multi drug dispensing (HIV positive people were given 2 months' doses to cater for movement restrictions)
- Mainstreamed COVID-19 to HIV prevention services. CSOs have been engaged to develop and disseminate virtual messages and peer support across all prevention pillars.
- We are Optimising transitioning to 4th Industrial Revolution (Reprogram all applicable interventions)

With this, Chair, I submit Botswana's Statement on **'TAKING STOCK AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE- COUNTRY ACTIONS FOR HIV PREVENTION 2021 – 2025'**.

Thank you.