



Republic of Botswana

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS
HONOURABLE EDWIN JENAMISO BATSHU

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE
SECOND GENERATION REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN
SORILATHOLO, 2ND JUNE 2015

Theme: "Let Me Be Visible; Register My Birth Today"



Director of Ceremony

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Magosi a atlotlegang

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour & Home Affairs

Deputy Permanent Secretaries

The Statistician General

Senior Government Officials

Directors in the NGO Community

Baruti baba leng hano

Members of the press

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Boore le bomme

Kea le dumedisa ka pula bagaetsho!

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you here today at this launch of the Second Generation Universal Registration Campaign. This campaign focuses on those citizens who still remain unregistered and therefore invisible in Government records.

I particularly like the theme, ***"Let Me Be Visible, Register My Birth Today!"*** It is well-chosen and inspiring indeed. This theme represents an appeal from our children to us as parents, to register their births. I therefore encourage all parents to take heed of this appeal and exercise

your responsibility to register the births of your children. Let me share information to the effect that the 2011 Housing and Population Census for Botswana indicates that we are at 75% registration of births. My Ministry is therefore striving to achieve at least 90% registration within the next 5 years, a target set by the United Nations Statistics Division, as the most acceptable registration level internationally. However, our final target as a country is to register every citizen.

I am also pleased with the choice of venue being Sorilatholo, as this demonstrates my Ministry's commitment to Government's effort of taking services to the people.

Director of Ceremony,

The civil registration system has continued to play a critical role in the governance of this nation from its inception. It is therefore in order that Africa positions itself strategically to effectively rise to dealing with the profound concern on the quality of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) data and its availability, to inform the African Development initiatives and to advance good governance in Africa.

Indeed, the CRVS system is a crucial tool for public administration in Botswana. Firstly, civil registration establishes the basic rights of an individual, such as the right to birth registration. It ensures that one has a birth certificate which bears one's name, nationality and parental details. A lot of rights are dependable on birth registration. When one is registered, states are able to ensure protection of the individual. The registration accords the individual access to other rights, such as the right to social services including land, voting, etc. All this is possible when the state has evidence of who the person is, whether the person is

alive or not, and their nationality. It is crucial that every person is registered to avoid our people being subjected to what is known as “*the scandal of invisibility*”.

Secondly, in the context of Botswana, the benefit of a civil registration system to individuals is such that, civil registration is a foundation for National Registration commonly known as *Omang*. Basically, there is an organic link between the Births and Deaths Registration System wherein a unique identity is issued at birth, which identity is used by an individual from cradle to the grave. This has given our identity value chain integrity as we are able to trace the identity of our people from origin. This in itself gives us the strength to attest to the fact that most of our people are who we say they are and whether they are a living identity. This has comparatively brought trust by individuals and third parties such as the financial institutions and other service providers in Botswana’s identity management system. As Government, it is our absolute responsibility to ensure that all is in place to facilitate formal establishment of legal identity of our people and ensure protection of their rights.

Thirdly, CRVS is a source of data that must be utilised by planners and policy makers as well as implementers to adequately inform policy formulation, programme implementation and monitoring. It will also inform socio-economic development in general. At another level, CRVS plays a significant role in improving and monitoring development outcomes. Indeed the importance of CRVS cannot be overemphasised, especially used as indicators to Millennium Development Goal 4 on Reducing Child Mortality, and MDG 6 on Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases.

As the Millennium Development Goals come to an end at the close of 2015, it is crucial that we strategically position this country and prepare a springboard for Botswana's launch in the race to achieving the Post 2015 Development Agenda. The most crucial foundation here is the production of reliable indicators to facilitate the attainment of sustainable development goals. CRVS is a source of some of the key indicators. There is therefore a need to accelerate improvement of Botswana's CRVS as Botswana's critical launching pad hence this campaign.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Pan African institutions have in their Post 2015 Development Agenda and regional consultations, identified good governance and human rights as development enablers. The importance of good governance for economic growth and poverty eradication is not in doubt. Based on this, is the notion of participatory democratic systems and the rule of law being essential to ensure that leaders are held accountable to the people. The basis of all this is a person whose existence Government must acknowledge and design relevant services and programmes, knowing the respective identities of such persons. It must be known how many they are, their age and gender, and so on. On this note, this universal registration campaign is very critical.

Director of Ceremony,

In the global agenda, the United Nations High-Level Panel commissioned by the United Nations Secretary General to recommend a framework for the world's Post 2015 Development Agenda, made a recommendation in March 2013, making CRVS data availability and accountability central to

post 2015 World Agenda. The Panel noted that the world needs data revolution and that too often, development efforts have been hampered by the lack of most basic data about social and economic circumstances in which people live. Therefore, the Panel recommended for substantial improvements in national and sub national statistical systems including local and sub national levels and the availability, quality and timeliness of baseline data disaggregated by sex, age, region and other variables. Botswana is one country in the African region that is making good progress in this area. There is however still room for improvement, which is why we have this campaign.

Bagaetsho,

Today's event, as well as the universal campaign, would not have been possible without the collaboration and cooperation of our key stakeholders who include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Statistics Botswana, as well as the non-state actors being Project Concern International (PCI), and its partners, Masiela Trust Fund and its partners, Marang Children's Trust, as well as the United Nations family being UNICEF, USAID, WHO, UNFPA, who continue to provide financial, technical assistance. I therefore wish to acknowledge PCI's contribution of P150 000.00 as well as Masiela Trust's contribution of P20 000.00 towards this launch, and the campaign. I also thank Marang Children's Trust for mobilisation of the unregistered children. This support and collaboration will certainly facilitate the achievement of harmony of effort in improving Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), and will strategically position Botswana to have accurate data to deliver on the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The roles of the Ministry of Health as well as the Administration of Justice are critical as sources of data, and as beneficiaries of the same data which is the correct, timely and accurate recording of causes of death. This availability of data will assist in health programming and prevention of premature deaths. The non-state actors on the other hand have the capacity for outreach as well as partnering with government in terms of resource pooling. Finally, I wish to reiterate the call for registering our children in order to make them visible. The greatest cruelty that any parent could do to his or her child is not to register them. I therefore call upon each and every one of you here to partner with Government and the non-state actors in our quest to reach universality in registration.

On this note, it is my singular honour and privilege to launch the Second Generation Universal Registration Campaign. This Campaign is officially launched.

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