1. What is the Women’s Affairs Department?

The Women’s Affairs Department is a Government Department within the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

The mandate of the Women’s Affairs Department includes facilitating the process of creating positive change through sensitization of development agents on gender and development issues. In line with this, the Department provides guidance and leadership on gender and development to partners including Government Ministries and Departments, Parastatal Organizations, the Private Sector and Non-governmental Organizations by:

- Formulating and interpreting gender and development policies, or components thereof, and establishing performance standards
- Promoting the development of gender-sensitive sectoral policies and procedures
- Monitoring and evaluating all projects undertaken by partners and providing technical as well as professional advice on gender planning and budgeting
- Promoting effective publishing/packaging/dissemination of information on gender and development
- Coordinating and facilitating capacity building in various aspects of gender and development

Vision

The Women's Affairs Department, will be a model organization in promoting gender equality in Botswana

Mission

The Women's Affairs Department, exist to create a gender sensitive environment, conducive for the promotion of equality between women and men in Botswana. We commit ourselves to mainstream gender in all policies and programmers, train and build capacity, advocate, research and manage information in a cost effective, customer friendly, efficient, transparent and timely manner.
Where is the Women’s Affairs Department located?

Head Office

Postal Address: The Director

Women’s Affairs Department

Private Bag 00107

Gaborone

Botswana       Tel: +267 - 3912290       Fax: +267 - 3911944

Physical address: Thusanyo House

Lithuli Road, along Old Lobatse Road

Old Industrial Site, Gaborone

District offices

a) Francistown
b) Gantsi
c) Kanye
d) Kasane
e) Maun
f) Selibe-Phikwe
g) Serowe
h) Tsabong

What is the structure of the Department?

The Women's Affairs Department is made up of the following Divisions:

3.1  The Management Division

3.2  The Administration Division

3.3  The Policy Development and Coordination Division

3.4  The Research Division

3.5  The Projects, Monitoring, Evaluation, Networking and Coordination Division
3.6 The Training and Information Management Division

What is gender?

- What is not physical as in sex. Sex is the biological differences.
- The expectations that people have from someone, because of their sex
- Learned behaviors in a given society
- It conditions which activities are considered feminine or masculine

What is the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW)?

The BNCW is the highest advisory body to the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs on women/gender issues. The Women's Affairs Department serves as the Secretariat to the BNCW. It is made up of fifteen members who are appointed by the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs.

What is the NGO/ CBO Forum?

This is a platform for women’s NGO/CBO and women’s groups to meet and share experience and ideas on women’s economic and service provision projects. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis at all the WAD Offices country wide.

What is the Women Sector?

This is a Sub-committee of the National AIDS Council. The Sector is made up of 10 member organizations, namely the Botswana Family Welfare Association, the Society of Women Against AIDS Botswana, the Botswana Network of People living With AIDS, the Young Women’s Christian Association, the Botswana Christian Women Association, Women in Church, Home Based Care and the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

What are the responsibilities?

- Establishing/strengthening Women Sector specific program on HIV and AIDS
- Reviewing existing Women Sector programs and policies with the view to mainstreaming HIV and AIDS (prevention, care and support)
Establishing strengthening appropriate structure(s) for coordinating an effective women sector response to HIV and AIDS

Identifying, mobilizing and sustaining active involvement of all key stakeholders in response to HIV and AIDS epidemic at all levels within the Women Sector

Facilitating, guiding and ensuring development and implementation of policies for prevention and mitigation of the impacts of HIV and AIDS within the Sector (through NAC and other relevant structures)

Determining resources needed for effective planning, implementation, monitoring and coordination of HIV and AIDS programs and policies within the Women Sector

Strengthening networking with other sectional committees on HIV and AIDS

Providing quarterly reports to National AIDS Council on the progress of implementation of Women Sector projects and programs on HIV and AIDS

Addressing any other matters relevant to the effective response to HIV and AIDS within the Sector

Identify research needs to provide necessary information for policy and program development within the Women Sector

What is gender mainstreaming?

The advancement of women and gender equality between women and men is a cornerstone for sustainable human development. The key strategy that has been agreed upon by the United Nation to achieve gender equality is gender mainstreaming. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to ensure the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a strategy and a method for bringing about gender equality and change.

In Botswana the gender mainstreaming process started in 2002/03 as a pilot project in the Ministries of

- Finance and Development Planning,
- Trade and Industry,
- Local Government
- Labour and Home Affairs.

The process was then rolled out to the Ministries of Agriculture and Education. These six Ministries have since developed Gender Guidelines that are to guide gender mainstreaming programs and activities in the Ministries.

What does the Department do?

- The Department commemorates the Sixteen Days of Activision on Violence against Women and Children from 25 November to 10 December every year.
- The Annual National Women’s Exposition. The main objective of the National Women’s Exposition is to offer women’s community-based producer groups and entrepreneurs a forum to exchange experiences, ideas and skills to manage their business.
• The Department commissioned a review of laws affecting the status of women in Botswana. The report was released in 1998 and it came up with recommendations geared towards improving the situation of women and bring along gender equality.

• The International Women’s Day (8 March) is an event celebrated worldwide for the enhancement of the status of women and the promotion of gender equality. The International Women’s Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history: it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

• Funding of women’s empowerment projects. The Department supports women’s groups through the provision of technical and/ or financial support under the six critical areas of concern.

What are the instruments for the promotion of gender equality?

The promotion of gender equality in Botswana is directed as well as guided by the national, regional and international instruments for the promotion of gender equality.

What does the instruments include?

• **The Policy on Women in Development**
• **The National Gender Programme Framework**
• The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
• The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on Violence Against Women
• **The Protocol to the African Charter** on Human and People rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Botswana has not acceded to this Protocol yet).