

 REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**SPEECH**

**BY**

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**ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS, GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**SIXTH GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

**THEME: RESILIENCE DIVIDED: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE**

**AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES**

** MAY: 2019**

 **SWITZERLAND**

**Salutations!**

1. Let me start by graciously acknowledging and thanking the Government of Switzerland for hosting this Sixth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction Conference, and organised by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
2. Botswana like other nations, have affirmed its position to the Sendai Framework of Action (SFA) and as such all disaster risk reduction programs and interventions being implemented are aligned to the SFA. This approach allows Botswana to monitor its progress in the different set of indicators of the SFA therefore ensuring that, there is a consistent progress and where there are challenges such can be identified and addressed accordingly.
3. **Director of Ceremonies,** Some of the major highlights that have been achieved by Botswana include the review of the National Policy on Disaster Management of 1996, which was done in 2018. Your Excellency’s, the revised document, *upon final approval*, will be seen as a milestone in the national DRR platform. As it considered a number of cross cutting issues like community participation, climate variability, SFA as well as SDG’s amongst others.
4. The continued engagement of various stakeholders in DRR in Botswana has also been at the forefront. We have seen this through a Memorandum of Understanding with Mobile Telephone Companies for early warning purposes. Following the partnership through MoU’s with mobile companies, we have improved on our early warning capabilities since now the public is able to receive short messages (sms) sent to their mobile phones across the whole country. Additionally such messages can be segregated and sent to the public in Cities, Town and Districts likely to be affected.
5. **Distinguished delegates,** to enhance response to disasters thereby minimizing disaster mortality and number of people affected, Botswana in partnership with other partners (Rescue Africa), conducted a capacity building program and trained selected participants in Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) techniques. Following nine months of grueling practical and theoretical training the team was able to fully get accredited as US&R technicians, and these will complement other assets often engaged during disaster response in the Country.
6. Another notable achievements are the approval in our current National Development Plan Framework (NDP11), the construction of the National Emergency Operation Center, which is targeted to be completed in the next two years. This investment for Botswana, will provide all the different mechanisms of DRR in the country with a hub for coordination especially during a disaster.
7. **Director of Ceremonies**, the challenges that we have had to face as a country in recent times include the Tropical Cyclone Dineo which affected Southern Africa in 2017 and did not spare us. We incurred infrastructure damages, loss of livestock and some of our communities were displaced. The losses and costs associated with disasters are considerable and a succession of these disasters have the capacity to make Batswana more vulnerable, and eventually culminate in major disasters. Furthermore, we are starting to experience other hazards which have the potential to cause extreme harm amongst people, infrastructure and the environment. Extreme weather events have been on a sharp increase particularly heatwaves, and earth tremors have also been felt around certain areas of the country. These pose challenges since we have to face up to the new threats by coming up with relevant contingency plans, resources and capacities to deal with the shocks posed by these hazards.
8. **Your Excellency’s,** I wish to highlight the significant strides that have been made by Botswana in achieving Target E, of the Sendai Framework. At the National platform level, a National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy in use to deal with disasters in Botswana.
9. On an annual basis the National coordinating agency for disasters undertakes capacity building for its District level structures, the District Disaster Management Committees. The training is aimed at giving the District level structures the skills and knowledge on developing contingency plans and strategies to timely prepare, and eventually respond to disasters when they do occur.
10. This ensures that appropriate actions during the full disaster continuum are followed in efforts to plan and respond to disasters in the various districts. Off course there is still more that needs to be enhanced by continuing to support the District levels on their plans and strategies as this will ultimately mean people, property and infrastructure are less affected.
11. Even at the national level, different sectors including essential services have crafted their own different strategies and plans on how to deal with their industry specific hazards.
12. Distinguished Guests, Botswana is committed to the implementation of risk–informed sustainable development as it will create resilience amongst the nation. This also would be done with the inclusion of all especially with the community, as this will entail the sustainability of any interventions being implemented.
13. In conclusion, on behalf of the Botswana Government, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for extending generous hospitality to the Botswana delegation.
14. I thank you for your kind attention.