



STATEMENT
BY THE
ASSISTANT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

HONOURABLE OREEDITSE SOLA MOLEBATSI

AT THE

38TH SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE

15 – 22 JUNE 2013

***“Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and
Nutrition”***



Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

1. Allow me to start by joining my other colleagues in congratulating you for your election as chair of this important Conference. I also wish to commend you for the excellent manner in which you are directing our deliberation.

Mr. Chairperson,

2. This Conference comes at a time when the global food insecurity continues to worsen. This, no doubt threatens security of all humanity. By security here, I also refer to the stability of our nation States, as the expression goes, *“a hungry man is an angry man”*. Therefore, by addressing food insecurity we are also addressing issues of peace and security. In this context, the theme, **“Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition”** could not have come at a more appropriate time.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. As you may be aware, Botswana has not been spared by this growing scourge of food insecurity. As a country, Botswana is not endowed with favourable climatic condition for arable agriculture or surface water for pastoral farming. It therefore remains a challenge to get water for increasing human population in both urban and rural areas, and water for irrigation and livestock. This scenario is exacerbated by climate change, which has negatively affected even the basic traditional methods used for food production due to erratic rainfall patterns. Botswana have always depended on rainfed agriculture for subsistence food production. This poses a serious threat to national food security and nutrition, as well as our national strategies to eradicate poverty and hunger in the country.

4. Notwithstanding the aforementioned difficulties, the Government of Botswana has introduced a number of mitigating strategies to promote agricultural production and productivity in line with Millenium Development Goal 1 (MDG 1), *"To Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger"*. Under the arable agriculture subsector, the Government has introduced an Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agricultural Development (ISPAAD) to boost production and productivity. This programme targets farmers and assists them with free inputs (seeds, fertilizers, fence materials, weed management, etc.) and free ploughing/planting up to 5 hectares. Under the livestock subsector, the Government has introduced the Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) Programme, where farmers are assisted with various packages such as borehole drilling and livestock infrastructure development and livestock for poor households. There is also the overall strategy under the National Master Plan for Arable Agriculture and Dairy Development (NAMPAADD) to promote commercialisation of agricultural production to increase its productivity.
5. These Government initiatives come at a cost to the national budget to the extent that some projects in our current National Development Plan have been suspended due to budgetary constraints. It is therefore, critical for FAO and other development partners to note that despite the global economic downturn, one of Botswana's national priorities remain human development including rural development, health, education, water, food security and nutrition, among others. It is against this background that we urge our international development partners including this Body, to consider Botswana for financial and technical assistance. In this context, it is important to consider Botswana not just as a middle-income country, but as a country emerging from economic hardship.

6. I wish to point-out that our agricultural activities are well-aligned with the MDGs, with a view to, among others: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; combat HIV & AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis; and ensure environmental sustainability. In this way, we are of the view that our programmes are more sustainable and to a larger extent provide the much needed food security and nutrition, within our limited technical expertises and financial resources.

Mr. Chairperson

7. Botswana, like most developing countries, values international development assistance towards improving our economic growth and advancement. I therefore, wish to reiterate our firm commitment towards cooperation with all our development partners.
8. Finally, **Mr. Chairperson**, let me take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government and people of Italy for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

I thank you for your attention