



BOTSWANA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000

TOWARDS AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION

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All of Us

*All of us
All of us are human beings,
All of us can become HIV positive,
All of us have rights,
All of us have responsibilities.*

*Let the world fight HIV,
Let the world conquer AIDS,
Let it not conquer us.
Do not fight us,
People with HIV,
People with AIDS.*

*Let the world fear HIV,
Let the world fear AIDS,
Let it not fear us,
People with HIV,
People with AIDS.*

*Let the world reject HIV,
Let the world reject AIDS,
Do not reject us,
People with HIV,
People with AIDS.*

*We need love
We need care,
We need support,
Above all we need acceptance.*

BILLY MOSEDAME



FOREWORD

It is most fitting that Botswana's Year 2000 Human Development Report (BHDR 2000) should be on the theme "Towards an AIDS-Free Generation". This report comes three years after BHDR 1997, which addressed the theme "Challenges for Sustainable Human Development" and flagged HIV and AIDS as one of Botswana's major development challenges.

As a nation, we have never underestimated the challenge of human development. We nevertheless are proud of our human development record; one of success in rapidly building basic human capabilities - good health, literacy and decent incomes - and meeting basic human wants. It took us three decades to build this record. Yet, the HIV and AIDS epidemic threatens to wipe it out in less than a decade.

Whilst experts engage in debates about how many years of life expectancy we have lost on account of HIV and AIDS, we continue to live the reality of the epidemic. Too many of our people are visibly sick and we bury our young and able-bodied, educated and uneducated, in unprecedented numbers. We have never had a situation in which the adult death rate was highest amongst 24-29 year olds! Nothing we have experienced since independence causes as much human suffering and death as HIV and AIDS.

Our social safety nets have proved equal to the worst droughts Botswana has experienced as a sovereign state. We have, to a large measure, overcome illiteracy, malnutrition, and children's diseases and accorded our people accessible quality health services. We have reduced both the magnitude and prevalence of poverty. We have had tremendous success against livestock diseases. Compared to HIV and AIDS, these challenges were minor.

We may as a nation, be traumatised by HIV and AIDS. But we remain hopeful that this epidemic will be overcome. Approximately 80% of the Botswana population are HIV

negative. About half of them are young people aged below 15 years. Until a cure for AIDS is found, these are our hope for an AIDS-Free generation.

"Towards an AIDS-Free Generation" expresses the same optimism that Botswana express in Vision 2016, wherein we envisage no new HIV infections amongst us by 2016. BHDR 2000 is therefore a vote of confidence in this ideal.

We have had ten years of information, communication and education on HIV and AIDS, emphasising change in sexual behaviour. Progress has been slow in the face of formidable barriers in the form of ignorance, denial and stigmatisation. Even so, there are indications that we may finally have made a breakthrough. Knowledge about HIV and AIDS is very high. People are beginning to talk more openly about the epidemic. Pregnancy amongst teenagers in school is reported to be on decline, even if only marginally.

We are now going through a phase in our national response in which a truly multisectoral response, including the private sector, organs of civil society and bilateral and multilateral development partners, can truly be mounted. The Government of Botswana has made resources available and development partners, including the private sector, have been generous in providing support.

But we dare not place all our confidence in the amount of financial resources mobilised against HIV and AIDS for they can only facilitate positive action on our part. BHDR 2000 calls for a "social revolution". We concur. This has always been the aim of our information, communication and education campaigns on HIV and AIDS. We need to refrain from behaviour that aids the spread of HIV. This includes intergenerational sex between adults and minors, unprotected sex, maintaining multiple sexual partners and failure to get timely treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. All sexually active people need to go for confidential voluntary HIV testing and counselling. There is also, an urgent need to address the structural

determinants of the epidemic - poverty, gender inequality and socio-cultural beliefs - with greater resolution. In this regard, I urge Botswana not to allow culture and religion to be encumbrances.

The ideal of an AIDS-Free Generation also requires upholding our values. We are not a promiscuous society. We do not condone the sexual abuse of children. Neither do we permit wife battering. We have a tradition of respect for marriage and good family life. We must therefore unite in maintaining these values and imposing tough sanctions on those who persist with anti-social behaviour.

We must also revive our culture of humanness, "Botho". Those who are living with HIV and AIDS require compassion and care from the rest of society and not

rejection. Our response to the epidemic must be anchored firmly on respect for human rights and the dignity of the human person. Otherwise, stigma and denial will continue to frustrate our efforts. I am pleased to report that our current efforts at revitalising the national response address these issues and many others raised in this report.

On a more general note, I welcome BHDR 2000 as a positive contribution to the debate on national development in Botswana. I urge Botswana to read it and engage in discussions of the issues raised therein in an equally robust manner. More significantly, I share the optimism expressed in the report. We will achieve an AIDS-Free Generation in our time.



FESTUS MOGAE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

PREFACE

A great many suggestions were put forward for a subject for Botswana's Human Development Report (BHDR) 2000, including some taken from the BHDR 1997. We chose to take up the challenge of producing a report which captures the impact of HIV and AIDS on Botswana's human development, analyses it and proposes practical solutions to the problem. The prevailing human development situation in the country made it almost impossible to select any subject other than HIV and AIDS.

While the Botswana UNDP office has undertaken many studies and reports, this particular report has proven to be a formidable task indeed. The reality of the situation is that the HIV and AIDS crisis is a rapidly unfolding drama whose study and analysis remains a fluid, complex and thus difficult undertaking even at the best of times.

Interestingly enough picking a title theme for the report proved, like most things to do with HIV and AIDS, also contentious. We wanted the theme "Towards an AIDS-Free Generation" because we believed that to make the whole enterprise of combating the epidemic worthwhile, perseverance and hope has to be re-enforced by the prospects of real success.

Having said that, it is our view that an AIDS-Free generation is not only desirable but possible in the Vision 2016 timeframe. The BHDR 2000 however, is not simply about creating an AIDS-Free generation. It strives for much more than that. The report takes a broad sweep at the human development condition in Botswana and comprehensively analyses its interface with HIV and AIDS.


As was highlighted in the BHDR 1997, Botswana has made tremendous gains in human development since independence. Ironically, rapid economic growth, large infrastructure projects, new job opportunities that drive intra country migration have all collectively contributed to the spread of HIV in the population.

Since 1985, when the first case of AIDS was diagnosed, laudable efforts have been made by the Government of Botswana to mitigate the effects of the epidemic. Unfortunately, these efforts have mostly fallen short of the mark. Stigma, discrimination, denial, ignorance, silence and the persistence of behaviour that aids the spread of the epidemic remain formidable obstacles to halting the spread of HIV and AIDS in the society.

BHDR 2000 recommends a three-pronged approach to tackling the epidemic, which can be summed up as *prevent, treat and develop*. A key contribution of the BHDR 2000 is the work done in undertaking a fresh look at the main determinants of the spread of the epidemic in Botswana. The BHDR 2000 develops recommendations for action which address, in a targeted and monitorable fashion, the known entry points of the epidemic in the society and the primary drivers and multipliers that accelerate its spread.

We hope we have produced an interesting and useful report that will not only contribute to the growing literature on HIV and AIDS in Botswana, but that will also have a practical impact on HIV and AIDS policy and programmes in the country.

Let me end by recognising that the BHDR 2000 was undertaken as a collaborative effort between the Government of Botswana, UNDP and the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis. Significant technical and editorial contributions were also received from outside Botswana and these are recognised in the Acknowledgements. The BHDR 2000 Reference Group that provided comments and a much needed Sounding Board for the report, together with the BHDR team in the UNDP Botswana office, ultimately made this report possible.



MACHARIA KAMAU
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

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Reference Group

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The UN System

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Consultations

Apart from Government sources, a number of organisations made their HIV policies available for use by the team. These include Debswana, Bank of Botswana, Barclays Bank of Botswana Limited and Water Utilities

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