Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Botswana*


I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 9 stakeholders’ submissions\(^1\) to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies\(^2\)

2. JS1 recalled that at the universal periodic review of the Republic of Botswana (State under review) which had been held on 23 January 2013 (2013 review),\(^3\) the State under review had supported a recommendation to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and recommended that the State under review ratify this Convention as soon as possible.\(^4\) JS1 also recommended the ratification of the Third Additional Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its protocols and the Arms Trade Treaty.\(^5\)

3. JS1 encouraged the State under review to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

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* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.
penalty and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.  

4. JS4 stated that the State under review was not a party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and recommended accession to this Convention.  

5. ODVV called for the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the ILO Convention No. 169.  

6. JS2 noted that the State under review had not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.  

7. While noting that the State under review had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2003, JS3 stated that the State under review was yet to submit its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.  

8. HRW stated that while progress had been made in implementing supported recommendations from the 2013 review, the State under review should take additional steps to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in the country in line with supported recommendations from the 2013 review.  

B. **National human rights framework**  

9. JS3 stated that the State under review maintains a “dualist” approach to international law and treaties and as a result treaties must be incorporated through domestic legislation in order to be enforceable. HRW noted that the State under review was yet to incorporate into domestic law those international human rights conventions it had ratified, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, making them directly applicable to the courts and administrative authorities.  

10. JS2 also noted that the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development had not been incorporated into the national legal framework.  

11. While noting that the State under review had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, JS2 stated that some of the provisions in the Children’s Act, 2009 were not in line with the Convention. It recommended that the State under review revise the Act to bring all of its provisions in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.  

12. HRW called on the State under review to complete the process of aligning its national legislation with the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court, including by incorporating provisions to cooperate promptly and fully with the Court.
13. HRW stated that the State under review was yet to establish a national human rights institution in line with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles),\(^9\) despite supporting relevant recommendations at the 2013 review.\(^{20}\)

14. JS2 stated that following the 2013 review, the State under review broadened the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman, to include human rights and the process of amending the Ombudsman Act 5 of 1995 to reflect the broadened mandate was ongoing.\(^{21}\) The Office of the Ombudsman was currently located under the Office of the President, which called into question its independence. JS2 recommended that the State under review ensure that the Office of the Ombudsman will be able to operate with independence and in adherence with the Paris Principles. It also recommended that the required amendments to the Ombudsman Act 5 of 1995 were swiftly adopted.\(^{22}\)

15. JS2 stated that the State under review had been found to be exemplary for good governance in Africa and in that regard several institutions had been established to ensure transparency and good governance. However, there was a need to ensure that such governance was inclusive and enabled the participation of all citizens.\(^{23}\) It recommended that the State under review create a legal framework for the transparent management of public resources with adequate monitoring mechanisms, and include civil society in the formation and implementation of policies and legislation. JS2 also recommended adopting legislation on access to information.\(^{24}\)

16. JS2 stated that the Freedom of Information Bill which was presented to Parliament in 2010 by the then leader of the opposition had not been passed into law. The Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Bill had also not been passed into law.\(^{25}\)

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-Cutting Issues

   *Equality and non-discrimination*\(^{26}\)

   17. JS2 recommended that the State under review enact anti-discrimination legislation to protect and promote the rights of sexual minorities and to promote awareness of sexual orientation and genders identity.\(^{27}\)

   18. JS2 stated that there were no mechanisms in place to ensure that transgender people were able to change their documentation once they have transitioned, and recommended creating such mechanisms.\(^{28}\) There was also no training for service providers on how to assist people who intended to transition, who were in the process of transitioning or who had already transitioned.\(^{29}\)

   *Development, the environment and business and human rights*

   19. JS2 recommended that the State under review produce and made public its implementation plan to reduce carbon emissions by 15 percent by 2030 in accordance with its nationally determined contribution for climate change, and develop public-awareness materials on climate change together with civil society. It also recommended that the State under review undertake consultations with affected communities before signing, ratifying or incorporating in the domestic legal framework any regional or international treaties relating to the environment and wildlife; and that the State under review make compulsory the conducting of social impact assessments and consultations with affected communities before the promulgation of any laws related to the environment to ensure that no community is arbitrarily deprived of its natural resources and land.\(^{30}\)
2. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person

20. While noting that the most recent execution was in 2016, JS2 stated that the State under review was the only country in the Southern African Development Community which retained the death penalty in law and in practice. It recommended a moratorium on executions and called for public consultations on the desirability and long-term effectiveness of the use of the death penalty as a deterrent.

21. JS1 encouraged the State under review to abolish the death penalty. It stated that the Constitution permitted the taking of life in cases of war, arrest, escape, riot, insurrection, mutiny, to defend life or property and to prevent the commission of a crime and encouraged the State under review to revise the Constitution to enhance the promotion and protection of the right to life.

Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law

22. JS2 noted that the State under review had a legal aid programme that aimed to promote access to justice. It recommended that the State under review raise the awareness of the programme, increase the number of offices to ensure access to legal aid throughout the country and expand the mandate of the legal aid programme to include criminal matters.

23. HRW called on the State under review to investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes fairly and effectively in its national courts.

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

24. COMEF stated that the Communications Regulatory Authority Act, 2012 did not recognise community broadcasting. It recalled that during a Parliamentary debate in 2013, members of the ruling party expressed the position that community radio would divide the nation. COMEF recommended that the State under review amend the Communications Regulatory Authority Act, 2012 at the 12th parliamentary session in 2018, to explicitly allow for the licencing of community broadcasters. It also recommended the convening of a national symposium on community radio.

25. JS2 stated that there had been an emergence of religious churches which had no tolerance for those rights associated with sexual orientation and gender identity. Those churches promoted discrimination and sometimes the persecution of sexual minorities. JS2 recommended that the State under review undertake a review of the legislation for the registration of societies and churches to ensure that registered organisations strictly adhere to human rights standards, including those of non-discrimination.

26. While noting that entry and service in the defence force was voluntary, JS1 recommended that the State under review make a clear statement in law of the right to have or to develop a conscientious objection to military service, so as to guarantee the protection of that right to all, including those persons who have already enlisted in the defence force.

27. JS2 stated that the space for the participation of civil society in democratic governance was shrinking due to a lack of resources for civil society organisations and a lack of constructive collaboration with the Government, amongst others.

Prohibition of all forms of slavery

28. Focusing its submission on the sexual exploitation of children, JS3 stated that although the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act prohibited sexual exploitation there was no definition of child prostitution in line with article 2 of Optional

29. JS3 stated that the State under review was a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, which appeared to be the most significant manifestation of the sexual exploitation of children. It recommended that the State under review commission a comprehensive study on the sexual exploitation of children to determine the extent of the exploitation, and to identify target areas, vulnerable groups, and areas for improvement. JS3 also recommended prioritizing an awareness raising campaign to educate families on the criminality and dangers of sexual abuse and exploitation.

30. While noting the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2014, JS2 stated that in order to ensure that trafficking in children was effectively addressed there was a need to provide appropriate training to service providers and stakeholders working with children who were victims of human trafficking.

Right to privacy and right to family

31. JS2 stated that same-sex relations remained criminalized. While recalling that at the 2013 review, the State under review had noted all the recommendations to decriminalize same-sex relations, HRW stated that the Authorities relied on article 64 of the Penal Code which criminalizes “carnal knowledge against the order of nature” to criminalize same-sex sexual activities. JS2 recommended that the State under review decriminalize same-sex relations and legalize same-sex marriage.

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to social security

32. JS2 called on the State under review to increase the amount of the old age pension in light of the increasing cost of living.

Right to an adequate standard of living

33. JS2 stated that the various programmes, including a national strategy, intended to alleviate poverty did not provide sustainable solutions to poverty alleviation. JS2 made recommendations including reviewing, in consultation with civil society and the private sector, the current National Poverty Strategy with a view to amending it to include long-term solutions to poverty alleviation.

Right to health

34. ADF stated that the State under review must focus on helping women safely get through pregnancy and childbirth and resources must be directed towards improving conditions for pregnant women, women undergoing childbirth, and postpartum women.

35. ADF stated that the high number of maternal deaths was a concern and resulted from conditions which included a lack of drugs and poor infrastructure in health care facilities such as no electricity or running water, and inaccessibility of hospitals. It called for improving health care infrastructure, access to emergency obstetric care, midwife training and resources devoted to maternal health.

36. While noting the development of a national strategy to combat HIV and AIDS, JS2 stated that the implementation of the strategy must be inclusive and cover all key populations including men who have sex with other men, the LGBTIQ community and sex
workers. Also, service providers should be trained to provide the required assistance to all members of the key populations.65

Right to education66

37. HRW stated that in June 2017, the State under review signed the Safe Schools Declaration, an international commitment that provides support for the protection and continuation of education during wartime.67

38. JS2 stated that there was no national anti-bullying policy for schools and many schools did not have their own anti-bullying policies. Corporal punishment was administered in schools and despite official guidelines for administering corporal punishment, children have been seriously injured.68

39. JS2 stated that children were taught in Setswana and in English, which made learning difficult for those whose mother-tongue was neither of the two languages.69

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women70

40. JS2 stated that marital rape was not illegal. Service providers, such as the police, were not trained to assist women who reported cases of gender-based violence, and generally discouraged the reporting of such cases. There were insufficient shelters for victims of gender-based violence.71 JS2 recommended criminalizing marital rape, training police officers and other stakeholders on the handling of reported cases of gender-based violence, building shelters for victims and developing public awareness of the Domestic Violence Act, amongst others.72

Children73

41. GIEACPC stated that pursuant to the Children’s Act 2009, corporal punishment was lawful in the home, in day care facilities and in alternative care settings.74 Corporal Punishment was also lawful in schools in accordance with the Education Act 1967 and Regulations 1968.75

42. GIEACPC stated that corporal punishment was lawful as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions pursuant to the Prisons Act 1980, the Prison Regulations 1965 and the Children’s Act 2009. Furthermore, corporal punishment was lawful as a sentence for crimes committed by males, and that a children’s court may sentence a child to corporal punishment.76

43. GIEACPC recalled that at the 2013 review, the State under review had noted a number of recommendations calling for the prohibition of corporal punishment.77

Minorities and indigenous peoples78

44. According to CS, there was no explicit recognition of indigenous peoples and minorities in the Constitution or in law.79 This lack of legal recognition prevented indigenous chiefs from fully participating in decision-making processes affecting them and their people.80 CS recommended that the State under review recognise indigenous peoples in the Constitution and enact legislation to protect their rights.81

45. CS stated that Indigenous Peoples faced food scarcity and hunger, and lacked access to education and clean drinking water. In June 2015, the State under review had been declared “drought-stricken”, a status that was exhibited by the privatization of water in the country, which disproportionately affects indigenous peoples.82
46. CS stated that the State under review had created the Remote Area Development Programme which benefits people living more than 15 km outside of villages. Those with no water, access to land, or access to other services such as healthcare and education qualify for support within this Programme. Qualifying citizens receive five cattle or fifteen goats, and children are provided with food, toiletries, bedding, and transportation to school. According to CS, there was still room for improvement.\textsuperscript{83}

47. CS stated that hunting was forbidden in the game reserves such as the Central Kalahari. The Basarwa relied on hunting and gathering yet they were denied special licences to access resources in the reserve in which they once lived. CS stated that as long as use of the resources by the indigenous peoples remained sustainable, their access to the reserves will not be a threat to conservation. There was a “shoot to kill” policy against poachers who were often Basarwa trying to provide for their families.\textsuperscript{84} CS recommended that the State under review immediately end the “shoot to kill” policy; recognize the authority of the indigenous chiefs and facilitate their participation in policy issues affecting their people; and engage with the indigenous peoples in the development of policies for the sustainable use of resources within the games reserves and federally-protected lands.\textsuperscript{85}

48. JS2 recommended that the State under review lift the hunting ban as hunting was important for the livelihood of the Basarwa/San community. It also recommended that the State under review recognise the indigenous knowledge systems of the community which support the sustainable use of the environment, including traditional hunting and gathering practices.\textsuperscript{86}

49. CS stated that the State under review did not recognise specific ethnic groups and as a consequence, the education policy served to assimilate into Tswana culture non-Tswana children, including indigenous children. Lessons in schools were taught in English and in Setswana. Also, both of those languages were considered core subjects in the school curriculum, which meant that pupils must pass the examinations in those languages, a status not afforded to any of the other languages spoken in the country. This impeded the ability of children to learn their mother tongue and to keep their cultural heritage alive. It was also disadvantageous to indigenous children as they were forced to receive their education in a language which was not their first.\textsuperscript{87} CS stated that many indigenous villages were unable to afford their own schools, resulting in children travelling long distances to attend school.\textsuperscript{88} ODVV called on the State under review to recognize all minority languages and provide all primary school children, particularly minority children, with the opportunity to access education in their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{89}

\textit{Stateless persons}\textsuperscript{90}

50. JS2 recommended that the State under review sign and ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It also recommended adopting legislation and regulations to ensure the right of every child to a nationality and that no child was born stateless.\textsuperscript{91}

51. JS4 stated that the Botswana Children’s Act of 2009 which ensures the domestic application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that every child has a right to a nationality from birth. However, the Botswana Citizenship Act of 1998, which regulates the acquisition of citizenship, did not address the manner in which (otherwise) stateless children may acquire citizenship. Children born in the territory of the State under review to stateless or unknown parents were therefore not guaranteed protection against statelessness. Furthermore, the Act did not specifically stipulate that every child has a right to Botswana nationality, if they would otherwise be stateless.\textsuperscript{92} JS4 recommended that the State under review amend the Botswana Citizenship Act of 1998 to ensure every child’s right to a nationality and that no child is born stateless in the territory of the State under review.\textsuperscript{93}
52. JS4 stated that the State under review did not grant any citizenship rights based on birth on its territory, if neither of the parents are Batswana. Citizenship rights were also not conferred in cases of foundlings or children of unknown parents. Furthermore, while birth registration was readily available to those children born in hospitals it was not the case for children born at home or children who lived in rural areas. JS4 recommended that the State under review take all necessary steps to ensure immediate and universal birth registration of children born on its territory, particularly foundlings, those born to migrants and undocumented persons and those born outside of hospitals. It also recommended that the State under review ensure that all children found within its territory be considered to have been born on its territory to Batswana parents, in the absence of proof to the contrary.

53. JS4 stated that the three-year time-limit (which commences at birth) for acquisition of citizenship through adoption may create statelessness among children who were adopted after their third birthday, particularly if they did not have a previous citizenship or were liable to losing their previous citizenship upon adoption. It recommended that the State under review amend the relevant law restricting acquisition of nationality through adoption to children below three years of age to ensure that all children (under 18 years of age) adopted by citizens of the State under review, acquire Botswanan nationality.

Notes

1 The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International
COMEF
CS
HRW
ODVV

Joint submissions:

JS1
JS2
JS3

ECAPT International, Bangkok, Thailand and Stepping Stones
SADC CRAI Network on Statelessness, Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative, DITSHWANELO, Lawyers for Human Rights and The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (Joint Submission 4).


3 See A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, JS1, p. 4, referring to A/HRC/23/7, para. 116.12 (Armenia); and see A/HRC/23/7/Add.1, para. 12 in relation to the position taken by Botswana on this recommendation.

4 JS1, JS4, paras. 12 and 25.

5 ODVV, paras. 15-17.

6 JS2, para. 3.

7 JS2, para. 2.

8 HRW, p. 1.

9 JS2, para. 3 and 4. JS2 made recommendations (para. 5).

10 JS2, para. 16.

11 JS2, para. 18. For other recommendations see para. 18; and see also JS3, para. 36.


13 JS2, para. 39.

14 JS2, paras. 38 and 39.

15 JS2, para. 38.

16 JS2, para. 7. JS2 also made other recommendations (para. 7).

17 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.59, 115.60, 115.74, 116.36, 116.37 and 117.4-117.21.

18 JS2, para. 40; and see also HRW, p. 1.

19 JS2, para. 41; and see also HRW, p. 1.

20 JS1, para. 36. JS2 made recommendations (para. 33).

21 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.41, 116.35, 117.2 and 117.3.

22 JS2, para. 39.

23 JS2, paras. 38 and 39.

24 JS2, para. 38.

25 JS2, para. 7. JS2 also made other recommendations (para. 7).

26 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.59, 115.60, 115.74, 116.36, 116.37 and 117.4-117.21.

27 JS2, para. 40; and see also HRW, p. 1.

28 JS2, para. 41; and see also HRW, p. 1.

29 JS1, para. 4.

30 JS1, para. 4.

31 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.59, 115.60, 115.74, 116.36, 116.37 and 117.4-117.21.

32 JS2, para. 34.
47 JS3, p. 6.
48 JS3, para. 9.
49 JS3, p. 5.
50 JS3, p. 5.
51 JS2, para. 17.
52 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, para. 116.38, 117.28-117.32.
53 JS2, paras. 38.
54 HRW, p. 1.
55 JS2, para. 39; and see also HRW, p. 1.
56 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, para. 115.83.
57 JS2, para. 37.
58 For the relevant recommendation from the 2013 review see A/HRC/23/7, para. 115.23, 115.25-115.32.
59 JS2, para. 23.
60 JS2, para. 24. For other recommendations see para. 24.
61 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.24, 115.33, 115.35, 115.80-115.82 and 116.39.
62 ADF, paras. 15 and 16.
63 ADF, paras. 17 and 18.
64 ADF, para. 23(e).
65 JS2, para. 19. JS2 made recommendations (para. 20).
66 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.36, 115.37, 115.84-115.87.
67 HRW, p. 1.
68 JS2, paras. 8-10.
69 JS2, para. 11. JS2 made recommendations (para. 12).
71 JS2, para. 21. JS2 made recommendations (para. 22).
72 JS2, para. 22.
73 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.34, 115.39, 115.79, 116.30 and 117.22-117.25.
74 GIEACPC, paras. 2.1-2.3.
75 GIEACPC, para. 2.4.
76 GIEACPC, paras. 2.5-2.7.
77 GIEACPC, paras. 1.1-1.3. For recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, para. 116 30 (Liechtenstein) together with A/HRC/23/7/Add.1, para. 31; and see also A/HRC/23/7, paras. 117.22-25 (Timor-Leste, Costa Rica, Djibouti and Slovenia).
78 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, paras. 115.89, 115.90, 116.40, 117.33-117.38.
79 CS, p. 2; and see also ODVV, para. 8.
80 CS, p. 3.
81 CS, p. 6.
82 CS, p. 1.
83 CS, p. 1.
84 CS, p. 4.
85 CS, pp. 6-7.
86 JS2, para. 29. JS2 made other recommendations (para. 29).
87 CS, pp. 5-6.
88 CS, p. 6.
89 ODVV, para. 19.
90 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/23/7, 22 March 2013, para.115.77.
91 JS2, para. 15. For other recommendations, see para. 15.
92 JS4, paras. 13-16.
93 JS4, para. 25.
94 JS4, para. 21.
95 JS4, para. 22.
96 JS4, para. 25.
97 JS4, para. 17.
98 JS4, para. 25.