



World Health Organization
Botswana

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



FOREWORD



Dear Partners, Colleagues, and Friends of Public Health in Botswana,

As we close the final quarter of 2025, I am pleased to present this October–December edition of the WHO Botswana Country Office Newsletter—a reflection of our shared progress, deepening partnerships, and collective determination to strengthen health outcomes for all people in Botswana.

This quarter has been marked by meaningful engagement across districts, ministries, development partners, and communities. From advancing health security and strengthening laboratory systems, to promoting volunteerism, disability inclusion, and multisectoral collaboration, each activity featured in this edition underscores the power of partnership in accelerating national health priorities.

Across all initiatives, a consistent message emerges: health is a shared responsibility. Our work with government, civil society, the private sector, and communities continues to demonstrate that when we align efforts, resources, and innovation, we can expand access, close service gaps, and build a health system capable of withstanding current and future challenges.

As you explore the highlights captured in this issue, I invite you to view them not only as milestones, but as reminders of what we can achieve together in the pursuit of Universal Health Coverage and Health for All. On behalf of the WHO Botswana Country Office, I extend my appreciation to all partners and colleagues for their unwavering collaboration throughout 2025. We look forward to an even stronger, more impactful year ahead.

Dr. Fabian Ndenzako
WHO Country Representative

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Civil Society at the Forefront of Climate and Health Action in Botswana

To strengthen the capacity of civil society actors in Botswana's health sector to effectively engage in the climate-health agenda at national and international levels, the Botswana Climate Change Network, with technical support from the Ministry of Health and WHO Country Team, conducted on 10 October a Civil Society Capacity-Building Workshop on the Climate and Health Nexus.

The workshop aims to enhance participants' understanding of the technical and policy dimensions of climate and health, while laying the foundation for collective action under the Civil Society Working Group on Health and Climate Change.

"This workshop is a vital step in empowering civil society with the knowledge, tools and networks needed to advocate for climate-smart health policies, hold decision-makers accountable and ensure that health remains central to climate action," said Dr Juliet Bataringaya, representing WHO Botswana. She further acknowledged the leadership and commitment of the Government of Botswana, civil society partners and other stakeholders in advancing health equity and climate resilience in the country.



Developing a Health Promotion Package for Community Health Workers

In October 2025, the Ministry of Health, Botswana, in collaboration with UNFPA Botswana and the World Health Organization Botswana, worked with district health teams to develop a new Health Promotion Package for Community Health Workers (CHWs).

This initiative responded directly to a key recommendation from the 2020 Strategic Assessment on Unintended Pregnancies. Through a collaborative workshop, midwives, medical officers, community health nurses and health education officers came together to develop accurate, culturally sensitive and evidence-based health promotion materials.

Strengthening the capacity of CHWs with appropriate tools and knowledge is critical to reducing unintended pregnancies, preventing unsafe abortions and improving maternal health outcomes across Botswana.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month



In observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, WHO Botswana actively participated in two key activities aimed at raising awareness, promoting early detection, and amplifying survivor voices. The Country Office hosted partners Journey of Hope and Motor Vehicle Accident Fund Botswana that brought staff together to strengthen understanding of breast cancer prevention, early screening, and support for those affected. The engagement highlighted the importance of collective action and workplace advocacy in the fight against breast cancer. Additionally, the Ministry of Health hosted a national commemorative event to mark the day, attended by WHO, partners, and other stakeholders. The activity was made especially impactful by the presence of breast cancer survivors, whose powerful testimonies underscored the value of early diagnosis, access to quality care, and sustained community support. Together, these activities reinforced a shared commitment to hope, prevention, and survivorship.

[Watch Video](#)



WHO Botswana Joins National Leaders to Celebrate UN@80 with Run4theSDGs

The WHO Country Team proudly joined national leaders, development partners, the diplomatic community, and the public to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations through the #Run4theSDGs event.

His Honour Ndaba Gaolathe, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana, led the commemorations alongside Government Ministers and members of the international community.

The event highlighted Botswana's continued commitment to peace, human rights, and sustainable development—values at the core of the UN's 80-year legacy. As we honour this milestone, we also look ahead to what comes next: the Summit of the Future in 2026 and the ongoing Decade of Action to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. The journey is long, but with unity, purpose, and strong partnerships, we can cross the finish line stronger than ever.



Happy 80th Anniversary to the United Nations. Together, we continue advancing a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable world.

Ministry of Health and WHO Advance Development of National Cancer Control Plan

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO Botswana, worked with stakeholders to finalize the development of the National Cancer Control Plan. The ambitious 5-year plan was designed to serve as Botswana's strategic guide for a coordinated national response to cancer. It aimed to provide policymakers and health managers with the evidence and insights needed to allocate resources efficiently and reduce the growing cancer burden.



A central element of the process was the inclusion of community members and cancer survivors. Their contributions ensured that the proposed interventions reflected real needs and supported efforts to improve cure rates across the country. The plan was scheduled for completion before the end of the year—representing an important step toward strengthening cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment services in Botswana.



Strengthening Botswana's Golden Achievement in EMTCT

Botswana continues to make remarkable strides in its health journey. The National Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission team, working closely with WHO and key partners, is finalizing the national Roadmap to safeguard the country's prestigious EMTCT Gold Status Tier, a recognition awarded for outstanding progress in eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B. This Roadmap outlines priority actions to ensure sustained high performance across prevention, testing, treatment, and follow-up services for mothers and infants. It also incorporates critical recommendations from the Global Validation Advisory Committee (GVaC), ensuring Botswana not only maintains its Gold Tier status but continues to strengthen quality, equity, and coverage of EMTCT services nationwide. Botswana's Golden Tier achievement stands as a powerful testament to leadership, technical excellence, and strong multisectoral collaboration. With this renewed commitment, the country is well-positioned to protect these gains and further advance the health and well-being of mothers, children, and families.



STEPS Survey Reveals About Health in Botswana

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO, released the preliminary findings of the 2024 STEPS Survey, offering the most up-to-date picture of Botswana's evolving health landscape. The results highlight both encouraging progress and rising challenges, including increased rates of overweight, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes, as well as persistent gaps in diet, physical activity, and alcohol use.

👉 Read the [full article](#) to discover the concrete actions Botswana can take today—strengthening prevention, energizing primary health care, and creating healthier everyday environments—to turn evidence into progress and build a future where every Motswana can live longer, healthier, and stronger.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY INCREASING



HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES RISING



UNHEALTHY DIET AND LOW PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PERSIST

Botswana Signs National AMR Action Plan during World Antimicrobial Awareness Week Commemoration

Botswana marked a major milestone in its health and One Health agenda with the official signing of the National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) during the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) commemoration held in Palapye.

The Action Plan was signed by three key ministries, namely Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise; Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Dr Edwin Dikoloti; Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Ignatious Moswaane.

Under the global theme “Act Now, Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future,” the event brought together stakeholders from the health, agriculture, environment, and education sectors; local One Health institutions; and global partners including WHO, FAO, and WOAH. Their presence underscored Botswana’s commitment to a coordinated One Health approach to tackling AMR.

Developed with the support of the World Health Organization, the new AMR National Action Plan provides a national roadmap to promote responsible use of antimicrobials, protect public health, and safeguard Botswana’s vital beef industry—especially important given stringent export standards and the need for prudent antibiotic use in farming communities.

Speaking at the event, WHO Representative Dr Fabian Ndenzako stressed that AMR “is everyone’s business” and urged urgent, multisectoral action, noting the heavy burden in sub-Saharan Africa and the need for education, stewardship, and sustained domestic financing to translate commitments into results.

[Read more](#)



“The signing of Botswana’s National AMR Action Plan signals a renewed national commitment to responsible antimicrobial use and a unified One Health approach to tackling AMR.”

Botswana Validates Global Youth Tobacco Survey Findings

A multi-sectoral Technical Working Group has successfully concluded a three-day validation workshop for the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), facilitated by World Health Organization (WHO) Botswana in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Botswana.

The survey gathered critical data from students aged 13–17 years across the country, providing valuable insights into tobacco use and exposure among young people. The validated findings will play a key role in informing policy decisions and strengthening tobacco control interventions, reinforcing Botswana’s commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of its youth.



Validation Workshop of the National Strategic Framework IV for HIV & AIDS

On 14 November, the **National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA)** convened stakeholders from government, civil society, development partners, and the private sector at the Avani Gaborone Resort for the Validation Workshop of the **National Strategic Framework IV (NSF IV)** for HIV & AIDS. The workshop provided a platform to review and build consensus on three key documents: the NSF IV, its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and the Costed National Operational Plan, all designed to strengthen Botswana's collective HIV and AIDS response.

The event was officially opened by Dr Gape Kaboyakgosi, Permanent Secretary to His Honour the Vice President, who reaffirmed Botswana's national commitment to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Partner reflections were delivered by Dr Malviya Alankar (UNAIDS), Dr Fabian Ndenzako (WHO), Dr Peter Fonjungo (CDC), and Mr Gobe Taziba (BONASO). Earlier in the programme, Mr Ontiretse C. Letlhare, NAHPA National Coordinator, welcomed participants and highlighted NAHPA's leadership in guiding the national HIV and AIDS response. The workshop marked a pivotal step in ensuring that Botswana's HIV and AIDS strategies remain inclusive, evidence-based, and sustainable, as the country continues its progress toward the 2030 goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat.



Private Sector High-Level Partnership Forum

The **Botswana Business Coalition on AIDS (BBCA)** convened the Private Sector High-Level Partnership Forum on 19 November, bringing together leaders from government, civil society, and the business community. The forum centred on the shared commitment to strengthen Botswana's response to emerging health challenges through coordinated multi-sector action. During the panel discussions NAHPA contributed national insights on HIV, NCDs, and coordination gaps and WHO – offering perspectives on global and regional health threats, including NCD trends, AMR, and surveillance needs.



World AIDS Day

The WHO Country Representative to Botswana, Dr Fabian Ndenzako, joined the Ministry of Health Botswana team, led by Honourable Minister Dr Stephen Modise, alongside the National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA), government officials, the UN Botswana Country Team including UNAIDS, and partners to commemorate World AIDS Day in Kanye. The commemoration was held under the theme "Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response", reaffirming collective commitment to sustaining progress, strengthening resilience, and accelerating efforts to end AIDS as a public health threat.



BoMRA National Quality Control Laboratory Achieves ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Accreditation

The Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority (BoMRA) announced on 7 September that its National Quality Control Laboratory has been accredited to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 by SADCAS, following a rigorous assessment of laboratory systems, technical competence, and operational processes—marking a major milestone in regulatory excellence and public-health protection.

BoMRA CEO Dr. Seima Dijeng welcomed the accreditation as a boost to institutional credibility and stakeholder trust, noting it strengthens the reliability and impartiality of testing and advances BoMRA's journey toward WHO Global Benchmarking Maturity Level 3. The Ministry of Health commended the achievement, underscoring its importance for patient safety and the overall credibility of Botswana's health system.

At the handover of WHO-supported laboratory consumables and analytical instruments to BoMRA, WHO Representative congratulated the National Quality Control Laboratory, highlighting how enhanced capacity helps detect and prevent substandard and falsified medical products and reduces the need to refer samples abroad—saving costs and accelerating response. He reaffirmed WHO's partnership in supporting BoMRA's path to Maturity Level 3 and beyond. This accreditation adds momentum to Botswana's broader effort to strengthen medicines regulation and safeguard the quality of health products for all patients nationwide.



BoMRA and WHO Convene Stakeholders for Good Manufacturing Practices Quality Circle Engagement

BoMRA, in partnership with WHO Botswana brought together on 15 December key stakeholders today for a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Quality Circle Engagement. This important gathering marks a significant step in strengthening Botswana's medicines regulatory systems and supporting the growth of local pharmaceutical manufacturing. The engagement aims to enhance regulatory alignment with global standards while promoting regional harmonization—advancing Botswana's long-term goal of ensuring that locally produced medical products meet the highest levels of quality, safety, and efficacy.



WHO Donates Laboratory Consumables to BoMRA to Strengthen Regulatory Capacity

WHO has donated essential laboratory consumables to BoMRA, reinforcing WHO's ongoing support to strengthen the Authority's regulatory capacity. The items were handed over during a courtesy visit led by WHO Officer-in-Charge Dr. Moagi Gaborone.

BoMRA CEO Dr. Seima Dijeng welcomed the support, noting that WHO remains a key partner as the Authority works toward achieving WHO GBT Maturity Level 3. Receiving the donation, Ms. Zukiswa Raditladi highlighted that the consumables will further enhance the BoMRA Laboratory's operational capability, especially following its recent ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation.

This collaboration reflects BoMRA and WHO's shared commitment to ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of health products in Botswana.



WHO Botswana and BPHI Advance National Health Security Through NAPHS Validation and Costing Workshop

Between 1–14 November, WHO Botswana, in collaboration with the Botswana Public Health Institute (BPHI), conducted a critical workshop focused on the validation and costing of Botswana's **National Action Plan for Health Security** (NAPHS). This milestone initiative brings together government institutions, technical experts from multiple sectors, and partners to strengthen the country's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies.

The workshop represents a major step toward safeguarding Botswana's hard-won public health gains and ensuring a resilient, well-coordinated emergency preparedness and response system for the future. By validating and accurately costing the NAPHS, Botswana is translating strategic commitments into a practical, resource-backed roadmap aligned with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and the Global Health Security Agenda.

👉 [Read the full article](#) to learn how WHO Botswana, BPHI, and partners are working together to build a healthier, safer, and more secure future for every Motswana.

“Global health security is only as strong as its weakest link – no one is safe until we are all safe.”

[Watch video](#)



Laboratory Managers Convene to Strengthen Biosafety, Biosecurity and AMR Response

The Ministry of Health brought together laboratory managers from across the country for a week-long workshop aimed at optimizing laboratory processes for improved biosafety, biosecurity, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) preparedness. A key milestone of the engagement was the official launch of the Medical Laboratory Practice Standards, developed in partnership with WHO to enhance the quality and resilience of laboratory systems nationwide.

Speaking at the launch, WHO Country Representative Dr. Fabian Ndenzako emphasized the pivotal role of laboratories in safeguarding national health security. He noted that “laboratories are the heartbeat of health security and resilient health systems, and by strengthening quality, innovation and collaboration, we can transform diagnostics into a shield to protect communities, economies, and futures.”



Botswana Hosts a Landmark Pandemic Fund Initiative for Stronger Health Security in Southern Africa

Botswana hosted on 9-10 December a landmark regional forum in Gaborone to accelerate a coordinated, eight-country effort to detect outbreaks earlier and strengthen cross-border health security.

The initiative—funded through a USD 35.8 million **Pandemic Fund** grant and coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for Africa—brings together Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe under one shared objective: preventing small outbreaks from becoming regional emergencies. Since early 2025, countries have been establishing governance structures, selecting national delivery partners, identifying hotspots, and building capacity in surveillance, laboratories and health workforce readiness.

The Gaborone meeting marks the first opportunity for the countries to engage face-to-face, compare progress, and align strategies for the next phase of implementation. Hosting this gathering underscores Botswana's commitment to regional health security and its recognition that no country can confront climate-driven disease threats alone.

As WHO Representative Dr Fabian Ndenzako affirmed, "For us in Botswana, it is a privilege to host this gathering and stand with our neighbours in strengthening our shared health security." His words capture the spirit of the forum: shared accountability, collaborative problem-solving, and a united approach to protecting communities across Southern Africa. [Read more](#)



Southern Africa Strengthens Resolve to Protect Every Child from Vaccine-Preventable Diseases



Health leaders from five Southern African countries gathered in Botswana this December to reaffirm their shared commitment to keeping the region polio-free and protecting every child from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Meeting in Jwaneng from 9–11 December 2025 for the 25th Inter-Country Certification Committee (ICCC), representatives from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa reviewed progress, assessed emerging risks and agreed on priority actions to close immunity gaps—particularly among zero-dose and hard-to-reach children. Against a backdrop of continued global poliovirus circulation and declining immunization coverage following the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting highlighted the critical role of regional solidarity, strong surveillance, routine immunization and cross-border collaboration in sustaining Africa's polio-free status.

👉 [Read the full story](#) to learn how countries are translating commitment into action—and why vigilance remains essential until polio is eradicated everywhere.

Botswana's Health Future: Integrating HIV and NCD Care Is Urgent

The **B-Well Health Symposium & Expo 2025**, hosted by **Tebelopele Wellness Centers** and the **National AIDS & Health Promotion Agency** on 10 November, spotlighted a critical turning point in Botswana's health journey: the urgent need to integrate HIV and non-communicable disease (NCD) care within national health systems.

While Botswana has achieved remarkable success in its HIV response—with over 97% of people living with HIV on treatment—this progress is increasingly challenged by the growing burden of NCDs, now responsible for 37% of premature deaths nationwide. Addressing this dual burden requires a unified, people-centred approach.

Speaking at the symposium, **WHO Botswana** Representative Dr Fabian Ndenzako emphasized that the convergence of HIV and NCDs demands integrated service delivery to protect health gains and ensure continuity of care. The urgency is not only a public health concern but also an economic one: NCDs are projected to cost Botswana more than P1.5 billion annually by 2030 if left unaddressed. Highlighting priority actions, Dr Tebogo Madidimalo, WHO Botswana's Communicable and Noncommunicable Disease Cluster Lead, underscored the need to accelerate prevention efforts, secure sustainable domestic financing, and strengthen the health workforce to support integrated care at the primary health care level.

Global experiences from countries such as Rwanda and Kenya demonstrate that integrating NCD services into existing HIV platforms improves early detection, reduces missed appointments, and enhances overall health outcomes. As emphasized during the symposium, integration is not optional—it is essential.

The symposium concluded with a call to action: Botswana has the opportunity to lead by example in Africa, demonstrating that integrated HIV and NCD care is key to a healthier, more resilient future.



United Nations Reaffirms Commitment to Inclusive Health

On the occasion of the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** (IDPD) 2025, reiterates its unwavering commitment to ensuring that all persons with disabilities can realize their right to the highest attainable standard of health. Guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, WHO continues to work with governments, partners, and communities to promote equity, strengthen disability-inclusive health systems, and remove the barriers that limit access to essential services.

As we commemorate IDPD 2025, WHO underscores that advancing disability rights is not only a matter of health—it is a matter of dignity, inclusion, and social justice.



Health Partners Forum Highlights Power of Public-Private Collaboration

The Health Partners Forum, organized by the **Mogoditshane-Thamaga District Council** and the **Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs**, with support from **WHO Botswana**, brought together stakeholders to explore how stronger public-private collaboration can unlock resources, close service gaps, and drive long-term, sustainable health outcomes.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr. Fabian Ndenzako, WHO Country Representative, emphasized the critical role of effective district health systems, noting that “an effective district health system reduces the burden of disease through scaled-up preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative interventions, intersectoral action and empowered communities. The District Health System provides the continuum of services from pre-birth to end of life; addresses equity in access to health services and tackles the determinants of health using a multi-sectoral approach. Ensuring effectiveness and efficiency is key in maximizing benefits from the limited available resources while using evidence as the basis for sound decision-making.”

WHO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Government of Botswana in advancing Universal Health Coverage, strengthening local health systems, and making #HealthForAll a reality.



WHO in Dialogue with Civil Society on Unlocking Regional and International Health Funding

WHO participated as a key strategic partner in the discussions led by BONASO on unlocking regional and international funding opportunities for health service CSOs, as outlined in the recently developed concept note. The engagement brings together stakeholders—including NAHPA, the Global Fund, civil society, and the private sector—to collectively explore sustainable financing models and strengthen Botswana's health service ecosystem. WHO's involvement supports efforts to enhance innovation, competitiveness, and systems strengthening, ensuring CSOs are better positioned to access global funding streams and contribute effectively to national health priorities.



UNV Visits WHO Botswana Ahead of International Volunteers Day 2025

WHO Country Office welcomed the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) team for a courtesy visit focused on strengthening joint efforts to promote volunteerism in support of people-centred health. The discussion reaffirmed a shared commitment to expanding impactful volunteer engagement across national health priorities.

While the visit comes ahead of **International Volunteers Day (IVD)** marked globally on 5 December, the emphasis was firmly on building long-term collaboration that ensures every contribution helps advance better health outcomes for communities in Botswana.



WHO and Botswana-UPenn Partnership Renew Commitment



Dr. Farouk Dako, the new Director of the Botswana-UPenn Partnership (BUP), paid a courtesy visit to the WHO Country Office, where he met with Dr. Fabian Ndenzako and his team. The discussion focused on strengthening long-standing collaboration in key areas including health research, digital innovation, and programme implementation for priority conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, and non-communicable diseases.

With over two decades of partnership, this renewed engagement between WHO and BUP sets the stage for deeper synergy and greater impact on Botswana's health outcomes.

Germany - WHO Partnership



Dr. Fabian Ndenzako, WHO Country Representative, hosted H.E. Gabriela Bennemann, Ambassador of Germany to Botswana and SADC — strengthening a vital partnership that supports WHO's global health efforts.

Strengthening UN Botswana collaboration



WHO joined the UN Country Team and the Government of Botswana for the annual Joint Steering Committee meeting of the UN Development Cooperation Framework. Together, we reviewed progress and agreed on priorities for 2026—reaffirming our shared commitment to advancing the SDGs, including climate action, gender equality, and education.

WHO Botswana and BHP Reinforce Collaboration in Research & Public Health



We are delighted to highlight the renewed and strengthened collaboration between WHO Botswana and the Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP). With BHP's world-class expertise in research and education and WHO's global leadership in public health, this partnership is accelerating our shared mission: to advance innovative science, build capacity, and translate evidence into action for HIV/AIDS and emerging health threats.

IOM - WHO cooperation



A warm exchange between WHO Botswana Representative, Dr. Fabian Ndenzako, and Mr. Itayi Viriri, the newly appointed IOM Chief of Mission to Botswana, reinforcing UN cooperation on migration, public health, and inclusive development for Botswana and the region.



World Day of Remembrance with MVA Fund



To mark the World Day of Remembrance WHO Botswana joined the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund to commemorate the Road Traffic Victims under the theme "Honoring Lost Talents".

PARTNERS APPRECIATION



BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation



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U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office



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To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria



World Organisation for Animal Health



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The Pandemic Fund
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REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs



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