



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT ON AFRICA DAY COMMEMORATION

BY

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***"Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe
Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of
Agenda 2063***

25TH MAY 2026



1. Today marks a significant moment in our history as the African Community. It is a day that unites us in our shared history, our rich cultural heritage and our collective vision for a peaceful, prosperous and united Africa following our hard-fought independence from Colonialism.
2. May 25 marks the historic 1963 gathering in Addis Ababa, where leaders from 32 newly independent African nations came together to establish the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now formally known as the African Union (AU).
3. Africa Day is celebrated annually on May 25 to remind ourselves of the journey we have undertaken to achieve political independence and self-rule. This day also reminds us of the journey ahead towards economic liberation and the realization of our people's human rights and dignity.
4. The African Union has designated 2026 as ***the Year of Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems***, highlighting access to water and sanitation as a critical and basic human right. This theme aligns with the AU's broader Agenda 2063, reinforcing Africa's commitment to sustainable development, equity, and resilience, ensuring that no one is left behind.
5. The Theme was officially launched during the 39th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Addis Ababa on the 14th February 2026. The Theme speaks directly to advancing Africa's Agenda 2063 and achieving the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 6- Clean Water and Sanitation. The theme emphasizes the need to:
 - Strengthen Political Leadership by reaffirming water and sanitation as enablers of industrialization, health, peace, and food systems.
 - Shift the narrative to highlight water's central role in economic growth, job creation, and industrialization.
 - Mobilize investment and finance to expand climate-resilient water and sanitation services across the continent.

6. Today, as we celebrate Africa Day across the Continent, we in Botswana wish to use this opportunity to call on all Batswana, including those in the diaspora, to join us in realizing our vision of a Botswana whose people enjoy a quality life and are fully included in determining their livelihoods.
7. Among our priority agendas is the promise to deliver healthcare and social protection. This promise can only be realized through, among other things, ensuring access to water and the provision of sanitation facilities.
8. At the African Union, we have adopted a common position on reparations and launched a global reparations fund to deepen diaspora collaboration for stronger advocacy and inclusion in the continent's development agenda. I therefore call on our own diaspora to join this effort and help us address the gaps created by current economic hardships.
9. In this regard, the Ministry of International Relations is developing a Diaspora Strategy aimed at mobilizing our citizens abroad and transforming the networks and connections they have built into measurable economic, cultural, and diplomatic capital for Botswana.

Bagaetsho,

10. In Botswana, we are a semi-arid country. We have learned that every drop counts. Most parts of the country face inadequate water supply sources and services. In recent years, water shortages have persisted because of growing demand, compounded by the effects of climate change.
11. Nonetheless, it remains our responsibility as Government to provide reliable water supply and sanitation services. As we focus on investment, we are actively seeking opportunities for African and global investors to partner with us for shared growth and mutual benefit.
12. This is precisely why the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP) identified water as a critical area for economic transformation. Under the BETP's dedicated Water and

Infrastructure Pillar, we are shifting from reactive interventions to a proactive, delivery-focused approach.

13. We aim to accelerate mega-infrastructure pipelines to bridge the geographic gap between water sources and dry settlements, deploy smart storage technologies to guarantee water security during severe droughts, and unlock private sector partnerships to fund and implement these extensive distribution networks more efficiently and effectively.
14. We also recognize that water scarcity is deeply linked to sanitation, and that this crisis is not gender-neutral. The burden of water and sanitation deficits falls disproportionately on women and girls. When clean water is scarce, sanitation systems deteriorate, forcing women and girls to feel unsafe using facilities outside their homes. They bear the heaviest burden of inadequate hygiene, compromising their health, safety, dignity on a daily basis.
15. These complex challenges require us to increase investment by allocating more resources to water and sanitation projects, while actively involving communities in decision-making processes to co-create innovative and sustainable local solutions for water management and sanitation systems.
16. In this way, we can systematically improve community sanitation facilities and integrate sanitation and hygiene education into all schools, which have the power to influence entire communities. This effort aligns perfectly with the Government of Botswana's Sanitation Roadmap Activity 8, which calls for a national campaign for behavioural change.
17. It also links directly with the President's National Clean-Up Campaign, which seeks to promote environmental cleanliness, sustainability and good health. I therefore, encourage all of us to take part in the Campaign, which has been designated to take place every second Saturday of every month.
18. This initiative presents an important opportunity to improve our public health by reducing disease transmission and promoting gender and social equity.

19. As custodians of a shared and precious inheritance, let us commit ourselves to collective action. Together, we can ensure that Botswana, and indeed Africa, has the water, sanitation, and resilience it needs to thrive.

I thank you.