



Republic of Botswana

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY SPEECH

ORGANISATION 1200

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

BY

MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Mr. Chairman, it is my honour to present to this Honourable House the budget proposals for the Administration of Justice (AoJ) for the Financial Year 2026/27. The core mandate of the Judiciary is to hear civil and criminal proceedings and determine in a manner which ensures peace, safety, good governance and the rule of law.

2. Mr. Chairman, please permit me to present for the attention of this August House, the **Administration of Justice's (AOJ)** budget proposal for the financial year 2026/27. My presentation will be led by achievements in terms of policies, strategies and projects, as well as challenges experienced in the 2025/26 financial year, planned policies, programmes, critical initiatives and projects to be implemented in the 2026/27 financial year. The focus of AoJ continues to be on transforming the Judiciary to make it more relevant and responsive to emerging trends. This includes amongst others, introduction of new reforms, specialized courts and digitization to achieve its goal of a world class judiciary.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR

3. Mr. Chairman, The Annual Performance Judicial Report for 2025 which covers performance of the Courts throughout the preceding year and

provides an in-depth overview of all activities in the Judicature was released in February 2026. The report indicates that the disposal rate for criminal cases at the High Courts from **January 2025 to 31st December 2025** stands at **40%** whilst at the Magistrate Courts the rate is **54%**. The disposal rate for civil cases at the High Court is **50%** whilst at the Magistrates Courts it stands at **77.3%**. **Mr Chairman**, this is a significant improvement compared to the previous year in terms of disposal of cases at both the High Court and Magistrates Courts. For the Court of Appeal, the report indicates that for substantive appeals the performance for the period January 2025 to November 2025 stands at 87%, whilst for applications over the same period performance was 93% indicative of a significant improvement from last year.

- 4. Mr. Chairman**, in its quest to continue to improve access to justice and improve on public confidence, on the 4th of November 2025, the High Court Sitting at Mahalapye became operational and is currently housed at the Mahalapye Magistrate Court. There is currently one Judge who is also the Judge President heading the division.
- 5.** Preceding the opening of the Mahalapye High Court Division, was the establishment of the Criminal Court launched on the 4th of September 2025, to deal solely with criminal cases. The court has divisions in the North (Francistown High Court) and South (Gaborone- Broadhurst Court). The need of this special court could not be emphasized as evidenced by the low disposal of criminal cases at the High Court which

stood at **32% in 2024 and 40% in 2025** **Mr. Chairman**, it is my hope and conviction that I will be reporting positive results next year this time.

- 6.** During the year under review, the Judiciary held two very important conferences; the Judicial Conference, where all AoJ Stakeholders and partners were present to discuss and engage each other on issues related to Justice and other reforms. There was also the Southern and Eastern African Chief Justice Forum where the Botswana Judiciary and Namibian Judiciary signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Both conferences were officiated by The President of the Republic of Botswana.
- 7.** The Administration of Justice in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Financial Intelligence Agency, and the Institute for Combating Illicit Financial Flows (ICIFI) hosted a colloquium for Justices of the Court of Appeal of Botswana on the role of the judiciary in curbing financial crime. The colloquium brought together resident Justices of the Court of Appeal, retired judge from the region, experts on Anti-money laundering, and renowned academics. The President of the Republic of Botswana delivered a key note address.
- 8. Mr. Chairman**, in January 2025, the Trust Property Control Act (TPCA) was amended to align it with the revised Financial Action Task Force (FATF) requirements in relation to trusts and implement recommendations from the Non-Profit Organisation Terrorism Financing

Sectoral Risk Assessment by providing mechanisms that prevent non-profit trusts from being abused for terrorism financing whilst avoiding undue disruption of their activities. Consequently, Botswana was in September 2025, upgraded by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) from Non-Compliant rating to Largely Compliant on Recommendation 8 dealing with preventing Non-Profit Organisation from being abused for terrorism financing.

9. The Master of the High Court through its Trust Property Unit participated in the National Risk Assessment (NRA) exercise and co-chaired the working group responsible for assessing the money laundering risks related to legal persons and arrangements. The draft NRA report was concluded in December 2025.

10. The Court of Appeal has on the 18th November 2025, issued Practice Directives in respect of Applications for leave to appeal and appeals in respect of Public Tenders and Filing of heads of argument. The need to issue the Directives pertinent to public tenders was to expedite the hearing of public tenders in a bid to alleviate disruption of essential services, avoid financial loss and ensure timely implementation of projects in the public interest. With regards to filing of heads of arguments, the Directive was to assist the Court by allowing sufficient time to consider the issues before the hearing so as to avoid delay and ensure cases proceed efficiently.

III. CHALLENGES

11. Mr. Chairman, shortage of manpower is a challenge for the Judiciary. There is need to create new functions to improve our performance and adapt to change. However, the Government's Directive to freeze the creation of new positions makes it difficult for the AoJ to establish critical functions such as the Court Annexed Mediation, Transformation Office, Ministerial Technical Unit and Procurement Oversight Unit. We thus have to work with the limited resources available and rationalise some of the existing positions to address critical manpower needs. The Judiciary is currently in the process of restructuring the Magistracy and Registrarship and working on Delinking the Masters Office, and both processes require resources, both human and financial to see them through.

IV. PLANNED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR 2026/2027

12. Mr. Chairman, upon the conclusion of the National Risk Assessment, the Trust Property Unit plans to embark on cascading the findings to the trust sector and developing supervision framework in line with identified risks. These would enable the Trust Property Unit to develop a Supervision Strategy, conduct inspections on a risk-based approach and provide relevant outreach and guidance notes to the sector. Through the technical assistance secured from SecFin Africa, digital tools will be developed to provide an integrated platform for implementing risk-based supervision of

the Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professionals (DNFBPs) sector including trust service providers.

Maintenance of court facilities will commence in 2026/27 to address major maintenance issues experienced throughout our courts. Amongst those earmarked for maintenance are; structural repairs and air conditioning repairs at Francistown High Court, air conditioning at both Gaborone High Court and Broadhurst Magistrates Court. This will enhance the appearance of and also improve functionality of our facilities to better serve internal and external customers.

- 13. Mr. Chairman,** it is our intention to design and develop an electronic court records system following the collapse of the old one. The process to procure the services have commenced and I am optimistic that before the end of the financial year the system will have been developed.

Commercial Courts

- 14. Mr. Chairman,** the Chief Justice, in his Legal Year Speech in February 2026, announced the establishment of the Commercial Court and that the court will assist in fostering an investment friendly environment and promote the stimulation of economic growth in Botswana. Investors will have confidence that their disputes are disposed of efficiently and on time. Court Annexed Mediation will be first applied in the Commercial Court, and the AoJ is currently in the preparatory processes of its establishment.

V. BUDGET UTILISATION FOR 2025/2026 FINANCIAL YEAR

15. Mr. Chairman, the Recurrent Budget provision in 2025/26 was **Four Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Eight Hundred and Twenty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Ten Pula (P428, 822, 210)**. As at 26th February 2026, an amount of **Three Hundred and fifty-five million, three hundred and fifty-six thousand eight hundred and ten-pula fifteen Thebe (P355 356 810.15) or 82%** has been utilised. It is anticipated that by the end of the financial year more than 95% of the remaining budget will have been spent as most of the services are expected to be paid in mid-Mach and the last week of March 2026.

16. The Development Budget on the other hand had a budget provision of **Sixteen Million, Six Hundred and Sixty thousand Pula (P16, 660,000)** for the 2025/26 Financial Year, the development budget has been underspent with less than 25% of the budget utilized. The under expenditure was due to the delays in commencement of the procurement process which tend to take time, especially crafting of the ITT and their approvals thereof.

VI. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR

Mr. Chairman, allow me now to present the 2026/27 Recurrent and Development budget requests.

RECURRENT BUDGET

17. Mister Chairman, I request an amount of **Four Hundred and Thirty-Four Million, Nine Hundred and Fifty-Eight Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety Pula (P434,958,490)** for the recurrent budget. This represents an increase of **1.4%** over the 2025/2026 approved budget of **Four Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Eight Hundred and Twenty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Ten Pula (P428, 822, 210)**. The additional 1.4% covers payments for witnesses, payment for prodeo counsel fees and basic salaries and allowances.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

18. Mr. Chairman, for the Development Budget, I request a total amount of **Twenty- Four Million, Two Hundred and Eighty-Six Million, Four Hundred and Twelve Pula (P24,286,412)** for the 2026/27 Financial Year. The budget covers infrastructure projects; Maintenance of Court Facilities, Maintenance of Judges Houses, Improvements to magistrates' Houses. Other projects to be executed include court security enhancements, computerisation projects such as e-Filing and procurement of Judges' vehicles.

VII. CONCLUSION

19. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my presentation of the 2026/27 Budget Proposal for the Administration of Justice. I therefore move that the sum of **Four Hundred and Thirty-Four Million, Nine Hundred and Fifty-Eight Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety Pula (P434,958,490)** under the Recurrent Budget for Organisation 1200 be approved and stand part of the Schedule of the Appropriation (2026/2027) Bill, 2026 (Bill No. 1 of 2026), and that the sum of **Twenty- Four Million, Two Hundred and Eighty-Six Million, Four Hundred and Twelve Pula (P24,286,412)** under the Development Budget for Organisation 1200 be approved and stand part of the Estimates for the Financial Year 2026/27.

I move accordingly.

I thank you, **Mr. Chairman**.