



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY SPEECH

ORGANIZATION 1500

2026/2027 ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUNDS

**BY THE
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HONOURABLE PHENYO BUTALE (PhD)**

16th March 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Mr Chairman**, it is a singular honour and privilege to present for consideration and approval by this Honourable Committee, the budget Estimates for the Ministry for International Relations under organization 1500 for the Financial Year 2026/2027.

1.2 The total proposed budget for the Ministry amounts to Eight hundred and fifty-two million, six hundred and fifty-three thousand, seven hundred and sixty Pula **(P852,653,760)**.

1.3 Of this amount, Eight hundred and twenty-three million, four hundred and three thousand, seven hundred and sixty Pula **(P823,403,760)** is for Recurrent Expenditure, while Twenty-nine million, two hundred and fifty thousand, Pula **(P29,250,000)** is for Development Expenditure.

1.4 Organisation 1500 comprises the Ministry Headquarters; twenty three (23) diplomatic missions.

1.5 **Mr Chairman**, in this presentation I will:

- a) outline the evolving global landscape within which the Ministry operates;
- b) review performance for the 2025/2026 financial year;

- c) present the Ministry's proposed budget for the year 2026/2027;and
- d) conclude by moving that this Honourable Committee approve the Ministry's budget estimates for the year 2026/2027.

2.0 MINISTRY MANDATE AND GLOBAL OVERVIEW

2.1 **Mr Chairman**, the mandate of the Ministry for International Relations is to advance and safeguard Botswana's national interests abroad through the formulation, coordination and implementation of foreign policy. Our foreign policy is an extension of our domestic priorities, reflecting Botswana's sovereignty, economic aspirations, democratic values, and the welfare and protection of our citizens. In essence, it represents the projection of Botswana's national interests onto the international stage. These interests include the preservation of our territorial integrity, economic prosperity, political sovereignty, the safety of our citizens, and national security. Guided by these principles, the Ministry works to ensure coherence in the articulation and effective promotion of Botswana's foreign policy and national interests globally.

2.2 The global environment in which we operate remains volatile and complex. Heightened geopolitical rivalry, armed conflicts, the climate crisis, pandemics, terrorism, and governance challenges continue to reshape international relations. While multilateral institutions face increasing strain, they remain essential platforms for small states such as Botswana. Botswana, therefore, remains firmly committed to multilateralism and to a rules-based international order. Through partnerships with like-minded nations, we strengthen our voice and contribute to global peace, stability, and sustainable development.

3.0 BOTSWANA'S FOREIGN POLICY

3.1 **Mr Chairman**, Botswana's foreign policy remains anchored in the five national values of ***Democracy, Development, Unity, Self-Reliance and Botho (Humility)***. It emphasises adherence to multilateralism, non-alignment, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for territorial integrity and human rights.

3.2 Under the leadership of President Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, our foreign policy has sharpened its focus on advancing

economic diplomacy and promoting human rights. In today's competitive global ecosystem, diplomacy must yield tangible economic outcomes-trade, expansion, investment attraction, job creation and market access for Botswana's goods and services.

4.0 EXPANSION OF DIPLOMATIC FOOTPRINT

4.1 **Mr Chairman,** Government has earmarked the establishment of new diplomatic Missions in; Ankara, Turkey; Muscat, Sultanate of Oman; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and a Consulate in Dubai. These regions presents strategic economic opportunities in trade, logistics, energy cooperation and investment.

4.2 Botswana cannot effectively compete globally with a limited diplomatic presence. It is for this reason that the Ministry has prioritised expanding Botswana's diplomatic footprint into the Gulf region, which represents a centre of considerable economic influence and capital mobility. By strategically expanding our international representation, we can leverage on the power of diplomacy to advance national priorities. If we

are serious about economic transformation, we must be present where capital flows.

5.0 PROMOTING OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS IN A COMPETITIVE GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM

- 5.1 **Mr Chairman**, During the period under review, the Ministry focused on advancing Botswana's national interests by promoting economic diplomacy initiatives and strengthening the country's image, both domestically and internationally, as a respected and human-rights-centred nation with influence at the bilateral, regional and global levels.
- 5.2 The Ministry facilitated high level strategic engagements across Africa, Europe, the Gulf and America. These engagements produced agreements in agriculture; cooperation in digital transformation; enhanced market access for Botswana beef; strengthened regional trade corridors, including through the Kazungua Bridge Authority.
- 5.3 Botswana as a member of the international community fully subscribes to multilateralism and a rules based international order. Invariably, in this setup, we work with like-minded

countries to amplify our voices as small countries to contribute to a predictable universal system. Customarily, this calls for us to partner with others towards finding durable solutions for sustainable development, peace and stability, which will contribute to improving the quality of life for our citizens.

5.4 Notable accomplishments in this regard, include, inter alia, strategic international engagements aimed at advancing the country's foreign policy objectives. The Ministry engaged with international strategic partners to market Botswana as a key destination for tourism and foreign direct investment, as a drive mainly towards employment creation, especially for the youth and improving the quality of life for our people.

6. ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 **Mr Chairman**, the smooth transfer of power from the former ruling party to the current administration has further strengthened Botswana's global reputation as a stable, rules-based democracy. We continue to promote democracy, good governance and the rule of law as foundations for attracting foreign direct investment and strengthening investor confidence.

6.2 During the year under review, the Ministry facilitated several high-level engagements aimed at advancing economic partnerships. These included Presidential visits and strategic engagements to attract foreign direct investment, promote tourism and expand market access for Botswana's products. Most of these engagements took place through international expos, business fora and targeted business meetings.

6.3 **Mr Chairman**, The Ministry also facilitated the launch of the Kazungula Bridge Authority on 24 February 2026, officiated by the Presidents of Botswana and Zambia. The Kazungula Bridge

is a transformative regional infrastructure project that will catalyse trade within the SADC region by improving transport connectivity and reducing logistics costs. It represents a model of smart partnership that will create opportunities for Botswana's businesses to participate in regional and global value chains.

6.4 **Mr Chairman**, during the current budget cycle, the Ministry facilitated several of the President's high-level strategic visits aimed at strengthening diplomatic relations and unlocking economic opportunities. These included visits to neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

6.5 Further engagements were undertaken with the United States, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Estonia and Hungary. These visits focused on cooperation in agriculture, digital transformation and investment promotion. Outcomes included agreements on agricultural cooperation, digital technology partnerships and improved market access for Botswana beef.

7. IMPROVING RELATIONS - STATE AND OFFICIAL VISITS

7.1 **Mr Chairman**, Botswana was honoured to host several Heads of State and Government during the year under review. These included the President of Zimbabwe and then Chairperson of SADC, Dr. Emmerson Mnangagwa; the President of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema; the President of Namibia, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah; and the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Right Honourable Mr. Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane.

7.2 Botswana also hosted the first ever State Visit from the Republic of India when the President of India, Mrs Droupadi Murmu, visited Botswana in November 2025. This historic visit marked a significant milestone in Botswana–India relations and culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Pharmacopoeial Cooperation, as well as the official handover of donated cheetahs to the Government of India.

8. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERALISM - REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL ENGAGEMENTS

8.1 **Mr Chairman**, Botswana remains an active and constructive member of the international community. Through its membership in the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, Botswana continues to contribute to shaping regional and continental policy in support of peace, development and our national interests.

8.2 The President, Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, currently serves as Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, while Botswana's Ms Joy Phumaphi serves as Executive Secretary of the Alliance.

8.3 The President was also appointed Vice-Chair of the AU Sub-Committee of Heads of State and Government on the African Continental Free Trade Area at the AU Summit held in February 2026.

8.4 In addition, I, in my capacity as Minister for International Relations, chair the African Union Ministerial Committee on Candidatures within the International System.

- 8.5 Botswana's Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs also chairs the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
- 8.6 Botswana continues to contribute actively to the regional peace and security agenda. In recognition of this posture, Botswana was elected to the AU Peace and Security Council for the 2024–2026 term and chaired the Council in October 2025.
- 8.7 **Mr Chairman,** During Botswana's chairship, the Council held the 16th Joint Consultative Meeting with the European Union Peace and Security Council in Brussels and the 19th Joint Consultative Meeting with the United Nations Security Council. The Council also convened discussions on the African Standby Force strategic review and an open session on Women, Peace and Security marking 25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- 8.8 At the sub-regional level, former President Mokgweetsi Masisi has been nominated to the Panel of SADC Peace Facilitators, positioning Botswana within the AU–SADC–EAC Peace Facilitation Mechanism for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Botswana has also led AU Election Observer Missions in Ghana in December 2024 and Tanzania in October 2025.

8.9 Promoting the placement of Botswana in international organisations remains a priority as part of our broader strategy to expand employment opportunities for our citizens.

8.10 Within SADC, Botswana has achieved full quota fulfilment, including representation at the Executive Secretary level.

8.11 The Ministry also continues to pursue the Presidential initiative of hosting United Nations regional and continental offices in Botswana. A key milestone was the opening of the UN-Habitat Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa in Gaborone in July 2025. Government is currently refurbishing Orapa House to accommodate additional international organisations.

9.0 PROTECTING BATSWANA ABROAD - CONSULAR SERVICES

9.1 **Mr Chairman**, the protection of Batswana abroad remains both a constitutional and moral responsibility. As increasing numbers of our citizens seek opportunities overseas, the demand for consular services has risen significantly. Through the work of our twenty-three Missions abroad, the Ministry continues to strengthen protection mechanisms for Batswana.

9.2 Over the past five years, there has been a notable increase in Batswana seeking employment abroad. This has also resulted in a growing number of citizens residing outside the country without proper documentation, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, thereby increasing demand for consular services. In some cases, individuals have resorted to fraudulent asylum claims, exposing themselves to heightened vulnerability. The protection of every Motswana remains central to our mandate.

9.3 Botswana has also faced certain setbacks, including the introduction of visa requirements for entry into the United Kingdom and visa bond measures imposed by the United

States. The Ministry continues to engage our counterparts diplomatically with a view to restoring ease of travel for Botswana.

9.4 Currently, Botswana enjoys visa-free access to seventy-eight countries. The Ministry remains committed to expanding this number over the coming years.

9.5 **Mr Chairman**, we are also concerned by reports of African youth, including Botswana, being recruited to fight in the ongoing Russia - Ukraine conflict. To date, four cases involving Botswana have been reported, and one citizen has been successfully repatriated. We continue to work with relevant authorities to secure the safe return of our citizens while cautioning young people against such dangerous enticements.

10.0 DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

10.1 **Mr Chairman**, the Ministry has developed a comprehensive Diaspora Engagement Policy with support from the International Organization for Migration. The Policy is currently awaiting Cabinet approval. It seeks to harness the contribution of the Botswana diaspora to national development through remittances, investment and skills transfer.

10.2 The Botswana diaspora remain an important source of strength for our country's growth and prosperity, and I encourage them to continue participating actively in Botswana's development.

11. DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

11.1 **Mr Chairman**, Botswana continues to benefit from the goodwill of its development partners through grants, donations, scholarships and training opportunities. No country develops in isolation, and this support will continue to play an important role in advancing Botswana's development priorities.

12.0 BUDGET UTILIZATION FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026

a) Recurrent Budget Utilization

12.1 **Mr Chairman**, The approved budget for the Ministry's recurrent expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year was Seven Hundred and Seventy-Six Million, Five Hundred and Forty Thousand, and Forty Pula (**P776 540 040**). As of December 31, 2025, the Ministry has spent Five hundred and thirty-one million, eight hundred and nine thousand, four hundred and sixty-two Pula (**P531,809,462**), which amounts to **68%** of the total budget.

12.2 **Mr Chairman**, expenditure across the four primary cost drivers reveals utilization levels ranging from 30% to 71%, reflecting a strategic approach to prioritization and cost containment.

12.3 **Personnel Emoluments** expenditure totalled **P258.44 million**, reflecting a **67%** utilisation rate with savings achieved through delayed recruitment, vacant positions, and a phased deployment strategy.

12.4 **Procurement** expenditure reached **P248.21 million**, representing a **71%** utilisation rate, driven by a focus on essential procurement activities. **Training** expenditure stood at **P858,157**, with a utilization rate of **70%**. The decision to defer non-critical training initiatives enabled prioritizing essential capacity-building needs.

12.5 **Travel expenditure** was managed with a strong emphasis on cost reduction during the period under review. **Internal travel** accounted for **P2.36 million**, representing a **30%** utilisation rate, attributable to stringent cost-containment measures, and increased reliance on virtual engagements. **External travel** expenditure totalled **P21.74 million**, reflecting a utilisation rate of **67%**. Spending in this area was limited to approved strategic and statutory engagements, ensuring cost-effectiveness while safeguarding essential international representation.

b) Development Budget Utilization

12.6 **Mr. Chairperson**, as of the 23rd February 2026, the expenditure under the Development was recorded as P 8, 075, 347.50 out of the revised budget of P21,514,500, and the

expenditure was attributed to the austerity measures imposed by the Ministry of Finance. Only two projects (these being the renovation of the State Guest House and the completion of the purchase of the Chancery building in Japan i.e. partitioning and associated modifications) were approved with the rest being deferred to the 2026/27 financial year.

13.0 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026

a) Recurrent Budget: 2026/2027

13.1 **Mr Chairman**, the proposed Recurrent Budget for the Financial Year 2026/27 amounts to Eight Hundred and Twenty-Three Million, Four Hundred and Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty Pula **(P823,403,760)**. This figure reflects an increase of Forty-Six Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty-Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Twenty Pula **(P46,863,720)**, or **6%**, compared to the approved budget of P776,540,040 for the 2025/2026 Financial Year.

13.2 This increase is driven by the necessity to sustain current operations, address rising cost pressures, and support the

expansion of Botswana's diplomatic engagements and international obligations.

13.3 The budget is allocated as follows:

Personnel Emoluments

a) A total of Four Hundred and Sixteen Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty Pula (**P416,894,940**) is designated for personnel emoluments, constituting **51%** of the total Recurrent Budget.

b) This allocation encompasses basic salaries, foreign service and other staff-related allowances, as well as remuneration for locally recruited staff at our Diplomatic Missions. It illustrates the Government's unwavering commitment to cultivating and retaining a professional workforce dedicated to fulfilling Botswana's foreign policy objectives.

Operational Costs

a) An amount of One Hundred and Twenty-Seven Million, Two Hundred and Sixty-Nine Thousand, Nine Hundred and Eighty Pula (**P127,269,980**), which makes up **15%** of the budget, is earmarked for operational costs.

b) A significant portion of this allocation, approximately **62%** is directed towards assessed contributions to international and regional organizations, reflecting Botswana's dedication to multilateralism and active participation in global and regional platforms.

c) External travel also constitutes considerable expenditure, stemming from diplomatic engagements, international conferences, negotiations, and oversight responsibilities for Missions abroad.

13.4 An allocation of Two hundred and forty-eight million, seven hundred and twenty-seven thousand and ten pula (**P248,727,010**), is designated for essential utilities, property rentals, maintenance, and office supplies critical to maintaining service delivery at Headquarters and across our Missions. This funding is crucial for ensuring the continuity of operations and the effective functioning of our infrastructure.

13.5 Furthermore, an amount of Thirty Million, Five Hundred and Eleven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirty Pula (**P30,511,830**), representing **4%**, is allocated for the establishment of new Diplomatic Missions. This funding aligns

with the Government's strategic objective of strengthening Botswana's international presence, enhancing bilateral relations, and advancing economic diplomacy in priority regions.

13.6 While the Ministry remains committed to operating within fiscal constraints, it is essential to note the ongoing challenge posed by limited funding for Promotional and Economic Diplomacy initiatives. These constraints hamper the Ministry's capacity to fully address the increasing expectations placed on Diplomatic Missions to actively engage in trade promotion, attract investment, advance tourism development, and pursue opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment.

13.7 **Mr Chairman**, on the whole, the proposed Recurrent Budget for the 2026/27 Financial Year seeks to balance fiscal prudence with the imperative to deliver on the Ministry's mandate effectively in an increasingly complex global environment.

14. DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2026/27

14.1 **Mr Chairman**, the Ministry requests an allocation of Twenty-Nine Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand, Pula **(P29,250,000)** for Development Expenditure. This is an increase of Seven million, Seven Hundred and Thirty-Five

Thousand, Five Hundred Pula (P7,735,500) or 36% from the revised budget of Twenty-One Million, Five Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Five Hundred Pula (P21,514,500) in 2025/2026. It is worth noting that the original budget, prior to reductions, stood at **P57,800,000**.

The requested amount will cover the following projects:

- a) Construction of Chancery Building and Diplomatic Apartments in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Three Million Pula Only (P3,000,000)
- b) Renovation and refurbishment of the Ministry Office Building, which includes building of new extension joining Block-A and Block-B building: Two Million Pula Only (P2,000,000)
- c) Renovation of Properties Washington, DC: Four Million Pula Only (P4,000,000)
- d) Renovation of Zimbabwe Mission: Three Million Pula Only (P3,000,000)
- e) Renovation of Botswana High Commission properties in Pretoria: Two Million Pula only (P2,000,000).
- f) Renovation of State Guest House(Swedish House): Three Million Pula Only (P3,000,000).

- g) Reclamation and development of Plot No. 4899: Two Hundred and Fifty Pula only (P250,000).
- h) Renovation of New York Chancery: Eight million pula only (8,000,000.00).
- i) Renovation Of State Guest House II: Three million pula only (3,000,000.00).
- j) Renovation of VVIP Lounge at SSKIA: One million Pula only (1,000,000.00).

15. CONCLUSION

15.1 **Mr Chairman,** diplomacy is not separate from domestic development. It is a strategic instrument for national prosperity. Through diplomacy we open markets for our products, protect our citizens abroad, strengthen Botswana's voice in global affairs, and secure opportunities for future generations. Every export market we unlock supports a Motswana at home, and every investment we attract creates jobs and strengthens our economy.

15.2 The proposed budget therefore reflects our commitment to fiscal prudence while ensuring that Botswana remains visible, credible, and competitive in the international arena.

15.3 Before I conclude, allow me to express sincere appreciation to our development partners for their continued cooperation and support. I also wish to thank the President, our Chief Diplomat, for his sterling leadership in advancing Botswana's interests on the global stage. I further commend the dedicated staff of the Ministry for International Relations, both at Headquarters and at our Missions abroad, for their unwavering service to the nation.

15.4 The Ministry, therefore, counts on the continued support of this Honourable Committee as we continue working to advance Botswana's interests abroad and deliver tangible benefits for our people.

Mr Chairman, when Botswana is strong abroad, Botswana prosper at home.

15.3 As I now conclude my presentation of the 2026/2027 budget proposals, I move that the sum of Eight Hundred and Twenty-Three Million, Four Hundred and Three Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty Pula **(P823,403,760)**, for Recurrent Expenditure and Twenty-Nine Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pula

(P29,250,000) for Development Expenditure be approved and stand part of the 2026/2027 Appropriation Bill (No. 1 of 2026) for Organisation 1500.

I thank you **Mr Chairman!!!**