



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF LANDS AND AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY PRESENTATION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

BY THE ACTING MINISTER

HON. DR EDWIN G. DIKOLOTI

TUESDAY 2nd MARCH, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members, I have the honour today, to present the 2026/2027 budget proposals for Head 0500 – Ministry of Lands and Agriculture for your consideration and approval. Before I proceed with my presentation of the budget proposals, allow me to update honourable members on the Ministry's performance with respect to execution of the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 as well as delivery of the Ministry's strategic initiatives and projects.

The total budget allocated to the Ministry for Financial Year 2025/2026 amounted to P5.322 Billion; which comprised of P2.885 Billion for the Development Budget and P2.437 Billion for the Recurrent Budget. The Development Budget was reduced by a sum of P483 Million to P2.402 Billion. The Ministry's expenditure as of end of January 2026 stood at P774 Million or 32.2% of the Development Budget and P1.754 Billion or 71.98% of the Recurrent Budget.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry continues to advance a comprehensive agenda aimed at transforming Botswana's land and agricultural sectors through strategic planning and targeted interventions. These actions will unlock the value of land which will enable Botswana to enterprise and enhance livestock and crop production through adoption of modernised infrastructure, innovation-driven research, market access, and global competitiveness. This speech outlines our key achievements, ongoing initiatives, and planned programmes that collectively advance national prosperity, support farmers, communities and strengthen the foundations of a modern, resilient agricultural economy. All this is aimed at achieving our sector True North; *"To transform Botswana's agriculture into a diversified, resilient, and export-oriented sector that achieves food security, reduces imports, and drives economic growth"*.

Land Sector

Spatial Development Planning

Mr. Chairman, the ministry continues to implement the National Spatial Plan through preparation of various spatial plans to guide development in the country. One of the plans that was successfully prepared during the 2025/2026 financial year is the City of Francistown Development Plan with a span of 21 years (2025-2046). The plan was approved and gazetted in June 2025.

Other projects that were successfully completed in house include (i) the Spatial Development Code of 2025 which was approved in October 2025. Stakeholder capacitation for this project will continue during the 2026/2027 financial year. (ii) the final Tati Land Structure Plan, which aligns to the National Spatial Plan, was also completed and is awaiting Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA component is delayed due to liquidity challenges; furthermore, other land development projects in other areas are equally affected.

Surveying

Mr. Chairman, During the financial year 2025/2026 a total of 44,112 plots were surveyed across the country. Out of these 12,416 plots have been approved, while the remaining 31,696 plots are under examination and quality control. Having surveyed almost all plots within the built-up area, the plan for 2026/2027 is to commence surveying of land parcels to facilitate private sector investment for socio-economic development.

Secure Land Title Production

Mr. Chairman, to date a total of 19,621 Secure Land Titles have been issued, against 68,190 plots captured through Registered General Plans. The remaining 48,569 await registration. This demonstrates a significant gap between the national plot inventory and the number of titles reaching completion. Production initially rose after the amendments to the Deeds Registry Act of 2017 and the coming into force of the Tribal Land Act of

2018, with 2,707 SLTs issued in 2022/2023 and a peak of 7,655 in 2023/2024. However, output declined to 6,136 in 2024/2025 and 3,126 in 2025/2026 due to budget constraints, outdated equipment, incomplete ICT integration and persistent technical requirements such as the mandatory registration of Certificates of Registered Title under Section 46 of the Deeds Registry Act, which constrains registration in old villages. The proposed amendment to waive this requirement for built-up areas will unlock large volumes of pending titles.

Mr. Chairman, to stabilise and accelerate SLT production, my Ministry will implement two major digital modernisation projects under NDP 12: the upgrades of the Land Information System (LIS) and the Integrated Geographic Information System (IGIS). These will be delivered over a four-year horizon to strengthen automation, improve spatial and administrative data quality, enable full interoperability across all land administration institutions and introduce essential functionalities such as registration of deceased-estate leases, conversions from customary to common-law leases, and processing of subdivisions under Certificates of Registered Title and General Plans. The IGIS upgrade will further enhance spatial accuracy and ensure seamless data flow into LIS. Strong governance and monitoring will support consistent, efficient and high-volume SLT delivery. This will also be implemented over a four-year horizon, supported by structured governance and monitoring to ensure disciplined execution, full benefits realisation and sustained efficiency across the land administration system.

Mr. Chairman, The ministry proposes an Electronic Deeds Registration Systems Act, which will be an Act to provide for electronic deeds registration, recognising legislation regulating electronic communication and transactions, and to make provision for matters incidental thereto.

It is key to have land registration system digitalized for purposes of addressing not only systematic deficiencies but also technical shortcomings intimately connected or associated with the manual nature of doing land registration business at Deeds Registry.

Land Servicing

Mr. Chairman, The Land Servicing programme facilitates infrastructure development within a surveyed piece of land to render it usable and to enable access to plots. The following three categories have been adopted for Land Servicing; Full land servicing, Bulk land servicing and Minimal Land Servicing, Due to liquidity challenges the Ministry provides minimal land services such as bush clearing on pathways, grubbing and de-stumping, access road construction and construction of water trunk main for standpipe connections for access into newly allocated plots.

Due to the prevailing economic challenges, the allocated budgetary provision for 2026/2027 is also restricted to only ongoing projects which are at various stages of implementation. These include six (6) projects being; Ghanzi Block 7, Ghanzi Block 1-6, Botshabelo Infill and Metsimotlhabe Block 4 Package 1, Mmankgodi-Tloaneng-Gabane Road and SSKIA SEZ. In addition to these, there are Four (4) other projects which are currently at defects liability period being; Metsimotlhabe Block 4 –Package 2, Mmopane Block 1, Kachikau and Letlhakane/Letsibogo.

Access to Land

Mr. Chairman, access to land is the most important aspect in land management. Batswana's attachment to land is clearly understood; as land to a Motswana is a means of production, a family property, a source of identity and a capital asset to unlock potentials. My Ministry will strive to support all sectors with access to land, including the key sectors of renewable energy, agriculture, tourism and real estate development.

Mr. Chairman, access to and timely allocation of land remains a major issue in both state and tribal jurisdictions. While the Botswana Land Policy, 2019 has made unequivocal pronouncements on land access, many Batswana are still on the waiting list for plot allocation. Numerous factors, such as a lack of resources, have contributed to this state of affairs, but the availability of land free of encumbrances is the most significant.

Mr. Chairman, 877 residential plots in Selebi Phikwe and Francistown have been available for allocation to citizens since 2022, but allocations were delayed due to concerns on data readiness and system functionality. My Ministry commits to allocate these plots by the first quarter of 2026/2027 fiscal year. Additional 200 residential plots in Lobatse and 12 in Gaborone will also be allocated during this fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, to support economic resurgence and investor facilitation, My Ministry have allocated 23 industrial plots and 71 commercial plots in the cities of Gaborone, Lobatse and Francistown in the just ended fiscal year. Further, investors were facilitated through BITC and SPEDU, where land for investment was reserved as follows: SPEDU - 9 direct allocation; BITC - 4 direct allocation for commercial projects in Jwaneng. In addition, Land Boards across the country have extensively supported investment through provision of land as follows; 7661.7ha were allocated for Foreign Investment and for promotion of domestic investment 16,475.5ha were allocated to citizen owned companies.

Mr. Chairman, my Ministry has supported the Bonno Project through providing land for development. In that regard, a total of 168ha in different places were reserved in state land with a possible yield of 150,000 residential units. Across all Land Boards, 281.5ha targeting 15, 872 plots have been reserved for the Bonno project.

Agriculture Sector

Mr. Chairman, fragmented, individual smallholder production limits productivity, value addition and market access, while clustered production enables aggregation of output, standardisation of quality, shared use of infrastructure, and stronger linkages to input suppliers, processors, and markets, which are critical for agro-industrial development.

In this context, my Ministry intends to shift from individual-based production to cluster production as part of building critical production mass that will trigger value addition. The purpose of these clusters is to develop agricultural villages where the full agricultural value chain is implemented at production areas, thereby creating employment

opportunities and stimulating local economic development. Central to achieving this strategic shift is targeted infrastructure development including irrigation, storage, energy, roads, and processing facilities.

In light of the above, my Ministry is also leveraging on Public–Private Partnerships (PPP) as a strategic instrument to accelerate infrastructure development, enhance service delivery, and unlock private sector financing within the agricultural sector. This approach is aligned with Government’s broader economic diversification agenda and the drive towards job creation and export-led growth.

Livestock

Mr. Chairman, to drive the transformation and commercialisation of our livestock sub-sector, my Ministry is implementing strategic interventions across the value chain. Government has partnered with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) under the Botswana Livestock Commercialisation Project (BoLCOP). This initiative, with proposed funding of USD 86.84 million, aims to commercialise smallstock and poultry enterprises, targeting 50,000 households and reaching approximately 200,000 beneficiaries, with particular emphasis on women and youth.

Mr Chairman, BoLCOP is expected to generate new income streams for rural households, reduce reliance on subsistence farming, and expand access to local and regional markets. By strengthening smallstock and poultry enterprises, the project will contribute to job creation, household food security, and increased cash earnings, while supporting Botswana’s broader goal of raising agriculture’s contribution to GDP from 2 percent to 6 percent in the short term and 10 percent in the long term.

Mr Chairman, To increase the national cattle herd from 1.7 million to 5.0 million by 2030, key initiatives include A-Di-Tsale Programme that is intended to boost reproductive efficiency and calving rates, and the upgrading of the Ramatlabama National Artificial Insemination Laboratory into a Centre of Excellence and export hub for superior germplasm. Alongside this, the Static AI Programme continues to support herd growth

among rural farmers. However, in 2025/2026 performance declined to 3,622 cows from 6,522 cows in 2024/2025, against a target of 7,500, largely due to financial resource constraints.

Mr. Chairman, Semen collection as at December 2025 was 139,050 semen straws, with 2,948 straws sold at P75.00 each, generating P221,100.00 in revenue. These operations, however, remain constrained by limited cryogenic storage and frequent breakdowns of the liquid nitrogen plant. To address this, additional storage tanks will be procured to expand capacity and accelerate efficiency.

Mr. Chairman, progress is clearly evident in reproductive performance, with 43 cows successfully calved, yielding 40 healthy calves, while embryo harvesting has commenced to validate production efficiency. These milestones represent significant advances in the modernization of our breeding systems, driving higher productivity and positioning Botswana's livestock industry for sustainable growth.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Botswana has partnered with the Green Climate Fund and Conservation International to implement a Rangeland Restoration Project. This initiative aims to restore 46,000 hectares in the Kgalagadi, Ngamiland and Bobirwa landscapes constituting 104 villages, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve livelihoods, and create 6,000 green jobs through enhanced livestock management practices to rehabilitate degraded livestock rangelands.

Mr Chairman, on the same token, my Ministry is jointly implementing a Growing Greener Project by GIZ and Conservation International (CI) under the International Climate Initiative (IKI), a flagship programme for Botswana and the wider Southern African region. With a funding allocation of approximately EUR 5 million, the project focuses on the restoration and sustainable management of agro-pastoral systems in open arid landscapes. The project is targeting vulnerable communities in Ngamiland and other semi-arid zones, directly benefiting thousands of households through improved grazing systems, climate-smart practices, and market-linked opportunities.

Commodity Performance and Infrastructure Development

Mr. Chairman, my Ministry continues to strengthen the livestock value chain through strategic investments. The Tsabong Multi-Species Abattoir construction, completed in September 2025, together with the Gaborone Multi-Species Abattoir now being handed over to the Botswana Meat Commission after previously being leased to a private investor, will expand national processing capacity, create jobs, stimulate rural economies, and enhance Botswana's competitiveness in both domestic and international meat markets.

Mr. Chairman, the dairy sub-sector continues to face challenges. Local production stands at 8.2 million litres, meeting only 13 percent of national demand and forcing imports valued at P370.4 million. To address constraints of high feed costs and limited breeding stock, Government imported 150 dairy goats from Australia. The first cycle has produced 42 weaners now ready for disposal to local producers, while a second cycle is underway with 85 goats expected to kid in March 2026. Beyond breeding, strategic initiatives are being advanced. The Botswana Economic Transformation Plan (BETP) is stimulating private investment in dairy projects, while the Milk Valley initiative under Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) serves as a cornerstone for dairy industrialisation with potential 12% contribution to the local production. At the same time, my Ministry is actively promoting dairy investments in red zones, unlocking untapped potential and expanding production.

Mr Chairman, the poultry sub-sector remains a strong contributor to food security and employment, producing over 52,000 tons of broiler meat and 14 million dozen eggs annually, sustaining nearly 7,000 jobs. To further strengthen this industry, the MMASEBOTSE Cooperative Poultry Abattoir construction is now complete and will be handed over by March 2026. This abattoir has a slaughter capacity of 1,500 birds per day. This facility will provide smallholder farmers in the Bobirwa District with modern processing infrastructure, improve food safety, enhance value addition, and open opportunities for supply into both domestic and regional markets.

Mr. Chairman, Aquaculture and apiculture are prioritised as emerging sectors with strong potential for import substitution, income diversification, and rural employment. The Mmadinare Fish Hatchery remains a strategic national asset supporting fingerling supply for fish farmers countrywide. Despite temporary setbacks arising from disease outbreaks, sustained investment in hatchery rehabilitation and strengthened biosecurity measures continues to underpin the resilience and growth of the aquaculture sub-sector. Under the National Aquaculture Strategy, aquaculture production reached 88.17 metric tonnes in the 2025/2026 financial year, demonstrating steady progress towards enhanced domestic fish supply and sectoral sustainability.

In the apiculture sub-sector, honey production increased from 6.6 metric tonnes in 2024/2025 to 8.2 metric tonnes in 2025/2026, reflecting improved productivity and sectoral support. Concurrently, the refurbishment of the Selebi-Phikwe Beekeeping Multiplication and Honey Processing Facility is strengthening value chains and expanding market access under the National Apiculture Strategy. The integration of beekeeping into the Lemang Dijo Programme will further enhance household incomes while improving crop productivity through effective pollination service.

Multiplication farms rationalisation

Mr. Chairman, in line with Government's commitment to efficiency and fiscal prudence, the Ministry will rationalise operations across its multiplication farms. The Ramatlabama National Artificial Insemination Laboratory, and the Lobu Smallstock Farm and other farms with breeding stock will be downsized to ensure that they remain sustainable, manageable, and aligned with the current fiscal environment. To support this restructuring, and in order to reduce operational costs while safeguarding the integrity of our breeding programmes, the Ministry will auction selected breeding animals once the livestock movement ban is lifted.

Animal Disease Control

Mr. Chairman, Botswana has a strong record in controlling animal diseases of socio-economic importance such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), Anthrax, and Rabies. Yet, recent years have seen rising prevalence of bovine brucellosis, lumpy skin disease (LSD), Heartwater, and Senkobo in cattle, as well as Gumboro, Newcastle disease, and avian mycoplasmosis in poultry. Smallstock remain vulnerable to Heartwater, mange, and pasteurellosis, while rabies continues to affect both domestic animals and livestock in the Central and North West districts.

Today, over 80 percent of cattle are kept under communal systems, which presents unique challenges for disease surveillance and control. To address this, Government has invested in over 10,000 kilometres of cordon fences, separating disease-free zones from endemic areas. FMD alone accounts for more than 70 percent of reported outbreaks, but through vaccination, quarantine, and strict movement controls, Botswana has preserved disease-free zones covering 60 percent of national territory, sustaining access to premium export markets.

Mr. Chairman, these measures demonstrate Botswana's commitment to protecting farmer livelihoods and maintaining a resilient, competitive livestock sector. They underpin our national target of expanding the herd to five million cattle by 2030, while advancing agriculture's contribution to GDP from 2 percent to 10 percent under NDP12.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Control

Mr. Chairman, recurrent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) have caused severe economic losses, disrupted the supply chain, and restricted access to premium markets such as the European Union, which traditionally absorbs over 60 percent of Botswana's beef exports. In 2025 alone, the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) recorded throughput declines of more than 30 percent, translating into revenue losses exceeding P500 million. These shocks erode the potential of the sector to absorb labour and uplift livelihoods, particularly in rural areas where alternative revenue opportunities are limited.

Mr. Chairman, the current FMD outbreak has slowed progress toward the national target of five million cattle, with current numbers at approximately 1.7 million. The disease contributes to over 15 percent shortage of breeding stock and depresses calving rates to 45–50 percent, compared to the optimal 65–70 percent required to drive herd expansion. This reality underscores the fragility of our export-led growth strategy under NDP12, which is failing to retain momentum in the face of disease pressures, supply chain disruptions, and declining competitiveness.

The current regional foot and mouth disease situation in the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe poses a threat to productivity of the livestock sector. Due to this threat, the Government is implementing an FMD preventative plan along the entire border with the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe to reduce the risk of FMD incursion into the country. The approach is a multi-sectoral shared responsibility model which emphasizes stakeholder vigilance, community involvement (through Mephato), and active participation from the private sector. This transition moves away from a purely government-driven model.

Mr. Chairman, a series of awareness activities have been carried out to different stakeholders amongst others the farming community, veterinary professionals and the business community. The emphasis is based on a community-driven approach which protects the national livestock from FMD incursions by herding and kraaling animals, combating rampant cross-border livestock rustling and general crime. In the Bobirwa district, Mophato regiments led by Dikgosi and supported by law enforcement (Police, BDF, Wildlife), serve as an extra layer of security, especially along the porous Botswana/Zimbabwe border. This same arrangement will be extended to the other affected areas.

In January 2026, Botswana experienced FMD outbreaks of South African Territories (SAT) 1 in FMD free zones 3c and 6b in the North East and Tutume districts. Appropriate animal health control measures which include vaccination, movement controls, surveillance, strengthened bilateral collaborations, strengthened biosecurity, intensified maintenance

and patrol of the border and disease control fences are in place to control and manage the outbreak. So far, the disease has not been reported outside the two (2) infected zones 3c and 6b. Prohibition of movements for cloven-hoofed animals remains in place in zones 3b, 3c, 6a and 6b, while movement for direct slaughter is allowed in FMD free zones 4a, 4b, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Export and import of cloven-hoofed animals remains in place.

Mr. Chairman, to safeguard national and regional livestock productivity, Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) produces and supplies high quality vaccines for the control of transboundary animal diseases. The operational challenges at the institute remain due to aged infrastructure and outdated equipment, affecting plant reliability and consequently, vaccine production. To address these, BVI is implementing key capital projects. The Laboratory Project is advancing, with the building shell completed in April 2024 and pharmaceutical equipment procurement underway. Upon completion in July 2027, the facility will comply with regulatory standards, including Current Good Manufacturing Practice, and alleviate operational bottlenecks. Additionally, the Separation of World Organization for Animal Health and Quality Control Laboratories Project will commence in 2026/2027 to reduce cross-contamination risks.

Research and Development

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry is intensifying research, innovation, and sustainable management interventions that respond to both climate change and evolving market demands.

In the area of fodder production, my Ministry is expanding research on emerging and climate-resilient fodder crops suited to Botswana's conditions. At the same time, trials on winter fodder production to ensure year-round feed availability are ongoing. This work is aimed at reducing feed shortages, improving livestock productivity, and enhancing resilience during drought periods.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry is also exploring a Unique Cattle Identification System to reduce stock theft. Each animal possesses a distinct muzzle pattern—much like a human fingerprint—which can be used for precise identification. This technology will strengthen traceability, improve livestock security, and enhance confidence in beef value chain.

In addition, the Ministry is working towards the development of a Botswana dairy breed. The objective is to produce a high-yielding dairy animal that is well adapted to the country's harsh climatic conditions.

Mr. Chairman, my Ministry is also prioritising enhancement of surveillance and management of reproductive diseases. The strengthening of Botswana National Veterinary Laboratory (BNVL) technical capacity will improve diagnosis, research, and development of solutions for common reproductive diseases which will directly increase productivity and reduce economic losses for farmers.

Furthermore, my Ministry recognises that rangeland degradation poses a serious threat to the sustainability of the national herd expansion goals. We will therefore undertake comprehensive rangeland assessments to determine carrying capacity and implement rehabilitation measures to restore degraded ecosystems. Both physical and chemical restoration methods will be tested to identify the most cost-effective and socially acceptable solutions.

Mr. Chairman, as part of our broader strategy to diversify and modernise Botswana's agricultural sector, the ministry is taking deliberate steps to strengthen horticulture, biotechnology, and soil health management.

One of our key priorities is the establishment of a certified nursery for fruit tree seedling production, particularly for crops such as citrus and mango. This initiative will significantly diversify our crop base and expand opportunities within the horticulture sector. Citrus production, in particular, represents a promising growth area. Although Botswana is a relatively new entrant into the citrus export market, this presents a strategic opportunity to expand production, increase exports, and contribute meaningfully to economic diversification.

Mr. Chairman, to support this effort, the Ministry will undertake systematic research on the biotic and abiotic factors affecting selected cultivars across the country's different agro-ecological zones. This will ensure that propagation and production are based on sound scientific evidence, leading to improved survival rates, higher yields, and better-quality fruit.

In addition, the Ministry is prioritising the establishment and optimisation of a tissue culture laboratory. Tissue culture technology enables the production of large quantities of plant material under sterile and controlled conditions. This approach is especially valuable for crops that are difficult to propagate using conventional methods. It plays a critical role in breeding and multiplying both field and horticultural crops, including dates, potatoes, bananas, cactus, and neglected and underutilised species. Through applied research, the ministry will optimise the use of this technology to accelerate crop improvement, ensure disease-free planting material, and strengthen agricultural productivity.

At the same time, the ministry recognise that crop yields in Botswana remain below their potential. Improving soil health is therefore fundamental to enhancing productivity. Strategic investments in soil health will improve nutrient use efficiency and maximise returns from fertiliser use. To achieve this, systematic soil health assessments will be conducted to guide targeted interventions, prioritise actions, and monitor progress over time.

Furthermore, while a National Fertiliser Strategy has already been developed, its successful implementation will require needs-based research. This includes reviewing fertiliser recommendations, strengthening soil fertility management practices, and ensuring that inputs are aligned with specific soil conditions across the country.

Mr. Chairman, these initiatives reflect our commitment to building a diversified, science-driven, and productivity-focused agricultural sector. Through investment in certified nurseries, biotechnology, and soil health, the ministry will lay a strong foundation for sustainable growth, increased exports, and improved livelihoods for farmers.

Arable Farming

Mr. Chairman, after three consecutive years of drought, the 2024/2025 season has shown signs of recovery, with estimated cereal production of 134,000 tons—an improvement over the previous two seasons but still meeting only 44.7% of national requirements. On the other hand, the horticulture subsector continues to expand, narrowing the supply gap through increased production. However, agricultural productivity remains constrained by smallholder dominance, harsh agro-ecological conditions, climate variability, poor soils, and recurring pests and disease outbreaks. In response, the Ministry is implementing programmes to boost commercial production, climate resilience, value-chain development, and private sector partnerships.

Mr. Chairman, the review of the Arable Input Subsidy Programmes is currently underway, with a formal governance and review structure already in place. The review is assessing the programme's design, targeting mechanisms, subsidy levels, delivery modalities, and overall impact on productivity, food security, and value for money. The outcomes of the review will inform policy adjustments and implementation reforms aimed at improving effectiveness, sustainability, and farmer outcomes.

Despite financial constraints, Government remains committed to ensuring food security at household level. The Lemang Dijo Programme which was introduced after preliminary review of the past programmes aims to address past structural weaknesses. This marks a shift from welfare-based support to strategic, growth-driven agricultural development. The programme has already exceeded its 50,000-farmer target, reaching 74,000 beneficiaries, with an expected 70,000 tonnes of grain in the 2025/2026 cropping season.

Mr. Chairman, the recent floods in Pandamatenga have caused significant damage to the commercial farming sector, posing serious risks to food security, rural livelihoods, and fiscal stability. Pandamatenga has 40,000ha of cultivable land of which 8,000ha were affected by these floods. From the 8,000ha affected by floods, a total of 2,000 ha requires

replanting while and estimated 2,000 ha was eroded and requires rehabilitation. To date all farmers are fully back to their operations, and so far 15,708ha has been planted.

Mr. Chairman, Botswana has selected potato as a priority crop under One Country One Product (OCOP) initiative. Selecting potato as a priority product under OCOP is strategic due to its strong contribution to food security, import substitution, and agro-industrial development. Potatoes are a high-value, short-cycle crop with consistent national demand from households, hospitality, and food processing industries, making them commercially viable across multiple agro-ecological zones in Botswana

Mr. Chairman, Botswana has started full implementation of cannabis industry following the finalisation of the legal framework as per the 2025 State of Nation Address (SONA). The Cannabis Policy was approved by Parliament on the 2nd April 2025 whilst the Cannabis Act, 2025 was passed by Parliament on the 19th August 2025. The Cannabis Regulations were publicised on the 12th January 2026. The National Cannabis Control Authority (NCCA) started operations and the Government farm at Dibete has been identified and zoned as a site for Phase 1 cultivation. Other suitable areas would be identified and zoned accordingly, as we implement. Two companies have been granted Pilot Cultivation Licences, and more are being assessed as applications have now open. The two companies will be collaborating with National Agricultural Research and Development Institute (NARDI) among others for research and skills transfer.

Plant Pest and Disease Control

Mr. Chairman, the 2025/2026 cropping season is experiencing pest outbreaks (locust, quelea, armyworm) in the swampy areas of Okavango, Chobe and Boteti. My Ministry continues to safeguard plant health while facilitating trade in plants and plant products to support agricultural productivity and export-led diversification. Government remains committed to strengthening plant health systems, with 2026/2027 priorities focusing on integrated pest management, full rollout of electronic certification, export market expansion, and upgrading laboratories to international standards.

Market Access

Mr. Chairman, My Ministry remains steadfast in enhancing market access for livestock and agricultural producers, leveraging multiple avenues to strengthen both domestic and international trade. On the international front, the five-year dispensation for the export of live cattle for slaughter concluded on 30 April 2025, during which a cumulative total of 562,554 cattle were exported, generating P16.9 million in cattle levy revenue. This achievement reflects the sustained contribution of the livestock sector to national revenue and international market engagement.

In addition, my Ministry continues to safeguard exports of plant products through farm registration, certification and inspections to facilitate compliance to market requirements and trade, thereby supporting agricultural productivity. Exports of fresh citrus increased from 2,790.7 tonnes in 2024 to 13,721.2 tonnes in 2025. Furthermore, the implementation of the Electronic Phytosanitary Certification System is at an advanced stage thus enhancing Botswana's credibility in international markets.

In response to concerns raised by farmers and stakeholders regarding the under-performance of the beef sector, my Ministry has initiated the establishment of the Meat Industry Regulatory Authority (MIRA). MIRA will strengthen the resilience of the livestock and meat sector by promoting a conducive business environment, ensuring consumer protection, and safeguarding market access. The drafting of the MIRA Act Regulations by the Attorney General's Chambers is in progress, laying the foundation for enhanced sector governance and market competitiveness.

Mr. Chairman, the Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) continues to play a pivotal role in securing livestock productivity and protecting market access. In the 2025/26 financial year, BVI supplied a total of 9,999,064 mono-doses of six critical vaccines including Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Anthrax, CBPP, Blackleg, Rabies, and Pasteurella to seven countries. Notably, FMD vaccines accounted for 8 million mono-doses, underscoring BVI's

central role in controlling this transboundary animal disease and sustaining Botswana's access to high-value international beef markets.

Mr. Chairman, the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) serves as the national anchor for beef processing, marketing, and export, creating value for farmers while enhancing Botswana's competitiveness in regional and international markets. Under this mandate, BMC has made significant strides in its performance transformation. Notably, farmers' payments totaling P698.3 million were fully liquidated, leaving no outstanding arrears except for Maun farmers who are yet to submit banking details, an achievement that restores confidence among primary producers. Operational performance also improved, with cattle throughput at Lobatse Plant increased by 22 percent, from 51,070 to 62,204 head, reflecting improved plant capacity utilisation and operational efficiency while throughput in Maun Plant remained subdued in 2025 due to farmer's reluctance to quarantine cattle. The Maun Plant only processed 3, 234 cattle in 2025 down from 6, 492 the previous year. Total revenue increased by 31 percent, from P790 million to P1.036 billion, demonstrating BMC's progress toward becoming a competitive and financially sustainable entity.

Mr. Chairman, BMC continues to advance its transformation through strategic investments in value addition, profitability, and market access. By 2026, the completion of the new Meat Value Addition and Secondary Processing Plant, the revitalized Tannery Project, and a modern cold storage facility at Table Bay in South Africa will diversify products, enhance efficiency, and unlock new revenue streams. These initiatives will deliver higher farmer returns, support the Government's vision of an export-led, diversified economy, and position Botswana's beef industry as modern, globally competitive, and recognized for quality and compliance.

Mr. Chairman, my Ministry is currently revitalizing and refurbishing the BMC Tannery in Lobatse to a modern commercially viable project. The rationale behind the BMC tannery is to promote value addition within the livestock sector by processing hides locally instead of exporting them raw. This enables Botswana to capture more value from each animal, support economic

diversification beyond beef exports, create employment, and stimulate downstream leather industries such as footwear and upholstery manufacturing.

The BMC tannery and value-addition investments have the potential to retain between P170–P250 million annually within the domestic economy through import substitution and increased value capture. More importantly, they strengthen Botswana’s market diversification, reduce export vulnerability, and increase per-head returns to the national herd.

Mr. Chairman, the development of a robust grain market is key to strengthening national food security and reducing dependence on imports. In this view, my ministry is strategically positioning the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board (BAMB) to play a catalytic role in crop value chain development, both as an anchor firm and as an aggregator for grains. To achieve this new role, the ministry will invest in additional infrastructure such as establishment of certified warehouses, pack houses and refurbishment of silos which will help BAMB to better link SMEs with markets and its capacity to maintain the strategic grain reserve and ensuring resilience against future supply shocks.

2026/2027 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry’s proposed budget for the Financial Year 2026/2027 is **Four Billion, One Hundred and Eighty - Three Million, Four Hundred and Six Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty Pula (P4,183,406,640.00)**. The budget is 21.4% less than the allocation for the 2025/2026 Financial Year. The decrease in the Ministry’s total budget is due to the country’s fiscal challenges.

RECURRENT BUDGET

Mr. Chairman, the proposed Recurrent Budget amounts to **Two Billion, Four Hundred and Eight Million, Six Hundred and Six Thousand, Six Hundred and**

Forty Pula (P2 408 606 640.00) which is 1.16% less than the 2025/2026 allocation of P2 436 943 540.

The sum of **P905 324 560 or 37.59%** of the proposed Recurrent Budget is for Grants to Parastatals consisting of **P645 128 740 or 26.78%** allocated to the twelve (12) Land Boards and their subordinate authorities as Revenue Support Grant, **P201 283 320** allocated to NARDI, **P22 562 500** to Maun-BMC, **P10 000 000** to MIRA, **P19 000 000** to Tsabong Multi-Species Abattoir, **P2 850 000** to Real Estate Advisory Council (REAC) and **P4 500 000** to BAMB. The remaining **P1 503 282 080 or 62.41%** of the Recurrent Budget is allocated to the twelve (12) Ministry Departments.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Mr. Chairman, the proposed Development Budget is **One Billion, Seven Hundred and Seventy - Four Million, Eight Hundred Thousand Pula (P1,774,800,000.00)**, which is 26.1% less than the current year's allocation of P2,401,782,410.00. The P1.775 Billion budget is distributed as follows:

0501 - HEADQUARTERS (MoLA) - P359 612 504.00 (20.3%)

An amount of **Three Hundred and Fifty – Nine Million, Six Hundred and Twelve Thousand, Five Hundred and Four Pula (P359 612 504)** is requested for Ministry Headquarters' to implement the following projects: BVI Blending and Filling Facility Laboratory (**P198 400 000**), upgrading of MS GP Enhancement (**P75 000 000**), NARDI Laboratory upgrade (**P25 648 409**), Establishment of Centre of Excellence (**P25 000 000**), NARDI - Seed Processing Plant (**P15 884 095**), Upgrading of the Gaborone National Agricultural Show Ground Infrastructure (**P2 000 000**), ePhyto GeNs (**P7 380 000**), Real Estate Innovation Hub (**P5 000 000**), Sebele Water Infrastructure Upgrade and Meter separation (**P4 000 000**), Project Management-LIS, IGIS & Digitization (**P500 000**), and Integrated Geographic Information System Upgrading (**P800 000**).

0503 - CROP PRODUCTION - P383 100 000.00 (21.6%)

The Ministry request an amount of **Three Hundred and Eighty – Three Million, One Hundred Thousand Pula (P383 100 000)** for Department of Crop Production. Funds will be used for; the implementation of Lemang Dijo programme (**P183 500 000**), establishment of the National Cannabis Control Authority (NCCA) (**P126 600 000**), Cluster Development (**P50 000 000**), Horticulture Support Programme (**P15 000 000**), Zambezi Agro Commercial Development Project (**P1 000 000**), One Country One Priority Product (**P5 000 000**), and rehabilitation of earth dams (**P2 000 000**).

0507- ANIMAL PRODUCTION - P258 500 000.00 (14.6%)

Two Hundred and Fifty - Eight Million, Five Hundred Thousand Pula (P258 500 000) is requested under the Department of Animal Production for the following projects: Agriculture Support Scheme-Livestock Support (Drought Subsidy programme) (**P146 000 000**), Smallstock Development (Lobu, Mantshwabisi, Setata and Impala Smallstock Farm) (**P5 000 000**), Pluralistic extension services (**P5 000 000**), Fodder production (**P500 000**), Surveillance and Management of Reproductive Diseases (**P5 000 000**), Botswana Livestock Commercialisation Project (BolCop) (**P5 000 000**), Agricultural Land Degradation Neutrality (**P8 000 000**), Dairy Farming Support (**P2 000 000**), Beef and Smallstock Cluster Initiatives (**P1 000 000**), Input Subsidy -Livestock (**P60 000 000**), Communal Rangelands Restoration (Ecosystem and Livelihoods) (**P6 000 000**) and final payment of Tsabong and MMASEBOTSE abattoirs (LIMID Phase II) (**P15 000 000**).

0510 – VETERINARY SERVICES – P56 500 000.00 (3.2%)

My Ministry request **Fifty – Six Million, Five Hundred Thousand Pula (P56 500 000)** to finance the ongoing Foot and Mouth Diseases Control (**P10 000 000**), Cordon Fences (**P32 000 000**), A-Di-Tsale programme (**P6 000 000**) and Botswana Animal Traceability System (BAITS) (**P8 500 000**).

0512 - PLANT HEALTH – P9 400 000.00 (0.5%)

Nine Million, Four Hundred Thousand Pula (P9 400 000) is requested for the Department of Plant Health to finance the following projects: Management of Pests of Economic Importance (**P4 400 000**) and Management and Disposal of Obsolete Pesticide Waste (**P5 000 000**).

0513- DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND APICULTURE - P2 000 000.00 (0.1%)

Two Million Pula (P2 000 000) is requested under the Department of Fisheries and Apiculture for refurbishment of Mmadinare Fish Hatchery.

0514 - DEPARTMENT OF LANDS- P16 500 000.00 (0.9%)

The Ministry request **Sixteen Million, Five Hundred Thousand Pula (P16 500 000)** for Land Board Compensation (Land Acquisition) (**P15 000 000**) and the upgrading of Land Information System (LIS) (**P1 500 000**) for the above-mentioned department.

0515 - DEPARTMENT OF SURVEYS AND MAPPING - P15 000 000.00 (0.8%)

Fifteen Million Pula (P15 000 000) is requested for the Department of Surveys and Mapping for the production of Cadastral Plans (survey for plot allocation) (**P12 000 000**) and Surveying of boreholes and ploughing fields (**P3 000 000**).

0516 - DEPARTMENT OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING - P5 300 000 (0.3%)

Five Million, Three Hundred Thousand Pula (P5 300 000) is requested for the Development of Botswana National Spatial Plan Framework (**P3 000 000**) and Regional Spatial Plans (Remaining 10 Regions) (**P2 300 000**) under Department of Town and Country Planning.

0517 - DEPARTMENT OF AGRI-BUSINESS – P220 000 000.00 (12.4%)

An amount of **Two Hundred and Twenty Million Pula (P220 000 000)** is requested under Department of Agri-Business for the implementation of the following projects:

Recapitalisation of Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board (**P110 000 000**), BMC-Cold Storage Upgrade Table Bay in South Africa (**P100 000 000**) and Leather Park-BMC Tannery (**P10 000 000**).

0518 - DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES – P448 887 496.00 (25.3%)

Lastly, **Four Hundred and Forty - Eight Million, Eight Hundred and Eighty - Seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety - Six Pula (P448 887 496.00)** is requested for the implementation of land servicing projects under Department of Technical Services. These projects include; Metsimotlhabe Block 4 (Package 1 & 2) (**P75 000 000**), Mmopane Block 1 (**P10 000 000**), Maun CBD (**P10 000 000**), Ghanzi Expansion - Block 7 (**P60 000 000**), Ghanzi Expansion - Block 1-6 (**P209 887 496**), Special Economic Zone SSKIA & Lobatse (**P30 000 000**), Mmankgodi - Tloaneng - Gabane Link Road (**P50 000 000**), Kasane Land Servicing (Nnyungwe) (**P1 000 000**), Kazungula CBD (**P1 000 000**), Kasane (Plateau) (**P1 000 000**), Palapye Extension 10 (**P1 000 000**), and Gerald Estate Block 2-Aerodrome Link Road & Phase IV Industrial (**P1 000 000**).

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, as I conclude my presentation of the 2026/2027 budget proposals, I move that the sum of **Two Billion, Four Hundred and Eight Million, Six Hundred and Six Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty Pula (P2 408 606 640.00)** for the Recurrent Budget be approved and stand part of the 2026/2027 Appropriation Bill (No. 1 of 2026) for Head 0500 and that a sum of **One Billion, Seven Hundred and Seventy - Four Million, Eight Hundred Thousand Pula (P1,774,800,000.00)**, for the Development Budget be approved and stand part of the same Schedule of the Appropriation (2026/2027) for Organisation 0500.

I move accordingly.

I thank you.