



Statistics Botswana

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DATA USER-PRODUCER WORKSHOP TLOTLO CONFERENCE

CENTER

19 FEBRUARY 2019

WELCOME REMARKS BY: DEPUTY STATISTICIAN GENERAL

MS. MALEBOGO KEREKANG

Permanent Secretaries and CEO's here present;

Heads of different agencies

Representatives from different Ministries, Departments and Agencies

Representatives from the Private and Parastatal Sectors

Representatives from research institutions

Representatives of the media

Colleagues and staff of Statistics Botswana

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very Good morning to you all,

- 1. I am very delighted that you have honoured our invitation to participate in this workshop which will also serve as a platform for disseminating Statistics Botswana's first ever Communication Strategy. I extend a very warm welcome to you all.**

2. I must also underscore the importance of this forum since it provides the needed platform for an interactive dialogue between users and producers of official statistics. Today, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and with the need for data producers to work with all partners from the data ecosystem, there is even more of a need to stimulate this dialogue. This exchange is a fundamental step in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) design process and is used to advocate, as widely as possible, for statistical capacity development. In this framework, Statistics Botswana supports the dialogue between data producers and several types of users. Among other things, this dialogue should help:

- understand the user needs on official statistics;**
- identify possible ways of improving the quality of official statistics in terms of timeliness;**
- encourage users to invest in statistics and make use of national statistical products.**

3. As users and producers of official statistics, you are all aware of the importance of statistics in development, planning and monitoring of policies and programs. Against that background, I strongly believe that this is an important forum to discuss issues around improving policy-making in the country, more specifically, the imperative of basing such processes on robust evidence.

Dear Colleagues,

4. The role of statistics in the development of a nation cannot be over-emphasized, and therefore statistics ought to be developed by modern nations. Everybody should be involved in statistical development including the suppliers of statistical

data (the respondents), the users of statistical products, the producers (Statistical workers) and, a special group, the media which is always referred to as the fourth estate of the realm.

- 5. The special position that the media occupies in statistical development is one important reason why national statistical offices should work closely with the media so that the media can undertake publicity to popularize statistics and help to build statistical culture in the nation, solicit for cooperation by the respondents on statistical programmes (surveys, censuses, etc.) and encourage usage of statistics by the society through efficient dissemination of statistical products using their channels.**

Ladies and Gentleman,

- 6. Governments across the world, including the government of Botswana, recognize the need for information to manage their economies more effectively. There is a particular need to examine national development plans, and global commitments to reduce poverty and related goals exemplified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And there is pressure to ensure that progress in meeting these goals is further accelerated.**

Director of Ceremonies,

- 7. Let me now touch on the new strategic direction the organisation has taken with regard to statistics service**

delivery: The Organization completed a midterm review of its (2015-2020) Strategic Plan and the BSDS during 2017/18. The review outcome indicates that the implementation of the BSDS requires attention particularly on the issues around funding of the statistical activities as well as inadequate buy-in to statistical development by some sectors. The review was conducted to note the achievements that have been made in delivering our commitments over the last two years and appreciate the challenges in implementing the plan and recommend some operational adjustments on the way we conduct our business. Various Stakeholders participated in this review. In addition to the mid-term evaluation of the strategy, a country peer-review led by the African Union was undertaken as way of strengthening the National Statistics System.

Ladies and gentleman,

8. In Improving Customer Satisfaction, Statistics Botswana is compelled by international data dissemination standards to provide comprehensive, timely, accessible and reliable socio-economic official statistics to its stakeholders in adherence to its annual Advance Release Calendar. The timely dissemination of statistical data plays a very important role in ensuring timely decision-making aiming to enhance the efficiency of policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes. In the just ended financial year, the organisation produced a total of 63 monthly, quarterly and annual statistical outputs in line with the advance release calendar.

9. I am excited to share with you that, through the joint efforts between Statistics Botswana, Ministry of Finance & Economic Development and Bank of Botswana, the IMF has congratulated Botswana for maintaining a National Summary Data Page (NSDP) which is fully compliant to the set timeliness goals for all data categories. Botswana is currently working towards subscribing to SDDS, so most of the e-GDDS categories e.g. CPI, GDP, External Trade, have been set to Standard Data Dissemination System (SDDS) timeliness.
10. To ensure continued customer satisfaction, the customer service standards stipulated in the organisation's service charter that was launched in 2016/17 were upheld. These relate to timely production and dissemination of statistical data and adherence to set turnaround times for responding to data and information requests. The [0-800-600-200](tel:0800600200) toll-free number was obtained and operationalized to increase access to statistical information and provide an even more positive customer experience.

Director of Ceremonies,

11. Statistics Botswana mandate is not complete if the statistics that it produces is not used to inform planning and decision making. Stakeholder engagement is critical for driving the use of official statistics. Guided by our mandate, we provide technical advisory services to the National Statistics System through various platforms such as participation at the National Steering Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's); support to the National Development Plan (NDP 11) Performance Framework, amongst others.

- 12. We continued to engage stakeholders with a view to improving the quality, content and coverage of reports as well as expanding the range of statistical products. In strengthening the engagement of stakeholders, a User-Producer workshop has been initiated which is a platform where users and producers of statistics exchange ideas on how to improve production and quality of statistics within the National Statistics System.**
- 13. Visits to the Information Resource Centre, visits and downloads from the website and data portals, and likes and engagements on the organisation's social media platforms, in particular the Facebook page increased significantly during the just ended year demonstrating increased access to our statistical outputs. I encourage you to continue using these available platforms for ease of access to our services and products. Promotion of statistical products and services as well as the channels through which to access them was done through community outreach, broadcast and print media, social media, and stakeholder meetings, hence the observed increase in demand for statistical information.**
- 14. We introduced, the BW-Statistics Radio, and BW-Statistics News Magazine to provide users, producers, and the general public with greater awareness about official statistical products and services. BW-Statistics News received great attention nationally and internationally for its rich content, and indeed its fresh, appealing engaging look. Products like these go a long way in demystifying statistics, and increasing understanding and consequently usage of statistics for decision making.**

Ladies and Gentleman,

15. As a way of Improving on the Quality of Statistics and Business Processes, the following are some of the major initiatives that the organisation has undertaken:

a. *Data Quality Assurance Framework (DQAF)* - In an effort to improve the production of quality statistics, SB has developed the DQAF. The framework will be used by the wider NSS.

b. *Data collection and Processing for business and household surveys*

You will recall that in the last user-producer forum, we indicated that SB is experiencing challenges with non-response rate, I am happy to inform you that significant improvements in response rates for various business surveys and collection of administrative records have been realised. Response rates for the Employment Survey increased to 71.1% in 2017/18 from 64.9% in 2016/17. Health statistics response rate increased from 93.9% to 94.2% between the same periods. The data collection and processing of the Botswana Demographic Survey was completed within the expected timeline due to the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). The plan is to extend CAPI to price collection and other statistical process to improve efficiency in delivery.

The development of a consolidated business surveys sector questionnaire system has been concluded, and is ready for implementation in the first quarter of the next financial year. Other initiatives such the development of the data collection and management strategy and NSS Capacity Building Program are ongoing.

c. *Scanning Technology*

In order to clear existing backlogs of data, the scanning technique and method has been implemented starting with Health and Tourism statistics. The application of the initiative is cost effective and efficient in timely delivery of statistical reports. Going forward,

the same will be extended to other areas of statistical production to address the delayed release of our products.

d. Opening of New Satellite Offices

In a strategic move to improve turnaround time for statistical production, optimize operational costs, and increase benefits to stakeholders through increased accessibility and presence, plans were made to open satellite offices in Maun and Ghanzi which brings the number of outstations to three (3). Users of statistics and other stakeholders are now able to access statistical services without having to travel to Gaborone or Francistown where the head office and northern regional offices respectively are located.

e. Economic Indicators

The organisation continues to release the key macro-economic indicators being the Gross Domestic Product, Consumer Price Index and International Merchandise Statistics, as well as other sector statistics such as Transport, ICT, Industry and Tourism. Among the notable achievements was the release of the comprehensive Environment Statistics Report 2016. Themes included in the report were water, natural disasters, forestry, wildlife and for the first time, an extensive coverage of Greenhouse Gases Emissions. The organisation has released the Census of Enterprises and Establishments 2016 Phase 1 Report.

f. Social Indicators

The organisation regularly compiles, analyses, and publishes the latest social statistics in a variety of formats as part of its dissemination activities. Among these publications are Annual Crime Statistics Report; Education Statistics; Health Statistics; Formal Employment and Work Permits. The release of the preliminary results on 2015/16 Botswana Multi Topic Household Survey (BMTHS) modules of Employment and Poverty were a great achievement for the organisation.

g. Provision of SDGs Indicator data

Monitoring of the progress the country is making towards achieving the SDGs by 2030 is a very important part of the implementation of Agenda 2030. The provision of required data is critical for this monitoring. Statistics Botswana as the coordinator of the National Statistical System, plays a crucial role in the provision of SDG indicator data. The SDGs are important globally and nationally and have thus continued to receive special attention in relation to this critical task of coordinating the production and dissemination of indicator data. A SDG stats brief was released in Dec, 2018 as well as the Botswana SDG Domesticated report.

Director of Ceremonies,

16. I am pleased to share the Statistics Botswana Communication Strategy with stakeholders here present today. The communication strategy goals are aligned to those of the BSDS, and Statistics Botswana Strategic Plan. The communication strategy seeks to improve internal and external communication to support the successful implementation of these two mother strategies by:
 - a. facilitating the exchange of information and education on statistical matters to support informed and interactive policy formulation, planning and decision making, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and
 - b. building relationships and networks that will be sustained over time and serve multiple purposes in managing current and emerging national statistical matters
 - c. strengthening the image of SB as the lead agency in the provision of quality official statistics and related services in the country.

I wish to acknowledge all parties who contributed to this effort; in particular, the departments, agencies and parastatal organizations across sectors that provided critical insights at the audit stage; the Strategy Drafting Committee's leadership in the development of the strategy; and PARIS21 for the technical assistance offered in the development of the strategy. Paris21 is now using Statistics Botswana's Communication Strategy as a benchmark for developing communication strategies for other countries.

Director of ceremonies,

17. Allow me to update the workshop about the major Projects that the organisation will be undertaking:

a. Cartographic work for the 2021 Population & Housing Census (PHC)

The Population and Housing Census is Statistics Botswana's biggest project. Botswana has successfully implemented PHC's on a decennial basis in keeping with agreed international standards. Due to the complex nature of conducting a PHC, and as is procedurally appropriate, census preparatory work begins three years before the census date. The organisation is in the process of establishing a census office with the appointment of the Census Coordinator having been done.

Preparations for the Cartographic exercise have been initiated, and are now at an advanced stage. A GeoMedia Smart Client application will be used for effective management of census mapping operations. The Software has proper security protocols and access control mechanisms with in-built quality assurance or quality control procedures. Data collection for Cartographic work is expected to start as soon as March 2019. A pilot survey was concluded in January, 2019 where Kweneng District was piloted.

b. Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey

Preliminary results from the 2015/16 Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey (BMTHS) were disseminated through publication of the Economic Activity and Poverty Statistics Briefs in August 2017 and January 2018, respectively. The full report from the BMTHS has been published. A strategic decision has been made for the organisation to undertake a continuous Multi-Household Survey starting with modules for Employment, Informal Sector and ICT. The survey is expected to kick start in Quarter 2 of 2019/20.

Statistical Business Register

SB has adapted the Statistical Business Register (SBR) generic system developed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) with technical support from Statistics Mauritius. Further work will continue to be employed to maintain the SBR with up to date data.

18. All of you, working together, are poised to make a very positive contribution to the improvement of Botswana's National Statistical System. As we share our experiences, we hope that this event will contribute towards building closer working relationships among the stakeholders in our country, and between sector statistical systems and our development partners, towards improving the coordination of the National Statistics System.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. With that, I declare this workshop officially opened.

I thank You.