



2023 SONA RESPONSE

The Botswana Climate Change Network, representing its individual and civil society organisation members, welcomes the attention given to climate change in the 2023 State of the Nation Address (SONA). We commend the government's recognition of the climate crisis and the efforts to respond to its impact on our nation. While we acknowledge the positive initiatives outlined, we also recognize several areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

1. Review of Botswana's Initial Nationally Determined NDCs

While we commend the government's commitment to revisiting the 2015 national climate change pledges, both the review and implementation of the NDC have been extremely delayed. While governments were to submit updated NDCs by 2020, Botswana's submission is still overdue, according to the UNFCCC NDC Registry. This is particularly concerning considering the urgency of action in Botswana.

2. GCF Supported updated Technology Needs Assessment

The utilisation of the Green Climate Fund to update the 2004 Botswana Technology Needs Assessment Report is a positive step toward incorporating modern green technologies into our national strategy. We look forward to the findings of this study, which will play a crucial role in guiding Botswana's transition to a more sustainable and low-carbon economy. We call on government and concerned stakeholders in this assessment to adequately engage frontline and marginalised communities (directly and through civil society organisations) to guarantee acceptance, adoption, and effective utilisation of new green technologies by grassroots communities.

3. Gender and Climate Change Vulnerability Hotspot Mapping:

We commend the ongoing study focusing on gender and climate change vulnerability hotspot mapping. Understanding the specific vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups is essential for designing targeted and inclusive climate adaptation measures. We encourage the government to ensure that the findings of this study inform policymaking. While we acknowledge the importance of such a study in informing policy, it is equally

important to communicate a framework for integrating findings from this study, along with other ongoing studies, into policies or other national actions. While research is important, guidance on how research informs ongoing policy development, especially from such a strategic position as the Presidency, is important in guaranteeing actual implementation.

4. Awareness Raising Among Members of Parliament

It is encouraging to hear that awareness of climate change issues has been extended to Members of Parliament. Educating and engaging decision-makers on climate matters is critical to garnering the necessary political will and support for ambitious climate action. We encourage the Presidency, as well as the National Assembly and its members, to prioritise the accelerated adoption of adaptation and mitigation measures at the constituency level to decentralise the government's climate change response.

5. National Development Bank Accreditation with GCF Adaptation Fund and P32m Funding for Climate Change Projects through the National Environment Fund:

The efforts to accredit the National Development Bank with the Climate Change Adaptation Fund of the Global Climate Facility reflect the government's commitment to securing increased climate finance. Diversifying funding sources and partnerships will be instrumental in implementing climate adaptation and mitigation projects effectively. We are, however, particularly concerned by the absence of a structured mechanism for directing climate finance to drive locally-driven adaptation efforts. This can potentially lead to limited progress in building resilience at the grassroots level, leaving vulnerable communities exposed. A disproportionate focus on national-level projects risks neglecting the unique vulnerabilities of different regions and communities in Botswana. While the National Environmental Fund provides funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation projects, a targeted local climate financing mechanism is necessary beyond the general environmental management bracket.

6. Sustainable Energy:

Although the President echoed government's commitment to a 30% green energy contribution to the national energy mix by 2030, new energy announcements within the very speech contradict this commitment. Particularly, the new solar energy projects announced in the address would generate 54 megawatts, while the announced coal energy projects would generate 308 megawatts of energy. This represents a 17.5% renewable energy contribution. With only 7 years left until 2030, there is a need for much more ambitious investments towards fortifying the country's green energy infrastructure and energy contribution.

While we acknowledge the positive steps highlighted in the address, we believe that addressing climate change requires continued commitment and, most importantly, **action**. As such, we would like to offer the following recommendations to strengthen Botswana's response to climate change:

- A. **Enhance Ambition:** We encourage the government to set more ambitious targets for emissions reduction and renewable energy adoption in line with the latest climate science and the goals of the Paris Agreement. We call on the government to commence the development of a National Green Economy Plan to provide strategic guidance on sustainable pathways for economic reform, encourage private sector participation in the just transition and accelerate the creation of new green jobs for the youth.
- B. **Timely Submission of NDCs:** We urge the government to provide a clear timeline for the submission of the updated commitments and commit to the timely submission of NDCs. The urgent roll-out of NDC actions and subsequent monitoring and review of NDC implementation by civil society relies on this commitment to timely review and implementation
- C. **Integration of Climate Considerations:** Ensure that climate considerations are mainstreamed across all sectors of government policy and planning, including local government planning and budget allocations. This mainstreaming exercise should be structured, programmatic and swift. The strategic leadership of the Presidency is thus crucial.
- D. **Increased Public Participation:** Promote the continued active engagement and participation of civil society organisations in the development, implementation, and monitoring of national climate policies and projects.
- E. **Monitoring and Reporting:** We highlight the importance of establishing a robust framework for monitoring and reporting on climate progress, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- F. **Project Impact Reporting:** While funding for climate change projects is mentioned, we urge the government to provide information on the outcomes and impacts of these projects. Transparency and accountability are crucial.
- G. **Equity and Social Inclusion:** In addition to the vulnerability study, we emphasise the need to address broader equity and social inclusion aspects of climate action, including the needs of indigenous communities and marginalised groups.