

Botswana APRM Popular Sensitisation (BAPS)
Zoom Online Civil Society APRM Working Group Meeting
Tuesday 7 July 2020

Report by Nhlakanipho Macmillan Zikalala

BACKGROUND

On 7 July 2020, the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in partnership with the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO) held its third virtual meeting with the Botswana APRM Civil Society Working Group as part of the Botswana APRM Popular Sensitisation Project (BAPS). The meeting was attended by Ms Lane B. Chaba (Guardian/Midweek Sun), Mr Robert Letsatsi (Botswana Watch Organisation), Ms Pusetso Morapedi (Botswana Centre for Public Integrity), Mr Dumiso Gatsha (Success Capital), Ms Dorothy Okatch (Young 1ove), Mr Kingston Mmolawa (Foodbank Botswana), Ms Alice Mogwe (Ditshwanelo), Mr Tumelo Bogatsu (Stereotype Society), Ms Babedi Ponego (Stereotype Society), Mr Randall Tseleng (Kalahari Conservation Society), Mr Boleng Magapatona (Environmental Heritage Foundation), Mr Omphemeste Onneile (Botswana Society for the Deaf), Mr Steyn Kefaletse (Kgasongo Foundation), Mr Rancheke Rancheke (Chobe Arts Association), Mr Siyoka-Simasuku (Ncongo Network), Mr Johannes Kuhuadi (Ghanzi Network, Window of Help Centre), Mr Molefe Kamela (Selibe Phikwe Network), Mr Gaolatlheope Gadise (Men, Sex and Aids), Mr Phetso Kgosiemang (Class Volunteer Foundation), Ms Bono Mmusi (Botswana Society), Ms Maipelo Phale (BOCONGO), Ms Mpho Tapela (BOCONGO), Ms Oratile Mothooagae (BOCONGO), Mr Loago Matlhare (BOCONGO), Dr Bashi Mothusi (University of Botswana), Ms Game Dibeela (Organisation of Youth and Elections in Botswana), Ms Ontlametse Leru (Men and Boys for Gender Equality), Ms Chigedze Chinyepi (American & African Business Women in Alliances), Mr Ishmael Chawelane (Smile Foundation), Mr Olash Ramajalwa (Olash & Bobby Foundation), Ms Bonolo Kelefang (BOCAIP), Ms Galaletsang Dintsi (Organisation of Youth and Elections in Botswana), Mr Kaelo Mokomo (BOCONGO Chairperson, Letloa Trust), Rebaone Mmerekhi (Oyebo), Nhlakanipho Macmillan Zikalala (SAIIA) and Steven Gruzd (SAIIA).

The main objective of the meeting was to consolidate all the issues that had been identified by Botswana civil society organisations during previous meetings and through an online survey. As was mentioned in the previous report, more than 25 governance issues had been identified as being of paramount importance for the APRM process in Botswana. The task was to combine similar issues into a maximum of 12 issues to enable the drafting of a civil society submission that is concise, coherent and well presented. Furthermore, collapsing the issues was considered crucial for the purposes of ensuring that all organisations that were responsible for preparing the written submission are well compensated for their effort.

WELCOME

The meeting was opened by Mr Steven Gruzd from SAIIA who welcomed all organisations present and all participants. He stated that there were only a few items on the programme, which included collapsing all the issues into 12 for purposes that have already been mentioned above. On the compensation aspect, he said that there is an amount of R84,000 in total, to be divided between the organisations that would be responsible for drafting a written submission on the selected issues. Mr Gruzd stressed that 4-5 pages would suffice for one issue since all drafts will be combined to form a consolidated civil society submission. He further stated that it is important to start thinking about deadlines and on this point, he proposed that individual submissions should at least be submitted on the first week of August, which was accepted by all participants. In closing, Mr Gruzd provided a brief description of the African Peer Review Mechanism for the benefit of participants that were not available in the previous meetings.

COLLAPSING THE ISSUES

Dr Bashi Mothusi was the first one to make a suggestion in terms of which issues to collapse. He suggested that sustainable development and natural resource management should be discussed together because they are interrelated. Furthermore, Dr Bashi Mothusi reasoned that issues relating to vulnerable groups could be discussed with issues on Women and Youth. His contribution was followed by Ms Game Dibeela who saw a link between the electoral system and citizen participation. This was followed up by Mr Robert Letsatsi who agreed with Ms Game Dibeela in saying that accountability and transparency are interrelated and could also be complemented by the inclusion of oversight bodies and corruption.

Ms Galaletsang Dintsi considered a link between a wide array of issues and proposed that issues on accountability, oversight bodies, transparency, access to information, media, corruption, conflict of interest and monitoring and evaluation be discussed in one consolidated section. She further suggested that natural resources, public services, sustainable development should not be stand-alone issues. Mr Kingston Mmolawa saw a link between vulnerable groups, poverty, and inequality.

Noting that collapsing these issues as suggested by previous participants may lead into some of the issues being side-lined, Ms Dorothy Okatch from *Young Love*, commented that it is vital to ensure that none of the collapsed issues lose their significance in the drafting process. On this point it was suggested that it would be ideal to make use of separate sub-headings when drafting the civil society written submission.

Ms Alice Mogwe expressed concerns in terms of human rights being a separate issue because it speaks to a wide range of issues and it is interrelated with almost all of the issues on the table. For example, access to information and equal treatment of vulnerable groups are all part of basic human rights. Therefore, if the doctrine of human rights is going to be discussed as a separate issue, it is important to have a focus on civil or political liberties as well as socio-economic rights.

Ms Dorothy Okatch went on to suggest that there is a link between language and ethnicity that could be linked to education with an emphasis on the medium of instruction at schools. Ms Alice Mogwe saw a link between education, health and ethnicity and observed that these issues form part of socio-economic and cultural rights. She also recommended that monitoring and evaluation should be a stand-alone issue outside of accountability and transparency because collapsing it could result into a neglect of a very much needed focus area. This idea was not supported by Mr Robert Letsatsi who said that monitoring and evaluation is inherently linked with accountability and transparency. On the doctrine of human rights, he agreed with Ms Alice Mogwe and said that it could be discussed in relation to the constitution as a law giver and the extent to which particular clauses in the constitution and other laws are a violation of human rights.

Ms Pusetso Morapedi saw a link between foreign policy and citizen participation but also stressed that inasmuch as the people in Botswana do feel the impact of foreign policy, it would be very difficult to discuss foreign policy given that it is uncodified. Perhaps what could be done is examining the reason why foreign policy is uncodified looking at the benefits of having a codified and an uncodified foreign policy objective. Moreover, it is important to have a discussion in relation to the money that the government spends on developing new embassies. Are they useful embassies because many countries in the world are beginning to see a lesser need of having too many embassies? Dr Bashi Mothusi suggested that foreign policy should be collapsed with public service. This suggestion was countered by Mr Siyoka Simasuku who posited that foreign policy has to be a stand-alone, especially because we don't know how Botswana is benefiting from it not being codified. Ms Galaletsang Dintsi agreed with the latter observation and mentioned that it should be a stand-alone and the needs to be a thorough discussion on how the relationships Botswana has with other countries affect governance. The APRM and the AU can also be included in that discussion.

Mr Phetso Kgosiemang noted that socio-economic and cultural rights, education, health, language and ethnicity can be discussed in conjunction with human rights. He said that this will enable the separation of education from the long list of issues to be discussed in one chapter. Education encompasses a wide array of aspects inasmuch research and development have to be a stand-alone issue.

Mr Steve Gruzd asked what is not on the list that should be here?

Responding to the question, Ms Pusetso Morapedi mentioned land rights and infrastructure development, particularly on why the government is developing CBDs and not villages. This also speaks to sustainable development. On poverty and inequality, she observed that it would be wise to put food security instead of poverty. Furthermore, Ms Game Dibeela reasoned that the way crime and security is captured as separate issues should not take away the idea of why it was involved in the first place, especially because the reason was related to land issues. Ms Mpho Tapela said that the issue of disability could also be included on vulnerable groups. On this point, Ms Galaletsang Dintsi suggested that on vulnerable groups can we also include LGBTQ because they don't have access in many spaces as they lack acceptance in particular communities. It is a group that many people in Botswana are yet to accept.

IDENTIFYING THE WRITERS

The following table illustrates the collapsed 12 BAPS issues along with the name of the organisation responsible for a draft thereof, which will form part of the civil society written submission report.

BAPS Issues	Organisation
Separation of powers	Botswana Centre for Public Integrity
Citizens participation and inclusion, electoral systems, political parties, economic inclusion	Organisation for Youth and Elections in Botswana
Sustainable Development and natural resource management, access to land, infrastructure	Law Society of Botswana?, NCONGO (natural resources), Kgasongo, Kalahari Conservation Society
Poverty, inequality and unemployment, food security	Food Bank Botswana, Selibe Phikwe Network (BOMASE)
Transparency and accountability (corruption, oversight bodies, access to information, media, conflict of interest, corporate governance)	Botswana Watch, Window of Hope Centre, Letloa Trust
Vulnerable groups (women, children and youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQ)	Stereotype Society, Smile Foundation, Midweek Sun Newspaper, Childline Botswana, Men Sex and AIDS
Education, Monitoring and Evaluation (including sex education)	Class Volunteers foundation
Human rights (law and constitution, socio-economic and cultural rights – health, language and ethnicity, business and human rights)	Ditshwanelo, Bonela, BOCAIP, Men and Boys for Gender Equality, Reteng, Botswana Watch (business and human rights) – also issue 6
Public service, decentralisation	Environmental Heritage Foundation
Crime and security, natural disaster preparedness	Botswana Centre for Public Integrity
Foreign Policy	Organisation for Youth and Elections in Botswana
Research and development – indigenous health, nutrition, indigenous education, indigenous knowledge	Stereotype Society

CLOSING

It was agreed that the draft sections should be ready by the end of July for discussion, and that Dr Bashi Mothusi would work on his background paper at the same time. The Namibia submission and SAIIA guide on writing submissions would also be circulated.