REPORT ON PEOPLE'S SCORECARD ON NATIONAL DELIVERY OF THE 2030 AGENDA

SUBMITTED TO:

ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Prepared by:

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List of Acronyms

A4SD	Action for Sustainable Development
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
CMTHS	Continuous Multi-Topic Household Survey
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDCs	District Development Committees
DDP 8	District Development Plans 8
DCEC	Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ERTP	Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan
LAs	Local Authorities
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LED	Local Economic Development
MFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MIC	Upper Middle Income Country
NDP 11	National Development Plan 11
NFSD	National Framework for Sustainable Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSC	SDG National Steering Committee
RoB	Republic of Botswana
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG TTF	SDGs Technical Task Force
TALD	Territorial Approach to Local Development
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UDCs	Urban Development Committees
UDP4	4th Urban Development Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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1. GENERAL BACKGROUND ON COUNTRY PROFILE AND SOCIO ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The Republic of Botswana (RoB) is a landlocked country situated in Southern Africa and covers a surface area of 581,730sq km. The 2022 Population and Housing Census preliminary results show that the country has a total of 2, 346, 179 (Two million, Three Hundred and Forty-Six Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-Nine) people, which is an increase of 15.9% from the 2011 census. The annual population growth rate between 2011 and 2022 is estimated at 1.4%. This indicates a decline from the 1.9% estimated in 2011. Botswana is a multi-party democracy which holds free and fair elections every five (5) years the last of which were held in 2019. Policy, accountability and governance institutions are fully fledged and functioning. The branches of government in Botswana comprise the National Assembly, the Executive, the Judiciary and the House of Chiefs *(Ntlo ya Dikgosi).* Local Government comprises 16 Administrative Districts and 16 District Councils in which district, town and city councillors are elected.

Macro-economic indicators show Botswana as one of the few economic success stories on the African continent. Since independence in 1966, Botswana has made significant socio-economic progress and made a notable transition from the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to an Upper Middle Income Country (MIC). The country is recognized as having one of the highest per-capita incomes in the whole of Africa. Largely as a result of the discovery of diamonds post-independence and vigorous development of the mining sector, Botswana has sustained admirable economic growth. Diamonds remain the mainstay of Botswana's economy while the beef industry, tourism and to a limited extent the manufacturing sector have over the years contributed to Botswana's rapid economic growth. Efforts to diversify the economy beyond minerals continue.

There is some convergence of ideas between government and the private sector economists, that the Botswana economy will not experience the growth rates recorded in the past. The economic challenges experienced by the country over the years, have among other measures resulted in government formulating a cost recovery policy, Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan (ERTP), post COVID, the introduction of value-added tax and eventual increase in 2021 as well as devaluating the national currency. Government

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Ministries are also expected to abolish 50 percent of vacant positions, in value, as of 1st April, 2021 to reduce their wage bill (Budget Speech 2021).

The immediate impact of such reforms has been adverse particularly on the poorest sections of the society who have been hardest hit by inflation. Women, particularly female-headed households experience greater levels of poverty and have a high dependency ratio (BIDPA 1997). Poverty remains a significant and persistent challenge in Botswana. However, preliminary results of the Botswana Core Welfare Indicators (Poverty) Survey of 2009/10 indicate that the number of individuals living below the Botswana Poverty Datum Line declined from 30.6% of the population in 2002/03 to 20.7% in 2009/10 (Budget Speech 2012).

2. ABOUT BOCONGO

BOCONGO is the national coordinating body for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Botswana. It was established in 1995 to coordinate the work of NGOs in the country. The Government of Botswana, through the National NGO Policy (2012) recognizes the important role played by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in national development. The NGO Policy provides for a coordinated approach to the implementation of the national development plans and priorities as well as enhancing communication and partnerships between government and CSOs. BOCONGO has over the past 28 years created a platform for CSOs in Botswana to engage in processes of development and policy formulation. BOCONGO works with NGOs and other stakeholders to strengthen the NGO sector through coordinating the sector's contributions to the development in country and beyond. Its mandate involves delivering capacity development; facilitating platforms for the effective communication between members and key stakeholders; and increasing capacity of members to be effective advocates for policy development both individually and as a sector.

BOCONGO has **326 active members** in its database, with some more awaiting approval of membership. Membership is broad including: umbrella organizations and Networks of NGOs; individual NGOs and Community Based Organizations. BOCONGO membership is mostly made up of umbrella bodies representing various thematic sectors in various districts around

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the country. The NGOs within these governing bodies thereby become members of BOCONGO by extension. Individual NGOs are also permitted to apply for membership which allows them to receive member benefits directly. Membership is spread across the regions as follows:

Regions	Number of members
Ghanzi Region	30
Gaborone Region	119
Francistown Region	5
Selibe Phikwe Region	62
Ngamiland Region	79
Chobe region	15
Kgalagadi region	16
Total	**326**

Ideally, BOCONGO as the Secretariat of NGOs is the one mandated to coordinate the implementation of SDGs by the NGOs in Botswana. However, despite notable achievements by the country towards implementation of SDGs, NGOs remain challenged in terms of organisation and capacities to fully implement the domesticated SDGs. As noted above, the area of SDGs implementation is essential and it requires urgent support (technical, finance, human capital and operational), so as to ensure that the CSOs play a meaningful role in the development space. CSO capacity gaps are diverse and range from technological, human resources, funding and other requisite skills and infrastructure for effective implementation. On the other hand, CSOs do not have a defined structure and strategy for implementation and coordination of efforts. Against this background, it is difficult to systematically account for their contribution towards implementation of the 17 domesticated SDGs and achievement of defined targets.

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3. INTRODUCTION

This Report provides consolidated CSOs perspectives on National Delivery of the 2030 Agenda. It further provides analyses on the progress that has been made since the country's first Voluntary National Review (VNR). The report looks at the challenges encountered in the SDGs agenda, and particular focus on the impact of COVID-19. The recommendations provided herein assist in building forward better in the Decade of Action. The report has been produced with inputs of CSOs in Botswana under the leadership of BOCONGO and its Regional Networks. Botswana CSOs have been involved in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals before and after its adoption on 25 September 2015 by the United Nations.

The CSOs work is based on the realization that the 2030 Agenda is a progressive global development framework. CSOs in Botswana have lobbied for the advancement of inclusive, just, equitable and sustainable development since the Millennium Development Goals era and continue in the times of the SDGs. The structure of the Report follows the key areas of assessment articulated in the People's Scorecard including Governance and Policy Framework, National Development Plans, Strategies and Budget, Institutional Support, Implementation at the national and sub-national levels, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Mechanisms, Transparency and Accountability, Public Awareness and Capacity Development, Multi-stakeholder Partnerships and Civil Society Participation. The Report provides key highlights on each focal area based on feedback obtained from the stakeholders. The first part focuses on assessment of the overall delivery of the agenda and the second part focuses on progress on each of the SDGs.

3.1 Preparation of the Report

To review the country's progress towards achieving the SDGs, BOCONGO adopted the People's Scorecard for CSOs consultations. The People's Score Card is a tool developed by the Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD). A4SD works in partnership with national SDGs focused civil society coalitions around the world. Following the People Scorecard Training, the Reference Group members were given almost a month to consult their

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membership and complete the scorecard. There were deliberate efforts to ensure participation of vulnerable population groups especially women, youths and persons with disabilities in line with the desire to make sure that no one is left behind. The number of CSOs and CBOs who responded through the People's Score Card is a fair representation from which meaningful insights into the current progress made in implementation and attainment of SDGs can be drawn. The information obtained from the meetings was used to develop key messages and proffer recommendations covered in this report.

Additionally, nine (9) physical Stakeholder Consultation Workshops were conducted at nine (9) locations to obtain the views of stakeholders as part of input into the Report. The locations include Selebi Phikwe, Francistown, Maun, Serowe, Gaborone, Ghantsi, Kagagadi, Chobe and Boteti. These locations were deliberately targeted as they represent one hundred percent (100%) coverage of all administrative districts in Botswana. Furthermore, BOCONGO Regional Networks in all the geographic regions of the country coordinated all consultation processes in their respective districts to ensure inclusive participation leaving no one behind.

Follow-up interviews were undertaken telephonically with targeted stakeholders to validate some of the submission. A triangulation process of emerging issues from the administration of the People's Score Card Tool and other stakeholder consultation processes was undertaken to validate some of the findings. A Draft Report was then produced by BOCONGO and shared with the stakeholders for validation before submission to Action for Sustainable Development.

3.2 General Observations

It is essential that the BOCONGO team coordinating the People's Scorecard process highlight some of the key observations informing the nature of feedback and insights documented in this Report.

a) While there was observable excitement and enthusiasm to participate and contribute to the People's Scorecard process by the stakeholders, there was a challenge obtaining concrete evidence in the form of data or statistics to qualify some of the

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perceptions shared. Often stakeholders just shared 'raw and abstract' perceptions that could not be easily qualified;

b) This People's Scorecard process was the first to be undertaken in Botswana. As such, there were so many learning curves that made the process somewhat tedious, with some informants abandoning the process midway and others providing incomplete responses.

c) There is generally limited knowledge of SDGs and implementation processes in place to achieve the 2030 Agenda among civil society stakeholders. For that reason, many stakeholders could not provide concrete information to substantiate their submissions.

With these observations made, a foundation for understanding the documented perceptions in each focal area has been laid.

4. FOCAL AREAS AND PREDOMINANT PERCENTIONS

4.1 Governance and Policy Framework

Botswana has an appropriate Governance and policy framework in place for oversight of the SDG implementation process. This framework comprises the SDG National Steering Committee (NSC); the SDGs National Secretariat based within the Ministry of Finance and and the SDGs Technical Task Force (SDG TTF). (Source: Botswana SDGs Roadmap 2017 to 2023 – A Guide to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals – Botswana Government and United Nations). It is under this framework that the SDGs roadmap was designed to guide implementation of the 2030 Agenda at both national and local levels. The Guide also provides clarity on the roles of the different players but CSOs observed that while the structure is clear and comprehensive, it does not provide a direct entry point for CSOs to make their contribution.

Botswana recognizes the several lines of accountability, being the vertical approach that moves from local to national, then global and horizontally, which move across different sectors and actors located at national, sub-national and community levels. The framework is also expected to create momentum for public awareness, attend to possible sectoral policy

trade-offs and equally create ownership of the SGDs at both country and community level. The Botswana SDGs institutional structure reflects political will, strong leadership to drive implementation and the well thought out yardsticks to constantly monitor and evaluate the country's progress, as can be noted by the inclusion of Cabinet, Parliament and the Traditional Advisory Body (*Ntlo Ya Dikgosi*/House of Chiefs), at the apex of the SDGs institutional structure. These are followed by the following:

SDG National Steering Committee – (NSC)

This committee was set up to drive the 2030 Agenda at policy level in the country. It is co-chaired by the Secretary for Economic and Financial Policy in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED) and the United Nations Coordinator of the United Nations Development System. Membership is comprised of Central government (through sector ministries and departments), Civil Society, UN Agencies, Bilateral and Multi-Lateral Partners, Youth and Women's organizations, the Private Sector, Media, Academic and Research Institutions.

SDGs National Secretariat

This is established by the MFED to support the Ministry and the NSC in the implementation and oversight responsibility of the SDGs. It is housed in the MFED's Population and Development Coordination Section and headed by a Director assisted by two Chief Economists.

SDGs Technical Working Group (TWG)

 TWG was established by the NSC to perform technical level functions in support of the implementation of the SDGs, as may be deemed necessary by the NSC. The membership is multi-sectoral, drawn from government at the national and sub-national levels including LAs, CSOS, Private Sector, Youth and Women organizations, Academic and Research Institutions, UN Agencies and other Development Partners. This is a structure where the BOCONGO Secretariat also sits. The purpose of the TWG is to validate reports sourced from government structures tracking SDGs implementation. Amongst the above, there are smaller Technical Working Groups (TWGs) who are assigned specific SDGs to lead on their

implementation. These Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are meant to operationalize all government programming throughout the economy in order to facilitate implementation, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs. (Botswana SDGs Roadmap: A Guide to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2017 – 2023).

Botswana SDG Structure at local level to localize the SDGs

The existing structures at sub-national level are used, in principle, to ensure that everyone is involved in the implementation of the SDGs. The Kgotla (traditional meeting place) is used for community consultations, with the key focus being to educate people and involve them in the planning process. Emphasis is put on striking a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environment) in the midst of coming up with infrastructure projects and social programmes.

Community participation at local level is assured through structures such as village development committees (rural)/ward development committees (urban), village health teams, village extension teams, farmers associations, parents and teachers associations, as well as community-based organizations. These were set up to ensure that communities play a vital role in the development of their villages, towns and cities in the areas such as health, education and overall development within their localities. All these sub-structures are bringing different aspects of the different SDG priorities to the District Development Committees (DDCs) and Urban Development Committees (UDCs). The expectation is that these plans should cover all SDG priority areas from the given locality. It is yet to be determined if this is the case.

4.2 National Development Plans, Strategies and Budgets

The People's Scorecard established that the Government of Botswana has incorporated the SDGs into its national Policy frameworks. The SDG framework has also been incorporated into national development plans and strategies. These have been incorporated through an SDG Strategy document as articulated in section 1.1 above. The process has also been undertaken in a participatory manner involving key stakeholders, amongst others; United Nations Development Program (UNDP) system in Botswana, Local Authorities (LAs), Civil

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Society Organizations (CSOs), Academic and Research institutions, Parliament, Media, Private Sector and the Youth. There is effective policy coherence within the national SDG framework and the policy approach include a recognition of the inter-related nature of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The technical assistance from the UNDP facilitated the establishment of synergies in line with established best practices.

In terms of financing for SDGs, the Government has embarked on a process of strengthening resource mobilisation, focusing on innovative and alternative sources of financing from both domestic and external sources of finance. An assessment of the financing landscape within and outside the country has been undertaken in the context of the Integrated National Financing Framework and was completed in March 2022. The findings of this assessment will be used to develop an appropriate and fit for purpose SDG Financing Strategy for the country. However, considering the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, more challenges are anticipated in terms of mobilising sufficient resources for efficient and effective implementation of the SDGs. CSOs alluded to the fact that they are more challenged in terms of financing for SDGs than Government and other development players.

4.3 Institutional Support-Public Agencies with Clear Mandate

The process of adopting the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs happened at approximately the same time that Botswana was developing the country's Vision 2036, National Development Plan 11 (NDP 11), District Development Plans 8 (DDP 8), 4th Urban Development Plan (UDP4) as well as the draft National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD). As a result, all these national development plans took into consideration the newly introduced UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). After the adoption of the 2030 agenda and the associated 17 SDGs, awareness campaigns and several dialogue sessions were undertaken by the government in collaboration with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) system in Botswana and other relevant stakeholders including Local Authorities (LAs), Civil Society Organizations

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(CSOs), Academic and Research institutions, Parliament, Media, Private Sector and the Youth.

As part of the domestication process and to facilitate tracking of implementation of SDGs in the country, the SDG indicators have been localized to Botswana's context. (Source: Botswana Domesticated Sustainable Development Goals Indicators by Statistics Botswana and UNFPA – December 2018). The appropriate institutional framework put in place by Government to ensure effective coordination of the implementation of SDGs comprises, the SDG National Steering Committee (NSC); the SDGs National Secretariat based within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED) and the SDGs Technical Task Force (SDG TTF). (Source: Botswana SDGs Roadmap 2017 to 2023 – A Guide to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals – Botswana Government and United Nations). It is under this framework that the SDGs roadmap was designed to guide implementation of the 2030 Agenda at both national and local levels.

Vision 2036 (2016 – 2036) is a transformational agenda that defines the aspirations and goals of Botswana. It is a national dream that projects the aspirations of the country in its developmental journey. The vision is an embodiment of hope that looks into the future for transforming Botswana into a nation that delivers services to all Batswana, ensuring that no one is left behind. Through its four transformative pillars of; Sustainable Economic Development; Human and Social, Development; Sustainable Environment, and Governance, Peace and Security, Vision 2036 also seeks to transform Botswana from an upper middle-income country to a high-income country by 2036 and sets out a compelling vision of what the future of Botswana will look like. It follows and builds on Vision 2016; Botswana's first national vision of 2000 to 2016.

Under Pillar 4 on Governance, Peace and Security, decentralization was identified as a key ingredient for better service delivery to the local communities. Vision 2036 notes that decentralisation promotes participatory development, and local level institutions are important vehicles for delivering on the country's bottom-up development planning as well as charting a development route that ought to be community driven. Through decentralised structures, services are moved closer to the people while simultaneously ensuring that the

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people's voices and concerns are channelled through the political representation at local level. Botswana's strategic and national planning documents include but are not limited to Vision 2036 and National Development Plans, which give recognition to the important role played by CSOs in the country's development trajectory.

To mitigate the impact of COVID 19, in September 2020, the Parliament of Botswana approved a government developed Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan (ERTP). This ERTP, which is an addendum to the Mid-Term Review of the NDP 11, followed the adoption of the COVID-19 economic relief package. The ERTP is designed to strengthen COVID-19 pandemic relief while strengthening resilience against future shocks. The reality on the ground however; is that the national vision (Vision 2036) seeks to project the desired destination for the country, there are still gaps that are noted in the development path. It is difficult for example, to be able to disaggregate data that speaks to the contribution of the CSOs on issues of national interest.

It is imperative that Statistics Botswana and Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO), being the voice of organized civil society, should liaise and develop a framework that will aptly capture data that is specific to the role of CSOs. There is therefore a need for a system that will have a robust research and documentation component to address some of these glaring gaps. The challenge nonetheless, is that there is need for a ramped-up impetus on implementation. This is so because even though there are structures set up at national level, there is still a gap in terms of public education and mobilization of various sectors to incorporate the SDGs in their planning, resource allocation for implementation and performance assessment.

In its quest for effective implementation of the SDGs, the country chose to periodically prioritize a certain number of SDGs in each of the reporting cycles. During 2017 reporting cycle, the country decided on the following SDGs; SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 9, and SDG 17. In the reporting process in 2022, the country is prioritizing SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17. Being a landlocked country, SDG 14 focuses mainly on rivers and their basins. However, it is also to be noted that gaps are noticeable in the implementation of the SDGs and other global agendas at local level. It is therefore important that the essential area of SDGs

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implementation   be given urgent support (technical, finance, human capital and operational), so as to ensure that the CSOs play a meaningful role in the development space.

4.4 Implementation of Policies, Action Plans and Strategies at National Level.

The People's Scorecard process established that Botswana CSOs do not have Monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of SDGs by themselves; Government or Private Sector. As such, it was very difficult to determine the extent to which the Policies, Action Plans and Strategies at national level were implemented and the extent of achievements thereof. The predominant feedback from the stakeholders was that the Government of Botswana is generally renowned for developing very sound policies and strategies but is limited in terms of implementation. Furthermore, there are structural and systemic challenges relating to policy and strategy implementation in Botswana which suffocates achievement of targets. The observation was that the environment in which government led programmes and processes are implemented is too vertical to facilitate effective collaboration and complementarity among the different stakeholders. Government departments are too focused and operate on *clean mandates* for example, health will focus on health, education on education, despite the glaring synergies and/or inter-linkages. This culminates in systemic fragmentation and parallelism which compromises efficiency and effectiveness. This reality puts to question the effective implementation of the policies and strategies for SDGs.

On the other hand, monitoring and evaluation is generally weak to inform systematic documentation of achievement of targets. Knowledge management is generally weak across most key development players in Botswana including Government, CSOs and Private Sector. The implementation of Policies and Action Plans by CSOs is very difficult to determine because of donor-driven programming by the latter. While CSOs make efforts to design their development interventions in line with existing policy and strategic frameworks, the general observation is that implementation of the same is weakened by the pursuit of donor priorities. They have no choice because that is a strategy to sustain their funding. It

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therefore follows that where CSOs are not directly funded to implement a specific SDG, they would hardly do so systematically and achieve specific results.

4.5 Implementation of Policies, Action Plans and Strategies at sub-national or local level

Even though LAs are not an embodiment of the country's Constitution, the enactment of the Local Government Act No. 18 of 2012 by Parliament gives formal recognition and endorsement to their existence. According to Vision 2036, Decentralization promotes participatory development, and local level institutions are important vehicles of bottom-up development planning and community driven development. Through decentralization, services are taken closer to the people on one hand, while their voice is heard through local level political representation on the other. In 2016, the Government started the process of decentralizing the LAs. Currently, countrywide consultations are ongoing to seek the views and input from the local population, in particular through their representatives at local authority level.

Much of the groundwork in the consultation process has been covered. It is anticipated that once Cabinet and later Parliament approve the Decentralization Policy (which is in draft form), the roll out process to decentralize the Local Authorities will commence. It is believed that the decentralization exercise will result in empowering local structures through devolution of political and administrative powers to make decisions, mobilize own resources, promote local economic development, and partner with other development actors such as the private sector and civil society in delivering quality services to their communities, and in the process, "Leaving No One Behind."

At the same time, the national government is promoting Local Economic Development (LED) to play a pivotal role in the country's adoption of the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD), through LAs embracing an approach to promote indigenous, integrated, multi-scalar, and incremental local development. The LED has been identified as key to attracting the Private Sector and other non-state actors to create Public Private Partnerships and to collaborate with LAs to enable them to deliver on their mandate to their

communities, namely: primary education, health care, the supply of water to rural areas, local development and road maintenance.

Decentralisation is perceived as an approach that will largely contribute to strengthening Local Authorities and supporting the localization of the national development objectives that have integrated the SDGs. Currently, LAs autonomy is limited. One of the key challenges facing Local Authorities (LAs) is decision making. Coupled with this, resource allocation remains a prerogative of the Central Government. Local Authorities are charged with delivering the following services at the local level; social benefits programmes aimed at alleviating the plight of the poor and the vulnerable e.g. social security grants, food baskets, orphan care programmes and school feeding initiatives; construction and maintenance of internal roads in villages and towns/cities; maintenance of educational facilities e.g. school buildings; as well as health infrastructure e.g. clinics and health posts, including some technical and auxiliary personnel for both. But the decision making relating to budgeting, resource allocation and planning for the said services remains the responsibility of the Central Government.

Despite councils having the legal powers to raise certain taxes, levies and fees as their revenue collection, the central government provides up to 90% of their total annual recurrent revenue. Even where the LAs could mobilize own resources, there is little motivation to do so because (I) the decision on how to utilize those funds rests with the Central Government, meaning they cannot utilise the said funds in the projects of their choice unless authorised by the Central Government. (II) Even where LAs are able to collect revenue through taxes, levies, rates, etc. such funds are subsequently remitted to the central government coffers. This multiple holding of responsibilities and reporting lines constrains service delivery to the population. These developments bring confusion in implementation. Of major concern is the fact that LAs were established through an Act of Parliament, exposing them to being vulnerable. In this context, LAs stand the risk of the possibility of the same Act that established them being repealed at any time. This vulnerability gives Central Government the leverage to prescribe priorities for LAs to execute, as well as having the ability to increase or lower financial and administrative support to LAs.

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Owing to a lack of financial independence, LAs end up acting as agents for the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The call is for LAs to be recognised and be given more power through Decentralisation so that they can make decisions on what they know to be their priorities and select service delivery programmes and projects that they undertake. The country's Constitution is currently undergoing a national review and it will be a positive development if the revised Constitution would give stronger recognition to local self-governance. Currently, LAs have little say in reconciling their plans which reflect their priorities with the budget they get allocated together with the priority areas determined by the Central Government for the same plans. Decentralization would accord the LAs the power and authority to determine their own priorities, raise their own resources and make decisions on their project and programme implementation, which should impact positively on the attainment of their priority for SDGs achievement. It is in the same vein that LAs would also remain accountable to their electorates regarding service delivery.

4.6 Public Awareness and Capacity Development

Currently, the full text of the Agenda 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs is not available in any local languages which presents challenges on awareness among the local population. In general, most educational bodies and researchers undertake analysis of SDGs; not necessarily for purposes of sharing but for pursuit of academic objectives. CSO programming is not effectively informed by a deliberate need to implement SDGs but they make reference to them for purposes of justifying theoretical relevance of their interventions. It is quite difficult to find a development proposal that does not make reference to SDGs, Vision 2036, National Development Plan 11 or any other relevant development framework. However, this does not translate into practical prioritisation and implementation of the provisions of such frameworks. In some cases, the SDGs are wrongly referenced and interpreted which demonstrates how poorly understood they are among the CSOs and general public. Often, most organisations pay lip-service to their commitment to the implementation of SDGs.

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In 2021, the UNDP provided a grant to BOCONGO to support a number of capacity development initiatives involving sensitisation workshops on selected aspects of SDGs. However, such initiatives are too short term to equip the beneficiaries with significant capacity for high impact programming at par with their needs and targets. In general, capacity development support on the SDGs is very limited among CSOs. Opportunities for partnerships are available but the major challenge is finding resources to realise the objectives of such partnerships. Another challenge is that stakeholders pay lip-service to partnerships; usually the objectives are vague, relationships are unequal for meaningful engagement and strategies are not clearly defined. Specific gaps in CSO skill development include, amongst others, weak resource mobilisation, weak innovation and high impact programming, weak project cycle management, weak knowledge management (particularly reporting), weak leadership and governance and weak financial accountability.

4.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, Data and Reporting Mechanisms

From the CSO perspective, Monitoring and Evaluation is weak. There is no specific framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, Data Collecting and Reporting Mechanisms. However; it is critical to note that BOCONGO, through the support of FORUS International, is currently developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for SDGs. A Consultant is already in the field collecting data to inform the design of the framework. The State Party makes reference to its initiatives towards strengthening this critical area, including launching of the Continuous Multi-Topic Household Survey (CMTHS) in 2019. The CMTHS is designed to provide more frequent updates on the baseline indicators from the Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey. While this framework may exist within Government, CSOs submit that the extent to which it is functional and achieves its intended purposes is still to be proved. Furthermore, it is yet to be realised how it will serve the data needs of CSOs. In general, CSOs are sceptical about the effectiveness of the system because it is not clear how it will generate real-time data to support evidence-based planning for effective implementation of SDGs. As stated earlier, Botswana is renowned for developing robust frameworks but implementation of same is weak.

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In terms of transparency, most CSOs are not aware of the system and how it works. CSOs cannot submit evidence on any progress on collating information/ evidence with disaggregated data to demonstrate progress in Botswana. CSOs are not aware of any invitation to supply and/or review evidence and data disaggregated by income, gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. It is also important to note that CSOs are challenged in the area of coordination and demonstration of the 'value' that they contribute to national development processes using facts and figures. The creation of a systemic process of documentation and sharing of milestones/achievements periodically would assist in demonstrating their value add to the national development processes.

4.8 Transparency, Accountability and Access to Information

Policy-making and decision-making processes on the SDGs are not based on easily accessible, timely and accurate information and data. The processes are highly centralised and Government pays lip-service to partnerships. While there is recognition of CSOs as the third sector in national development processes, practices on the ground demonstrate that they are not taken seriously and fully involved in decision making. While participation of CSOs in decision making is based on representation, mostly by the Executive Director of BOCONGO, CSOs argue that it is not sufficient for effective contribution to decision making processes. Regarding data, processes are hardly transparent because of too many procedures one has to manoeuvre to access data to inform evidence based planning. Data is equally centralised; thus, presenting challenges of access. Institutional processes for tackling corruption are in place and housed at the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC). CSOs are of the perception that they are doing their best to play their role effectively as often, corruption cases of high level individuals are exposed and prosecuted. However, the increasing number of corruption cases involving high level individuals remain worrisome.

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4.9 Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

As noted in section 4.1 above, the Government has attempted to establish a broad horizontal partnership across sectors for implementation. However, mutual accountability is not evident. The tendency is to work in silos thereby compromising maximisation of efforts. Furthermore, because of weak monitoring, evaluation and reporting, it becomes difficult to determine the extent to which partnerships and mutual accountability are optimised. Often, implementation of SDGs, just like other national development frameworks, is characterised by fragmentation, parallelism and duplication of efforts which wastes development resources. Relationships are not based on smart partnership and equal footing but characterised by subordination where Government plays a big brother role to other players. The major challenge to partnerships is that of resources because Government controls the purse while CSOs and the small private sector struggle and look up to the former. When they sit around the table to plan development implementation, private sector and CSOs do not have a strong voice because of weak resource bases.

4.10 Citizen Participation and Civil Society Engagement

Afrobarometer Report of 2018 on 'Citizen Engagement in Botswana: Beyond Voting, How Much Interest in Participation?' highlights a number of insights on Botswana Citizen participation and Civil Society Engagement. The Report notes that more recent analysis has shown that while most Batswana see their country as a democracy, satisfaction with the way their democracy is working and perceived freedom of speech have declined steeply over the past decade. If citizen engagement is one of the pillars of a strong findings of the latest Afrobarometer survey are a mixed bag for Botswana's democratic prospects. While most Batswana say they vote in elections and attend community meetings, the proportion of citizens who express interest in public affairs and discuss politics are in decline, and only a minority contact public officials or get together with other citizens to raise an issue. It further notes as follows;

- Citizens' interest in public affairs has been on a decline, dropping from 85% in 2003 to 67% in 2014.

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- Seven in 10 Batswana (71%) say they attended at least one community meeting during the previous year, an increase of 7 percentage points from 2014.

- Only one in three (33%) say they joined others to raise an issue, and even fewer say they contacted public officials or participated in a demonstration.

Botswana Civil Society participated in the Voluntary National Review of 2022 through a representational process. BOCONGO, as the apex body represented Civil Society. Indeed, the participation was organised through high level meetings, working and technical groups, informal consultations and specific workshops. However, these CSOs are concerned that spaces are too generic and do no maximise the benefits of clear mandates, methodologies and resources. CSOs are sceptical that the VNR process will provide opportunities for participation in broader implementation process especially regarding policy dialogue. Sceptics argue that Government only involved CSOs for completeness of the process whilst there is no genuine commitment on its part. A representative of CSOs from the BOCONGO Secretariat was invited to participate at the presentation of the VNR.

5. ADDITIONAL CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

5.1 Progress since last VNR

This is the first Report that CSOs are presenting.

5.2 Leaving No One Behind

CSOs submit that there is recognition of the poorest and vulnerable and those furthest behind in the national strategic frameworks and the national strategy of the 2030 Agenda. However, there is a huge gap in terms of concrete efforts towards addressing the situations of those people. Government planning and implementation processes remain vertical without paying particular attention to the situation of such marginalised groups. CSOs are not aware of any deliberate overarching approach to incorporate the Leave No One Behind principle into institutional guidance for policy-making processes. Furthermore, a business as

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usual approach is on-going as there are no special programmes or innovative strategies in place to address the situation of the poor and marginalised populations including, amongst others, persons with disabilities, people discriminated by geographic area, migrants and undocumented persons and indigenous peoples.

5.3 Planetary Boundaries

There are significant number of policies in place to protect the environment including the Environmental Policy and the Revised Community Based Natural Resources Management Policies to guide community initiatives of environmental management. Agricultural production is undertaken in a sustainable way guided by clearly defined land use plans. Botswana is largely reliant on extractives. The profits are shared between the Government and mining companies but there is huge debate in terms of benefits to mining communities/communities in mining locations. CSOs are pushing for more direct benefits to mining communities who suffer a lot of risks including emission of sulphur dioxide which affect arable farming, different forms of pollution that affect plant and human life and displacement in some cases.

5.4 Delivery By CSOs

Delivery by CSOs is a huge challenge as already alluded to. This is because CSOs do not even have a structure or strategy for SDG implementation. They are too fragmented to organise themselves into a formidable force for SDG implementation. They are also challenged in terms of monitoring, evaluation and documentation to account for their implementation processes. Their major and most pressing challenge is that of funding for implementation of any aspect of the SDGs. They rely on donor funding and if the funding does not have as its deliberate objective, implementation of SDGs, it becomes difficult to deviate the funding from other donors for SDG implementation purposes. What obtains on the ground is that CSO implementation of SDGs is largely by coincidence or accident and not a deliberate effort guided by a specific planning and funding process.

6. PROGRESS ON EACH OF THE SDGs

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6.1 Goal 1: End Poverty In All Its Forms Everywhere.

Goal 1 was given an average score of 39%. CSOs submitted that the country still has a long way to go towards achievement of this goal. Poverty in all its forms is still rampant in certain geographic regions of the country targeting diverse populations. Kgalagadi, Ghantsi and Bobirwa districts and other hard to reach areas are affected by chronic and multi-dimensional poverty. People living in commercial farms and other hard to reach communities in Kgalagadi and Ghantsi are worst affected by multi-dimentional poverty and poor access to basic services which is also a critical contributor to the latter. There are no special programs in place in the worst affected locations towards ending poverty in all its forms hence no hope that change can be achieved from doing nothing different.

6.2 Goal 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security And Improved Nutrition And Promote Sustainable Agriculture.

Goal 2 was scored 40%. It is closely related to Goal 1 and the justifications are almost similar except that as for sustainable agriculture, the arid to semi-arid conditions of most regions of the country present major insurmountable challenges towards achievement of the goal.

6.3 Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives And Promote Well-Being For All At All Age Groups

This goal was scored 46%. Government has done well in providing affordable health services catering for the poor. However, there is a concern regarding the quality of health services especially the times that are spend on queues at health service delivery points/facilities. Poor quality of services is marked by, amongst others, shortage of staff with requisite qualifications and fit for purpose skillsets to deliver services, obsolete infrastructure, shortage of health commodities, attitude of health workers and lack of children, key populations and disability-friendly services and facilities. Improved nutrition is linked to sustainable agriculture and its snapshot of challenges presented above.

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6.4 Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities For All.

This Goal was scored 46%. The Government has done well in efforts to achieve this Goal. However, there are significant gaps including the following;

- Not all villages have primary schools and as such, Children in villages where there are no primary schools have no access to Early Childhood Development (ECD). Furthermore, there are concerns regarding the situation of children living with disabilities. Another gap recognized is in terms of late identification of children with developmental /learning intellectual disabilities which result in them not receiving relevant and specific education. Currently there are only two Central Resource Centres (CRCs) in Botswana which are very few to cater for all the children in need.

- The use of Setswana as the medium of instruction, particularly at lower primary level has presented challenges and affects many children, especially in Basarwa and Bakgalakgadi communities. This has resulted in many children dropping out of primary school after failing to cope with the challenge of learning a new language and applying it to the learning requirements of the curricula.

- Children with disabilities face the problem of inappropriate infrastructure and systems for efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of education services.

- Teacher student ratio is still high for effective learning processes and some of the infrastructure is now obsolete to accommodate contemporary learning methodologies.

6.5 Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

This Goal was scored 39%. The CSOs observed that gender inequality is still a serious challenge despite the availability of sound policy and strategic frameworks to address it. Empowerment programmes to address Gender Equality are too generic to achieve the objectives. Funding of the programmes is too limited to achieve the targets. Furthermore, there are rising cases of Gender-Based Violence in the country, including on the girl-child which confirms gender inequality.

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6.6 Goal 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All.

This Goal was scored 44%. Government has invested significant efforts towards achievement of this Goal. However, there is limited involvement of Civil Society in efforts to achieve this Goal therefore limited complementary efforts by other players to optimize achievement of targets.

6.7 Goal 7: Ensure access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable And Modern Energy For All.

This Goal was scored 35%. Botswana is still relying on traditional forms of energy such as electricity and other gas products for domestic and industrial use. Few CSOs are in the energy sector. The Government has done well in its subsidies on energy to increase access even to the poor. However, the CSOs are concerned about the slow pace of transition towards solar energy as a cheap and sustainable source of energy. This concern is anchored on the reality that Botswana being largely a desert, certainly there are abundant sources of solar energy that are not optimized.

6.8 Goal 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All.

This Goal was scored 38%. CSOs observe with concern that economic growth is not inclusive and diversified. The country relies too much on diamond mining and is at the risk of collapsing should the demand for diamonds go down abruptly. Unemployment is high and most employed people are under-employed. Most people are engaged in all sorts of work for survival, for example, commercial sex work and other forms of indecent work at farms. Despite the advantage of a small population, the industry is too small to accommodate the number of professionals and non-professional without employment and it does not seem like there are any opportunities in the foreseeable future to address this gap which is an outry of Trade Unions.

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6.9 Goal 9: Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation.

This Goal was scored 34%. CSOs note with concern that while efforts to build resilient infrastructure are observable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth is still a challenge. Inequality forms are observed in Botswana thus not all inclusive. Industrialization and Innovation are still lacking because of the Government's inside-looking approach to innovation. The pace of industrialization is slow and the Government is not willing to open its population to competition or strategic partnerships with foreigners that promote innovation. The mentality is counter-productive when it comes to achieving the objectives of industrialization and innovation.

6.10 Goal 10 Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries

This Goal was scored 36%. Botswana remains an unequal society and there are no tangiable efforts to close that gap in terms of policy formulation and implementation processes. Policy implementation maintains a business as usual approach while in fact, there is need for a complete paradigm shift if this goal is to be achieved. Minority and hard to reach and key populations remain at the periphery of development due to poor opportunities, access to information and services.

6.11 Goal 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable.

This Goal was scored 30%. Cities and Human Settlements are not inclusive as they often ignore the special needs of certain populations such as the poor who cannot afford to pay for certain services. Youth, disability and other key populations friendly services and facilities are not available and or limited. Resilience and sustainability are not guaranteed as issues of pollution and poor waste management which contaminates the air people breathe and water sources also contributes to the negative effects of climate change.

6.12 Goal 12; Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

This Goal was scored 31%. The predominant perception among CSOs is that there is no evidence of a balance between consumption and production patterns. It seems that consumption patterns are higher that production patterns and thereby necessitating the

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need for production of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to meet demand. There are no observable efforts to ensure an increase in the production patterns to match the demand therefore raising uncertainities on the achievement of this Goal by 2030.

6.13   Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impacts

This Goal was scored 36%. CSOs are of the view that there is no evidence of any urgent action either by Government and CSOs to combat climate change and its impacts. While political statements always allude to the need to take action, in practice, the action is not visible. The most significant effort to work with Civil Society to address Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Initiatives in Botswana is the recent Call for Proposals by the National Environmental Fund but at this juncture, it is not clear how many such initiatives will be supported out of the four priority thematic areas. Public awareness on climate change issues is also very limited to enable meaningful participation.

6.14   Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development.

This Goal was scored 29% but does not apply directly to Botswana since it is a landlocked country. However, the Okavango Delta is a Ramsar Site with water resources that the Government is doing its part to conserve for sustainable development.

6.15   Goal 15: Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Hold Biodiversity Loss.

This Goal was rated 41%. The CSOs recognize the policy and Strategic Frameworks to achieve this Goal but implementation of these policies and strategies has been a challenge. For a considerable period of time, CBNRM activities have been very slow owing to review of the policy. Most Environmental NGOs have closed shop due to funding challenges. COVID-19 has also been a challenge by shifting attention of stakeholder towards health issues only, in the processes, abandoning some operational imperatives in other sectors. There is need for regrouping and refocusing by all stakeholders if this Goal is to be achieved.

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6.16 Goal 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels.

This Goal was scored 37%. The rationale is almost similar to Goal 8, 10 and 11.

6.17 Goal 17: Strengthen The Means Of Implementation And Revitalize The Global Partnership For Sustainable Development.

This Goal was scored 36%. CSOs are of the view that there is no clarity on how the Global Partnership works and there are no evident efforts to strengthen the means of implementation beyond what is being done by Government and its respective institutions.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CSOs observe that Botswana still has a long way to go in terms of effective implementation and domestication of SDGs. While there is recognition of the poorest and vulnerable and those furthest behind in the national strategic frameworks and the national strategy of the 2030 Agenda, there is a huge gap in terms of concrete efforts towards addressing the situations of those people. Government planning and implementation processes remain vertical without paying particular attention to the situation of such marginalised groups. It is cardinal for SDG implementation processes to ensure that no one is left behind. CSOs need to intensify their efforts in pushing for more direct benefits to mining communities who suffer a lot of risks including emission of sulphur dioxide which affect arable farming, different forms of pollution that affect plant and human life and displacement in some cases.
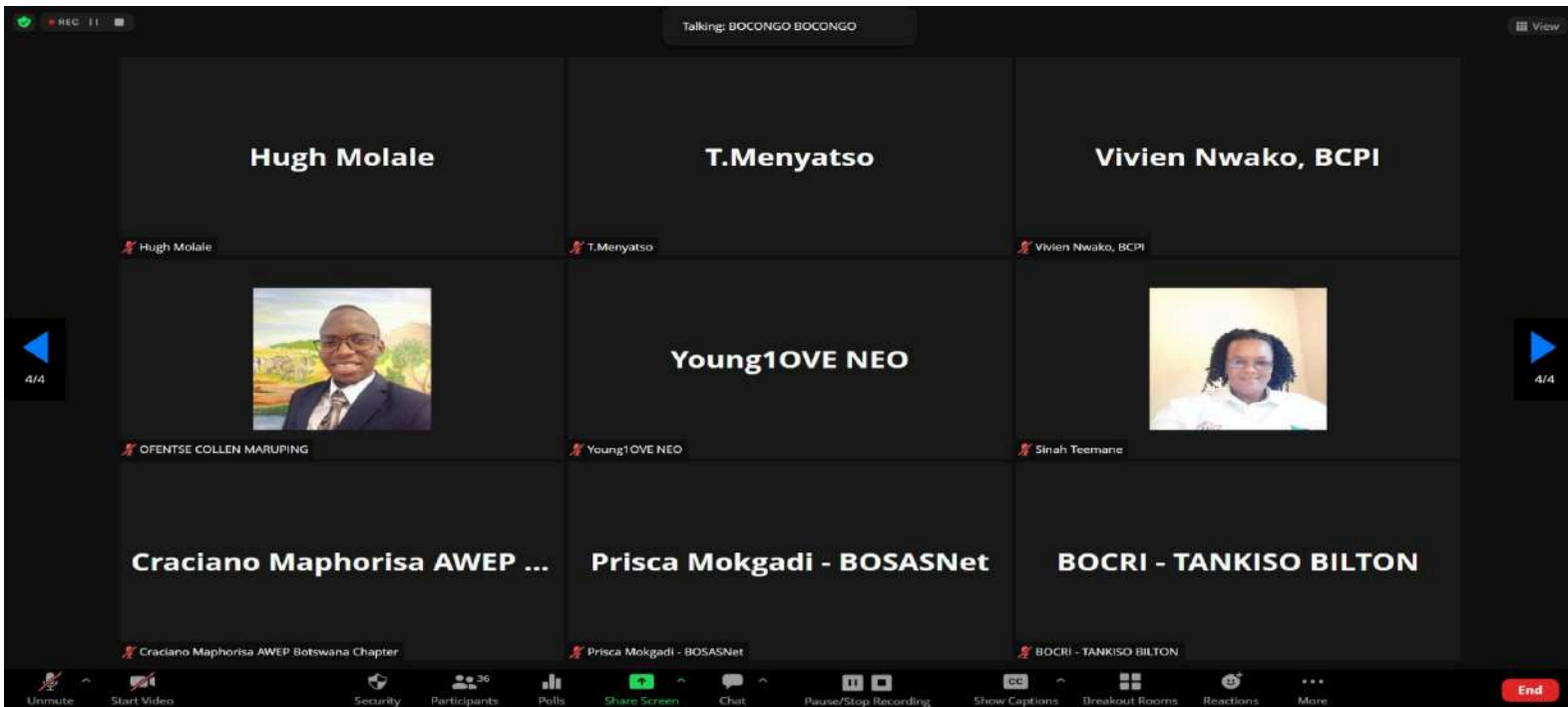
Delivery by CSOs remains a huge challenge as already alluded to. This is because CSOs do not even have a structure or strategy for SDG implementation. They are too fragmented to organise themselves into a formidable force for SDG implementation. They are also challenged in terms of monitoring, evaluation and documentation to account for their implementation processes. Their major and most pressing challenge is that of funding for implementation of any aspect of the SDGs. From analysis of emerging issues from the People's Scorecard following the described methodology, the following recommendations are

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considered by CSOs as key in positioning them strategically for the implementation of the SDGs;

7.1 BOCONGO should lead the process of developing a comprehensive structure and strategy for systematic implementation of SDGs by CSOs. The strategy should be accompanied by an Implementation Plan for all prioritised SDGs and a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The effort to develop an SDG Implementation Monitoring Tool is a significant step in the right direction and should be followed to the latter;

7.2 BOCONGO and its members should intensify efforts towards resource mobilisation for SDG implementation. They should explore both domestic and international sources of funding in collaboration with Government and UN Agencies;

7.3 BOCONGO should undertake a deliberate CSO Mapping and Capacity Assessment for SDG Implementation and address the identified capacity gaps thorough training, coaching, mentoring, accompaniment and provision of requisite resources where necessary;

7.4 BOCONGO needs to strengthen coordination of CSOs for SDG implementation. An appropriate and effective model should be defined based on participation and implementation gaps among the CSOs.

7.5 BOCONGO should strengthen its documentation processes to ensure that efforts by CSOs towards the implementation of their priority SDGs are consolidated and shared with the relevant stakeholders to demonstrate the value add of the sector.

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Consultations in Pictures

BOCONGO Validating the CSOs SDG Spotlight Report

SDG Consultations in Kgalagadi Area

Media SDG Consultations in Maun

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SDG Consultations in Ghanzi

SDG Consultations in Francistown

SDG Gaborone Consultations Virtually

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