Welcome Remarks
International Conference
Leave NO One Behind
The Fight Against Poverty, Exclusion and Inequality

by

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I am delighted to welcome you all to this conference on behalf of UNDP.

I am also delighted to be partnering with the Government to hold this important conference on Leave No One Behind: the Fight Against Poverty Inequality and Exclusion.

A special warm welcome to those speakers who have come from North, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and the continent of Africa, our neighbours. I welcome the policy makers and researchers who have travelled far to be with us today.

I welcome all the participants Botswana, both political leaders and development practitioners from Gaborone and from all the districts, sub- districts and community levels, the Central Statistics Organization/CSO, the private sector and academic institutions, as well as leaders, activists, faith based organisations and the media. I welcome the diplomatic community, development partners and my UN colleagues.

So as to ensure that no one is left behind in listening to the speakers, we are live streaming the conference around the world, so a warm welcome to our virtual participants/viewers. The link is:

Please tweet to all your colleagues and friends this live streaming link……..

Dear participants, this conference has come about because Botswana wanted to share its successes in its fight against poverty - i.e., to ‘Leave No One Behind’ and to learn from other in continuing this fight.

Let me begin my remarks, by recalling that Botswana was one of the 43 countries which volunteered to review their progress towards achieving the SDGs and eradicating poverty, at the High Level Political Forum/HLPF, in New York, in July 2017. I would like to also note that we are holding this conference before H.E. Lieutenant General, Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana completes his 10-year’s term in office, as he had put ‘eradicating poverty’ as one of his top priorities during his presidency, and he has achieved remarkable results in this endeavour.
As Botswana continues to be committed to the fight against poverty and wants to build on the President’s legacy, it has invited experts and leaders from other countries to hear from them on how they have been tackling poverty, learn lessons and see how Botswana can build on the good results already achieved and what it could do differently. UNDP has, therefore, been very pleased to reach out to countries’ representatives and partners, around the world, and to invite them to Botswana to share their success stories and the lessons that they have learned in their journey to ensure that the pursuit of sustainable development benefits all, and not just a few.

Botswana has just concluded drafting a new poverty strategy for 2018-2023. I have no doubt that the discussions over the next two days will feed into this draft strategy before it goes for approval in the coming weeks, under the new President, as he will be taking over this poverty baton. I am proud to share that the draft strategy sets out clearly what the poverty related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals/SDGs this country wants to achieve by 2023, and the policies that will need to be put in place to translate the Government’s aspiration to eradicate poverty into concrete results for all people of Botswana.

We hope this conference will be special for you here in this room and that it will also be relevant to every country around the world because:

1. **We want the conference to focus on unbundling the SDG principle of *Leave No One Behind*.** We will discuss in depth what this global pledge means, for public policies and programmes on the ground. How realistic is it to state that we will leave no one behind? Is this inclusive principle only an aspiration or can we make it a reality? Are we putting it in practice already but do not call it by this name?

2. In order to make it a reality, we will be asking in **Session One** the question **WHO** are those left behind? **WHICH** approaches and measures do we use to determine and identify those who are left behind? Are these approaches and measures adequate and effective? Do we have the capacity to collect disaggregated data to really know who are those left behind? How good are our statistical systems in providing the kind of data we need to identify those who are left behind? We will also look at how we are measuring Poverty. What
measurements are appropriate for an Upper Middle-Income Country, (UMIC)? Should they be the same as those for a Low-Income country(LIC)? Is it sufficient to consider the $1.90 a day in a UMIC, or elsewhere? Which other measures could a country consider to identify those who are left behind, given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty? These and other are the many questions to be answered in the course of the first session!

3. Once we have determined in Session 1 who are those left behind, we will move to Session 2, in which we will examine HOW best to target those left behind with our policy-reducing interventions. We will discuss what target methods are appropriate for the different vulnerable groups we want to reach out to. For example, the target methods we may use in a middle-income country like Botswana, may be different from those used in low-income countries, like Malawi or Ethiopia. We will then explore the reasons why countries chose one method over another, and the kind of results that are expected. We are privileged to have with us, today, globally recognized speakers to answer these questions, so I am looking forward to what they have to say and how they will critique and challenge what countries are doing.

4. In session 3, we will discuss the possible interventions aimed at reaching out to the groups that are left behind. What policies and interventions have worked and WHY? How do we know they have worked? Which are the main determinants of their success? Have we done evaluations to assess whether they have been successful in improving the lives of the intended target groups? Have countries taken the time to pilot-test policies and programmes, to understand whether they work and, most importantly, what actually works? This promises to be a great session as we have five ministers from different parts of the world sharing their experiences, telling us what has worked and what has not worked. The information around what has not worked is as valuable as around what has worked. Without acknowledging that there are lessons from which we can learn, we won’t be able to make the necessary changes to our policies, to advance this critical agenda and put an end to poverty, once and for all.

5. Session 4 will look at the challenges, political and institutional, in bringing about change in the design and implementation of poverty reduction strategies. How bold are governments in pushing boundaries? How can change be
brought about while having to balance competing political agendas, respond to the demand of different constituencies, and having different political parties agree on the kind of reforms that are required in the interests of leaving no one behind? The session will also look at how governments are bringing on board other actors such as CSOs and the private sector and the critical role that these stakeholders are playing. The session will also highlight how important it is to invest in gender equality and women’s empowerment as we are serious about leaving no one behind. No country will be able to achieve the SDGs if over fifty percent of the its population is left behind: the women!

6. The last Session will discuss what key recommendations can be made as countries adopt the Leave No One Behind principle. Which bold actions do governments and other stakeholders need to take to end poverty and to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development? What needs to change in terms of identifying who are the poor, how they are targeted and what interventions work and in what circumstances.

7. We will be putting together a set of key recommendation that we will share with you before you leave, based on the discussions in the course of the next two days. We will also prepare a brief outcome document that we will share with you a few weeks after the conference. We will also distribute some memory sticks of speeches for those who do not have ready access to a computer and have difficulties downloading the materials from the link.

In conclusion, I hope all the speakers will be lively, frank, provocative and have us holding our breaths in either agreement or disagreement. We have in this room a great body of knowledge on the subject so let us challenge each other over the next two days on how best to leave no one behind in our fight against poverty exclusion and inequality. Please do not forget our virtual participants as we deliberate on this important topic.

On behalf of UNDP, I once again would like to extend a warm welcome to you all.

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