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UPR 15: Botswana
New Zealand Statement
Delivered by Alana Messent, 23 January 2013

Thank you, Mr President.

New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to engage with Botswana on its human rights situation and we thank the delegation for submitting such a comprehensive national report highlighting the good progress made since its 2008 review. We would also like to acknowledge Botswana's hard and constructive work as a member of the Human Rights Council.

New Zealand commends the Botswana government's increased attention to gender issues, seen most evidently through the significant bolstering of the budget allocation for the implementation of its National Gender Programme. In particular, New Zealand welcomes the Government's inclusion of a focus on "Women and Health including Reproductive Rights" in the National Gender Programme. However we note CEDAW's concerns at the high rate of maternal mortality in Botswana and the absence of a strategic plan to address this problem. New Zealand would be interested if Botswana could provide more details on the Women and Health focus of its National Gender Programme, in particular to address maternal mortality rates.

Notwithstanding the excellent focus on empowerment in the National Gender Programme, New Zealand is concerned that customary laws in Botswana continue to discriminate against women. New Zealand **recommends Botswana increase its efforts to raise awareness of a woman's entitlement to request the transfer of a case from a traditional court to a constitutional law court, as recommended by CEDAW in 2010.**

Finally, New Zealand welcomed Botswana's acceptance of a first cycle recommendation to establish an independent national human rights institution. We note the good efforts made, but difficulties encountered, in attempting to transform the Office of the Ombudsman in to such a body. We **recommend Botswana continue working towards the establishment of an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles.**

Thank you, Mr President.