

**STATEMENT BY BOTSWANA DURING THE REVIEW OF MALAWI
AT THE 22ND SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

(5 May 2015, Geneva)

Mr. Vice President,

1. Botswana joins in welcoming the delegation of Malawi to their second UPR. We thank the Minister and his delegation for the presentation of their national report.
2. We commend Malawi for their efforts to protect children and women from harmful cultural practices. In particular, we welcome efforts taken to combat child marriages and polygamy, including the enactment of the Gender Equality Act.
3. We urge the Government of Malawi to finalise the enactment of pending bills such as the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Bill and the Trafficking in Persons Bill, which intend to prohibit polygamy, set the minimum age for marriage to be 18 years; and combat trafficking of persons, respectively.
4. While we note with appreciation efforts made to promote good administrative practices, the rule of law, good governance and respect of human rights, we are concerned about reports of high number of persons in pre-trial detention; and the insufficient resources in the judiciary to address the backlog of court cases.

5. We are also concerned about reports of restrictions on the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of assembly and of expression by journalists and human rights defenders.

6. Botswana makes the following recommendations to Malawi:

- a) develop and implement a comprehensive strategy and judicial reforms to effectively reduce the backlog of cases;
- b) ensure thorough investigations into reports of attacks and threats against human rights defenders with a view to bring perpetrators to justice.

7. We wish Malawi a successful review and adoption of their UPR report.