**STATEMENT BY BOTSWANA DURING THE REVIEW OF BURKINA FASO AT THE 44TH SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) WORKING GROUP**

*(6th November 2023, Geneva)*

**Mr President,**

1. We welcome the delegation of Burkina Faso to the fourth cycle of the UPR process and appreciate the updates provided today.
2. Botswana notes with appreciation the signing of an Agreement in October 2021 between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Government of Burkina Faso on the opening of a Country Office aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights. We encourage the expeditious operationalisation of the Agreement of the Office through the availing of necessary resources for its establishment.
3. Botswana is concerned by reports that women and children continue to be victims of gender-based violence and experience harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. In that regard, Botswana recommends that Burkina Faso:
   1. Takes active steps to facilitate the operationalisation of the OHCHR Country Office in Burkina Faso; and,
   2. Investigates all reports of gender-based violence and raises the minimum age for marriage to 18 years without exception.

We wish Burkina Faso a successful UPR outcome.

**I thank you, Mr President**