

Canada – Africa  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
Canada – Afrique

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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation regarding  
its Bilateral Mission at the Republic of Zimbabwe and the  
Republic of Botswana**

**Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association**

**Harare, Zimbabwe and Gaborone, Botswana March 26 to 31,  
2017**

# Report

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association (“the Association”) conducted bilateral visits to Harare, Zimbabwe, and Gaborone, Botswana, from 26–31 March 2017. The Association was represented by Robert Oliphant, M.P., Co-Chair of the Association; Chandra Arya, M.P.; Michael Cooper, M.P.; and Marwan Tabbara, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by the Association’s secretary, Josée Thérien, and its analyst, Brian Hermon.

## **Mission Objectives**

This was the Association’s second bilateral mission to both Zimbabwe and Botswana, following initial visits to these countries in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

In Zimbabwe, the Association’s objectives were the following:

- to follow-up on its 2008 bilateral mission and to update members of the Association on the current political and economic situation in Zimbabwe;
- to gain insight about the upcoming 2018 presidential and legislative elections and to hear about the state of political pluralism in the country;
- to engage with members of civil society and other key interlocutors on issues related to governance, the rule of law, and human rights;
- to hear about development challenges facing Zimbabwe, including public health issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, malnutrition and maternal, newborn and child health, as well as to learn about the issue of child marriage in the Zimbabwean context.

In Botswana, the Association’s objectives were the following:

- to follow-up on its 2010 bilateral mission and to update members of the Association on the current political and economic situation in Botswana;
- to hear about the leadership role that Botswana is playing in the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and other regional institutions with respect to the promotion of good governance, human rights and international law;
- to engage with parliamentarians and other interlocutors on economic issues, and to learn about the challenges and opportunities associated with efforts to diversify Botswana’s economy;
- to acquaint parliamentarians – both Canadian and African – with Canada’s involvement in the region, including its development support and business activity, and to discuss the issue of corporate social responsibility;

- to strengthen Canada's bilateral and parliamentary co-operation with Botswana.

In support of its objectives, the delegation met with parliamentarians from the governing and opposition parties, government officials, international and regional organizations, including United Nations (UN) agencies and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), civil society organizations (CSOs), members of the media and various private sector groups. In addition, the delegation visited an anti-child marriage wall art project at a community centre in Glenview – a high density suburb outside of Harare – as well as a Stepping Stones International community centre located just outside Gaborone.

## **THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE<sup>1</sup>**

The Republic of Zimbabwe is a land-locked country located in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to the east, Zambia to the north-west, Botswana to the south-west, and South Africa to the south. The population of Zimbabwe is approximately 15 million. The vast majority of the Zimbabwean people belong to the Shona ethnic group. Ndebele is the other main ethnic group, while people of Asian, European, and mixed descent make up a small portion of the population. Zimbabwe has 16 official languages.<sup>2</sup> However, the most widely spoken language across Zimbabwe is Shona, with Ndebele being the second most common language. English is widely used in government and in the business community.

### **A. System of Government**

Zimbabwe has a bicameral parliamentary system of government. Parliament is composed of two chambers: the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly is made up of 270 seats, of which 210 are directly elected through a first-past-the-post system with one member per constituency. According to the 2013 constitution, an additional 60 seats are reserved for women only for the first two Parliaments to be elected under that constitution (i.e. in the 2013 and 2018 elections). For the seats reserved for women, six women are directly elected in each of Zimbabwe's 10 administrative provinces by proportional representation. Currently, 88 of the 270 members of the National Assembly are women (32.6%).<sup>3</sup>

The Senate is made up of 80 members, of whom 60 are directly elected in 10 multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation. Two of the remaining 20 seats are reserved for members with disabilities and the other 18 are reserved for traditional chiefs, who are indirectly elected by regional governing councils. Currently, 38 of the 80 members of the Senate are women (47.5%). Members in both the National Assembly and the Senate serve five-year terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, this section of the report contains information retrieved from the following sources: Global Affairs Canada, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the United States Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook*, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and *Europa World*.

<sup>2</sup> World Atlas, [What Languages Are Spoken in Zimbabwe?](#)

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, [ZIMBABWE National Assembly](#).

The head of government is the President, who is directly elected for a five-year term by an absolute majority vote in two rounds if necessary. The 2013 constitution limits presidents from serving two five-year terms, but this provision did not apply retroactively to President Robert Mugabe who has been in power since 1980. The cabinet is appointed by the President and responsible to the National Assembly.

## **B. Governance**

Zimbabwe is classified as a “partly free” country by Freedom House, a global organization that assesses the strength of freedom and democracy around the world. This designation represented an improvement from 2015, when Freedom House classified Zimbabwe as “not free.” Freedom House reports that corruption has become “endemic since 2000, including at the highest levels of government.”<sup>4</sup>This finding is supported by Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index*, a report that assesses countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be.<sup>5</sup>Zimbabwe ranked 154<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries surveyed on Transparency International’s 2016 *Corruption Perceptions Index*. By comparison, Botswana ranked 35<sup>th</sup> and South Africa ranked 64<sup>th</sup> on that same index.

Zimbabwe scores poorly on two other major indices related to democracy and governance. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Zimbabwe 140<sup>th</sup> out of 167 countries on its 2016 *Democracy Index*, which measures electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Based on that score, Zimbabwe is considered to be an “authoritarian regime.”<sup>6</sup>From a regional comparative perspective, Botswana is ranked 27<sup>th</sup> and South Africa is ranked 39<sup>th</sup> on the same index. In addition, Zimbabwe ranks 39<sup>th</sup> out of the 54 African countries on the *Ibrahim Index of African Governance*.<sup>7</sup>

## **C. Economic and Social Development**

Overall, Zimbabwe ranks 155<sup>th</sup> out of 188 UN-recognized territories on the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) 2015 *Human Development Index* (HDI).<sup>8</sup>While Zimbabwe continues to be categorized as having “low human development,” it is notable that it has advanced 12 places in the HDI rankings since 2009. Over the same period, life expectancy has increased from 49.6 to 57.5 years old. Despite those improvements, however, Zimbabwe’s HDI ranking is below the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Zimbabwe faces high rates of poverty and income inequality, and HIV/AIDS continues to be a major challenge. According to UNAIDS, at

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<sup>4</sup> Freedom House, “[Zimbabwe](#),” *Freedom in the World 2016*.

<sup>5</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2016](#).

<sup>6</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, [Democracy Index 2016 – Revenge of the “deplorables”](#).

<sup>7</sup> The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is an annual report that assesses the governance of every African country according to indicators that measure respect for the rule of law and safety; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity; and human development. See: Mo Ibrahim Foundation, [Ibrahim Index of African Governance \(IIAG\)](#).

<sup>8</sup> The *Human Development Index* is a composite measurement of education, health and income indicators. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development](#), 2015.

approximately 14.7%, Zimbabwe had the world's 5<sup>th</sup> highest HIV adult prevalence rate in 2015.<sup>9</sup>

Once considered the “breadbasket of Africa,” Zimbabwe has faced significant economic challenges for more than two decades. In the decade following independence (1980-1990), Zimbabwe's economic growth was strong, but subject to significant variances depending on agricultural conditions. However, beginning in the mid- to-late 1990s, growth began to stagnate as the Zimbabwean economy entered a period of decline, before turning negative in 1999. At that point, the country's economy contracted rapidly – by as much as 10.4% in 2003 – and by an average of 5.4% a year between 1999 and 2006.<sup>10</sup> By the late 2000s, the country was suffering from hyperinflation. While economic conditions improved between 2009 and 2013, Zimbabwe continues to face significant economic challenges today. These include high levels of unemployment, a shortage of foreign currency reserves necessary to finance imports, decaying infrastructure, and fear about a looming currency crisis. By the late 2000s, the country was suffering from hyperinflation. While economic conditions improved between 2009 and 2013, Zimbabwe continues to face significant economic challenges today. These include high levels of unemployment, a shortage of foreign currency reserves necessary to finance imports, decaying infrastructure, and fear about a looming currency crisis.

#### **D. Canada-Zimbabwe Relations**

Canada established diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe at the country's independence in 1980 and has an Embassy in Harare. Canada-Zimbabwe relations are presently limited. Canada enacted sanctions under the *Special Economic Measures Act* (Zimbabwe) regulations in 2008 in response to human rights abuses and election-related violence. These measures prohibit arms trade with Zimbabwe, and impose sanctions against 177 listed Zimbabweans and 4 entities. According to Global Affairs Canada, these measures will be reviewed “once there are genuine and lasting policy shifts towards democratic and accountable governance, as well as respect for human rights and the rule of law.”<sup>11</sup>

While Global Affairs Canada notes that the sanctions do not “impede trade and investment with the vast majority of Zimbabweans,” trade between Canada and Zimbabwe is minimal. Total bilateral merchandise trade in 2016 was approximately \$13 million.<sup>12</sup> Canada's development assistance to Zimbabwe is also very limited. While Canada's bilateral development assistance program for Zimbabwe ended in March 2014, Global Affairs Canada notes that Zimbabwe is eligible for funding through other channels, including the Pan-Africa regional program, as well as through multilateral programs.<sup>13</sup> Local organizations are also eligible for funding through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives that is administered by Canada's Embassy in Harare.

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<sup>9</sup> UNAIDS, [AIDSinfo](#).

<sup>10</sup> EIU, *Zimbabwe*, Country Profile 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, [Canada-Zimbabwe Relations](#).

<sup>12</sup> Simon Richards, *Canadian Trade Activity: Canada-Zimbabwe*, Trade and Investment Series, Library of Parliament, February 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, [Canada-Zimbabwe Relations](#)

## **MEETINGS IN ZIMBABWE**

### **1. Briefing by Ambassador Kumar Gupta, Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe; Mary Rose, Political Counsellor, Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe; and Elizabeth Robertson, Management Consular Officer, Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe**

Ambassador Kumar Gupta and Embassy staff briefed the delegation on Canada-Zimbabwe relations and on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. Ambassador Gupta said that Canada no longer has a bilateral development assistance program in Zimbabwe. He noted, however, that Zimbabwe is eligible for Canadian development and humanitarian assistance through the United Nations, other development agencies, and the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. Ambassador Gupta spoke about Canada's targeted sanctions related to Zimbabwe, which were imposed in 2008. He indicated that Canada will continue to maintain sanctions until such time as meaningful improvements related to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe have been made.

The briefing then shifted to a discussion of the current political and economic climate in Zimbabwe. The delegation heard that Zimbabwe is scheduled to hold its next presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018. Despite President Mugabe's decision to stand for re-election, the delegation was told that there has been significant speculation surrounding who will succeed him in the future. It was explained that the two likely front-runners to succeed Mugabe are believed to be Emmerson Mnangagwa, the current Vice-President and Minister of Justice, and Grace Mugabe, President Mugabe's wife. Vice-President Mnangagwa is being supported by a faction within ZANU-PF known as Team Lacoste, while Grace Mugabe is backed by a group known as Generation 40 (or G40). The delegation heard that much of what transpires both politically and economically in Zimbabwe today is viewed through the lens of this factional struggle.

The delegation was also briefed on the street protests that occurred in Zimbabwe in the summer and fall of 2016. One of the protests known as #ThisFlag called on the Mugabe government to improve the living conditions for the average Zimbabwean. The delegation was told that this protest, along with several other demonstrations that occurred around the same time, was met with violent crackdowns by the country's security forces.

Delegates heard that the economic situation in Zimbabwe is fragile. It was noted that Zimbabwe's economy is about 90% informal and that the country has a very large current account deficit. Ambassador Gupta explained to the delegation that Zimbabwe recently introduced bond notes in order to ease the currency shortage. The bond notes are pegged to the U.S. dollar and theoretically redeemable for dollars at banks. However, it was noted that there is fear that the bond notes could begin to lose value against the U.S. dollar over time. The importance of minerals and tobacco exports in generating much needed foreign exchange for Zimbabwe was emphasized, while the significance of remittances to the country's economy was also discussed.

Following the briefing, members of the delegation posed questions to the Ambassador and Embassy staff on several issues. These included questions about the role of China

in Zimbabwe, the prevalence of corruption in the country, and the effect of sanctions on influencing policy change. Finally, there was discussion about the various development challenges facing Zimbabwe, including HIV/AIDS, child marriage, and gender rights.

## **2. Meeting with the Honourable Edgar Nyasha Mbwembwe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs**

The delegation visited Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a meeting with the Honourable Edgar Nyasha Mbwembwe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Minister Mbwembwe referred to the Association's visit to Zimbabwe as timely and spoke about Zimbabwe's desire to re-engage with Canada and the West. He said that the biggest concern for Zimbabwe was "misperceptions" by foreigners about the situation in the country. Deputy Minister Mbwembwe noted that Zimbabwe established a new constitution in 2013, which he referred to as "very democratic," and maintained that the country was undertaking economic and political reforms. He also indicated that Zimbabwe was still in the process of aligning the country's laws with the new constitution. Deputy Minister Mbwembwe stated that Zimbabwe is working to improve its regulatory environment and to provide a more conducive environment for foreign direct investment.

Following his comments, the delegation engaged in a discussion with Deputy Minister Mbwembwe. The delegates asked questions relating to the rule of law, human rights, as well as the process of aligning the country's laws to the new constitution. Deputy Minister Mbwembwe commented that the Government of Zimbabwe takes issues related to the rule of law and human rights seriously, and outlined that the government was committed to proceeding with the process of aligning the country's laws to the constitution. He noted, however, that a lack of resources and capacity are holding Zimbabwe back. In this respect, he spoke about the Lima Plan – the process agreed to in Lima, Peru, in October 2015 to help Zimbabwe reduce its arrears to international financial institutions – as being critical to helping Zimbabwe gain access to new sources of financing. He also spoke about Zimbabwe's desire to improve its ease of doing business in order to attract new investors.

## **3. Courtesy call on the Honourable Jacob Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly**

The delegation visited Zimbabwe's Parliament for a meeting with the Honourable Jacob Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly. Also present at the meeting was the Clerk of Parliament, who provided the delegation with information on the administration of both Houses of Parliament. Following comments from Mr. Oliphant on the objectives of the Association's mission to Zimbabwe, the Speaker offered an overview of the structure of Parliament and some of the challenges facing Zimbabwean parliamentarians. He noted that the chamber of the National Assembly can only accommodate about 150 members, which is well below the number of elected members (270). Consequently, the Speaker informed the delegation that the Government of Zimbabwe is working to put together the funding needed to construct a new building with greater capacity.

Speaker Mudenda also talked about Zimbabwe's new constitution, which he referred to as the "bedrock" of Parliament. He said that the constitution, which defines the composition of Parliament, the role of the executive and the justice system, has resulted in new tools that promote the rule of law. According to Speaker Mudenda, 190 pieces of legislation have been introduced since the promulgation of the new constitution as part of the constitutional alignment process. He noted, however, that the process of aligning legislation to ensure it is constitutional has been slow due to a lack of legislative staff in Parliament and within government. As a result, the Speaker remarked that the Minister of Justice has outsourced some of the drafting of Zimbabwe's laws to various law societies in Zimbabwe.

The Speaker also spoke about efforts to engage the public in the legislative process. He described, for example, that Parliament is trying to do more outreach to ensure that the public is consulted on bills, noting that attendance at public hearings is typically very low. He also identified a need to build the capacity of members of Parliament. He said that Parliament is now running workshops to help train parliamentarians on how to review technical pieces of legislation. He informed the delegation that Zimbabwe's Parliament receives funding from the United Nations Development Program for this training, and he encouraged Canada to also support Zimbabwe in this regard.

The delegation posed questions to the Speaker on issues related to the current priorities in Parliament and about the resources available to parliamentarians. The Speaker clarified that the salaries of parliamentarians in Zimbabwe are among the lowest in Southern Africa. Finally, the Speaker was critical of Canadian and international sanctions regimes related to Zimbabwe and called for dialogue with the Government of Canada.

#### **4. Meeting with Zimbabwean Civil Society Organizations**

The delegation's next meeting included the participation of individuals representing the following Zimbabwean civil society organizations: the Election Resource Centre; the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network; the Media Institute for Southern Africa; the Zimbabwe Peace Project; and the Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum. The discussion was wide-ranging, touching on topics related to justice, human rights, freedom of the press, and constitutionalism, as well as on the upcoming elections in 2018.

The delegation was told that the human rights situation in Zimbabwe is fragile. Several civil society representatives expressed concerns relating to what they referred to as the selective application of laws. The delegation heard that a number of journalists have been harassed by the police over articles critical of the government. It also heard that, while the private print media in Zimbabwe is largely independent, ZANU-PF remains firmly in control of the broadcast media. Delegates were informed that freedom of assembly is regularly curtailed in Zimbabwe. It was also mentioned that several of the "hashtag protests" that occurred in 2016 were violently disbanded by police. In terms of the rule of law, civil society representatives pointed out that the process of constitutional alignment was progressing slowly and inconsistently.



Much of the discussion during the meeting revolved around the upcoming 2018 elections. A number of CSOs expressed concern regarding the registration of voters ahead of the next elections, and about the process of procuring the biometric voter registration (BVR) kits. The delegation heard that the introduction of the BVR kits was intended to be a “confidence builder” for the 2018 elections. Yet, several CSOs pointed out that the Government of Zimbabwe has recently taken steps to assume control over the procurement of the BVR system from UNDP. They noted that this action – which is being opposed by opposition parties – could undermine the public’s confidence in the credibility of the elections.

The delegation was told that the subject of President Mugabe’s succession was dominating the political environment in Zimbabwe, with various ZANU-PF factions competing for control within government and in rural leadership structures. Participants also discussed the state of efforts to establish an opposition “grand coalition.” It was noted that the Movement for Democratic Change–Tsvangirai (MDC-T), led by former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, was engaged in discussions with other opposition parties about forming a coalition to challenge ZANU-PF in the next elections. At the time of the mission, Mr. Tsvangirai was in discussions with former Prime Minister Joice Mujuru and former Finance Minister Tendai Biti about the possibility of forming a coalition. While it was unclear at the time of the visit if efforts to establish a “grand coalition” would succeed, the delegation was informed that opposition politicians – as well as members of civil society – expect police harassment to increase as the next election nears.

## **5. Meeting with Members of the National Assembly’s Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs**

The delegation held a working lunch with the following members of the Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs: the Hon. Nokuthula Matsikenyere (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Jessie Fungayi Majome (MDC-T); the Hon. George Gangarahwe (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Tendayi Makunde (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Ricky N.S.Y Mawere-Mubvumbi (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Alice Ndlovu (ZANU-PF); and the Hon. Fortune Chasi (ZANU-PF).

This meeting provided an opportunity to focus in on some of the key issues and challenges facing Zimbabwe’s Parliament and its parliamentarians. The delegation was told that the Parliament of Zimbabwe has historically been viewed as an “adjunct” to the Executive branch. However, the delegation heard that the new constitution is intended to “liberate” Parliament and to increase its role related to legislative oversight. Several parliamentarians spoke of the increasing role for committees of Parliament in holding public hearings and engaging with the public on pieces of legislation. The role of the Portfolio Committee on Public Accounts, which is chaired by an opposition member, was highlighted as being one of the most important committees in holding the government to account.

Parliamentarians from both ZANU-PF and MDC-T suggested that there is a lack of administrative, technical and research support for parliamentarians. For example, the Hon. Mr. Chasi commented that there is a need for parliamentarians to be better trained

in how to review technical pieces of legislation. The Hon. Ms. Majome spoke about the need for greater funding to hire staff to assist parliamentarians in their work. The Zimbabwean parliamentarians were also interested in hearing about the resources available to Canadian parliamentarians, and a discussion ensued on that topic as well as on the subject of campaign financing in both the Zimbabwean and Canadian contexts.

## **6. Roundtable with Development Experts and Practitioners**

The delegation participated in a roundtable discussion on development challenges in Zimbabwe with the following individuals: Bishaw Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe; Mohamed Ag Ayoya, Representative, UNICEF; Delphine Serumaga, UN Women; Dagmar Hanisch, Technical Specialist, United Nations Population Fund; Philip Christensen, Country Director, CARE; and Tholakele Ndhlovu, Child Rights Advisor, Plan International.

The roundtable discussion began with each participant providing an overview of their organization's development focus and operations in Zimbabwe. Mr. Parajuli noted that as the UN Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe he helps to coordinate the UN's overall humanitarian response and development assistance plan in the country. He maintained that the development situation in Zimbabwe was very challenging. He highlighted, for example, that 74% of people in rural Zimbabwe are estimated to live in poverty; that food insecurity, including rates of malnutrition and stunting are very high; and that Zimbabwe has recently experienced one of its worst droughts in the past 35 years. Mr. Parajuli noted that the UN's work in Zimbabwe is multi-fold, focusing not only on the humanitarian and development fronts, but also on improving the country's resilience against environmental and economic shocks. He highlighted that Zimbabwe has enormous opportunities given its rich land, mineral, agricultural resources, as well as human development potential.

Mr. Ayoya discussed UNICEF's programming in Zimbabwe, which includes projects focused on combatting child marriage, countering sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV), and projects related to conditional-cash transfer programs, nutrition, sanitation and HIV/AIDS prevention. Speaking on behalf of UN Women, Ms. Serumaga shared that Zimbabwe remains a very conservative society and the exclusion of women is normalized in many parts of the country. She commented on UN Women's work related to gender exclusion, legal and legislative reform, and addressing the normative patriarchal approaches to family and community. Ms. Serumaga underlined that UN Women is working with the Zimbabwe government, other UN agencies and with civil society to empower women to understand their rights and to push for social inclusion.

Ms. Hanisch of UNFPA spoke about the agency's work related to improving the health of women and girls, including relating to family planning. UNFPA also works on the prevention of HIV, and Ms. Hanisch noted that the incidence of HIV has been reduced by about half over the last decade. For his part, Mr. Christensen highlighted CARE's work related to food assistance and delivery, as well as conditional cash transfer programs. He explained that CARE has supported Zimbabwe through the recent El Nino drought with projects to build resiliency and increase the capacity of farmers to

withstand agricultural shocks. Finally, Tholakele Ndhlovu discussed Plan International's work on child protection and health. Ms. Ndhlovu noted that child marriage remains a key concern in Zimbabwe, as does teenage pregnancy, and said that Plan is working with religious leaders to address these issues.

During the discussion period, the delegation posed questions to the development practitioners on a wide array of issues, including about food spoilage and child marriage. The delegation heard that up to 60% of all food in Zimbabwe is spoiled after harvest as a result of poor infrastructure and inadequate storage facilities, and due to an inability to get food to market in a timely manner. Regarding child marriage, the delegation was told that approximately 1/3 of girls in Zimbabwe marry before they are 18 years old. The delegation was informed that village and church leaders must be involved in the fight against child marriage if it is to be successful.

## **7. Meeting with Fadzai Mahere**

The delegation had a working breakfast with Ms. Fadzai Mahere, a Zimbabwean lawyer and activist, in order to gain the perspective of a youth leader on the political situation in Zimbabwe. Ms. Mahere said that Zimbabwe was entering an uncertain political climate ahead of the 2018 elections. She noted that many issues were dominating Zimbabwe's political landscape, including questions related about President Mugabe's health, the post-Mugabe succession scenario, the factionalism within ZANU-PF, and about efforts to establish an opposition "grand coalition."

Ms. Mahere also discussed the "hashtag protests" that occurred in Zimbabwe in 2016 led by Pastor Evan Mawarire. She explained that, while that the protests were non-violent, they were met with force by the police and government, which banned the demonstrations. Ms. Mahere also spoke about the high level of youth engagement and participation in the public demonstrations that took place in 2016. Finally, Ms. Mahere described recent events relating to the appointment of a new Chief Justice to Zimbabwe's Supreme Court. She said that appointments to the Supreme Court are significant because the court could be called upon to make important decisions in the event of a post-Mugabe succession crisis.

## **8. Meeting with the Portfolio Committee on Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development**

The delegation visited the Parliament of Zimbabwe where it participated in a regular meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development. Also present at the meeting were representatives from Veritas, a local CSO that has been supported by Canada through the Canada Fund on Local Initiatives. The discussion focussed on the work of the Portfolio Committee and of Veritas relating to combatting child marriage. Veritas provided a brief overview of the 2016 decision by the Constitutional Court on child marriage. That decision ruled that the Marriage Act, which had allowed girls as young as 16 to be married with their parents' consent, was unconstitutional, and it recognized 18 years as the legal minimum age of marriage.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, the Honourable Biata Nyamupinga, spoke about the mandate of her committee and its work related to child marriage. She noted

that the committee has visited one province in the context of its study on child marriage, and intends to visit a second province to conduct further public hearings. She also described how her committee has examined issues related to the trafficking of women and the conditions facing women in prisons. The representatives from Veritas informed the delegation of a model law developed by SADC on child marriage. Veritas, which has a memorandum of understanding with the Parliament of Zimbabwe to assist it with constitutional and legal matters, underscored that Zimbabwe's Parliament was engaged in debate regarding the process of domesticating this initiative into law.

### **9. Meeting with Deryk Matyszak and Dr. Francis Lovemore**

The delegation participated in a frank and open discussion with Dr. Francis Lovemore and Mr. Deryk Matyszak, two political analysts, regarding the situation in Zimbabwe. Dr. Lovemore and Mr. Matyszak discussed the civil unrest that occurred in Harare in 2016 and the resulting counter-reaction by Zimbabwean security forces. They also talked about the growing factionalism within ZANU-PF and possible scenarios for post-Mugabe succession. In addition, Dr. Lovemore and Mr. Matyszak outlined the dynamics in Parliament and the prospects for an opposition "grand coalition." Mr. Matyszak said that, while there is a chance the opposition could form a united front, it remains weak, lacks resources and struggles to get its message out in rural parts of the country. With respect to the upcoming election, both Dr. Lovemore and Mr. Matyszak expressed concern about the process surrounding the procurement of the biometric voter registration kits and about the prospects for a free and fair election in 2018. Members of the delegation and the two interlocutors also discussed the impact of international sanctions regimes on Zimbabwe.

### **10. Briefing by John Makamure, Executive Director, Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) – Zimbabwe, and Chengetai Kanyangu, Programme Officer, SAPST**

The delegation met with officials from the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) . SAPST is a non-governmental organization that provides technical and financial support to the parliaments of Southern African countries to assist them in their core functions of executive oversight, law-making and representation. Mr. Makamure and Ms. Kanyangu provided the delegation with background information on SAPST and an overview of its support to the Parliament of Zimbabwe including technical support and training related to legislation and committee report writing, as well as assistance on promoting citizen engagement. In particular, SAPST works with parliamentarians on how to consult with the public on legislation, as well as how to inform the public of their right to petition the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Makamure told the delegation that the committee system in Zimbabwe's Parliament has grown significantly in recent years. He indicated that there are currently 19 portfolio committees in the House of Assembly and 6 thematic committees in the Senate. While Mr. Makamure referred to Zimbabwe's committee system as one of the best performing in the SADC region, he noted that Zimbabwe's Parliament faces serious funding gaps. The delegation heard that SAPST tries to help fill these gaps by supporting Parliament

with a particular focus on committee work. Mr. Makamure explained that SAPST is funded entirely by development partners, of which USAID is their largest supporter.

## **11. Meeting with the Zimbabwean Parliamentary Women's Caucus**

The delegation had a working lunch with the following members of the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus: the Hon. Monica Mutsvangwa (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Paurina Mpariwa (MDC-T); the Hon. Tionei Melody Dziva (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Dorothy Tholakele Khumalo (MDC); the Hon. Annah Rungani (ZANU-PF); the Hon. Dorcas Sibanda (MDC-T). The Hon. Monica Mutsvangwa, Chairperson, began the meeting by providing the delegation with background information on the women's caucus. The women's caucus was launched in 2001 with the aim of establishing a forum for women parliamentarians to gather and address issues of common concern. According to Ms. Mutsvangwa, the caucus works to ensure that women have strong voices inside and outside of Parliament, and that the rights enshrined for women in the constitution are upheld.

While several members of the women's caucus mentioned that initiatives are underway to increase the representation of women in positions of power, the delegation also heard that challenges remain to improve the gender balance. For example, Ms. Mutsvangwa pointed out that only 4 out of 26 cabinet ministers in Zimbabwe are women. Moreover, while the number of elected women in Zimbabwe's Parliament is currently at an historic high (about 32%), it was reiterated to the delegation that this is largely the result of a provision in the 2013 constitution that allocated an additional 60 seats for women for the 2013 and 2018 elections. As was pointed out by members of the women's caucus, that provision comes to an end in 2023. Members of the women's caucus indicated that they are grappling with the question of how to maintain the gains that women have made ahead of the 2023 election, and how to eliminate barriers for women interested in politics.

During the roundtable discussion, delegates engaged in a discussion with the women's caucus about some of the issues facing women in Zimbabwe. The delegation heard that sexual- and gender-based violence remains all too common in Zimbabwe, as does child marriage. Members of the women's caucus indicated that there is a need to improve education in rural parts of the country, and to empower women to understand their rights.

## **12. Roundtable with Professor Ashok Chakravarti, University of Zimbabwe, and Dr. Godfrey Kanyenze, Labour and Economic Development Research Institute Zimbabwe**

The delegation met with Professor Ashok Chakravarti, University of Zimbabwe, and Dr. Godfrey Kanyenze, Labour and Economic Development Research Institute Zimbabwe, for a briefing on the economic situation in Zimbabwe. Professor Chakravarti and Dr. Kanyenze spoke about some of the serious economic challenges facing Zimbabwe. The delegation heard, for example, that Zimbabwe is currently running large budget deficits and that the unemployment rate is very high. Delegates were told that approximately 90% of working people are employed in the informal sector through micro-enterprises,

as street vendors, in small-scale agricultural operations, in artisanal mining, or in other small-scale businesses. The delegation also heard that Zimbabwe faces a serious currency shortage owing to a lack of U.S. dollars in circulation and few export-generating industries. Professor Chakravarti noted that one way to solve the liquidity crisis in the short-term would be to adopt the South Africa Rand as Zimbabwe's currency. While Professor Chakravarti acknowledged that this would not resolve Zimbabwe's fiscal crisis, he said it would ease the liquidity problem in the short-run.

During the round-table discussion, members of the delegation posed questions about the power structures in Zimbabwe and about the country's near-term economic prospects. Dr. Kanyenze expressed concern about the hierarchical power structures in Zimbabwe. For example, he noted that there is a lack of accountability mechanisms in Zimbabwe's extractive sector. Professor Chakravarti also noted that patronage appointments are commonly used to reward individuals for their electoral support.

The delegation was told that Zimbabwe's economy will continue to subsist in the short-term. The worst of the El Nino drought is believed to have passed, which could result in greater agricultural output. Donors such as the European Union have also begun to re-engage in the country – albeit in a restrained way – and Zimbabwe is working with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank on an arrears repayment plan. In addition, Professor Chakravarti and Dr. Kanyenze both highlighted the important role that remittances from Zimbabwe nationals play in supporting the economy. Despite this limited optimism, the delegation was informed that Zimbabwe's economy would likely continue to face significant economic challenges going forward with the economy operating well below its potential.

### **13. Meeting with Chester Samba, Director, and Samuel Matsikure, Programme Manager, Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)**

The delegation met with Chester Samba, Director, and Samuel Matsikure, Programme Manager, of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ). Established in 1990, GALZ is one of the oldest lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-sexual, and intersex (LGBTI) rights organizations in Southern Africa. GALZ has about 300 members and advocates for the recognition and defense of the rights of the LGBTI community in Zimbabwe. Mr. Samba and Mr. Matsikure spoke about what it is like to be gay or lesbian in Zimbabwe. They noted that, while gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe do not face the same kind of intolerance seen in other parts of Africa, many members of the community report acts of harassment and violence. Mr. Samba and Mr. Matsikure stressed that GALZ is free to operate in Zimbabwe. However, they noted that, as the 2018 election approaches, they expect the targeting and harassment of the LGBTI community to increase. They also told the delegation that they expect homophobic rhetoric at the highest political levels to intensify as the election nears. Mr. Samba and Mr. Matsikure commented that President Mugabe has a long history of making homophobic remarks, particularly during electoral periods. They also spoke about the work of GALZ to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and to campaign for access to affordable treatment.

### **14. Meeting with Independent Zimbabwean Journalists**

The delegation met with several independent journalists for a wide-ranging discussion about the state of press freedom in Zimbabwe and the political and economic situation in the country. The delegation was told that, although the constitution protects press freedom and freedom of expression, the media landscape in Zimbabwe remains highly restrictive. While a number of independent print media outlets exist, the delegation heard that the television and radio broadcast mediums continue to be dominated by the governing party. In addition, the delegation was told that journalists that publish articles critical of the government routinely face harassment from the police, with many having been arrested on politically-motivated charges. The delegation heard that harassment of the independent media will likely intensify ahead of the next elections.

The journalists provided delegates with information about the current political dynamics in Zimbabwe and on the economic challenges facing the country. It was noted that there is an internal power struggle underway within ZANU-PF over President Mugabe's succession, as well as a struggle over who should lead a "grand coalition" if one could be established. On the economy, the delegation heard that in the absence of political and economic reforms, the liquidity crisis in Zimbabwe was likely to continue. According to the journalists present, the idea of adopting the South African Rand as Zimbabwe's currency was unlikely due in part to symbolic reasons of national pride.

### **15. Site Visit to Glenview Community Centre**

The delegation visited a community centre in Glenview, a high density suburb located outside of Harare, where it participated in the unveiling of anti-child marriage wall art. The community centre is supported by Girls Legacy, an NGO that seeks to build the capacity of young women and girls through leadership development and mentoring. Girls Legacy also supports safe spaces for young women and girls to engage on issues that affect their lives. Girls Legacy has received support from the Government of Canada through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

The delegation was welcomed by Judith Chiyangwa, Director, Girls Legacy, who spoke about the objectives of her organization and the purpose of the wall art. Ms. Chiyangwa confirmed that child marriage remains common throughout Zimbabwe. She described the Glenview community centre as a place for girls to come together to feel safe and to discuss issues of common concern. Ms. Chiyangwa noted that the words written on the mural in Shona translate into English as "child marriage is illegal and is a crime." Nyasha Sengayi of Girls Legacy added that the main message of the mural is to say "no" to sexual violence and child marriage, and "yes" to economic empowerment and opportunity.

Ambassador Gupta affirmed that combatting child marriage is a key priority for Canada in Zimbabwe. He also made the point that men bear just as much responsibility in combatting child marriage as women do. This message was reinforced by a local municipal counsellor who urged that programs to fight child marriage must include boys as well as men. Mr. Oliphant spoke on behalf of the delegation and thanked Girls Legacy, the mural's artist, and all of those involved in the project for their work and dedication. Following Mr. Oliphant's comments, the delegation was invited to sign the mural and provide a personalized message or drawing.

## REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA<sup>14</sup>

The Republic of Botswana (“Botswana”) is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. Its neighbours are South Africa to the south, Namibia to the west, Zimbabwe to the northeast, and Zambia to the north. The Kalahari Desert covers much of the south, and most of the country’s 2.2 million inhabitants live along its eastern border. The main ethnic groups in Botswana are Tswana (or Setswana) (79%), Kalanga (11%), and Basarwa (3%). English is the official language, but is the mother tongue of only about 2.8% of the population. The majority of Batswana have Setswana as their mother tongue.

### A. System of Government

Executive power is held by the President, who is also commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces and an ex-officio member of the National Assembly. The President is indirectly elected; the presidential candidate of the party with the majority in the National Assembly becomes President. (If no party has a majority, the President is elected by the Parliament.) The President is restricted to serving no more than two terms of office. He appoints a Vice-President and a cabinet from members of the National Assembly. The National Assembly is composed of 63 seats, of which 57 are filled by directly-elected members elected in single seat constituencies by simple majority vote. An additional four members are indirectly elected by the National Assembly from a list of candidates submitted by the President. The President and the Attorney-General are ex-officio members of the National Assembly. The Assembly’s term is five years. Only 6 out of 63 members elected to the House of Assembly in 2014 were women (9.5%).<sup>15</sup>

Another body called the Ntlo ya Dikgosi exists in an advisory capacity to the National Assembly. The Ntlo ya Dikgosi, formerly the House of Chiefs, comprises 35 members: eight hereditary chiefs from Botswana’s principal tribes; 22 members indirectly elected by the chiefs; and five members appointed by the President. Legislation that pertains to chieftaincy matters and changes to the Constitution must be referred to it for approval, but the House has no power of veto.

### B. Governance

Botswana ranks as the top or as one of the top African countries on several prominent global indices that measure governance, democracy and corruption. For example, Botswana ranked 35<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries surveyed on Transparency International’s 2016 *Corruption Perceptions Index*.<sup>16</sup> This was the highest ranking of any country in Africa. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Botswana 27<sup>th</sup> out of 167 countries on its 2016 *Democracy Index*. Based on that score, Botswana is considered to be a “flawed democracy.”<sup>17</sup> Botswana is the third highest-ranking African country on the index, after

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<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, this section of the report contains information retrieved from the following sources: Global Affairs Canada, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the United States Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook*, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and *Europa World*.

<sup>15</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Women in National Parliaments](#).

<sup>16</sup> Transparency International, [Corruption Perceptions Index 2016](#).

<sup>17</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, [Democracy Index 2016: Revenge of the "deplorables"](#).



Mauritius (18<sup>th</sup>) and Cape Verde (23<sup>rd</sup>). Botswana also ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 54 African countries on the *Ibrahim Index of African Governance* (Mauritius is first) for 2016.<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding its strong rankings on these and other indices, several organizations have raised concerns about aspects of the political and human rights situation in Botswana. For example, while Botswana is classified as a “free” country by Freedom House, that organization notes that critics of President Khama “have expressed concerns about creeping authoritarianism, particularly in light of crackdowns on the media and questionable actions by Khama regarding the judiciary.”<sup>19</sup> Amnesty International issued similar concerns in its 2016–2017 annual report on Botswana. In particular, Amnesty International highlighted concerns with respect to restrictions on freedom of expression and of assembly and related to the rights of the LGBTI community.<sup>20</sup>

### C. Economic and Social Development

Botswana ranks 106<sup>th</sup> out of 188 UN-recognized territories on UNDP’s 2015 *Human Development Index*, a ranking that puts it above the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>21</sup> While Botswana’s social development indicators are relatively strong for the region, it continues to face high levels of poverty and inequality. The poverty rate is estimated to be 19% overall, but is about 24% in rural areas.<sup>22</sup> Rates of poverty are particularly high for households headed by women.<sup>23</sup> Botswana is also one of the top ten most unequal countries in the world, as measured by the Gini coefficient.<sup>24</sup> Inequality has, however, declined over the past decade, largely as a result of welfare improvements in rural areas.<sup>25</sup>

HIV/AIDS continues to present one of the biggest development challenges to Botswana. According to UNAIDS, at approximately 22.2%, Botswana had the world’s 3rd highest HIV adult prevalence rate in 2015 (behind Swaziland and Lesotho).<sup>26</sup> As a landlocked country, lack of access to clean water and sanitation services is another development challenge. In July 2015, Botswana declared a drought emergency due to poor rains across most of the country. According to the country’s meteorological department, the

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<sup>18</sup> The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is an annual report that assesses the governance of every African country according to indicators that measure respect for the rule of law and safety; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity; and human development. See: Mo Ibrahim Foundation, [Ibrahim Index of African Governance \(IIAG\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> Freedom House, “[Botswana](#),” *Freedom in the World 2016*.

<sup>20</sup> Amnesty International, [Botswana 2016/2017](#), Annual Report.

<sup>21</sup> The *Human Development Index* is a composite measurement of education, health and income indicators. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development](#), 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Statistics Botswana, [Poverty](#).

<sup>23</sup> World Bank, [Botswana: Systematic Country Diagnostic](#), March 2015.

<sup>24</sup> The Gini coefficient is the most commonly used measure of inequality. The coefficient varies between 0, which reflects complete equality, and 1, which indicates complete inequality (i.e. one person has all the income or consumption, all others have none).

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, [Botswana Poverty Assessment](#), March 2015.

<sup>26</sup> UNAIDS, [AIDSinfo](#).

drought was the worst in the last 34 years.<sup>27</sup> Given its semi-arid climate, droughts in Botswana are considered to be “chronic,” with six of the past 10 years having been moderately to severely dry. Lack of water also affects sanitation, particularly in the more isolated rural communities.

With respect to its economy, Botswana has witnessed a transformation over the past several decades from one of the world’s poorest countries to an upper-middle-income country. This transformation has been fuelled by growth in the extractive sector, and particularly by the successful exploitation of diamonds. Diamond mining is estimated to have contributed an average of 24% to the country’s GDP from 2005 to 2014.<sup>28</sup> It is also estimated to generate about 85% of export earnings and roughly 1/3 of all government revenues.<sup>29</sup> However, GDP growth has slowed in Botswana over the past several years and the country is now engaged in efforts to diversify its economy.

#### **D. Canada-Botswana Relations**

While Canada-Botswana relations are limited, Global Affairs Canada notes that the two countries maintain a common approach on several international issues, including a commitment to human rights, freedom of expression, rule of law and democracy.<sup>30</sup> Canada’s commercial links with Botswana are also relatively strong for a country of its size. In 2016, Canada–Botswana bilateral merchandise trade was \$367.3 million. Canadian companies have made significant investments in coal, copper/nickel, gold and diamond exploration in Botswana in recent years.<sup>31</sup> According to Natural Resources Canada, Canadian mining assets in Botswana were approximately \$289 million in 2015.<sup>32</sup>

Canada does not maintain a significant development assistance program in Botswana. However, Canada and Botswana share links through the education sector. According to Global Affairs Canada, approximately 250 Botswana students come to Canada every year.<sup>33</sup> Over the past years, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives administered by Canada’s Embassy in Harare has also provided support to local organizations to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

### **MEETINGS IN BOTSWANA**

#### **1. Meeting at the Botswana International Trade Centre**

The delegation’s first meeting in Botswana was at the Botswana International Trade Centre where it met with the following individuals: Charles Siwawa, CEO, Botswana Chamber of Mines; Fred Jansen, Secretary, Botswana Chamber of Mines; Meshack Tshekedi, Chief Operations Officer, Botswana Investment and Trade Centre; Reginald

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<sup>27</sup> World Bank, [Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet \(PID/ISDS\)](#), Botswana Emergency Water Security and Efficiency Project, Report no. PIDISDSA19547, 21 July 2016.

<sup>28</sup> African Economic Outlook, [Botswana 2016](#).

<sup>29</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “[Botswana](#),” *TheWorld Factbook*.

<sup>30</sup> Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, [Canada–Botswana Relations](#).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Natural Resources Canada, [Canadian Mining Assets \(CMA\) by Country and Region, 2014 and 2015](#).

<sup>33</sup> Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, [Canada–Botswana Relations](#)

Selelo, Executive Director, Botswana Investment and Trade Centre; and, Reitumetse Aphiri, Executive Director, Botswana Investment and Trade Centre.

The primary focus of the meeting was about socio-economic issues facing Botswana, including the country's efforts to diversify its economy and to implement practices of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in its extractive sector. The meeting began with a presentation by the Botswana International Trade Centre (BITC) entitled "Botswana's Comparative Advantage." The presentation provided an overview of Botswana's main economic strengths, which according to BITC includes its strong rankings on international indices that measure the ease of doing business and competitiveness, its low level of perceived corruption, its politically stable environment where the rule of law is enforced, and its labour market stability. The delegation heard that Botswana also had one of the highest investment grade credit ratings in Africa and a competitive tax framework. The delegation was told that key opportunities for businesses exist in the following sectors: agriculture and agribusiness (e.g. leather and beef); manufacturing (e.g. automotive components); resources (e.g. coal and diamonds); services (e.g. transport and information and communications technologies); and, tourism and hospitality (e.g. game lodges).

The second presentation of the meeting was provided by Fred Jansen of the Botswana Chamber of Mines on the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) framework. The TSM framework is an initiative led by the Mining Association of Canada that was established in 2004 with the objective of seeing that mining is performed in the most socially, economically and environmentally responsible way. When adopting TSM, companies agree to a set of guiding principles that are backed by six performance protocols involving 23 indicators against which mining companies measure and publicly report their performance.<sup>34</sup> Mr. Jansen noted that the Botswana Chamber of Mines is the first mining association in Africa to adopt TSM, and the third to do so outside of Canada.<sup>35</sup> Mr. Jansen explained to the delegation that, under the TSM framework, the Botswana Chamber of Mines had conducted two mine site visits and made presentations to four of its members. He suggested that six more site visits and several presentations would be done within the next few months. In addition, he said that operating mine members of the Botswana Chamber of Mines will do a self-assessment of their policies and operations under the TSM framework within a year of implementation.

During the discussion, delegates posed questions on several topics, including on regional and global trade and investment. The delegation was told that Botswana is actively pursuing double taxation agreements and free trade agreements internationally, including with the European Union. It was noted that Botswana is a member of the Southern African Customs Union – the oldest customs union in the world – as well as the SADC free trade area. The delegation heard that Botswana is also making infrastructure investments in order to deepen its intra-regional trade with other countries in Southern Africa.

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<sup>34</sup> For more information on the various components of the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) framework, including its guiding principles, see: Mining Association of Canada, [Towards Sustainable Mining](#).

<sup>35</sup> FinnMin, the Finnish Mining Association, adopted TSM in November 2015 and the Cámara Argentina de Empresarios Mineros (CAEM), the Argentinean Chamber of Mining Entrepreneurs, adopted the framework in October 2016.

## **2. Meeting with Emmanuel Bolthale, Associate Professor, University of Botswana**

The delegation met with Emmanuel Bolthale, Associate Professor at the University of Botswana, for a briefing on the political and economic situation in Botswana. Professor Bolthale provided the delegation with an overview of some key political and economic events in Botswana's history since its independence in 1966. He noted that at the time of independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world and had almost no infrastructure, schools or hospitals. He described how Botswana was very dependent on foreign aid at this time and that agriculture was responsible for about 90% of the country's GDP. This began to change, however, in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the discovery of diamond deposits. By the 1980s, Professor Bolthale remarked that Botswana began to enter a "golden age" as diamond exploitation spurred significant foreign investment and a construction boom. He noted that throughout the 1990s, Botswana's economy was growing at one of the fastest rates in the world.

Despite its economic and social development successes (poverty has decreased from about 50% in the 1970s to about 20% today), Professor Bolthale suggested that Botswana also faces development challenges. For example, he pointed out that Botswana is one of the world's most unequal countries in terms of income disparity, that unemployment among youth remains disproportionately high, and that Botswana has one of the world's highest HIV prevalence rates. He also added that Botswana remains highly dependent on diamond revenue, and thus vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity markets. Professor Bolthale indicated that the Government of Botswana has undertaken steps to diversify the country's economy, including by investing in the tourism and service sectors.

The delegation engaged in a discussion with Professor Bolthale on several aspects of the economic situation in Botswana. Professor Bolthale said that there is a sense in Botswana that the country is being punished by donors for its economic success and its status as an upper middle income country. According to Professor Bolthale, several donors have pulled out or reduced their bilateral development assistance. In response to a question about youth unemployment, Professor Bolthale commented that there is a mismatch in Botswana between what people are studying in school and what the market requires. He reasoned that there is a need for the supply side (i.e. universities, vocational schools) to be more responsive to the demand side (i.e. employers). Finally, Professor Bolthale spoke about the Pula Fund. The Pula Fund is a sovereign wealth fund that was established in 1994 with the aim of preserving part of the income from diamond exports for future generations. Professor Bolthale told the delegation that the Pula Fund is an important component of Botswana's broader economic diversification drive and poverty reduction strategy.

## **3. Meeting at the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation**

The delegation visited Botswana's Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation where it met with Gaeimelwe Goitsewang, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Athaliah Molokomme, the former Attorney General of Botswana; Benetia Chingapane, Director, Multilateral; and Tsbogo Motshome, Director, Americas.

Mr. Goitseman began the meeting by thanking Canada for being a strategic development and economic partner for Botswana. He then provided an overview of some of the key economic and development challenges facing the country. He noted, for example, that the Government of Botswana recently authorized the closure of the state-owned BCL Ltd. copper and nickel mine located in the north-eastern part of the country, which he called a necessary but painful decision. He indicated that the Government of Botswana was developing a revitalization strategy to attract investors to the communities affected by the closure of the mine. Mr. Goitseman also said that his Ministry is encouraging Canada and other donors not to end their development support to Botswana because of its status as an upper middle income country. He emphasized that Botswana wants to partner with donors so that it can continue developing and addressing poverty and inequality.

Members of the delegation engaged in discussions with Mr. Goitseman and Ms. Molokomme on Canada-Botswana relations and key regional and international issues. It was noted that Canada and Botswana are like-minded partners on a number of global issues, including on the International Criminal Court (ICC). Ms. Molokomme stressed that Botswana feels strongly that the ICC is important. While indicating that the ICC has flaws, Ms. Molokomme argued that Botswana's position is that the ICC remains critical to ending impunity for gross violations of human rights and that it should be reformed from within, not eliminated. Ms. Molokomme expressed optimism that this message was getting across, noting that Gambia announced in February 2017 that it would rejoin the ICC.

In response to questions about regional issues, Mr. Goitseman said that the situation in Zimbabwe remains a concern for Botswana. He commented that Botswana and South Africa host a number of migrants from Zimbabwe, and that the number of new migrants typically swells in the aftermath of elections. Mr. Goitseman also discussed the situation in Lesotho. The day before the delegation's visit to Botswana, Lesotho's Prime Minister lost a confidence vote in Parliament that resulted in the calling of new elections on 3 June 2017 – more than three years ahead of schedule. Mr. Goitseman indicated that the unstable situation in Lesotho has been a concern for Botswana – and the broader SADC community – for several years, and that they would be monitoring the situation.

#### **4. Meeting with Members of Parliament**

The delegation had a working lunch with the following members of Parliament: the Honourable Biggie Butale (Botswana Democratic Party – BDP); the Honourable Setlhomolole Lelatisitswe (BDP); the Honourable Noah Salakae (Umbrella for Democratic Change – UDC); the Honourable Haskins Nkaigwa (UDC); and the Honourable General Pius Mokgware (UDC). Also present at the meeting was Mmonni Butale of the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust.

This meeting provided a chance for the delegation to meet with members of Parliament from both the governing and opposition parties to learn about some of the issues and challenges facing parliamentarians in Botswana. The delegation heard, for example, that parliamentarians from remote regions of Botswana face significant logistical and

resource challenges in trying to fulfil both their constituency and legislative duties. There was also discussion about the introduction of an electronic voting system in Botswana ahead of the country's general election in 2019, and whether the system could be compromised. Finally, members of both the BDP and the UDC concurred on the importance of continuing to diversify the economy in Botswana, including by improving the country's infrastructure and exploiting its tourism potential.

Following the lunch, the delegation visited Botswana's National Assembly where it witnessed a question and answer period between members and ministers. During this session, members of the BDP government responded orally to written questions by opposition parliamentarians on several topics, including on the number of vacant posts in certain ministries, on efforts to improve water and sanitation services, and on the construction of special education classrooms.

## **5. Meeting with Officials from the SADC Secretariat**

The delegation visited the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) where it met with Dr. Themba Mhlongo, Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, SADC, and Dr. Vitalis Goodwell Chipfakacha, Technical Advisor, Capacity Building and Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS, SADC. Dr. Mhlongo provided an overview of SADC's main programming related to peace and security, and economic development in the region. He noted that within these broad areas of programming, SADC oversees issues such as elections, defence, migration, energy and infrastructure. He indicated that energy in particular was a priority for SADC. Dr. Mhlongo mentioned that over the past few years the energy capacity in the region has been insufficient to meet demand. As a result, he explained that almost all SADC countries have faced blackouts and have resorted to "load shedding," i.e. scheduled shutdowns intended to ease the strain on power systems. He also noted that Southern Africa was hit hard by El Nino and that SADC is working to address issues related to food insecurity.

Members of the delegation expressed an interest in hearing about SADC's work to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. Dr. Chipfakacha confirmed that SADC is the only region in the world to have reduced prevalence of HIV/AIDS by more than 4% over the past year. He underlined that SADC is working toward what is known as the "90-90-90 target" across the region. That target calls on countries to achieve the following goals:

- have 90% of people living with HIV diagnosed by 2020;
- have 90% of diagnosed people on antiretroviral treatment by 2020; and,
- have 90% of people in treatment with fully suppressed viral load by 2020.

Dr. Chipfakacha told the delegation that, while progress against the disease is being made, donors need to put just as much support into prevention as they do into treatment. He indicated that approximately 50% of new HIV infections in Eastern and Southern Africa are from South Africa. Finally, Dr. Chipfakacha suggested that domestic capacity and resources across the region to combat HIV/AIDS remains limited. He shared, however, that SADC is working to support countries in the region to develop

their industrial capacity to produce antiretroviral drugs and other pharmaceuticals needed to fight the disease.

## **6. Meeting with the SADC Electoral Advisory Council**

The delegation's second meeting at the SADC Secretariat took place with Professor Mpho Molomo and Dr. Mavis Matenge of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC). Professor Molomo provided a brief overview of SEAC, noting that it was established in 2011 as a body to advise SADC on issues pertaining to elections and the enhancement of good governance and democracy. He then discussed the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* policy that was adopted by SADC in 2015. These guidelines define terms such as "credible election," and "free and fair election," and outline a set of standards aimed at promoting the holding and observation of democratic elections based on the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Professor Molomo and Dr. Matenge told the delegation that, as part of its mandate, SEAC embarks on pre-election goodwill missions to member countries where it interacts with stakeholders and assesses whether the target country's environment is conducive to holding an election. Members of the delegation posed questions to SEAC about its preparations for the upcoming elections in Zimbabwe. Delegates were informed that SEAC will be launching a pre-election goodwill mission to Zimbabwe in the coming months, after which it will produce a report that will be shared with the relevant stakeholders in Zimbabwe and SADC countries.

## **7. Meeting with the Law Society of Botswana**

The delegation met with the following representatives of the Law Society of Botswana: Kgalalelo Nneiseng Monthe, Chairperson; Onalethata Kambai, Vice Chairperson; Tebogo P. Moipolai, Executive Secretary; and Kusigani Mbambo, Member. This meeting allowed the delegation to gain a snapshot of issues related to the rule of law in Botswana, including the functioning of the judiciary and the protection of human rights, as well as to gain insight into the difference between Botswana's two systems of common and customary law.

Mr. Monthe told the delegation that the Law Society of Botswana has been concerned with issues related to the rule of law in Botswana since 2008, particularly with respect to the process of judicial appointments. He commented that in recent years President Khama has rejected the recommendations of the Judicial Service Commission regarding the appointment of judges to the High Court, and has instead appointed judges to the court with little legal experience. Mr. Monthe considered that these appointments are causing people to question the independence of the judiciary in Botswana. The delegation also heard that Botswana's Court of Appeal is dominated by white male judges, which is not reflective of the demographics of the country.

Members of the Law Society of Botswana expressed concern about what they referred to as a downward trajectory with respect to human rights in Botswana. They noted, for example, the poor conditions facing Botswana's San people and the high prevalence of sexual- and gender-based violence. Ms. Mbambo remarked that a lot of SGBV occurs in

the context of marriage and goes either unreported or unpunished. She pointed out that there is no national human rights commission in Botswana, and only one human rights NGO that monitors these issues on a national scale. The delegation was also told that the Government of Botswana has become increasingly security conscious, and is spending a disproportionately high amount on defence for the severity of the security threats that Botswana faces.

## **8. Meeting with Joel Konopo, Managing Partner (Editorial), and Ntibinyane Ntibinyane, Managing Partner (Operations), of the INK Centre for Investigative Journalism**

The delegation met with Joel Konopo and Ntibinyane Ntibinyane, two Botswana journalists from the INK Centre for Investigative Journalism. The INK Centre is an independent, non-profit newsroom that was founded in 2015. It produces investigative journalism and supports young reporters in newsrooms that have significant budget constraints and are struggling to maintain investigative journalism desks.

Mr. Konopo and Mr. Ntibinyane provided the delegation with an overview of the media landscape in Botswana. The delegation heard that – in addition to the state-run newspapers – there are 15 privately-owned newspapers in Botswana, all of which are fighting for a small readership and advertising base. There are also three private radio stations, two state-run radio stations, and one state-run national broadcaster. The delegation was told that the state-run radio stations have more reach across the country than private stations, which are struggling to survive. More broadly, delegates heard that newspaper readership is declining in Botswana as a result of the ubiquity of social media.

The delegation was told that concerns have emerged regarding freedom of the press in Botswana in recent years. For example, general harassment and arrests of journalists has increased since 2008, and there has been an increase in defamation cases. Mr. Konopo and Mr. Ntibinyane expressed concern about the Media Practitioners Act, which if implemented would compel all resident journalists to obtain accreditation from a media council. While the Act is currently in abeyance, it was explained to the delegation that this legislation could undermine press freedom and the independence of journalists in Botswana. Specifically, Mr. Konopo and Mr. Ntibinyane argued that Botswana needed to undertake the following reforms to enhance press freedom: enact access to information laws, strengthen whistle-blower protections, and repeal the Media Practitioners Act.

## **9. Meeting with United Nations Resident Coordinator and UN Agencies**

The delegation participated in a roundtable discussion about the development situation in Botswana with Jacinta Barrins, UN Resident Coordinator for Botswana, and representatives from the following UN agencies: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and UN Women.



Through the presentations of the UN Resident Coordinator and the various UN representatives, the delegation was given a broad overview of the major development challenges facing Botswana. Ms. Barrins began the meeting by noting that, despite its status as an upper middle income country, there are several development issues of concern in Botswana. UNDP noted, for example, that Botswana is vulnerable to climate change given that it is a landlocked country in which water is scarce. The delegation heard that water scarcity puts major stress on agricultural development in Botswana, which can have consequences for sanitation. UNFPA spoke about development challenges in Botswana related to maternal mortality, which remains high. It was also noted that Botswana has one of the highest adult prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS in the world, and that more work needs to be done within the school system to ensure that youth are provided with adequate information on sexual and reproductive health.

The representative from the IOM told the delegation that it is working to support Botswana on disaster response management, as well as to manage the inflow of vulnerable migrants across its borders. This includes ensuring that migrants have access to health services and that unaccompanied minors receive proper support. For its part, the delegation heard from UNESCO about the *Better Education for Africa's Rise* (BEAR) project that is being implemented in Botswana. The BEAR project focuses on improving the knowledge base and capacity of technical vocational education and training in five SADC countries (Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia). The delegation was told that the rationale behind this project is that youth unemployment in Botswana remains high, and there is a mismatch between the needs of the market and the skillsets of Botswana youth.

UN Women spoke about some of the main challenges facing women in Botswana. These include high rates of SGBV and the lack of female representation in high-ranking political and economic positions of power. The delegation was told that women make up less than 10% of the total membership of the National Assembly, and that the percentage of women in cabinet is about 17%. Delegates heard that UN Women funds programs that focus on women's empowerment, SGBV prevention and advocacy, as well as projects to support gender-responsive budgeting and mainstreaming. Finally, the DPA informed the Association about its work related to electoral assistance and its partnership with SADC to develop a counter-terrorism framework for the region.

During discussions, members of the delegation engaged with the participants on subjects relating to youth unemployment, UN inter-agency coordination, and skills training and development. The delegation also heard about the different challenges faced by women under the common law system versus the customary law system. For example, delegates found out that the capacity of the customary courts remains limited, which can result in impunity for perpetrators of SGBV and other crimes.

## **10. Meeting with Members of Civil Society Organizations**

The delegation had a working lunch with representatives of the following CSOs: Kagisano Women's Shelter; Men and Boys for Gender Equality; Stepping Stones International; the Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (Legabibo); World

University Services Canada (WUSC); Ditshwanelo – the Botswana Centre for Human Rights; and the Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV and AIDS (Bonela).

A representative from each CSO had the opportunity to brief the delegation on their organization's main objectives and activities. The delegation heard that Ditshwanelo has the broadest mandate of the groups represented; it advocates for the abolition of the death penalty in Botswana, focuses on developing the capacity of human rights organizations, and provides support to those in need of legal aid. Bonela described its work to provide health support for marginalized populations, particularly vulnerable groups such as sex workers and members of the LGBTI community. Legabibo – formerly a member of Bonela – has a similar focus, and the delegation heard about its efforts to promote the recognition, acceptance, and equal protection of the LGBTI community in Botswana.

The representative of Men and Boys for Gender Equality spoke about his organization's work to educate men and boys about sexual- and gender-based violence. The organization also works to educate men on child-rearing and to support women during pregnancies. The participant from Kagisano Women's Shelter spoke about that organization's work to provide care to people affected by SGBV, including temporary shelter and other social services. The delegation heard that Kagisano Women's Shelter works with government officials, social workers, police and law firms, as well as with community leaders, on gender sensitization.

For its part, the individual from Stepping Stones International commented on the range of programming that their organization is involved in. This includes working with vulnerable and disadvantaged people with experience of sexual abuse, programs relating to the rights of children and financial programs to help new mothers. Finally, the delegation heard from WUSC about their work in Botswana. WUSC has been engaged in Botswana for 37 years, primarily through partnerships that see Canadian volunteers work with local CSOs.

During the discussion period, delegates engaged with the CSO participants on several topics. This included exchanges about the importance of involving men and boys in gender sensitization, and efforts to support and promote the rights of the LGBTI community. Several participants spoke about the challenge of working in rural Botswana. The delegation heard that getting information about sexual and reproductive health into rural parts of Botswana remains a challenge due to highly entrenched traditional leadership structures. Moreover, the delegation was told that SGBV often goes unreported in these areas, due to weak judicial mechanisms and social service support.

## **11. Visit to Stepping Stones International Community Outreach Centre**

For its final meeting in Botswana, the delegation visited the Stepping Stones International (SSI) community outreach centre located just outside of Gaborone. SSI was established in 2006 to serve orphaned and vulnerable adolescents and their caregivers. Today, SSI offers after-school and community outreach programs that focus on the following four areas: youth empowerment, family strengthening, strengthening youth services, and advocacy. The delegation heard that SSI works with orphaned or

vulnerable youth who under-perform academically, live in abusive environments or have basic unmet needs. Through its program model that combines life skills, leadership, psychosocial support and community mobilization, SSI seeks to enable youth to grow into self-sufficient young adults.

The delegation had the opportunity to tour several SSI program units, including those related to leadership, life skills development, computer skills, psychosocial support, as well as a new young mother's program. Delegates were told by program participants, as well as staff and volunteers, that the purpose of these programs is to bring out the potential of young people. SSI also provided the delegation with information on its programs relating to countering sexual-and gender-based violence. Finally, Association members heard about the work of SSI to engage with the Government of Botswana on school curriculum. The representatives of SSI explained that it is working with the government to develop a curriculum that incorporates elements relating to practical life skills for Botswana youth.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The mission to Zimbabwe and Botswana provided an opportunity for the members of the Association to become apprised of the situation in two strategic countries in Southern Africa. While Zimbabwe and Botswana are neighbours, the two countries face a different set of political, economic and development issues and challenges, which the delegation heard about in detail over the course of its mission. At the same time, certain similarities between the two countries caught the delegates' attention and offer interesting avenues for comparison. For example, both countries are approaching critically important elections – Zimbabwe in 2018 and Botswana in 2019 – that could result in domestic political re-alignments. The Association's mission allowed it to explore these and other topics, and to engage with key stakeholders working on issues relating to governance, human rights, the rule of law and socio-economic development. It also gave the delegation an occasion to hear about opportunities where Canada could more fully engage in Zimbabwe and Botswana from both a development and economic perspective.

The sections below reflect on some of these issues by outlining the Association's key observations and conclusions from its mission to Zimbabwe and Botswana.

### **A. Republic of Zimbabwe**

The Association last visited Zimbabwe in May 2008 at a very heated and uncertain time in that country. Two months before the Association's last mission to the country, Zimbabwe held legislative and presidential elections that saw Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC win 48% of the popular vote compared to 43% for Robert Mugabe. The first round election was considered by international observers to have been deeply flawed, with the MDC claiming that Mr. Tsvangirai had won an absolute majority. Yet, as no candidate was declared to have obtained the requisite 50% necessary to avoid a run-off, a second round of voting was scheduled. Despite efforts to postpone the second round of voting until it could be conducted freely and fairly, the election proceeded in June 2008 as planned, with Mugabe standing as the sole candidate. Members of the international

community, including Canada, responded to the flawed elections by imposing new sanctions against Zimbabwe.

While much has changed in Zimbabwe in the almost 10 years since the Association's last mission, the climate of uncertainty that existed in Zimbabwe in 2008 continues to predominate today. The delegation heard throughout its meetings that the main driver of this uncertainty is the upcoming elections in 2018 and the factionalism that surrounds the question of who will succeed President Mugabe in the future. Uncertainty also exists in the ranks of the opposition parties particularly as it relates to efforts to establish a "grand coalition" to challenge ZANU-PF in 2018.

The delegation was struck by the level of apprehension that many people expressed regarding the upcoming elections. Some of these concerns related to the introduction of a system of biometric voter registration. While the BVR system was intended to build confidence in the credibility of the elections, the delegation heard concerns that the process to procure the BVR kits had become politicized. Delegates were also made aware of allegations that ZANU-PF is attempting to change electoral boundaries in certain parts of the country in order to suit its electoral interests. In addition, several people noted that – despite having one of the highest literacy rates in Africa – a worrying number of people have registered as "assisted voters." Assisted voting is intended to help the illiterate or the disabled cast their ballots by receiving support from another registered voter. The Association believes that all allegations of electoral irregularities and manipulation need to be taken very seriously. The Association encourages the Government of Canada to engage with regional organizations such as SADC with respect to election observation in Zimbabwe.

The issue of Canadian and other international targeted sanctions regimes on Zimbabwe were raised on several occasions during the delegation's mission. The position of the Canadian government is that "Canada will review [its] targeted measures once there are genuine and lasting policy shifts towards democratic and accountable governance, as well as respect for human rights and the rule of law."<sup>36</sup> The objective of the delegation's mission was not to make a pronouncement on Canada's sanctions regime on Zimbabwe.

However, insofar as Canadian sanctions are related to the human rights situation in Zimbabwe, the delegation's mission revealed that the human rights situation remains precarious and troubling. In particular, the delegation heard concerns that human rights abuses, including the targeted intimidation of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, opposition politicians, and members of the LGBTI community, would increase as the election nears. It also heard that the ability of groups to peacefully assemble was already being curtailed more than one year away from the election. The Association encourages the Government of Canada to monitor the human rights situation in Zimbabwe closely in advance of the 2018 elections, and would recommend no change to the current targeted sanctions regime at this time.

Another major theme of the delegation's mission related to the process of constitutional alignment that Zimbabwe has been engaged in over the past several years. While the

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<sup>36</sup> Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, [Canada–Botswana Relations](#)

delegation heard from many people that the constitution is an important new tool for the protection of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law, it also registered concerns about the constitutional alignment process. For one, the delegation was told that the alignment process is proceeding slowly. Zimbabwean legislators acknowledged this issue themselves, commenting that a lack of resources within government and Parliament has slowed the process of constitutional drafting and review. In addition, the delegation heard that in the case of human rights related protections, laws were either being applied selectively, or not being introduced to bring them into line with the new constitution.

The delegation believes that increasing the capacity of Zimbabwean parliamentarians is critical to furthering the constitutional alignment process and to ensuring the necessary oversight of government. Some progress has already been made in this regard. The delegation was told that the committee system in Zimbabwe has grown significantly in recent years to become one of the better performing committee systems in Southern Africa. Members of the National Assembly and Senate also reported that their ability to engage directly with citizens by holding public consultations has also improved. At the same time, parliamentarians told the delegation that they struggle with a lack of resources to hire staff, to travel to their constituencies, and to properly perform legislative analysis.

The social and human development situation in Zimbabwe was another major theme of the mission. The delegation heard that Zimbabwe has made progress in addressing a number of development challenges. For example, in recent years, Zimbabwe has seen an increase in average life expectancy and a decrease in the adult HIV prevalence rate. Progress has also been made in the fight against child marriage as a result of the 2016 Constitutional Court decision that recognized 18 years as the legal minimum age of marriage. In terms of gender rights, delegates were told that efforts to empower women are also making headway. The fact that the number of women in Parliament is currently at an historic high was underscored for the delegation on several occasions.

Notwithstanding these important gains, the delegation was told that Zimbabwe continues to face significant development challenges. For example, some 74% of people in rural Zimbabwe are estimated to live in poverty, and food insecurity, including rates of malnutrition and stunting, remain high. While the prevalence of HIV/AIDS has been on a downward trajectory over the past decade, Zimbabwe continues to have one of the world's highest adult HIV prevalence rates. Regarding the representation of women in Parliament, the delegation was told that the recent gains remain fragile. The Association agrees with the Parliamentary Women's Caucus that more work is required to ensure that the barriers to entry for women in politics are eliminated.

Finally, with respect to economic development, the Association heard throughout its mission that Zimbabwe continues to face high levels of unemployment, and a liquidity shortage that undermines public investment, and increases economic hardship on the average Zimbabwean. While Canada does not maintain a bilateral development assistance program in Zimbabwe, the Association encourages the Government of Canada to ensure that the development funding it provides to Zimbabwe through multilateral and other channels is targeted to assisting the most vulnerable people.

## **B. Republic of Botswana**

The delegation's mission to Botswana provided it with an opportunity to learn about another important country in Southern Africa, one that faces very different issues and challenges than Zimbabwe. The Association last visited Botswana in February 2010, at a time when that country was dealing with the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis. In 2009, Botswana's economy contracted by over 7%, due in part to a global slump in the demand for diamonds and other minerals. That economic contraction was a reflection of a challenge that the delegation heard about throughout its most recent mission to Botswana – the fact that the country's economy remains over-reliant on the extractive sector.

The delegation heard from a number of people that Botswana must take steps to diversify its economy. In this regard, delegates were briefed on the economic potential of non-extractive-related sectors in Botswana. In particular, the delegation was told that key opportunities exist in Botswana's tourism and hospitality sectors, as well as in its service and information and communication technology sectors. The delegation heard that the Government of Botswana is aware of the need to diversify the economy and has taken steps in that direction. For example, it was noted that the creation of the Pula Fund was one mechanism to help ensure that funding is available for critical future investment.

The economic potential of Botswana was very evident to the delegation. The country is politically stable, has a sound legal system, and performs well on ease of doing business and competitiveness rankings. The Association believes that Canada should look for opportunities to deepen its commercial engagement, including its trade and investment linkages, with Botswana.

Despite its many economic successes, the delegation heard that Botswana continues to face a number of development challenges. Most notably, Botswana continues to see high rates of poverty – particularly in rural areas and in households headed by women – and its rate of income inequality and prevalence of HIV are among the highest in the world. Furthermore, delegates found out that sexual- and gender-based violence remains a serious concern in Botswana and that more work needs to be done to both empower women and to educate men to counter this problem. On the subject of women's empowerment, Association members were reminded on several occasions that women hold fewer than 10% of the seats in the National Assembly – down from about 18% in 2000.

These development challenges were pointed out to the delegation by Botswana government officials and parliamentarians themselves. Indeed, delegates heard that it is precisely because Botswana continues to face development challenges that international investment and assistance remains necessary. Botswana is classified as an upper middle income country by the World Bank. The delegation was told that this classification has prompted some donors to reduce their development assistance, or to disengage from the country altogether. There is a sense in Botswana that the country is

being punished by donors for its economic success. The Association heard similar sentiments when it visited Namibia – another upper middle income country – in 2016.<sup>37</sup>

While Canada does not maintain a significant development assistance program in Botswana, the Association encourages the Government of Canada to listen to the concerns expressed by Botswana and other upper middle income countries regarding donor engagement. It encourages the Government of Canada to continue partnering with Botswana so that it can move to the next level of social and economic development.

Botswana is one of the most stable countries in Africa and has the continent's longest continuous multi-party democracy. The delegation heard on several occasions how well Botswana ranks on prominent indices that measure governance, democracy and corruption. At the same time, delegates were disturbed to hear about what some people perceived as recent “democratic backsliding,” and the slow decline in human rights protection and advancement. Indeed, the delegation heard from several people about increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, including freedom of the press. On the subject of the upcoming election, the delegation was told that the election is expected to be the most competitive in Botswana's history.

Irrespective of the result of the next election, the Association encourages Botswana to continue to play a leadership role in Africa in the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. These are values that Canada and Botswana share. Canada and Botswana maintain strong bilateral relations and similar perspectives on a number of regional and global issues. In particular, Botswana's enduring commitment to the International Criminal Court is appreciated by Canada. The Association urges the Government of Canada to reinforce its relations with Botswana, including at the multilateral level. It also encourages Canada's Embassy in Harare, which is accredited to the country, to continue to build stronger political, economic and development relations with Botswana.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The members of the delegation wish to thank the staff of the Canadian Embassy in Zimbabwe for their hard work and dedication in organizing the Association's mission. In particular, they express their gratitude to Ambassador Kumar Gupta, who accompanied the delegation throughout its meetings and activities, and who made the mission a success. Special thanks are also owed to Elizabeth Robertson, Management Consular Officer, Mary Rose, Political Counsellor, and to all of the staff at Canada's Embassy in Harare for their efforts in organizing the programme and for providing many informative briefings.

The delegation also extends its appreciation to all those who met with the Association during its mission and for sharing their valuable insights and experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

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<sup>37</sup> See: Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, [\*Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting its participation in the Bilateral Mission to the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of South Africa\*](#), 2016.

The Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator,  
Co-Chair,  
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

Robert Oliphant, M.P.,  
Co-Chair,  
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association



## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Bilateral mission to the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Botswana
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Harare, Zimbabwe and Gaborone, Botswana
<b>DATES</b>	March 26 to 31, 2017
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Robert Oliphant, Co-Chair Mr. Chandra Arya, M.P. Mr. Marwan Tabbara, M.P. Mr. Michael Cooper, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Josée Thérien, Association secretary Mr. Brian Hermon, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 88,307.71
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 9,105.81
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 4,358.19
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 2,756.65
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 287.48
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 517.83
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 105,333.67</b>