BOTSWANA STATEMENT TO THE FIRST (1ST) MEETING OF STATES PARTIES OF THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

22nd June 2022

Mr President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Botswana, it is my pleasure and privilege to address the First meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which endeavours to promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

2. As it is the first time Botswana addresses this Meeting, Botswana wishes to congratulate you on your election as the President of the First Meeting of State Parties to the TPNW on Tuesday, and to also thank and commend the Government of Austria for successfully hosting this important inaugural Meeting.

3. We also congratulate Carbo Verde, Grenada and Timor-Listee on their ratification of this important Treaty, bringing the number of State Parties to sixty-four (64). We call on non-State Parties to ratify the Treaty, as its universalisation is a step in the right direction to complete nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr President,
Botswana re-affirms her commitment to disarmament non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In our view, these three pillars of the non-proliferation treaty regime are equally important and most viable instruments for achieving a world without nuclear weapons for peaceful co-existence.

4. Botswana supports the peaceful research and development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which Botswana has been a State party since 1969. However, the pursuit of developing nuclear energy should be within the framework and protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is, therefore important that all the State Parties to the NPT must fully comply with the non-proliferation obligations, Safeguards and Additional Protocols to the NPT as a matter of priority.

5. To this end Botswana has demonstrated her commitment to the NPT, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreement, Pelindaba Treaty and the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In furtherance of the aforementioned, Botswana enacted the Nuclear Weapon (Prohibition) Act, of 2018 to domesticate the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty, to prohibit the production, possession and use of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials.
6. We note that the nuclear test-ban verification regime currently known as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force despite being opened for signature 1996. Botswana encourages States not party to the CTBT ratify the Treaty. We view ratification and entry into force of the CTBT as an important step in strengthening the verification regime, which also serves as an effective deterrent against covert nuclear armaments programmes.

7. Furthermore, humanitarian considerations in nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapons States is a necessary condition for international peace, security and stability.

8. In conclusion, Botswana reiterates her commitment to supporting the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear technology for peaceful development.

I thank you, Mr President