

The impact of Democracy in Botswana:

Assessing political, social and economic
developments since
the dawn of democracy

Ebrahim Fakir

Research Report 121

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Botswana achieved independence from Britain more than 40 years ago and much has changed in Botswana since that time. This paper reports on the state of development in Botswana over the past 10 to 15 years, and looks at whether democracy has led to improvements in people's lives. The paper also investigates the views of ordinary citizens on development and democracy in Botswana. The paper was undertaken as part of a research project funded by the Kellogg Foundation on the benefits of socio-economic and political transformation in selected southern African countries.

Botswana is a relatively large, landlocked, semi-arid country, covering 581 730 km square, bordered by Zambia and Zimbabwe to the north east, Namibia to the north and west, and South Africa to the south and south east. It has a population of 1.84 million (EISA Fact File 2008). Roughly 45 per cent of the population resides in urban areas or towns. Gaborone, the capital, is the largest urban centre, with an estimated population size of 250 000 (Lodge et al 2002.)

1.1 Methodology

This paper draws on primary and secondary data sources for its main findings on the assessment of the state of development in Botswana over the past 15 years, since its independence, when it adopted a multiparty democratic system.

Primary data was obtained through three semi-structured interviews and three group discussions which were conducted during a field trip to Botswana in January 2008. Interviews were in urban and rural areas, including village settlements. Respondents comprised ordinary citizens as well as members of community-based organisations. A list of semi-structured interviews, as well as respondents participating in the group discussions, is provided in Appendix One. Secondary data was obtained from published material from various sources, such as journals, periodicals, and published statistics on Botswana.

1.2 Structure of the paper

The paper first focuses on governance in Botswana, including the structure of the state, elections, and the major challenges facing the country in respect of governance. These challenges include: political accountability of elected leader to ordinary citizens, issues concerning the separation of powers and the co-ordination of development programmes, as well as perceptions of human rights and freedom of expression.

After exploring issues relating to governance and politics, the paper then deals with the socio-economic changes that have taken place. Progress with the provision of key services, such as healthcare and education, are then examined, followed by access to basic services such as sanitation, water and electrification. The paper concludes by assessing the nature of democracy in Botswana, and whether democratic and socio-economic changes have changed the way citizens feel about governance and democracy and socio-economic progress in their country.

2. GOVERNANCE IN BOTSWANA

This section explores issues relating to governance and politics in Botswana, including the structure of the state and the different levels and arms of government, political accountability and elections, and major challenges in the question of governance. The major challenges in Botswana include political accountability and dealing with corruption.

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has been a non-racial, multiparty democracy operating within the framework of a constitution, which enshrines freedom of speech, of association, and of worship, and affords all citizens equal rights (Mogae 2005). Botswana has a simple majority, first-past-the-post electoral system for both National and Local Government. There are no states or provinces in Botswana and the country has a single-tier local government system, divided into districts and wards. There are 10 district councils in the rural areas, and two city councils, five town councils, and one township authority in an urban area (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2008). Despite having a multiparty democracy, underpinned by a constitution, there has been some criticism of the country's political culture, in that it structurally and by statute excludes minority groups and certain tribal/clan groups, such as the non-Tswana-speaking ethnic groups, and the Basarwa, Kalanga, Herero and others, from decision-making processes in the political system¹

Botswana has adopted a constitutional, multi-party, democratic, parliamentary, republican model, with an executive president who has extensive powers and is elected by Parliament. Parliament in Botswana consists of the predominantly elected National Assembly and the partly appointed, partly elected Ntlo ya DiKgosi (House of Chiefs), providing the institutional co-existence of modern forms of democracy alongside traditional modes of

¹ For more detail on how the political system excludes minority groups and certain tribal and clan groups see the submission of *RETENG: The Multicultural Coalition of Botswana*, to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights working group on minorities 10th Session, March 1-5, 2004.

governance and consultation through the *Kgotla* system (consultative council). The National Assembly consists of 57 directly elected and four specially elected members, four of which are nominated and appointed by the president. The National Assembly can be expanded following census counts of the population, undertaken every 10 years; the next census is due in 2011. The advisory House of Chiefs represents the eight principal subgroups of the BaTswana, with five members specially elected by the President, and 22 members elected from designated regions. The elected members hold office for a period of five years, and the eight principal chiefs comprising the Chiefs of the Bakgatla, Bakwena, Bamalete, Bamangwato, Bangwaketse, Barolong, Batawana and Batlokwa Tribes as stipulated by the Constitution of Botswana (1966), are members for life.

2.1 The structure of the state

The Constitution of Botswana provides for democratic governance, with three principal organs of the state, the Executive, Parliament and the Judiciary. The operations of the three branches of government are subject to internal accountability mechanisms. The Executive is subject to parliamentary control in translating policy into action. Similarly, Parliament makes laws for the peace, order and the good governance of Botswana, but is restricted by special procedures contained in Section 89 of the Constitution and from making amendments to the Constitution, unless they enjoy the support of a two-thirds majority in Parliament. This is the case especially in relation to the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. Section 89 also prescribes a referendum in instances where an amendment to the Constitution is proposed or in cases where new laws are proposed that affect and amend citizenship rights and the institutions of Parliament and the Judiciary.

The institutional framework of governance in Botswana spreads from the national to the local levels of government. Local government is single-tiered, comprising both urban and rural councils. There are 10 district councils in the rural areas, and two city councils, five town councils, and one township authority in an urban area (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2008). Each district is presided over by a District Commissioner appointed by the central government and is vested with executive authority (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2008). District Commissioners are assisted by a total of 591 councillors country-wide, of which 490 are elected and a further 101 appointed by the Minister of Local Government. These are further bolstered by the assistance of District Development Committees (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2008). Each district council is divided into several wards and each ward elects one councillor.

The statutory functions of councils include the provision of primary education, primary healthcare, access roads and village water supplies, related matters such as sanitation services, social welfare and community development, and infrastructural development such as the building of primary schools and health facilities. (Maundeni et al 2007). With extensive scope, the capacities of local authorities in Botswana, however, are limited, and they depend heavily on the central government for co-ordination, financial and human resources, and capacity support (ibid). The institutions of local government are expected to support the National Development Plans, which are the principal planning instruments for development in Botswana (Mogae 2005).

To facilitate the role of local government in development, the government of Botswana is committed to decentralisation and the strengthening of local government in terms of expanding its role, powers, functions, and providing it with the necessary capacity to fulfil an effective role in development. A Presidential Commission (the Venson Commission, chaired by Pelonomi Venson) was appointed to investigate ways of strengthening local government structures. Following the Commission's findings in 2001, a White Paper was developed that proposed steps to strengthen local government through decentralisation and in increasing its autonomy in financial and personnel management and in local level development planning and management (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2008). However, many of the projects advocated in the White Paper remain unimplemented.

Management of the State and Development is also underpinned by state oversight institutions such as the Office of the President, the Auditor General; the Ombudsman and the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) (AGF 2007)².

2.2 Elections in Botswana

Elections since independence have without exception been declared free and fair. A large percentage of Batswanans (59 per cent) also appear to be satisfied that democracy works in Botswana (Afrobarometer, Round Three Survey 2005). Botswana has had nine multi -party elections since 1965 and the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been the dominant party since the founding elections, when it won 90 per cent of the seats to the opposition's

² The Office of the President provides overall political and policy leadership and direction and performs a co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluation function. The Auditor General is responsible for auditing public accounts of all government bodies, agencies and parastatals. The Auditor General's reports assist development in Botswana through the promotion of sound financial management and accountability practices. The Office of the Ombudsman investigates allegations of injustice and maladministration made by citizens against the public service and other public bodies, and monitors the implementation of any remedial action that may be required. The DCEC was established in 1994 to combat economic crime and corruption; it also investigates and prosecutes offences involving public officers, employees of public bodies, and crime and corruption in the private sector.

10 per cent. The BDP's dominance politically and its control of government has led some authors to label Botswana, "effectively a one party state" (Lodge et al 2002 : 31).

Citizen participation in state processes has been integral to Botswana's growth and development. With the exception of a low poll in the 1974 election, Botswana's elections have been characterised by a comparatively high voter turnout, ranging from 58 per cent in 1979 to 77 per cent in 1984, with the highest-ever recorded voter turnout - in 2004 - which was 78 per cent. The political system in Botswana has been sustained since pre-independence times through reliance on the traditional institutions at the local level, such as the *Kgotla*. As already reported, the *Kgotla* system is used as a facilitating process for the crafting of the District and National Development Plans, and forms one of the cornerstones of the community development and social integration initiatives of the Botswana government. According to respondents from the group interviews, the *Kgotla* may be dominated by local leaders and power nodes with particular sets of interests that do not necessarily coincide with the interests of other community members³. Despite this limitation, some experts believe that the *Kgotla* system has allowed for some communication and consultation at the local level about local development issues and needs (Lodge et al 2002).

2.3 Governance challenges in Botswana

Botswana is viewed widely as a success story on the continent with respect to governance and development. It is perceived as a capable state because it has made considerable progress in delivering public goods and services for development, poverty reduction, ensuring security, and in maintaining an open democratic political system (AGF 2007). Despite this, Botswana does face some governance challenges. These include issues relating to political accountability, concerns about the separation of powers, and the co-ordination of state departments for effective socio-economic development.

2.3.1 Political accountability and the separation of powers

Power is constitutionally concentrated in the President to such an extent that he exerts his power directly over the Executive and personally over the Legislature. Thus, the democratic principle of separation of powers is undermined. Good (2007) highlights instances where this separation has been eroded. For example, there have been instances where individuals have been moved from the Attorney-General's office to the bench of the High Court. This has the effect of blurring the boundaries between an independent judiciary and the Executive arm of government. When this occurs, the impartiality of judges may come under question, particularly in those cases where the individual served as Attorney General and subsequently

³ Interview with members of BOCOBONET, and Thusano Lefatsheng Trust; Manyanya Development Trust , 28 January 2008

moved to the bench of the high court while presiding over the same case that initiated under their term as Attorney General.

Round Three of the Afrobarometer Survey (2005) also suggests that political accountability in Botswana may be an area of increasing concern. When respondents were asked how often during the past year they had contacted one of the following types of people: a local government councillor, member of parliament, an official of a government ministry, a political party official, and a traditional ruler, an overwhelming majority of respondents (ranging between 74 and 88 per cent) reported they had never done so.

Respondents to in-depth interviews also indicated a degree of dissatisfaction with the quality of representation and accountability, and were of the opinion that politicians pursue the interests of their parties or themselves at the expense of the citizens they are meant to be representing. This emphasises the distance between citizens and their representatives, as well as citizens' inability to influence and interact with their elected representatives, including members of parliament and elected local councillors.

Participants in the group discussions expressed a more nuanced evaluation of their elected representatives on the issue of accountability, even though many were unaware of what the role of elected representatives was:⁴

There are elected representatives and people in the village/community are aware of them. The problem is that people don't know what their role and function is. There is a great need for civic education on their roles and responsibilities and how communities can interact with them. Thus far, what I know as a community leader is that people vote for people for very different reasons and everyone has very different expectations of elected leaders. Political representatives, the local councillor as well as the MP for the area are visible and known. They are available and people are familiar with them, but the problem is we don't know what they are supposed to do. Often one candidate gets more votes because of their sweet talking and what they promise. The promises sound very good, but then the big promises can't be fulfilled. Lack of accountability is based on that. Then we say people are not accountable, even when they do report back on what they are doing. It is just that what they are doing is not what they promised to do.

The inability of constituency offices to deal effectively with community concerns was also highlighted by respondents in the field research:⁵

There is a distance between those who are elected and their constituencies - even in the case where there is direct election of MP's and local councillors. This is true even though MP's address the Kgotla's in their constituencies at least once a year. There is a feeling that the size of

4 Group discussion in Manyanya with Deputy Chief Conservation Committee Officer; and secretary of the Village Development Committee

5 Group discussion with representatives from BOCOBONET; Botswana.Thusano Lefatsheng Trust and the Manyanya Development Trust

constituencies is a little too large to be effectively served by one person. MP's have constituency office workers, but they are not able to be responsive to communities and serve largely as secretarial assistants.

Round Three of the Afrobarometer Survey (2005) indicates that the majority (70 per cent) of respondents were able to indicate the correct name of their local government councillor, supporting the findings from the present field research reported earlier that citizens are aware of who their local representatives are. When respondents were asked how much trust they placed in their elected local government council, slightly less than two thirds (64 per cent) reported that they had trust in *some* or *most* of them. Disaggregating these figures further supports the findings from the field research and in-depth interviews that suggest there is a large percentage of the population that does not have trust in their local representatives. Less than half of the respondents (48 per cent) reported they only trusted *some* of the locally elected representatives (Afrobarometer Round Three Survey 2005).

Another governance challenge identified is a lack of co-ordination with respect to development programmes and projects. Community and citizen feedback, which is required in drawing up the National Development Plans, falls short due to inconsistencies between the plans at the local and national levels, and declining levels of participation in the *Kgotlas*⁶ because of urbanisation and modernisation (Mokwena and Fakir 2008). Sometimes local community issues are left out because they are not consistent with the direction of National and District Development Plans. Despite some criticisms with the National Development planning process, it has in many areas stood Botswana in good stead, and has proved to be a useful tool in a process that is participatory and attempts to include all its citizens. The civil service in Botswana is maintained and run by a strong and committed bureaucracy with a close and mutually beneficial relationship to the political elite. (Good 1994).

In summary, data from the secondary and primary sources so far described indicate a degree of ambivalence towards public representatives, with some citizen dissatisfaction with the quality of representation, accountability, responsiveness, and problems with the co-ordination of development projects.

2.3.2 Human rights and the freedom of expression

Although fundamental freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, there are concerns expressed about the erosion of the freedom of the press (BTI 2008) and incidences of curbs on the freedom of expression. The most well-known Human

⁶ Kgotlas are the main consultative structures in Botswana (or traditional court of law) to channel community feedback into the process of formulating the District and National Development Plans. Kgotlas are made up of community groupings and individuals, and are traditional institutions at the village level, usually headed by the village chief, at which deliberations are conducted and decisions arrived through consensus.

Rights criticisms of the Botswana government relate to its treatment of the Basarwa community and their forced relocation from the central Kalahari.

The Afrobarometer Survey (2005) explored the issue of basic freedoms, including the freedom of speech. The following table shows that surveyed respondents were generally of the view that things were either the same or had improved from the position of five years ago.

Table 1: Afrobarometer Survey (2005) Perceptions of political freedoms

<i>Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than five years ago, or are they the same? (Percentage respondents indicating things are the same; better and much better)</i>		
Item	Percent The same	Percent Better or Much better
Freedom to say what you think	36	55
Freedom to join any political organisation you want	36	57
Freedom from being arrested when you are innocent	41	47
Freedom to choose who to vote for without being pressured	36	58

Despite the Botswana's government view of civil society as partners (African Governance Forum 2007), Botswana's civil society has been described as weak and apolitical, even though Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are free to form and operate. The vibrancy of activity in the sector is limited to a few high-profile NGOs and CBOs, with development in the rural areas beginning to also play an active part in social mobilisation for more active grassroots development. Much of the vibrancy is mediated through the village development committees and *Kgotlas*. Nevertheless, the consensus-based decision-making processes at state level and in society may account for the description of Botswana civil society as weak, because this effectively avoids the conflict-prone and confrontational approach that may characterise other societies.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

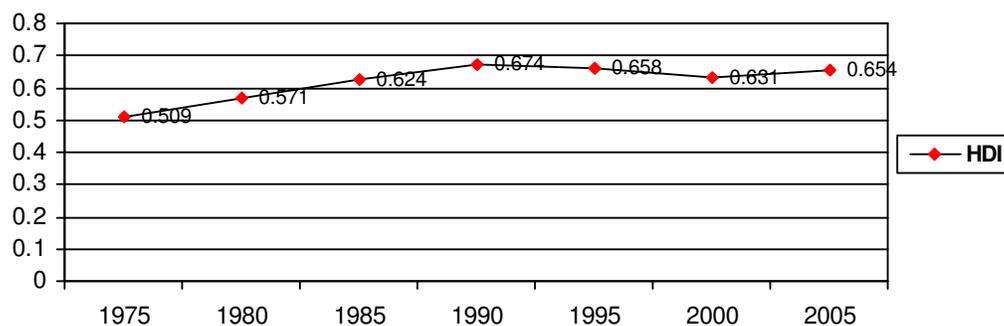
This paper has explored the political system, including elections and the quality of governance in Botswana. This section reports on some of the socio-economic changes in Botswana since its transition to democracy.

3.1 Human development in Botswana

Although poverty has declined from 59 percent in 1986 to 30 per cent in 2003 (Mogae 2005), poverty is still pervasive. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that 55.5 per cent of the population live below the poverty line of two dollars per day, and half of all female-headed households live on less than one dollar a day (UNDP 2007). The proportion of Batswanans who are undernourished has increased from 1990-1992 levels of 23 per cent to 32 per cent for the period 2002-2004 (UNDP 2007).

Figure 1 shows the trend-line of human development in Botswana, as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI).⁷ The Index shows a steady improvement in human development up to the decade of the 1990s, with a slight decline from the mid-nineties until the millenium, and with subsequent improvements in development from 2000 until 2005. According to the Index, as of 2005, Botswana is ranked as a “medium development country”. In comparison to other SADC states, Botswana is placed 4th highest in respect of human development progress (Richards 2008).

Figure 1: Human Development in Botswana 1975-2005, UNDP 2007



⁷ The HDI is a composite measure of human development that makes use of specific sub-indicators to arrive at an aggregate score. These sub-indicators are: life expectancy at birth; knowledge (comprising adult literacy and gross school and tertiary enrolment ratios) and standard of living as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

3.2 Economic growth and employment in Botswana

Up to the time of its independence in September 1966, Botswana was one of the least developed and poorest nations in the world, with a per capita income estimated at between US\$70 and US\$90 (Mogae 2005). The majority of the population was dependent on subsistence agriculture, with beef production for export as the mainstay of the economy. Since independence, Botswana's economic growth as measured by GDP has been one of the world's highest. Between 1980 and 1989, economic growth averaged 11 per cent per year (BTI 2008). In the early 1990s, economic growth declined but showed steady gains between 1994 and 1997, peaking at 7 per cent, and, in the last decade, the economy was growing annually at 5.4 per cent up to 2007 (IMF 2007). The forecast for GDP growth in 2008 was expected to be 4 per cent (OECD and African Development Bank 2008). Botswana's laudable economic record has been built on the foundation of using revenue generated from diamond mining to sustain economic growth. (USA Department of State 2008). There is also a rigorous adherence to development plans that are driven by consensus-seeking across different sectors of society, which further strengthens Botswana's economic performance (Mogae, 2005).

Nonetheless, hidden behind Botswana's healthy economic growth are high levels of inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Botswana remains overly reliant on mining for economic growth, particularly the mining of diamonds. Mining accounts for 41.1 per cent of GDP (USA, Department of State 2008). Other sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, account for 1.7 per cent, 4.1 per cent and 10 per cent (Good 2007) of GDP respectively.

Botswana's slowing growth rate has translated into rising unemployment, increasing from 21 per cent of the labour force in 2001 to 24 per cent in 2003 (Sebudubu and Osei-Hwedie 2005), rising again to 27 per cent in 2007 (EISA Botswana Fact File 2008). Afrobarometer Survey findings (2005) highlight citizen concerns about unemployment in Botswana. When respondents were asked what were the most important problems facing the country that government should address, the problem of unemployment was raised most frequently. The most number of responses (41 per cent) were for this issue.

In the group discussions and in-depth interviews, respondents in Manyanya, Serowe and Dutlwe communities perceived unemployment and lack of infrastructural, manufacturing and industrial development as the major challenges affecting the country's development. The following comments from respondents highlight Botswana's concerns about the economy and the problems of unemployment:⁸

⁸ Interviews in Manyanya - Deputy Chief; Conservation Committee Officer; and Secretary of the Village Development Committee

No new factories and or shops or any new jobs have occurred in the area over the last 15 years. People in the area still engage in the traditional agricultural activities in farming. That is the main economic activity - planting, reaping and harvesting, herding cattle and goats.

There are no jobs. In some of the village's graduates are roaming around. There is however, going to be coal mining starting in the area soon. Exploration has been going on and will be coming to an end. There is determination though, that mining will be starting soon. This will be of some benefit to the community. In the exploration phase, some jobs were created - mainly unskilled type jobs. But there will also have a power plant so we have been promised to be electrified too. Opportunities will arise from these two projects as the road and rail network will also then be expanded. So things come on the back of each other. ⁹

Survey findings from Round Three of the Afrobarometer (2005) support the findings of the in-depth interviews undertaken during the field research. When asked to describe the present economic conditions in Botswana, citizens were more likely to say they were bad or very bad (42 per cent) than good or very good (33 per cent). When asked to describe their own present living conditions, slightly less than two thirds of respondents (61 per cent) indicated they were bad or very bad, compared to 20 per cent reporting them to be good or very good.

3.3 Social development

This section highlights some of the social development programmes in Botswana that address the challenges of poverty, the development of social and physical infrastructure such as schools, housing and roads, and in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups including older persons and those infected with HIV/AIDS.

Communities in Botswana organise themselves to provide communal support for members in need (Brown 1996:68). Thus, government efforts at community development through the Community Development Department have demonstrated a level of inclusion. There have been some successful road, housing and schools projects through community participation (Brown 1996; 70).

Welfare and social support programmes in Botswana follow universal standards in providing care and support, and there have been regular interventions in the development of social support and welfare programmes in response to changing social patterns and the emergence of social problems. The Botswana government provides a wide range of services aimed at reducing poverty and providing a social safety net for vulnerable groups. Some of these include the Program for Destitute Persons, the Orphan Care Program in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Supplementary Feeding for Vulnerable Groups and the universal old age pension (both introduced in 1966) (Botswana Federation of Trade Unions, 2007), World War

II Veterans (introduced in 1998), and Labour Based Drought Relief Program (introduced in 1967).¹⁰

Additionally, due to the high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS (discussed later), Botswana runs social assistance schemes for those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. These schemes are integrated into the general policy and programmatic response to the HIV pandemic. Some of these programmes are the orphan care programme (as noted above), the national destitute programme, the community home-based care programme, the antiretroviral therapy (ARV) programme. In fact every decade has seen the introduction and development of some kind of social support or welfare-related intervention in Botswana.

3.4 Healthcare

Life expectancy at birth rose from 48 years in 1966 to 65.3 years in 1991, before declining to 55.7 years in 2001, and showing a further decline in 2004 to 40 years for both males and females. This significant drop in life expectancy is attributable largely to the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has lowered average life expectancy. According to WHO (2006), HIV/AIDS related deaths accounted for 80 per cent of total deaths in 2005.

The infant mortality rate declined from 100 per 1000 live births in 1971 to 55 in 2001 (Mogae 2005), but increased to again to 75 per 1000 live births in 2004. Botswana does considerably better than the rest of the WHO Africa region, where 100 per 1000 live births is the measured norm for the region (WHO 2006).

Whereas public expenditure on education was 6 per cent of GDP, expenditure on health care has been lower. In 2004 it comprised 4 per cent of GDP (UNDP 2007) and increased to 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2006. Respondents highlighted the lack of healthcare infrastructure (including hospitals and clinics) as well as the shortage of medical professionals to manage, co-ordinate and provide adequate health services. While the decentralised health care system is relatively well developed and almost free in Botswana, challenges remain with respect to providing universal healthcare to citizens, even though all villages are served by a primary health care clinic, or at the very least by a mobile clinic, as the following quote from a respondent indicates:¹¹

“Every person in Botswana is located within a radius of thirty kilometres of a hospital of primary health care clinic, even in villages that are served only by a mobile unit”

9 Interviews in Mahalapye sub-district .

10 For a full list of social programmes in Botswana see Botswana Federation of Trade Unions 2007, Policy Position Paper on Social Security and Social Protection in Botswana, February 2007

11 Interview with a representative of a Botswana Community Based Organisation

Despite almost universal free primary care, the low numbers of health professionals - other than nurses - compromises the provision of high-quality, wide-spectrum healthcare. For example, whereas South Africa had 77 physicians per 100 000 people, Botswana had 40 physicians for the period 2000-04¹² (UNDP 2007).

Respondents from the group discussions raised a number of concerns about the health-care system. These included the failure of the state to invest sufficiently in health infrastructure since the 1970s. All of the participants in the group discussions indicated that there had been no improvements or expansion of primary healthcare facilities since they were established in the 1970s. The lack of a strategy to recruit and retain professional healthcare workers was also highlighted by respondents as an area of concern. Because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Botswana and its potential in undermining development, a brief description of the prevalence of this pandemic is needed, as is the government's response to it.

3.5 HIV/AIDS prevalence

An estimated 25 per cent, or roughly 300 000 (in 2007) people in Botswana are HIV- positive. More than 90 per cent of those infected are 15 years or older. (WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF 2008). The incidence of HIV infection in the most economically active segment of the population (people aged 15-49 years) is 24.9 per cent, down from 27.8 per cent in 2001(ibid). There are an estimated 95 000 (in 2007) children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS, an increase from the 57 000 estimated in 2001 (ibid).

Government expenditure on HIV/AIDS programmes, has steadily increased since 2005. In 2005, US\$165 million was allocated, and by 2007 some US\$203.8 million was spent fighting the disease (UNAIDS 2008). Interventions include capacity building (infrastructure and human resources), the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, orphan care, routine HIV testing, community-based home care, and extensive information, education and communication campaigns (Mogae 2005). As at 2007, 93 000 of the 120 000 people that require antiretroviral (ARV) therapy were receiving the treatment. (WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF 2008).

3.6 Education and literacy

Levels of education and literacy have increased substantially since independence. At independence in 1966, there were only three secondary schools in Botswana; secondary schools numbered about 300 in total by 2003 (Clover 2003). The adult literacy rate (15 years and older) improved substantially from 68.8 per cent in 1995 to 81.2 per cent in 2005 and

¹² The most recent data available over the period 2000-2004 is used for this statistic.

the youth literacy rate (aged 15-24) less substantially, but still significantly, from 89.3 per cent in 1995 to 94 per cent in 2005 (Human Development Report 2007/2008). This shows evidence of a sustained focus on primary education and continuing adult education. At primary school level, enrolment rose from 66 100 in 1966 to 327 600 in 2000, representing an average compound growth rate of 4.8 per cent per annum (Mogae 2005). By 2007 Botswana had achieved its millennium development goal (MDG) target of a 100 per cent enrolment rate at primary schools, and a further 100 per cent transition rate from primary school into junior secondary education (OECD and African Development Bank 2008). There is also a policy focus on the improvement of the quality of education on offer, with a strong emphasis on technical, management and vocational education and skills training (ibid). Government investment in education is substantial; education stands at 21 per cent of the budget. Expressed as a percentage of GDP, education expenditure for the period 2002-2005 remained constant at 10.7 per cent - almost double what is spent on health (Human Development Report 2007/2008). The extent of investment in physical infrastructure and building the capacity of teachers is reflected in statistics and also in the responses from focus groups. Moreover, focus group findings reveal that government investment in education in the area of education subsidies and teacher training is paying dividends in terms of quality and commitment of educators, as respondents seem to be highly satisfied with the quality of and access to education.¹³

3.7 Water, sanitation, and electrification

Access to basic services in Botswana has improved over the years. With regard to basic services, improvements in access to clean, usable and drinkable water, increased from 77 per cent in 1996 to 97.7 per cent in 2000. Although the figure marginally declined (96 per cent) in 2005, the government provides and maintains at least one standpipe in each of Botswana's officially recognised settlements "*With regard to running water - every household will at least have a yard standpipe. The distribution of the network is wide...*"¹⁴ Although there are disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of access to water, the World Health Organisation (WHO 2006) statistics, show increases in the percentage of the population that has access to improved water sources both in urban and rural areas. Modest improvements have been made on sanitation, as 41 per cent of Botswana's rural and urban populations have access to sanitation facilities (OECD and African Development Bank 2007; WHO 2008). The electrification rate in Botswana is substantially lower at 39 per cent overall (Human Development Report, 2007/2008), representing much slower progress as compared to water and sanitation.

13 Interviews in Manyanya and Serowe Districts: Deputy Chief Conservation Committee officer; and Secretary of the Village Development Committee; Principal Adult Education Officer; Senior Adult Education Assistant, Dibete Development Trust.

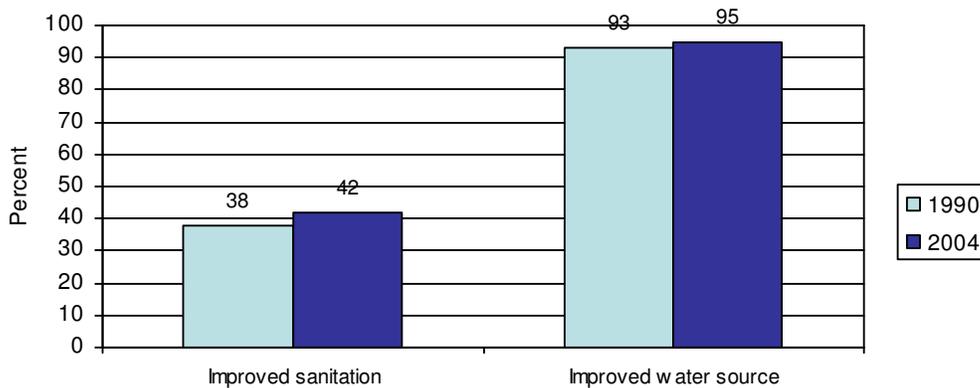
14 Group discussion

Although these services exist and there is effort on the part of government to improve sanitation and infrastructural developments, findings from a group discussion showed that access to these services is a problem in respect of affordability, as well as their scarcity. Respondents highlighted a policy challenge where government’s growth and accumulation strategy results in citizens’ access to certain infrastructural-related services being dependent on service provision to private sector interests, such as mining. In the Serowe district, respondents viewed the plan for the development of a coal-mining plant as an opportunity for employment as well as for accessing the services that the mine would provide:¹⁵

There is however, going to be coal mining starting in the area soon... This will be of some benefit to the community.. some jobs were created... there will also have a power plant so we have been promised to be electrified too..the road and rail network will also then be expanded...

Figure 2 shows that small improvements have been made to sanitation and water supply services between 1990 and 2004. From a policy perspective, perhaps this is a planning strategy that integrates local economic development and provision of service - however it also suggests that until and unless districts begin to attract investment from private sources, infrastructural development to citizens alone may be delayed.

Figure 2: Access to improved sanitation and water (1990-2004), UNDP 2007



15 Group discussion

4. CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to assess the changes that have taken place in Botswana since its independence and the onset of democracy. Citizens' perceptions of democracy and development were also explored. The paper reviewed the changing governance structure in Botswana, including the country's stated commitment to decentralisation and strengthening local government to facilitate development. Over the decades, participation in the democratic process through national elections has been high (from the 1980s up to the last election in 2004, more than two thirds of the electorate cast their vote), suggesting that the people of Botswana have not become cynical about the benefits that democracy can provide, despite the dominance of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in successive elections. Citizens' perceptions of democracy seem to also suggest that a majority of the people in Botswana are satisfied that democracy works (Afrobarometer Survey 2005).

Botswana is also widely viewed as an African success story with respect to governance and development progress. However, the country does face some distinct governance and development challenges; the main challenges concern the accountability of local leaders and the co-ordination of development efforts. Findings from this research suggest that perceptions of political accountability of local political leaders does not match Botswana's policy of strengthening political accountability and delivery at the local community level. For example, while the majority of citizens appeared to be aware of who their elected local leaders were, many citizens had never contacted any of these leaders, when there was a need (Afrobarometer Survey 2005). In addition, when respondents were asked how much trust they had in their elected local government council, less than two thirds reported only having trust in some or most of them (ibid).

The in-depth interviews undertaken in this study support the findings of national surveys. For example, a view was expressed that participation in *Kgotlas* has declined and that some constituencies are too large to be adequately serviced by one elected representative. These findings therefore indicate some disconnection between citizens and elected political leaders.

In formulating development plans, co-ordination of these plans from local to national levels was also reported to be a problem. Civil society is viewed as weak in Botswana, which must have an impact on the formulation of development plans and the identification of local needs and concerns, and may be a concern to human rights activists even though citizens were of the view that basic freedoms and rights were either the same or had improved from the position of five years ago (Afrobarometer Survey 2005).

Encouragingly, Botswana's HDIs have shown steady improvements since the mid-1970s. Nevertheless, findings indicate that the country faces severe socio-economic challenges. There are high levels of inequality and unemployment, and citizens named unemployment as one of the most important problems facing the country that the government needs to deal

with (Afrobarometer Survey 2005). In-depth interviews highlighted weaknesses in the Botswanan economy, with respondents listing a lack of infrastructural, manufacturing and industrial development as the main obstacles to development and growth. Botswana is still heavily reliant on mining and the production of diamonds.

With respect to the provision of services such as healthcare, education and basic services (including sanitation, water and electricity), Botswana has made steady progress. However, with the spread of HIV/AIDs, life expectancy has declined and government spending on programmes to combat the high mortality rate due to HIV/AIDs deaths has increased since 2005.

In conclusion, Botswana has experienced sustained development over the decades since it achieved independence. The country has benefited from its rich minerals - particularly diamonds - and has used its resources well to improve the lives of its people. Botswana has been credited with having a state with an effective and efficient bureaucracy, committed to socio-economic development. It could be argued that Botswana's economic achievements have served democracy well. The relationship between development and democracy in the country is mutually reinforcing, because citizens appear to be satisfied with democracy because they attribute their improved quality of life in part to the current political system.

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APPENDIX : FIELDWORK

<p>GROUP DISCUSSIONS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Group discussion 1: 28 January 2008. Manyanya</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deputy Chief Kgosi Mangope: 2. Conservation Committee officer village Development Committee 3. Secretary of the Village Development Committee <p style="text-align: center;">Group discussion 2: 29 January 2008. Serowe District - Mahalapye Sub District.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal Adult Education Officer 2. Senior Adult Education Assistant 3. Dibete Development Trust. <p style="text-align: center;">Group discussion 3: 30 January 2008. Dutlwe Community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendees of the village <i>Kgotla</i> 2. Dutlwe Development Trust 3. Official from the Land Board
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<p>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS</p>	<p>28 January 2008.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mabei A. - Director: Botswana Community Based Organisations Network (BOCOBONET)2. Matlhare T. Thusano Lefatsheng Trust3. Sethibe T.S. Manyanya Community Development Trust
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ⁱ Ebrahim Fakir is now with the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa.