



ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS
THEME: PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN THE WORK OF PARLIAMENT

**TOPIC: STRENGTHENING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR
IMPROVED INCLUSIVENESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICE
DELIVERY**

THE CASE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA

Ms Barbara N. Dithapo
Clerk of the Botswana National Assembly

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Principles for Public Participation
- Public Participation Spectrum
- Public Participation in Botswana Parliament
- Public Participation Mechanisms and Tools
 - Botswana Speaks – Digital Kgotla (Case Study 1)
 - Monitoring and Evaluation
- Conclusions



INTRODUCTION

- Parliament represents the interests of the people and ensures those interests are taken into account by government.
 - Critical to fulfilling Parliament lawmaking and oversight functions.
- The legitimacy of a parliament – dependent on **accountability to voters** taking place systematically throughout the election cycle, rather than just at the ballot.
- People should have ample opportunities to provide feedback on the work of parliament and of individual parliamentarians. (*Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: A Parliamentary Handbook, 2017*).



INTRODUCTION CONTINUATION...

Public engagement:

- strengthens parliamentary representation, and contributes to better laws and policies.
- ensures the involvement of the public, good governance and accountability by Government to the citizens.
- An active citizenry → to a more open, dynamic and robust democracy.

Access to parliament by the citizens is imperative in a democracy:

- Facilitates public participation by providing information to help people understand issues, opportunities or problems, and alternative solutions.



BOTSWANA PROFILE

- Botswana is sparsely populated and protects some of Africa's largest areas of wilderness. In that regard Conservation and tourism rank highly on the nation's priorities as a source of sustainable development and livelihoods.
- Capital: Gaborone
- Area: 581,730 sq km
- Population: 2.3 million (2022 census)
- Languages: English, Setswana
- Life expectancy: 66 years (men) 72 years (women)


PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation:

- Foundational tenet – the public should have a say in decisions that affect their lives.
- Includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Promotes sustainable decisions through an inclusive decision-making process
- Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- Provides participants information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN BOTSWANA

The Kgotla System

- The Parliament represents the modern form of political governance, especially for former colonies and protectorates.
- It is important to note that historically and prior to the adoption of modernised governance there was traditional governance system in use.
- In the case of Botswana, the Kgotla was the traditional system and forum for conducting the tribal affairs, with the chiefs (*Dikgosi*) presiding over tribes within the nation.
- The Kgotla was, and is still is, the authority domain of a paramount chief, a chief or a headman. Likewise, both the traditional and modern systems of governance have come together, and are working together in Botswana
- Parliament of Botswana is the supreme legislative authority.
- 57 Members of Parliament are elected on a five year term while 6 Members are Specially elected by Parliament.
- There also exists a body known as Ntlo ya Dikgosi, (The House of Chiefs), which is an advisory body that does not form part of the Parliament.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOTSWANA PARLIAMENT

Public Participation Strategy

- Developed in 2018 through the assistance of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).
- Is premised on the understanding that in a democratic setup Parliament acts as an effective avenue for opening-up parliamentary processes to public involvement.
- The National Assembly of Botswana thus acknowledges that public engagement strengthens parliamentary representation and contributes to better laws and policies.



PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA

- **Mission:** Parliament exists to make Laws, provide oversight and to promote participatory governance for the Peace, Order and Good Government of Botswana.
- **Vision:** To be a model of excellence in democracy and governance.
- **Values**
 - ✓ Political neutrality
 - ✓ Integrity
 - ✓ Accountability
 - ✓ Transparency
 - ✓ Service excellence



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS & TOOLS

Case Study 1

Botswana Speaks – a parliamentary initiative aimed at enhancing democracy through public participation and policy dialogue.

- Pilot Project launched in September 2012.
- The live platform was successfully launched albeit limited to four (4) constituencies from April, 2013 to March 2014.
- Full scale rollout was launched in July 2022



Botswana Speaks!
an innovative initiative by Parliament of Botswana

Hon. Phandu. T.C. Skelemani, Speaker of the National Assembly.

“Democratic participation can be both empowering to the participants and effective in influencing the representative bodies that have the final power to make public decisions. Botswana Speaks talks to these very sentiments and aims to contribute to shaping a democratic, unbiased and secure nation where the rule of law and unanimity reigns”

Source: <https://www.botswanaspeaks.gov.bw/main>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS & TOOLS CONTINUED...

Objectives of Botswana Speaks:

- Increase citizen participation in the democratic process
- Improve communication between elected representatives and citizens
- Reduce digital divide between rural and urban communities
- Harness opportunities presented by the more than 160% mobile penetration in Botswana (ICT statistics – ITU).
- Increase uptake and use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) in Botswana.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS & TOOLS CONTINUED...

Botswana Speaks main functionalities, enables citizens to:

1. uSpeak

- ✓ submit issues and opinions pertaining to their constituency.
- ✓ enables constituents to be in touch with their MP's and or request information from them.

Other functionalities:

- ✓ Report generation
- ✓ Individual case log/dashboard
- ✓ Case management
- ✓ Opening/replying a case (service provider, government or MP).



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS & TOOLS CONTINUED...

Botswana Speaks main functionalities, enables citizens to:

2. Speak4Yourself

- ✓ Discuss and vote on polls put up by Members of Parliament.
- ✓ Accessing news and updates
- ✓ This help make constituents' position known about issues and legislation before Parliament.
- ✓ This empowers constituents to have more of a say and role with regard to policy making and motions tabled by their respective MP's at Parliament.

Other functionalities:

- ✓ Report/statistics generation
- ✓ Creating polls
- ✓ Data analysis – top issues



SELECTED PLATFORM SCREEN SHOTS

Manage Cases/Issues

Filters: Status, Labels, Issues, Types, Apply, Reset

Actions: [Icons]

Folders

- Inbox
- New
- Open
- Rejected
- Closed
- important
- Urgent

Date	Title	Status	Primary Issue	Secondary Issue
26-01-2023	Unpaid salaries - edit	New	Salaries & Income	Poverty & Employment
26-01-2023	Invitation - edit	Open	Community Development	MP Performance & Representation
26-01-2023	Removal of tree - edit	Open	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Water & Environment
25-01-2023	Appointment with Mp - edit	Open	Health	Social Welfare & Services
24-01-2023	Appointment with Mp - edit	Open	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Infrastructure Development
13-12-2022	lack of water drainage - edit	New	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Health

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Statistics

Chart type: Issue frequency, Opinion categories, Case/Issue status, Wards, Top Issues

Ongoing cases

- Agriculture & Food Security: 1
- Community Development: 9
- Credit & Loans: 2
- Education: 9
- Finance, Taxes & Public Accounts: 2
- Gratuity & Insurance: 1
- Health: 9
- Homelessness, Street Children & Orphans: 2

Closed cases

- Agriculture & Food Security: 9
- Community Development: 12
- Credit & Loans: 3
- Education: 2
- Culture & Arts: 2
- Education: 4
- Elections & Political process: 2
- Gender: 1
- Government Administration: 3

Rejected cases

1/3

STATISTICS

Statistics

Chart type: Issue frequency, Opinion categories, Case/Issue status, Wards, Top Issues

TOP ISSUES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1	2	3	4	5
MP Performance & Representation	Community Development	Poverty & Employment	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Youth

TOP ISSUES AT CONSTITUENCY LEVEL

Constituency	1	2	3	4	5
Bobonong	Community Development	Infrastructure Development	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Health	Government Administration
Boteti east	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Gratuity & Insurance	MP Performance & Representation	Education	Justice, Human rights & Security
Boteti west	Water & Environment	Local Government Administration	Trade, Communication & Transportation	Poverty & Employment	MP Performance & Representation
Chobe	Community Development	Local Government Administration	Youth	Tourism & Hospitality	Infrastructure Development
Francistown east	Poverty & Employment	Housing, Sanitation and Land	Education	Water & Environment	-
Francistown south	MP Performance & Representation	Justice, Human rights & Security	-	-	-

MAJOR ISSUES RANKING

Should Face Mask Be Made Compulsory In Open Areas

Created: 2022-07-23 15:02:07

Should people be legally obliged to wear a mask even out in the open? ... right now in South Africa people are allowed out in the open and there are not that many people around them.

Related links: <https://www.gov.za/covid-19/about/transitional>

Status: Closed

End Date: 2022-10-01

Opinion bar:

Oppose: 5.35 / 10

Statistics:

Voters so far: 45

How many pros have been added: 2

How many cons have been added: 0

33.33% (Oppose), 6.67% (Neutral), 0% (Support)

15.56% (Oppose), 0% (Neutral), 0% (Support)

44.44% (Support)

top rated PROS: Face masks reduced the transmission of airborne

top rated CONS: There are no top rated CONS for this poll

CITIZEN DELIBERATION

MONITORING & EVALUATION INDICATORS

M&E of initiatives under the public participation model involves *inter alia*:

- Developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation tool.
- Public participation concept documents and project plans must be provided to the Public Participation Team/Committee pre-implementation.
- Update reports must be compiled and considered at regular meetings of the Public Participation Team/Committee – weekly or fortnightly.
- Developing and implementing Reporting and Feedback mechanism(s).
- Tabling and publication of reports in Parliament.



CONCLUSION

- Public participation is not an add-on to any parliamentary processes, but its imperative for it to be integrated into all processes and systems of Parliament.
- Citizens must: be provided with access to information about parliament business and the positions being taken by their MP; and have venues for providing their opinion and input into the work of the parliament.
- In a functioning democracy citizens have:
 - knowledge and opinions about various draft laws under consideration.
 - access to information about how the government is implementing laws and spending their tax monies. This information must be used to ensure proper oversight of the Executive branch of government.



REFERENCES

- *Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: A Parliamentary Handbook*: retrieved from- <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/parliaments%20role%20in%20implementing%20the%20SDGs.pdf>
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). www.iap2.org
- Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: a guide to good practice. <http://archive.ipu.org/dem-e/guide/guide-4.htm>
- ParlAmericas. Citizen participation and the legislative process. <http://parlamericas.org>
- AGORA. Parliament outreach. <https://agora-parl.org>
- Botswana Parliament Public Participation Model, 2018
- Constitution of the Republic of Botswana
- Standing Orders of the National Of Botswana, 2017



**THANK YOU!!
REA LEBOGA!!**