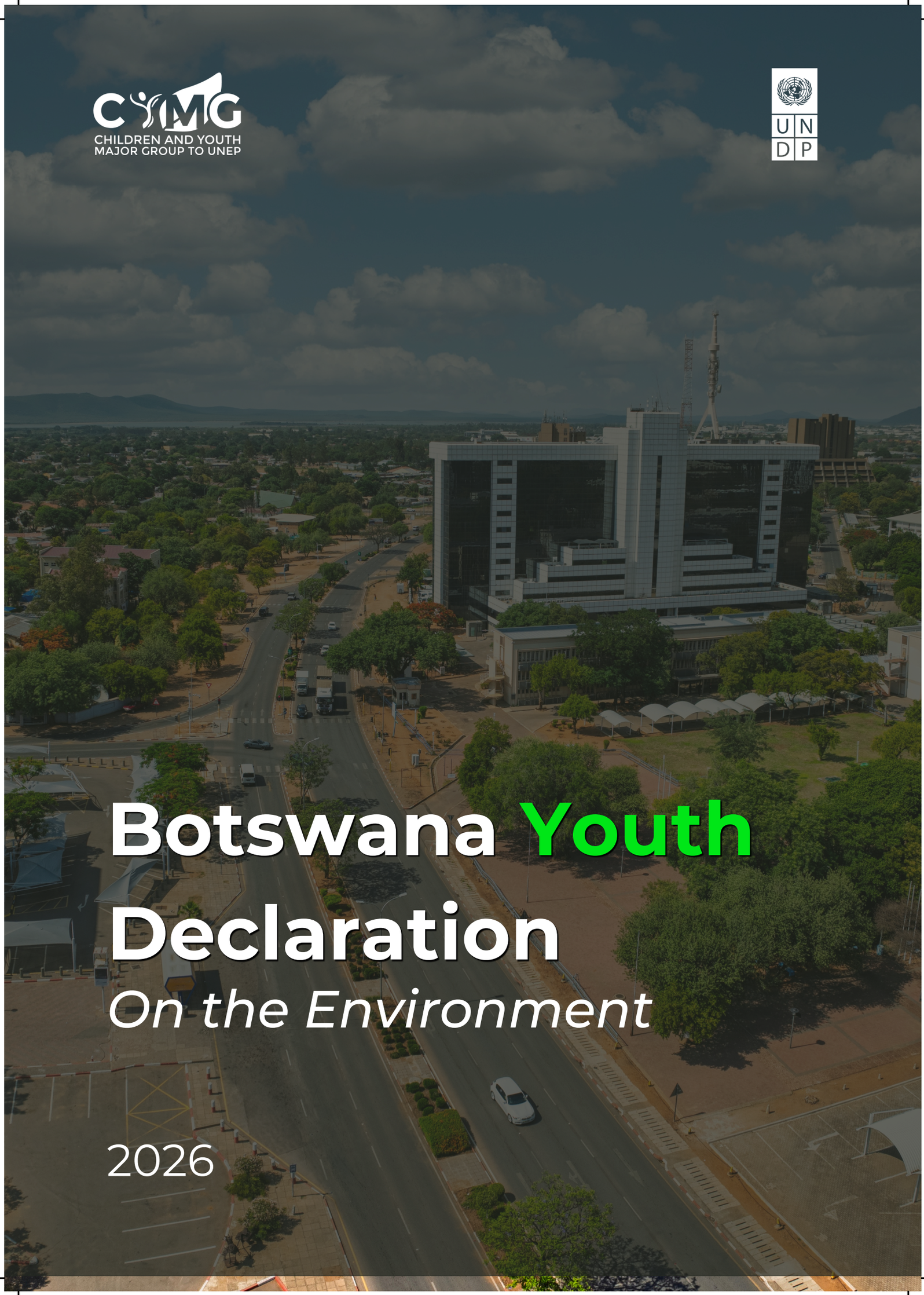


CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP TO UNEP

UNDP

Botswana Youth Declaration

On the Environment

2026

Abbreviations

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
BETP	Botswana's Economic Transformation Programmme
CBFiMAs	Community-Based Fire Management Associations
CYMG	Children and Youth Major Group to the United Nations Environment Programme
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTEF	Department of Tertiary Education Financing
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EWS	Early Warning Systems
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NDP 11	National Development Plan 11
NDP 12	National Development 12
PRO	Producer Responsibility Organisation
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-FI	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative
YOUNGO	Children and Youth Constituency to UNFCCC
YEA	Youth Environment Assembly

Preamble

Building on the outcomes of the Seventh Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), we, the children and youth of Botswana, present this Declaration as our collective call for urgent, locally grounded, and inclusive environmental action.

The Post-UNEA-7 Youth Environment Dialogue (YED) in Botswana (YEDxBotswana) stands as a direct response to UNEA-7 resolutions, serving as a platform to empower youth, enhance knowledge exchange, and foster leadership in environmental governance. Through this initiative, young people are contributing to the localisation and implementation of global environmental commitments.

Botswana's young population represents a critical asset for environmental action. We call on the Government of Botswana, in partnership with UNEP, UNDP, and all stakeholders, to prioritise the implementation of UNEA-7 resolutions in a manner that is inclusive, context-specific, and aligned with our national development goals, including Vision 2036 and National Development Plan 11. In doing so, Botswana can demonstrate how global environmental commitments can be effectively translated into local action that benefits both people and the planet.

As young people in Botswana, we present this Declaration to our decision-makers to position young people as the catalysts they are towards action, as the last four years to 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda are ahead of us. We stand ready as partners to help make Botswana reach closer to its targets for a healthier environment and conditions of well-being and livelihoods for all. We, the youth of Botswana, call for the localisation of the following UNEA-7 resolutions across eight priority areas. Each call to action is grounded in Botswana's national context and aligned with the six transformations of the 2025 Global Youth Declaration on the Environment.

The contents of this Declaration resulted from two online consultations with young people from across locales in Botswana, facilitated by youth who have previously engaged in the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) meetings and the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP. Furthermore, validation of the main calls to action further occured at the in-person Youth Environment Dialogue in Botswana (YEDxBotswana) hosted in collaboration with UNDP Botswana and CYMG to UNEP.

Acknowledgements

The process to create the Botswana Youth Declaration was done in support of the Global Steering Committee of the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP. CYMG's work across regional and thematic global processes (including the first Youth Day held ahead AMCEN-20 in Nairobi) has been instrumental in creating pathways for African youth to engage meaningfully with UNEA processes. The Botswana Youth Declaration builds on this global momentum and the six interconnected transformations outlined in the 2025 Global Youth Declaration on the Environment which was formally handed over to the Executive Director of UNEP and the Chair of UNEA-7 at the 3rd Youth Environment Assembly (YEA-3). The goal of this first localized Declaration is to translate global goals into local action for Botswana.



Photo Description: Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP (CYMG) at the third Youth Environment Assembly (YEA-3) ahead of UNEA-7 in Nairobi, Kenya (2025)

Sport and Environmental Sustainability



UNEP/EA.7/Res.2 (2025) Sustainable Solutions through Sport for a Resilient Planet

Sport is a powerful tool for promoting environmental awareness, social inclusion, and community resilience. In Botswana, sport presents a unique opportunity to engage young people in sustainability through school programmes, community platforms, and grassroots initiatives. In alignment with the Anti-Doping Act, National Youth Policy 2026-2036, Vision 2036's sustainable environment pillar, and NDP 11's focus on social development and inclusive growth, we call for:

1. The establishment of a national framework for sustainable sports management across school, community, and professional levels.
2. Mandatory environmental standards across all sporting codes, particularly in waste management and sustainable resource use.
3. The integration of environmental education into sports programmes and events, including pilot initiatives at national marathons and major competitions.
4. Mandatory environmental impact assessments for all sporting infrastructure developments, with continuous monitoring for sustainability.
5. The introduction of a national green certification system for sporting events.
6. Government, private sector, and CSOs to use Botswana athletes as stewards for sustainable capacity building, with sporting clubs adopting sustainability pledges.
7. Proper waste segregation and recycling at all sporting activities to promote zero waste.

Photo Credit: Olympics 2025

Sustainable Mineral Resource Management



UNEP/EA.7/Res.3 (2025) Environmentally Sound Management of Minerals

Mining remains a cornerstone of Botswana's economy, yet it presents significant environmental challenges including land degradation, water pollution, and waste generation. In alignment with Vision 2036's economic diversification and sustainable resource management goals, we call for:

1. The integration of circular economy principles into mining practices, in line with Vision 2036.
2. Strengthened regulatory compliance with international environmental and mining standards.
3. Mandatory rehabilitation of mining sites during operation and after closure, learning from experiences such as Selebi-Phikwe.
4. The inclusion of youth as key stakeholders in mining governance and policy dialogues.
5. The establishment of youth innovation funds and incubation programmes focused on green mining solutions.
6. Partnerships with communities and youth groups to implement restoration projects and create green employment opportunities.
7. Full transparency of mineral extraction processes and contents, critical for a mineral-led economy.
8. Dedicated funding for clean technology start-ups in mining operations.

Coordinating Multilateral Environmental Agreements



UNEP/EA.7/Res.5 (2025) Promoting Synergies for National Implementation of MEAs

Botswana has demonstrated commitment to various environmental conventions, yet fragmentation across sectors continues to limit effectiveness. We therefore recommend:

1. The establishment of a National Multilateral Coordination Committee, housed under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism or Ministry of International Relations, with focal points addressing each agreement and convention.
2. The inclusion of all relevant ministries in environmental agreement implementation to ensure policy coherence.
3. The development of a centralised national database to track progress across multilateral environmental agreements.
4. Strengthened implementation and monitoring of UNEA outcomes at the national level.
5. Intentional inclusion of youth and all relevant stakeholders in the commemoration of environmental agreements and related national events.

Photo Credit: Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP (CYMG) during thr 3rd Youth Environment Assembly (YEA-3) in 2025

Youth Participation and Environmental Education



UNEP/EA.7/Res.6 (2025) Meaningful Youth Participation and Environmental Education

Meaningful youth engagement is fundamental to achieving sustainable environmental outcomes. Barriers to participation persist, including limited access to decision-making spaces, capacity gaps, and inadequate support for youth-led initiatives. In alignment with the National Youth Policy 2026-2036 and Vision 2036's human and social development pillars, we call on the Government to:

1. Institutionalise youth participation in environmental governance at all levels, including local, national, and international processes.
2. Integrate comprehensive, up-to-date, and locally relevant environmental education into national curricula across all educational levels.
3. Ensure youth involvement across all stages of policymaking, including design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
4. Facilitate collaboration between Botswana youth and UNEP regional structures to improve access to resources and opportunities.
5. Support youth participation in regional and global environmental platforms through targeted capacity-building initiatives.
6. Incentivise engagement in the green economy (for instance, by integrating sustainability-focused courses into Top Achievers and other DTEF scholarships)

Photo Credit: UNEP Communications of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP (CYMG) members meeting with the Chemicals and Health Branch, on sidelines of UNEA-7 (2025) in Nairobi, Kenya

Wildfire Management and Community Resilience



UNEP/EA.7/Res.7 (2025) Strengthening the Global Management of Wildfires

Botswana faces growing risks of veld fires due to increasing climate variability, threatening rangelands, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods. Strengthening community-based fire management, integrating indigenous knowledge, and enhancing early warning systems are critical. We call upon the Government of Botswana to:

1. Establish Community-Based Fire Management Associations (CBFiMAs), in alignment with the National Disaster Management Policy and the Herbage Preservation Act.
2. Integrate indigenous knowledge systems with modern scientific approaches in wildfire prevention and land management strategies.
3. Develop and implement early warning systems and public awareness campaigns to improve wildfire detection and rapid response.
4. Strengthen capacity-building programmes for rural communities and youth, supporting resilience and sustainable land stewardship.
5. Enhance inter-agency coordination for wildfire management, ensuring alignment with Vision 2036's sustainable environment pillar.

Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

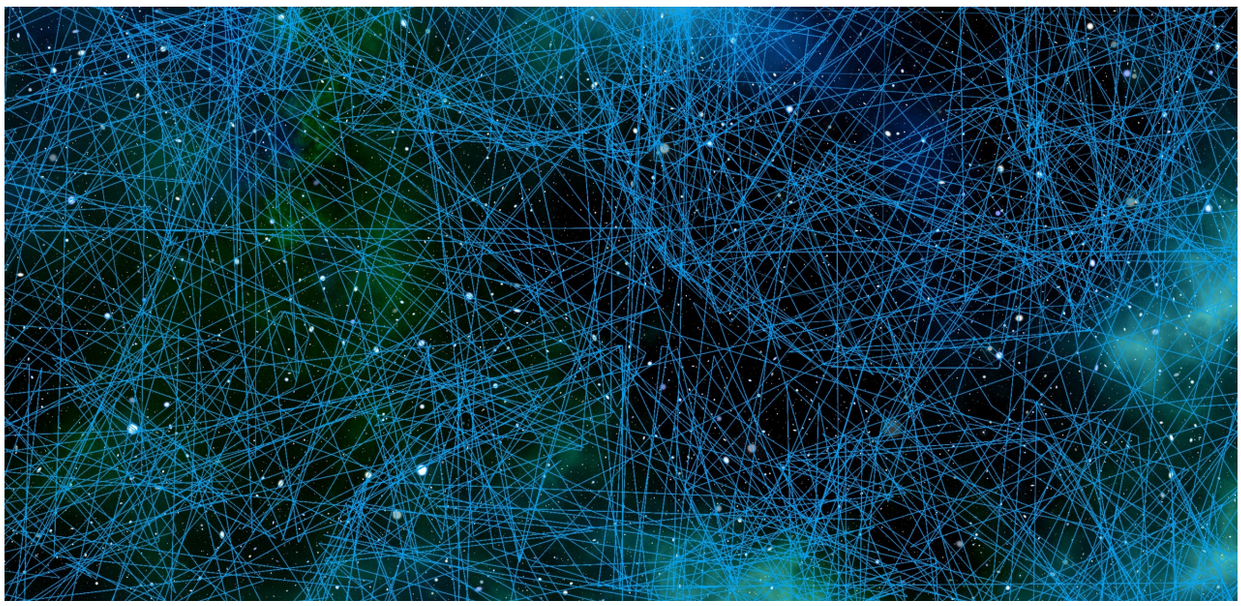


UNEP/EA.7/Res.8 (2025) Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

Effective waste and chemical management is critical for protecting public health, ecosystems, and achieving sustainable development. We call upon the Government of Botswana to:

1. Reduce fragmentation across governmental sectors, ensuring coordinated implementation of waste and chemical management policies in line with NDP 11.
2. Integrate public health indicators into waste and chemical management systems, recognising the environment-health nexus.
3. Strengthen national reporting and accountability mechanisms, ensuring transparency to Batswana alongside international reporting obligations.
4. Advocate for Botswana's participation in global science-policy platforms on chemicals and waste.
5. Introduce a nationwide mandatory waste separation-at-source policy, covering recyclables, organic waste, and general waste, implemented through municipal by-laws, beginning with urban centres such as Gaborone.
6. Introduce mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations for plastic packaging, beverage producers, and retail chains, with a national Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) to oversee compliance.
7. Promote green bonds and sustainable financing instruments to support private sector investment in waste management and circular economy initiatives.

Artificial Intelligence and Environmental Sustainability



UNEP/EA.7/Res.9 (2025) Environmental Sustainability of Artificial Intelligence Systems

As digital transformation accelerates, Botswana has an opportunity to adopt sustainable AI practices while leveraging technology for environmental monitoring, land management, and climate resilience. We call upon the Government of Botswana to:

1. Develop and adopt a standalone national AI Environmental Policy, aligned with Vision 2036's digital transformation and sustainability goals.
2. Promote youth capacity-building programmes in AI and environmental data science, facilitated through partnerships with the private sector and academic institutions such as UniPod.
3. Establish frameworks for the regulation, financing, and strategic deployment of AI technologies, ensuring equitable access, sustainable infrastructure, and minimised environmental impacts.
4. Encourage the use of AI in climate monitoring, biodiversity conservation, and land-use planning, strengthening evidence-based environmental decision-making.

Antimicrobial Resistance and Environmental Governance



UNEP/EA.7/Res.11 (2025) Environmental Dimensions of Antimicrobial Resistance

We, the youth of Botswana, recognise that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is not only a health issue but an environmental problem that must be addressed through proper environmental governance, pollution control, and sustainable practices. Resistant bacteria develop and spread through agricultural runoff, wastewater mishandling, and waste management failures. We call upon the Government of Botswana to:

1. Strengthen enforcement, compliance, and monitoring of existing environmental legislation, including the Environmental Assessment Act, in alignment with Vision 2036.
2. Establish a multi-sectoral AMR Environmental Task Force, led by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, with representation from health, agriculture, academia, and youth stakeholders.
3. Develop science- and risk-based environmental surveillance systems to monitor AMR in water, soil, and waste systems.
4. Promote research, innovation, and knowledge-sharing platforms to support evidence-based responses to AMR.
5. Facilitate access to international financing mechanisms, including the Antimicrobial Resistance Multi-Partner Trust Fund.
6. Strengthen the National One Health Approach, ensuring clear integration between human, animal, and environmental health systems.
7. Improve wastewater management, agricultural practices, and pollution control systems to reduce environmental drivers of AMR.
8. Submit progress reports on AMR and environmental management to future UNEA sessions, including UNEA-8.

Our Commitment

We, the children and youth of Botswana, **commit to supporting the implementation of these commitments** in alignment with our national goals and priorities. We do so as partners in decision-making, not merely as future stakeholders, but as present-day leaders in environmental action. Guided by the spirit of the Global Youth Declaration on the Environment and the mandate of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP, Botswana's youth stand ready to shape a sustainable, just and resilient future for our country and our planet.

We, the youth of Botswana, recognising our role as active agents of change, reaffirm that environmental action is already underway across communities, institutions, and sectors. Building on the outcomes of UNEA-7, and in alignment with Vision 2036, National Development Plan 11 (NDP 11), and the National Youth Policy (2026–2036), we commit to strengthening and scaling locally driven solutions through inclusive partnerships. Guided by the spirit of the Global Youth Declaration on the Environment and the mandate of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP. Botswana's youth stand ready to shape a sustainable, just, and resilient future for our country and our planet.

Botswana faces pressing environmental challenges that underscore the urgency of action:

- Approximately 70–80% of Botswana's land is affected by desertification and land degradation (Government of Botswana; UNCCD National Reports).
- Urban centres, including Gaborone, generate over 150,000 tonnes of waste annually, with recycling rates below 20% (Statistics Botswana; World Bank What a Waste Database).
- Youth constitute over 60% of the national population, with youth unemployment estimated at over 25% (Statistics Botswana Labour Force Survey, 2023).

These realities **reinforce the need to scale the solutions already being led by young people across the country,** in line with UNEA-7's call for evidence-based, inclusive, and locally driven environmental action.

1. Community-Led Environmental Action

We commit to continue and expand grassroots environmental initiatives, led by youth in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), community-based organisations, and traditional leadership structures.

- Youth groups and CSOs are already implementing tree planting, waste clean-ups, recycling campaigns, and climate awareness programmes across Botswana.
- Botswana loses an estimated 36,000 hectares of forest cover annually (FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment; Global Forest Watch), reinforcing the urgency of restoration efforts.
- Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes currently support over 130 community trusts nationwide (Government of Botswana, Ministry of Environment and Tourism).

In alignment with UNEA-7 operative provisions to strengthen stakeholder engagement and community resilience, we commit to institutionalising community participation in environmental governance frameworks.

2. Academic and Research Contributions

We recognise the critical role of universities and research institutions in advancing environmental sustainability.

- Institutions such as the University of Botswana and Botswana International University of Science and Technology are contributing to research on climate change, biodiversity, water systems, and sustainable mining.
- Botswana is classified as a water-scarce country, with renewable water availability estimated at less than 1,000 m^3 per capita per year (World Bank; FAO AQUASTAT).

Consistent with UNEA-7's emphasis on science-policy interfaces, we commit to strengthening linkages between research, innovation, and policy implementation, including youth-led research platforms.

3. Private Sector and Green Economy Engagement

We acknowledge the growing role of private sector actors in advancing sustainable development.

- Botswana's electricity generation remains over 70% coal-dependent (International Energy Agency; Government of Botswana Energy Statistics), highlighting the need for a just energy transition.
- Youth-led enterprises are increasingly active in renewable energy, recycling, and sustainable agriculture, contributing to diversification efforts under Vision 2036.
- Youth unemployment remains above 25% (Statistics Botswana, 2023), underscoring the need for green job creation and skills development.

In line with UNEA-7's call to advance sustainable consumption and production, we commit to promoting circular economy models and green enterprise development.

4. Inclusion of Marginalised and Underrepresented Groups

We affirm that environmental justice requires inclusive participation.

- Approximately 35–40% of Botswana's population resides in rural areas, where livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources (Statistics Botswana Population Data).
- Rural communities are disproportionately affected by drought, land degradation, and climate variability (UNDP Climate Risk Profiles).

In alignment with UNEA-7's commitment to leave no one behind, we commit to ensuring equitable access to environmental opportunities, particularly for young women, persons with disabilities, and indigenous and local knowledge holders.

5. Policy Alignment and Localisation of Global Commitments

We commit to aligning our actions with national and global frameworks, ensuring coherence and impact.

- Botswana is a Party to multiple Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including the Paris Agreement, Convention on Biological Diversity, and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (Government of Botswana; UN Treaty Collections).
- Implementation challenges persist due to institutional fragmentation and coordination gaps (UNEP and national policy reviews).

In line with UNEA-7 operative paragraphs on enhanced national implementation and policy coherence, we commit to supporting localisation, monitoring, and accountability of environmental commitments.

6. Strengthening Partnerships and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

We recognise that collective action is essential for transformative change.

- Partnerships with organisations such as United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Development Programme have supported youth engagement, environmental governance, and capacity building initiatives in Botswana.
- Environmental financing in Botswana increasingly relies on blended finance mechanisms, combining domestic and international resources (World Bank; UNDP Financing for Development Reports).

Consistent with UNEA-7's call to strengthen multilateral cooperation, we commit to expanding partnerships to mobilise resources and scale impact.

7. Commitment to Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability

We commit to transparency and accountability in environmental action.

- Botswana continues to strengthen environmental reporting systems; however, data gaps remain in waste management, emissions tracking, and biodiversity monitoring (UNEP Environmental Data Assessments; Statistics Botswana).
- Youth-led initiatives are increasingly utilising digital tools and community monitoring systems to support data collection and awareness.

In line with UNEA-7's emphasis on data-driven decision-making and reporting, we commit to developing youth-led monitoring frameworks aligned with national indicators and global reporting obligations.

Concluding Commitment

We, the youth of Botswana, resolve to scale up evidence-based, inclusive, and locally driven environmental solutions, building on the work already being implemented across the country.

Guided by UNEA-7 outcomes and national development priorities, we commit to transforming data into action and action into measurable impact, demonstrating that Botswana's youth are not only participants but leaders in advancing a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.



Photo Credit: Unsplash

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