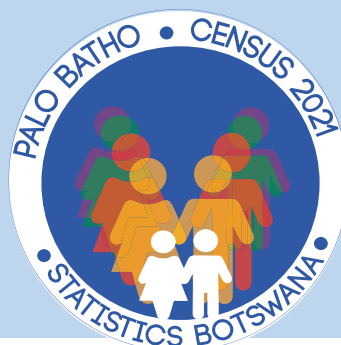


2022 Population and Housing Census Launch Statement

By

Peggy O. Serame

Minister of Finance and Economic Development



Mpala, Ke Botlhokwa



Director of Ceremonies,

**Statistics Botswana – Board Chairperson, Mr. Letsema
Motsemme**

The Statistician General of Statistics Botswana, Dr.

Burton S. Mguni,

Executive of the Ministry of Finance,

District Commissioner, Gaborone District Ms. Grace

Seitshiro,

Executives of Statistics Botswana and staff here present,

Members of the 4th Estate, the media,

All invited guests,

Good Morning.

1. Today marks yet another important day in the country's calendar of events, as we launch the 6th decennial Population and Housing Census for the country. As you might be aware, the 2022 Population and Housing Census is scheduled to take place take place from 18th to 31st March, 2022. Statistics Botswana is charged with the responsibility to undertake this important national exercise.

2. The Census Act of 1904 and the Statistics Act of 2009 provide the legal basis for the conduct of the Population and Housing Census every 10 years. This is in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission and it has become international best practice. This is a practice that Botswana has adhered to since 1971. The last census was conducted in 2011. However, the 2021 Census was postponed to 2022 due to challenges that were experienced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. The Population and Housing Census, in simple terms, is the counting of the human population within the geographic boundaries of a country at a specified time, following a procedure of systematically obtaining or recording information on all persons.
4. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, a Census provides invaluable information for planning, including demographic and socio-economic data at regular intervals, making it possible to appraise the past, accurately describe the present, and to estimate the future.

5. The data is provided at small area level, to enable the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, national and district development plans and the country's Vision. The data is also important for monitoring and reporting on progress in relation to global, continental and regional commitments and frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa Agenda 2063 and to address other administrative processes by stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

6. The results from the Population and Housing Census are also a critical input in to the Delimitation Commission Exercise, which is a Constitutional requirement. Section 64 of the Constitution of Botswana implores Government to undertake a delimitation exercise at an interval of no more than 10 year and use the results to determine the need to alter boundaries of constituencies in order to ensure adequate representation.

7. **Ladies and Gentleman,** the 2022 Population and Housing Census is expected to address the following specific objectives:-

- i. Increase availability and accessibility of accurate, timely and reliable baseline data on demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population;
- ii. Provision of various demographic baseline indicators, such as current data for the determination of fertility, mortality and migration levels, patterns and trends, as well as population growth at national and sub-national levels;
- iii. Support evidence based formulation of development policies and programs as well as tracking and monitoring socio-economic development, among others;
- iv. Interpretation and dissemination of population census data in a manner that will ensure effective application as well as an understanding of the population factors in national development evidence-based decision making, formulation of policies, programmes and projects;

- v. Provision of data for constituency delimitation processes;
- vi. Strengthening national capacities in data collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and utilization, including Geographic Information System (GIS), as well as, census strategic planning and management.

8. **Ladies and Gentleman**, in line with our digital transformation agenda, this will be Botswana's first digital census. As information technology will be employed for many of the Census activities, it is expected that results of the census will be released within a short space of time than was the case before. During the Cartographic exercise, which does mapping for the Census, Geographical Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of dwellings were collected instead of placing metal plates on doors within household dwellings; and Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), as opposed to the traditional paper based data collection method, will be employed during enumeration.

9. Preparations are already advanced. The Pilot Census, which was meant to test the questionnaires and the Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) application, as well as other administrative logistics, took place from 22 - 31, October 2021. I'm informed that the Pilot Census has shown all processes to be fit for purpose and providing quality data in a timely manner.

10. **Director of Ceremonies**, this year's Population and Housing Census message is: "**2022 Census. Palo Batho. Mpala, Ke Botlhokwa**". In an effort to intensify publicity ahead of this national undertaking, various platforms will be used to sensitize all stakeholders to participate accordingly. The main objective is to raise awareness and build consensus to have a common understanding as to why a census is conducted, as well as, why participating partners should adequately play their roles.

11. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** various stakeholders will be involved in the conduct of the Census and these include: Ministries, such as; Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; Ministry of Presidential Affairs; Governance and Public Administration (MOPAGPA); Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Transport and Communications; and Ministry of Basic Education.

The key departments under the MOPAGPA are the District Commissioners' Offices nationwide, who take responsibility for undertaking census activities in the districts, from planning to enumeration. They are responsible for the day to day supervision of the exercise, while Statistics Botswana provides technical expertise and coordination.

12. Other key stakeholders include the general public. It is important to sensitize and educate the public on the need to cooperate and support the teams involved in the census exercise. They should understand the importance of the census, the use of data collected and the importance of confidentiality by all those engaged in the census operations.

13. In addition, various media houses, either in print or electronic, are also primary stakeholders. They have an important role to play and, by acting as a bridge between government and the general public, they provide an important platform for exchange of ideas to dispel any myths and misconceptions about the census.
14. Ladies and Gentlemen, every effort is being made to ensure that the conduct of the census is safe for those conducting the count as well as those being counted at home. In this regard it is important that members of the public should know how to identify the Census personnel.
15. The Census personnel will be identified through the following:
 - Attire and protective clothing carrying the census logo;
 - Official letters of appointment on Government of Botswana letterhead;
 - National Identity Cards (OMANG) with names corresponding to those on their letter of appointment and
 - The vehicles also carrying the census logo

16. I urge all of you to support this national exercise for its success. Members of the Public are urged to welcome Census staff to their households and cooperate with them to ensure that this important national exercise is successful.
17. **Bagaetsho**, the COVID-19 virus is still with us. For this reason, every effort will be made to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are complied with throughout the training and visits to households for data collection. Therefore, there should be no increased risks to the census workers and members of the public as a result of the conduct of the Census.
18. With these words, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to officially launch the 2022 Population and Housing Census, "PALO BATHO 2022".
19. Thank you.