



Government of Botswana

Topic:

“Governments as Co-operatives Advocates”



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Co-operatives: Putting People at the Centre Of Development

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION



- The Co-operatives Movement in Botswana started in the early 1960s. Government approved the Co-operative Societies Act, 1962 to provide legal backing to the Co-operative Movement.
- Following this, the first Co-operative (Swaneng Consumers) was registered in 1964.
- There are currently 266 registered Co-operatives with around 200 000 members and this constitutes around 9% of the population. This signifies the importance of the spirit of cooperation in the country.

II. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT



- Co-operative development is a function under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.
- The Ministry through the Department for Co-operative Development has been mandated to:
 - Promote formation of autonomous, vibrant, competitive and profitable Co-operative businesses.
 - Administer the services required by the Co-operatives for their formation, organisation, registration, operation and for advancement.
 - Provide business advisory services, and
 - Promote training of members and staff of Co-operatives.

II. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT



- The Ministry delivers this service providing Policy and Legislative Framework. These Policy documents are consistent with the nature and functions of Co-operatives as well as its values and principles.
- The basis for these Policy documents is the seven (7) principles for Co-operatives which are embraced by the Co-operative Movement globally.
- These principles emphasise the unique characteristics of Co-operatives and the quest to improve the sustainability of Co-operatives enterprises.



III. Establishment of an Institutional Framework to guide Co-operative Development in Botswana

- The Co-operative Societies in Botswana are guided by the ***Co-operative Societies Act, Cap 42:04***, of 1962.
- This Act has since been reviewed twice, in **1989 and 2013** to align it to changing global business environment.
- The 2013 review was done in accordance with the requirements of the ***ILO Recommendation 193, 2002*** which provides a framework for Governments to develop laws, administrative systems and policies that can enable Co-operatives to flourish.



III. Establishment of an Institutional Framework to guide Co-operative Development in Botswana

- Currently, the Co-operative Societies Act Cap: 42:04 regulates both the Financial (SACCOS) and Non- Financial Co-operatives.
- However, with significant growth of Co-operatives in the Financial Sector, there are plans to develop an appropriate Legal Framework for their governance.
- In an effort to augment the Co-operative Act and facilitate Co-operatives to meaningfully contribute to Income Distribution, Employment Creation and Poverty Alleviation at local community level, Government adopted the National Policy for Co-operative Development (2007).

III. Establishment of an Institutional Framework to guide Co-operative Development in Botswana



- Further, Government adopted the Transformation Strategy for Co-operative Development in 2015.
- The main objective of the Strategy is to develop New Generation Co-operatives that will be sustainable and globally competitive.
- This Strategy is being implemented through Eight (8) Strategic Growth Pillars, which include Co-operative Branding, Corporate Governance, Participation and Commitment, Growth Pillars and Linkages.

IV. Governments strategic role in capacity building of Co-operatives.

- Government established the Botswana Co-operative Training Center in 1970, to provide capacity building to Co-operative Societies on a continuous basis. The Centre undertakes the following:
 - Training to Co-operative Boards and Staff to facilitate good corporate governance in Co-operatives;
 - Conducting outreach programmes to educate the general public about the nature and benefits of the Co-operative Business Model.
 - Conducting research and providing information on the available opportunities to be explored by Co-operatives.
- Government continues to collaborate with Competent Authorities to ensure the Centre is a position to deliver accredited training.
- In this regard, the Centre was accredited in 2014.

IV. Governments strategic role in capacity building of Co-operatives



- As part of efforts to improve the performance of the Co-operatives, Government is collaborating with the Co-operative Movement to computerise their operations.
- The Computerisation process is aimed at:
 - Automating the Co-operative societies business operations;
 - Providing timely and up-to-date Co-operative data;
 - Marketing Co-operatives as credible and competitive business entities.

V. CONCLUSION



- The Botswana Government has identified the potential of Co-operatives to contribute to the social and economic being of its communities due to their footprints across the breadth of the country, hence the need for Government support.
- In view of this, Co-operatives are considered important instruments that can reduce poverty eradication and address economic injustice in the communities.
- Hence, Government will continue to provide the necessary support for Co-operatives to thrive.



THANK YOU