



Republic of Botswana

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **STATEMENT ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)**

**Gaborone, 25 October 2016:** The Government of Botswana has noted the decision by the Government of the Republic of South Africa to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in terms of Article 127(1), by an instrument dated 19 October 2016, deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations on 21 October 2016.

While Botswana fully respects the sovereign right of any country to become a party to, or to withdraw from any international instrument, the Government of Botswana nonetheless regrets that the Government of South Africa reached this decision.

Botswana remains convinced that the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) to the Rome Statute is the most appropriate platform for States Parties to address any concerns they may have regarding the implementation of the Statute. It had been our sincere hope and expectation that the Government of South Africa would use the opportunity presented by the upcoming meeting of the ASP on 16-24 November 2016 at The Hague to ventilate its concerns in this regard.

Botswana is convinced that as the only permanent international criminal tribunal, the ICC is an important and unique institution in the international criminal justice system. Botswana therefore wishes to reaffirm its membership of the Rome Statute and reiterate its support for a strong international criminal justice system through the ICC. The Government of Botswana does not, therefore, associate itself with calls for States Parties to withdraw from the Rome Statute. Botswana believes that such a move betrays the rights of the victims of atrocious crimes to justice and also undermines the progress made to date in the global efforts to fight impunity.

We therefore urge all States Parties to remain committed to and also respect their obligations under the Rome Statute by cooperating with, and providing political support to the ICC in order to ensure that the maintenance of minimum international standards of justice are observed.

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