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## CONSULAR SERVICES CHARTER

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This Charter outlines the services that our clients can expect from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation when seeking consular assistance.

The role of the Consular Division is to provide high quality consular services to citizens of Botswana both locally and abroad. These services are often related to the welfare of Botswana as they aim to protect or assist Botswana who are either travelling to or are resident in other countries.

The consular assistance and advice provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is free, though services in relation to partner Government Ministries and Departments may have accompanying fees, which will be specified at all times.

**Disclaimer:** Careful consideration of many factors has been taken into preparing this Charter. The responsibilities of the Government of Botswana, its officials or diplomatic and consular staff are confined to only those areas specified in this Charter, and they are neither a State obligation nor a citizen right. The Charter aims only as a tool to assist Botswana better identify areas for which they can seek assistance and advice.

The Charter aims to be as exhaustive as possible; outlining to the closest detail as possible those areas for which it holds responsibility as well as those areas it does not. The Botswana Government will therefore not be held liable for responsibilities beyond its control and scope.

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## Service provided to Botswana/Foreign Nationals

- Provision of Humanitarian Assistance in certain emergencies (case by case e.g. for victims of serious crimes we inform next of kin)
- Provision of information to Botswana citizens in event of international humanitarian crisis (e.g. Tsunami, inform next of kin if results in death or injury)
- Assistance to Botswana in detention abroad (visitation by Embassy staff, facilitate family visitation and general contact, informing family, transfer of funds where applicable, provide lists of local lawyers)
- Repatriation of bodies of deceased Botswana abroad (logistical/non financial)
- Burial of Botswana abroad ( logistical support only, non financial)
- Assistance in search for missing persons abroad (i.e. contacting/informing local authorities)
- Assist transfer of funds from family members in Botswana to those in distress abroad
- Assist with funds for stranded Botswana abroad (with the understanding that funds will be reimbursed and within limits)
- Provide contact advice and guidance to custodial parents in cases of child abduction/ child stealing
- Provide advice and guidance in cases of kidnapping (in close collaboration with local and international security agencies)
- Provide assistance to foreign representatives regarding their citizens in Botswana (in cases accidents, missing persons, deaths)
- Issuing basic travel advisories (to assist with relevant technical information regarding travel in collaboration with relevant Government Departments)
- Citizenship applications
- Certification and Authentication of public documents
- Facilitates the issuing of passports
- Develop and Manage data base of Botswana in Diaspora (incumbent on Botswana voluntarily registering upon travel or employment abroad)
- Police Clearances

## **Services NOT PROVIDED to Batswana**

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- Provision of Legal Advice, representation or institute Court Proceedings (though information regarding these services can be furnished)
- Intervention in local judicial practices in relation to private matters
- Intervention in local investigations involving Botswana abroad (e.g. crimes committed, deaths occurred etc)
- Intervention in search and rescue efforts abroad (including financing etc. Information regarding such services can however be furnished)
- Paying of personal expenses for Botswana abroad (medical bills, hotel bills, air fares, transport, meals, return of remains etc)
- Facilitating personal arrangements such as obtaining accommodation and work, residence, study permits for Botswana travelling or planning to live and work abroad (though information can be furnished)
- Financially supporting Botswana incarcerated abroad
- Assisting with transfer of funds for Botswana NOT in distress
- Enforcing Botswana custody agreements abroad (\*advice or guidance in relation to relevant local offices one can engage can be given but not enforcement)
- Acting as a travel agent, bank or post office, or luggage storage facility
- Issuing of loans (except in limited cases of extreme emergencies)
- Payment of pensions (assistance in contacting relevant authorities can be availed )
- Intervention in relation to customs or quarantine requirements and regulations of foreign countries
- Provision of security protection
- Acceptance of responsibility for custody and safe return of property

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## Please Note:

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- ✦ In cases where services are provided (as outlined) it is incumbent on the individual, representative or family member to inform the nearest Botswana diplomatic mission or MOFAIC for assistance.
  - ✦ The Botswana Government has no official policy cases of repatriation (deceased or living). As such every request regarding repatriation is dealt with on a case by case basis.
  - ✦ The Botswana Government has no official position on loans. As such, requests for loans will be considered on a case by case basis. Loans may be granted on condition that a legally binding undertaking to repay in full is concluded. In determining the veracity of the request, a comprehensive assessment of the economic status of the family will be conducted. In cases where a family is able to repatriate a member or their deceased, arrangements are made for them to deposit money with the government. Where the family does not have money but are capable, the government arranges to repatriate such with an undertaking that the family will pay back the funds in full.
  - ✦ In cases of death, where families opt to bury their deceased abroad to minimize costs the Ministry may facilitate what is commonly referred to as a **pauper's burial**. The Ministry can **only** provide **non-financial** assistance for repatriation.
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## Personal responsibility/Top 10 travel tips

In addition to the services that the Ministry provides, it is critical that Batswana accept personal responsibility for personal travel. In addition personal responsibility must also be taken for any and all agreements, and arrangements entered into with third parties locally or internationally. Adequate due diligence must be exercised before any business relationship is established with any foreign interest as it is often difficult to litigate over international private agreements in local courts. To assist Batswana avoid the pitfalls of international travel and engagements, the following advice must be followed at all times:

- ✓ Before you travel abroad, ensure that you have a valid passport with the necessary visas. Make sure your passport is valid (at least six months validity from your planned return date home), have the right visas for your country of destination and transit visas if necessary before you embark on your journey.
- ✓ Consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's (MoFAIC) website or help lines for contact information of Botswana diplomatic Missions abroad. Where necessary, particularly in trouble spots, relevant information can be sourced upon request. Some countries have resident Missions, Consulates or Honorary Consuls in Botswana where such information can be sourced.
- ✓ Make sensible and precautionary arrangements for your accommodation, take comprehensive travel and health insurance, safety and ensure proper behavior overseas.
- ✓ Register your travel details with MOFAIC or Botswana representative abroad providing **ALL** relevant information.
- ✓ Inform your family/friends of your travel plans and leave copies of your passport, itinerary, insurance policy, visas and ID/Omang with them.

Inform them of your arrival, location and your new contacts so they know where you are. Carry at least one extra copy of each document in a separate place in case of loss of the original.

- ✓ Obey the laws of the country of your destination. **DO NOT** cross illegally at un-gazetted entry points into a foreign country or cross without the necessary documents. In this case, you will be an illegal immigrant.
- ✓ Check vaccination requirements or other necessary health precautions of the country of your destination at least ten (10) weeks in advance of your travel. Contact the Ministry of Health and/or Labour and Home Affairs for detailed assistance. It is advisable to get travel insurance to avoid expensive medical costs should you need medical attention abroad.
- ✓ It is your responsibility to ensure your personal security and protection once abroad and your safe passage home. Always ensure that you have enough funds for your travel and minimize interaction with strangers.
- ✓ Unless it is highly important and you are assured of your security, avoid travelling to countries/places that are prone to or undergoing natural disasters, human rights violations, terrorist attacks and civil/political unrest. If absolutely necessary, have a travel companion or group. There is limited assistance and authority that Government can give when Botswana are involved in such serious crimes as abduction, kidnapping, hostage situations or human trafficking.
- ✓ Kindly exercise patience and the necessary courtesies when approaching the Ministry for assistance. The Ministry is cognizant of the stressful circumstances that those seeking assistance are often under, but must with equal measure appreciate the volume of requests and the limitations the Ministry has particularly in cases for which Botswana has no jurisdiction. The bulk of the assistance provided will thus be facilitatory as other governments and Government Ministries and Departments would have primary responsibility.

## Diplomatic Missions Abroad

Consular assistance is provided to Botswana traveling or living abroad through the Ministry headquarters in Gaborone and our diplomatic missions abroad.

Botswana has to date, twenty one (21) diplomatic missions in the following eighteen (18) countries; **Australia (Canberra), Belgium (Brussels), Brazil (Brasilia), China (Beijing), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), India (New Delhi), Japan (Tokyo), Kenya (Nairobi), Kuwait (Kuwait City), Namibia (Windhoek), Nigeria (Abuja), South Africa (Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town), Sweden (Stockholm), Switzerland (Geneva), United Kingdom (London), United States of America (New York and Washington D.C.), Zambia (Lusaka) and Zimbabwe (Harare)**. These missions are also accredited to other countries in their region that they cover.

When travelling abroad, Botswana are advised to contact MoFAIC to get the contact details of the appropriate Botswana mission abroad that one may contact for assistance should the need arise.

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## Our Contacts and Location

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation  
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