



What is a Member of Parliament?

Members of Parliament have been elected by Batswana voters to represent them in Parliament. There are a total of 63 Members of Parliament. The President, the Speaker and 57 elected Members and 6 Specially elected Members (referred to as MPs).

57+6=63



What is a Minister?

A Minister is a Member of Parliament who is given a specific area of responsibility, also known as portfolio. Most Ministers are in charge of government Ministries/Departments or assist in the administration of a Ministry or Department, such as as the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. Ministers work with their Ministries or Departments, as well as community organisations and professional associations to prepare new laws and change old laws which need updating.

What is a bill?

In Parliament, a bill is a proposal for a new law or a change to an existing one. Generally, bills aim to improve something or fix a problem. Most bills are introduced to Parliament by governing Ministers and are then debated and voted on in both chambers. Other bills are introduced to Parliament by members of the back bench and these are known as Private Members bills.

How does a bill become a law?

A bill becomes a law after it has been passed in the same form by Parliament and is signed by the President.

It is then called an Act of Parliament. For a bill to be passed, it must be agreed to by a majority vote in the House. A bill may also be sent to a parliamentary committee for further investigation before being voted on by Parliament.

If Members of Parliament agree on a bill, it may only take a couple of days to be passed through Parliament. However, the process may take weeks or even months if there is a lot of debate and disagreement, e.g deferred for further consultation. An example of such a bill was the Public Health Bill of 2013.

How can the community affect decision-making in Parliament?

Parliament's role is to make decisions on behalf of all Batswana; it is interested in finding out what the community thinks about important issues. There are many ways the community can get involved with Parliament, including:

- creating or signing a petition to request action from Parliament
- writing a submission and /or giving evidence to a parliamentary committee
- writing to Members of Parliament to express concerns or discuss ideas or issues.

Contact details for Members of Parliament can be found on the Parliament of Botswana website www.parliament.gov.bw



Republic of Botswana

PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA

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FACTS

ABOUT PARLIAMENT



Physical Address: Government Enclave



Postal Address: P O Box 240 Gaborone



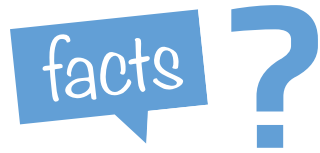
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What is Botswana’s system of Governance?

Botswana is a representative democracy.

A representative democracy is a system in which the people vote for delegates to represent their interests in Parliament. In Botswana, Members of Parliament are elected to the National Assembly to represent the people of Botswana and make laws on their behalf.

What is the Constitution of Botswana?

The Constitution of Botswana is the set of rules by which Botswana is governed. It came into effect in 1966, following the end of the British Colonial rule and the dissolution of the Bechuanaland Legislative Council on January 28, 1965. The Constitution includes details about:

- the composition of the National Assembly – which comprise the President, and the National Assembly
- legislative Powers
- order of exercising legislative powers i.e how laws are made
- the role of the Executive government and the Judiciary, among others.



Parliament of Botswana is located in Gaborone, the Capital city of Botswana.

What is Parliament of Botswana?

Parliament of Botswana consists of the President (as the ex – officio Member of the National Assembly), and the National Assembly

Section 58 (1) of the Constitution of Botswana stipulates that the National Assembly shall consist of 157 elected Members and 4 Specially elected Members.

The Speaker of the National Assembly is a Member of the National Assembly by virtue of his/her role.



Parliament of Botswana has four main roles:

- making and changing laws
- representing the people of Botswana
- providing a place where government is formed
- keeping a check on the work of the government

How is Parliament of Botswana formed?

At the general elections, eligible citizens vote for people to represent them in Parliament.

Each Member of Parliament is elected to represent one of the 57 Constituencies around Botswana.

Each Member of Parliament is elected to represent their Constituency in Parliament.

Elections for the National Assembly are held at least every five years.

Once the election result is finalised, the successful candidates are announced and the writs (official election documents) are produced and returned.

General elections are run by the Independent Electoral Commission.

What is Ntlo Ya Dikgosi?

Ntlo Ya Dikgosi is the lower House which serve as an advisory body to Parliament. Ntlo Ya Dikgosi is made up of 35 Members. Each member represents one of the Tribal Territories of Botswana.

What happens in Parliament and Ntlo Ya Dikgosi?

When in the Chambers, Members of Parliament and Ntlo Ya Dikgosi spend the majority of their time debating issues of national importance and making laws on behalf of all Batswana. They all represent their electorate, or tribal territories by speaking about issues that are important to their part of the country. Activities that take place in the chambers include:

Parliament Debates and passes bills (proposed laws) – Ntlo Ya Dikgosi advises on Parliament bills referred to them.

- asking and answering questions, particularly during Question Time, in which Members of Parliament closely examine the work of the government
- speaking on matters of public importance, in which Members of Parliament discuss current important issues
- presenting and debating parliamentary committee reports
- presenting petitions on behalf of citizens, among others.



250
Headquarters

Who works in Parliament of Botswana and Ntlo Ya Dikgosi?

Parliament House is a busy place, with around 250 people working in the building on sitting days and around 290 officers working at Constituency Offices. These include:



290
Constituency

Members of Parliament and Members of Ntlo Ya Dikgosi Parliamentary Officers and public servants who support the work of Parliament and the government employees who provide services such as broadcasting, computing, cleaning and catering.