

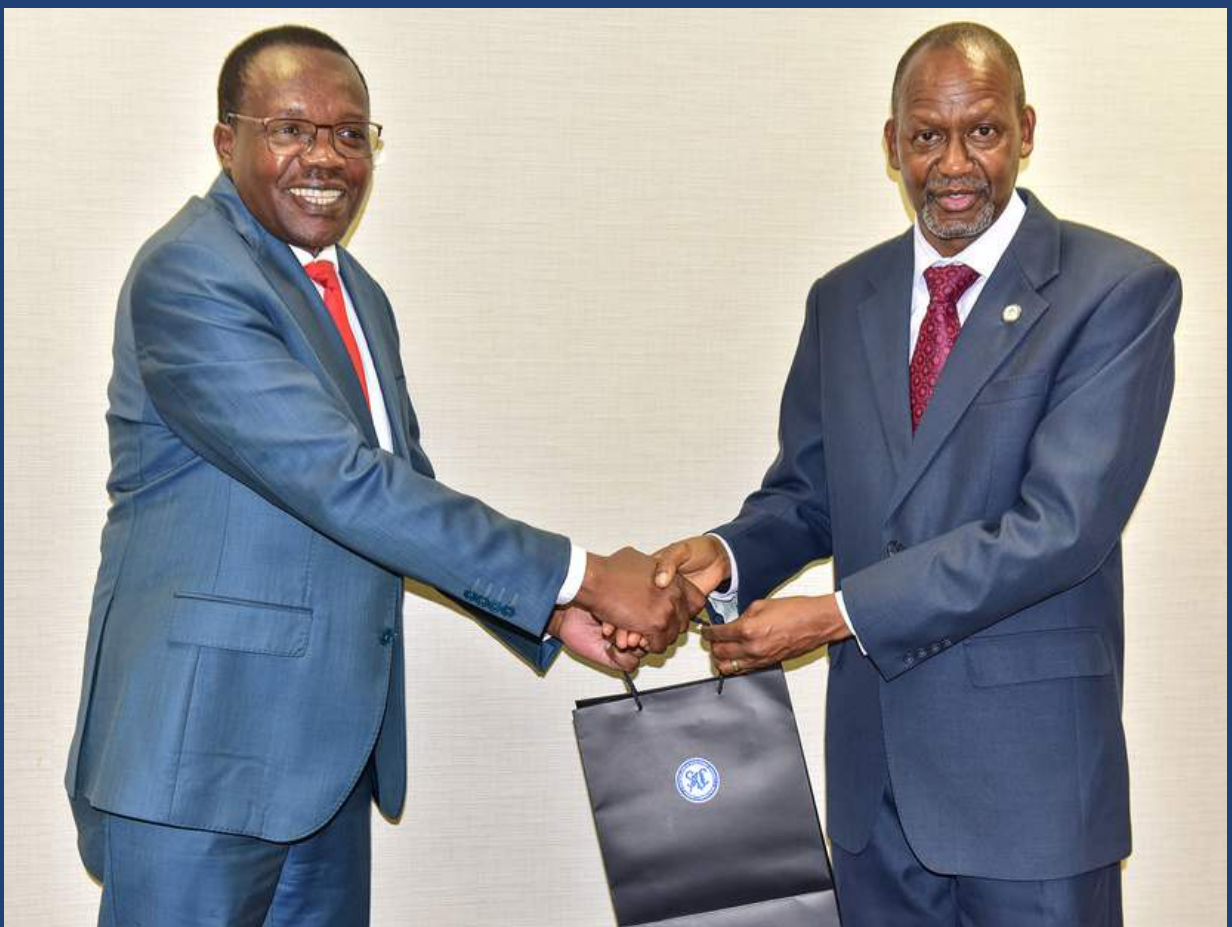


**World Health
Organization**
Botswana

APRIL - JUNE 2026

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Promoting health • Keeping the world safe • Serving the vulnerable



FOREWORD



Dear Colleagues, Partners and Friends,

Welcome to the second edition of the WHO Botswana Quarterly Newsletter 2026, highlighting key achievements and partnerships from April to June 2026. Throughout the quarter, collaboration remained at the heart of our work as Government institutions, communities, development partners, academia, civil society organizations and the United Nations family joined efforts to strengthen health systems, improve preparedness and advance better health outcomes for all.

A major highlight was the successful implementation of two rounds of Polio Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs), led by the Ministry of Health with support from WHO, UNICEF and funding from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). The campaign reached thousands of children across the country, helping to close immunity gaps, strengthen routine immunization and surveillance systems, and identify zero-dose and under-vaccinated children who might otherwise have been left behind. These achievements underscore Botswana's continued commitment to protecting children and maintaining its polio-free status. Significant progress was also made in strengthening health security and preparedness. Botswana enhanced its readiness to respond to emerging public health threats through investments in One Health approaches, laboratory systems and multisectoral coordination. The National Bridging Workshop brought together stakeholders from the human, animal and environmental health sectors, reinforcing collaboration and supporting a more integrated approach to preparedness, surveillance and response.

The quarter further marked the launch of WHO Botswana's Data and Policy Initiative, an important step towards strengthening evidence-informed decision-making. Continued support for health workforce planning, mortality reporting, disease prevention, health-promoting schools and tobacco control also contributed to building a stronger, more resilient and responsive health system capable of meeting current and future challenges.

Another encouraging development was Botswana's growing contribution to global public health. The work of the WHO Collaborating Centre on HIV Drug Resistance at the Botswana HIV Reference Laboratory continues to demonstrate the country's scientific excellence and leadership in research, surveillance and innovation, generating benefits that extend beyond national borders.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Botswana, our donors, partners, health workers and communities whose dedication continues to transform plans into action. Together, we remain committed to advancing universal health coverage, strengthening health security and building a healthier, more resilient future for all.

Dr. Fabian Ndenzako
WHO Country Representative

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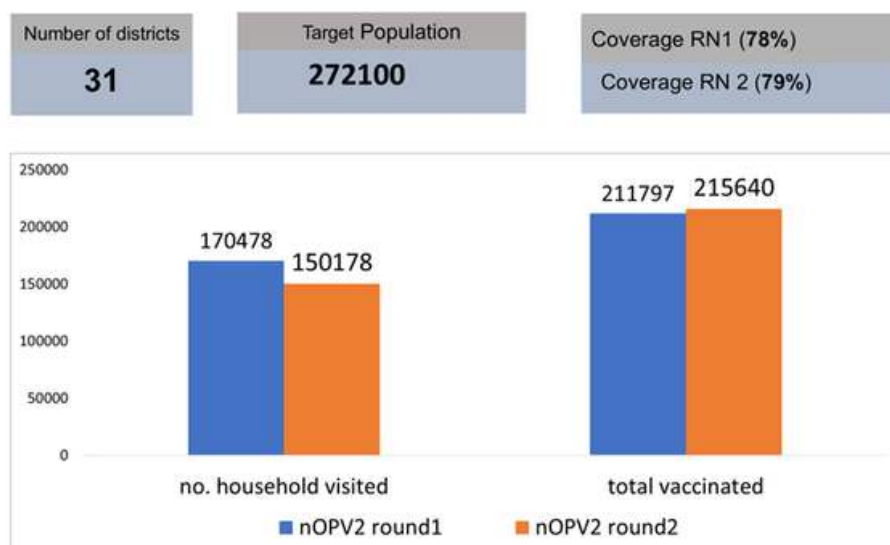
Nationwide Polio campaign reinforces child health protection in Botswana

Botswana reaffirmed its commitment to protecting every child from polio through two nationwide Polio Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) conducted in response to the continued circulation of poliovirus in neighbouring countries. The campaign, supported through funding from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), aimed to close immunity gaps among children, particularly those who had missed routine vaccinations, while strengthening surveillance systems and safeguarding Botswana's polio-free status.

Through close collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, WHO, UNICEF and other partners, extensive preparations were undertaken to ensure successful implementation. Districts updated microplans, health workers received training, vaccines and supplies were distributed nationwide, and cold chain systems were strengthened to maintain vaccine quality and effectiveness.

During the campaign, vaccination teams reached children through house-to-house visits, health facilities, preschools and transit points, helping to ensure that no eligible child was missed. Real-time monitoring using digital tools enabled rapid identification and correction of gaps, particularly in hard-to-reach communities.

NATIONAL COVERAGE



The results demonstrated significant progress. Administrative coverage improved across most districts between Round 1 and Round 2, while independent monitoring recorded fewer missed children and increased community awareness. The campaign also helped identify zero-dose and under-vaccinated children, linking them to routine immunization services and strengthening disease surveillance.

Beyond boosting immunity against polio, the campaign strengthened health systems, enhanced community engagement and demonstrated the impact of coordinated action and partnership in advancing GPEI goals and protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

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Among dignitaries at the campaign launch, Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs Hon Ketlhalalele Motshegwa (left seated) and WHO Representative, Dr Fabian Ndenzako (right standing)



Multisectoral action to strengthen tobacco control

From 19-20 May 2026, Botswana's national multisectoral technical working group convened to develop a coordinated strategy to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of tobacco control laws.

The initiative brought together representatives from the health, environment, education, agriculture, trade, finance, local government and law enforcement sectors, alongside regulatory bodies and civil society organizations. Through this collaborative approach, stakeholders are working to enhance coordination, strengthen policy implementation and protect communities from the harmful effects of tobacco use.

By aligning efforts across sectors, Botswana is reinforcing its commitment to public health and creating a stronger foundation for a healthier, tobacco-free future.

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Botswana ranked among Africa's leaders in protecting public health from tobacco industry interference

WHO Botswana participated in a panel discussion during the launch of the Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report 2025, led by the Anti-Tobacco Network (ATN). The report highlighted Botswana's significant progress in strengthening tobacco control policies and safeguarding public health from tobacco industry influence, ranking the country third in Africa. The launch brought together government representatives, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders through both in-person and virtual participation, reaffirming a shared commitment to advancing tobacco control and promoting healthier communities.

During the discussions, participants emphasized the importance of protecting public health policies from undue industry interference and strengthening multisectoral collaboration to support effective tobacco control measures. WHO remains committed to supporting Botswana's efforts to implement evidence-based tobacco control policies, protect public health and advance a healthier future for all.

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Prof. Bontle Mbongwe, Executive Director
Anti-Tobacco Network



Prof. Bontle Mbongwe, Executive Director
Anti-Tobacco Network



Panelists Ms. Chenetani Kangangwani,
Tobacco Control Unit, MoH and Mr. Moagi
Gaborone, Health Promotion, WHO

Health Promoting Schools Initiative scaled up in Botswana

In April 2026, WHO, in collaboration with UNESCO, supported the Government of Botswana in strengthening the implementation of the Global Standards for Health Promoting Schools through an orientation programme involving multidisciplinary teams from 14 schools across three districts. The initiative brought together education and health professionals, including school leaders, nurses, teachers, health promotion practitioners and social workers, to enhance collaboration and promote healthier school environments.

Participants were introduced to the eight global standards that guide the creation of safe, inclusive and health-supportive learning environments. The training also helped districts develop implementation roadmaps to support the rollout, monitoring and evaluation of Health Promoting Schools activities. By strengthening links between the health and education sectors, the initiative contributes to improving learner health, well-being and educational outcomes across Botswana.

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Botswana strengthens mortality data quality through improved cause of death certification and reporting

Botswana has launched a national initiative to improve the quality and completeness of cause-of-death reporting, an important step towards strengthening health information systems and evidence-based decision-making. Supported by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative and WHO, the programme focuses on improving Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCoD) and introducing the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11), in six health districts.

As part of the initiative, health professionals received specialized training on death certification, mortality reporting and ICD-11 coding. The programme aims to address gaps in mortality data quality, improve the accuracy of health statistics and strengthen collaboration across sectors involved in death registration and reporting.

By modernizing mortality surveillance systems and enhancing the quality of cause-of-death data, Botswana is laying the foundation for stronger health planning, better resource allocation and more effective public health policies.

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Data-to-Policy Initiative strengthens evidence-based health policy development

WHO Botswana has launched a Data-to-Policy Initiative aimed at strengthening the use of data and evidence in health policy development and decision-making. The initiative brings together health professionals, policymakers, researchers and partners to enhance their capacity to translate data into actionable policy recommendations that can improve health outcomes and accelerate progress towards national health priorities. By promoting evidence-informed decision-making, the initiative seeks to ensure that policies, programmes and resource allocation are guided by reliable data and robust analysis. It also supports stronger collaboration between researchers, technical experts and decision-makers, helping to bridge the gap between evidence generation and policy implementation.

The initiative represents an important step towards building a stronger culture of data use within Botswana's health sector and reinforces the country's commitment to effective, equitable and sustainable health policies.

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Botswana strengthens One Health collaboration through National Bridging Workshop



Botswana took an important step towards strengthening collaboration between the human, animal and environmental health sectors through a National One Health Bridging Workshop. The workshop brought together stakeholders from government ministries, technical institutions, academia and development partners to identify opportunities for stronger coordination in preventing, detecting and responding to public health threats.

Using the internationally recognized One Health approach, participants reviewed existing coordination mechanisms, identified gaps and developed a joint roadmap to strengthen multisectoral collaboration. The workshop highlighted the importance of integrated action in addressing emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases and other health challenges that cross sectoral boundaries.

The initiative reinforces Botswana's commitment to building resilient systems and advancing health security through stronger partnerships between human, animal and environmental health sectors. [Read More](#)



Botswana advances establishment of the end Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases Council

Botswana has made significant progress towards establishing an End Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Council, a high-level multisectoral platform designed to accelerate the elimination of malaria and the control of NTDs. The proposed Council will bring together leaders from government, the private sector, civil society, academia, traditional leadership and development partners to champion advocacy, mobilize resources and drive collective action towards disease elimination goals.

The initiative reflects growing recognition that ending malaria and NTDs requires engagement beyond the health sector. By strengthening partnerships and promoting shared responsibility, the Council aims to enhance community participation, increase domestic investment and support the implementation of evidence-based interventions in affected communities.

The establishment of the Council represents an important milestone in Botswana's efforts to eliminate preventable diseases, improve population health and contribute to regional and global disease elimination targets. Through continued collaboration and leadership, Botswana is positioning itself to accelerate progress towards a malaria-free future and reduce the burden of neglected tropical diseases. [Read More](#)

Botswana steps up readiness for Bundibugyo Virus Disease

Botswana is enhancing its preparedness and response capacity in the face of the ongoing Bundibugyo Virus Disease (BVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reports of cross-border transmission into Uganda. Although no cases have been detected in Botswana, increasing regional connectivity and cross-border movement have reinforced the need for heightened vigilance and readiness.

Working closely with the Government of Botswana, WHO has supported a comprehensive assessment of the country's preparedness across key emergency response areas, including surveillance, laboratory services, infection prevention and control, risk communication, case management, logistics, and emergency coordination. The assessment helped identify priority actions needed to strengthen Botswana's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to any potential importation of the disease.

Building on these findings, WHO has supported the development of technical guidelines, standard operating procedures, training materials, and a costed national contingency plan. Capacity-building activities for healthcare workers are already underway, while efforts continue to strengthen surveillance systems, preparedness at points of entry, and the availability of essential response supplies and equipment.

These proactive investments reflect Botswana's commitment to safeguarding public health and ensuring rapid response to emerging health threats.

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WHO supports Ebola preparedness and Neglected Tropical Disease control

WHO continues to support Botswana in strengthening its preparedness and readiness for Ebola virus disease while advancing efforts to prevent and control neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). Working with the Ministry of Health and the Botswana Public Health Institute, WHO has supported the development of infection prevention and control (IPC) guidelines, standard operating procedures and contingency plans to enhance the country's capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies.

Healthcare workers, rapid response teams and public health practitioners across all 31 health districts have also received training to strengthen outbreak preparedness and response, with a strong focus on IPC measures and the safe management of suspected cases.

In addition, WHO has supported preparations for a nationwide schistosomiasis mass drug administration campaign targeting children in endemic districts through the donation of medicines, financial support and training of frontline personnel. Although the campaign was postponed due to medicine quality concerns related to storage conditions, the preparatory work strengthened operational readiness and capacity for future implementation.

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Botswana strengthens health workforce planning through WISN



Botswana is taking important steps to strengthen its health workforce through the implementation of the Workload Indicators of Staffing Need (WISN) methodology, a WHO tool that supports evidence-based health workforce planning. A recent technical mission provided an opportunity for national stakeholders to review progress, strengthen capacity and discuss strategies for institutionalizing the use of WISN across the health sector.

The mission supported efforts to improve the allocation of health workers by better aligning staffing levels with actual service delivery needs. By using workload data to inform planning and decision-making, Botswana aims to optimize human resources for health, improve access to quality health services and address workforce gaps more effectively.

The initiative reflects the country's commitment to building a stronger, more efficient and resilient health system that can meet the evolving health needs of the population.

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Pandemic Fund initiative boosts One Health laboratory systems in Botswana

Botswana is strengthening its capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats through a Pandemic Fund-supported initiative aimed at enhancing One Health laboratory systems. The programme brings together the human, animal and environmental health sectors to improve collaboration, laboratory capacity and disease surveillance.

The initiative supports investments in laboratory infrastructure, workforce development and integrated diagnostic systems, helping to build a more coordinated approach to tackling emerging and re-emerging health threats. By reinforcing the One Health approach, Botswana is improving preparedness and strengthening national health security. The programme represents an important step towards creating more resilient laboratory systems capable of responding effectively to future outbreaks and public health emergencies.



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WHO and SADC strengthen regional health collaboration

WHO and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat reaffirmed their commitment to advancing regional health priorities during a high-level meeting between SADC Executive Secretary H.E. Elias Magosi, WHO Representative Dr Fabian Ndenzako, and their respective teams. Discussions focused on strengthening collaboration in health security, emergency preparedness and resilient health systems across SADC Member States. SADC also expressed appreciation for WHO's technical support, including the secondment of Dr Miriam Nanyunja, Senior Health Adviser, whose expertise continues to support the Secretariat's health agenda. The meeting underscored the importance of strong partnerships and coordinated action in addressing regional health challenges across Southern Africa. WHO and SADC remain committed to working together to advance health and development in the region.



WHO Botswana pays tribute to former President Festus G. Mogae



WHO Representative to Botswana, Dr Fabian Ndenzako, signed the condolence book in honour of His Excellency Dr Festus Gontebanye Mogae, former President of the Republic of Botswana, following his passing.

On behalf of the World Health Organization, Dr Ndenzako conveyed heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Botswana and paid tribute to Dr Mogae's visionary leadership and outstanding contribution to public health and national development. His steadfast commitment to addressing major health challenges, particularly HIV/AIDS, helped shape Botswana's internationally recognized response and improved the lives of countless citizens.

WHO joins the nation in mourning and honours the enduring legacy of integrity, service and leadership left by His Excellency Dr Mogae, whose contributions will continue to inspire future generations.

Inside Botswana's WHO Collaborating Centre on HIV Drug Resistance

A visit by the WHO Country Representative to the WHO Collaborating Centre on HIV Drug Resistance at the Botswana HIV Reference Laboratory highlighted the country's growing contribution to global public health and scientific excellence. The Centre plays a critical role in supporting HIV diagnosis, treatment monitoring, disease surveillance, quality assurance and research, contributing to Botswana's efforts to end HIV as a public health threat.

During the visit, laboratory scientists showcased advanced technologies, innovative diagnostic systems and robust quality management processes that ensure reliable laboratory results for patient care and public health decision-making. Discussions also explored opportunities to strengthen collaboration, expand surveillance of priority diseases, and enhance capacity-building for laboratory professionals in Botswana and beyond.

Beyond HIV, the Centre supports surveillance and testing for other priority pathogens, including tuberculosis and human papillomavirus (HPV), demonstrating the vital role of strong laboratory systems in health security and evidence-based public health action. The visit reaffirmed the importance of investing in science, innovation, partnerships and workforce development to build resilient health systems and improve health outcomes.

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PARTNERS APPRECIATION





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