



DUMELA

Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association

Dear BOTSFA Members

Botswana in Sweden had the honour of meeting with the President of Botswana, Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, during his short visit to participate in the Stockholm+50 environmental conference on June 2-3, 2022. I, on behalf of BOTSFA, extended well-wishes to the President and the people of Botswana and assured him of the Association's commitment to promoting closer contacts between Swedes and Botswana.

During the weekend of 17-18 September, at least thirty (30) BOTSFA members will be in Vänersborg on the southern tip of Vänern, Sweden's largest lake, to take part in a get-together hosted by Vänersborgs museum. This is a follow-up to a visit made by the Association in 2015, which was greatly enjoyed by those who attended. The museum houses extensive collections from southern Africa, brought to Sweden by early travellers. The Director of the Museum, Peter Johansson, has a keen interest in these travellers. He greatly assisted BOTSFA in having a comfortable and fruitful visit to Vänersborg seven years ago. He will, once again, join hands with the Association in making the upcoming visit yet another success.

The Association held its Annual General Meeting on March 19, 2022.

In this issue, there are two articles—one on the outcome of a recent case on dual citizenship in Botswana and, the other, an entertaining story on knowing the “number” of cattle in a herd without counting. Honorary Consul, Kent Nilsson, engagingly updates the reader on developments in Botswana. Happy Midsummer — Pula!

Julia Majaha-Jartby
BOTSFA Chairperson

PS: Thanks go to Dumela editors/publishers, past and present, for their tireless efforts in ensuring the production of Dumela. Please send your thoughts, memories and experiences on Botswana to our editors. All stories are of interest to readers.

No 2 / 2022

PRODUCTION

Publishing Agents & Editors:
Mats Ögren Wanger
Julia Majaha-Jartby

Webmaster:

Per Järtby

Contact for contribution

mowanamedia@gmail.com
christina.skarpe@inn.no

VISIT US ON

www.botsfa.nu

CONTENT

Chairperson's letter	1
From Kent Nilsson	2
Sweden's Honorary Consul	
Are 40 oxen more than 38?	3
Dual citizenship - ball on the Attorney General's court	4

Dumelang dear BOTSFA members!

by Kent Nilsson
Swedish Honorary Consul



Swedish flag on top of the cake in Botswana



Kent Nilsson with Ambassador Håkan Juholt

very nice event, on a crispy cold Botswana winter day. Glad midsommar. Skål!

I will be returning with updates on developments in Botswana in the next issue.

Pula!

After a two-year Covid break we finally celebrated again. This year we celebrated the National Day of Sweden with 100 plus guests, made extra special by a visit by Ambassador Håkan Juholt and his wife Åsa who came up from Pretoria to celebrate with us. Swedish specialities like köttbullar, smörgåstårta, Janssons, sill, gubbröra, kalles på ägg, knäckebröd, kanelbullar, chokladbullar samt jordgubbstårta were on the menu. A selection of aquavit was also available. It turned out to be a



Middle - former Botswana's Ambassador to Sweden
Mr Lameck Nthekela

Are 40 oxen more than 38?

by Christina Skarpe

We had just arrived in Botswana to work with grazing cattle in the Kalahari, Roger Bergström and I. We thus needed experimental cattle. It was in the 1970s, when much of the Kalahari was ungrazed by livestock, at least in the dry season, as there was little permanent drinking water. SIDA had started to drill for water for a large ranch block near Ncojane and the Namibian border and there was also private drilling for a few cattle posts. As the grazing on the Dondong experimental ranch in the block was better than that on the nearby cattle posts, it was fairly easy to borrow cattle. After some negotiations we got 40 steers. At the same time, we employed Polase to look after them, help moving them between our experiential paddocks and check that they did not escape, got stolen or eaten by lions. Many people had recommended Polase to us. He was not San, even if he spoke a couple of their dialects and partly subsisted on hunting, as they did. Most likely he was Mokgalagadi, as he also spoke their language, Sekgalagadi, that is closely related to Setswana, that he of course also knew. Polase spoke and understood 7 languages, but we had none in common! We could to some limited extent communicate in English, which Polase was quickly learning, Setswana, that I tried to learn, and a bit Afrikaans, that he knew, and that for me to some extent resembled German. So, we managed to explain that Roger and I were going back to Gaborone for a week or so, and that he should look after the steers in the meantime.

I came back from Gaborone late an evening. The following morning, I found everything looking fine and I asked Polase how many steers there were. He had no idea but claimed that all were there. I asked him how he could have no idea how many they were, but he said that he did not, but that all steers were there. How did he know if he did not know how many they were? Well, he knew. I was angry, and was considering dismissing Polase and looking for someone else. I just waited for someone to translate a discussion.

After a couple of days, Polase came to our camp in the morning, saying that two animals were missing, and he drew and described them in detail. He assumed they had escaped and said that he would track them down. Before lunchtime he was back, saying that he had found them, and they were now with the herd again.

At that I started to think! Polase did still not know how many steers there were, but he knew which ones had been missing, and he tracked them and brought them back. I realised that he did not count them – I think it later turned out that he could not count to forty – but he recognised all forty animals individually, and immediately saw if a certain animal was missing!

I was thinking about the young women looking after livestock in the Swedish forests before the art of counting was widespread – did they

count the animals or recognise them individually? If the total number was small, they may have recognised them. If you have one white, one red and one black cow you would immediately see which one was missing. How many animals would they know – ten? Twenty? Hardly forty. The question may rarely have been entertained, as the Swedish farms seldom had many cattle.



Polase recognised all forty animals so well, so he immediately saw if a certain animal was missing! That is an ability trained by people not having, or using, the counting facility. Somehow, we lost that ability, except for very small numbers, when counting became common and widespread.

Needless to say, after that we fully trusted Polase. He helped us with numerous things, first of all with the steers and their fences, but also in finding various items lost in the bush and, much later, he found the remains of two of our steers that lions had taken. We hunted these lions - but that is another story.

Dual citizenship - ball on the Attorney General's court

By Julia Majaha-Jartby

My daughter closed the millennium by renouncing her Botswana citizenship. The citizenship law provides that any child born of a citizen of Botswana and a foreigner must renounce one of the citizenships upon attaining the age of 21. This resulted in her making the difficult choice, in 1999, of deciding which citizenship to renounce. She renounced the citizenship of her mother's motherland, Botswana, and stay with her father's fatherland, Sweden. From that day on, as a Swedish citizen, she could not be in Botswana at will. This, after growing up in Botswana—schooling, developing friendships and

bonding with kin. She was legally disconnected from the cultures and traditions of her mother's side of family. When she elects to spend time in Botswana, her visits are limited to the ninety days per annum provided to tourists to the country—a foreigner to her mother's country of birth and citizenship.

A Botswana citizen, by birth, and married to a Swedish citizen, I am often asked if I am a Swedish citizen. I am not. I live in Sweden—where I am a permanent resident since 2008. The Swedish law provides for spouses, living together with their partners, to apply for Swedish citizenship after three years. The law in Botswana provides for a citizen, married to a foreigner, to retain his/her citizenship if the law of the spouse's country confers to automatically become a citizen to that country. A citizen of Botswana who voluntarily applies and attains foreign citizenship is required to renounce Botswana citizenship. Consequently, were I to apply and attain Swedish citizenship, I would have to renounce my Botswana birth right citizenship. The same applies to my husband as, to attain Botswana citizenship, he must renounce his Swedish citizenship.

In 1992, Unity Dow, a citizen of Botswana, married to a non-citizen, challenged the rule of barring children from receiving nationality from their mothers. Dual citizenship, until 21 years of age, favoured children born of male citizens of Botswana. Specifically, the law as it was then, conferred citizenship on a child born in Botswana only if "a) his/her father was a citizen of Botswana; or b) in the case of a person born out-of-wedlock, his/her mother was a citizen of Botswana." Dow argued for the removal of sections of the Citizenship Act that constituted discrimination on the basis of sex. The law was amended to remove gender disparities, but it retained the requirement that children born of a citizen of Botswana and a foreign parent should denounce one of the nationalities on reaching the age of 21 years—whether born to a male or a female Botswana citizen. The Government lost the case in the Court of Appeal—resulting in a landmark case that drove women in other parts of Africa to press for changes towards equal rights.

Hand in hand, metaphorically, four applicants, representing three families, recently challenged the necessity of a citizen to renounce the citizenship of another country, to stay a citizen of Botswana. Sithabile Mathe, a citizen of Botswana married to a citizen of Norway, recently initiated a case for the annulment of the requirement to renounce one of the citizenships. On 29th April 2022, three judges unanimously ruled in favour of the applicants, to the jubilation of

many other families who had suffered in silence or whose efforts to influence changes in the law were bearing no fruit.



The High Court building in Gaborone

Section 15 of the Citizenship Act No. 8 of 1998 provides for dual citizenship as follows:

Any person who is a citizen of Botswana and also a citizen of another country shall, upon the attainment of the age of (21) years, cease to be a citizen of Botswana

unless such person has, immediately before the attainment of the age of 21 years-

renounced the citizenship of that other country;

taken the oath of allegiance; and

made such declaration of intentions concerning residence as may be prescribed.

Any person who, being 21 years of age or above, acquires the citizenship of another country by a voluntary and formal act, shall cease to be a citizen of Botswana.

A citizen who has acquired the citizenship of another country as a consequence of marriage shall, upon renouncing such citizenship and applying to resume citizenship of Botswana, be re-instated as a citizen of Botswana.

Where the law of the country of a citizen's spouse requires that the foreign spouse of its citizen should be registered as a citizen of that country, or the law of that country automatically confers citizenship on the foreign spouse of its citizen a citizen of Botswana shall not cease to be a citizen of Botswana-

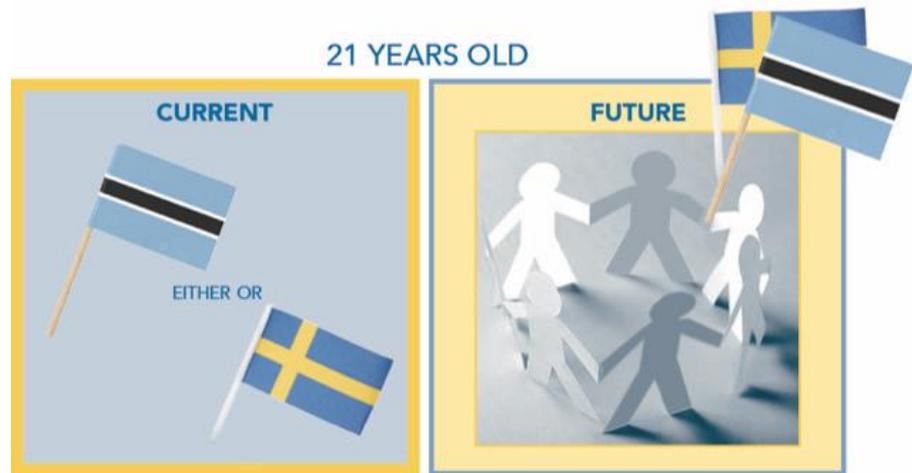
if he or she does not, by a voluntary and formal act, acquire the citizenship of his or her spouse's country notwithstanding the requirement of registration; or

if, after contracting marriage, he or she continues to live in Botswana. The judges declared sections 15(1) and 15(4) of the Citizenship Act No. 8 of 1998 unconstitutional and ordered both to be struck down. The applicants in the Mathe (current) case were aggrieved that, with their children's dual citizenship being taken away at age 21, their freedom of association with their parents is being infringed. This also impacts on their freedom of living in and association with the country

they no longer are citizens of, whether it is the mother's or father's country of citizenship.

Edward Egner, a citizen of Botswana married to a citizen of Sweden, was part of the applicant group in the Mathe and others citizenship case. The need for his children to renounce either the Botswana or Swedish citizenship upon attaining the age of 21, and for him to part with his Botswana citizenship on attainment of Swedish status, took him to the judges' bench. Family Egner are part of the victory—an achievement that should positively impact on the lives of many other families in similar situations.

Dumela is informed that the Attorney General/Government of Botswana has lodged an appeal with the Court of Appeal. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the outcome, Dumela congratulates family Egner (longstanding members of BOTSFA) and the other applicants on winning the case. Botswana should consider the option of fully legalizing dual citizenship for life, for the benefit of all its citizens.



Sketched by Viera Larsson