



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

ORGANISATION 2100

INDUSTRIAL COURT

**2026/2027 RECURRENT AND DEVELOPMENT
BUDGET PROPOSALS**

PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

BY

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MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

MARCH 2026

1. **Mr. Chairman**, it is my honour to stand before this house to present the Industrial Court's Recurrent and Development budget proposals for the financial year 2026/2027. Before presenting the proposals, allow me to provide an update on the policies, programmes, projects and critical initiatives for 2025/26 financial year as well as those planned for in the 2026/27 financial year.
2. **Mr. Chairman**, The Industrial Court's mandate as a Court of equity is to settle trade disputes as well as secure and maintain good industrial relations in Botswana. The Court does this mindful of the country's need to attract Foreign Direct Investment which contributes to the country's development efforts.
3. **Mr. Chairman**, between April 2025 and February 2026, a total of One Thousand Four Hundred and Twenty-Four (**1424**) cases were registered compared to One Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty-Nine (**1339**) registered in the same reporting period last financial year. There has been a slight increase in the number of registered cases as compared to last year. Similar to my previous presentation on the matter to this Honourable House, more cases continue to be registered at the Gaborone Division of the Court, followed by Francistown, Maun and its catchment areas, Palapye and Selebi Phikwe, the two latter places being Circuit Courts. For this reporting period, One Thousand Three hundred and Thirty-Three (**1333**) cases were completed, compared to One Thousand Two Hundred and Twenty-Four (**1224**) completed at the same time in the last financial year. Some cases were abandoned by litigants, as they failed to present themselves to Court, thus leading to their matters being dismissed for want of prosecution.
4. **Mr. Chairman**, eradication of backlog continues to be a top priority at the Industrial Court. Currently, One Thousand Three Hundred and Forty-One (**1341**) cases are pending before the courts as against One Thousand and Eighty (**1080**) in the last reporting period. A total of Ninety-One (**91**) of the pending cases are considered backlog as they are more than 24 months old. In the same period during the last financial year, the backlog was at Ninety-Eighty (**98**) cases. As at

present, the Industrial Court is devising new means to eradicate backlog, inter alia, the establishment of a Judicial Case Management (JCM) Unit comprising of four (4) Judges of the Industrial Court.

5. **Mr. Chairman**, I must emphasize that the Court remains resolute in its commitment to complying with the international set standards of delivering judgments within three (3) months from the date of completion of a case. The three (3) months excludes the time taken from when a case is registered to when its concluded pending judgement. On average, the current turnaround time for all cases is **9.15** months, that is from the time a case is registered to the time judgment is delivered. Last year the turnaround time was at **11.5** months. The turnaround time tends to fluctuate and this is dependent on various factors a few of which are; litigants failing to honor court dates, lawyers not coming on set dates or postponing matters to mention but a few.
6. The Court also continues to issue writs to execute and enforce arbitration, default and settlement awards that emanate from the Commissioner of Labour's office. The Court has, from April 2025 to February 2026, issued Two Hundred and Ninety-Three (**293**) writs for default awards, Four Hundred and Ninety-Three (**493**) writs for settlements and Fifteen (**15**) writs for arbitral awards. As can be observed, the numbers indicate that there is an increase of cases referred to the Industrial Court for the issuance of writs of execution. The settlement of cases demonstrates the parties willingness to resolve their employment disputes before the Commissioner of Labour, using alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
7. **Mr. Chairman**, to ensure that the Court's clients get efficient and timely service, the court has endeavoured to ensure that the Honourable Judges and Registrars of the Industrial Court get training on a regular basis to keep them up to date with the changes in labour law and emerging trends. Similar to the previous financial year, no trainings were done due to financial constraints.

8. **Mr. Chairman,** In addition to the operationalization of the Maun Division of Court which services Maun and its catchment areas such as Gantsi, Shakawe, Kasane and Gumare, the Court also continues with circuit courts in other areas such as Palapye, Selebi Phikwe and Letlhakeng. Due to budgetary constraints and austerity measures, we were only able to conduct one circuit court in Tsabong. Despite the budgetary challenges and austerity measures we will endeavor to conduct at least two circuit courts in Tsabong and at least one in Kang/Hukuntsi during the 2026/2027 in order to bring the Court closer to these seriously underserved regions.
9. **Mr. Chairman,** in its endeavour to drive the digitalisation agenda, the Industrial Court with the assistance of a local citizen owned company, has developed a court management system (CMS) to manage court records and the operations of the court digitally. It is envisaged this system will improve the efficiency of the Court, as it will electronically capture, track, store and manage reported case processes, provide secure online filing to ensure integrity of records, ease communication between the various departments and the parties to a case including other relevant stakeholders and also provide for virtual court hearings.
10. In order to fully operationalise CMS and go live, the Court needs to procure various hardware. The Court hopes to do a soft launch of the system within the first quarter of year 2026/2027.

REVIEW OF THE 2025/2026 RECURRENT AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

RECURRENT BUDGET

11. **Mr. Chairman,** for the 2025/2026 financial year, the Industrial Court was allocated a recurrent budget of **Sixty-Two Million, Four Hundred and Ninety-Three Thousand, Three Hundred and Ten Pula (P62 493 310)**. To date, **Forty-Four Million, Eight Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand Two Hundred and Ninety-Four Pula, One thebe (P 44, 835 ,294.01)** has been

spent, which translates to **72%** expenditure. Our expenditure level is at **72%** owing to the current austerity measures in place which have capped travelling, overtime and delays in processing payments due to the authority which needs to be sought from the Ministry of finance.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

12. **Mr. Chairman**, under the development budget, the Industrial Court was allocated the sum of **Twenty-Six Million and Sixty-One Thousand (P26,061,000)** for the 2025/2026 financial year, out of which **Twenty-Two Million Six Hundred and Fifty-Three Thousand and Sixteen Pula (P 22, 653, 016.00)** was spent, translating to **87%**.
13. **Mr. Chairman**, physical infrastructure establishment of Maun Division is almost complete with the Administration block portacabin already in partial use and the Court room portacabin at the interior fittings stage. The project's progress is at **90%**, against **100%**. The delay in completion is attributable to challenges in sourcing material, on the part of the contractor. The construction phase of the Expansion of the Gaborone Industrial Court building commenced in June 2025 and is expected to be completed in June 2026. The project is progressing well and has reached **51%** of the planned **54%** as at February 2026. In Implementing this project, delays in processing payments were a major setback.

RECURRENT AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET REQUESTS FOR 2026/2027

14. **Mr. Chairman**, allow me to present budget proposals for the Industrial Court for the financial year 2026/2027 for both recurrent and development budget.

RECURRENT BUDGET

15. Mr. Chairman, I request an amount of **Sixty-Two Million, Two Hundred and Eighteen Thousand, One Hundred and Forty Pula (P62, 218 ,140)** for the recurrent budget. The budget request reflects a decrease of **Two Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand and One Hundred and Seventy Pula, (P275 170)** when compared to the 2025/2026 budget allocation of **Sixty-Two Million, Four Hundred and Ninety-Three Thousand Three Hundred and Ten Pula (P62 493 310)**. The budget requested will cover personal emoluments, utilities, Industrial Court board and circuit courts amongst others.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

16. **Mr. Chairman**, I request an amount of **Eighteen Million Nine Hundred and Three Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty Pula (P18,903,920)** for the development budget. The budget will cover the ongoing Expansion of Gaborone Industrial Court, establishment of Maun division and for development of a Case Management System.

CONCLUSION

17. **Mr. Chairman**, this concludes my presentation of the 2026/2027 Recurrent and Development budget proposals for the Industrial Court.
18. I therefore move that the sum of **Sixty-Two Million, Two Hundred and Eighteen Thousand, One Hundred and Forty Pula (P62 218 140)** under the Recurrent Budget for Organization 2100, be approved and stand part of the Schedule of the Appropriation (2026/2027) Bill, 2026 (Bill No.1 of 2026), and that the sum of **Eighteen Million Nine Hundred and Three Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty Pula (P18 903**

920.00) under the Development Budget for Organization 2100 be approved and stand part of the estimates for the 2026/2027 financial year.

I move accordingly. I thank you, **Mr. Chairman.**