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Republic of Botswana

MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
PRIVATE BAG 0038  
GABORONE

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## PRESS RELEASE

### WEARING OF MASKS IN OUTDOOR AREAS NOW OPTIONAL

The Ministry of Health informs members of the public that effective today, wearing of masks in outdoor areas will no longer be mandatory. Having reviewed the disease burden in the country and globally and most importantly, the high numbers of people vaccinated against COVID-19 in Botswana, the Government of Botswana has decided to relax some COVID-19 protocols in order to allow for more increased economic activity.

**Save for schools, protocols relating to social distancing will also now be optional.**

It has also been decided that there will no longer be isolation of positive cases, unless if such isolation has been prescribed by a physician or medical doctor. **Further, immediate COVID-19 testing of unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people who present themselves at ports of entry, will no longer be conducted.** This means that unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people will now only require a 72 hour negative PCR test result to be allowed entry into Botswana. However, anyone presenting themselves at ports of entry, without the requisite documents (COVID-19 vaccination card or 72 hour negative PCR test result), will be tested on arrival, at own cost and if positive, isolated for 5 days within the district of the port of entry.

The ministry advises the public that though the disease burden has gone down in the country and globally, the disease has not yet been fully defeated. Precautions should still be taken to ensure safety, especially among elderly people and other vulnerable groups like those with chronic illnesses. **People should use their discretion to still follow some protocols which are now optional, if they believe that doing so, will safeguard their health.** The ministry advises all those not yet vaccinated or taken their booster dose, if due, to do so, because COVID-19 vaccination remains an effective and scientifically proven protection against the disease.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Dr Christopher Nyanga  
**For Permanent Secretary**