We, the ministers and representatives of Signatory Countries of the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa, having met in Maun, Botswana from 11th to 12th October 2017;
Recalling the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA) signed in Gaborone, Botswana in May 2012;

Recalling the GDSA Ministers meeting and its joint communique which called for the operationalization of the GDSA in Gaborone, Botswana in October 2013;

Recalling the 15th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Cairo, Egypt, in April 2015 where the contribution of the GDSA was acknowledged in implementing the African Green Economy Partnership Regional Flagship programme of AMCEN;

Recognising and reaffirming the commitment to the implementation of all conventions and declarations that promote sustainable development made by all Signatory Countries and noting the relevance of GDSA in implementing the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 The Africa We Want and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

Acknowledging the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the GDSA, which provided an opportunity to review progress and impact made since the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa was signed in 2012;

Noting that the current Memorandum of Understanding between Government of Botswana and Conservation International for the establishment and support of the GDSA Secretariat will end in December 2018;

Recognising the role that Botswana has played as the interim Secretariat of the GDSA from 2012 to 2017;

Recognising that the GDSA is a cross-cutting initiative that can contribute significantly to the attainment of Sustainable Development programmes in Signatory Countries;

Noting the progress of the GDSA from 2012 to 2017 in supporting sustainable development programmes in Signatory Countries; and acknowledging that the benefits that countries have gained from the GDSA include but are not limited to:
- the provision of technical support for countries;
- capacity building;
- information sharing;
- promotion of the participation of non-state actors in GDSA initiatives which will improve the mobilization of additional financial resources; and
use of GDSA as a vehicle for mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of African sustainable development programmes in GDSA Signatory Countries.

Further noting the draft GDSA Secretariat Strategy (2017 - 2022), the draft GDSA Governance Structure, and the draft private sector engagement strategy.

Hereby:

Agree that the GDSA remains valid in light of the SDGs and the Paris Accord.

Reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of the vision of the GDSA.

Agree to annual meetings of the Focal Points at a venue to be determined by the Secretariat in consultation with Focal Points.

Agree that the GDSA Secretariat should continue to operate in its current form until its independent legal status is determined.

Agree that it is important for the GDSA Secretariat to seek financial sustainability, with Signatory Countries encouraged to provide voluntary contributions in cash or in-kind.

Agree that countries can constitute GDSA cross sectoral national committees to support the in-country implementation of the GDSA or select an appropriate existing committee to perform those functions.

Request the GDSA Secretariat to develop Terms of Reference for the suggested GDSA Advisory Committee for consultation with Focal Points and decision-making by Forum of Ministers.

Endorse the GDSA joining guidelines detailing the process by which countries can join the GDSA as signatories or associate members.

Recommend that the Government of Botswana continue to host the interim GDSA Secretariat.

Welcome and acknowledge the technical and financial support provided to the GDSA by GoB, CI, UNEP, UNDP, WB, and other development partners over the past five years.

Recommend that the scope of the draft GDSA Strategy (2017 – 2022) be broadened to include the activities of the Secretariat, Signatory Countries and Partners.

Call for increased resource mobilisation to support relevant GDSA activities in Signatory Countries, and that bilateral and multilateral donors, development partners, regional and international organizations be urged to support the implementation of the action statements of the GDSA in signatory countries.
Request clarity on CI’s involvement and support for the implementation of the GDSA beyond 2018 and that this be finalised by March 2018.

Request the Government of Botswana to undertake an independent assessment of the Secretariat’s performance.

Request the Secretariat to appropriately consult on the outcome of the independent assessment and to recommend the way forward for the GDSA and its Secretariat.

Note the GDSA Secretariat Workplan for 2017/18 as approved by the Focal Points.

Welcome the Government of Madagascar as a full signatory country.

Welcome the Republic of Uganda’s expression of interest to join the GDSA and looks forward to welcoming her as a signatory country.

Express gratitude to Conservation International for the support to the GDSA Secretariat and the implementation of the GDSA.

Express gratitude the President of the Republic of Botswana His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama for officially opening the inaugural Forum of Ministers meeting and for his visionary leadership as the GDSA Chairman.

Express appreciation to the Government of Botswana for hosting the Forum of Ministers meeting and the Focal Point meeting from October 9 to 12th 2017, and the National Environment Fund of Botswana for funding.

THANK YOU.