



PRESS RELEASE

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To: All Media

BGI Investigates Hatsalatladi Ground Fissuring

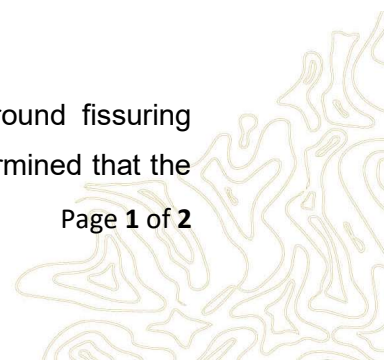
The Botswana Geoscience Institute (BGI) conducted a site visit to Hatsalatladi village on January 7, 2025, to assess the recent ground fissuring incident. The visit aimed to visually inspect the affected areas, evaluate the extent of the fissuring, and assess any resulting damage and risk to public safety.

Site inspection revealed that subsurface cavities had developed prior to the fissure formation, and water from recent rains had ingressed hence weakening the ground and leading to collapse.

The current fissuring incident coincides with heavy rains in Botswana following a prolonged dry season. Historical data shows that fissures have been occurring in the Hatsalatladi area for decades, with larger fissuring in recent memory occurring during Tropical Storm Dineo in 2017, highlighting the relationship between extreme rainfall events and ground fissuring in Hatsalatladi and surrounding areas.

BGI in collaboration with University of Botswana (UB) and Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) had recently completed a robust multidisciplinary geoscientific investigation on the causes of ground fissures in Hatsalatladi and Ditshukudu villages. The project has been completed and is currently at stakeholder engagement and information dissemination stage and BGI has so far shared the findings with Office of District Commissioner in Kweneng District Council and Ministry of Minerals and Energy.

The project was successful in delineating high risk areas with regards to ground fissuring phenomenon and current incident falls within such areas. The study further determined that the



combination of heavy rainfall, groundwater dynamics, and geological faults plays a significant role in causing ground fissures. These Project findings underscores the critical need for land use planning and development to be preceded and informed by geological assessments such as this study to minimize risks, save costs and reduce the likelihood of disruptions.

BGI urges Batswana to exercise caution around fissure-prone areas to prevent accidents. Fissures can be hazardous to both humans and livestock and communities are advised to report any new fissures or unusual ground activity to authorities promptly. Furthermore, residents are urged to remain calm but vigilant and prevent children from playing near fissures.

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