



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

Thursday, 04 March 2021

**RESPONSE BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA, MINISTER OF
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM TO QUESTIONS NO.
24(2021/02/18) RAISED
BY HON. DUDU MURORUA (UDF)**

I thank you for the opportunity to address this august House on the detailed questions brought forward by Hon. Murorua on issues relating to Human Wildlife Conflict.

Hon. Speaker,

Before I answer the questions posed by Hon. Murorua, kindly permit me to first give some background to this subject matter and to clarify important issues surrounding this matter.

Namibia has adopted a number of innovative approaches to achieve biodiversity conservation, economic development and improved community livelihoods.

Due to the commitment shown by Namibians, there has been a remarkable recovery and increase of wildlife populations, including key predator species and internationally threatened or endangered species such as elephant and black rhinoceros.

Despite these successes, the Government recognizes that living with wildlife often carries a cost, with increased wildlife populations and expanded ranges into communal and freehold farming areas resulting in more frequent conflicts between people and wild animals, particularly elephants and predators in many areas.

This has resulted in livestock and crop losses, damage to water installations and, in some instances, loss of human lives. There is therefore an urgent need to reduce the impacts of Human-Wildlife Conflict on our most vulnerable citizens.

We also recognize that such conflicts have always existed where people and wildlife live together and may continue to do so in the future. This means that it will not be possible to eradicate all conflict, but that conflict has to be managed in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

It has thus far been impossible for the Government to pursue a policy of direct compensation to individual farmers because of the estimated cost of damage caused by wildlife across the country, and more importantly, the administrative problems that a compensation scheme presents. It should also be recognized that people and wildlife live in an interconnected and dynamic environment, that land use patterns are changing and that wildlife distribution patterns equally are changing, as populations recover and recolonize former parts of their distribution areas.

It is for these purposes that the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management was developed in 2009 to manage human wildlife conflict in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities while at the same time recognizing the need to promote biodiversity conservation. This policy has been revised and updated in 2018 to reflect changing circumstances, new thinking regarding HWC and the results of experience in addressing HWC management issues on the ground over the past years.

That being said, Hon. Speaker, allow me to respond in brief to the specific questions raised by Hon Murorua.

Question 1

How are the directly affected members of the Namibia society in both the communal and commercial farming sectors going to benefit from the sale of these elephants?

Answer:

The areas in which the elephants will be captured have been identified as critical hotspots with regard to Human Wildlife Conflict and these areas will see a definite reduction in elephant incursions that normally result in damages to water infrastructure equipment, buildings, fences, cattle posts and the destruction of crops.

Money generated from the sale of these elephants will be paid over to the Game Products Trust Fund (GPTF). This money would then be available through the Human Wildlife Conflict Self Reliance Scheme in order to offset for loss of life (funeral expenses and related costs), injuries to persons, livestock losses and crop damages caused by wild animals.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has and will continue to support, through revenue generated from the sale of these elephants, provide affected farmers with the necessary relief in replacing and rehabilitating damaged infrastructure.

Additionally, the Ministry will continue to provide new infrastructure such as water tanks, construct protection walls, drilling and equipping new bore holes

project document. Furthermore, as per established project management arrangements, the Green Climate Fund does not advance the whole project value amount to the accredited entity at once, but rather disburses the funds in phases. I am pleased to inform this august House that N\$ 53 million has been disbursed to the IREMA project so far of which just over N\$52 million has been spent and that the project has made substantial progress in terms of implementation since its launch on 14th June 2019 at Warmquelle. To this end:

1. Rehabilitation of Green Schemes at settlements of Warmquelle and Khowarib, covering an area of 21 hectares, has officially commenced and the contract was awarded in November 2020. The rehabilitation of the green schemes, which includes fencing, the rehabilitation of the three boreholes and a six km galvanized pipeline, installation of drip irrigation systems, construction of horticulture and fodder storage facilities and renovation of the water reservoir, construction of ablution facilities, workers houses and security check points represents a major milestone of this project implementation. The total cost to rehabilitate both green schemes is N\$ 32 Million.

The site handover on the 24th November 2020 at Warmquelle paved way for commencement of the preparatory work, which comprised of the following:

- a) Community profiling to determine the skills level of Warmquelle and Khowarib communities, which started in December 2020 and completed in January 2021.
- b) Removal of old fences from the sites (Warmquelle and Khowarib), started in December and completed in January 2021.
- c) Removal of old irrigations systems at Warmquelle in January 2021
- d) Land clearing at both Green Schemes to put new irrigation systems
- e) Digging of trenches to receive new irrigation at Warmquelle is in progress and is expected to complete by the 21st March 2021.
- f) All multidisciplinary designs are complete and waiting for approval by the Executing Entity, which is the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform. The approval of the

construction designs will be followed by the construction works for the bulk water supply and storage facilities

2. On 4 November 2020, the project through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform facilitated an official handover of 425 goats to twenty (20) vulnerable farmers, at Khorixas. This event was officiated by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Hon. Calle Schlettwein along with the Hon. Governor of Kunene Region, Hon. Marius Sheya. Each farmer received 20 does (female goats) and one buck (male goat). The value of these goats is N\$900 000.00, including a basic animal health starter pack of vaccination that each farmer received. To ensure productivity of the small stock received, the project team together with technical staff members from the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Land Reform in collaboration with Agribank's Advisory Services Division offered a three days training that provided both theoretical and practical skills to the beneficiaries from the 8th to 10th February 2021, at Khorixas.

Hon. Members, the selection process of these first twenty (20) beneficiaries was executed by constituencies committees comprised of representatives of various constituency structures including traditional authorities, Farmers Associations, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform and the project staff oversaw the process. Again, the list of beneficiaries with their contact details is available on request.

3. Furthermore, with the permission of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, the project procured drought relief fodder, which included 2,940 grass bales, 1,764 Lucerne bales, 588 bush improvers lick bags valued at N\$ 1.2 Million. This fodder was delivered at the Agricultural Development Centers (ADCs) in Kunene Region, from which it was further distributed to 2,500 farmers as part of the project's interim intervention in supporting farmers to cope with the devastating and prolonged drought experienced in the region. The list of these beneficiaries with their contact details is available on request.
4. Hon. Members, during October 2020, the project procured 300 Energy Fuel Efficient Stoves from the Ongwendiva Rural Development Centre valued at N\$1.5 million that promotes climate-smart cooking. The distribution of these stoves to vulnerable households in Kunene Region

is currently ongoing. This is a three-in-one energy-efficient stove that cooks, bakes/roasts, and heats up water. Hence, making life much easier for rural people, especially for those with less access to firewood.

5. In addition, the project has finalized the procurement process of the tender to revamp Sesfontein Community Garden at the cost of N\$ 14 Million. As I speak now, the successful contractor is on site. More than 80 vulnerable households (small scale crop farmers) will benefit from this intervention. I should also mention here that, the participation of local entrepreneurs in these tenders was highly encouraged.
6. Similarly, the procurement process to establish a community garden at Fransfontein at the value of N\$ 12 Million is at an advanced stage. This will entail construction of a storage facility for horticultural produce. The Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia will finalize this contract before end of March 2021.
7. Furthermore, the project procured and distributed certified seeds of drought-tolerant high-value crop varieties, valued at N\$ 500,000.00, to more than 1000 vulnerable farmers during the 2020/2021 cropping season. The quantity of procured seed are as follows: Cabbage (110 000 seeds), Watermelon (30.5kg), pumpkin (40kg), onion (25kg), tomatoes (40kg), Green paper (40kg), carrots (40.5kg), Lucerne (150kg), spinach (100kg) and beetroot (80.4kg). With this intervention, farmers are able to plant on time to catch the first rain. This project's activity complements the National Horticulture Programme initiative of MAWLR.
8. The procurement process for the consultancy to develop Early Warning Systems tailored for the Kunene Region has been finalized. The inception of this work is expected to commence before end of March 2021. This work will be done at the cost of approximately N\$800, 000.00
9. Finally, the procurement process for the consultancy to undertake a Disaster Risk Reduction assessment for Kunene region and training of the regional stakeholders on disaster risk reduction has been finalized. This consultancy is valued at N\$ 450,000.00.

Question 2

The project was supposed to be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and was expected to benefit forty-four thousand four hundred and forty (4440) small farmers and their families. Did the Ministry of Agriculture ensured to implement this project, and can you provide the list of all beneficiaries, and names of farms /project individuals that secured funding and the amounts thus far?

Answer:

I am pleased to inform you, Hon. Speaker that the implementation of the project is well on track to reaching the number of beneficiaries alluded to by Hon. Seibeb.

Honourable members, it is important to emphasize that these resource-poor rural farmers are extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change due to the recurrent devastating droughts in the Kunene Region.

The project is under the full supervision and strategic guidance of the Executing Entity (Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform). So far, a total fourteen thousand (14 000) smallholder farmers, of which four thousand and seventeen (4017) are direct beneficiaries, benefited from the project. The list of all the direct beneficiaries is available upon request from the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia.

Let me further inform Hon. Seibeb, that the project took a participatory and community-based approach to ensure autonomous community-led solutions. Additionally, there were some high-level stakeholder engagements and consultations done during the inception phase. This approach helped the project to prioritize its activities, lobby stakeholders' support, and most importantly align activities to the needs of the targeted populations.

Hon. Speaker,

Allow me to inform the house that the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) is responsible for the overall coordination, governance and management of the project as an Executing Entity. The Environmental

Investment Fund of Namibia and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform continue to work together towards the implementation and monitoring of the project activities as spelled out in the Funding Proposal. Hence, the Ministry continues to oversee project activities.

Question 3

Or was this merely an election conspiracy, gimmick hatched by the Chief Executive Officer of the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, Mr. Benedict Libanda, who also serves in the SWAPO Think Tank to make fake promises to lure voters in Kunene Region seeing that SWAPO may suffer a colossal defeat in 2019 and 2020 Regional Council and Local Authority Elections.

Hon. Members,

Hon. Seibeb, this 3rd question is very vague and embarrassing and leaves much to be desired, indeed you are the one whose opportunistic conducts are hatching gimmick to entertain the public for political gains and conspiring to cause the project to fail with your political interference in the work of our technical people. The position of the EIF CEO in the SWAPO Party Think Tank has no bearing on the project.

I would like to encourage fellow Namibians, especially our political leaders, to familiarize themselves with the IREMA project document and progress reports. These are available on the websites of both the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia and the Green Climate Fund. The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism is entirely open and, please approach our offices for any information and clarity on this and any other issues so that you are correctly informed and do not contribute to the further spreading of rumors and misinformation to the public.

I thank you for your kind attention.