



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

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**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

**STATEMENT BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA,**

**MP, MINISTER**

**ON THE NOTICE OF QUESTIONS RELATING TO HUMAN WILDLIFE  
CONFLICT AND COMMERCIAL EXPORT OF IVORY**

**OCTOBER 2018  
14H30**

**WINDHOEK  
KHOMAS REGION**



**“Stop the poaching of our rhinos”**

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

**Comrade Speaker**

**Honourable Members**

I raise to respond to questions raised by Hon. Apius Auchab.

On the first question on how good were the intention to encourage wildlife recoveries and environment restoration through 1996 legislation has turn into human wildlife conflict, may I start by reminding this house that conservancies are established in accordance with the Nature Conservation Amendment Act, Act No. 5 of 1996, which empowered rural communities to sustainably manage and benefit from wildlife and tourism. In terms of that Act, local communities can form a conservancy which must have an elected representative committee, a constitution, a defined membership, a defined boundary and a plan for the equitable distribution of benefits. Once a communal conservancy is registered with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and gazetted, rural communities gains rights over wildlife and can be involved in tourism and conservation hunting activities thus generate income from the sustainable use of wildlife.

It must be clear that conservancies do not replace livestock or crop farming with wildlife and tourism. In a conservancy, wildlife and tourism simply become additional forms of land use alongside existing uses such as crop production and livestock. Conservancies do not take land away from communities or traditional authorities, the status of the land stays the same hence the principle of multiple land use. The legislation gives rights over wildlife and tourism to a group of people in a certain area of land and conservancies have to work closely with the traditional authorities. Conservancies are a conservation mechanism aimed at providing incentives to communal area residents to manage wildlife sustainably. At the same time income earned by conservancies makes a significant contribution to rural development. There is therefore a need for co-existence between wildlife and people.

Human Wildlife Conflict is a complex matter that needs to be dealt with by all of us as a collective. The wildlife endowment that is found in Namibia plays a very important role in terms of tourism attraction to thousands of visitors that contribute to economic development and create employment. The Ministry Environment and Tourism (MET) is cognizant of numerous challenges that our rural community are experiencing as result of Human Wildlife Conflict. As a result, the Ministry invest a lot of resources in community extension work with the aim of imparting knowledge on how to mitigate and deal with cases of HWC, and on specific mitigation, preventative and protective measures to reduce human wildlife conflict.

We have a new revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, that has been in place to ensure that we manage human wildlife conflict in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities, recognizes the need to promote biodiversity conservation, promote self-reliance and ensures that decision making is quick, efficient and based on the best available information.

In order to achieve this, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism have developed appropriate mitigation and monitoring methods as well as capacity of stakeholders to manage human wildlife conflict. The mitigation and monitoring methods or measures are currently being implemented but this will require more financial resources to be implemented fully.

**Comrade Speaker**

**Honourable Members**

With regard to the request or concern to share with the public how the proposal from Namibia to adopt a mechanism to permit commercial export of ivory without further discussion was rejected, I would like state and clarify that at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which took place in The Hague, in 2007, the Parties adopted a decision directed to the CITES Standing Committee with the assistance of the

*CITES Secretariat to develop a decision-making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory under the auspices of the CITES Conference of the Parties.*

In preparation of the Conference of the Parties which took place in South Africa in 2016, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe noted with concerns that despite substantial deliberations on the issue, there was no progress made. It was clear that the Standing Committee has not been able to finalize the development of the Decision Making Mechanism for a process of future trade in elephant ivory as instructed by the Conference of Parties.

In an attempt to address the lack of progress made by the Standing Committee, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe prepared the Decision Making Mechanism for consideration by the Conference of Parties which took place in South Africa in 2016 in order to bring this matter to conclusion.

A few countries, including Swaziland, Tanzania and Syrian Arab Republic supported the proposal. Kenya, on behalf of 28 other Parties from Africa, and supported by the US, the EU, Israel and many observers, stressed that establishing a DMM when African elephants are in critical decline “would send the wrong signal at the wrong time,” and instead called for, inter alia, legislative, enforcement, educational and fund-raising measures to reduce poaching rates and demand for ivory and illegal commerce. After in-depth discussions the proposal was put to a vote and it was rejected (21 in favor, 76 against, 13 abstained)

Although some of the countries might have been influenced by the IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group’s report, some countries just in principle do not support sustainable use hence the position they took during that Conference. The IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group’s report however did not identify declines of elephants in proponent States.

Failure to establish this Decision Making Mechanism within the agreed process and time frame significantly undermines the needs and interests of the affected range States and

their conservation objectives and programmes, which rely on a) the creation of positive incentives for landholders, whether communal or private, and to set land aside for elephants and to co-exist with them instead of opting for forms of land use that would displace elephants and cause the loss of their habitat; and b) the generation of revenues from the sale of elephant products to finance elephant conservation programmes, including the management of protected areas and the combatting of illegal killing and trade. Additionally, this failure is counter to the letter and spirit of previous agreements of and decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties and infringes upon the legitimate rights of Parties enshrined in their Constitutions and the text of the Convention.

I trust that this clarifies and answers the questions raised by Hon. Apius Auchab.

I thank you.