



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE JOINT VISIT TO THE ZAMBEZI REGION OF NAMIBIA
AND THE CHOBE DISTRICT OF BOTSWANA
BY
THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA,
FROM 2-3 SEPTEMBER 2021**

15 September 2021

Honourable Speaker,

At the directive of H.E. Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and H.E. Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, Hon. Dr. Lemogang Kwape, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana, and I jointly visited the Chobe District in the Republic of Botswana and Zambezi Region in the Republic of Namibia, from 2-3 September 2021. I wish to highlight here that this visit was supposed to have taken place at an earlier time, however, it was delayed owing to various factors beyond our control.

During the Joint Visit, I was accompanied by Hon. Dr. Daniel V.H. Kashikola, MP, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, Hon. Col (Rtd) Lawrence Alufea Sampofu, Governor of Zambezi Region, Hon. John Musialela Likando, Member of Parliament and Councilor of Kabbe South Constituency, Hon. Warden Matengu Simushi, Chairperson of Zambezi Regional Council and Councilor of Katima Rural Constituency, H.E. Asser Kapere, High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia to Botswana, and Senior Officials.

Prior to meeting my Botswana counterpart, the Namibian delegation first undertook a familiarization visit to the border area in the Zambezi Region, from 12-15 May 2021. My Botswana counterpart also paid a similar visit on the Botswana side. During the familiarization visit to the Zambezi Region, I held engagements with various stakeholders, such as the traditional authority leaders, tourism operators, and community activists. Their valuable input informed my engagement with my Botswana counterpart.

Honourable Speaker,

I wish to inform this August House that during the joint visit, I expressed concerns of the Namibian people with regard to access to the shared resources along the common riverine border, as well the desire for peaceful co-existence, which is currently under threat due to the continuous harassment/intimidation and recurring shootings by the Botswana Defence Force (BDF).

It is for this reason that during the joint visit, we re-affirmed the continuous enjoyment by nationals of both countries of equal access and treatment to the

shared natural resources along the common riverine boundary. The preceding has been codified regionally within the framework of the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses (2002) and supported by international law (United Nations Convention on the Law of International Watercourses of 1997) and the 13 December 1999 judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), with respect to the Kasikili/Sedudu Island case, which ruled that nationals of both countries should continue to enjoy equal access and treatment to shared natural resources in the two channels around Kasikili/Sedudu Island.

Honourable Members,

It is a known fact that globally, cross-border matters are not easy to resolve, when they occur, contrary to the suggestions by some members of our society. Therefore, what is happening between our two countries is not unique. Recognizing the complexity of the matter at hand, we are faced with two choices: to resolve the matter amicably or through other means. I wish to inform that we have elected to resolve this matter amicably.

It is on that basis that during the joint visit, we urged the Chobe District and Zambezi Region Council to enter into a twinning agreement, which will amongst others enhance cooperation between the two regional authorities, as well as facilitate engagements by the traditional authorities.

During the joint visit, Namibia underscored the need for communities along the common border to have access to natural resources, to which they depend on for their livelihood, without fear and continuous intimidation by BDF. Botswana agreed to the sentiments expressed by Namibia, further adding that people were enjoined by blood.

I wish to inform this August House that the Governments of the Republic of Namibia and Republic of Botswana signed the Boundary Treaty in 2018. This was necessitated by an African Union Decision at the level of Heads of State, which called for all AU Members States to reaffirm their borders before the end of 2022. In this regard, Namibia has started the process to reaffirm her borders with all her neighbours. Accordingly, it has come to Government's attention the concerns that have been raised by various stakeholders, including the Traditional Authority, I wish to place on record that engagements are taking place between

the two countries at all levels of Government from the Regional and Central. Therefore, the Ministry's responsible for border issues have a responsibility to engage the communities along our common border on the matter.

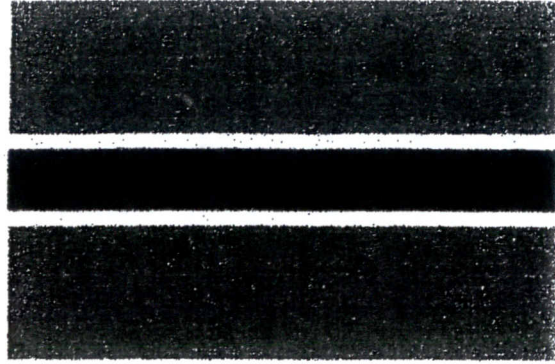
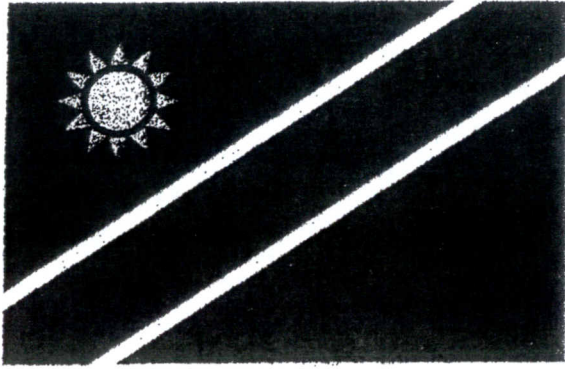
Honourable Speaker,

With regard to the defence and security cooperation, we noted the challenges experienced due to COVID-19 pandemic regarding the hosting of the 29th Session of the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS). However, after several delays, I am glad to inform this August House that as I speak, the 29th JPCDS is concluding in Swakopmund. We look forward to the fruitful deliberations JPCDS.

Lastly Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members, it should be noted that the joint visit we undertook was in line with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on Political and Diplomatic Consultations between the two countries. It is for this reason that I seek your understanding in giving diplomacy a chance in resolving the matters before us.

I hereby submit the Communiqué on the Joint Visit for Record.

I thank you.



COMMUNIQUE ON THE JOINT VISIT TO THE ZAMBEZI REGION OF NAMIBIA AND THE CHOBE DISTRICT OF BOTSWANA BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

1. At the directive of H.E. Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and H.E. Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia, and Hon. Dr. Lemogang Kwape, MP, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana, jointly visited the Chobe District in the Republic of Botswana and Zambezi Region in the Republic of Namibia, from 2-3 September 2021.
2. The Ministers undertook the visit to Chobe District and Zambezi Region, to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground, including engaging communities and stakeholders on the importance of peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness along the common riverine border.
3. Hon. Nandi-Ndaitwah was accompanied by Hon. Dr. Daniel V.H. Kashikola, MP, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, Hon. Col (Rtd) Lawrence Alfea Sampofu, Governor of Zambezi Region, Hon. John Musialela Likando, Member of Parliament and Councilor of Kabbe South Constituency, Hon. Warden Matengu Simushi, Chairperson of Zambezi Regional Council and Councilor of Katima Rural Constituency, H.E. Asser Kapere, High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia to Botswana, and Senior Officials.

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4. Hon. Dr. Kwape was accompanied by Hon. Kagiso Thomas Mmusi, Minister of Defence, Justice and Security, Hon. Machana Ronald Shamukuni – Assistant Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology, and Chobe Member of Parliament, H.E. Batlang Comma Serema, High Commissioner of the Republic of Botswana to Namibia, Ms. Sekgabo N. Makgosa, District Commissioner of Chobe District, Hon. Amos Ben Mabuku, Council Chairperson and Councilor for Chobe Enclave West, Traditional Authority Leaders from the Chobe District and Senior Officials.
5. During the joint visit, the Ministers and their delegations held bilateral talks with the Chobe District and Zambezi Region leadership in Kasane and Katima Mulilo, respectively. They also engaged traditional authorities and other stakeholders, to discuss cross-border concerns and challenges faced by communities living along the common riverine border on both sides.
6. The parties reiterated that the people of Chobe District and Zambezi Region share blood relations which will continue to exist for centuries to come and are only separated by the Chobe river. They share resources such as, fish, water, reeds, grazing land, which they depend on for their livelihood. They therefore, underscored the shared responsibility to protect and conserve the shared natural resources.
7. The two Ministers re-affirmed the continued enjoyment by nationals of both countries of equal access and treatment to the shared natural resources along the common riverine boundary, which has been codified regionally within the framework of the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses (2002) and supported by international law (United Nations Convention on the Law of International Watercourses of 1997) and the 13 December 1999 judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), with respect to the Kasikili/Sedudu Island case, which ruled that Kasikili/Sedudu Island forms part of the Republic of Botswana and that nationals of both countries should continue to enjoy equal access and treatment to shared natural resources in the two channels around Kasikili/Sedudu Island.
8. In order to cement the desire to continue sharing and protecting shared natural resources to ensure cross-border safety and security of people along the common border, the parties agreed to escalate this matter to be decided at the Inaugural Session of the Bi-National Commission (BNC).

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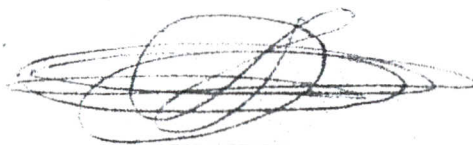
9. In addition, the Ministers acknowledged the importance to strengthen relations between the two local authorities, chiefs and people to people. The Ministers urged the Chobe District Council and Zambezi Regional Council to enter into a twinning agreement which will amongst others enhance cooperation between the two local authorities, as well as facilitate regular engagements by the traditional authorities.
10. With regard to defence and security cooperation, the Ministers noted the challenges experienced due to COVID-19 pandemic with regard to hosting the 29th Session of their Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS). They further noted that the signing of the Bi-National Commission (BNC) agreement absorbed the JPCDS and that the 29th JPCDS would be held from 13-17 September 2021 in Swakopmund. The Ministers expressed confidence that the Security Clusters of both countries will initiate workable modalities to further strengthen cooperation on matters of mutual concern and interest.
11. The Ministers called for the speedy implementation of the Agreement on the Facilitation of Persons Residing in Impalila Island and Kasika Villages, signed in February 2020.
12. The Ministers noted that their joint visit was in line with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on Political and Diplomatic Consultations between the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia and the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana. They further underscored their commitment to continue consolidating bilateral cooperation, promoting good neighbourliness and peaceful co-existence, within the spirit of realizing the regional and continental integration agenda within the framework of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the eventual attainment of the AU Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want.

Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region, 3 September 2021



Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, MP

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
International Relations and Cooperation
of Namibia



Hon. Dr Lemogang Kwape, MP

Minister of International Affairs
and Cooperation of Botswana

