



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**7<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT**

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**REPORT ON THE MOTION ON HUMAN WILDLIFE  
CONFLICT**

**February 2025**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE NO
Acronyms .....	ii
Executive Summary .....	iii
1 Introduction and background.....	1
2 The purpose of this report.....	1
3 Courtesies on the Regional Governors .....	2
4 Meetings with Traditional Authorities .....	3
5 Meeting with affected communities .....	7
6 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Tourism.....	13
7 Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, 2018 – 2027 .....	14
8 Benchmark visit to the United Republic of Tanzania.....	14
9 Findings .....	16
10 Conclusion .....	17
11 Recommendations.....	17
12 Signatories .....	19

## ACRONYMS

<b>CBNRM –</b>	COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
<b>CCFN</b>	COMMUNITY CONSERVATION FUND OF NAMIBIA
<b>CITES –</b>	CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA
<b>EHRA</b>	ELEPHANT-HUMAN RELATIONS AID
<b>EIF –</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT FUND
<b>GPTF</b>	GAME PRODUCT TRUST FUND
<b>HWC –</b>	HUMAN/WILDLIFE CONFLICT
<b>KAZA-TFCA –</b>	KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA
<b>MEFT-</b>	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM
<b>MPs –</b>	MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
<b>NGOs –</b>	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
<b>TAs -</b>	TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES
<b>ZTA -</b>	ZERAERUA TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wildlife is one of the remaining assets of the natural world with considerable potential to benefit rural communities. However, one of the greatest threats to this wildlife, particularly the more iconic species such as elephants, crocodiles and lions, arises from human-wildlife conflict (HWC), i.e. retaliation due to loss of livestock to predators, crop damage from elephants and loss of human life or injury. This becomes a greatest threat to people living in regions where such species are roaming around in search for survival. It is unfortunate that both wildlife and human being find it difficult to coexist in the same area, resulting in HWC.

Due to severe drought that Namibia found itself at some point, people living in some regions such as; Zambezi, Kavango East and West, Kunene and Erongo regions are competing for water and crops with the above mentioned species. The community out there is devastated by loss of their domestic animals' due to predators, loss of life as a result of crocodiles' attack, crops damage including destruction of infrastructure by wildlife animals. Affected communities are imploring the government for a prompt intervention. Despite the National Policy in place, a lot still needs to be done to rescue the situation.

The importance of wildlife cannot be overemphasized due to the benefit it brings to the nation at large, however the community out there is losing out to a point, they want to take law in their own hands. The cases of HWC in some regions, Zambezi and Erongo regions in particular are cumbersome. Thus, the government should consider an annual culling of problematic wildlife animals especially the old ones, including awareness raising on coexistence with wildlife.

A motion on HWC was tabled in Parliament and referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Natural Resources. The Committee conducted public hearings in five (5) regions; Zambezi, Kavango East, Kavango West, Kunene and Erongo regions. A report is compiled as per the findings with recommendations for possible implementations.

## **1 Introduction and background**

In April 2023, a Motion on Human Wildlife Conflict was tabled in Parliament by Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, Honorable Dr. Ester Muinjangu. This motion was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Natural Resources. After scrutiny, the Committee deemed it necessary to have consultative meetings in different regions, to hear the view of the affected community members on the subject matter, before compiling the report for tabling to the National Assembly.

The Committee resorted to conduct public hearings in five regions namely; Zambezi, Kavango East, Kavango West, Kunene and Erongo regions during the period of August 2023 to August 2024. The objectives of the consultative meetings were to engage with the Regional Governors, Traditional Authorities and affected community members to hear their views on the matter that was under scrutiny.

Subsequently, the Committee found it prudent to benchmark with their counterpart in Tanzania in order to learn, share information and experience on the best practices on HWC mitigation strategies and the management of community conservancies. The benchmark was undertaken in May 2024.

The group was comprised of the following;

- Hon. Agnes M. Kafula
- Hon. Mike Venaani
- Hon. Hon. Tangeni Iijambo
- Hon. Annaklethe Sikerete
- Hon. Nghidipohamaba Hamata
- Hon. Natague Ithete
- Mr Albius Mutonga
- Ms Belinda Karuaera
- Mr George Sanzila
- Ms Frankhilde Endjala

## **2 The purpose of this report**

The purpose of this report is to submit the Committee's findings and recommendations to the National Assembly for discussion, adoption and implementation thereof.

### **3 Courtesies on the Regional Governors**

Zambezi region is one of the regions with increase number of HWC cases due to the region finding itself in the middle of the Kavango, Zambezi Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA-TFCA), the second largest nature and landscape conservation area replete with a large elephants' population. The region has 15 conservancies and one association, with three (3) national parks, namely; Bwabwata, Bamunu and KAZA-TFCA with over 400 animal species.

The Regional Governor, Lawrence Alufea Sampofu informed the committee that conflict between human and wild animals occurs due to sharing of water points. He referred to an incident of loss of life that occurred in Tshimwe area during the week of 01 August 2023. Communities dependence on the river and resources along the river bring them in conflict with wild animals

The Governor further applauded the Namibian government for its stance not to be pressured to allow the ban of the sale of ivory adding that the current conservation efforts by the country required financial resources which can be generated from its ivory stockpile. He felt that there is a need to have a discussion with CITES to allow the sale of ivory in order to generate money for conservation activities.

The Chief Regional Officer, Reginah Ndopu Lubinda who also attended the courtesy noted that the regional council has been contemplating ways to restore the region to its former glory as the breadbasket of Namibia, by exploring other alternatives to wildlife conservation. This include reducing the size of conservancies to allow communities to farm and produce enough food for their livelihood. She said the Zambezi region has quite a number of conservancies, which cannot cater for all communities hence the need for exploring other means of survival, agricultural in particular. The region needs to strike a balance to ensure that people are not going hungry while protecting wildlife animals.

The Kunene Region is also amongst the regions most affected by Human Wildlife Conflict and this has been exacerbated by the severe drought. During the courtesy on the Regional Governor, Honourable Marius Sheya inform the committee of the various challenges the region is facing due to elephants, lions, jackals and cheetahs destroying crops and killing domestic animals. Most of the HWC cases experienced are crops damage by elephants and losing of livestock due to cheetah and lions attacks and incidents of loss of lives have also been reported as people

were attacked by crocodiles while fetching water from the river. Despite the reviewed offset amount, the Governor felt that it is not sufficient.

Other challenges he alluded to includes; the communities not benefiting from conservancies, and conservancies left alone to negotiate contracts with donors and different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) such as without assistance or advise from experts. As a result, conservancies are being paid peanuts compared to what NGOs are benefiting. He also emphasized the needs of laws and policies to guide and regulate the operation of conservancies. Moreover, the Governor pleaded with the Committee to understand the nature of people in his region (the uniqueness of their culture compared to others), Ovahimba in particular. They move from one area to another in search for grazing land of their animals.

Additionally, the governor felt that it would be best if conservancies' budget could talk to the needs of the community to cater for the needs of the respective communities in which they are falling. It is also high time that Namibia should consider executing earth dams as the region is losing out on agricultural / irrigation projects. The Governor expressed concern that despite the region vastness only 30% of the area is utilized hence the need to developed the coastal areas of Kunene such as Terrence bay and Torra bay as they have the potential to change the economy of the region.

#### **4 Meetings with Traditional Authorities**

During a meeting held with the Masubia Traditional Authority at Bukalo, the Ngambela of the Masubia tribe, Albius Kamwi described the offset for losses as negligible noting that farmers make many financial sacrifices during the ploughing season. He further accused the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and conservancies for ostracizing the traditional authority by failing to alert the Khuta when incidences of human wildlife conflict occur in their areas of jurisdiction. Ngambela Kamwi was further not happy that only three wild animals are compensated for when they cause damage to crop fields. TA are of the opinions that if a crop is damaged by any wild animals, the complainant should be compensated for the damage.

The Mafwe Traditional Authority at Chincimane, situated on the southwest of Katima Mulilo in the Linyanti constituency of the Zambezi region have proposed that government should

consider installation of boreholes in strategic places to avoid competition for water sources between humans and wild animals that often result in conflict. They further recommended that there was a need for government to assist farmers in the area to fence off their crop fields given the fact that many villages in the area are found within the boundaries of conservancies.

Natamoyo (advisor to the chief), Patrick Kawana shared the same sentiments that the amounts of money paid to victims of human wildlife conflict were insignificant. Equally, MEFT officials often delay when incidences are reported resulting in community members taking the law in their own hands and getting arrested. TA further felt that, an increasing population of both wild animals and humans and the proliferation of conservancies, have resulted in the many incidences of human wildlife conflict, hence, government should explore alternatives such as translocaten of problematic wild animals to places that are far from human settlements. Problematic wild animals identified in the area include lions, elephants, buffaloes, hippopotamus and crocodiles.

Mayeyi Traditional Authority bemoaned the offset offered by government to victims of human wildlife conflict noting that it was too low. Offset for the loss of a cow is 3000 while, the market value of a cow is currently over N\$10 000. When family members loose a bread winner the amount offered cannot even sustain those left behind. One traditional councilor proposed that when incidents of HWC occurs government should consult the family to determine offset to be paid.

The traditional authority further complained about lack of coordination and being side-lined when decisions pertaining to conservation and tourism are taken in their areas by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism together with conservancies. The government is failing to install enough boreholes in villages to prevent people from fetching water from the river to avoid attack by wild animals. The same government is responsible for setting up hunting quotas without involving the traditional authority. Furthermore, the traditional authority complained that trophy hunters are being appointed without their knowledge and while their areas plagued by problematic animals such as lions, they keep on relocating animals there without consulting them.



Chief of the Hambukushu, Erwin Munika Mbambo called for the repeal of outdated colonial era law of Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975, as it has failed to address contemporary issues related to the management of natural resources. According to Chief Mbambo his community has been consulted multiple times over the issue of HWC but the law addressing the issue has remained the same.

He noted that the 2018 – 2027 Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management lacked consultations leading for its failure to address the challenges associated with human wildlife conflict. The protracted Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill which has been in discussions for more than 20 years, is envisaged to replace the Conservation Ordinance of 1975, to address a wide range of shortcomings in the management of natural resources.

The Hambukushu Chief further took issue with Namibia bowing to international pressure in the management of its own natural resources. According to Chief Mbambo, tendencies by international conservation pressure groups to dictate how African countries should manage their natural resources without understanding the social dimensions and realities of local communities in those countries, continue to affect and impoverish people, particularly at the grassroots level. Restrictions imposed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have contributed to the reduction in the number of hunting quotas allocated to conservancies for some species despite their ballooning populations.

He further accused government of side lining traditional authorities in the management of natural resources. “Why should we manage our natural resources based on the interests of foreign governments at the expense of our own people? In the past government collaborated with the traditional authorities. We now have to ask for permission to use our own natural resources”, moaned Chief Mbambo.

The Gciriku traditional leaders repeated the same sentiments regarding the destruction of crop fields and loss of lives due to problematic animals such as elephants, crocodiles and hippopotamus. They complain about the criteria for offset for damaged crops noting that often times, gardens set up along the river are destroyed by wild animals such as hippopotamus but

do not qualify for offset due to size limitations set out in the offset policy. The policy only compensates crop damages measured from a quarter of a hectare. Traditional leaders further implored government to review the policy to include damages caused by all wild animals as the policy currently only compensates farmers who have suffered crop damages caused by three wild animals namely, elephants, hippopotamus and buffaloes.

The Ukwangali traditional authority in the Kahenge constituency of the Kavango West are tired of parliament's failure to change the colonial era law governing conservation activities in the country, more than 30 years after Namibia's independence. They noted that the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975 together with the current 2018 – 2027 Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management fail to respond to current social dimensions and realities of rural communities. The Protracted Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill, still under consideration, is set to replace the old law.

The Vita- Royal House and Otjikaoko traditional leaders' expressed their frustrations of their crops damage by wild animals. Their community is already affected by drought yet, 90% of their people don't harvest due to crop damage by wild animals. Additionally, the offset fees / amounts are far below the market value. Moreover, communities who are not residing within the boundaries of conservancies are not benefiting from offset. Once cases of HWC occurs, there is no one to conduct investigations due to absence of game wardens. The traditional leaders also appealed to the government to resize if not demolish peoples' parks since farmers have nowhere to settle with their animals for grazing. Equally, the number of wildlife animals should be restricted as they are on increase resulting in increasing number of HWC cases annually.

Unlike other TAs, the NAMI-DAMAN traditional leaders are supporting conservation of elephants in their communities as they bring a number of tourists. However, they are urging the government to be on par with what the market offers when compensating people as a result of HWC losses. They are of the opinions that, if an animal is killed by a wildlife animal, it should be replaced (an ox is killed by an elephant should be replaced with an ox but not money). The most problematic wild animals in their areas are lions, cheetahs, jackals and hyenas, to a point that animals' herders are being chased by lions when looking after their animals.

The Zeraerua Traditional Authority (ZTA) narrated that HWC came a long way for a period of 15 to 20 years due to an increase in desert elephants in Erongo region. The region is experiencing disruption of water infrastructure like; windmills, water pumps and pipes are destroyed by elephants. Their domestic animals are in danger of attacks by predators' animals such as jackals, hyena and lions, whilst in the evening, houses are being destroyed by elephants. TA has to deal with traumatised people to offer support and ensure psychological wellbeing for their people. They felt that HWC is taking place due to scarcity of water points in the community thus, it should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

ZTA came up with initiatives of protecting water points with the assistance of Environmental Investment Fund (EIF) and Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA). In the areas like, Okongwe, Okanaera they installed water points and solar systems, while in the areas where water pumps are not protected, elephants are causing damages to water infrastructures. Severe drought has force elephants to venture into human settlements destroying crops and houses. ZTA mentioned that, traditionally, there were no animal heading but due to an increase in the number of predators 'animals, the community is forced to have people looking after their animals. Donkey that are being used as a mean of transport are also in danger of hyenas attacks. ZTA is pleading with the government to consider rural electrification for Erongo especially in areas where destruction of houses is on increase due to elephants to deter them from coming to homesteads.

## **5 Meeting with affected communities**

### **5.1 Zambezi region**

Community members whose livelihood depended on crop farming complained about damages to their crops caused by wildlife, Community members of Muyako village in the Katima Mulilo Rural Constituency have suffered devastating crops damage due to wild animals. Many failed to harvest their crop fields during the planting season (May – July 2023) as marauding groups of animals such as elephants, buffaloes and hippopotamus devoured the crops. To add insult to injury, there is long delay in the payment of offset they are supposed to receive for damaged crops. The amount per quarter of a hectare is a mere drop in the ocean as it stands at N\$250.00 only despite the high cost of ploughing. The costs involved in ploughing, weeding and fending of wild animals is far exceeds the set offset fees.

The community members accused MEFT officials of failing to attend to their plight timeously, when cases of human wildlife occur and are reported to them. In most cases the officials from the MEFT delay in attending to communities' requests citing lack of transport, but they would quickly show up when a wild animal is killed. In such cases, MEFT officials confiscate both their guns and carcass and even arrest them.

Nakabolelwa residents are unhappy with an increasing population of problematic wild animals. Community members are complaining that wild animals such as crocodiles, elephants and lions continue to destroy both their crops and livestock. Nakabolelwa which is situated over 50 kilometres East of Katima Mulilo is in the flood plains of Kabbe South constituency of the Zambezi region. The area is adjacent to the game rich Chobe National Park that is found in neighbouring Botswana. The Chobe River lies only a few metres away separate Namibia and Botswana. Community members recommended an annual harvesting of problematic animals (especially the old ones) such as; crocodiles and elephants whose populations has been ballooned.

They noted that this might help decrease the incidents of human wildlife conflict. The conservancies in the region also appealed to the government to increase the hunting quota for crocodiles which currently stands at only two (2) despite an increase in their population. Other suggestions included the erection of crocodile fences and the provision of more boreholes and water troughs to minimize human wildlife conflict as both animals and humans rely on the river for their livelihood. The affected community members also complained that at the offset fees set by government, is far below the market value of the livestock is. Residents claim many farmers who have suffered losses have not received any offset by the time the committee visited the region.

The residences of Sangwali area in Judea Lyabboloma Constituency in Zambezi region describes the National parks in their areas, as both blessing and a curse as they continue to suffer heavy losses from incidences of human wildlife conflict due to their close proximity to National parks. Sangwali is bordered with Nkasa Rupara in the East and Mudumu on west respectively. Although conservancies in the area are benefiting from the inflow of wild animals

for tourism purposes, the same cannot be said for residents who live in fear of losing their lives and properties.

A considerable number of incidences of human wildlife conflict are experienced annually in the area that is inhabited by a large number of game such as elephants, lions, buffaloes, crocodiles and hippopotamus among others. The villages falling within Balyerwa conservancy alone have experienced increasing cases of human wildlife conflict since 2020. “In 2020, there were 139 cases of which 109 were crop fields and 29 were livestock attacks and 1 human attack. In 2021, the total number of cases were 201 with 193 crop field damages and 8 incidences of livestock attacks. In 2022, a total of 188 cases were recorded, 180 were crop fields while 8 were livestock attacks. From January to mid-August 2023 alone, over 180 cases have been recorded that involve damages to crops, livestock attacks and even loss of human lives.

The incidences were recurring making it difficult for residents to survive as they depend on crop fields for their livelihood. The statistics provided by Salushando were only for areas such as Nongozi, Mbambazi, Sauzuo, Mambali and Lyanshuru and excludes other villages found in other conservancies. There are four conservancies in the Judea Lyabboloma constituency namely Dzoti, Wuparo and Balyerwa. Mr. Salushando, Chairperson of the Balyerwa conservancy revealed that his conservancy has benefited over N\$1 million from the Community Conservation Fund of Namibia (CCFN) which will help its members to come up with mitigation measures to prevent the destruction of crop fields. These measures will include the installation of predator proof kraals, tin wire fence and crocodile fence to be erected in the hotspot area of Lyanshulu.

Sangwali community pleaded with the government to consider all animals to be part of offset policy as problematic animals eligible for offset. Other animals such as hyenas, leopards, bush pigs, antelopes, jackals and baboons too cause havoc in crop fields. Offset is only limited to crop damages caused only by three animals namely, elephants, buffaloes and hippopotamus. The community further appealed to the government to increase hunting quotas for conservancies and empower residents to kill problematic animals when their lives or property are in danger.

Community members in the area of Kongola Constituency had similar challenges which include the destruction of crop fields with minimal or no offset. According to the residents,

from 2016 to 2023, farmers have not received any form of offset for their losses. However, Kwando conservancy chairperson Albius Walubita revealed during the meeting that over 134 members whose crop fields were damaged by wildlife, were eligible for offset to the total amount of over N\$137 000.

Apart from the destruction of crop fields, one member of the community lost his life in 2022, after he was attacked by a crocodile while fishing in the Kwando River. Community members further implored lawmakers to look at economic conditions of people especially at the grassroots level, when they enact laws. They made specific reference to a law by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources prohibiting residents from fishing in protected fishing zones, arguing that people depend on the river for their survival.

## **5.2 Kavango East region**

The Hambukushu community, who live adjacent to Bwabwata and Mahongo National parks, complained about increasing cases of human wildlife conflict in the area and the slow response from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism when such cases are reported including delay in the payments of offset claims. They also suggested that a deliberate policy aimed at regularly harvesting problematic animals in order to reduce their populations, should be introduced.

The committee was also informed that most cases involved loss of lives were reported in the region but couldn't meet the criterion for the offset. According to the National Policy, "one of the conditions for payment for loss of life is that the deceased person should not have been engaged in any recreational activity in the river such as swimming or bathing". When investigations are conducted, reports always reflect recreational activity which disadvantage them. They made reference to a boy who went lost after being attacked by a crocodile in 2021.

They are appealing to the government to work together with TA in awareness raising as they are losing lives. Another boy was killed by a hippo and his body was destroyed in bad manner, however, nothing was done as he was a baby, the community reported. During November 2022, a community member lost his / her life after being eaten up by a crocodile. The sad part of it is that, when the body is not found, no offset for such incident. Although it was reported, by the time MEFT officials responded was too late.

The community is pleading with government to establish crocodiles ranching in order to translocated them from the river as they are losing lives. Most of the people in Kavango East depend on the river for survival reasons and it is very difficult to stop going to the river hence their appeal to the government.

### **5.3 Kavango West**

According to community members, many consultations have taken place but no solution is ever found. “People should be helped through parliament that has the responsibility to change or make laws. They are of the opinion that parliament is failing to change colonial laws that are far removed from the realities in their communities. Wild animals are valued more than human beings”, complained one community members.

They further accused the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism of lack of coordination and not responding on time to reported cases of HWC. “Whenever cases of crocodile or hippos’ attacks are reported, they are being told there is no boats or transport. The community have to wait for some time giving enough time for problem causing animals such as crocodiles, hippos and elephants to disappear”, complained another resident.

The community was also not happy with set offset fees paid for destruction of crops and loss of life and livestock adding they were negligible and needed to be reviewed.

### **5.4 Kunene Region**

The Otuzemba community members narrated that their gardens that they use to plough are no more attended to due to wildlife animals. Although there is a policy in place for offset as a result of crops damage by wildlife animals, they never come across any payment that was done. There was a problematic lion that killed a number of animals in their community but none of them was compensated. Afterward, the community decided to kill it and they were arrested. The size of their crops fields are smaller than a quarter hectare hence they don’t qualify for offset. Additionally, problematic wild animals (snakes, hyenas, jackals and baboons) in their area are not covered in the offset policy as well as destruction to water points and fencing.

There are also marked protected areas in Kunene region where animals are not allowed to graze on. The demarcation of land for conservancies also disadvantaged the community as it doesn’t promote crops farming. The committee also was showed a vehicle which was destroyed by an elephant in 2023 but no offset was paid. The reason given was that, the car was not road worthy.

They implored the government to translocate elephants and predators from the region and to introduce annual culling of animals as there is no more farming in the region. Although there are game guards in the community, their literacy skills make it difficult for them to compile reports as per the criterion. This made it difficult for the community to be compensated for their losses due to the absence of incident reports. The community felt that MEFT should train game guards to be able to compile proper reports in respect of HWC incidents in the region.

Other community members from Otjierunda also pleaded with the government to assist with funeral costs when a community member died as a result of snake bite. Furthermore, they informed the committee that most of their gardens are less than a quarter a hectare, thus it would be best if the government could consider their garden for offset despite their sizes. They also complained that cases of HWC are handled / treated differently from region to region and cited examples of people who were compensated for damaged water tanks and pumps as well as destruction of houses while others are not considered.

The community of Ombombo area expressed concern with the strength and uniqueness of elephants particularly the fact that they consume similar diet like human hence their destruction of crops fields. This situation is further exacerbated by severe drought when elephants in search of food destroy crops. Thus it is crucial that problematic elephants should be killed and when trophy hunting concessions are issued, the proceeds benefit the respective community. The community appeal to the government to consider putting up network infrastructures as this ease communication with their fellow village residents when reporting problematic wild animals. They reported that a week before (5 – 11 August 2024) the committee visited their area, 4 cattle and 10 goats were killed by predators. If there was proper network connectivity, other residents could have come to their rescue. Additionally, in 2021 water pipes were destroyed by elephants but no one turned up for inspection. They suggested that the government should erect parks to conserve wildlife animals. Due to the increase in number of HWC cases, they appealed to the government to register survivors of the HWC victims under different beneficiary grants.

Other community members in the region felt that offset should take into account the benefits derived from domestic animals killed. For example, if a cow was producing milk then such benefits are worth offset while donkeys are used as transport to take people to hospital, go fetch water and plough in the field. Additionally, lambs, calves and all small animals should be compensated when killed by wild animals. Moreover, they pleaded with the government to conduct awareness raising to educate the communities on how to coexist with wild animals.



## **5.5 Erongo region**

The Ani-chab community members appreciated awareness / training from EHRA on how to co-exist with wild animals. However, they recounted incidents where two houses in their area were destroyed by elephants more than once and EHRA assisted them with the bags of cements and corrugated irons to fix the damages. They are also dissatisfied with absence of rural electrification in their area despite electricity connection passing through their village to connect the neighbouring villages. Thus, they are pleading with the government to consider assisting them with rural electrification. Although there are a number of elephants that are roaming around not all of them are problematic hence only problematic ones should be relocated.

In the area of Okongwe, community members are living in fear of their lives due to an increase in elephants. Unfortunately, some villages are not residing within the boundaries of any conservancy which made it difficult for offset when HWC cases are reported. They implored the government to appoint someone in the community to assist with investigations of HWC cases and compile reports in that regard for offset purposes. However, they appreciate assistance from EHRA which include the installation solar lights, teaching kids in the community about wild life animals and how to co-exist with them, and to how minimize the incidents / cases of HWC.

People in Omutuwaduko proposed that government install rural electrification in their areas. The number of elephants are too many as they escape from commercial farms. Due to the destruction of crops caused by elephants, community members are reluctant to plant crops such as tomatoes and onions as they usually do. People without cattle and goats find it difficult to survive as they cannot put up gardens any more. The network in the area is also a problem hence they are appealing for network towers. Additionally, assistance with few water points may also minimize HWC case in their area.

## **6 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Tourism**

During meeting consultations in the Zambezi region, MEFT officials narrated that, the main reason contributing to HWC is community members who decided to settle in conservancy core areas. As a result, there is a backlog of HWC claims with some outstanding payments dating

back as far as 2019 due to lack of funds derived from COVID-19 pandemic. Other challenges facing MEFT officials in the regions include;

- lack of transport and staff (so far the region has only three field rangers that are currently active and responsible for the entire Zambezi region),
- the rationing of fuel for official cars allocated to MEFT that affects the operations of the ministry (officials are allocated only two full tanks of fuel per month for operations with no bush or cellphone allowance) and,
- hierarchy of authority in processing payment claims with the final approval at the head office in Windhoek (activities of the ministry still remain centralized, contributing to bureaucracy and lack of efficiency).

## **7 Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, 2018 – 2027**

The 2018 – 2027 Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management states that payments to crops will be made to damages caused only by elephants, buffaloes and hippopotamus only without considering other problematic animals. The policy further lists the offset fees for loss of cattle at N\$3000 and damages to crops at N\$250 and N\$1000 for one quarter of a hectare and one hectare respectively. The criterion set from claiming of losses due to wildlife animals is cumbersome.

## **8 Benchmark visit to the United Republic of Tanzania**

The Committee undertook a benchmark visit to the United Republic of Tanzania. The visit was aimed at understanding how Tanzania a well renowned wildlife sanctuary are dealing with human wildlife conflicts, strategies and policies in place.

### **8.1. Meeting with the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Tourism**

The Chairperson informed the delegation that Tanzania is experiencing same problem that of human wildlife conflict mainly due to its many wildlife parks and conservation efforts. Elephants are the main problem animal with the country having more than 60 000 of them across all its 21 national parks. There are incidents of lions attacking humans but not very common since lions only attack when provoked. Villages located within proximity of national parks are more at risk especially during drought when animals venture out of the parks in search of food and water. In the event of loss of a life government compensate about USD 200, cow

USD 25 and goat 15 USD. Lions that leave the national parks and those that cause either injury or death are put down.

The most common solution to problem animals is relocation to parks far away from human habitants, same goes to crocodiles they are relocated to rivers not often used by people. The most effective way of scaring off elephants is the use of chilli bombs. In Tanzania, hitting an animal with a car regardless of how it happened the driver gets a fine upward of USD 15.

## **8.2. Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism**

Tanzania has 21 National Parks, 29 game reserves and 4 wetlands. About 90% of tourism is wildlife based, with the sector contributing 21% of the GDP and 25% foreign currency. The sector also contributes for about 1.6 million direct and indirect employment. The main causes of animal wildlife conflict is blockage of wildlife corridors, encroachment, human settlement, land use and habitat destructions, livestock incursion in protected areas and poaching. Among the measures out in place to mitigate the crisis are:

- The development and implementation of the National Human Wildlife Conflict management Strategy focusing on community based mitigation, benefits to communities , co-existence and education and research and monitoring
- Wildlife patrols by rangers and construction of rangers posts in hotspot areas
- Public Awareness programmes, trainings to adapt and co-exist with wildlife
- Building crocodile enclosures where people and animals use same river
- Animal collaring to control and track movements and relocation
- Construction of water points in protected areas to minimise encounters with people

## 9 Findings

- 9.1 The size limitations for crops damage to be compensated is huge a concern.
- 9.2 Some affected communities in some regions are not aware of the procedures to be followed when reporting loss of life in cases where the body could not be retrieved.
- 9.3 The most aggressive crocodiles are the old ones as they compete with young ones for different resources.
- 9.4 Hyenas are the most troublesome wild animals in Erongo region attacking domestic animals like goats and cattle.
- 9.5 People in Erongo region (Omutianduko and Okongwe areas in particular) live in fear due to an increasing number of elephants in their area. Elephants constantly destroy their houses and gardens.
- 9.6 The conservation and sustainability of wild animals is prioritised for the sake of tourism whilst ignoring the caring capacity of the wildlife animals that cause HWC.
- 9.7 The Policy does not make provision for inheritance of the deceased debt.
- 9.8 MEFT support conservancies through Game Product Trust Fund (GPTF) but there is no budget for HWC.
- 9.9 The land conflict between human being in Zambezi region contributed to people residing in core areas and animals corridors, which result in increases cases of HWC.
- 9.10 Lack of psychological support to the affected members after injuries or loss of loved ones.
- 9.11 MEFT officials do not have cell phone allowances despite dealing with problem animals on the ground and are limited to only two tanks of fuel per month not sufficient for effective patrols and attendance to call outs.
- 9.12 Poor network in the remote Kunene region (Otuzemba, Otjerunda) makes it difficult to seek help and report incidents of HWC on time.
- 9.13 METF officials are stationed in Outjo, instead of Opuwo, which is the town closer to the communities suffering from HWC.
- 9.14 The boreholes and other resources are not covered in the offset list

## **10 Conclusion**

The number of HWC cases are on the increase due to wildlife animals. HWC cases involving loss of lives are on increase in Zambezi region compared to other regions while, destruction of houses and water infrastructure by elephants are high in Erongo region. Additionally, conservancies in Zambezi region are more beneficial to community members compared to other regions. An intervention from the government is required as a matter of urgency to address the situation. Moreover, the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management should be reviewed to consider other aspects as per the recommendations provided.

## **11 Recommendations**

### **Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism**

- 11.1** Sensitization / awareness raising on reporting of HWC incidences and submission of claims or damage / losses because of HWC should be prioritised. MEFT should educate the communities especially those in the affected areas on the Human Wildlife policy and the need for co-existence.
- 11.2** MEFT staff should be part of discussion for contract agreements signed by different conservancies management.
- 11.3** MEFT should decentralize the payment process to avoid delays and clear backlog of payments.
- 11.4** MEFT should finalize the Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill at least within a year.
- 11.5** MEFT should conduct regular monitoring and game count to ensure the number of games is kept at sustainable levels in the communities.

- 11.6 MEFT should strengthen the conservancies by conducting regular training to ensure optimal functioning, as they perform a very important role in the community.
- 11.7 MEFT should ensure fair and equal treatments of victims in all regions when handling HWC cases.
- 11.8 MEFT presence and offices in areas affected by the Human Wildlife conflict should be increased to ensure speedy response to avert incidents of HWC.
- 11.9 MEFT Staff should be stationed in Opuwo not Outjo as they are far from the majority of affected communities. MEFT should ensure that proceeds from trophy hunting benefits the affected community, for example; installation of water points, rural electrification and network towers.
- 11.10 The policy should clearly define what a damage is
- 11.11 The policy should include a clause / provision on harvesting of wildlife animals
- 11.12 The review of the Human Wildlife Conflict Management Policy to address pertinent areas such as the inclusion of infrastructure (water tanks, wind mills and houses) destructed by wildlife animals
- 11.13 An annual culling of problematic wildlife animals in all regions depending on their caring capacity to minimize HWC, including relocation where possible.
- 11.14 Laws and regulation to guide the operation of conservancies.
- 11.15 Construction of earth dams in Kunene, Zambezi region to cater for drought.
- 11.16 Government to subsidize the fencing off crops in Kunene regions due to its uniqueness in terms of wildlife animals.
- 11.17 Game guards should be trained on how to handle cases in terms of reporting

#### **Ministry of Information Communication and Technology**

- 11.18 The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology should facilitate the installation of network towers in Kunene and Erongo regions in villages that are affected by HWC as a matter of urgency.

## 12. MEMBERS SIGNATURES

Hon. Tjekero Tweya (Chairperson)

Hon. Agnes Mpingana Kafula (Deputy Chairperson)

Hon. Herlinde Tjiveze

Hon. Vincent Joseph Mareka

Hon. Maria Elago

Hon. Diederik Vries

Hon. Gotthard Kasuto

Hon. Natangue Ithete

Hon. Kletus Karondo

Hon. Paula Kooper

Hon. Sebastiaan Karupu

Hon. Hilaria Mukapuli

Hon. Jan Mukwiilongo

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Hon. Johanna Kandjimi

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Hon. Annakletha Sikerete

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Hon. Rebecca Kambayi

Hon. Dr. Daniel Kashikola

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