



Statement by

The Deputy Minister Hon. Tommy Nambahu, MP

Namibian Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism

AT THE HANOI CONFERENCE ON THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Date: 17 November 2016

Venue: Lotte Hotel, Social Republic of Viet Nam

Your Excellencies,

Honourable Ministers,

Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Namibian Government, allow me to thank the Government of Vietnam for hosting this important Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade and for the warm hospitality accorded to us by the Vietnamese people since we got here. By hosting this conference Vietnam is demonstrating to the whole world its commitment to fight illegal wildlife trade which fuels poaching especially of rhino and elephant.

Chairperson,

Illegal wildlife trade is a scourge that calls for a collective resolve of the international community to bring it to a complete stop. Namibia is concerned about the increased demand levels for illegal wildlife products, which undermine our conservation endeavours. This unsustainable trade will deprive nations of their natural capital and cultural heritage thus undermining sustainable development. This

Conference has therefore come at an opportune time, hot on the heels of CITES COP 17 which took place in South Africa in September this year, and where issues of conservation of species including rhinoceroses, African elephants and pangolins which are highly trafficked were discussed.

Namibia has implemented actions and measures adopted under the London Declaration and the Kasane Statement and would like to reaffirm its commitment to continue implementing the outcome of similar conferences going forward. My country has proposed to amend its legal framework to provide for severe punishment of wildlife crimes and the Amendment Bill will soon be tabled in Parliament. We have strengthened our law enforcement measures and we continue to give rural communities a meaningful role in conservation of natural resources.

Namibia's conservation programme is underpinned by strong community involvement because we recognize community as an important stakeholder in the protection of wildlife. The community is then granted rights to benefit from wildlife by using them in a sustainable way. This is done through consumptive way such as

hunting and non-consumptive way for example eco-tourism. Both forms of utilization generate job and earn community an income. We have made significant strides in this regard and we remain willing to share our experiences with any interested party.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Namibia strongly feels that there should be a clear distinction between illegal wildlife trade and legal wildlife trade. Efforts should be made to promote legal trade or else some of our successful conservation programmes which are based on creating incentives for the local community who live with wildlife will collapse completely.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that my country remains committed to do its utmost to curb illegal wildlife trade and in Namibia, you have a partner you can trust.

I thank you