

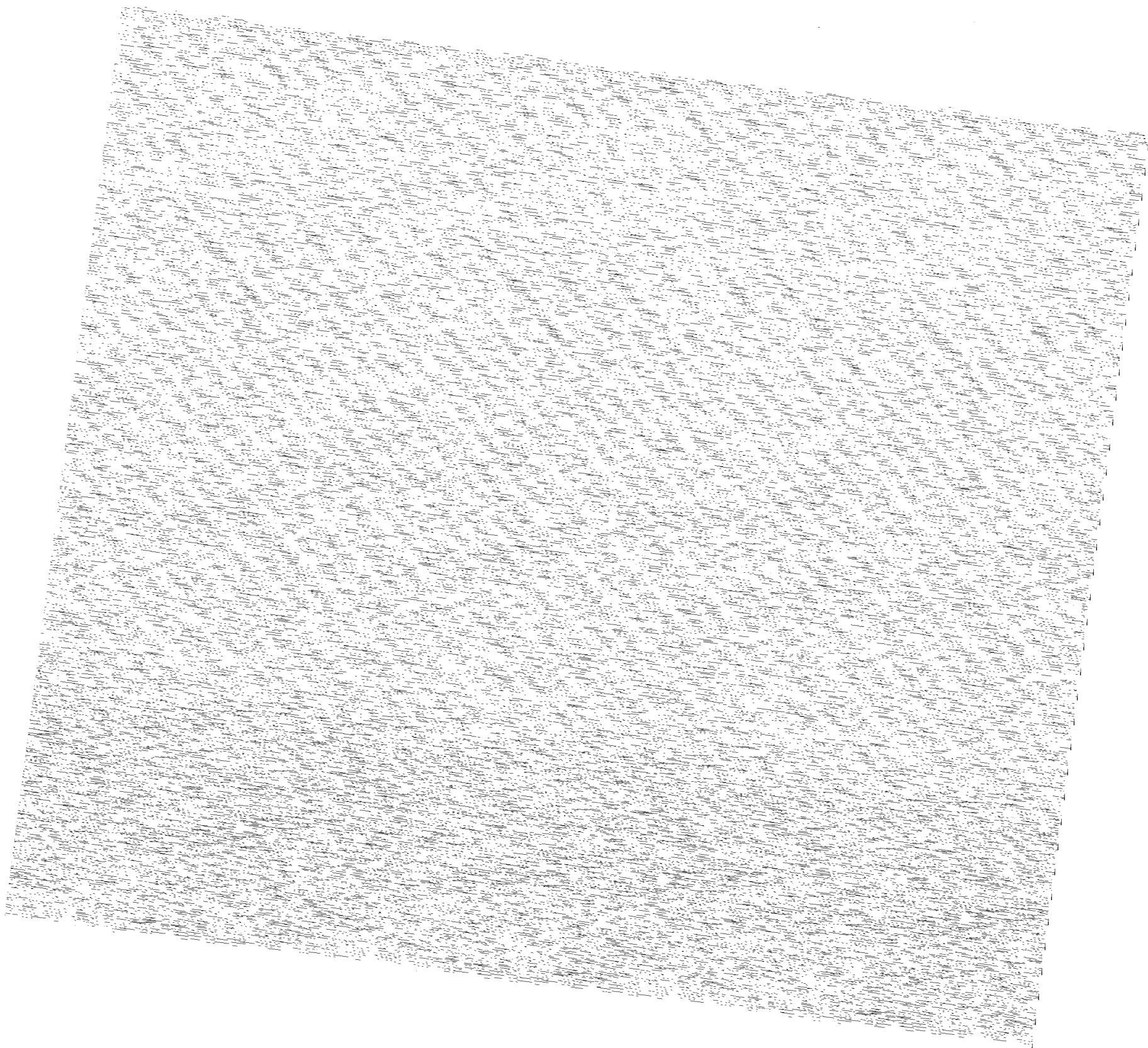
**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**



**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY  
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MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

**ON THE NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**21 February 2017**



elephant poaching levels, as well as the trafficking of their products, are not brought under control there will be severe negative impacts on the survival of the two species. Furthermore, such illegal activities will have serious impact on our tourism and Rural poverty will also be enhanced because a high number of our local communities derive income from wildlife through consumptive and non-consumptive. The current levels of illegal trade and wildlife trafficking also promote corruption, threaten peace and stability, strengthen illicit trade routes and destabilize economies.

Just to illustrate the gravity of the current illegal hunting of rhinoceros situation, Namibia is home to about 2700 rhinoceros, the second largest population of rhinoceros in the world. However, in 2014, we lost sixty-one (61), in 2015, ninety-one (91) and last year 2016, sixty-three (63) animals. This has negatively impacted our rhinoceros population especially in Etosha National Park.

Out of our population of approximately 22 000 elephants, we have lost seventy-eight (78) in 2014, forty-nine (49) in 2015 and hundred and one (101) in 2016. This is particularly concerning as most of the poaching has occurred in Bwabwata National Park and involve foreign nationals working together with Namibians.

All those losses were experienced despite massive resource investments by our Government and our conservation partners towards combating illegal hunting of our rhinoceros and elephants. In 2016, two hundred and sixty cases related to illegal killing of elephants and rhinoceros as well as illegal possession and export of rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks were reported. On a positive note, two hundred and twenty two suspects were arrested, however, arrests and even convictions cannot be deterrent enough if penalties are low.

**Comrade Speaker**  
**Honourable Members**

Having said that, allow me to introduce the amendments to the penalties related to illegal wildlife hunting:

- 1) To increase the fine related to elephant and rhinoceros, from the current maximum of N\$ 200 000 to N\$ 25 000 000 and imprisonment period from 20 to 25 years.

- 2) To increase the fine related to all other specially protected species from the current maximum of N\$ 20 000 to N\$ 10 000 000 and imprisonment period from 5 to 10 years.
- 3) To increase the fine related to all protected species from the current maximum of N\$ 4 000 to N\$ 500 000 and imprisonment period from 4 to 5 years.
- 4) To increase the fine related to all other species from the current maximum of N\$ 2 000 to N\$ 500 000 and imprisonment period from 2 to 5 years.

The proposed fines are based on comparisons with penalties in neighbouring countries.

The Bill also seeks to increase general penalties, in line with the Criminal Proceedure Amendment Act, 2010 (Act No. 3 of 2010) as follows:

- 1) To increase the fine from the current maximum of N\$ 250 to N\$ 6 000 and imprisonment period from 3 to 6 months, for first time offenders.
- 2) To increase the fine from the current maximum of N\$ 500 to N\$ 12 000 and imprisonment period from 6 to 12 months, for subsequent offenders.

In conclusion, I would therefore humbly request this august House to pass the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill, as tabled, to improve our legislation framework with the aim to protect our wildlife resources.

I thank you.