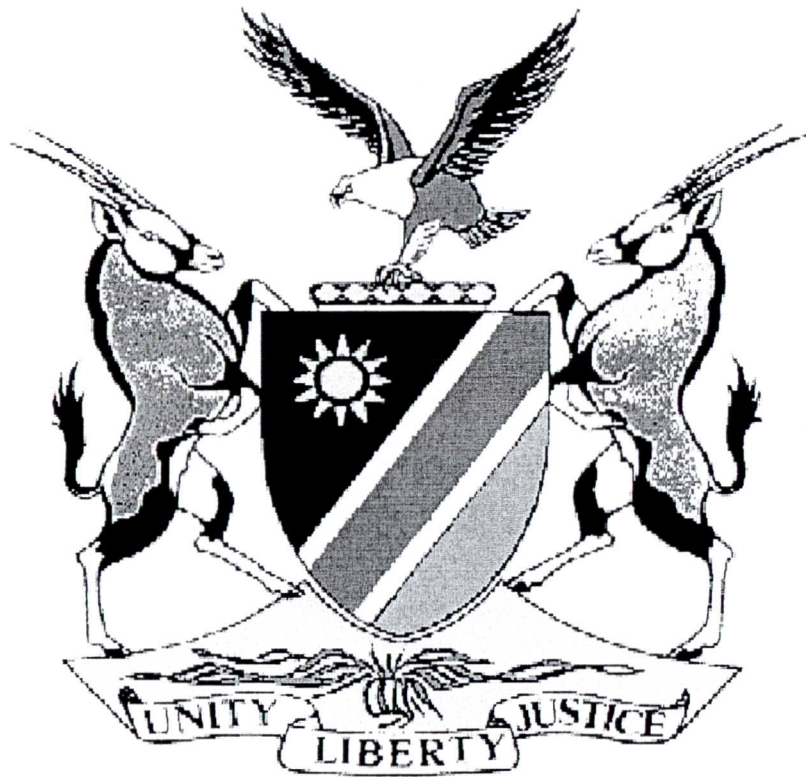


MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA,
MP**

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

**ON TROPHY HUNTING AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF
WILDLIFE**

NOVEMBER 2015

Minister's statement – Trophy hunting

Namibia, like many other African countries had endured a historical past, one in which decisions and solutions were imposed. The wildlife and other natural resources on communal land belonged to the government of that time. In my opinion, I will define this as preservation rather than conservation. This had led to a number of issues including poaching and deliberate destruction of habitat, both on private and communal farmland hence the decline in wildlife prior to independence.

However, at the renaissance of Namibia as a sovereign state in 1990, the status quo could not be maintained. Things had to change and thus a Constitution was drafted calling for amongst others the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, one that had in mind democracy, peace and stability of the people of Namibia as its pillars.

In 1996, a piece of legislation was passed to empower local communities to actively manage and benefit from both consumptive and non-consumptive sustainable utilization of wildlife through the formation of conservancies. This was done with the aim to encourage wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration in communal areas. Amongst other initiatives, this programme has contributed to the growth of the National elephant population from 7500 animals in 1995 to about 20 000 currently. A large percentage of these elephants occurs outside formal protected areas. Thanks to this programme, our National populations of giraffe, leopard, crocodile and cheetah are also very healthy today. Due to this programme, some of the local extinct species have been restored in their former range within communal areas and this has expanded the range. All these good conservation stories to tell come at a cost. Local communities suffer heavy losses from living with wildlife, including loss of human lives. As a result, tangible incentives from wildlife are therefore a must for our local people to tolerate living with wildlife. In 2013, the Community based Natural Resources Management contributed about N\$ 444 million in national income, of which N\$72 million was generated directly for the benefit of the rural communities. Annually, 6500-7000 jobs are created through this programme. Trophy hunting contributes also to the availability of protein supply in that meat of the trophy hunted animals is distributed to rural communities.

Trophy hunting plays an important role in the management and operation of conservancies by generating tangible returns directly right after the formation of the Conservancy. In fact with

most of the conservancies, if income from trophy hunting is taken away, then operations cannot be sustained at all. In 2013, trophy hunting contributed 33% of the total direct income to communities. Today, this programme is one of the success global stories in conservation. Obviously, if we remove trophy hunting from our conservation equation, the CBNRM programme will collapse and Namibia will fail dismally in conservation.

The importance of trophy hunting in conservation is not only applicable to communal areas. About 80% of the numbers of the larger plains game species are found on private farm lands. Trophy hunting on privately owned farmland has resulted in an increase in value of game. With the increase in value which land owners realize from game, the conservation of game resulted in an increase in game numbers. A combination of cattle/trophy hunting operations employ double the number of permanent employees that cattle farms.

A ban on trophy hunting will reduce the values of game species to their meat value and private landowners will have to reduce their game numbers in order to increase cattle numbers in an attempt to substitute the loss of income. If trophy hunting is banned, private farmers will lose at least N\$350 million per annum in foreign currency, 50% of employment opportunities on cattle/trophy hunting operated farms will be lost and 100% on exclusive hunting operated farm, translating to over 1 300 jobs, on private farms only. Owners of cattle farmers will also experience pressure on cash flow and profitability, and will need to source income from other sources. They may be forced to seek additional employment and farm with cattle on a part time basis. It is also important to note that investment on farms is currently largely driven by the trophy hunting industry. This includes investment in game fences and other infrastructures. A reduction in infrastructure development on farms will negatively affect input suppliers of fencing and building materials, to mention just a few.

In conclusion, a ban in trophy hunting in Namibia will lead to significant economic losses, as tourism is one of the major contributors to our GDP and hunting accounts for about 18% of total income from tourism. The ban will also increase poverty because a number of jobs will be lost. Additionally, it will also result in heavy biodiversity losses for Namibia as a whole. Consequently, we will fail in the attainment of Article 95 (1) of the Namibia Constitution, which talks about sustainable utilization of our living natural resources for the benefits of the present and future generations. An indiscriminate ban of all trophy hunting activities imposed by a

largely urban-oriented international community in many ways represents a return to colonial-type external restrictions imposed on Africans. We should therefore resist any calls to ban trophy hunting in Namibia as it is detrimental to our economy and conservation of wildlife resources.

I thank you!