



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND
TOURISM**

STATEMENT

BY

**Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, MP
Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism**

**At the Press Conference on Hunting, Conservation
and Livelihoods**

**11 August 2022, 10h00
Windhoek**

Esteemed members of the media

Fellow Namibians

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have noted some initiatives in process to ban the import of trophies into the United Kingdom, Belgium and Finland. Before these developments, France and the Netherlands also implemented restrictions and prohibitions on the importation of certain hunting trophies.

We recognise that introducing any option related to imports and exports of hunting trophies is fully within the sovereign right of these countries. We further understand that their intention is to protect animal species that are hunted in Namibia and other African countries, an intention that is shared by the Namibian Government. We are nonetheless concerned that this action may have unintended negative consequences for Namibian people and wildlife, if an option to ban the import and export of any trophies is taken.

The Namibian conservation model, which has received international acclaim, is based on the premise that people living with wildlife are its rightful custodians. Our legislation and policies thus provide for rural communities and private landowners to manage their wildlife populations sustainably and derive financial and other benefits from these natural resources. This system is supported by the Ministry, which is committed to conserving wildlife and natural habitat for current and future generations.

Our policy of devolving conditional wildlife ownership rights to our people has produced excellent results for wildlife conservation and rural

sustainable development. Populations of elephants, lions and black rhinoceros have increased in number and expanded their range into areas where they were formerly eradicated. Today, over 90% of our wildlife population occurs on private and communal lands and we have more wildlife now than at any time in the last 100 years, having reversed losses suffered during the colonial and apartheid eras.

As of 2018, an estimated 230,000 communal areas residents, which is 9% of Namibia's total population, were members of communal conservancies, which have created jobs for nearly 5,000 people. These conservancies are responsible for managing wildlife on 169,756 square kilometres of land, which is 21% of Namibia and over two-thirds the size of the UK. Communities generated from this land approximately Euro 7.7 million in cash and other benefits during 2020 alone. About 30% of these returns were derived from conservation hunting, which includes what is commonly known as trophy hunting, while the remainder was from photographic tourism and other nature based enterprises.

Research has shown that hunting and photographic tourism are complementary sources of conservancy income and benefits, including meat, but photographic tourism cannot replace hunting tourism. While the former performs well in scenically attractive areas with good road access, hunting tourism is viable in less attractive or more remote areas and provides an important source of protein for our communities.

On private farmlands, wildlife ownership has encouraged the recovery and growth of numerous species. Collectively, they host about 82% of Namibia's wildlife population, generate Euro 13.6 million in annual hunting revenues and employ over 6,000 people in rural areas. They also

contribute to food security, as over 95% of the venison produced on these lands remains within Namibia. The economic contribution of the wildlife sector has overtaken livestock production and is an important part of our future adaptation to climate change in our semi-arid country. The economic competitiveness of wildlife-based land use has driven Namibia's rewilding success, with huge gains for wildlife, biodiversity conservation, job creation and the national economy.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has the mandate to manage and protect wildlife on State-owned National Parks and Nature Reserves. The Ministry is at the forefront of the government's anti-poaching efforts and plays a vital role in supporting communal conservancies and managing the rhino custodianship programme. These efforts are partly funded through the Game Product Trust Fund (GPTF), a statutory body created by an Act of Parliament, which receives revenue from hunting and live wildlife sales. Data from 2020 – 2021 reveal that GPTF spent about Euro 1,2 million on conservation programmes, 73% of which was dedicated to anti-poaching and other wildlife management activities such as rhino conservation and Protected Area Management.

Conservation hunting is therefore an important part of our integrated sustainable development and conservation strategy. The most economically valuable and least extractive form of hunting is selective, high value hunting whereby an international client pays a premium to hunt older individual animals. The Ministry closely regulates this practice, through registering trained local Professional Hunters who accompany each client and issuing permits based on quotas set using reliable information and scientific studies. The hunting clients may then export a part of the hunted animal (the "trophy") as a memento of the hunting

experience. Most of the animal enters the local food chain. This form of hunting removes just under 1% of the national wildlife population each year, against typical wildlife population growth of about 25 to 35% per year. In the case of slower breeding species such as elephant, typically breeding at 3 to 5% per year, the offtake is far lower, at about 0.2%. High value hunting by clients from Europe and elsewhere is therefore an important contributor to the sustainable wildlife economy in Namibia and to Namibia's growing "rewilding" conservation programme.

Should the countries I have mentioned ban import and export of hunting trophies, that will erode all the progress made in our country since independence, particularly if other more European countries follow suit. European hunters account for over half of the total hunting revenue to Namibia.

In 2019, a total of 5001 trophy hunters visited Namibia for hunting. German tourists or hunters were the highest with a total of 1792 (36%), followed by USA with 934 (19%), Austria 378 (7%), Hungary 210 (4%), France 196 (4%), Sweden 189 (4%), Spain 155 (3%), Denmark 103 (2%), Russia (2%), Australia 70 (1%). Other countries were to a combined number of 888 (18%) of hunters.

In 2020, a total of 871 trophy hunters were recorded. German hunters were the highest with 322 (37%) hunters, followed by the USA with 121 (14%) and thirdly Austria with 95 (11%). Other countries for 2020 from where the hunters came from are France 42 (5%), Denmark 35 (4%), Namibia 33 (4%), Hungary 30 (3%), Sweden 24 (3%), Czech Republic 21 (2%), RSA 21 (2%) and other countries at 127 (15%).

In 2021, a total of 2587 trophy hunters were recorded. German hunters were once again the highest with 824 (32%) hunters, followed by the USA with 775 (30%) and thirdly Hungary with 146 (6%). Other countries for 2021 from where the hunters came from are Austria 108 (4%), France 84 (3%), Spain 80 (3%), Denmark 39 (2%), Czech Republic 43 (2%), Romania 62 (2%), Switzerland 45 (2%) and other countries at 381 (15%).

Without a suitable alternative that fully replaces the income, employment and protein provided by conservation hunting in Namibia, both our people and wildlife will suffer. We therefore appeal to them not to opt for the route of any bans but rather continue to apply current controls based on internationally agreed rules. While we understand that trophy hunting might not always contribute to rural development and conservation in all countries as it does in Namibia, any ban on trophy import and export, whether selective or not would effectively undermine the Namibian people and our successful conservation model.

Namibia can demonstrate that trophy hunting positively contributes to wildlife conservation and the rural economy, which should provide sufficient grounds for approving trophy imports from our country. We therefore encourage all countries that imports trophies from Namibia to adopt a targeted and measured approach.

I Thank You All.