

TORB LINDSKOG CALL TO ACTION AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE ECOLOGIC AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HUNTING, DELIVERED ON THE 17TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Good morning.

I am Torb Lindskog. I am a member of the WFSA Executive Committee and I have been asked not only to summarize what has been said during this symposium, but to make some suggestions and recommendations about where we go from here – a call to action, as it were.

First, the quality of papers has been outstanding. Those of you who presented have not only demonstrated your academic and professional expertise, but have shown unique insights into aspects and issues that I, for one, was not familiar with. Now, learning something new at a symposium is hardly unusual, but this has been an exceptionally educational two days.

I certainly can't review everything that has been said and I don't think I could do justice to much of what was put before us. Anyway, in brief, what are some things that we have learned about the ecological and economic benefits of hunting?

First, that hunting can and does play a vital role in conservation of habitat. In fact, we learned it can be used to literally resurrect or bring back endangered species. The Markhor in Pakistan comes to mind.

Second, the revenues from hunting will enable governments and land owners to maintain ecosystems in their natural, undeveloped form. Hunting is the most friendly productive use of the land possible. It is also interesting that there really is such a close relationship between the environment and the economy. To protect the land you have to use wisely it – this is truly sustainable use.

I was also impressed by some of the specific examples that we heard: the Namibian Communal Conservancies, the Senegal Mining Project, and the economic benefits of bird hunting in the UK.

The title of the symposium might lead someone to think that ecologic and economic benefits are two separate matters, but that is not the case. It is compelling that there is such a close relationship between ecologic and economic benefits.

We have also heard about the problem of the declining numbers of hunters (although I was encouraged by the Swedish and American figures). We heard about the politicizing of the issue, about the unfortunate combining of anti-hunting and anti-gun politics. We heard about problems in our own camp regarding necessary law enforcement, and lack of regular game censuses.

Again, these are just a few highlights of what has been examined for the past two days. But now, what should we do? What is the prescription after the diagnosis? What is our call to action?

I am a businessman and I like to deal in specifics, concrete things we can do, not just should do.

Here is my specific recommendation: the research in the papers we have heard has been invaluable. Sound science can and will supply the intellectual ammunition used in the public policy debates all

over the world. We need more of this type of research and we need it disseminated in a wide and efficient manner. This should be our task. To accomplish it I would recommend a concerted, continuing effort between academics, experts, interest groups and trade associations.

Ladies and gentlemen the report generated by this Symposium will be a tremendous tool that we can use to promote and protect sport hunting throughout the world. Let us use this tool, let us take full advantage of what we have done here over the past two and a half days.

Let me go further, whether through the WFSA or our sister organizations there should be an regular convocations to do what we hope to do here in Windhoek. There should be an ongoing communications, not just one report.

I am not going to apologize for the ambitiousness of this proposal. Too much is at stake; too much needs to be done.

Thank you.