

**MINISTER NETUMBO NANDI' NDAITWAH CLOSING REMARKS AT THE
SYMPOSIUM ON THE ECOLOGIC AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HUNTING,
DELIVERED ON THE 17TH SEPTEMBER 2009.**

Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Ted Rowe, President of the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting, Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost let me thank you for choosing Namibia and Windhoek in particular as the venue for your symposium, and for inviting me to share some perspectives on the subject of your symposium - A subject of great interest to Namibia. The theme of your symposium namely "ecologic and economic benefits of hunting" is well thought of as it is very important in addressing issues related to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, especially as it is taking into account ecologic and economic matters.

Historically, hunting is one of the most important economic activities all over the world, as most, if not all people have looked upon wildlife as the most important sources of food.

Director of ceremonies, esteemed guests,

Namibia has a strong commitment to and long history of conservation and sustainable utilization of our natural resources for the benefit of the current and future generations. We believe that sustainable use of natural resources is the key to successful conservation.

In 1975, Government devolved conditional user rights to private farmer owners. This devolution of user rights led to significant increase in wildlife on private land and the expansion of wildlife-based economic activities such as game farming and hunting and the tourism. This was only small sign of what was to follow.

The success on private land prompted Government to replicate this model on communal land. The Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 devolved management rights over wildlife and tourism to communities that form conservancies under the Community-Based Natural Resources Management Programme (CBNRM). Conservancies have provided economic benefits to communities through eco-tourism and hunting. Today, of the 57 registered conservancies 31 have hunting concessions and rely on wildlife utilization for their livelihoods. For example during the year 2008 conservancies generated 41.9 million Namibian dollars from sustainable National Resources utilization of which 11.8 million was derived from hunting and 8 million from trophy hunting.

Looking at your programme papers giving experience from 13 countries in Europe, America and Africa have been shared. Your discussions, I am informed, were based on research made in those countries. It is my hope that Namibian participants have used this opportunity to learn more so that as a nation we can benefit from the information shared. I am saying this because in Namibia we believe in private and public partnership and that is why the Ministry of Environment Tourism works closely with the private sector and the relevant organisations such as the Namibia Professional Hunters' Association.

Under the CBNRM programme, wildlife populations on state land outside protected area increased significantly. And various species such as black rhino, sable and black-faced impala were re-introduced in their former range. Last year alone the Ministry, supported by our development partners, translocated in excess of 2000 animals to communal conservancies.

Over the years we have seen the growth of capacity in the conservancies to manage this wildlife, and develop economic activities based on this wildlife. We have seen the creation of jobs and the generation of revenue in areas that had few options other than subsistence farming. We have seen how well local communities have integrated wildlife management in their other activities and increasingly how such wildlife management is complementing other forms of land use.

The co-existence of people and wildlife is not without a price. With the growth of wildlife populations in conservancies, we have also seen significant increase in the number of incidences of Human-wildlife conflict (HWC).

The CBNRM was able to function well because of two factors: firstly, the fact that the programme has a strong community buy in, and secondly, conservancies are deriving economic benefit from the sustainable use of wildlife in their areas. This enable them to off-set some of the damages to property and sometimes to loss of lives as a result of HWC. Against that background the Namibian Government has adopted a national policy on human wildlife conflict management. And from the 14 -15 September, we had a national conference on the implementation of that policy. The conference was attended by over 350 delegates that included regional governors, traditional chiefs, members of conservancies and other stakeholders. The conference was successful and we believe the strategies agreed upon if implemented, will help us in dealing with issues of human wildlife conflict.

Director of Ceremonies,

Namibia is a semi-arid country with limited agricultural potential. And indications are that with climate change, Namibia is likely to become even drier. It is therefore possible that farmers will shift to game farming as a substitute to livestock farming.

As we make decisions that affect our environment and economy, it is important for us to have adequate scientific information to guarantee best results. Having looked at the agenda of your meeting I am impressed with the topics covered by the meeting, and the relevance of these topics to the Namibian situation. I am confident that Namibia and other countries that support the principle of sustainable utilisation of natural resources stand to benefit from the outcome of your deliberations. We will appreciate if you can make copies of your presentations and outcomes available to the Ministry.

I wish you all the best with your future endeavors in promoting sport hunting internationally. Though your symposium is ending today, for those who have not done so, may I invite you to visit other parts of Namibia before you go back to your respective countries. Namibia is a land of contrast that one must not miss when chance come.

I thank you

**The Hon. Minister Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah,
Minister of Environment and Tourism, Republic of Namibia**