

**MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT POHAMBAMBA, PRESENTED BY
HON. MINISTER WILLEM KONJORE
OPENING REMARKS AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE ECOLOGIC AND ECONOMIC
BENEFITS OF HUNTING, DELIVERED ON THE 15TH SEPTEMBER 2009**

Good Morning, Mr. Ted Rowe, President of the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities, Presenters, Delegates and Distinguished Guests.

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency President Pohamba, I welcome you to our beautiful country, Namibia!

I wish to apologise on behalf of President Pohamba for not being here this morning to welcome you personally – His Excellency /is unfortunately attending a previously made appointment/attending to urgent affairs of state/out of the country.

We are impressed with the gathering of distinguished international delegates to focus on issues of such great importance not only to Namibia, but the world, and we support your efforts to highlight the many benefits of regulated sport hunting internationally.

Namibia is a pro wildlife-utilisation country, and our progressive national Constitution is the first in the world to formally enshrine the sustainable utilisation of living natural resources.

Namibia has been successful in positioning itself as a model for sustainable, fair-chase trophy hunting, and has become one of the most popular trophy hunting destinations in Southern Africa. This is due in part to our political stability and diversity, a well-developed infrastructure, the ease with which hunting rifles may be temporarily imported into Namibia, and the friendliness and warm hospitality of our people. The key component, however, is Namibia's scientifically based land-use and game-management policies, which have created great and healthy populations of game.

This success has been based on devolving rights over wildlife to freehold and communal area land holders. By giving land holders rights to use wildlife and benefit from it, government has provided incentives for conservation. This has resulted in the fact that 80% of wildlife is found outside of protected areas, and wildlife is increasing on communal land. A strong wildlife industry has been created that, linked to tourism, is a major contributor to the national economy. Income and other benefits such as jobs and training linked to wildlife and tourism in communal area conservancies are contributing to combating poverty.

Recent statistics show that trophy hunting in Namibia steadily generates revenues of around N\$300 million per annum, representing approximately 2.3% of the Gross Domestic Product. To put these values into perspective, note that our hunting industry's revenue grew by 12% annually over the past 10 years. This considerably outpaced the goal of 7% annual growth that was set by "Government in Vision 2030," a white paper on economic development in Namibia.

The Namibian government and organized trophy hunting industry, through NAPHA – the well respected Namibian Professional Hunting Association, continues to focus on the successful conservation of wildlife and wild habitats in Namibia by promoting ethical, selective and fair-chase sustainable trophy hunting.

Our wildlife is a natural resource, which we have proved, if managed properly through game ranching and utilized sustainably through fee-based trophy hunting, has the potential to develop into one of our country's most valuable renewable assets. We are a nation with a proud hunting heritage, and our trophy-hunting sector is well respected by our government and fellow Namibians as an essential and integral part of Namibia's conservation, tourism, farming and business industries.

We are proud that you chose Namibia to host your symposium, and we hope that what you will learn about our country and our strong support of regulated sport hunting.

I wish you fruitful deliberations over the next 3 days.

Thank you!

On behalf of His Excellency President Pohamba,
Hon.Minister Willem Konjore