

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND CHAIRMAN OF
THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)
AT THE KASANE ELEPHANT SUMMIT**

MAY 07, 2019

KASANE, BOTSWANA

Check against delivery

- **Your Excellency Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi,
President of the Republic of Botswana and
Chairperson of the Kasane Elephant Summit;**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and
Government;**
- **Honourable Ministers;**
- **Your Excellency, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax,
SADC Executive Secretary;**
- **Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic
Corps;**
- **Media fraternity;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I commend our host, My Brother, President Masisi, for convening this Elephant Summit, with objective of creating a common understanding and shared vision towards the sustainable management of our elephants. I also thank all

Heads of State and Government for their presence here today.

Conservation in Namibia has attained major successes. In fact, conservancies manage approximately 19.8% of the total Namibian surface area. By joining large contiguous areas and thereby allowing wildlife to roam freely, environmental restoration has been achieved and healthy wildlife populations sustained.

Namibia's conservation model has enabled expansion of the elephant population from just over 7,500 in 1995 to 24,000 at present. The biggest potential threat to the Namibian elephant population is the loss of habitat due to cyclical periods of drought. Another problem area is fragmentation of range and rising incidences of human-elephant conflict. We are aware that these challenges are not unique to Namibia and exist within all member states. We therefore

welcome the developed Elephant Management and Planning Framework, which will assist Partner States to manage their elephants as one contiguous population through a harmonized approach.

Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,

Conservation generates much required economic returns for rural communities. By the end of 2017, community conservation contributed an estimated 7 billion Namibian Dollars to net national income, facilitating job growth within local communities. With this in mind, Namibia affirms the call for communities to be actively involved in the protection and conservation of environment and biodiversity. We further underscore that programmes to promote conservation of biodiversity must positively

impact the standard of living of rural communities.

Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,

Concerning the trade in elephant specimens, Namibia has fully complied with requirements from the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and contributed to the development of a rigorous trade control system. As a result, Namibia successfully exported raw ivory between 1999 and 2008, proving that with adequate controls and strict enforcement measures, ivory can be traded legally.

To that end, Namibia has taken note of the ongoing debate and criticism on elephant population management and status for the

Republic of Botswana and affirm our support to the new policies and programmes on elephant population management and sustainable use, which have been developed by us all, as KAZA Partner States.

Namibia continues to exercise strict control over ivory stocks, however, stocks continue to accumulate, by an average of 4.5 percent per annum, primarily through natural mortalities. We express concern over the cost and security implications of holding large ivory stocks and reiterate our favourable stance towards legal international trade of ivory, from which proceeds would be utilized to support elephant conservation and rural conservation programmes.

Chairperson,

I am further pleased to report that Namibia has nearly completed the projects under Phase I and II of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area Agreement (KAZA TFCA) and encourage ratification of the Treaty by all five Partner States. I further use this opportunity to call for renewed commitment to resourcing the KAZA Fund, so as to enable the full and timely implementation of our shared objectives.

Your Excellencies,

President Ramaphosa concluded the just ended Africa Travel Indaba with the words "Tourism is the new gold". This is an accurate statement that captures the tremendous potential presented by this sector, which remains largely untapped and brimming with possibilities for accelerated socio-

economic growth and development in our Sub-region. The conservation and sustainable management of our natural resources remain key markets in rekindling economic growth and job creation.

I am on record, having stated that the free movement of people must be facilitated, especially to enable Africans who are traveling within Africa. I therefore reiterate the call for the easing of movement of people across our borders and affirm Namibia's commitment to implementing the KAZA UNIVISA, which has been successfully piloted in Zambia and Zimbabwe since 2014.

I wish to conclude by stating that the Namibian elephant population is secure. The population recovery over the past several years attests to our management efforts. Changing times call for appropriate management strategies to be

developed in order to maintain the historic coexistence between our people and elephants. To that end, Namibia supports the realization of a shared approach towards elephant conservation via the KAZA Agreement, thereby, remaining committed towards a common vision for the management of Southern Africa's elephants.

Thank you.