



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

**STATEMENT BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA, MP AND
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM
ON HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT INCIDENTS BEING
EXPERIENCED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY**

10 March 2021

Hon. Speaker

Hon. Members,

I rise to provide information on the current situation pertaining to Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in Namibia.

A number of human wildlife conflict incidents involving elephants, buffaloes and predators are being reported on a daily basis in some parts of the country, which the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism is attending to.

Reports of elephants causing damages to crops, water infrastructure and property has been reported in the areas of Ehirovipuka and Kamanjab in the Kunene Region; in Ruacana and Okahao, Tsandi Constituencies of Omusati Region; Okongo, Nehale Lya Mpingana and Eengondi constituencies in Ohangwena and Oshikoto Regions respectively; Grootfontein commercial farming areas in the Otjozondjupa Region; Mangetti and Musese areas in the Kavango West Regions; areas around Khaudum National Park and Bwabwata National Park in Kavango East Region; Omatjete area in Erongo Region and many parts of the Zambezi Region.

Buffaloes are also reported to be destroying crops in the Zambezi Region, mainly in areas around Lake Liambezi, eastern floodplains as well as areas around Nkasa Rupara, Mudumu and Bwabwata National Parks.

In the Kunene and Omusati Regions, lions continue to attack livestock. The situation is worsened by the current drought situation mainly in the Kunene Region. Wild dogs have also been reported in Salambala Conservancy of the Zambezi Region to be causing conflict in that area. Similar conflicts of wild dogs are also reported in the Kavango East and Otjozondjupa Regions.

Addressing Human-Wildlife Conflict requires striking a balance between conservation priorities and the needs of people who live with wildlife. Human wildlife conflict needs to be managed in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities and farmers, recognizes the need to promote biodiversity conservation, promotes self-reliance and ensure that decision-making is quick, efficient and based on the best available information.

It is for this reasons that the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism is intensifying efforts to manage the conflict, and specific mitigation and preventative measures are being put in place to manage the conflicts. These measures include:

- Drive and chase away elephants to areas where they will not cause problems. In some instances, helicopter are being used or will be used to chase away these elephants.
- Sale of elephants. The process of selling some of the elephants is currently at a stage of discussion and negotiation of contracts, and elephant population in specific hotspot areas will be reduced to minimize the conflict as we sell the elephants.

- Capture and relocation. Certain animals will be relocated and moved to National Parks or areas where they cannot cause problems. For example, the wild dogs in Salambala Conservancy will be captured and moved to Bwabwata National Park in the core wildlife areas away from people. The area where they are roaming has however been difficult to access due to good rains received in the area.
- Early warning systems by collaring specific elephants in different herds to monitor their movements and alert communities and farmers will also be conducted and has already been done in some areas like Kamanjab in Kunene Region, Musese in Kavango West, Tsumkwe in the Otjozondjupa Region, Bwabwata in Kavango East and Zambezi Regions.
- We have created alternative water points for elephants at a distance from homesteads or villages in the Omatjete area of Erongo Region, and Ehirovipuka in the Kunene Region. This year we plan to do the same in areas around Etosha National Park in the Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto Regions. Depending on available funds, this project will be extended to areas around Khaudum National Park in Kavango East Region, and parts of the Kavango West Region.
- With support of the Game Product Trust Fund, we plan to support communities and farmers in replacing their water tanks being damaged by elephants. We however encourage for proper protection of water infrastructure from such damages by elephants. We also plan to support communities in hotspot areas with silos for proper storage of their produce and that elephants in particular don't

damage housing infrastructure in search for the mahangu, maize or pumpkins stored in homesteads.

- While our staff members in the regions are under instructions to assist communities and farmers, we encourage farmers and communities to make use of wire with tins around crop fields for noise that can chase away wild animals like elephants and buffaloes.
- We further encourage the use of chili pepper fences and chili bombs. Where possible trenches around crop fields should be dug as wild animals like elephants and hippos cannot jump a trench.
- Farmers and communities should use traditional methods of drums, whips, vuvuzelas and loud noises.
- Guarding of crop fields at night is important and highly encouraged, as long as it is done with care and caution that people do not walk into a herd of wild animals or make wild animals aggressive.
- Alternative water for people and animals away from rivers should also be provided.
- Where necessary, destruction of specific declared problem causing animals will be done. We recently put down three lions in the Omusati Region that has been causing havoc to communities and their livestock in the area. Two crocodiles in the Zambezi Region were also put down and removed from areas they were causing such problems, just to give two examples.
- In the long term, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism is mapping out wildlife corridors, to determine or make known the movement areas of wild animals so as to prevent human wildlife

conflict. The wildlife corridor strategy for the Zambezi Region has been finalized and will be launched soon. We are currently working on and finalizing the wildlife corridor strategy for the Kunene, Erongo and Omusati Regions. Kavango West and Kavango East regions will follow thereafter.

- We are also developing species management plans that will guide the long-term management of species including the management of human wildlife conflict caused by these species. The Elephant Management and Conservation Plan has just been finalized, and this year we will prioritize plans on lions, wild dogs and buffaloes.

These unfortunate incidents are also worrisome and raise many concerns to us. With the current good rains in certain parts of the country, the river levels are rising and floods are already experienced in some areas. Crocodiles, hippos, snakes and other wild animals including elephants are also moving with the water. I therefore would like to caution communities and the general public not to take risks that may result in human wildlife conflict or cause loss of human lives. The Ministry staff members in the regions are under instructions to give information and render services to communities and farmers in order to protect themselves from wild animals in the areas. The logistical challenges that our staff members experience in the regions are also being addressed.

We will continue to create innovative mechanisms to reduce the level of human wildlife conflict, and to ensure that benefits of conservation management far outweighs the costs, and to build on the significant successes in managing human wildlife conflict.

It is a fact that both humans and wildlife are sharing the same space, but these incidents of human wildlife conflict can be avoided.

On behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, I express my sympathy with those who are experiencing the conflicts with wild animals, and assure you that the Ministry will continue to do everything possible to manage the conflict, and I call upon all citizens to put measures in place to avoid human wildlife conflict in their specific areas.

I thank you all.