



## OUR RESOURCES OUR RIGHTS

12 April 2021

Dear Mr. Habeck, Ms. Baerbock and Ms. Lemke

### **Urgent appeal to the Green Party to enable conservation and uphold human rights in Africa.**

As representatives of millions of rural Africans, the majority of whom live below the poverty line, we are urgently appealing to you to uphold what you have stood for over the years: fighting for environmental protection and the well-being of all life on earth. A recent demand by your party for an effective end to trophy hunting and the wildlife trade as laid out in your manifesto (adopted by your party base in November 2020), is detrimental to biodiversity conservation and tramples upon the rights of our communities to sustainably manage and use the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend. We would like to believe that the position you have taken is as a result of misinformation being spread by [campaigns like these](#) and we would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

Over the last few years there have been increasing calls in many European countries including Germany to ban the import of trophies from animals hunted in Africa, in the mistaken belief that this will enhance the conservation of iconic African species such as elephants and lions. Such a move will have devastating consequences for our livelihoods as well as for conservation, which is eloquently explained [in this article](#) by globally renowned conservation scientists and in this [video](#) sharing our perspective. We take this opportunity to share our viewpoints and lived realities and ensure that our voice informs decision making that affects our lives. We are tired of people from elsewhere, far removed from our realities, talking on our behalf, misrepresenting our successes and dismissing these as 'myths'.

As Africans we share with the Germans a passion and commitment to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation and similar successful approaches to conservation based on sustainable use of our resources. Conservation is a way of life for us and is deeply ingrained in our culture, traditions and rural economies and it starts with those of us who live alongside dangerous large animals. Social injustice is no stranger to us in Africa. During colonial times colonists removed our rights to manage and benefit from our wildlife, and in many instances forcefully evicted us from our lands, often to make way for protected areas. This led to dramatic loss of wildlife and habitat – a disaster for conservation, our traditions and our livelihoods.

Post-independence governments restored our rights, integrating wildlife into rural economies through inclusive conservation strategies. These provide us with socio-economic incentives to live with and

sustainably manage our wildlife. Whilst it varies from country to country, 50-90% of these economic incentives come from sustainable, regulated and scientifically verified hunting. In South Africa, for example, trophy hunting annually contributes more than US\$341 million to the South African economy and supports more than 17 000 jobs. This approach has led to increasing wildlife populations and habitat expansion throughout our region, in stark contrast to elsewhere in the world where biodiversity loss and habitat destruction accelerate at disastrous rates.

The approach to conservation we adopt in Africa acknowledges the harsh reality of living with dangerous wild animals. Although many view elephants, lions and other wildlife through an idealized lens, our daily reality of living with these valued, yet dangerous, animals requires more pragmatism. We worry daily that our children may be killed on their way to school, or that our ability to provide for our families will be destroyed by elephants in our fields or predators amongst our livestock. Some facts for consideration:

- A few weeks ago, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, a 4-year-old girl was killed in Zimbabwe by a crocodile and her 10-year-old sister escaped with serious injuries.
- In Botswana, elephants killed 36 people in 2018, injured dozens more, and destroyed the livelihoods of thousands.
- In Mozambique, wildlife killed 265 people over a 27-month period from July 2006 to September 2008.

In all our countries, similar incidents occur and escalate yearly as wildlife numbers increase. Despite this, elephants, lions and other animals live amongst us – not only in protected areas – and are multiplying because we want them to. But the harsh reality is that if incentives for us to conserve and share our land with wildlife are removed, their future in Southern Africa will be as bleak as that of large predators that were once plentiful in other parts of the world.

We appreciate that for people not familiar with the realities of rural Africa, hunting may seem a counter-intuitive conservation strategy. But if the objective is conservation – not solely recognizing individual animal rights – it is necessary to understand the context of coexisting with dangerous wildlife. Consider our perspectives, evidence base, and success stories from a conservation method that recognizes the basic human right of our peoples to manage and benefit from the sustainable use of our natural resources. If we cannot feed our families through humane and sustainable use of wildlife, we will have no option but to adopt land use practices that will destroy our beautiful natural landscapes and exterminate our treasured wild animals – an all too familiar situation throughout the world.

We welcome international interest and support for conservation in our countries. Indeed, the international community has been instrumental in our success to date through significant investment over 35 years in our Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes. Such support has been forthcoming from the US, the EU and multi-lateral organisations such as IUCN, UNDP and UNEP, along with conservation organisations such as WWF. It is therefore with dismay that we now hear that these same successful programmes and our human rights are under serious threat from those countries and organisations who have been our allies and supporters for decades.

We respectfully request that you hear and amplify our voices. Our conservation successes and lived realities are not 'myths'. We extend our invitation to you, please do come visit our communities to understand the realities of living in rural Africa, and witness our conservation successes. **We trust that you will agree that our human right to sustainably manage the natural resources on which we rely for our livelihoods is not negotiable. Anything less is to put the rights of animals before the rights of African's.**

We write this letter at a time when we trust it will have particular resonance as throughout the world there is increasing acknowledgement of the need to address past and present wrongs stemming from racism, social and environmental injustice, structural inequalities and imposition of Western values and belief systems based on privilege. **Black lives matter, everywhere.**

**Signed for and on behalf of:**

Nano Cruz, President, Green Nation Association, Angola

Botshelo Sesinyi, Manager, Okavango Community Trust, Botswana

Siyoka Simasiku, Director, NCONGO, Botswana

Dick George, Director, Maun Snake Capture, Botswana

Chifundo Dalireni , Programme Coordinator, Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi

Malidadi Berlings Langa, Chairperson, Kasungu Wildlife Conservation for Community Development Association (KAWICCODA), Malawi

Dorothy Malesu Manga, Namibia, Sikunga Conservancy- Committee member of the Conservancy

Lorna Dax, Namibia, #Khaodi //Haos Conservancy – Conservancy Manager

Mervin //Gaseb, Tsiseb Conservancy, Namibia - Chairperson

Iyambo !Naruseb , Namibia , Otjimboyo Conservancy- Chairperson

Zak Dirkse, !Kho !Naub Conservancy Southern Namibia - Chairperson

Hilda Nakathinge, Sheya Shuushona Conservancy, North Central Regions, Namibia – Chairperson

John Bobby Itengula, Ipumbu Ya Tshilongo Conservancy, Omusati Region North Central Region, Namibia – Chairperson

Eva N. Iikondja, Namibia Uukwaludhi Conservancy - Chairperson

Max Junior Wa Midhi, Namibia, Muduva Nyangana Conservancy, Kavanago East Regions, Namibia- Chairperson

Gerson //Aiseb, Chairperson, Sorris Sorris Conservancy, Southern Kunene, Namibia

Echanis Mutoma, Chairperson Mayuni Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Cletius Maketo, Chairperson Sikunga Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Simasiku Fransisca, Chairperson, Kasika Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Martin Ngonga, Chairperson, Dzoti Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Kadima Shine, Chairperson, Mashu Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Nyama Morgan, Chairperson, Wuparo Conservancy, Zambezi, Namibia

Masangu Leonard, Chairperson, Kabulabula Conservancy, Namibia

Muchila Ryco, Chairperson, Nakabolelelwa Conservancy, Namibia

Saisai Doreen, Chairperson, Salamabala Conservancy, Namibia

Ntelamo Eugene, Chairperson, Bamunu Conservancy, Namibia

Slyskan Sampofu, Chairperson, Balyerwa Conservancy, Namibia.  
Dr Lamson Makuleke, Makuleke People, South Africa;  
Fadhili Njilima , Tanzania Africa Wildlife Foundation;  
Dr Rodgers Lubilo, Chair, Zambia CBNRM Forum  
Felix Shanungu, President, National Community Resources Board Association  
Bupe Banda, Zambia Community Resources Boards Association, Zambia  
Bulilima District Never Ncube CAMPFIRE Inter-ward Chairperson, Zimbabwe  
Delani Mabhena Councillor Malanswazi Ward, Zimbabwe  
Phillip Mpofu CAMPFIRE Chairperson Khame Ward, Zimbabwe  
Zoolakes Nyathi Council Chairperson, Zimbabwe  
Isaac Msebele CAMPFIRE Chairperson Ndolwane Ward, Zimbabwe  
Land Ndebele Finance Committee Chairperson; Zimbabwe  
Innocent Mavunela Conservation Committee Chairperson Chipinge District, Zimbabwe  
Patson Simango CAMPFIRE Chairperson Mahenye Ward, Zimbabwe  
Liberty Chauke Campfire Association – Mahenye Communal land, Zimbabwe  
Kumbula Jimmy CAMPFIRE Chairperson Mtandahwe Ward, Zimbabwe  
Naison Ndhlovu Mahenye Ward Councillor, Zimbabwe  
K. Njanjeni Mtandahwe Ward Councillor Hwange District, Zimbabwe  
Nyalani Mgaduwi CAMPFIRE Chairperson Sidinda Ward, Zimbabwe  
Sinikiwe Nyathi Sidinda Ward Councillor, Zimbabwe  
Jabulani Ndubiwa, CAMPFIRE Elder Jambezi Ward Mbire District, Zimbabwe  
Ishmael Chaukura CAMPFIRE Inter-ward Chairperson Masoka Ward Zimbabwe  
Promotion Dzomba Village Head Masoka Ward, Zimbabwe  
Sarudzai Goredema CAMPFIRE Chairperson Masoka Ward, Zimbabwe  
Oscar Marowa Committee Member Masoka Ward, Zimbabwe  
Public Museruka Committee member Angwa Ward, Zimbabwe  
Ishmael Jack CAMPFIRE Vice Chairperson Angwa Ward, Zimbabwe  
Julius Chokubooka CAMPFIRE Treasurer Angwa Ward, Zimbabwe  
Justin Mawachi CAMPFIRE Secretary Angwa Ward, Zimbabwe  
Cossam Chikondoma CAMPFIRE Vice Secretary Angwa Ward Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe  
Godfrey Ndlovu CAMPFIRE Inter-ward Chairperson, Zimbabwe  
Chief Tategulu, Zimbabwe  
Chief Matupula, Zimbabwe  
Chief Siphoso, Zimbabwe  
Chief Shana, Zimbabwe