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The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell  
Minister of State (Development and Africa)  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

07 March 2023

Dear Minister Mitchell,

### **Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill**

The Namibian Chamber of Environment, an umbrella organisation for 70 environmental NGOs, was requested by the Community Conservation Leaders delegation from four countries attending a meeting in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) to share the attached open letter with you via your High Commissions, Embassies, and other communication channels. The correspondence will be released to the media 24 hours later. Also attached is a short report on the response of the community leaders to the news that the UK government intends to prohibit the import of wildlife trophies into the UK by means of legislation.

Wildlife and its wise management is part of the economy of Southern Africa. Trophy hunting is an important part of that economy. This view is shared by rural communities, environmental NGOs and governments. There is thus a significant difference between the views on trophy hunting of environmental NGOs in your country and those in Southern Africa. And that is explained by the fact that we have seen, at first hand, how well-managed hunting contributes to conservation and to rural livelihoods. This can be clearly seen in the macro-environmental indicators of wildlife numbers and trends in Southern Africa, supported by a peer-reviewed study of 152 countries and their success in conserving the world's megafauna. Botswana and Namibia were rated the most successful, Zimbabwe was 5<sup>th</sup>, Zambia 9<sup>th</sup>, and Angola, after decades of civil war, 40<sup>th</sup>. The UK was 123<sup>rd</sup>. It is thus somewhat paradoxical that the UK feels it is necessary to impose its conservation approach on countries with far more successful track records.

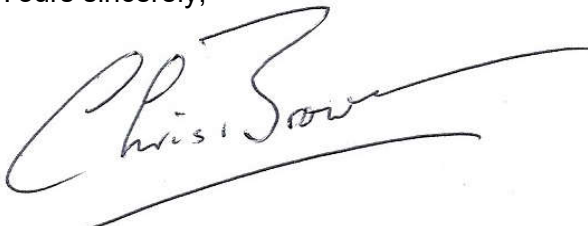
I think that it is also worth drawing to your attention the fact that Southern African countries are becoming increasingly sensitive to the attempts by western industrialised countries to dictate how they use and manage their natural resources, especially given the situation explained above where wildlife numbers are stable and increasing. At the same time, western countries and blocks such as the UK, EU and USA are attempting to have greater influence in the region to counter the expanding role of China and perhaps Russia. This macro-political policy approach is being undermined by micro-policy issues around wildlife and natural resources. Such paternalistic and, might I say, arrogant and misinformed approaches will only encourage

our countries to look eastwards to grow alliances and markets for our natural resources.

The rural communities have asked that you, either personally or via your High Commissioners and Ambassadors, visit their communities, wildlife areas and programmes and see for yourself what is happening. I assure you, you will come away being highly impressed and with a totally different understanding of the situation. Your current views are understandably influenced by the loud voices of your NGOs and animal rights advocates. These people do not live with difficult and dangerous megafauna. They do not need to come up with conservation policies and approaches to maintain wildlife outside of national parks. Just think for a moment how your farmers would respond if you still had wolves, bears and lynx roaming freely across your country. They would simply not tolerate them unless they got some significant and tangible benefits. And your UK extinct species are far less problematic than elephants, hippos, lions, hyaenas, crocodiles and the many other species that our farmers need to contend with. Your proposed Bill will remove the benefits our farmers get, and they too will then not tolerate these species on their farmland.

I sincerely hope that you will give deep thought to these issues as conservation in our Southern African countries will be very negatively impacted by your proposed Bill – and I am sure that that is not what you intend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Brown", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Chris Brown  
CEO: Namibian Chamber of Environment

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The Namibian Chamber of Environment is a voluntary association and body corporate separate from its members  
[*universitas personarum*] under Namibian Common Law.

The NCE is an environmental membership organisation. Its current Executive Committee comprises:  
Otjikoto Environmental and Education Trust, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations,  
Namibian Environmental and Wildlife Society, Namibia University of Science and Technology, and Sustainable Solutions Trust.