



The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell MP
Minister of State in the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
Minister for Africa
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

8th March 2023

cc:

Trudy Harrison MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
The Rt. Hon. Lord Benyon, Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Dear Minister,

RE: UNITED KINGDOM HUNTING TROPHIES (IMPORT PROHIBITION) BILL

We are writing regarding the above Bill which is due to have its Report stage in the House of Commons on 17th March.

While we recognise that the government's intention with this Bill is to support conservation it has the likelihood of reversing and inhibiting long established and sustainable conservation efforts in many African nations, including Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

As discussions of the Bill have continued and the media has availed local communities of news on the subject matter, and the intent of the law, these communities in our respective countries have expressed angst over the adverse impact that the law will have on their livelihood and efforts towards wildlife conservation.

Our countries have national and international responsibility for protecting these unique wildlife resources for the present and future generations. Owing to our good record in biodiversity conservation our region holds more than half of the world's lions, buffaloes, elephants, rhinos, and many other species.

Trophy hunting currently helps generate revenue from wildlife across Southern African countries, incentivising landowners to maintain wild habitat and populations. This benefit is significant, as trophy hunting areas protect more land than our National Parks.

If trophy hunting is removed the economic viability of these vast areas of land will be reduced and land conversion to agriculture is likely to increase. This has been identified as the primary threat to biodiversity. It should also be noted that photo-tourism is not a viable option for most places, and already fails to generate sufficient revenue for most protected areas.

Additionally, trophy hunting is an important wildlife management tool to address over-population of species. It is also a means of managing human-wildlife conflicts particularly with communities that live adjacent to wildlife protected areas. If there is no control of the population of wild animals, there is a danger of them migrating to human settlements. Reports abound of people being injured or killed by wild animals, crops being destroyed, consequently causing food insecurity to communities.

While we know that poorly managed trophy hunting and ‘canned hunting’ do not have conservation benefits, we do know that well managed trophy hunting - the prevailing model in all our countries - contributes to reductions in habitat loss and poaching. It has been proved as a demonstrable conservation tool for multiple species, including endangered ones such as black rhinos.

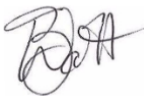
It is our collective position that, where legislation such as the current Hunting Trophies Bill is to be enacted, the IUCN’s recommendations regarding trophy hunting should be considered.

As this Bill will adversely affect large populations in our countries, we suggest that there should be a meaningful consultation with either ourselves as affected African country representatives and/or local community groups in our respective countries. There is an urgent need to conduct a clear impact assessment of trophy hunting on conservation projects, wildlife management, livelihoods, and tourism in our respective countries.

We would therefore like to urgently request a meeting with yourself, Trudy Harrison MP, and Lord Benyon, the DEFRA Ministers responsible for the Bill’s passage through Parliament, ahead of the Bill’s Report stage and 3rd reading in the House of Commons on March 17th, to set out our concerns and those of our peoples, with the backing of data from the scientific community.

Yours sincerely

Her Excellency, Ms Linda Scott



*High Commissioner
Namibia High Commissioner*

His Excellency, Mr Jeremiah Nyamane Mamabolo



*High Commissioner
South Africa High Commission*

Her Excellency, Asha-Rose Migiro



*High Commissioner
High Commission for the United Republic of
Tanzania*

His Excellency, Colonel (Rtd) Christian M Katsande



*Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary
Zimbabwe Embassy*