



THE REPORT ON RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS OF HUNTING TOURISM BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES LIVING ALONGSIDE WILDLIFE AND DELIVER PETITION TO THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION



DATE

12 March 2024

VENUE:

Avani Resorts and Hotel
Gaborone, Botswana

23

Community Trusts

100

Participants marched to
the British High
Commission



Table of Contents

• INTRODUCTION	-----	3
• 2.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE MARCH, PETITION & PRESS CONFERENCE	-----	3
• 3.0 IMPACTS OF THE MEETING	-----	3
• 4.0 CHALLENGES	-----	3
• 5.0 CONCLUSION	-----	4
• ANNEX A: PETITION	-----	5 - 7
• ANNEX B: REGISTER	-----	8



The gathering of over 100 community members from 24 community trust living along wildlife, in Gaborone marching peacefully, demonstrating their opposition to the Hunting ban (Trophy imports Prohibition) to deliver the petition to the British High Commissioner representative on March 12, 2024.

INTRODUCTION

This detailed report encapsulates the events surrounding the submission of a petition by NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Botswana protesting the proposed hunting ban (importation prohibition) bill in the United Kingdom. The gathering of over 100 community members in Gaborone to march and peacefully demonstrate their opposition to the ban underscores the significance of the issue at hand. The petition, personally delivered by the Chairperson of Chobe Enclave Community Trust (CECT) to the British High Commissioner representative on March 12, 2024, symbolizes the collective voice of communities living alongside wildlife.

The orchestration of the peaceful demonstration by the Ngamiland Council of NGOs (NCONGO) on behalf of community-based organizations reflects a concerted effort to safeguard the interests of communities impacted by the proposed import hunting ban. The confluence of events leading to the submission of the petition highlights the proactive stance taken by these organizations to address potential threats to wildlife conservation and community livelihoods.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MARCH, PETITION & PRESS CONFERENCE:

The multifaceted objectives of the March, petition submission, and subsequent press conference were meticulously designed to achieve several crucial goals:

- To raise awareness regarding the adverse effects of the hunting importation bill on wildlife, the environment, and the livelihoods of communities residing in proximity to wildlife habitats.
- To foster unity among community-based organizations nationwide, encompassing both consumptive and non-consumptive tourism practices, in opposition to the detrimental bill.
- To emphasize the bottom-up conservation approach embodied by the Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) program through a comprehensive **press conference, shedding light on its efficacy in achieving conservation goals.**

IMPACTS OF THE MEETING:

The gathering of community-based organizations and concerned community members for the petition submission signified a pivotal moment in voicing out against the potential repercussions of the hunting importation bill. The collaborative platform created during the event not only facilitated the articulation of shared concerns but also catalyzed networking opportunities and strategic partnerships essential for advancing biodiversity conservation, community-led conservation initiatives, and sustainable resource management practices.

The meeting served as a catalyst for increased dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, paving the way for enhanced coordination in conservation efforts. Furthermore, the visibility generated through the press conference helped amplify the voices of local communities and organizations, drawing attention to the importance of community-led conservation initiatives in protecting wildlife and natural habitats.

CHALLENGES:

A notable challenge encountered during the organization of the event was the constraint posed by limited financial resources for some communities, which impacted the scale and reach of the demonstration. The shortfall in the expected number of attendees from community trusts underscored the logistical and promotional hurdles faced, thereby influencing the overall effectiveness and outreach of the event.

In addition, logistical challenges such as securing permits, coordinating transportation, and ensuring adequate publicity also presented obstacles during the planning and execution of the event. These challenges emphasize the need for greater support and resources to enable more robust and impactful community-led initiatives in the future.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the submission of the petition by NGOs and CBOs in Botswana serves as a poignant reminder of the pivotal role that community engagement, advocacy, and collaborative action play in safeguarding wildlife conservation and community well-being. While the initial petition submission marked a significant milestone in raising awareness and garnering support, sustained efforts and strategic interventions are imperative to ensure that the proposed hunting importation bill does not materialize into law, safeguarding the interests of communities living alongside wildlife and preserving the delicate ecological balance.

In essence, the collective voice echoed through the submission of the petition embodies the unwavering commitment of these organizations and communities to champion conservation efforts, protect wildlife habitats, and uphold the principles of sustainable resource management for the collective benefit of present and future generations. As we look to the future, it is essential to build upon the momentum generated by this event and continue advocating for policies and practices that support the coexistence of communities and wildlife in a harmonious and sustainable manner.





MARCH 12, 2024

The British High Commission Plot 1079-1084 Main Mall, Off Queens Road,
Gaborone, Botswana

ATT: THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION

Contact: 686 2851/ 2

director@ncongo.org www.ncongo.org

RE: PETITION AGAINST THE PROPOSAL MADE BY THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA TO LOBBY FOR THE RETURN OF THE HUNTING TROPHIES (IMPORT PROHIBITION) BILL

Dear Sir/Madam,

We the Communities living alongside wildlife represented by 22 Community Trusts across Botswana, write to you today with deep concern regarding the proposed bill to be presented to the UK parliament on prohibition of importation of trophies from CITES listed species for importation to the United Kingdom.

Our petition addresses critical issues that we believe merit careful consideration and evaluation:

1. Botswana's incredible conservation success story: Botswana has a long history of un-paralleled conservation success. Almost 40% of the area of Botswana has been set aside for biodiversity conservation. Botswana has the largest population of elephants in the wild in the whole world. The recent (2022) elephant wide survey estimated the population of elephants in the KAZA area to be 277 900 of 131,909 or 47% of the KAZA elephant population resides in Botswana. This due to our good conservation policies and programs
2. Trophy Hunting Benefits to Communities: Trophy hunting plays a pivotal role in benefiting communities residing in wildlife areas. It serves as a vital source of revenue generation, providing employment opportunities, social services such as funeral insurance and scholarships, and income for housing for the needy and elderly. In 2023, trophy hunting contributed significantly to communities involved in the practice, generating a substantial amount financial resource, directly contributing to community development. The ban on trophy hunting between 2014- 2019 resulted in complete loss of financial benefits for some local communities. We urge against reverting to such detrimental outcomes if the ban on trophy hunting is reinstated.
3. Elephant Expansion and Human-Wildlife Conflict: The ban on hunting in 2014 led to a noticeable expansion of the elephant population in Botswana, causing elephants to venture into previously non elephant range areas. This expansion has resulted in increased instances of crop damage, posing risks to human lives and livelihoods. The current elephant population estimates in Botswana raise concerns about the environmental sustainability of maintaining such large herds in the country's rangelands.
4. Crop Damage and Human Losses: Wildlife, including elephants, have been responsible for damaging crops, leading to reduced yields and food scarcity for communities. Furthermore, the escalation of human-wildlife conflicts has tragically resulted in human casualties, with reports of fatalities linked to encounters with elephants. These conflicts underscore the urgent need for sustainable wildlife management practices.

- 5. Conservation and Human Well-being: Trophy hunting can serve as a conservation tool when implemented responsibly and with consideration for wildlife populations. It aids in managing wildlife distribution, particularly the elephant population, to mitigate negative impacts on vegetation, agriculture, and livestock farming. Integrating human well-being into conservation policies is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes, as conservation efforts must prioritize both ecological preservation and community welfare.
- 6. Controlled Trophy Hunting Practices: Contrary to misconceptions, trophy hunting in Botswana is a regulated practice guided by annual wildlife quotas set by the government, selective targeting of specific animals, and adherence to ethical hunting standards. By focusing on old males and avoiding the hunting of breeding females and young animals, hunting practices aim to maintain sustainable wildlife populations.
- 7. Mitigating Wildlife Poaching: Ceasing trophy hunting in the past has led to adverse consequences, including increased wildlife poaching driven by factors such as crop damage, reduced community benefits, and wildlife-human conflicts. The rise in poaching incidents poses a threat to the conservation of wildlife resources and undermines tourism development in regions like Ngamiland, Chobe, and Boteti. Addressing these challenges through sustainable conservation practices that consider human well-being alongside wildlife preservation is imperative.
- 8. Economic Impact on Local Communities: The livelihoods of many local communities in Botswana are intricately linked to wildlife-based tourism, including trophy hunting. Reinstating the ban on hunting trophies importation could have significant economic repercussions for these communities, potentially leading to reduced income, employment opportunities, and social services that they depend on.
- 9. International Relations and Conservation Efforts: Botswana's stance on wildlife conservation, including the management of trophy hunting, can have implications for its international relations and conservation efforts. Collaborative efforts with other countries and organizations in the conservation sphere may be impacted by decisions related to wildlife management practices and policies.

In conclusion, we implore your government to carefully consider the implications of enacting THE HUNTING TROPHIES (IMPORT PROHIBITION) BILL. Such a decision could have far-reaching negative consequences on wildlife populations, exacerbate human-wildlife conflicts, undermine conservation efforts, and impact the livelihoods and well-being of communities residing in wildlife areas.

We trust that your esteemed office will give due consideration to our petition and advocate for sustainable wildlife management practices that balance conservation efforts with community needs and welfare.

Signatories to the petition

1. Ngamiland Council of NGOs
2. Qangwa Community Trust
3. Lake Ngami Community Trust
4. Xhauxhwatubi Community Development Trust
5. Sankoyo Tshwaragano Management Trust
6. Okavango Community Trust
7. Mababe Zokotsama Community Development Trust
8. Cgae Cgae Community Trust
9. Okavango Jakotsha Community trust
10. Tcheku Community Trust
11. Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community trust
12. Tsodilo Community Development Trust
13. Habu Community Trust
14. Okavango Human Wildlife Foundation
15. Masego Community Conservation Trust
16. Nata Conservation trust
17. Pandamatenga Lesoma Kazungula Community trust (PALEKA)
18. Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust
19. Tsau Semboyo Makakung Management Trust
20. KD1
21. Nokaneng Community Trust
22. Shorobe Community Development Trust
23. Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives (TOCaDI)



Press Conference Attendance Register

Location – Gaborone @ Avani

Time: 0900hrs – 1100hrs

Date: 12 March 2024

Names	Organization	Contacts	Signature
JEMUNGUNA KANDJOU	Hobu Trust	73235483	J. Kandjou
KENRAMESE MATSUNAKA	HABISE COMMUNITY TRUST	75851761	C. Matsunaka
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