

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER, 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

BY THE HON. MINISTER OF TOURISM AND ART, MR BANDA

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement and inform the nation on the extent of the problem of human wildlife conflicts in the country and what is being done in addressing and providing mitigation measures.

Sir, the problem of human wildlife conflict in Zambia is huge. The Ministry of Tourism and Art in 2017, through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife received a total of 6,085 reports of human wildlife conflicts across the country. This resulted in sixty-three people being killed and twenty eight people injured with a total of 279 livestock killed by wildlife animals. Wildlife animals also destroyed several unquantified crop fields.

Mr Speaker, in response to this, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife killed a total of 125 problem animals to control the situation. These included twenty six elephants, thirty six hippopotamuses, sixteen crocodiles, twenty four baboons, sixteen buffaloes, three lions, three hyenas and one bush pig.

Sir, in the last six years, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife received an average of 4,490 reports of human animal conflicts with an average of forty four people killed and 140 problem wild animals being killed as a control measure. During the same period, incidences of human animal conflicts, numbers of people killed by wild animals and numbers of killed problem wild animals show increasing trends. These statistics indicate the human animal conflicts are, indeed, a huge problem of concern to the Ministry of Tourism and Art.

Mr Speaker, the human animal conflicts have apparently increased in the country primarily because humans are increasingly encroaching, settling and cultivating in wildlife habitats and corridors. Further, fishing in hippo and crocodile inhabited rivers is usually done with no concern of safety measures. For example, people will wade in rivers with dangerous animals while fishing. The animal behavioural activities have, to a large extent, increased chances of human/animal encounters. As a result, humans are being killed, injured and their properties damaged and wild animals are also being killed, disturbed or displaced from their habitats.

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER, 2018

Sir, increased human/wildlife conflicts have a negative impact on wildlife conservation, community livelihoods and wellbeing. Human wildlife conflicts are undermining community support for wildlife conservation and contributing to increased wildlife mortalities through problem animal control measures and retaliation from the communities. However, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife does not compensate the victims of human/wildlife conflicts. It just provides humanitarian assistance in various forms to victims or their families. The Department has no capacity to compensate victims of human/wildlife conflicts. None of the human/wildlife conflict compensation schemes in Africa have succeeded in providing best practices.

Sir, it has been observed that compensation schemes of human/wildlife conflicts have not worked well as they are very expensive and unsustainable due to high occurrence rates. They are also prone to abuse as people prefer to be compensated and use human/wildlife conflicts as reasons for livestock or crop failures.

Mr Speaker, this despite huge and growing problem, the Ministry of Tourism and Art has put the following measures in place to address the problem and protect humans, crops and property:

- (a) the Ministry of Tourism and Arts through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, with support from donors, is constructing solar electric fences around crop fields in some parts of the country such as Chiyawa, Livingstone and Kazungula;
- (b) the ministry through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife uses fireworks and fire arms on a regular basis to frighten and deter Elephants from coming close to crop fields and villages;
- (c) the Department of National Parks and Wildlife responds to human-wildlife conflict reports and deploys officers to scare or kill problem animals thereby preventing crop damage and predation on livestock;

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER, 2018

- (d) community members in the affected areas are being sensitised by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife staff to avoid moving in wildlife habitats and corridors especially after 1800 hours;
- (e) the Community Resources Boards (CRBs) are being encouraged to engage communities and address human-wildlife conflict approaches through a community based conflict mitigation programme; and
- (f) the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in consultation with stakeholders is developing general management plans for guiding human settlement patterns in game management areas thereby avoid unplanned settlements and land uses which are increasing occurrences of human-wildlife conflicts.

Sir, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife has been having challenges in adequately responding to reports relating to problem animals country-wide due to inadequate man power and transport. The department has no capacity to effectively deal with the problem singlehandedly. This requires collaboration and an integrated approach by various stakeholders such as the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, the Department of Agriculture, local authorities and communities.

I thank you, Sir.