



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON. CATHERINE
NAMUGALA, MP, MINISTER OF TOURISM, ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES, ON ZAMBIA'S PARTICIPATION TO THE 15TH
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION IN
INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES IN WILD FAUNA
AND FLORA (CITES) TO BE HELD FROM 13-25 MARCH 2010, IN
DOHA, QATAR, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

MARCH 2010

Mr. Speaker,

I thank you for according me this opportunity to inform the House of Zambia's participation at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which started on the 13 and will run up to the 25th March 2010 in Doha, Qatar, United Arab Emirates. This meeting is of particular significance to Zambia, because the country submitted a proposal to down list it's Elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II. This proposal will be decided upon by the international community at this meeting.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia is a State Party to CITES whose main objective is to promote effective conservation of the world's endangered species of wild plants and animals by regulating international trade in these species. As a State Party to the Convention, Zambia has an obligation to comply with requirements of CITES both by the implementation of the Convention and by further enacting legislation to domesticate the Convention. The country, as a state Party, is also obliged to participate in the Conventions Conference of the Parties, which is its supreme decision making body. The last conference of the Parties to CITES was held in the Hague, the Netherlands in 2007.

Mr. Speaker,

According to the Convention's criteria for listing, Appendix I listing means that the species is threatened with extinction and, therefore, no commercial activities or exploitation are allowed. The Zambian population of the African elephant has for the last three decades been said to meet the biological criteria of listing on Appendix I, which entails that it is an endangered species.

Mr. Speaker,

During the early 1980s, the Zambian elephant population was below 20,000 and in constant decline to as low as 12,000. In 1989, the elephant population qualified for Appendix I listing as the species was threatened with extinction. From the early 1990's, Zambia strengthened its law enforcement efforts and the population started to increase to the current levels of 27, 000 in 2008 from 22,000 in 2002. This represents a significant increase which unfortunately has also triggered escalating human-elephant conflict. Honourable Members of this House, in particular those representing rural Constituencies, will attest to the fact that crop damage and other forms of conflict have escalated over the years and this can be attributed mainly to the increase in elephant populations. A large population of elephants is also a threat to the environment due to habitat destruction.

Mr. Speaker,

The House may wish to know that elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are already on Appendix II and available for commercial utilization. Although Zambia's elephant population is in Appendix I where no commercial activities are allowed by CITES, most of the elephant population in Zambia is shared with other countries in the sub-region whose populations are already in Appendix II. This situation is perceived to be unfair to us as we protect the same elephants which can end up being hunted in our neighboring countries.

Mr. Speaker,

The House may wish to know that during the 14th Conference of the Parties to CITES held in the Hague, the Netherlands in 2007, an Annotation was adopted to rest elephant ivory trade for nine years. There are also advances to put in place a twenty year moratorium on all ivory trade. It must be stated that this annotation does not apply to any other elephant range state other than that of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia being outside the range State of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe is allowed to submit a proposal to down-list, if

the criteria to do so are met. Given that Zambia's elephant population is increasing and its broader sustainable conservation objectives have been met, the country qualifies to propose for down-listing. I wish to state that Zambia's proposal to down-list the elephant is based on findings of a comprehensive assessment that showed that commercial trade would not be detrimental to the survival of the elephant.

The proposal is aimed at facilitating the following:

- i. A quota of 120 elephants to trade in hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes and/or trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations;
- ii. Trade in raw skins from Problem Animal Control; and,
- iii. Trade in registered 21.6 tonnes of registered stockpile of raw ivory currently in our custody.

Zambia's proposal is also supported by the fact that only ivory from Zambian elephant population from its registered stock will comprise its export stock. In addition, all tusks from the ivory stockpile will be marked with individual identification system. Revenue realized from the sale of ivory will be used strictly for conservation activities.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia recognizes that its elephant population is a valuable and prestigious resource in tourism development. Therefore, the country

would not have proposed the down-listing of the elephant if doing so endangered the survival and existence of a species it considers critical in nature-based tourism.

I wish to re-iterate that the down-listing of elephant is important in order to clear stocks of Government owned ivory while at the same time allow for sustainable use of the species through trophy hunting for non commercial purposes and trade in live animals to acceptable destinations. It is important for the House and the public to understand that the country presently incurs huge costs in terms of securing its ivory stockpiles from theft.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia has accumulated over 30 tonnes of ivory in the last 17 years of which 67 percent of the ivory stock was obtained from natural mortalities and problem animal control. Currently, the primary risk to the long term survival of the elephant in Zambia is not illegal international trade, but loss of habitat and increasing conflict with legitimate human interests such as agriculture as well as poaching.

Mr. Speaker,

The House may wish to know that this is not the first time that Zambia is submitting a proposal to down-list. In 2002 during the 12th

Conference of Parties, the Zambian Government submitted a proposal to down-list its elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II in order to clear stocks of ivory. The proposal was rejected because its elephant populations were low and, therefore, threatened with extinction. There were other findings by the Panel of Experts that assessed Zambia's proposal then that did not favour Zambia's proposal. Following Zambia's second submission of its request to down-list the elephant this time, a CITES Panel of Experts that visited the country has favourably rated the country's proposal. Their findings indicate that Zambia's elephant population is viable and sustainable; that we have improved in our ability to monitor the elephant population; that the current anti-poaching measures and law enforcement are effective; that the control of ivory stocks is adequate to prevent the mixing of legal and illegal ivory; that our controls are adequate to stop ivory taken or traded illegally from other countries to be traded in Zambia; and that the acceptance of the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the conservation status of the elephant population and its environment. The findings on most of these aspects in 2002 were found to be negative and hence the failure of the Zambian proposal to go through.

Mr. Speaker,

The down-listing is important for the following reasons:

- i. It is in the best interest of sustained elephant conservation and management;

- ii. It will contribute towards poverty reduction of impoverished rural communities;
- iii. It will in the long-term support bio-diversity conservation and wildlife management; and
- iv. It will support enforcement measures. In this regard, the revenue from downlisting of Zambia's elephant would go a long way in narrowing ZAWA's financial gap which is currently estimated to be in the range of K36 billion (US\$ 8 Million).

In conclusion, I wish to assure the nation that despite resistance by some states to support down-listing of the elephant to allow for restricted trade, Zambia's proposal is in the best interest of the country and should be supported by all. As Government, as well as members of this House, we should lobby for the adoption of this proposal which will no doubt bring about benefits to the Zambian people, especially those who live in Game Management Areas.

I thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**

Catherine Namugala, M.P.
MINISTER OF TOURISM, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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