

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**  
**ON**  
**EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES BEING UNDERTAKEN TO REDUCE HUMAN-**  
**ANIMAL CONFLICTS COUNTRYWIDE**  
**BY THE**  
**THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (MR SIKUMBA), MP**

Madam Speaker, I rise to deliver a ministerial statement on the effectiveness of measures being undertaken to reduce human-wildlife conflict and the status of the problem that is countrywide. This is in response to the urgent matter of public importance, raised by the hon. Member of Parliament for Chama South, Hon. Davison Mung'andu.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity given to update the nation through this House on the issues raised with regards to the human-wildlife conflict and allay fears of the people in the affected areas.

Madam Speaker, my statement will first address the possible causes and reasons for the increase of human-wildlife conflict. I will then outline the extent to which the Government is implementing measures to address the problem and finally conclude by making a statement outlining the measures to remedy the situation in the short-term, medium-term and long-term.

Madam Speaker, the human-wildlife conflict situation in Zambia has become a matter of great concern to the Government. Lately, we have seen an increase in these incidences. The ministry has taken time to populate statistics for the last five years to show or rather indicate that 63,211 problem animal reports raging from loss of human lives, injuries, loss of livestock, destruction of crops and property, where recorded, which the Government deeply regrets.

Madam Speaker, let me detail the glaring statistics that I have just mentioned. Over a period of five years;

- (a) in 2018, as a benchmark, 6,318 human-wildlife conflict incidences were reported, including in Chama North and Chama South;
- (b) the following year, 2019, 8,765 human-wildlife conflict incidences were reported, representing 39 per cent increase compared to the previous year, which is 2018;
- (c) in 2021, 18,513 human-wildlife conflict incidences were recorded representing yet another increase of 193 per cent compared to our benchmark of 2018; and
- (d) In 2022, 21,442 human-wildlife conflicts representing 239 per cent increase from 2018.

Madam Speaker, the reported increase trend of human-wildlife conflict is worrisome and indeed of great concern to us in the Government. It appears that the measures that the Government has been implementing over a period of time to address these problems such as scaring animals using firearms or using chilli, electric fences and controlling problem animals as well as capture and relocation, have not yielded effective results.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the measures of controlling problem animals, for example, in 2022 alone, a total of 131 problem animals were controlled by killing. When I say controlled, we are talking about killing. This is in comparison to 227 problem animals controlled in 2021.

I could have brought graphs, but not for this segment.

Madam, some of the reasons measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict have not been very effective, include, among others, scaring animals using firearms, use of chilli, electric fences, chilli blusters, controlling problem animals as well as capture and relocation are only effective in the short term.

Madam Speaker, allow me to outline some of the probable causes of the observed increase in human-wildlife conflict across the various Game Management Areas (GMAs) that we have in our country;

- (a) the increase of human settlement in wildlife habitats and corridors for various reason such as farming and settlement;
- (b) the increase of the number of elephants in some parts of the country such Luangwa Valley, Lower Zambezi and the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Area (KAZA TFCA), popularly known as KAZA.
- (c) the observable increase of wildlife numbers due to better law enforcement in protected areas;
- (d) sharing of water sources between wild animals and humans, which usually results in attacks on the later by the former;
- (e) animals such as elephants are migratory animals and as such, we are having a challenge of an influx of elephants migrating from different areas seeking refuge, food and water;
- (f) injuring of animals due to poaching, makes certain animals such as buffaloes and elephants become violent and aggressive;
- (g) the months of May and July are known to be breeding seasons for large cats such lions, which usually result in some adult male lions and a few circumstances, lionesses and young cubs being forcibly ejected out of the pride causing them to wonder far away from the protected areas into community areas; and
- (h) the practice of fishing at night unprotected areas, has lead to people being attacked by hypos.

Madam Speaker, allow me to outline the measures that the Government together with cooperating partners will continue to put in place to address the problem in the short-term, medium-term and long-term;

- (a) training of community members and blusters;
- (b) the development of Participatory Village Land Use Plans (VLUPs);
- (c) data correction—in which we collect data that will help us provide information that includes the time and extent of crop damage, location of the incidence and the name of the affected individual;
- (d) mass media communication—through the use of local and community radio station;
- (e) the deployment of wildlife police officers—this will enhance our numbers of patrols within national parks and protected areas;
- (f) supporting communities with early maturing crop varieties and alternate livelihoods like gardening, pottery, goat rearing and bee keeping;
- (g) the Ministry of Tourism is in the process of amending the Wildlife Act No.14 of 2015, which will obviously come to this House and intends to propose a provision for relief in the case of loss of crop or livestock and consolation when human life is lost;
- (h) the relocation of illegal settlements from wildlife habitats and corridors; and
- (i) the Government intends to commission a study to comprehensively understand the causes extents of the problem to provide practical recommendations to address the problem.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, let me reiterate that human-wildlife conflict remains one of the biggest and complex challenges the Ministry of Tourism is facing at the moment. As a ministry, we are doing everything humanly possible to respond and mitigate the problem which requires a multi-pronged approach to effectively deal with this problem. However, it is still worth noting that human-wildlife conflict is unavoidable, but can be mitigated and reduced to minimum levels to an extent where people and wildlife can coexist including our people from Chama South.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.

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