



8TH JULY 2016

**ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE
AT THE SPECIAL SADC MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

**HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT GENERAL DR SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA
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BY

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA



2. I am pleased to inform this gathering that two workshops on Poverty Eradication and Food Security, as well as Water and Energy Crisis in the region were successfully

1. It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the city of Gaborone, and to this particular Workshop on the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). Your presence here is highly valued as it will ensure the success of this Workshop. As you would recall, following my assumption of the Chairmanship of our regional body in August last year, I committed to convene a series of workshops to respond to a host of challenges currently afflicting our region.

- **Honourable Ministers from SADC Member States;**
- **The Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr. Tax and your Deputies;**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations;**
- **Senior Government Officials from SADC Member States;**
- **International Cooperating Partners;**
- **Heads of Civil Society Organisations;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**

conducted during the months of May and June, respectively.

3. The convening of this workshop was necessitated by the need to dialogue and thus come up with some remedial measures to curb the disturbing trend of illegal trade in wildlife. I am therefore hopeful that the outcome of this Workshop will help in operationalizing the Southern African Development Community Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy.

4. The theme for this workshop, "**Implementation of the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy: towards eliminating Illegal Trade in Wildlife**" is appropriate in view of the growing incidences of illegal trade in wildlife. This scourge has significant harmful effects on environments and ecosystems across the globe. Consequently, there is an imperative need to put in place some necessary measures and sanctions at national and international levels to combat the illegal trade in wildlife. Many SADC Member States tourism is wildlife based. Tourism is a major contributor to GDP and job creation. Therefore decimating our wildlife will not

- only lead to a loss of a natural resource but also cause lasting damage to our economies.
5. It is disheartening to note that illegal trade in wildlife products is estimated to be worth billions, and that it is one of the most profitable transnational criminal activities globally. This in itself is a clear message to all of us that our efforts to protect wildlife from illegal trade at the national, regional, and international levels have not produced the desired outcome.
6. It is my conviction that as SADC we have an obligation to resolutely and collectively work together to find lasting solutions to illegal trade in wildlife. I hope you will all agree with me that several of our iconic species will be faced with possible extinction should we fail to act decisively.
7. Illegal trade in wildlife is no longer limited to conservation within source countries, but it is increasingly being used by transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups to fund their militant activities which threaten international peace and security.

8. To this end, the United Kingdom Government hosted the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade in 2014 where global leaders resolved to improve the conservation of iconic species from the threat of poaching and illegal trade. The resulting London Declaration focused primarily on strengthening law enforcement and the criminal justice system, reducing demand for illegal wildlife products, and supporting the development of sustainable livelihoods for communities affected by Illegal Wildlife Trade.
9. Subsequent to the London Conference, Government hosted the second Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in March 2015 in Kasane. The primary aim of this Conference was to, inter alia, review status of implementation of actions agreed as part of the London Declaration.
10. The Kasane Conference culminated in endorsement of the 'Kasane Statement'. The Statement, which is in fact a Progress Report, stressed the need to rid the market of illegal wildlife products, ensure effective legal frameworks and deterrents, strengthen law enforcement, and facilitate sustainable livelihoods and economic development.

12. As SADC countries, we house the largest population of these highly sought after species, particularly elephants and rhinos. This gathering therefore provides us with an invaluable opportunity to agree on actions and effective cross border initiatives that could address illegal wildlife killing, as well as illicit trade of wildlife products. You will agree with me that it is a sad reality today that our continent is a major source for illegally acquired wildlife and their derivatives. The elephants, rhinos, pangolins are being killed in large numbers to meet rising international demand for commodities such as ivory, rhino horn, scales and meat.

11. During the Kasane Conference, the Government of Vietnam kindly offered to host a third high-level international conference in November 2016, aimed at reviewing progress on the 'Kasane Statement' and to furthermore strengthen action against the illegal trade in wildlife. In addition, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 69/314 in July 2015, which aims at tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. Notwithstanding, all these efforts, indications are that tangible progress continues to elude us in this regard.

16. Article 9 of the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, which deals

15. Efforts can no longer be directed only at stopping front line poachers and traffickers. We also have to empower our law enforcement agencies to eliminate corruption which fuels wildlife crime and to seize the assets which accrue from illegal wildlife trade. Perhaps this is an opportune time to consider putting in place dedicated judiciary systems to deal with wildlife crime.

14. It is increasingly becoming apparent that our efforts to eradicate transboundary wildlife crime requires a coordinated approach involving all our law enforcement agencies, customs, the judiciary, prosecutors, private sector and the civil society.

13. While incidences of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife are on the increase, I note with satisfaction that SADC Member States are committing funds to combat the scourge of wildlife and forestry crime. Equally, I note with appreciation that penalties for those who poach and benefit from the proceeds of wildlife crime have become more stringent in recent years.

18. The SADC LEAP Strategy was developed through a consultative approach, and represents the collective desire by SADC member states to eradicate illegal wildlife trade. The Strategic Programme Areas enumerated in the Strategy include:

17. It is worth noting that whilst the aforesaid Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement has been in force since 1999, there is no formal implementation strategy to address wildlife crime which has been agreed to by signatories. The lack of such a strategy has, without any doubt, proved to be a challenge and hinders our collective ability to implement workable actions to counter the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. The approval of the SADC LEAP Strategy by the SADC Council of Ministers in March 2016, heralds an important first step in the right direction.

specifically with cooperation in wildlife law enforcement, calls on state parties to take the necessary measures to enforce legislation governing the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife resources. It further urges Member States to allocate sufficient financial and human resources to enforce wildlife legislation.

- Enhancement of legislation and judicial processes;
 - Minimization of wildlife crime and illegal trade;
 - Integration of people and nature;
 - Sustainable trade and use of natural resources; and
 - Improvement and strengthening of field protection.
19. Let me also take this opportunity to draw your attention to one of the key actions that has been proposed within the LEAP Strategy. This entails the establishment of a Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit (WCPCU), to coordinate the response of Member States to combat Illegal Wildlife Trade. I am happy to note that work has already begun to strengthen cooperation in this area through the formation of a Wildlife Enforcement Network for the Southern African (WENSA) region.
20. There were recommendations for Botswana to host the provisional Secretariat for WENSA, nominate national focal points, establish national level WENSA committees, and to commence a needs assessment in each participating country in relation to wildlife law enforcement capacity.

23. In addition, I encourage our development partners, some of whom are present here today, to engage with the Strategy so as to identify areas that could potentially benefit from their support. Let me also take this moment to thank them for their invaluable support, over the years.

22. I must add and also reiterate that the approval of the LEAP Strategy represents only a first step in the right direction. The implementation plan clearly identifies the actions which need to be taken. I therefore urge all SADC Member States to work together to develop a resource mobilisation strategy which will be used to leverage the necessary resources to implement these actions.

21. In this regard, Government and the SADC Secretariat requested support from the EU to provide technical assistance to establish WENSA. I am pleased to inform you that this resulted in an experienced technical adviser being recruited to assist SADC since February this year. I would like to propose that since the two initiatives remain complementary, this workshop examines the relationship between the two in order to tackle the current dynamics of organised wildlife crime.

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24. I am hopeful that this Workshop will come up with actionable outcomes that will be presented to the Summit in August that will help our SADC region to safeguard its environment.
25. Let me conclude my remarks by declaring this Special Ministerial Workshop on Illegal Trade in Wildlife officially open. Finally, I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to your concrete outcomes.
26. Thank you for your attention.