

Remarks by the Government
of the Federal Republic of Germany

by Ambassador Udo Volz,

German Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe

- check against delivery -

Honourable Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife Zimbabwe,
Government officials of the various SADC TFCA country delegations,
Director Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, SADC Secretariat,
Traditional leaders, royal highnesses,
Community representatives and leaders,
International Cooperating Partners,
Research institutes and organisations,
Members of the SADC TFCA network,
Media and journalists,
Ladies and gentlemen,
All protocols observed,

Importance of biodiversity

Biodiversity is fundamental to human well-being. Biodiversity conservation plays a critical role in maintaining ecosystem stability and thereby supporting life on Earth: it provides essential services such as clean air, water, and fertile soil, and it offers resources for food, medicine, and economic growth. At the same time, it also plays a key role in mitigating climate change and supporting resilience against natural disasters.

The rich ecosystems in the SADC region are of global significance. For human health and survival! At the same time, they provide critical livelihoods for local communities.

Germany is a member of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People. We support more than 900 protected areas worldwide – more than 2.5 million square km – where we put both, local communities and nature, centre to our cooperation.

German support to TFCAs

For almost 33 years, Germany has been a committed partner to SADC and its member states. Cross-border cooperation is particularly important in biodiversity conservation as ecosystems and wildlife do not adhere to political boundaries.

One of the priorities of our cooperation for almost 25 years has been the support to SADC's Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Germany has committed more than 270 million euros to TFCAs in the SADC region since then.

Through SADC we have committed funds and programmes to three focus TFCAs, namely Great Limpopo, KAZA [Kavango Zambezi] and MAZA [Malawi Zambia] TFCAs.

Yet, Germany also supports more TFCA in the region via the SADC TFCA Financing Facility, through bilateral programmes and via the Legacy Landscape Fund, such as North Luangwa, Nyika and Vwaza National Parks in MAZA, Gonarezhou National Park in Greater Limpopo and Iona National Park in Iona Skeleton.

Additionally, Germany is supporting the SADC Secretariat and member states in the areas of tourism development, strengthening law enforcement and anti-poaching activities, combatting illegal wildlife trade, aquaculture, monitoring, climate change and disaster risk management.

TFCAs – successes and challenges

The progress made in the SADC region in establishing and developing TFCAs is a prime example to the rest of the world. Your progress contributes significantly to the 30 by 30 target of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Even people from other regions and continents come to learn from what you have established here!

The development and management of TFCAs is, however, not without its challenges. The recent droughts and floodings via El Niño have amplified the need to urgently address matters of climate change and human-wildlife conflict.

This applies in particular for TFCAs where land-uses are often mixed. Here the primary focus is on co-existence, so that the dual goal of wildlife conservation and enhanced human livelihood can be achieved.

The recently approved SADC TFCA Programme, the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy and the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework provide important strategic orientation to guide both domestic policies and local implementation.

Germany also commends the well-recognized knowledge platform SADC TFCAs have established. During the SADC TFCA International Conference and Summit, the SADC TFCA Network is relaunching its new website, which I hope will become a strong base for knowledge sharing and networking. The German Government, together with the EU, is proud to have contributed and to see this Network come together strongly at this high-level gathering.

As a member of the EU, Germany also partners closely with the relevant EU programmes. And we welcome the EU for starting its support to TFCAs via the “NatureAfrica” programme in 2024.

I am hopeful that this week’s SADC TFCA Conference and Summit will further strengthen the TFCA vision and mission at the highest political level. Your high ambition, commitment and ownership will be the basis for achieving more for both, local communities and nature! Speeding up the implementation of TFCAs and their mechanism will be of great importance.