

**Republic of Botswana**  
**COMMUNIQUE - KASANE ELEPHANT SUMMIT**

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(07th May 2019) We the Heads of State for the countries comprising the Kavango –Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA – TFCA) convened at the Kasane Elephant Summit on the 07th May 2019. The Summit whose theme was “towards a common vision for management of our elephants” focused on the management of the shared KAZA elephant population.

The specific objectives of the Summit were to raise awareness on the current status of the African elephant in the southern African region; exchange of ideas on human-elephant conflict, illegal and legal trade; and reach agreement on concrete interventions to address the challenges posed.

We reflected on the status of the African elephants in the KAZA TFCA, and noted that while overall numbers have declined, it is evident from available data that countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe have large populations. Namibian and Zambian populations are increasing while Angola has a small population.

We further noted that even as numbers continue to grow, human-elephant conflict is escalating in much of the elephant range due to competition for limited resources and the effects of climate change. The conflict is aggravated by inadequate local level participatory land use planning and conflicting land use policies. It was also recognised that communities are often not adequately empowered to deal with this conflict.

We note with concern the recent upsurge in illegal offtake of elephants on much of the African continent. If this state of affairs is allowed to continue unabated, it will pose a very real threat to the survival of this iconic species in much of its range.

We acknowledge that the African elephant has been the subject of much discussion in international fora such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of fauna and flora (CITES).

The conditions for trade in elephants and their parts and derivatives have been the subject of often acrimonious debate with onerous conditions being placed upon those countries whose elephant populations are currently on Appendix II.

Efforts by southern African elephant range states to sustainably manage their populations are subjected to constant media scrutiny which often does not take into consideration the aspirations of the KAZA range states.

We contend, however, that communities deserve to derive benefits from the sustainable utilisation of natural resources including elephants; particularly since they are the ones who bear the brunt of living side by side with these elephants.

In reaching agreement on the specific actions to be taken to manage the KAZA elephants, we recognized the principle of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of the respective partner states, acknowledged the variable state of readiness of KAZA partner states to adopt all resolutions and noted the uneven distribution and abundance of elephants across the KAZA landscape.

We resolved to:

- i. Conduct transboundary coordinated and synchronized KAZA wide aerial surveys of elephant (and other wildlife populations) according to standardized methodologies to allow comparability across the KAZA landscape;
- ii. Harmonise management of elephants as much as possible while taking into account national peculiarities and priorities;

- iii. Provide for integrated land use planning and harmonisation of land use policies at KAZA level.
- iiii. Provide incentives for communities to continue tolerating and coexisting with elephants;
- v. Ensure that the management of elephants is adaptive;
- vi. Standardize approaches to stockpile management;
- vii. Improve regional collaboration on wildlife crime through implementation of the Southern African Development Community Law Enforcement and Anti- Poaching Strategy;
- viii. Engage transit and destination countries to address issues of demand reduction for illegal ivory;
- ix. Effectively engage the international community on matters related to elephant conservation and management, including lobbying for support for the proposals submitted by KAZA member states to CITES CoP 18;



Angola



Botswana



Namibia



Zambia



Zimbabwe