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News - Environment | 2019-08-29

Page no: 8



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**AFRICAN members of the Bureau of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are not happy with the way executive secretary, Cristiana Pasca Palmer is running the organisation.**

In a letter seen by *The Namibian*, that the disgruntled countries wrote to the CBD secretariat entitled "African Region Views and Position on the Question of the Term of the Office of the Executive Secretary", the group said it is a common knowledge that the livelihood of Africans is dependent on its biological and natural resources.

"Over the years, Africa has been paying close attention to the secretariat of the CBD, how it is performing its functions, and how it tries to support the African Parties to the Convention in their efforts to implement the Convention.

However, they alleged that what they have observed over the last two years has become a source of concern.

"The secretariat is changing in a way that alienates Africa. As we have clearly stated at our last bureau meeting, the executive secretary, seems to have limited knowledge about biodiversity and related issues and because of that, after two years at the head of the secretariat, she has not provided a

strategic vision for the secretariat and the role it should play in supporting the efforts of developing African countries in implementing the convention," they wrote.

They claimed that having been appointed to lead the secretariat four years before the end of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020, Palmer has instead shifted the entire focus of the secretariat to the framework that may be adopted by 2020 instead of pushing for progress in the implementation of the strategic plan and the Aichi Targets.

"We lost a balance between working hard in implementing the current strategic plan and working towards elaborating the future framework on biodiversity.

From what we observed through the budget document submitted to the CBD's 14th Conference of the Parties (held in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt last year), the executive secretary, abolished, for unclear reason, a Division on a very important function, namely main-streaming and as a result diminished the overall capability of the secretariat," the countries alleged.

In light of the above, African countries say they do not support any extension of the term of the CBD executive secretary.

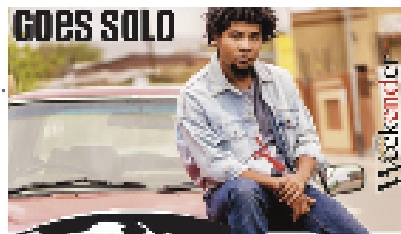
Namibia is a Party to the CBD as well as to the UNCCD and the UNFCCC.

Marthin Kasaona, the chief conservation scientist at the environment ministry, told The Namibian the ministry is aware of the concerns raised by African countries against the CBD secretariat. However he did not divulge more information on the matter.

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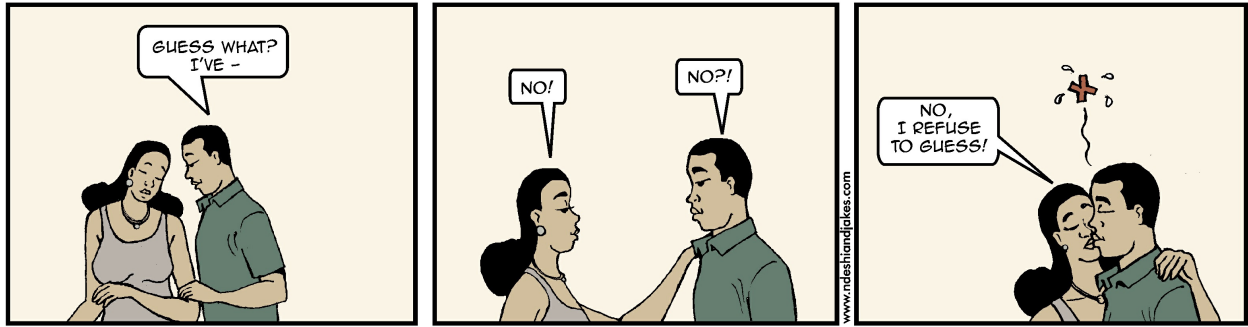
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