

October 15 2019

Dear Jennifer,

**Suggested Agenda Item for IUCN Council meeting**

We, the undersigned members of the SADC Regional CBNRM network – which includes rural community and civil society leaders, conservation scientists, economists, political scientists, NGO leaders, human rights advocates, academics and government representatives – several of whom represent IUCN member organisations, whilst the majority are members of IUCN specialist groups and/or Commissions, respectfully request that you, in your capacity as IUCN Councillor for Southern Africa, propose that the IUCN Council includes the following item on the upcoming Council agenda.

On September 27 2019, the news section of the IUCN HQs global website published an IUCN report ‘Compatibility of Trophy Hunting with Sustainable Use with IUCN’s Objectives’. In essence, this highly partisan report claimed that hunting was incompatible with sustainable use and it was therefore inappropriate that organisations supporting hunting should be members of IUCN. This report contradicted and undermined IUCN’s clearly stated policy in IUCN WCC REC3.093 as follows:

*RECOGNIZING that in much of southern Africa, wildlife on communal and privately-owned land is accommodated because it also provides an economically viable form of land use; and that where it is successfully implemented, well-managed consumptive utilization, including recreational hunting, enables retention of wildlife populations and ecosystem functions on large areas of land that would otherwise be used for agriculture...*

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004...

*2. ACCEPTS that well-managed recreational hunting has a role in the managed sustainable consumptive use of wildlife populations...*

It transpired that this “IUCN report” was simply a revised version of recommendations for Council from the World Commission on Environmental Law’s Ethics Specialist Group, submitted to Council two years ago. The report emerged from a small group of legal academics with no field conservation expertise and no demonstrated understanding of the extensive academic literature on the conservation impacts of hunting, and was issued with no consultation with the extensive array of taxonomic and thematic IUCN specialist groups in the SSC, CEESP and elsewhere with vast practical and research-based knowledge on this topic.

After sometime, in response to protests from various parts of IUCN, the IUCN Secretariat moved the report to an alternative location on the website and included a disclaimer to indicate that it did not represent IUCN policy. However, by this time the IUCN report had been widely picked up by the media and animals rights organisations. This “IUCN report” has then brought into international disrepute the reputation of several IUCN State and non-State members of good and long standing explicitly, and by extension many other member organisations and members of Specialist groups/Commissions that support the use of well-managed hunting as a sound, scientifically proven conservation and livelihoods strategy which upholds the human rights of people living with wildlife in full accordance with IUCN policy. See for example;

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/03/anti-hunting-groups-seek-oust-big-game-hunters-global-conservation/>

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/community\\_petitions/Grethel\\_Aguilar\\_Expel\\_Trophy\\_Hunters\\_from\\_the\\_IUCN/](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/community_petitions/Grethel_Aguilar_Expel_Trophy_Hunters_from_the_IUCN/)

<https://iwbond.org/2019/10/02/compatibility-of-trophy-hunting-as-a-form-of-sustainable-use-with-iucns-objectives/>

To date, we believe that the actions taken by the World Commission on Environmental Law and IUCN to rectify this situation are insufficient given the level of controversy and media attention generated. Notably, such actions have avoided clarification of what IUCN's position actually is. Unfortunately, this situation does not represent an isolated incident of IUCN's credibility being misused by some to represent their specific and highly partisan agenda, which is not in accordance with IUCN policy. For example, a report by an external consultant, Bertrand Chardonnet, condemning hunting was similarly widely mis-portrayed as a formal IUCN report earlier this year.

The Regional CBNRM network would therefore respectfully request that this matter is given further consideration by Council, with the aim of determining:

- What further actions will be taken to restore confidence that IUCN will take steps to reverse the reputational damage done by this report;
- What further action IUCN will be taking to clarify publicly its policy position on regulated hunting, as a means of correcting the misleading impression that has been widely spread in the name of IUCN;
- Investigate how and why recommendations from a specialist group of the World Commission on Environmental Law came to be (re)published as an IUCN report and distributed as 'news' two years later;
- What IUCN intends to do to prevent similar occurrences in future.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rodgers Lubilo, Chairman CBNRM Forum, Zambia. SULI member  
Maxi Louis, Director, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations  
Charles Jonga, Director, CAMPFIRE Association, Zimbabwe. IUCN member organisation  
Professor Brian Child, African Wildlife Economy Institute, University of Stellenbosch and University of Florida. SSC and SULI member  
Dr Chris Brown, CEO Namibian Chamber of Environment (representing 62 Namibian Environmental NGOs)  
Debbie Peake, Executive Committee, Botswana Wildlife Producers Association. International Professional Hunters Association. IUCN member organisation and SULI member.  
Dr Max Abensperg-Traun, Independent Consultant, Austria. SULI member  
Dr Liz Rihoy, Director, Resource Africa UK. IUCN member organisation and SULI member  
Keith Madders, Chairman of Board, Resource Africa South Africa. IUCN member organisation  
Angus Middleton, Namibia Nature Foundation. IUCN member organisation  
Brian Jones, Independent Environment and Development Consultant. SULI member  
Dr Rosie Cooney, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australia National University. SULI member  
Gail Potgieter, Director, Felines Communication and Conservation, Namibia. SULI member  
Hilma Angula, Governance and Institutional Development Coordinator, Namibian CBNRM Programme  
Dr Malan Lindique, Resource Africa South Africa  
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