Welcome Address by CIC President Bernard Lozé at

Opening Ceremony of the 63rd CIC General Assembly
Brussels, Belgium, 22 April 2015, 09:00 - 10:00 h

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of the CIC,

I am deeply honored to welcome at the Opening Ceremony of the 63rd CIC General Assembly a sheer endless and impressive list of leaders from society, politics, and the private sector. It gives me great pleasure to greet our keynote speaker, the Vice-President of the European Commission Jyrki KATAINEN,
The Dean of European Court of Auditors, Karel PINXTEN,
Her Excellency the Deputy Minister of the Department of Environmental Affairs South Africa Barbara Thomson,
The Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism of Namibia, Honorable Tommy Nambahu,
His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Zimbabwe, Tadeous Tafirenyika Chifamba
The President of the Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside in the European Parliament Karl-Heinz Florenz
The Secretary General of ELO Thierry de l'Escaille,
Honorary President of FACE Maitre Giovanni Bana in representation of FACE President Dr. Michl Ebner
and our friends and distinguished partners of the Collaborative Partnership of Sustainable Wildlife Management – CPW

I would like to welcome everyone who is here with us today and I am very happy to see that so many of you came, despite the recent tragic events in Brussels on March 22, 2016 which shocked not only Belgium, and not only Europe, but the whole world.

It is very hard to know what to say at times like this, words somehow seem so inadequate and powerless. We continue to hold the families who have lost their loved ones and all of the injured in our thoughts. Today, we come together in these difficult times at the 63rd General Assembly of the CIC with our heads held high. Before we begin with the proceedings of this Assembly, I would like to ask you to join me in a moment of silence. Please rise.

[Stand up, one minute silence]

Thank you.

While we need to focus on the joint work ahead, I would first like to recall some of our past achievements since the last General Assembly, which have greatly contributed to our sustained growth. The CIC is doing something right in its mission to promote sustainable hunting to conserve wildlife and wild lands, support communities, and preserve our hunting heritage across the globe. Nothing proves this better than being recognized at the Dallas Safari Club Convention in
January in the United States and receiving the prestigious 2015 Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award, which distinguishes individuals and organizations whose achievements demonstrate a sustained and active contribution to the conservation of wildlife and its habitat. We have also further enhanced our relationship with OIE and we are looking forward to the opening of the CIC Training Centre for Wildlife Health in Bulgaria, where our friends are doing their utmost to make this project a success.

Thinking about recent developments at the international level, we are currently facing unusually strong attacks against hunting and hunters. In the heart of Europe, members of the European Parliament had even initiated a written declaration with the aim to ban trophy hunting. We can proudly say that we have stood together and demonstrated our collective strength in support of sustainable hunting. The declaration did not pass. (Achieving only 135 votes, one third of what would have been needed.) [Applause]

Ladies and Gentlemen, all of your assistance is required to achieve what we want to achieve. You can read more details about our work during the last 12 months in the working documents, which has been distributed to you. Thank you for your attention and I hope you enjoy and get the most out of these next two days we have together.