“NEO-COLONIALISM” OR “ECO-COLONIALISM”?

ARE THE VOICES OF AFRICA HEARD?

Johannesburg, South Africa, 24 September 2016-

The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC; www.cic-wildlife.org) is supporting its members in Africa by facilitating a press conference on Saturday, September 24 at 17:00 at the Sandton Convention Centre (Press conference room floor -2, exhibition 2 area), during the 17th CITES Conference of the Parties in Johannesburg, South Africa.

African Nations are increasingly concerned that some proposals and proposed amendments put forward to the CITES CoP17 will have a detrimental effect on many countries where the sustainable consumptive use of wildlife provides vital income for the survival and expansion of conservation efforts. This income also safeguards the livelihoods, education, and upliftment of local rural people coexisting with wildlife, thus contributing to poverty eradication.

In Africa, living alongside wildlife is often challenging and can have disastrous negative consequences. The revenue from consumptive use substantially helps with the implementation of measures which negate the destruction of livestock and crops, thus improving the livelihood of those living in close proximity to the wildlife. In addition, sustainable consumptive use can often be the best form of land use in arid and poor soil regions by providing sorely needed employment and a supply of protein. If sustainable hunting and other forms of consumptive use are eliminated and local people do not benefit from the wildlife sharing their neighborhood, the natural assets we are bound to protect will no longer have support and protection from the locals. The consequence of banning sustainable consumptive use, which would largely be the result of purely emotional reasons, would cause a massive and devastating loss of wildlife habitat.

In line with the position of several African countries, the CIC suggests amending the proposals from the European Union, which would otherwise make the import and export of hunting trophies even more difficult. The African Range States should have a say on the future of their wildlife. Imposing northern hemisphere views on and making decisions for African Nations, despite their success in wildlife conservation, is not only seen as interventionistic by the affected countries but also by others around the world. For example, at meetings with the European Commission and European Parliamentarians in Brussels in April of this year, the Governments of Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Tanzania expressed their frustrations and concerns over the imposition of rules and guidelines, developed without their input, which would adversely affect wildlife conservation and employment creation in their respective home countries by foreign governments. This form of imposition has been referred to as “neo-colonialism” or “eco-colonialism”.

For the CITES CoP17, the CIC has distributed a position paper on issues which are directly relevant to sustainable hunting and other forms of consumptive use.