



Remarks By:

Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho,

UNDP Resident Representative

**Inauguration of the Anti-Poaching Awareness
Billboards**

23 March 2017

Okahandja,

Namibia

Director of Ceremonies;
Minister of Environment and Tourism, Hon. Pohamba Shifeta;
Inspector General of the Namibian Police, Lt. General Sebastian Ndeitunga;
Mayor of Okahandja, His Worship Mr. Johannes Congo Hindjou;
Deputy Mayor of Okahandja, Her Worship Ms. Sophia Upithe;
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Dr. Malan Lindeque;
Director of Wildlife and National Parks, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mr. Colgar Sikopo;
Officials from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism;
Distinguished Members of the media;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

I am pleased to join you at this very important launch of the anti-poaching billboards, aimed at increasing awareness about Poaching and the Illicit Trafficking and Trade of Wildlife.

Director of Ceremonies,

On this continent over 20,000 elephants were reported killed in 2013¹ while over 1,300 rhinos were reported killed by poachers in 2015.²

And in Namibia, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has also reported an escalation in the number of elephants poached last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

¹ CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (2013)

² International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission's African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) (2016)

Illegal wildlife poaching and trafficking are issues that are very much on the agenda of the international community.

-The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals, specifically targets under SDG 15,³ express the global determination to combat the illegal trade in wildlife.

- In July 2015: The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on countries to prevent, combat and eradicate both the supply of, and demand for, illegal trade in wildlife.⁴

- In 1975 CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) -- an agreement to regulate international trade in wild animals and plants -- entered into force.

-And globally, additional finance has become available. For example, the Global Environment Facility through UNDP, was instrumental in funding the billboards and the Law Enforcement Training Centre to the tune of N\$6 million dollars.

Here at home Namibia has acted promptly:

-Namibia took leadership and hosted its first workshop on Enforcing Wildlife Law and Preventing Wildlife Crime, in May 2014. The 2014 workshop, in response to the escalation of rhino and elephant poaching, developed the building blocks of a National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement.

³ 15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products. 15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.

⁴ General Assembly resolution [69/314](#), **Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife**, adopted 30 July 2015

- Namibia held a National Response Workshop on Illegal Hunting of Rhino and Elephant in January 2015 to: Enhance law enforcement and wildlife protection; and contain and minimize illegal hunting and poaching.

-MET held its first fundraising event, hosted by the Honorable Minister Pohamba Shifeta to protect Namibias wildlife on the 5 March 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As there is limited public information about the risks, impact and cost of poaching on the economy and society at large, it is our duty to ensure that we provide Namibians with correct and necessary information.

While recongnizing the risks that poverty and the lack of alternative livelihoods could play in poaching and the illegal trafficking of wildlife, we believe that raising awareness on the importance of reporting wildlife criminal activities, is important.

So, MET with the support of UNDP, felt it was essential to construct these Billboards and erect them at strategic points, including in Okahandja, in order to get the message out.

Therefore and in conclusion, allow me to state that: achieving the SDGs; winning the war on poverty and realizing Vision 2030; call for collective action. Collective action to tackle poverty, and improve livelihoods especially for marginalized communities; collective action to strengthen law enforcement and institutions; and collective action to combat the illicit trafficking of wildlife.

And we the UN, your partner of choice, stand ready to advance this collective effort through ongoing strategic, technical, and financial support. We will continue to be your partner in combating wildlife

crime and we will continue to be your partner in ensuring the legal and sustainable use of wild life.

Thank you