



**PRESENTATION FROM
THE COMMUNITIES
NEIGHBORING KNP**

INTRODUCTION

- Good Day my name is Mike Masuluke representing the communities bordering the KNP

BACKGROUND

- In the olden days people used to live harmoniously with animals.
- People identified themselves as part of nature and live in a manner that made nature sustainable. Mankind erected fences that limited the movement of animals and at the same time limited or even prohibited people from the utilization of natural resources.
- Elephants were part and parcel of the communities hence the proverb in Shangaan that says “Ndlopfhu I ya hina” (the elephant is ours) which meant if there is a job to be done it needs involvement of all affected parties, hence we came to participate in this Indaba.
- To find an African solution to an African problem.

ELEPHANT AND HUMAN ENCOUNTERS

- Day in, day out Elephants cross the poorly maintained fence or at some stages the non existing KNP fence to the neighboring villages.
- This has caused problems to the communities where in some cases human movement becomes limited.
- People are afraid to go to their farms because Elephants have taken over.
- They destroy our crops that are our source of living.
- Crops are of an economic value and sustain the living standard of our poor communities.
- They compete with our livestock for grazing land.
- Human movement and social activities become limited.
- Rivers where they draw water, do washing and take their livestock for drinking are already occupied
- (Remember when man and animals used to live together people and animals took turns to use these resources hence the word (Mahlamba Ndlopfhu) (when and where the elephant takes a bath)
- A number of documented and undocumented cases of human mortality caused by Elephants can be mentioned by various speakers.
- A woman at Matiyani was trampled while working on her field, a boy was killed by an elephant at Hluvukani and in the Phalaborwa area families have lost their loved ones because of these animals. Just to mention a few.

POSSIBLE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

- The state of the fence is very poor, and Elephants have no respect of the current fence
- (They need no passport to go and check on their long lost friends and forget that they are no longer welcomed.)
- Over population of Elephants in the Park led to overgrazing of their area and make them run short of extra trees to toss around.

THE FENCE ISSUE

- The current situation in conservation is not proper.
- When Elephants are inside the Park they are property of the Park.
- Once outside they are property of environmental affairs.
- This causes big confusion in the communities
- The Government hires professional hunters whose priority is to get the biggest trophy but not to take out the problem animals
- *Veterinary Considerations*
- Fence breaking elephants cause damage to themselves, and also allow the dispersal of other species such as lions and buffalo which may result in the spread of disease.
- Lions pose a threat to livestock while buffalo for example, carry Foot and Mouth disease and Bovine TB.

WAY FORWARD OR SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- Contraceptive and translocation
- How will the communities benefit out of that?.
- Who want to carry our problem?
- Is it cost effective? What if we run short of reserves to take these animals to?
- Five years down the line we will be sitting again discussing the same problem on those area Elephants would be transferred to.
- We as affected communities believe that culling of elephants could be the solution if done and managed in a proper manner.
- Neighboring communities need to be involved in what ever process to be taken.
- How can the community benefit.
- In the past when elephants were culled the communities were not consulted.
- Either they were not recognized or deemed not important by the previous regime and like minded Institutions. We should not make the same mistake and exclude our people in decision making lest we become unpopular and suffer the same fate.
- As communities we are saying when you consider culling, the neighboring communities should benefit from by-products of these animals.
- Communities can be encouraged to train as professional hunters so that they can participate in the process.
- Others can be contracted to do the skinning of the animals.
- Their hides can be given to craft makers who produce and sell their weirs to tourists. This will enable local communities to tap the benefits that nature brings to them.
- The communities want to benefit socially and economically from elephant management processes.
- The Protected Areas Act recognises the need for parks to provide sustainable benefits to local communities
- If culling must be conducted for ecological reasons, it can yield economic benefits and opportunities for local communities.

IN CONCLUSION WE SAY

- Whatever decision you take, do not forget the most affected people.
- As you go back to your posh houses and offices in the cities, far from the dangers of the damage causing animals, do not forget the people who encounter them day in day out.
- There is a Shangaan proverb that says “Ndlopfhu a yi hluriwi hi timondzo ta yona”
- Literal translation “Elephant’s tusks will never be heavier than its owner.
- Meaning that “where there is a problem there is a solution.”
- I thank you