



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

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PRESS RELEASE

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Re: Meeting between the Deputy Minister Tommy Nambahu and the Chinese Ambassador Qui Xuaejun on the allegation of poaching of wildlife

On 25 January 2017, The Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism Honourable Tommy Nambahu met with Ambassador-designate of the People's Republic of China to Namibia His Excellency Qui Xuejun on the allegation of wildlife poaching against the Chinese nationals.

The meeting was convened by Honourable Nambahu after Ambassador-designate Qui wrote a complaint letter to the Ministry over the concerns expressed by Namibian Chamber of Environment regarding cases of wildlife crimes that includes poaching and smuggling of wildlife products involving Chinese nationals.

In his letter to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism the Ambassador expressed his dissatisfaction on the views expressed in the letter which he says contain speculations and unreasonable accusations against Chinese nationals and the Embassy.

During the meeting, the Deputy Minister underscored the cordial relations that Namibia and China enjoys with strong roots stemming from the years of the liberation struggle and that the Namibian government remain committed at strengthening the existing bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The Deputy Minister described the sentiments expressed in the open letter by Namibian Chamber of Environment as unfortunate with potential to negatively impact on the good relation between the two nations. He further informed the Ambassador-designate that the open letter was written by an NGO which is NOT an arm of the government of the Republic of Namibia but an organization run by private individuals. With that in mind, the Deputy Minister said views expressed in the open letter are NOT that of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the Namibian government in general.

“These are not government sanctioned views, they are views of individuals that should only be attributed to them and not to the government. The content of the letter is inflammatory and does not augur well with our historic relation.” Honourable Nambahu said.

The Deputy Minister is fully cognizant of the freedom of expression as guaranteed in the Namibian constitution. He however called on the NGOs and other individuals who will add their voices to the issue of poaching to be sensitive of the language they use and avoid making blanket statements against certain nationals.

With regard to poaching of wildlife in the country, Hon. Nambahu said that the Government of the Republic of Namibia will never think that these actions are condoned at government levels but criminal actions are by individuals. Both the Namibian and Chinese governments have a mutual task of contributing to the efforts of anti-poaching of wildlife in the country. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has invited its Chinese counterpart to be part of the anti-poaching drive in Namibia.

However, the Ministry is faced with a number of challenges that include the control at borderlines with neighbouring countries, lack of resources and capacity building.

On his part, Ambassador-designate Qui Xuejun expressed gratitude to the Deputy Minister and the Namibian Government for making time to highlight government’s position on the matter. He told the Deputy Minister that although there are Chinese nationals involved in criminal activities, not all Chinese are bad people and that such criminal tendencies are strongly opposed by the Chinese government.

The Chinese government has reiterated its commitment to ensure that its nationals living in Namibia are law abiding residents contributing to nation building. The Embassy has also promised to take some actions at the beginning of the Chinese New Year which begins on Saturday 28 January 2017.

The Ambassador further told the Deputy Minister that he had met Dr. Chris Brown of the Namibia Chamber of Environment where they reached common ground resulting in the removal of the open letter from their website.

The Chinese Embassy expressed willingness to cooperate with the Namibian government by providing necessary support needed in the anti-poaching drive.

The meeting which was also attended by official from the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation was held in a pleasant atmosphere.

Sent Via Email

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