



**AFRICA  
WILDLIFE**   
ECONOMY SUMMIT

Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

24 - 25 June 2019

**THE SUMMIT REPORT**

August, 2019



ZIMBABWE



## Acknowledgements

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*Photo of Ministers of Government, Heads of key institutions, taken with participating Heads of State*

## Executive Summary

On June 24-25, 2019 Victoria falls, Zimbabwe hosted more than 1300 delegates representing over 30 African countries to for the first African Wildlife Economy Summit. The 2-day summit was co-organized by the United Nations Environment Programme, the African Union, and the Ministry of Environment, Tourism, Hospitality and Industry of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The high-level summit was an inaugural event aimed at bringing together disparate discussions and initiatives currently underway or planned to support nature-based economies across Africa. The summit also aspired to forge a new deal to expand opportunities for tourism, rural communities and wildlife for the benefit of Africa. Understanding and unlocking the potential of these opportunities, while achieving economic, social and ecological sustainability require a new level of commitment, investment and entrepreneurship.

In attendance were Heads of State for Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 14 Ministers of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife from across African States and beyond, including those of Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Namibia, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Also present were development partners and intergovernmental organizations such as the European Commission, private sector players and civil society organizations working across Africa in wildlife and tourism related sectors. More than 40 community representatives drawn from across the continent were also in attendance (see Annex 2 for a list of accredited delegates).

Key issues that dominated the discussions, from dialogues by heads of states, through panel discussions, to keynote speeches, were the need for Africa's wildlife economy initiative to (i) assure rights to benefits for local communities through relevant laws, (ii) institute proper structures that ensure equitable distribution of benefits accrued from the wildlife economy, (iii) promote proper governance through elaborate transparent and accountable processes, systems and institutions, (iv) ensure participation by all stakeholders in decision making, (v) develop a regulatory framework that attracts private sector investment, (vi) call for development partners to enhance conditions that encourage private sector investment and catalyse financing options for conservation of natural resources.

## The Summit

More than 1300 delegates, including political leaders from across Africa led by H.E Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe, H.E. Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, H.E. Hage Geingob of Namibia, and H.E. Edgar Lungu of Zambia, gathered on 24-25 June at the Elephant Hills Resort, in Victoria Falls to launch the Wildlife Economy Initiative.

The Summit aimed at advancing political and community leadership, private sector know-how and financial resources for a new vision of pan-African conservation that delivers sustainable economic benefits to national governments and local communities.

Among issues that dominated the discussions, through the heads of states dialogue, private panel discussions to keynote speeches by invited speakers, were the need for Africa's wildlife economy initiative to (i) assure rights to benefits for local communities through relevant laws, (ii) institute proper structures that ensure equitable distribution of benefits accrued from the wildlife economy, (iii) promote proper governance through elaborate transparent and accountable processes, systems and institutions, (iv) ensure participation by all in decision making, (v) develop regulatory framework that attract private sector investment, (vi) calls for development partners to enhance condition that encourage private sector investment and catalyse financing options for conservation of natural resources.

A series of sessions were designed to exchange key messages between heads of state and ministers of government and a pool of private sector leaders, key guest speakers, and panellists covering a broad spectrum of issues related to the wildlife economy.



*Africans need to take the lead, in partnership with like-minded global organizations, in the conservation agenda on our continent, because it affects all of us directly. Driving conservation will allow us to get the most out of our continent's assets, contribute to better management of our agriculture and tourism sectors, and support efforts to mitigate climate change.*

*H.E. President Paul Kagame,  
Former Chair of the African Union*





*Photo of heads of State present at the Summit*

## Introduction and Opening Remarks

In her introductory remarks, UNEP's Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Joyce Msuya noted that wildlife and wild space will only survive when people derive benefit from co-existence. The Wildlife Economy Initiative, she underscored, presents a robust framework necessary to expand opportunities for transboundary sharing of wildlife resources.

H.E Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, through his opening statement underscored that the Wildlife Economy must seek to explore innovative ways to leverage wildlife resources to reduce poverty, create jobs, especially for women and conserve biodiversity and wildlife spaces. This, he said would be achieved through (i) Expanding Tourism opportunities, (ii) Enhancing protection of endangered species, (iii) ensuring sustainable "use" of wildlife resources and spaces and (iv) while addressing direct and indirect threats for sustained wildlife economy: such as Human Wildlife Conflict, Poaching and illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife resources, Climate Change etc. He further remarked that Wildlife Economy would be a major contributor to achieving Zimbabwe's vision to become middle income country by year 2030.



## Youth Perspectives

### Session: Sparking New Ideas: The Future we want for Africa's People and Wildlife

While sharing their life experiences, a select number of youths presented their perspectives on how to effectively connect young people and nature, arguing that:

- (i) with an approximate 20% of the global population represented by youths between 15 and 24 years of age, through introduction of special nature based-stewardship programmes, young people offer a great opportunity to addressing some of the current challenges affecting nature, thereby contributing to reverting subsequent negative impacts on wildlife and the wildlife economy. “Only young people can save the world from this situation of forest destruction. My dream is to set up a movement I will name ‘10-24 Movement’ and the slogan will be ‘Trees to save humanity’” – noted Rohkaya from Senegal;
- (ii) inter-generational knowledge exchange has the power to nurture young conservationist – said Hilma from Namibia; and
- (iii) governments, business partners and development partners need to recognize the central role communities play in conservation efforts.

## Private Sector Perspectives

### Session: Unlocking Investments and The Power of the Wildlife Economy

The discussion on how the environment can be an enabler for investments in the African Wildlife Economy resulted in the following conclusions:

- Infrastructure development and ongoing support for communities and government is needed to create investment opportunities and boost tourism income.
- Enduring transparent partnerships between private sector, government, and communities is essential to attract investments.
- Tourism is not the only way to benefit from wildlife and, especially given the challenging competitive tourist market in Kenya, diversifying away from tourism should be considered.



## Session: The Wildlife Economy Opportunity for Africa

This topic generated much needed attention and helped advance the dialogue on the transformative potential of the wildlife economy opportunity for Africa, including economic and social justice benefits and how to scale-up. Key insights brought by leading private sector establishments were as follows:

- Opportunities private and public investments in the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) area are numerous in terms of available capital, the resounding political will, and with the opening of Victoria Falls.
- Empowerment of local communities is key through involvement, training, and ensuring equitable distribution of wealth creation.
- Improved access-roads, air and or rail and ease of transboundary movement are some of the enabling environments for investment in tourism.
- The wildlife economy can and should go beyond jobs and contribute more meaningfully to GDP, but developing it further requires co-financing as governments do not have the means to cover the cost alone.

## Session: Panel on Private Sector Perspectives Africa on the Move

Panelists selected from the private sector shared their perspectives on key consideration to unlocking the potential of wildlife. Some of the key messages include:

- Wildlife-based tourism can be a transformative opportunity for economies and communities but only with proper conservation management and rights, political stability, local involvement and training, fair community benefits, and proper infrastructure.
- Not all landscapes are suitable for all types of activities and one must consider the uniqueness value of the space and understand the aspirations and expectations of the discerning guests.
- Certain wildlife exports under strict conditions can be considered as a source of finance.
- Numerous natural resources can be included in the wildlife economy, including oils and foods.

## Heads of State Dialogue

Heads of State present shared their vision on driving Africa’s new Wildlife Economy led by H.E Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe and featuring H.E. Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, H.E. Hage Geingob of Namibia, and H.E. Edgar Lungu of Zambia.

H.E. Mokgweetsi Masisi, Botswana underscored that the wildlife economy and communities are interconnected. “It is important for community development to be at the core of ecosystem conservation agenda-they are dependent on each other. For the wildlife economy initiative to be worth, people must benefit from it. Community rights must be part of the new paradigm.”

While presenting his views, President Geingob of Namibia noted, “we are a third wave of African leadership that understand the need for well-defined processes, systems and institutions. It is about good governance and this must be part of how the wildlife economy is developed. People must be involved in land use decisions. They suffer from human wildlife conflict and we must manage this better.”

Underpinning remarks made by other heads of state, Zambian President, H.E Lunga highlighted that “people have not been given space to participate in the wildlife economy. There is a need to include them first and foremost.”

*“We encourage a process where accruing benefits from natural resources are fairly and equitably shared among communities living within wildlife areas. This way, the wildlife resources add value and improve the quality of life of local communities.”*

President Emerson Mnangagwa

In general, the Heads of State

- emphasized that community rights need to be prioritized and their input incorporated in decision making processes for meaningful engagement to be realized in a wildlife economy, across the continent;
- underscored that biodiversity is Africa’s competitive advantage and noted that communities and individual rural residents need to benefit from the wildlife economy; and
- indicated that the new African Union’s Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) presents great opportunities to harmonize benefits and rights of people across the region.

In closing, the Heads of State dialogue, H.E Emmerson Mnangagwa noted that trade in wildlife products including ivory can fund biodiversity conservation and development.

## Perspectives of Development Partners and Catalytic Enablers

### Session: Panel on Expanding Wildlife-Based Tourism

Key actors in wildlife-based tourism conferred what they believed to be the key enabling conditions for unlocking the potential of tourism. They emphasized that engagement with and development of communities is key to promote sustainable tourism. They called for

- Governments to invest heavily in women and education;
- Benefit sharing approaches such that communities see their interest catered for in the exploitation of natural resources; and
- Streamlined regulatory frameworks and legislation to attract private investments that are critical in enabling an environment for wildlife management

In response to Africa's Wildlife Economy Challenge, Mr. Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary General of the European Commission's External Action Service, indicated that the EU is reviewing its financial support mechanism to enhance conditions that allow for private sector investments and catalysing financing options for natural resources conservation. He further emphasized the necessity to fight against trafficking and illicit financial flows to avoid governments losing out on tax revenue and natural capital and enable a regulated sustainable wildlife economy.

### Session: Panel on Building Africa's Wildlife Economy

Development partners offered the following key messages on how Africa's Wildlife Economy can be realized:

- Poaching and trafficking can only be halted through support of sustainable livelihoods, community involvement, and demand reduction.
- Good governance, security and stability, investments and inclusiveness in partnerships are basic tenets for good conservation and sustainable wildlife economy.
- Commitment of development partners to a series of investments/projects that build on each other can achieve sustained results beyond the funding cycles

- To comprehensively address IWT, a serious transnational crime, more resources should be invested in dealing with illegal wildlife trade at a national level, including illegal fishing and logging
- There is need for reliable data to anchor the wildlife economy plan, especially considering that conservation benefits differ by region and contexts

## Community perspectives

### Session: Panel on Voices from the Community

While discussing what needs to be done to unlock the power of communities as co-partners, community representatives emphasized (i) the importance of their recognition as shareholders instead of stakeholders in the management of their land and natural resources. Further, (ii) the role of communities in managing natural resources and their rights need to be reflected and enshrined into relevant laws. Moreover, (iii) women’s participation in wildlife management needs to be encouraged. These points were delivered in their ‘new deal’ [declaration](#), in a move to claim their rightful place in Africa’s Wildlife economy. They called on African Governments, the private sector and international organizations to recognize the integral role of communities in the ownership, management and conservation of the natural resources that drive the continent’s wildlife economy.

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*“We need to see reform, where our communities are put in control of the nature and wildlife they live with-at the moment, decisions are taken by others and imposed on us”, said Ishmael Chaukura, a community representative from Mbire, Zimbabwe attending the Summit. He further added that “Communities see only a fraction of the income from wildlife and nature earnings, yet we bear the costs of living with wildlife. We feel that the Governments and other partners understand the importance of the communities in conservation, as caretakers of protected areas- we should see this reflected through the revenue these areas and wildlife bring in.”*

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## Ministerial Responses

### Session: Ministerial Response Dialogues

Ministers from key countries actively engaged in the wildlife economy shared the policy direction of their respective governments and their commitments to Africa’s wildlife economy going forward.

They addressed the issues presented concerning governance and legislation affecting ease of doing business, as well as community rights and wildlife-based resources and benefits distribution.

## Public-Private Partnerships

### Session: Co-management Dialogues

This session was intended to explore how co-management and public-private partnerships can help secure endangered conservation estates. Some of the key messages emanating from this dialogue were that

- communities are a critical part of the co-management relationship along with private sector and government
- for stronger economic opportunities co-management should include all the relevant natural resources.
- there is need to look at landscape-based approaches to managing the resources
- government's role in the wildlife economy initiative is to lead the process in garnering private sector investment to improve and restore marginalized lands for sustained wildlife economy

### Session: Panel on Innovative Approaches to Expand Economic Benefits

A panel of experts described some of the existing innovations that bear potential to unlock new wildlife based economic benefits and that promote public-private partnerships. Some of the innovations presented include:

- The lion's share initiative, which is aimed at raising funds from private enterprises that utilize wildlife images as part of their brand. More information on the [Lion's Share Initiative](#) can be found using this link: <https://thelionssharefund.com/>
- [Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network](#), an initiative that seeks to protect threatened and endangered species while contributing to economic viability of rural communities
- [Powering Africa Recharging Conservation](#), a first-of-its-kind wildlife-smart energy development designed to develop large-scale, grid-connected solar plants in Sub-Saharan Africa

## Session: Practical Experience to Unlock Wildlife and Timber Value Chains

The CITES Secretary General, representatives of Zambia’s Community natural resources management forum and government representatives for Kenya and Zimbabwe, elicited an important dialogue on the value of existing trade data and regulatory frameworks in unlocking key value chains. At the same time, representatives of government institutions shared practical experiences that have advanced wildlife and timber value chains and what more needs be done to ensure sustainability.

### Side Events

On the margins of the summit, a series of side-events were held to strengthen the discussions, further support collaborations and foster partnerships. Individual programmes for each of these events can be found in the list of annexes.

- A ministerial meeting of the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) ministers, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019, was organized and hosted by the KAZA Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of Zimbabwe.
- A one-day community dialogue workshop, hosted by UNEP in collaboration with USAID’s Resilient waters program and UNDP, was organized a day before the summit with the overarching goal of providing safe space for the community and youth to share experiences, identify and organize their key messages and strategize on how to deliver these messages during the summit.
- A welcome cocktail was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 at the A’Zambezi River Lodge hosted by Minister of Environment, Tourism & Hospitality Industry - Hon. P. Mupfumira (Sen).
- A gala dinner, held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019, at the Elephant Hills Resort hosted by H.E. E.D Mnangangwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe with support from WWF.

In concluding the 2-day summit words of appreciation from the Government of Zimbabwe through the Permanent Secretary, Mr. M. Munodawafa, and the Head of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Branch, Maxwell Gomera, who presented UNEP’s appreciation on behalf of the Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Joyce Msuya, were shared with all participants noting, in their own words, that the Summit was an unparalleled, extra-ordinary and a defining moment in the history of African wildlife management – “and one that we will all look back at with pride” said Mr. Gomera.

Both called on governments, political leaders, key actors in the private sector, development partners and the civil society to support the initiative that seeks to forge a new deal to expand opportunities for tourism, rural communities and wildlife for the benefit of Africa.

## List of Annexes

Annex 1: Final Programme of the Summit

Annex 1b: Individual Programmes for Side Events

Annex 2: List of accredited participants

Annex 3: Biographies of panelists, presenters and guest speakers

Annex 4: List of presentations

Annex 5: Full video recording of the 2 day-summit