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26 January 2018

The Director
World Heritage Centre

Dear Mechtild Rossler

RE: STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT: MANA POOLS, SAPI AND CHEWORE SAFARI AREAS WORLD HERITAGE AREAS.

Please find attached Zimbabwe's submission on the State of Conservation Report on Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Areas.

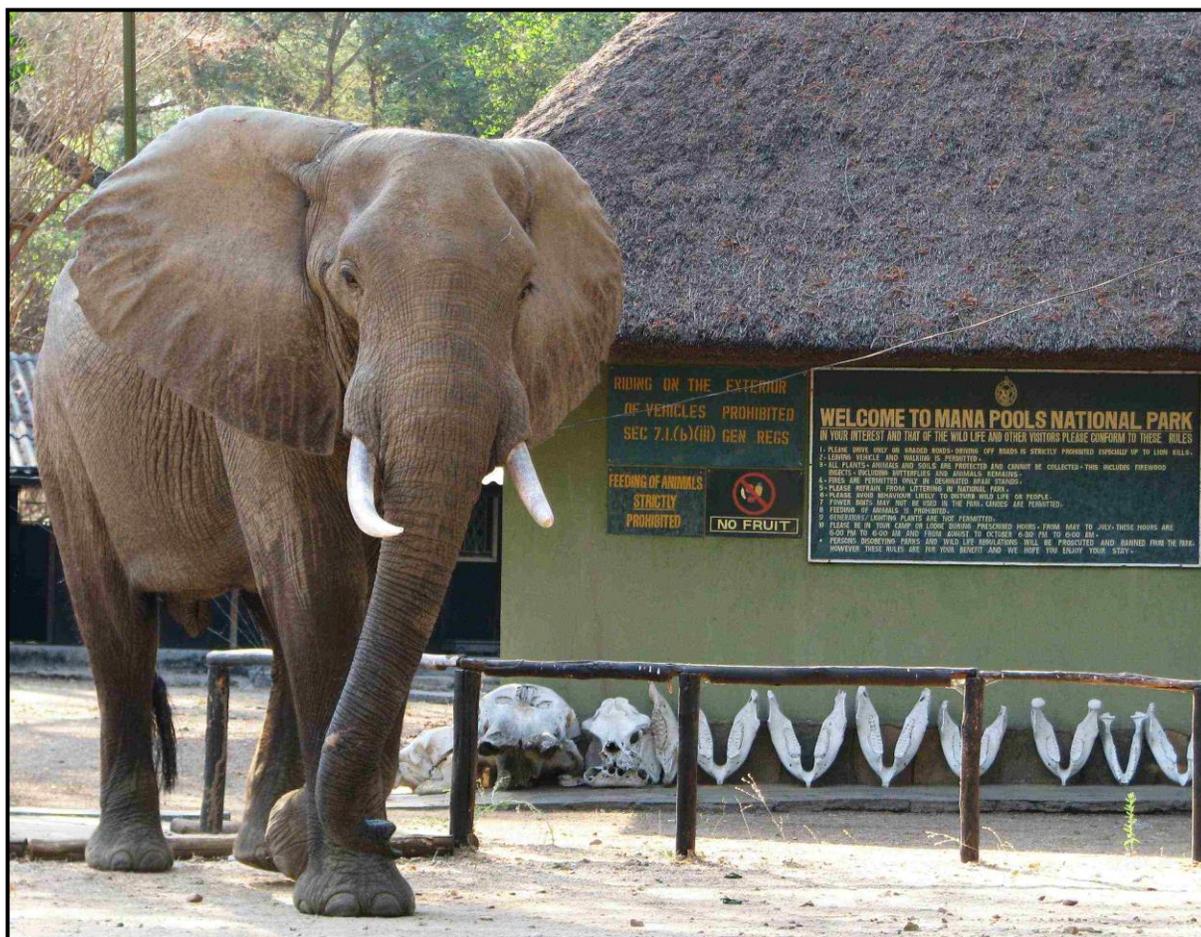
I sincerely apologise for the delay in submitting our report.
Please Madam, accept the assurances of my highest regard.

Ms M.J. Chirapa

SECRETARY GENERAL - ZIMBABWE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO



Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Site



State of Conservation Report (2017)

Property details

State Party: Zimbabwe

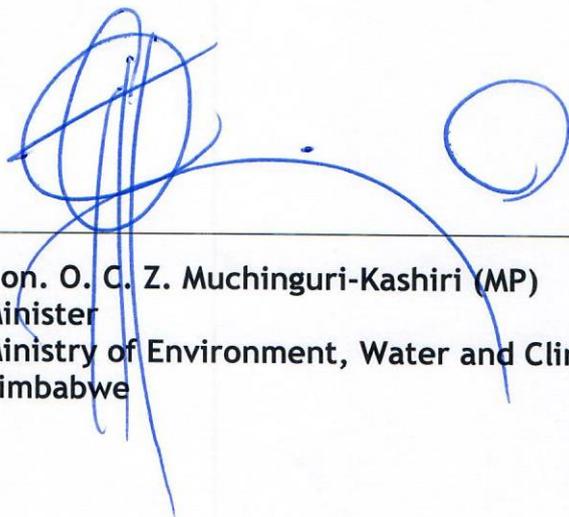
Name of property: Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Site

Property Identification Number: (No.302) Zimbabwe

Reporting period: 2018

Reporting Date: 1 December 2017

Signature on behalf of the States Parties

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right, positioned above a horizontal line.

Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri (MP)
Minister
Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate
Zimbabwe

1. Executive Summary of the report

The State party of Zimbabwe is committed to conserve and protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Mana Pools National Parks, Sapi, Chewore Safari Areas' World Heritage site. This report gives detail on the state of conservation of the site and provides responses to the decisions made by the 40th Session of the World Heritage Committee regarding monitoring of Vine Camp a newly established tourism site; implementation of conservation management strategies and plans; progress towards establishing a management plan for the site; establishment of a joint-transboundary World Heritage Site with Zambia, loss of wildlife populations due to high poaching rates; and the finalization of the Trans-frontier Conservation Area MoU.

The State Party of Zimbabwe has put efforts to engage with a number of stakeholders, donors and private partners in order to meet its conservation targets. The implementation of the Elephant Management Plan and Anti-poaching Strategy is being done with full stakeholder participation and support. The management planning process for the new World Heritage Site Management Plan is underway with funding secured from African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and is expected to be complete in eleven months' time as from November 2017.

The strategies and plans encourage trans-boundary collaboration with the neighbouring State Party of Zambia which has also been emphasized by the committee through the need to finalize the TFCA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as well as the establishment of a joint trans-boundary world heritage site. In line with the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, the State party of Zimbabwe has engaged the State party of Zambia in a consultative process with the view of establishing a transboundary World Heritage site incorporating Mana Pools, Sapi, Chewore and the Lower Zambezi National Park. The State Party of Zambia has completed its internal consultation process for the signing of the MoU to establish the Lower Zambezi- Mana Pools TFCA and are ready to sign. The State Party of Zimbabwe is yet to complete its consultation process for the finalization of the MoU.

The initial consultation meeting which was organized by Zimbabwe was held between the two States parties at Chirundu Safari Lodge. The meeting resulted in the appreciation by both states parties of the benefits of a transboundary site and the need to expedite the conclusion of the TFCA MoU signing process. It was however noted that both parties still have issues to address in order to ensure commitment to the protection of the OUV of the extended World heritage site.

Research and monitoring is being done to ensure species protection. Hunting has been suspended in the Sapi and the northern part of Chewore Safari Areas to allow monitoring of game populations and their recoupment. Efforts are being made to secure the areas for Black rhinoceros reintroduction in the future.

Tourism activities are being monitored at Vine Camp, as well as implementation of management recommendations. There are no illegal developments taking place as the Lessee is complying with the development guidelines agreed upon. The camp is not yet fully functional. New tourism camps are to be established in poaching hotspots and further away from the Zambezi River as recommended by the 2009 Management Plan.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

Paragraph 1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B,

Paragraph 2. Recalling Decision 38 COM 7B.97, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),

Paragraph 3. Welcomes the implementation of the environmental safeguards in the development of the new Mana Pools Lodge at Vine Camp, and the State Party's assurance that any further developments will be located in more peripheral areas, away from the Zambezi riverfront, and requests the State Party to ensure regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the environmental management and monitoring plans at Vine Camp, and to adopt an adaptive approach to its management;

The State Party of Zimbabwe seriously takes note of the concerns of the Committee on the implementation of environmental management recommendations for Vine camp; and is committed to regular monitoring of the site. As of the time of writing this report; Vine Camp is not yet fully functional as they are only receiving marketing guests. Regular monitoring of environmental management at Vine Camp is done by the Parks site management team as well as the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). The environmental impact mitigation measures adopted in the revised EIA for the site are being strictly monitored. The Camp is solar powered and the natural vegetation has been allowed to thrive. It should be noted that the camp is not yet fully operational and has so far been receiving marketing guests only in anticipation of receiving high market end visitors once the lodge has been fully marketed. No further developments have been made since the establishment of the camp. With limited activities at site level, no significant visible impacts have been noted or recorded at the site.

Paragraph 4. Notes with significant concern that the 2014 national aerial survey of key wildlife species has revealed a decline in the Zambezi Valley populations of elephants and other mammals which are key attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and that the threat of poaching is currently too high to consider a feasibility study for a possible reintroduction programme of Black rhinoceros;

The decline in populations in the Zambezi Valley has been of great concern to the State Party of Zimbabwe. It is noted as well that the decline did not equate to the carcass ratios in the aerial survey report. As such, studies have been embarked on to monitor the movements of elephants in the Zambezi Valley through use of satellite elephant collars. Habitat use, home ranges, corridors and transboundary movements will be

monitored as such. Four satellite collars have been mounted and deployed since the beginning of the year, and more are yet to be deployed in the entire Zambezi Valley landscape.

Habitat status is also being monitored through vegetation mapping, establishment of exclusion zones; alien invasive species and parasites monitoring.

In Sapi Safari area and the Northern side of Chewore Safari area, hunting has been suspended since 2016 to allow elephant populations and other key species such as buffalo, lion, leopard etc to recover from the downward trends. This, coupled with intensified anti-poaching operations is obviously expected to afford a conducive environment for the recovery of the populations.

Anti-poaching efforts have been increased through stakeholder involvement. This has facilitated the establishment of operational bases infrastructure built at stations in the Valley; anti-poaching reaction units have also been established, that is, the Zambezi Valley Reaction Unit and Rhino Tusk Force. National Parks Rangers have been seconded to the fully equipped reaction units in terms of resources.

Ranger trainings are being carried out and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) has been adopted in stations that make up the World Heritage Site (WHS); and efforts are being made to extend it to the whole of the Zambezi Valley. The three elements of the WHS are Monitoring Illegal Killing of Endangered Species (MIKES) sites and have also been nominated to be Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) sites. Equipment such as micro-lite and helicopter have been donated to the Zambezi Valley to assist in monitoring of poaching activities.

Collaborative work is also being implemented with the States Party of Zambia in the form of joint river patrols (being carried out fortnightly); sharing of intelligence information as well as Joint Commission and Joint Operations Commission meetings being held between the two States Parties.

The States Party of Zimbabwe shares a common vision with the WH Committee, to re-introduce the Black rhinoceros in the Zambezi Valley. As such, Great Plains an International Safari operator currently operating in the Okavango Delta in Botswana has been engaged as a Photographic Safari operator in Sapi Safari Area, assisting with anti-poaching and securing the Valley together with various stakeholders. It is therefore the hope of the State Party of Zimbabwe, that the endangered Black rhinoceros will be reintroduced in the near future.

The states parties will continue to share information on the OUV in their respective areas and review their Management plans.

Paragraph 5. Notes the development of an anti-poaching strategy for the property and a broader elephant management plan for the Zambezi Valley, and also requests the State Party to ensure that they are fully resourced and effectively implemented so as to restore and maintain the property's OUV;

The State Party of Zimbabwe appreciates the concerns of the Committee towards the funding of activities of the Anti-poaching Strategy and the Elephant Management Plan. The private sector has been engaged to assist with resourcing the effective implementation of the anti-poaching strategy and Elephant Management Plan. Organisations such as SINOZIM, African Wildlife Foundation, Tashinga Initiative, Zambezi Elephant Fund, Bush-life anti-poaching unit and Zambezi Society are key players operating in the Valley and assisting with the implementation of the anti-poaching strategy as well as the Elephant Management Plan. Quarterly meetings are being held as follow ups to implementations of plans and strategies, with working groups continuously operating on the ground, mobilising resources and ensuring implementation of the strategy. The end of year Elephant management meeting for the year 2017 has been held and achievements of targets were significant. Other development partners such as UNDP are also finalising arrangements of supporting the Zambezi Valley through funding from Global Environmental Facility (GEF) 6 in order to support us as we implement our conservation mandate. Mana Pools obviously is one of the key beneficiaries to this arrangement.

Paragraph 6. Regrets that the State Party has not been able to complete the new management plan for the property due to lack of funds and encourages it to apply for International Assistance to support this work;

Funding for the World Heritage Site management planning process has been secured from African Wildlife Foundation and the process is underway. An external consultant has been engaged to facilitate the review process. The first phase of biodiversity and tourism assessments has been completed. The management planning process is expected to be completed in 11months time with effect from November 2017. Stakeholder consultation and interviews are key to the planning process. Site visits and tourism camps assessments have been carried out.

Paragraph 9. Also welcomes progress made by the States Parties of Zimbabwe and Zambia to establish a trans-frontier conservation area linking the property with Zambia's adjacent Lower Zambezi National Park, and also encourages them to finalize the TFCA Memorandum of Understanding and further enhance joint operations to protect and manage the area;

The establishment of the Lower-Zambezi- Mana Pools TFCA is in its final stages. The MoU finalisation process is still underway, with Zambia having completed its internal consultations; while Zimbabwe is still consulting. The States Parties are committed and joint operations through anti-poaching, intelligence sharing and joint meetings (Joint Commissions and Joint Permanent Commissions of Defense and Security) are taking place regularly. Issues concerning the TFCAs in the Zambezi Valley have been discussed at Joint Permanent Commission of Defence and Security between the two states parties as well.

Paragraph 10. Reiterates its recommendation to the States Parties to consider nominating the Lower Zambezi National Park, in order to eventually constitute a joint trans-boundary inscription on the World Heritage List, in line with the World Heritage Committee's recommendation at the time of inscription of the property;

States Parties of Zimbabwe and Zambia have welcomed the initiative for a joint transboundary inscription. The initial processes of engagement have begun; with the first joint technical meeting having been held on the 23rd and 24th of November 2017 in Chirundu, Zimbabwe. At the meeting the two states parties identified the existing challenges and threats to the OUV of Mana Pools World Heritage site but also noted the value and opportunities for cooperation between Mana Pools and Lower Zambezi National Parks. Both States Parties expressed willingness to collaborate with the intention of eventually creating a Transboundary World Heritage site. Both parties also acknowledged the enhanced benefits that would derive from the TFCA cooperation, hence the need to finalise the MoU. However both parties admitted that this was a process that would require further consultations and updating each other on the developments in the area. The necessary consultations will also require funding and in some cases technical assistance. As a way forward, Zambia will follow up on the conclusion of the Court case concerning the copper mining in Kangaluwi and consult stakeholders on the inscription of Lower Zambezi National Park. On the other hand Zimbabwe will finalise the review process on the TFCA MoU. Both parties agreed to the holding of the second joint consultative meeting in April 2018 which would be hosted by Zambia.

3.0. Other Current Conservation and Management Issues

- 3.1. In efforts to conserve wildlife populations and reduce poaching, anti-poaching reaction units have been established, that is the Zambezi Valley Reaction Unit and the Rhino Tusk Force. Picket bases have been established as well as fly camps. Monitoring systems such as SMART and MIKE have been introduced in all station in the WHS.
- 3.2. New law enforcement roads have been opened for quick reactions to poaching incidences as well as improved site monitoring.
- 3.3. Elephants have been collared to monitor and study their habit preferences, home ranges, corridors as well as transboundary movements.
- 3.4. Vegetation mapping has also been done to monitor impacts of herbivory and climate on the existing woody species. Enclosure plots have also been put in place to assess regeneration of woody species on the alluvial floodplain.
- 3.5. A decision was taken by the State party of Zimbabwe in 2016 to reduce hunting in the buffer zone of the World Heritage site and maintain them as Photographic Safari areas for the next 25 years. In this regard hunting has been stopped in Sapi and the Northern part of Chewore Safari area. This is intended to revive the species populations in order to enhance the OUV of the site and prepare for the reintroduction of the Black rhinoceros in the near future.

4.0. Proposed Developments

Efforts have been made to have new tourism developments being established inland and towards the escarpment far from the Zambezi River as recommended by the 2009 Management Plan. Seven new sites have been identified in poaching hot spots both inland and along the Zambezi River. The developments will be subject to Environmental impact assessments.

5.0 Public access to the state of conservation report

The State party of Zimbabwe has no reservations regarding the publication of this report on the website.