

LATF/LAGC.9/3.6

ADDRESS BY THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT OF THE 8TH LUSAKA AGREEMENT GOVERNING COUNCIL AT THE 9TH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

**Honourable Ezekiel Maige, MP,
Representative of the Vice President of the 8th Governing Council and the Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism for the United Republic of Tanzania**

**Honourable Henri Djombo, MP,
Rapporteur of the 8th Governing Council and the Minister for Forest Economy of the Republic of Congo;**

Hon. Serapio Rukundo, MP, Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities of the Republic of Uganda;

**Heads of Delegations of Party States and Signatories
The Director of the Lusaka Agreement Task Force
The Representative of the Executive Director of the UNEP
Technical Experts
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Once more may I welcome you at this important meeting of the Governing Council of the Lusaka Agreement. I realize that we have a lot to address and would like to make my remarks as precise as possible.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank my fellow Bureau officers of the 8th Governing Council for their efforts and finding time to deal with matters of Lusaka Agreement despite their busy schedules.

I wish to recognize the presence of Honourable Ezekiel Maige Deputy Minister for Tourism and Natural Resources of the United Republic of Tanzania, Honourable Serapio Rukundo MP, Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for the Republic of Uganda, and His Excellency Professor Royson Mukwena the representative of the Minister for Environment, Tourism and Natural Resources of the Republic of Zambia.

I salute Honourable Henri Djombo MP, Minister for Forest Economy of the Republic of Congo and Rapporteur of the Governing Council, who has made great contributions in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. He has served as a Governor since 1999. I also wish to thank other honourable ministers for their unrelented support and advice during our term in office.

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During the period, the implementation of the Agreement we had both successes and challenges. One of the key challenges was the mobilization of resources to ensure that the Task Force and other implementing organs of the agreement operate effectively. I am indeed glad to report that despite these hurdles, the Task Force and National Bureaus performed well as is reminiscent in the success stories that have been presented in their progress reports.

You will recall that Decision VIII/3 of the 8th Governing Council meeting requested the Director of the Task Force to initiate financial strategy to ensure financial sustainability, expansion of partnerships and to develop staffing levels for the Task Force.

I am pleased to report to you that the financial strategy was developed in consultation with Parties and approved by the Bureau. In expansion of partnerships the Task Force concluded two cooperation agreements with the Secretariats of ICPO-Interpol and World Customs Organization (WCO). During this period the staffing levels for the Task Force was developed and approved by the Bureau and its implementation is subject to the availability of funds.

You will also recall that the Bureau through Decision VII/C/1 was tasked with the responsibility to continue serving as an implementation committee of the Agreement and undertake regular reviews and monitor the implementation of the Agreement and the institutions established under it as well as review budgets and financial management of the Task Force. I am pleased to report that the Bureau held a meeting in October 2007 at which we made some decisions. The Bureau appointed a Committee of Experts to deliberate on specific issue on finance and expansion of membership to the Agreement. The Committee sat in April 2008 in Nairobi and their report has been presented to Council for consideration.

Honourable Ministers
Distinguished Delegates,

The Decision further instructed the Director of the Task Force to identify and appropriately undertake appointment of auditors. This was fulfilled with Messrs Deloitte and Touche having audited the books of accounts for the period July 2007 to June 2008. The Audit Report is being presented to this Governing Council for consideration and approval.

I wish to thank all the Parties and the cooperating partners for their unreserved support during our tenure in office. Further, I wish to commend the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for their support and more so for playing a pivotal role in the implementation of the Agreement which has seen it grows.

Indeed our partners have assisted us to surmount some of the challenges and I urge them to continue supporting us in our collective fight against wildlife crime. These included the Forest Bureau of Taiwan, the David Shepard Wildlife Conservation Foundation, and International Fund for Animal Welfare.

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Finally, on behalf of the Bureau of the 8th Governing Council, I wish to take this opportunity to wish our successors all the very best as they take over the mantle of leadership. I am delighted that we are handing over the office to an able and very resourceful leadership that will continue revitalizing the Agreement as well as the Task Force to a more vibrant entity. I therefore encourage the parties to offer their unlimited support to the new Bureau officers to enable us realize our cherished objective of reducing and ultimately eliminating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.

With these remarks may I take this opportunity to invite the President of the 9th Governing Council Hon. Shamsa Mwangunga to make her speech.

Please welcome.

Hon. Dr. N. Wekesa MP

President of the 8th Lusaka Agreement Governing Council