

18th NACSO AGM

Chairperson's Report

Presented by: Ronny Dempers (Chairperson) on behalf of the NACSO Executive Committee

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NACSO Members (Full and Associate members)

NACSO Secretariat

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to present to you once again the Chairperson's Report at this 18th Annual General Meeting of NACSO. This report highlights institutional and programme related issues as well as challenges experienced during 2018. It also touches on the overall progress of the CBNRM programme, as well as highlighting key organizational issues that NACSO has to confront head on.

As we know NACSO is a networking organization serving its members and I am pleased to report the following:

- NACSO's strategy, including the role and the functioning of the NACSO Working Groups, has remained focussed because we have a strategic plan in place. The strategic plan is an active document that has been reviewed annually.
- We have also appointed a Task Force to restructure the NRWG (Natural Resources Working Group) and its work is in progress. I am pleased to announce that the Management Committee, at its meeting in December, made concrete decisions regarding the hosting of the NRWG and provided some key directives. After extensive deliberation the committee decided that the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) would host the working group. NACSO expects the NNF to let us know within the next two months how the process is unfolding.
- Strategic level discussions have taken place between NACSO and WWF to create a mechanism for the two organizations to work closely together to access funding for the work we are doing.
- The finalization of the long awaited appointment of a Coordinator for the Institutional and Development Working Group (IDWG) is a solid achievement as it strengthens our capacity to address institutional governance challenges in conservancies in a

coordinated fashion. I must hasten to thank all those, including WWF staff and NACSO leadership, who have enabled us to secure funding for the working group activities.

- We also managed to develop a short-term strategy to assist the NACSO Secretariat with the NACSO Director's workload, moving the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) to one of its member organisations, and to restructure the NRWG, enabling it to take over some operational activities. The CLP remains an important programme in terms of building and strengthening leadership capacity in conservation, which will also help us to deal with the leadership succession challenges within NACSO member organisations. There is need for us to apply our minds and energy to strengthen the conceptual development and implementation of the CLP programme. A further leadership development has been the AFRICA leadership Institute (ALI). Through support provided by the SCP (Sustainable Communities Partnership) project with funding from the Morby Foundation we have been able to provide leadership training to 33 conservancy managers and 22 NGO and MET staff. In total 66 leaders have received training in Transformational Leadership. This leadership approach focused mainly on the soft skills leaders require. Initial feedback from the recipients has been impressive. There is now a requirement to put in place on-going mentorship that will help us to build and strengthen leadership within CBNRM.
- The question of finding the best mechanism possible to manage NACSO finances has also received attention and we have received a report and had a number of discussions on the issue. I expect this AGM to give definitive direction on this matter. Our Constitution provides in section 6.3 that annually we review progress relating to the financial management service delivery and make the necessary decisions in this regard.
- Despite challenges, NACSO member organisations have continued to support conservancies and developing regional conservancy associations.
- The NACSO Secretariat has facilitated conservancy association training in several regions, and I feel that there is now a need to go to the next level of facilitating the establishment of a National Conservancy Association. However, at a workshop co-hosted by NACSO and UNDP's Small Grants Programme, the participants drawn from the regional associations indicated that they are not yet ready for the formation of a national association. Therefore, the workshop agreed that in the interim the

regional associations would identify and nominate from their regions people with the potential to be groomed as CBNRM ambassadors or spokespersons. It was agreed that those names will be forwarded to the NACSO Secretariat by end of January 2019, which will enable us to prepare for the upcoming CITES meeting this year.

- We have seen the NACSO Secretariat, together with the conservancy representatives, representing community voices at CITES and other similar platforms. I therefore believe that building and strengthening national level platforms through which communities can amplify their voices, aimed at influencing national and international policy instruments, will be the next logical step to embark upon.
- We have also taken a decision about training accreditation issues, as we have resolved to create a NACSO training institute that will be registered as a separate legal entity responsible for driving the training agenda of NACSO. It is envisaged that NACSO's constituent members will be the shareholders of the entity. NDT is expected to take a lead in the finalization of this process.

A brief review of the CBNRM programme:

Conservancies continue to make a growing contribution to the land under conservation and in 2018 a further 3 conservancies were gazetted. From the income data for 2017 it is clear that the programme continues to make significant impacts on the income of conservancies, conservancy members and Namibia's GDP. This year has been also characterized by two important pieces of legislation that will have a significant impact on the CBNRM programme, the Human Wildlife Conflict Management Policy, and the Wildlife Bill.

NACSO and its partners have played, and continue to play, a very significant role. The second National Land Conference took place and individual NACSO member organizations, including UNAM and the LAC were invited to make presentations at the conference. Despite this, the voice of conservancies and CBNRM institutions should have been stronger at this conference. Key land related issues that remain for the CBNRM programme are the shrinking commonage, land allocation, and land invasions threatening areas reserved for wildlife.

One aspect that I would like to highlight in this Chairperson's Report is that international funding to Namibia has not only declined, but the way available funding is being channelled has also changed. This is the case with the arrival of the Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)

funding channelled through The Environmental Fund of Namibia (EIF) to conservancies and community forests. While we do not in principle oppose the direct funding of CBOs, it has the potential to generate new challenges for CBOs which are already struggling to manage their finances, and which will be additionally expected to comply with the accountability requirements imposed by donors. This funding arrangement also challenges NACSO's relationship with the conservancies. This needs a robust discussion and a strategy to deal with this matter.

Funding is expected to flow to the newly created Community Conservation Fund of Namibia to contribute to a newly initiated Human Wildlife Conflict insurance scheme.

Allow me now to briefly touch on international level interventions:

- Together with the MET, NACSO contributed to the Rural Community Voice submission to CITES.
- Together with Namibian Ambassador in Brussels, on the invitation of the European Parliament, NACSO joined other organizations making a presentation on the sustainable use of wildlife entitled: "Let Africa Speak".
- The IWWC (International Wildlife Conservation Council) also invited NACSO to present "How hunting, and especially trophy hunting, has an impact on benefits to communities". The invitation was from the Department of US Fish And Wildlife Services.
- NACSO also hosted, together with the MET, the Under Secretary of the UNCBD (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity) at Wêreldsend, who praised the Namibian programme and invited 4 community members to the UNCBD Conference in Egypt.
- NACSO also successfully hosted the "Women in Conservation" workshop in Windhoek in conjunction with the US embassy.
- NACSO attended the African Wildlife Consultative Forum on Hunting in Kampala and showcased NACSO and its activities.

Some specific CBNRM Progress to date, based on 2017 SOCC annual report;

- 46 conservancy management plans in place, (down from 52 in 2016).

- 24 sustainable business and financial plans in place, (increased from 15 in 2016) due largely to efforts from the Business, Livelihoods and Enterprises Working Group (BEL).
- 52 annual financial reports presented, (also 52 in 2016).
- 57 annual general annual general meetings held in 2017, compared to 55 in 2016.
- 15% female chairpersons in 2017, an increase from 14% in 2016.
- 44% female treasurers / financial managers in 2017, compared to 41% in 2016.
- 34% female management committee members in 2017, a decline from 39% in 2016.
- 26% female staff members, compared to 29% in 2016.

Overall I feel that the governance data represents a downward trend in most of the categories and we firstly need to understand what the story is behind the data results and then try to find solutions to address the issues. I therefore welcome whole-heartedly the decision taken by the IDWG to create a platform early in the year to critically analyse the overall results from the audits.

Total Returns to CBNRM Programme (conservancies)

In 2017 the economic contribution to Namibian net annual income by the conservancy programme was estimated at N\$ 804 million, an increase from N\$ 692 million the previous year. Conservancies generated over N\$ 132 million in fees, salaries, meat and other social benefits going directly to rural communities living in conservancies. However, we must remember that that income accruing to conservancies is shown before costs, and that after salaries and other management expenses, only 31% remains for the distribution of benefits to members in cash or as community infrastructure projects or social benefits *(2017 figures)*.

Challenges include:

- More sustainable funding, especially for the NACSO Secretariat
- The need to restructuring the working groups
- Climate Change
- Illegal settlements in wildlife areas

- Poaching. This has been in decline, but there seems to be a perception that there is under reporting from some conservancies, according to the 2017 SOCC report.

Ladies and Gentleman, there is a need to reach out to other sectors.

I would like to identify one key resource: water. Under the MAWF there is a CBM (Community Based Management Programme), which I would urge us to reach out to. The first engagement could be for them to be invited to make a presentation at a NACSO gathering. I believe there is much potential in working with this programme, given also the need for strengthening the collaboration between water point committees, conservancies, community forests etc.

Whilst thanking you all, I am also reminded that some of the champions of CBNRM have passed on, notably from Torra Conservancy: Bennie Roman and another affectionately known as Talus – Vitalis Florry, and other conservancy leaders, such as the founding and former Chairperson of //Khoadi #Hôas. I would like to urge us to rekindle the idea that was suggested, notably by the Deputy Minister of Environment, at the memorial service of Bennie, to consider some kind of a fund / mechanism to maintain the legacy of these fallen CBNRM guardians

Allow me to thank all the NACSO members and their staff for their dedication to the cause, to all our donor partners and the private sector fraternity, and our government, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, for their timeless support and partnership. To our Secretariat: a word of appreciation for their efforts.

I thank you all!