



Republic of Namibia
Ministry of Justice

STATEMENT BY
THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE
HON. MR. SAKEUS E.T. SHANGHALA, MP
DURING THE LAUNCHING OF THE
ANIMAL PROTECTION AND WELFARE BILL, 2019

AT
EAGLES BEER GARDEN, AVIS, WINDHOEK

September 21, 2019

– To be checked against delivery –

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

1. As indicated by the introduction, what you see here today is the product of excellent public and private sector collaboration. It is my pleasure to welcome you here today and to launch the second phase of country-wide public participation on the Animal Welfare and Protection Bill, 2019.
2. In terms of the law-making process, the Bill which came to light at the beginning of this year, has been approved in principle by Cabinet and has been shared with the Office of the Attorney-General and the Law Reform and Development Committee for constitutional scrutiny. This Bill has been the test-case for the draft law-making process and great success has been experienced thus far. We hope to make this type of enthusiastic participation the norm in law-making in Namibia. The updated law-making process would place Namibia at the pioneering helm of law-making in developing countries.
3. Another area where Namibia seeks to become a leader is in Animal Protection and Welfare. Before I delve into this topic let me allay the fears of my worst political critics. Some may ask, why waste time on animal welfare when there are people being abused, tortured and neglected. Globally, there is increased understanding that there is a link between animal and human violence. This is a link that, when identified, can prevent the abuse of vulnerable victims. Studies correlating animal abuse and violence against women and children in the United Kingdom showed that 61.5% of convicted animal abuse offenders had also committed an assault, 17% had committed sexual abuse, and 8% had arson convictions. Animal abuse was a better predictor of sexual assault than were previous convictions for homicide, arson, or firearms offences. Animal cruelty offenders committed an average of four different types of criminal offences. All sexual homicide offenders reported having been cruel to animals. Sexual assault, domestic violence, and firearms offences featured prominently in cruelty offenders' criminal histories.¹ A similar study has not been undertaken on the continent, but I have no doubt that it would yield the same results. Therefore, by focusing on animal welfare, I am also able to focus on the welfare of women and children that are abused in secret.

¹ M. Randell *Hidden-in-Sight*.

4. As Minister of Justice and as a general rule in my life I like to benchmark standards and legislation with industry leaders. When I saw the World Animal Protection Index in January I was driven to immediate action to improve Namibia's world-wide animal welfare reputation. Namibia is generally known for its excellent animal welfare reputation, but it is not officially recognized. Namibia does not even feature on the World Animal Protection Index. The United Kingdom and Austria have the best rating while Iran and Belarus have the worst rating. South African, Tanzania and Kenya have average ratings which Namibia would also be categorized as, because we still have legislation from South Africa in force in Namibia. The indicators used to determine a country's rating were used to guide the drafting of the Animal Protection and Welfare Bill.
5. The Animal Welfare Protection Index measures the extent to which the country's legislation provides protection to animals used in farming, animals in captivity, animals used in scientific research and the protection of wild animals. The Index also considers the strength of governance systems created through legislation and compliance with international animal welfare standards. The final measure is the level of stakeholder engagement that takes place between the Government and those involved in animal welfare and protection.
6. Today's launch of the Animal Protection and Welfare Bill for public comment is a first of many steps that will be taken to ensure open dialogue on legislation and improvement of animal welfare mechanisms. Although Namibia is making great strides in Animal Welfare, I am under no illusions that there is still plenty of work to be done in terms of the protection of marine animals, draught animals and general education in animal care standards.
7. I now invite you to get a copy of the Bill on the Ministry's website and on Annie's Animal Legal Fund website and send your written comments to the Ministry by 21 October 2019. The reason for the odd date is, because the last day for tabling Bills in Parliament is 1 November and I would like to table the Bill this year still.
8. The Ministry looks forward to receiving your constructive inputs and I look forward to fulfilling my role as SPCA Ambassador through close engagement with you and the greater animal loving community.

THANK YOU