



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

CONSERVATION OF BIOTIC DIVERSITY AND HABITAT PROTECTION



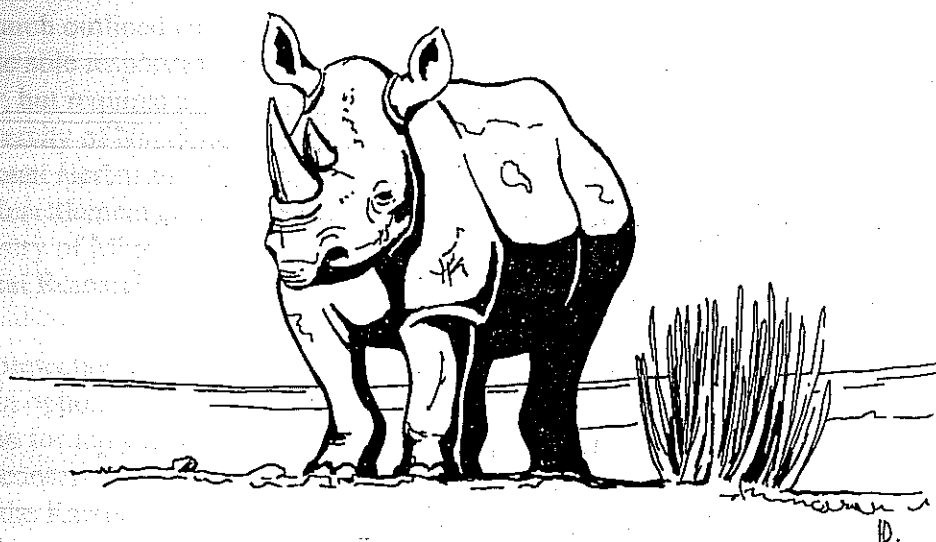
POLICY DOCUMENT

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM
PRIVATE BAG 13306
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

MAY 1994

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The loss of biological diversity is impoverishing the world of its most fundamental capital stocks: its variety of genes, species, habitats, ecosystems and landscapes. This affects the ability of the biosphere to sustain itself and people, and reduces future options for natural resource use, land use and development.
- 1.2 All ecosystems are ultimately interrelated, thus each country, including Namibia, is responsible for the conservation/preservation of its own biotic diversity, as well as that of the global environment.
- 1.3 The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is the primary statutory body responsible for the protection of the natural environment of Namibia.



2. POLICY

In view of the above, it is the policy of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to ensure adequate protection of all species and subspecies, of ecosystems and of natural life support processes, by means of:

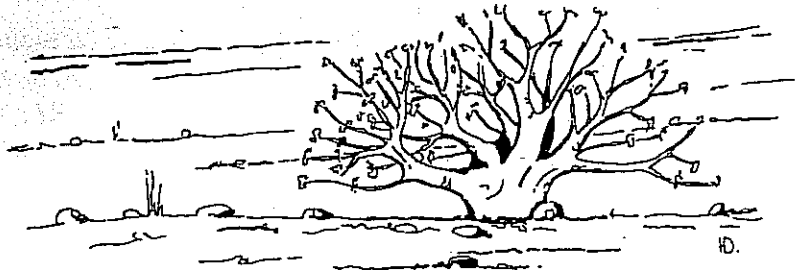
- a) inventories, monitoring and appropriate research,
- b) education and extension,
- c) managing, and assisting and advising in the management of, land and natural resources in Namibia,
- d) legislation,
- e) cooperation with local, national, regional and international organisations working for biotic diversity and habitat protection.



3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

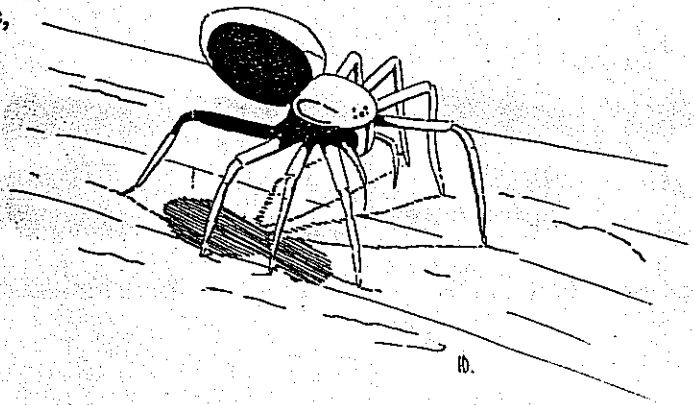
3.1 Research should be encouraged, promoted and directed towards the following fields:

- a) The definition of biological diversity problems and the identification of sites necessary for conserving biodiversity.
- b) Systematic and biogeographical studies to define the conservation status of all Namibian fauna and flora.
- c) The monitoring of resource utilization and the sustainability of renewable natural resources and processes.



- 3.2 The research outlined above should not be the sole responsibility of this Ministry, but requires collaboration with other institutions, both government and NGO, e.g. the University of Namibia, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (and the National Herbarium), Ministry of Education (State Museum of Namibia), Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Ministry of Mines & Energy (Geological Survey of Namibia), and the Desert Ecological Research Unit of Namibia.
- 3.3 Habitat protection by means of land acquisition by the Ministry (i.e. proclamation), should remain an option to enable the Ministry to legislate for a high level of environmental protection for representative samples of biotic and abiotic elements of Namibia, as well as areas of conservation and scientific importance. An example of the latter is the Aigams Cave in the Karstveld, the only locality of the rare endemic catfish *Clarias cavernicola*.
- 3.4 Land acquisition in the non-formal sense should be actively and creatively explored. Consultative, cooperative or contractual strategies should seek the willing consent and active participation of the people who are involved with the land in question. Such strategies include the following:
- a) A Natural Heritage Site Programme,
 - b) The establishment of sustainable, cooperatively managed buffer areas surrounding proclaimed reserves (including proclaimed buffer zones),
 - c) A programme to promote and implement the conservancy concept,
 - d) The principle of sustainable development being promoted and adopted throughout Namibia society,
 - e) The creation of sound economic benefits from natural resources, particularly wildlife and forestry, being derived by local communities linked to their sound and responsible management of these resources.

3.5 In some circumstances, it must be recognized that protection of biological diversity, ecosystems and important landscapes is of national and sometimes international importance, and this must override local interests. Where all reasonable methods fail to afford protection to these feature, land or particular sites may be expropriated in terms of the concept of public domain (article 6(2), Namibian Constitution).



3.6 The Ministry accepts that development is necessary for economic growth and to improve the quality of life of all Namibians. All development must be sustainable and must be evaluated at an appropriate level by means of environmental assessment procedures. This includes proposed developments within proclaimed conservation areas.

3.7 A relevant education and extension programme is necessary in order to cultivate an environmental and conservation ethic throughout all sections of Namibian society.

3.8 To facilitate and implement the conservation of biotic diversity and land acquisition in Namibia, a permanent statutory multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral body must be established (participants listed, in part, in section 3.2). The Directorate of Environmental Affairs could chair this body, and be answerable directly to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

