

Kaza plans could threaten wildlife – conservation fund



TERRITORY ... The World Wildlife Fund in Namibia has called for well-designed development in the Kavango-Zambezi Trans-frontier Conservation Area to ensure wildlife conservation is not hampered. Photo: Absalom Shigwedha

By Absalom Shigwedha
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Major plans, including oil drilling and hydropower, are threatening wildlife and natural resource management across the five-nation Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (Kaza-TFCA).

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) director in Namibia Juliane Zeidler said this at the just-ended 2025 Insaka Symposium held in Namibia.

She said a number of activities are being planned in many parts of the Kaza-TFCA, such as drilling for oil in the Okavango River Basin in the Kavango East region, which lies near the elephant movement corridor in the Mangetti National Park.

In Botswana, a part of the Kaza-TFCA is a licensed area for petroleum prospecting, while in Angola part of the Kaza-TFCA is proposed for hydropower projects.

"There is a lot of planned development. We need to make sure all of them are well designed and developed with conservation in mind," Zeidler told The Namibian yesterday.

She said strategic environmental assessments should be done.

University of Namibia (Unam) vice chancellor Kenneth Matengu in a speech read on his behalf by Alfons Mosimane at the symposium, said theoretical and applied knowledge can only be beneficial through practice-based and evidence-based research.

"To achieve success you need a research capacity and a learning community of practice," Matengu said.

He said the partnership between Insaka and the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) community has created a conducive environment for advancing theoretical and applied knowledge.

Eric Xaweb, the manager of the Tsiseb conservancy in the Erongo region, at the event said community conservation has been an indigenous practice, but many rural communities view tourism as only benefiting those who are employed at tourism accommodation facilities and not the whole community.

He said when tourists visit communal conservancies, they also want to know wild animals are being protected, and in this way tourism and conservation could complement each other.

Xaweb expressed concern over the 1975 Nature Conservation Ordinance giving rural communities too much decision-making power.

He said an individual capable of running a conservancy is sometimes selected but may later be removed from their position if the community decides to do so.

"Why can't such a person be given more time to deliver?" he asked.

Insaka is a consortium of universities that comes together once a year to discuss and share knowledge on socio-ecological systems.

The Insaka 2025 Symposium was held under the theme 'Connecting Terrestrial and Marine Landscapes for Resilience, Knowledge and Partnerships', and was held from 10 to 13 November in Windhoek, and at Spitzkoppe and Henties Bay.

The event brought together researchers in the field of wildlife conservation, resource management and marine and terrestrial environments.