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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women for Conservation improving governance in the Namibian CBNRM programme

3 December 2021, Opuwo | **Namibia Nature Foundation** (NNF) together with **Namibia Development Trust** (NDT), and **Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation** (IRDNC) organisations, acknowledged and celebrated the perseverance and hard work of the Kunene Women for Conservation group in Opuwo. The celebration took place during their annual agenda planning meeting that was facilitated by the three organisations under the *Improving Governance in the National Community-based National Resource Management Programme* project.

The intended impact of this project is to improve governance within the Namibian CBNRM programme. The project further aims to improve equitable benefit distribution through enhanced accountability of management structures and active community inclusion in decision-making. Financially supported by the European Union Delegation to Namibia, this project is coordinated and implemented by a consortium comprising of NDT, IRDNC and NNF as the lead implementing partner, with the coordination of the NACSO - Institutional Development Working Group.

The event was opened by NNF communications officer Disney Andreas who discussed the benefit that conservancies have through their right over wildlife and the opportunity WfC group has in ensuring these are sustainably utilised and benefits accrued to members. Strong governance, accountability and equitable distribution of benefits all form part of the priority areas for this intervention of which the partners want to work closely with women groups to strengthen conservancies and the wider programme. The discussion was then lead by WfC chairperson Ms Tjavarekua, who mentioned that she was very pleased with the visit from the project's communications team and that a dream has become





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a reality because of the acknowledgment received from the EU. Ms Tjavarekua stated that: “Women have a voice within the communities too, and we also uptake the role of a mother, not only to our households, but to our communities. It is therefore important for us to take lead in conservation together with the men in our conservancies.”

The Women for Conservation initiative was started in 2018 during a 4 day field trip to Ombonde People’s Park. The trip was attend by several conservation conscious individuals including IRDNC Executive Director Mr John Kasaona, founder of IRDNC, the late Garth Owen-Smith, and the Kunene Regional Communal Conservancy Association and chairperson of Omatendeka conservancy. Amongst these important heads, a decision was made and a blessing was given to the formation of the group by the women who all believed that women in rural areas deserve a voice in conservation. The group has actively completed trainings on gardening, poultry and pig farming and a plot has already been secured in Orupupa conservancy for intended poultly farming. With external donor support, the group successfully established a living museum in the Ehirovipuka conservancy. The women have taken the initiative to ensure the group is a well-established legal entity with a bank account that is sustained with a monthly contribution of N\$100.00 by the chairperson.

Nabot Mbeeli, NNF’s Senior CBNRM Coordinator briefed the women on the aim of the project and how it is directed to benefit them and their communities. Nabot also emphasized on the need for men in Namibia to be part of such discussions but not dominate, and to understand the challenges faced by women in conservation to collectively address them. Women groups in Namibia such as the WfC should be the champions carrying the voices of conservation from rural areas and mainstreaming wider issues with the wider support of partner organizations through such interventions. * The event was wrapped up with a handover of gifts to the women that attended the event and lunch.

The group has vowed to stay active and participative during the year 2022 with plans to have ongoing committee meetings as well as meeting with the Kunene Governor for frequent updates on their





activities. They further aim to lobby for funding to kick start the poultry and garden projects, maintain the traditional village and purchase uniforms for their conservancy's wildlife game guards.

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Notes to editor:

Photographs File Number: Image 1

Group photo: Attendees to the agenda plan

Caption: Attendees to the agenda planning meeting after receiving their gifts from the conservation consortium

Photographs File Number: Image 2

Individual photo: Ms Tjavarekua

Caption: WfC co-founder and chairperson Ms Tjavarekua

About

Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) is a registered non-governmental organisation founded in 1987. It is a non-profit and funding institution with an independent board of trustees. The foundation initiates, supports and promotes activities that conserve the environment, protect biodiversity and foster the sustainable and ethical use of natural resources. www.nnf.org.na

Namibia Development Trust (NDT) was registered on 21st of March in 1989 under the Trusts Monies Act of 1934, NDT is a non-Governmental Organisation. It was founded in 1987 as a welfare organisation to channel aid from the European Commission to communities disadvantaged by past colonial policies.

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) is a non-governmental organisation and registered trust in Namibia. It evolved out of a pioneering partnership with community leaders in





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the early 1980s to end commercial and subsistence poaching of black rhino, desert adapted elephant, and other species.

