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Community-Driven Approaches to Natural Resource Management: How Conservation is Creating Prosperity and Stability in Rural Namibia

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MAYOCK: Good afternoon and welcome to the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Thank you very much for joining us today for this very special event.

My name is Andrew Mayock. I'm the Deputy Vice President for East and Southern Africa. I'm here to introduce our special guest, the CEO of the Namibian Tourism Board, Mr. Digu Naobeb, and our panel. I'd like to say a few introductory words about MCC, the MCC-Namibia compact, and our partnership with the World Wildlife Fund.

First, I'd like to thank the World Wildlife Fund for collaborating on this event and being such a good partner; we hope this is the first of many successful events to come.

Secondly, many of you are familiar with MCC, but some may not be, so I wanted to say a few brief words about what we do and who we are. MCC is a U.S. government agency, created in 2004 with bipartisan support. We just had our eight-year birthday about a month ago.

Our mission is to reduce poverty through smart investments that promote economic growth. We focus on those countries that are committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in people.

Some of the core guiding principles that make MCC unique are competition, country ownership, and results. Our competitive selection process is based on a country's performance on 20 independent indicators.

Our guiding principle of country ownership means that the country leads in the selection of the projects and leads in the implementation. And our commitment to results is a robust focus on monitoring and evaluation, including independent impact evaluations.

Another guiding principle is our strong commitment to environmental conservation. MCC and our partner countries recognize that the environment and natural resources must be highly valued and well managed to achieve economic growth and poverty reduction.

We know that effective, sustainable development must meet current populations' needs while maintaining opportunities for future generations.

To address these environmental challenges, MCC incorporates better management of natural wealth into its model of economic development in a number of ways.

First, annual country scorecards include measurements of policy performance in natural resource protection and land rights and access.

Second, for countries implementing and developing, MCC compacts' high standards regarding environmental and social considerations are integral components of project selection, design, and implementation.

Lastly, I'd like to make a brief note about how our partner country, Namibia, is an excellent example of putting these principles into practice.

Namibia qualified for compact funding in 2006 and we signed a \$304 million compact in 2008. We're now just halfway through and we're focused on investments in three projects, education, agriculture, and tourism.

MCA-Namibia's tourism project builds on over 10 years of partnership between Namibia and USAID and biodiversity and this investment is expected to directly benefit over 150,000 Namibians and increase Namibian incomes by over \$43 million.

And, as you will hear from this panel, the project is a clear recognition of how sustainable management of natural resources, innovative policies, and promotion of partnerships between communities and the private sector can generate substantial employment and benefits for rural communities. This, in turn, creates a powerful incentive for conservation.

I will let the other participants go into more detail about this project, but I can tell you this project represents MCC's largest investment in tourism and conservation in our 24 compact countries, and it's a real cornerstone of MCC's portfolio.

Now, on to the main event -- a few words on how we plan to proceed. First, the CEO of the Namibia Tourism Board, Mr. Digu Naobeb, will lead off with a presentation that describes his government's commitment to promoting policies that have led to increased opportunities for wildlife conservation.

Mr. Naobeb is also accompanied by a delegation of stakeholders from the Namibian tourism sector who are on a tourism promotion road show.

Second, Mr. Naobeb's presentation will be followed by short remarks by three panelists. Those three panelists are Mr. Tom Campbell, MCC's senior director for private sector development; Mr. Fanuel Demas, director of the tourism project at MCA-Namibia; and Tom Dillon, senior vice president of field programs at the World Wildlife Fund.

This panel discussion will be facilitated by Mr. Russ Webster, who is the president of Cardno Emerging Markets USA. MCA-Namibia has hired Cardno to implement a destination marketing campaign focused on increasing the number of North American tourists to travel to Namibia, and they are organizing the road show that has brought the team here today.

Lastly, the event will conclude with an audience Q&A facilitated by Mr. Webster.

So, with that, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Naobeb. He brings a wealth of experience to the tourism sector and the tourism board. Prior to joining the tourism board, Mr. Naobeb was executive director of the Indigenous Peoples' Business Council, where he was responsible for forging partnerships with the local and international funding communities, NGOs, and business chambers.

He also worked as head of the Department of Hotel and Tourism School at the Polytechnic of Namibia where he was instrumental in establishing travel and tourism degree curricula.

Mr. Naobeb, we welcome you and the floor is all yours.

(APPLAUSE)

NAOBEB: Thank you very much and good afternoon. I am Digu Naobeb, as it was announced. I've Chief Executive Officer of Namibia Tourism Board. I'm representing this afternoon the Minister of Environment and Tourism, Madam Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah.

To start with, I would like to share with you the story of Namibia and what we have achieved in the area of conservation and tourism since independence 21 years ago.

In the world where wildlife numbers are dwindling and biodiversity is declining, where natural landscapes are being degraded, and where the footprint of development is becoming more evident, in Namibia, things are different -- and our story is one of the success.

Today, Namibia is the greatest African wildlife recovery story ever told. It is a story of people and wildlife living together to the benefit of all. Our arid country is inhabited to a diversity of people living in harmony with and surviving from their environment and biodiversity.

As with the most of Africa, Namibia's more recent history was punctuated by colonization and oppression. It became a German imperial protectorate in 1884 and remained a German colony until the end of World War One.

In 1920, the League of Nations mandated the country of South Africa, which imposed its laws from 1984 -- which we all know being the apartheid regime -- and policies that went with it.

During this period, wildlife numbers declined due to unsustainable hunting practices: the upsurge in demand for ivory and rhino horns; the detrimental impact of fencing of wildlife, natural migration patterns; and unfavorable legislation regarding ownership.

In 1975, the Nature Conservation Ordinance was introduced, which gave conditional rights to wildlife utilization to a commission of white farmers. As a consequence, the wildlife numbers in these areas started to increase as land-owners took ownership and accountability. These rights, however, did not apply to communal farmers, and here wildlife numbers continued to dwindle.

Following the (inaudible) liberation struggle which started in 1960s, Namibia obtained independence from South Africa in 1990. The upsurge of poaching of elephants and rhinos in 1980s catalyzed some forward-thinking conservationists and traditional leaders into action and, in an effort to protect the last remaining desert rhinos, the community game-guard system was introduced. This became the foundation for Namibia's now world-renowned, community-based natural resource management program: in short, CBNRM program.

The underlying principle is simple. People who were able to assume ownership over and benefit from their natural resources have a strong incentive, in our view, to ensure that such resources are sustainably managed. Namibia is a testimony to this, as the policy of establishing conservancies in the rural areas has worked very well.

The process of changing the status quo was very much a participatory one. (Inaudible) at that time, which was former and founding minister of environmental (inaudible) initiated consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including, above all, the local people living with wildlife.

Through these, we came up with a new approach to conservation and natural resources used in Namibia. We have continued and expanded upon the tradition of participation. As a new nation, Namibia was one of the first countries to enshrine protection of our environment in our constitution.

One of our priorities was to enable communities in communal areas to legally access and benefit from natural resources. We revised the outdated nature conservation legislation of 1995, as amended in 1996, to enable communities to benefit more from the natural resources in the area through conservation.

By forming conservancies, rural residents gained the rights to manage and benefit from the wildlife and the related tourism resources in their area. The management decisions are made by people and benefits go directly to them. It is important, as the benefit is -- in the sense of ownership over resources that have been reinstated.

Currently, there are about 65 conservancies -- just last Friday, they have moved up to 74 -- employing over 800 people on a full-time basis and between 2,000 to 3,000 seasonal workers.

The evolution of conservation in Namibia has been a very dynamic and exciting one. We continue to revise the way we work as we learn and as the programs grow and expand.

The success of our work is largely based on partnerships. We don't work in isolation. Over the years, a strong and very positive constellation of partners (inaudible) been developed which we continue to foster.

Governments, communities, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations have embraced the concept and philosophies and work closely to achieve a common vision: that of improved livelihoods of our people through sustainable and responsible resource management practices in Namibia. Private-public partnership is part of our planning, implementation and monitoring process -- just to underline that.

We have a wealth of traditional knowledge and (inaudible) to draw on. Using these also helps to keep traditions alive.

We also have access to a wide-range of modern technologies and always look for innovative approaches. Research provides the foundation of important management decisions and Namibia has become the heart of pioneering in this field.

(Inaudible) from the early days of radio and then satellite tracking of wildlife, aerial and ground survey methodologies, to the development of game capture and (inaudible) location methods which are still used widely in African contexts.

Against that background, annually, the ministry has a budget for wildlife management programs, including translocation of game as the demand may arise from the communities.

The Event Book was developed right here in Namibia for use by local people, and with their active input during the development of the system. The Event Book is a tool that allows communities to monitor the trends in numbers and distribution of their natural resources, in particular, the wildlife.

The annual game counts are great example of cooperation between conservancies, NGOs, the private sector, and the ministry, at large.

People living in developed countries and urban environments sometimes forget that natural and rural people need to live off the land and (inaudible) the resources and fall back into the old paradigm of separating people and wildlife. In Namibia, our approach is exactly the opposite. We are looking at ways of bringing the two together.

Of opening up our landscape and resources and creating a continuum within the patchwork of different land categories to provide, we believe the ecosystem -- to take care of its leading organisms, including human beings, both wildlife and human beings have to live together, generating benefits for local communities, including park neighbors, is vital for people trying to survive in remote areas and harsh environments.

It also enhances local participation and ownership. Our concession policy is aimed at ensuring that, when one is asked to provide services on behalf of the state, the community around must benefit and the environment is not compromised.

Through the innovative conservancy legislation, Namibia has effectively more than tripled the land under some form of conservation since independence. Thirteen percent of the land was under conservation in 1990. That moved up to 18 percent in 1998, 35 percent in 2006, and now we are standing at a mere 46 percent in 2012.

If my geography of understanding the United States serves me right, 46 percent that I made reference to is almost the same size as the state of Montana -- so that is the size of the land that is under conservation.

African boundaries are essentially man-made, and often cut across natural ecosystems and wildlife ranges. Namibia is part of even reaching beyond this initiative, with its neighboring countries, in creation of trans-boundary conservation areas that enable wildlife movement and ensure the health of the ecosystem, as well as creating exciting new adventure tourism opportunities.

Such initiatives includes Trans-Frontier Conservation Area between Namibia and South Africa, the Iona Trans-Frontier Conservation Area between Namibia and Angola, and, the biggest of all, the KAZA -- simply stands for Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area -- with the purpose of ever-enhancing the harmonious management of our natural ecosystems with our neighbors.

KAZA is the largest trans-frontier area in Africa, as I said, encompassing five countries, namely Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. A treaty signed by the five heads of state signifies that the five countries have agreed to manage wildlife together and allow better access to tourists to this area named KAZA.

The Namibian government has placed tourism as one of the top economic priority sectors. We are not just using wildlife to generate benefits. We are using indigenous plants, fish, and other rural, natural resources, as well as our wealth of cultural resources, the result of our coordinated efforts (inaudible) to name but a few.

Namibia has experienced an unprecedented increase in wildlife numbers throughout their range, complemented by initiatives from government to restock wildlife into previously depleted communal areas.

(Inaudible) and endangered species such as black rhinos are trans-located out of national parks and into their former range within the communal areas.

Namibia's progressive black rhino conservation program has resulted in the largest, free-ranging population of this endangered species. Namibia is also host to the large, free-ranging population of cheetahs in the world, increasing numbers of elephants, and increasing free-roaming population of lions outside the national parks, recoveries in the populations of endemic species, such as the black-faced (inaudible) and the Hartmann's mountain zebra.

Namibia is a very dry country with limited agriculture potential, but the wealth of indigenous natural resources, the expansion of livelihood options to include natural resources used, has made a great difference to local people. Community conservation is providing new income options and unlocking human potential through new training and capacity building. It is empowering women and formally marginalized groups, and contributes to rural democracy.

Conservancies are catalysts for local economy growth and the promotion of a new entrepreneurial spirit. Joint venture tourism is allowing local communities to grow into the complexities of the tourism industry. Currently, there are more than 40 community-private, joint ventures in Namibia.

The human development program has created an entirely new spectrum of tourism opportunities in Namibia. The great (inaudible) of vast and spectacular unfenced landscapes, (inaudible) wildlife, and iconic cultures are unique, but these opportunities aren't limited to tourists.

Two thousand full-time and 8,000 part-time jobs have been created for Namibians. Most of these jobs have established in rural communities where, without tourism, subsistence agriculture and flight to urban areas in search of jobs have been the two most common choices available to rural Namibians. Tourism is changing all of that.

As part of our nation's dedication to poverty alleviation, conservancy development and joint venture tourism enterprises are providing training, ownership opportunities, and hope for the future. Namibia is a vibrant democracy.

Our infrastructure is strong with a vast road and cellular telephone networks, strong aviation industry that is forging links with the United-States-based airlines to increase access to our country, and a tourism market that is ready and more than willing to welcome you to our land of the endless horizons.

With all cases and progress, we are not saying all is done. We know all is just progress and more is still to be done. The conservancy program continues to grow and we are perpetually looking at opportunities to and approaches to enhance the well-being of our environment, our wildlife, our people.

In Namibia, we are a team working in harmony to bring synergy as a means of achieving more than the sum of its parts. Our team extends beyond Namibia and now includes our American partners, which are the citizens of the United States, U.S. government, our conservancy partners, WWF, and the private sector.

Tourism is one of the backbones of Namibia's success story and, whether you are developing policies that encourage development in Africa, involved in conservation efforts to protect our spectacular biodiversity, or are simply here to hear and share our story, you are a critical part of our team.

Namibia is ready for tourism. We know it is a critical piece in our conservation efforts to ensure sustainability. Our delegation is here in United States to launch our marketing efforts to bring Americans to Namibia.

We want to share our success with you. We believe that sustainable tourism is the key to poverty alleviation and economic growth for our people. You are welcome to Namibia, where you will lose your heart, but find your soul.

Thank you for listening.

(APPLAUSE)

WEBSTER: Thank you very much.

OK, I'd like to invite the panelists to come up.

As we're getting ourselves situated here, I wanted to ask the audience here a question. If you have been to Namibia, could you put your hand up?

Wow. Boy, this is not a shy group.

OK, keep your hands up. Now, what I'd like you to do with your other hand is reach in your satchel or your briefcase, pull out your calendar, and schedule a visit – because I just had the pleasure of visiting Namibia.

Cardno had a retreat there about two weeks ago and I'm still riding high in the wake of that --- it's a beautiful, beautiful country with a lot to offer.

And Digu, I want to thank you very much for your presentation. I think it gave everybody some insight as to the resources there, the work that we're trying to do together.

So, what we're going to do now -- my name is Russ Webster. I work with Cardno Emerging Markets USA. We're part of a global company that provides a range of consulting services and we're very, very proud of its relationship with MCC on this project, and other projects that we're working on.

I'm very happy to see so many people attending today because I think you're in store for some very interesting insights into a very unique activity within the overall MCC portfolio programs supporting development around the world.

First off, I wanted to just to start with a word of thanks to our co-hosts, MCC and World Wildlife Fund. Thanks very much for organizing this event and sponsoring us here.

I also wanted to give a special shout-out, a thanks, to Cardno's partners in this effort in Namibia: Development Counselors International, Solemar International, and Sustainable Travel International. I believe there are representatives here of those organizations and I hope you get a chance to say hello to them, but I wanted to say a special thanks to our partners who are working so hard with us to make this program such a success.

I want to, then, quickly introduce the panelists -- Tom Campbell, senior director from MCC; Dr. Fanuel Demas, of the MCA compact in Namibia; Tom Dillon, the senior vice president for field programs, the World Wildlife Fund. I think there are brief bios in your packets of each of them.

I also wanted to start off with a couple of questions, just to each of you to think about for a few minutes then maybe speak to for a few minutes each, and then after that we'll open the floor for questions.

So, Tom -- MCC -- I'd like you to just say a little bit about how this particular compact is unique in the overall portfolio programs and what, in terms of MCC's expectation, you're looking for, in terms of gauging success?

Tom, I -- Tom Dillon -- I thought you could speak a little bit to what you see as the best practices coming out of this particular effort in Namibia and how those might be relevant to World Wildlife's vision and some other programs that you're involved with.

Dr. Demas, I thought you might elaborate a little bit on some of the challenges. I know you'll been working on this for some time and it is a unique effort.

By the way, we sat, just about two weeks ago, with the Honorable Minister of Environment and Tourism and went over some of her vision for this program, but I thought perhaps, Dr. Demas, you could speak a little bit to some of the unique challenges that you faced in implementing this program and achieving the successes you've set out for.

So, if that's okay with you three guys, why don't we start with the MCC -- Tom. If you could speak for a few minutes to that?

CAMPBELL: Sure. Good morning, everyone. Andrew, Digu, fellow panelists, guests. I see some MCC staff in the audience.

I'm delighted to have a chance to talk a little bit about MCC's compact activity, tourism compact activity, in Namibia.

First of all, it's a pleasure to see Digu again. He was one of the important thought-leaders on the training aspects and the marketing aspects of the compact, as we were putting it together.

(Inaudible) is another name I remember from those early days when he was principal secretary for Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

It's also a pleasure to share the panel today with WWF. Chris Weaver in Windhoek and his WWF team there provided patient and insightful advice throughout the development of the compact, and WWF continues to have an active role under the compact in helping to prepare communities for community-based, natural resource management, CBNRM. They've been a terrific advisor and partner for both MCC and for MCA, I believe.

In the audience, we do have some representatives from USAID, and USAID provided some of the original funding to WWF in Namibia for some of the activities that eventually made their way into the compact, so that contribution should be acknowledged as well.

I'm not supposed to have favorite compact projects. However, the three activities that we are here to discuss today in Namibia, I think, count for me as favorite projects. And it's not only because of what it is that they do, but how it is that they do it.

Let me tell you about those three projects. The first project invests in infrastructure and equipment for Etosha National Park. Etosha is a natural resource gem, but to fully realize its potential the government thought the park should -- could use some sprucing up. They were probably right.

This activity in the compact builds on -- will build new management centers and management systems in the park, pave some game-viewing roads to make the park more accessible. It also supports some game relocation, as Digu mentioned, so that more of the surrounding communities can benefit from CBNRM.

The key to destination tourism is to make that destination as stellar and memorable as possible and these efforts will help to do that.

The second activity is directed at NTB, Namibia Tourism Board, and should help to diversify its tourism base to attract more visitors from countries other than Germany and Great Britain. When we were doing our due diligence on the compact proposal from Namibia, tourism from those two countries represented 40 percent of long-haul tourists venturing to Namibia.

But those marketing efforts will help to create jobs, both in Namibia and here in North America, as well.

The third activity is the heart of CBNRM and community-based tourism. Once the visitors have been attracted to the national parks, especially Etosha, the challenge is to find ways that enable local conservancies to benefit economically. In Namibia, the most successful way to do that has been through joint venture tourism.

A typical model entails a private sector entrepreneur negotiating an arrangement with a conservancy whereby, in exchange for access to land and certain other rights, the entrepreneur agrees to share with the conservancy a portion of (inaudible) revenues resulting from that lodge.

There are a number of ways that the compact helps to encourage more of this. It provides partial grants to communities to allow them to invest in joint ventures. Two have been approved so far, an expansion of the Grootberg Lodge (ph) in Khoadi/Hoas (ph). I can't say that quite as well as you can, Digu.

There was actually a photograph of the view from the Grootberg Lodge in the slides that Digu showed. It's a magnificent place.

There is also a grant to support a new, tented lodge in Wuporo (ph) Conservancy in the Caprivi. Returns from the lodge have helped the conservancies to improve schools, spawn social programs, and provide new jobs and skills for community members.

For private sector investors, this approach reduces the financial risks of investing in new and remote sites. It's truly a win-win for both sides.

The conservancy movement and the CBRM programs in Namibia are largely responsible for the resurgence of wildlife headcounts over the past 15 years, but with an increase in headcounts comes occasional damage to crops and water holes. The compact helps not only with the relocation of game to enhance the draw of each conservancy, but it also helps, for example, to build water hole protection for communities to reduce damage done by elephants.

The key to sustainability is strengthening the economic incentives to protect wildlife as a community asset. All of these compact activities are designed to have a long-lasting impact on the region. At the least, they will help to make a number of these conservancies more financially viable.

The recent example is the agreement between MET, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and a conservancy in the western part of Etosha to give that conservancy exclusive access to the western part of Etosha. This has allowed the conservancy to attract a joint-venture lodge and this will create new livelihoods for that conservancy.

In the near-term, there may be yet one more exclusive access given around mid-year if the trust to create a new conservancy for the (inaudible) people is completed and approved.

These compact activities build on the lessons learned before the arrival of MCC and amplify the resources previously available for these activities. Together with the government of Namibia, we hope that through this compact we will be able to help reduce poverty in the northern part of the country, where about 65 percent of Namibia's poor households are located and where a primary constraint is the lack of skilled workers and jobs.

Let me actually answer the question you asked -- what is unique about this?

Within the development business, it is remarkably hard to find opportunities where developmental sorts of objectives of donors overlap neatly with the private sector motives of the private sector, and the joint-venture lodges in Namibia are a great example of that.

This is an example of a donor helping to remove a constraint, reduce risk. That, in turn, generates investment. That, in turn, generates jobs in areas that would otherwise not have those jobs.

So, this is a great example in Namibia, of one way to accomplish that.

WEBSTER: Great. Thanks. Thanks very much, Tom.

Dr. Demas, if you don't mind, why don't we move on to your remarks and any thoughts you might have?

DEMAS: All right, I thank you so much, Russ, and good morning, everyone. I don't know -- maybe it's good afternoon!

But, yes, it was pointed out that this is really a quite an exciting project and it's very difficult to talk about challenges because, you know, we took it on for the past two-and-a-half years, as my personal baby, and we have really jumped through a couple of hoops to get where we are, here, today.

But, yes, having said that, I should maybe point out that there are quite a few of them, of which I am (inaudible) the first one -- as was pointed out earlier by previous speakers. But this might be the most substantive support that MCC has given to tourism and we basically -- we thank MCC for that.

Namibia's actually the first country that got this kind of support in tourism. Therefore, one of the challenges we have is we do not have a benchmarking country, against which we can compare ourselves and say, are we doing well or bad?

But, as was said before by my colleague here on my left -- the kind of feedback that we are getting in the MCA is that we are one of -- if maybe not the -- best MCA in the entire [MCC] compact package, and we are very proud of that.

Okay, the second one is basically -- we were operating under a ton of conditions precedent. This project is the one that had the most conditions (inaudible) and, when I started off on this project as a director, I was thinking, 'Am I ever going to get all these conditions satisfied on time so that we can see the rest of the investment?'

Because the bulk of the money that we are setting (ph) was actually investment into a national park, in terms of infrastructure, and, if the conditions were not met, we got a very stern warning that the investment would not go forward.

But, basically, we worked together, with MCC, MCA, with the ministry, and with all the stakeholders in Namibia and we pulled it off to the extent that, right now, we only have condition precedent and outstanding which (inaudible) set aside by June and then we are very much firmly on cost, you know, to have the compact completed on time by next September 2014 -- with all our money spent. That's actually our bottom line.

All right. Then, on the conservancy support side, we are looking at the conservancy grant fund and that grant fund is really something very good, something that was really needed in Namibia, something that's filling a niche, and that's basically that -- this conservancy could not get access to money to really help them to do joint ventures. They could come with the land. They could come with the animals. They could come with some land leases and so on, but in the end, money talks, you know.

So, if they get a joint venture, and the joint venture partner puts down money, and they cannot put down also a certain amount, then definitely -- that tips the favor sometimes in the favor of the joint venture partner, in terms of the benefits flowing.

We could succeed in assisting the conservancies, you know, in putting up some kind of money to help them towards that. And it's just that -- the money was flowing, but slow in the first two-and-a-half years. We have been expecting bigger projects to come in, lots of more fixed infrastructure, joint venture launches and the like. You know, that's costly, but more money.

But then we used to get some investments which were below what we thought we would spend during that time. So, we are looking into that. We have adjusted the (inaudible) accordingly. We have pushed up the support that we give for extensions. We have pushed up the support that we can give for green-field development. And, with that, you know, we think that we can really improve on that.

Okay, what we also had was -- in terms of the projects -- we realized that some of the contractors -- we can contract a contractor to maybe to do a certain part of the work, but then maybe one of our implementing partners like NTB or the Minister of Environment and Tourism could also contract their own contractor to do part of the work.

Okay, so, we are sitting with a contract where we have to get to the same objective, but part of the contractors are under our kind of command and the other part is under NTB command, so we cannot talk to their contractors. They cannot talk to our contractors. We have to talk via each other to each other's contractor and the timelines are really quite crucial.

So, that's also one thing that we have realized that maybe we will try to avoid in future, if -- as far as possible, to see that maybe if an activity is to be done, you know, it is perhaps mainly under one kind of contractor, so that that person also under MCC -- or whoever, MCA -- can talk to that contractor and perhaps try and speed up the timelines.

Also, on the joint ventures, I should also mention there are issues about land leases. They are, as far as the conservancies are concerned, that's on communal land and sometimes -- especially, if you're looking for a joint venture partner to partner with these conservancies, the person needs some kind of security.

You know, for how long are you on this land? Do you really have the title deed? Can I invest if it's for 20 years? If it's for 25 years, can I recoup my money?

So, it's also a matter of the (inaudible) working on the grant, but basically working with the communities, working with the joint venture partners, working with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to see how we can obtain these land leases and help these people to move forward on the grants.

So, Russ, I think in short, those are a couple of issues that come to mind.

WEBSTER: Thank you, Dr. Demas. Thanks very much.

Let's now go to World Wildlife Fund and then, Tom, when you're finished, we'll start to take some questions from the floor.

DILLON: Thank you. I am delighted to be here this afternoon on this panel and, Digu, I think that your presentation was insightful, beautiful. There's not a lot to say afterwards, but I will try and make a few short remarks.

The people who are benefiting from this MCC investment are among the poorest and most disenfranchised people in the world, certainly among the poorest in Africa and in Namibia.

A few years ago, I was up in Kunene, which is in northwest -- northwest Namibia, for those of you who haven't yet been there -- and I was meeting with the committee that runs one of the conservancies. It's a group of maybe seven or eight people. We were in a one-room, cement building. There were pages from the event book that Digu had mentioned all over the walls.

The Event Book is what the communities use to monitor what is happening in the conservancy, particularly when it's happening with wildlife, whether there are conflicts with elephants, what sightings have been seen, and so forth.

And we talking about lions and I was asking, 'How many lions have you seen recently?' And they were showing me in the Event Book, and then the man who was the committee chairman told me a story about lions and how not long ago, ten years beforehand, they -- every time there had been any interaction not only with lions, but other big cats, they poisoned them immediately because it meant loss of their domestic cattle or goats.

And he said, 'But now, we're not killing the lions anymore because, of course, people want to see these lions. You know, they're an economic resource. They're an asset. And, so, we are now hoping that not only lions, but other wildlife that we once considered pests are going to walk through or decide to stay in our conservancy.'

But then one of the other gentlemen piped up and said, 'Yes, but it's not only that, with predators coming back into our lands, we now have more grass for domesticated animals because we had a problem with overgrazing occurring from (inaudible) and others before.'

And, so, basically they started giving me an ecology lesson. And these were gentlemen and one woman who had about a fourth-grade education, had spent their entire lives as herders, and now are involved with high-end tourism -- had been trained to work with wealthy Westerners who are coming in to see the fabulous sights that were in the first presentation.

And so they had learned how to cater to these people, how to treat them, how to run their own conservancy as businesspeople.

A year ago, exactly a year ago, February of last year, I was in Namibia with a delegation of members of parliament from Nepal. The reason my colleagues and I brought them there was that Nepal is rewriting its constitution, and there are some interesting things they can learn from the Namibian constitution about local empowerment and about the environment and writing the environment directly into your constitution.

It was a fascinating trip, but one of the interesting parts was we were at the Khoadi/Hoas (ph) conservancy -- and [Digu] had shown a picture, as Tom had mentioned, of the Grootberg Lodge, which is fabulous. It's up on the lip of a big valley, and you can look down upon this gigantic valley with lots of wildlife and spectacular sunsets.

And the people who -- not the manager -- the manager's from a private company, but the people who work there -- are all from the conservancy. They're employed and they're the only people employed by the lodge. And it's one of the lodges that MCC financing is going to significantly enlarge in size.

And the Nepal delegation was asking how this happened. How has a very rural, poor community been able to manage this lodge and do it so well, and make a significant profit?

And they started talking about the (inaudible), which was the program that -- that USAID funded for 15 years that set the base that now MCC is taking and driving home more deeply into communities -- and how they were "capacitized," which is a wonderful term to mean they were supported, too, as all of us in Washington, D.C. know.

But how here, it was the conservancy itself that was making the money. And, interestingly, you know, a lot of you probably know about Nepal. It's got some of the best conservation stories in the world, and some of the best community conservation stories in the world, but the mass -- the large scale tourism that's going to Nepal, which is 1.5 million visitors a year -- it's not going as directly to the communities as it is in Namibia.

In Namibia, through this conservancy system, it is going directly into local communities, while also supporting the private sector. The private sector, up until now, owns the lodges. MCC assists in helping the communities get more shares, in terms of joint ventures.

And my colleagues from Nepal, the members of parliament, were shocked. They were shocked at -- they did not think that there was that much they could learn from coming to Southern Africa. They thought that Nepal was one of the leading countries in tourism, one of the leading countries in figuring out how the benefits can be at the local level.

And what they learned is, yes, there were some things that actually they could share with Namibians and that the Namibians could learn from, but some of the aspects, particularly on tourism at a local level, is what they could learn -- and that is why the MCC is supporting this tourism project, which is largely about rural development. Rural development that is based on conservation. It's based on the natural heritage of the country and that valuing of that natural heritage.

I think it's also worth applauding the government of Namibia for, one, having changed a policy in 1996 that allowed communities to get ownership of wildlife. That is not common around the world. It's unusual. And they're a leader in that respect.

It -- you know, many ministries would not act like the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Namibia, and they would be threatened by a movement that has been able to garner real economic resources and to complement so well what MET does. And we saw it up on the map. There is a whole system of national parks that the ministry runs, and now there is this whole system that is run by the communities -- and they complement each other.

From the perspective of an environmental conservation organization like mine, what is happening is large-scale conservation that goes across these borders. And one of the main things that the MCC investment is doing is working to increase that connection, particularly in the western edge of Etosha, to ensure that communities are benefiting to the west and that these connections that allow for the movement of wildlife across the country not only occur, but even grow beyond where they are now.

But the question that I was asked is about best practices, and I think there are a lot of best practices. One of the simplest is this so-called Event Book System by which people who -- you don't need to read and write to know how to use it. And it is some of the -- it aggregates up to what are some of the most sophisticated wildlife data in the world -- in Namibia.

The training modules that have already come about through the MCA project, they are sophisticated. They're very practical and they're relevant not only in Namibia, but they're also relevant in other countries in Africa which are trying to empower communities in conservation, in place like Tanzania and Zambia and elsewhere.

From the big picture, Namibia is a great example for many other countries, and not only in Africa. We had an event this morning on the Hill where I made this statement and so those of you who were there, please forgive me -- but there are a lot of countries coming to Namibia to learn from these kinds of tools, and it includes people from Cambodia, Mongolia, even the United States, coming to learn how communities are driving conservation, how they're benefiting economically and how that has a much larger effect, in their case, on a national scale. In our case, on probably state scales.

I think I've used up my time, but thank you.

WEBSTER: Thanks, Tom.

So, in a minute, we'll open up for questions and -- but, before that, I just wanted to share a couple of my own thoughts.

You know, the wonderful thing to me about the work that MCC is seeking to do is they're looking for opportunity -- opportunities to tie their funding into countries that are on a path, that seem to be moving in the right direction along the dimensions that were mentioned earlier.

And from my firsthand experience in Namibia, I could see on the ground how this program helps to promote economic development and address issues of poverty alleviation by the jobs that are created through some of the investments that the MCC is supporting.

Also, I think it's quite clear from the presentations that it's promoting sustainable natural resource management. The focus of this activity is really on getting communities -- building on a lot of work that USAID did earlier, but driving home the issue of getting communities involved in conserving the natural resources around them and benefiting from them economically.

The other aspect of it, though, has to do with bringing Namibia and other countries that have these kinds of resources into the global sphere and to global development. And this program, in fact, has another dimension that was referred to a couple of times where, working with American tour operators, which adds an economic benefit for us here at home, creating an awareness among them and helping to facilitate their business of promoting tourism to Namibia.

So, I think it's a really very wonderful example of how you can bring together economic development, poverty alleviation, sustainable natural resource management, and global economic development.

I want to again thank each of you for your comments -- and you, Digu, for your presentation.

But why don't we go ahead and -- I think we have some microphones. Let's open up for some questions and hear from the floor. Please, state your name and your organization for the record.

QUESTION: I think I wanted to highlight one other thing that I believe MCA is doing and ask you a question about a constraint. When you think about the poorest of the poor, as Tom referred to, a lot of these communities obviously also have livestock and, if you think about northern Namibia, livestock development is part of the overall trajectory for economic growth -- and we heard about the KAZA Transfrontier Conservation Area and this vision for connectivities.

So, from a wildlife conservation point of view, we want wildlife to become an expansive land-use of choice, but the fundamental constraint is the management of diseases, like foot-and-mouth disease, and that disease has kept pastoralists and the rural people of northern Namibia out of international markets.

And MCA is actually funding a pilot initiative to get beef out of northern Namibia in a way that no one else in the world is doing that makes the beef safe for international markets, and that has huge potential for poverty alleviation, but it also may be the only way for the vision of trans-frontier conservation in a place like KAZA to actually happen, because then you wouldn't necessarily require these fences that are in place solely to keep wildlife and livestock separately.

So, I think my question for the panel is, how are you thinking about the integration of your investments in the agricultural sector, which is also very important with your investments in CBNRM, and reconciling what is really one of the biggest conflicts in Southern Africa, in terms of land-use planning?

WEBSTER: Dr. Demas? Fanuel would you -- everybody's putting you on the spot. Would you like to try to answer the question? Go ahead.

DEMAS: All right. Thanks so much for that question, Steve (ph). Yes, you know, it is something that is being realized within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Let me put it that way, okay?

So, especially the foot-and-mouth disease movement and the (inaudible) trans-frontier parks and that whole notion of maybe getting rid of fences and having wildlife roam around. But you are quite right in saying that, you know, (inaudible) that's been funded which is agriculture, we would like to have (inaudible) stations up there. We would like to see maybe if one day that red line state has been lifted from that area so that those farmers can also export.

So, it's actually a delicate balance, between -- and, you know, how much of the disease is being carried by the wildlife. We know that every time a buffalo escapes from water park (inaudible) all these fears about foot-and-mouth and all that.

But, if you talk maybe more towards the eastern part of (inaudible) Caprivi and so on (inaudible), some wildlife have been naturally migrating all along -- and so on, and especially now, trying to see what will be the disease status, you know, so that the farmers can export.

It is something that I think, between the two projects, we are talking with the (inaudible) services on the other side, as well. It's actually a delicate balance so that the (inaudible) because both activities on the wildlife and on the livestock side have some potential to alleviate poverty.

So, one can basically not override the other one, in a way, until you find the balance to say that, 'Okay, now, we are going purely down this road because there might be additional diseases that might influence a farmer -- so let's go down the road of agriculture, or let us go down the road over here.'

So, we are looking at a system which will not be mutually exclusive. But, meanwhile, we are cognizant of the fact that there could be some animal diseases, and there are some diseases already that are a worry to the farmers and so on.

So, yes, it will be an ongoing debate, I think, as far as I'm concerned. It will be an ongoing debate and it will be a matter of where do you find something that can benefit both, and what is negotiable and what can you live with, you know? And what are the absolute non-negotiables, you know, in terms of that equation.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE) (Inaudible) modest, in a sense, because MCA a commodity-based (inaudible) program (inaudible) another leadership job (inaudible).

DEMAS: Thank you, sir.

WEBSTER: OK. Another question? Maybe we'll take two and note them down and try to address each.

I saw another hand up somewhere before. Yes? Thank you.

QUESTION: Sorry to harp on the beef issue, but, well, I've just recently seen a very interesting presentation of the Namibian standards for the abattoir and the slaughterhouse, and was very impressed to see that they are already exceeding the OIE standards.

They are already practicing commodity-based trade and it seemed, at least from what the Namibian delegation was explaining to us, the hurdle in that case is the lack of a buyer, and the fact that the E.U. is still insisting on separate standards that exceed those of the OIE.

So, my question is, I think it's very innovative and has a lot of foresight that the tourism and wildlife sector of the MCA compact included this outreach component for marketing and the lifting of barriers. Does the agriculture component perhaps also include those outreach steps that might open up those European-based markets to the commodity-based trade of beef out of Namibia?

WEBSTER: OK, while we're thinking about a response to that, is there another question that we can add to the docket? Yes, right over here.

QUESTION: We've had some luck recently doing guest lodges at conservation sites down in Brazil, using solar power to provide lighting as an amenity for the tourists in their lodges. To what extent has that issue come up for you? Is lighting and electricity an issue for you or is there a willingness on the part of the tourists in particular to have the drone of the generator providing their energy?

WEBSTER: Thanks very much, who would like to take the second livestock question? Any one of you. Go ahead.

DEMAS: OK, the second livestock question.

You know, from my connection with the agriculture sections, all I do know is that they are working through it at (inaudible) services, at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. So whatever we do, it is (inaudible) actually not a stand-alone project, it came about because of some needs that were identified by the various ministries.

So, the agriculture project, it is something that was at the heart of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, especially with (inaudible) services. And they are doing all that footwork, the kind of things -- like where they want to be, say, in the next five years, and so on.

So if MCA could help us to set up additional (inaudible) stations, if MCA could help us in taking and putting a proper traceability system into place so they would know where this livestock came from, which (inaudible) livestock been treated prior to entering the beef market., those kind of things are the ones that can be helped.

The Ministry works on the bigger issues right now, negotiating, you know, for (inaudible) getting the right messages sent out and so on, those are basically in the (inaudible) of the directorate of (inaudible) services and so

on. And then we trust, basically, that they are doing that while we are doing the tracking, while we are sorting out the additional (inaudible) stations and while we are sorting out all the other items that were (inaudible) supported under the MCA project.

WEBSTER: OK. The second question, can you guys help Fanuel out here with the solar panel question?

CAMPBELL: I was actually going to ask Digu if he wanted to take the question regarding solar energy, renewable energy sources other than diesel for some of these joint-venture lodges and the like.

NAOBAB: This is a particularly new, sort of a (inaudible) in Namibia. Yes, we do have a vast expanse of desert. We have about 365 days of the year light. However, I think the instruments that -- you have to use the panels that were imported, particularly from Germany, are vastly expensive, vis-a-vis using main grid electricity.

So, I think the incentive to encourage people to make use of the solar electricity is yet to be realized. However, I think if you look at the south of the country, I think we have a lodge group called (inaudible) which has about three lodges, which have put up a couple of panels, about twenty of them, that supplies electricity to their lodges.

More particularly for lighting purposes, but also other types of facilities. So there are some initiatives that are being made, but as I said, we don't have a manufacturing facility or base of that type of facility for panels in the country. So they have to be imported, which makes it very much more expensive -- but I think lots of people, not even in their lodge areas, but if you look at in the epicenters, people have already started using solar panels to heat water for reducing the electricity bills.

So I think the concept is emancipating, but I think lots still needs to be done, but of course it comes with affordability of those materials that you ought to use to make sure that you harness the necessary heat energy from solar.

WEBSTER: Great. Thanks, sir, you may have some more discussion on that later, in terms of the technology. Some other questions, yes?

QUESTION: I'm with Air Namibia, and we have great airfares from the U.S. to take you to Namibia, and we hope everybody in this room were to fly with us! Thank you.

WEBSTER: I actually flew Air Namibia from Frankfurt down to Windhoek, so I can testify to the airline, it's good.

I know there were more hands up. I saw some other hands. Yes, way in the back there's one, and I thought I saw -- and here.

QUESTION: One question I had for the gentleman who works specifically in tourism. The reasons that Americans choose to travel to Namibia, do you find that they are different from the reasons that Europeans travel there? What has your research told you as to why Americans are seeking to go there? Thank you.

WEBSTER: Are you addressing that question to me? Oh, I see. Well, I'm going to have to turn to one of colleagues to address that, so no problem. Sir, why don't you go ahead with your question and then we'll go with the responses.

QUESTION: I have two very generic questions. One is, are there any formal or informal networks within the community that you were able to tap into? So, you know, in certain countries you have village development units, other support groups, and several more informal networks and I was wondering if you tapped into any such networks.

The second question is for community ownership. Were there any incentives and triggers other than the financial incentives that you could share with us? Thanks.

WEBSTER: OK. Thanks. So, who can answer the first question? Digu? OK. Thank you very much.

NAOBAB: As far as the (inaudible) are concerned, I think as earlier has been noted, so far the Europeans are making up the large hunk of arrivals frequent to Namibia. But, basically I think their traveling plans or wishes are more grounded on leisure and holiday travel, focusing on landscape, scenery and wildlife.

Whereas when we started about a year ago with (inaudible) here in United States, (inaudible) a dozen travel agents, it has emerged that the American tourists are more concerned or more interested in conservation related type of tourism, eco-tourism more, in particular. So our strategy that we actually have started embarking upon is to -- we have actually developed what we call 'tribes.'

How we have defined, or segmented them, is the 'curious conservationist,' and of course you have those that have interest in how we teach, and that is how we have actually identified the operators. We are here with our tour operators as well, we are going to have an event tonight and later tomorrow in New York, where we will be networking with the American operators to really try and solve that idea.

For them to be able to communicate that through a filter, that through the consumers in the United States that have that interest -- that is, in particular their interests -- that we are able to provide in terms of their travelling needs. So that is how different it is from the European market.

WEBSTER: Thanks, Digu, and who would like to take the second question?

CAMPBELL: I can take the second question.

WEBSTER: Okay. Thanks.

CAMPBELL: The question -- you've got two questions, actually, one was whether there were informal groups that were tapped into; and the second, which is the one that I think I can address, and I think other panel members, too, can help to address, is whether there were incentives within the conservancy other than financial incentives.

Let me try to answer that question, or at least answer it from my travels to Namibia, which are now a couple years old.

I had a conversation with some conservancy leaders in a conservancy in which there is a wilderness safaris lodge, and the community has certainly benefitted from having that lodge, financially.

There was some discussion about a second lodge, and it became apparent very clearly that from the conservancy leader's point of view, what mattered more -- and what mattered more even than money, I think, was the skills training that those lodges provided. There are no livelihood alternatives other than sustenance farming and hunting in those areas.

So even though tourism skills, hospitality skills, often tend to be low level sorts of skills, they nevertheless were skills, and the opportunity to get those skills literally did not exist anywhere in the region.

So the answer is yes, there were other incentives and they were very strong. Even the financial incentives were incentives to try to achieve other things. Conservancies established, for example, soup kitchens for the elderly members of their communities who might otherwise not have gotten food.

They improved schools, they helped to build clinics, to buy schoolbooks, they did a lot of things that were, in many ways, very basic, but it was that revenue that allowed them to do it for the, really for the first time. They were extraordinarily proud of their ability to be able to contribute that way to their own communities.

So, Fanuel, I don't know if you have anything more to add with respect to the other groups that might have been tapped into.

I know during due diligence, we tried to talk to as many NGOs as possible, certainly NACOBTA. What does NACOBTA stand for? Namibia Community...

(Off-mike, inaudible)

... There you go, and the organizations that made up NACOBTA were entities that we tried to talk to and tried to listen to when -- during the compact design process.

WEBSTER: Great. Thanks. Any more questions? Yes, in the back, sir? Thank you.

QUESTION: I'm just interested to know, how are you guys prepared to manage the income that the community earns from tourism? For instance, where do they spend? For example, in the Serengeti, you find communities that earn income, even from tourism, are more interested to invest either in buying cattle or expanding their farms. So I'm just interested to know how you are trying to achieve that?

WEBSTER: Do we have some information on that? How the communities are using their increased income?

CAMPBELL: Here we could use the assistance of Chris Weaver and friends from Namibia. Yes, maybe somebody has an answer to the question, since WWF in Namibia is working closely with communities both to prepare for community-based tourism and to manage that process.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We work very closely with all aspects of our community programs in Namibia, and a lot of it revolves around the education that goes on within the communities. So, also working in other countries of Africa where there are cheetahs, and trying to bring the community programs like our conservancies into all these other countries.

I think one of the big things that our conservancy programs do is really look at the integration of livestock and the wildlife, and so if you are getting increased income from wildlife, then if you had the proper education, you're going to look at not just buying more livestock, but trying to look at investing that money in a different way.

And, so, I think there are a lot of different alternative livelihoods, that many of the education programs going on within Namibia are trying to change. And I think that's why, from our standpoint, we do a lot of training programs throughout Africa, bringing them in to try to actually get back into these other countries, Tanzania, as well.

CAMPBELL: Just at a very basic level, one of the ways that some of the income from tourism is used is to hire game guards within the conservancies. That creates jobs within the conservancies. That also helps to prevent poaching, helps to further the wildlife, and, also, create that linkage that is so important between jobs, having jobs, and the protection -- preservation of wildlife.

NAOBEB: Yes, probably -- to add to that -- I think by years of legislation each conservancy is required to have a management structure in place and one of that is a community fund.

So, whatever the revenue that is generated, be it through bed nights in joint venture lodges or any other means, are coming into that and normally has community is what we call an (inaudible) general meeting.

And, in that meeting, the community looks at its needs and desires and then, based on the income they have, they make proposals as to where the money should be invested.

I think it's some -- especially if you look at the northeastern side, for example, in Caprivi, of course, when people die, it is very difficult to do a funeral, so some of the funds are used to buy coffins and do the burials, for example, or pay for those family households that are not able to afford school fees.

So, I think the investment varies from the conservancy to conservancy, as (inaudible) said, depending also on education and knowledgeable levels that they do have.

In some far, remote communities like (inaudible) that would then -- of course, health was probably an issue -- that would then say, "Let us build the clinic," and then they would approach the government or then provide the supplies and the (inaudible) on-site, which the government will take care of making payments, but, at least, they make provisions for the infrastructure, the physical structure of the clinic, for example.

So, it very much differs. When it comes to cattle, I think individual families own their own. A farmer might buy his cattle and farm with it, but it doesn't come from the large (inaudible) itself.

So, for family and agriculture purposes, such as, I think on the northeastern side, people do (inaudible) plantations, but they do that with their own seeds or sometimes from government programs.

But part of the money is decided commonly by the community through an AGM (inaudible) invested.

DILLION: Hi -- I wanted to say something, too. And that -- first of all, going back to the question about are there networks that have useful for this movement that now has 74 conservancies?

One thing it's important to note is -- not just informal networks, but formal -- in that about 15 years ago something was created that's called NACSO, the National Association of Civil Society Organizations, and it consists of small, grassroots, national-level organizations that provide support services to the conservancies.

And it's a case in which the international NGOs, such as WWF, we're not the ones at the conservancy level providing those services, which is often a mistake that the international community, including the organization I work for, make.

And one of the more sustainable things that's happening in Namibia is that there is this association. It's local groups. They're the ones providing the services. Even with -- we estimate that, currently, the conservancies are only making about 15 percent of what they could make over time, in terms of benefits from the conservancies and from tourism and the other sources of funds.

And even in the future when they're more financially secure, there's probably always going to be the need for some level of services that are provided from somewhere. And probably it is this formal network of NGOs.

And, in fact, one of the really important things that's needed -- and somebody out in the audience, Melissa Moore (ph), is working on this -- is to ensure that these small NGOs can continue to operate and provide support services to the conservancies. And, so, there is a trust fund that is being set up that can, hopefully, provide some of that financial support to those groups into perpetuity.

I also wanted to comment on the question about, is there anything besides money? There's a lot, and one of the most basic things is meat, in that hunting goes on in these conservancies and hunters provide meat and the meat is valuable. When you look at the numbers for what are the benefits and when it's monetized, there's a fairly

significant portion that is from meat – and there is more meat, wildlife meat, on the conservancies than there used to be.

Also, Digu mentioned the elected governance bodies. These are now 74 elected governance structures, which means that other -- that these can serve as vehicles for other things besides conservation and tourism. It can provide a hub that is organized for a governance body and, essentially, that is also a small-scale democracy building that is going on in very remote and rural areas.

Thank you.

WEBSTER: Thanks, Tom.

So, yes, Fanuel, please.

DEMAS: OK, thanks so much. Yes, sorry, Tom. That was quite a good intervention. I just want to correct the acronym, NACSO. OK, it's Namibia Association for Community-Based Natural Resources Management Support Organizations.

(LAUGHTER)

(UNKNOWN): Thank you.

DEMAS: All right. And then, secondly, just quickly, yes, I just want to quickly add onto the question that Digu answered on the gas and solar energy question that was asked.

Especially on the housing that's going to be constructed in Etosha National Park, that's actually a big consideration (ph). (Inaudible) building in a protected area and so and, since we would like to look at more sustainable energy resources to be used there, so, currently, the design phase is on and (inaudible) and architects and so on (inaudible).

We had already the first round of meetings with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, talking about (inaudible), solar, gas, you know, what kind of energy resources can be used there, and we are basically prepared to spend a little bit per house, you know, just to have that right rather than looking at just a mass number of houses with, you know, some energy source that might run out.

So, that's certainly a great consideration for us for Etosha.

WEBSTER: All right. Please join me, if you would, in thanking our keynote speaker and our panelists.

(APPLAUSE)

Our guests from Namibia have another event that they need to be at at 3:00, so we'll close formally now.

I just want to wrap up by, again, thanking our partners, MCC, World Wildlife Fund, and all of you who are involved in this effort and thanks, everyone, for coming today. I hope it was interesting and enjoyable for each of you. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

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