



Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area

Secretariat: P. O. Box 1171, Gaborone, Botswana
Tel/Fax: +267 397 1857
E-mail: rc@kazatfca.org.bw or pm@kazatfca.org.bw
www.kavangozambezi.org

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PRESS RELEASE

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (KAZA TFCA)

On 15th March 2012 the Ministers responsible for environment, wildlife, natural resources, hotels and tourism of the Republics of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe hosted various stakeholders in the town of Katima Mulilo, Namibia to celebrate the official launch of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA). The TFCA was formally established on 18th August 2011 when at the SADC Summit in Luanda, Angola, the Presidents of the Republics of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe signed the KAZA Treaty. The KAZA Treaty was unveiled to the stakeholders during the official launch in Katima Mulilo, Namibia where the concept of the KAZA TFCA was initially mooted in July 2003.

The KAZA TFCA, situated within the Kavango and Zambezi River basins and spans over 444,000 km², is the world's largest conservation area comprising multiple resource use areas including National Parks, Game Reserves, Forest Reserves, Conservancies, Game/Wildlife Management Areas and Communal lands. The natural resources contained in the KAZA TFCA are critical to the sustainable development of the region on

Country Contacts

Angola

Ministry of Hotels & Tourism
Largo 4 de Fevereiro,
Palacio de Vidro 6 Andar
Luanda
Tel/fax: +244 222 310 899

Botswana

Ministry of Environment,
Wildlife & Tourism
Government Enclave
P/Bag B0199
Gaborone
Tel: +267 364 7902
Fax: +267 391 4955

Namibia

Ministry of Environment
& Tourism
FGI Building
Post Street Mall
P/Bag 13346
Windhoek
Tel: +264 61 284 2335
Fax: +264 61 229 936

Zambia

Ministry of Tourism, Environment
and Natural Resources
Electro House, Cairo Road
P. O. Box 30575
Lusaka
Tel: +260 211 223 930
Fax: +260 211 223 930

Zimbabwe

Ministry of Environment and
Natural Resources Management
11th Floor Kaguvi Building
Corner Fourth Street &
Central Avenue
P/Bag 7753
Causeway
Harare
Tel: +263 4 701681/2/3
Fax: +263 4 252673



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account of their inherent and enormous socio-economic value. Furthermore, the biodiversity in the TFCA has potential to insulate the region from the effects of climate change.

The KAZA TFCA partner countries have identified tourism as one of the key drivers for socio-economic development of the region due to its strong multiplier effects. The partner countries are determined to accelerate the growth of the tourism industry in the region within the context of sustainable development. It is the strong desire of the KAZA TFCA partner countries that the socio-economic development in the region must benefit the local communities that live within and around the TFCA. These communities are the custodian of the resource and bear huge opportunity costs associated with biodiversity conservation such as Human Wildlife Conflicts which have contributed to household food insecurity.

During the launch of the KAZA TFCA the partner countries reaffirmed their commitment to regional economic integration through sustainable management of transboundary natural resources and tourism development. The establishment of the KAZA TFCA is in line with the objectives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of regional economic integration and specifically the Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement of 1999, which commits SADC Member

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States to *“promote the conservation of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas.”*

The development of the KAZA TFCA has continued receiving significant support from various development partners and in particular, the Federal Government of the Republic of Germany, Peace Parks Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Netherlands, the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). The local communities and traditional leaders have equally been instrumental to the development of the TFCA. The KAZA partner states wish to extend their gratitude and appreciation to all the development partners and the local communities for their continued support to this unique conservation, tourism and sustainable development partnership.

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