

Written evidence submitted by Mike Idziaszczyk (AAB0004)

Animal Abroad Bill

The point I wish to make to the Committee is that should this Bill be passed it will be a blistering example UK Government arrogance and ignorance in telling other nations how to manage their economies, forced through by the influence of a few individuals vehemently opposed to shooting and the hunting of animal in the UK and overseas – in particular Africa.

The wildlife of Africa is the property of and a natural resource of the African nations. They have a right to manage this resource as they see fit and not to be dictated to by well meaning but ill informed foreign governments. For too long the developed Western nations have decided that we know best and can tell, force or coerce other nations to bend to our will and opinions. Whenever we do so – however well intentioned – the results are nearly always negative. Our recent involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan to promote western liberal democracy being recent examples. When it goes wrong – we walk away and leave others to pick up the pieces and live with the consequences of our actions.

We should listen to what the African Governments on whose land hunting takes place and whose natural resource – the wildlife – is being hunted, and not to the emotional and ill informed voices of the anti hunting lobby. The Governments where African wildlife is flourishing are openly asking the West not to impose trophy bans on animals hunted legitimately in their countries as this generates a great deal of valuable revenue and employment to their nations which cannot be obtained through other means – eg photo safaris. Why should Zack Goldsmith or Carrie Johnson know more about managing populations of African elephants and rhinos than President Rhamoposa or the heads of the other African nations? Since when have urban dwellers in the UK known more about conservation than those that live and work in rural Africa?

When an item or animal has a value it becomes important and people look after it, as they recognise it is a valuable resource. When they have no value they are discarded or replaced with something that does. By seeking to make hunting trophies worthless the bill hopes to stop hunters from shooting wild animals. This I am sure will indeed be the case. How many individuals will want to travel to Africa to legitimately hunt an animal in accordance with local management and conservation plans if they have to pay thousands of dollars but cannot even export a trophy to remind them of their hunt? The animal will still have to be killed but the local economy will not benefit. The local populace will then be forced to seek alternative sources of revenue. Wildlife will be poached to reduce competition for farm animals and to decrease damage to crops and humans. The result is that habitat will be lost and wild animal numbers will be decimated.

If this bill is passed do not be surprised if the wild animals of Africa (and indeed Europe) will suffer. Beware of the law of unintended consequences. In 25 years time we may have stopped hunting in Africa but through the destruction of habitat and the increased poaching of wild animals the only place our children will be able to see elephants, lions, rhinos or even springbuck – if they are not extinct - will be in a zoo as they will no longer have a home or place in the wild.

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