

7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference

Maun Lodge, Maun, 4-5th July 2016



The 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference hosted in Maun marks the extensive contribution of Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) to the improvement of livelihoods in rural Botswana. The conference Theme, **“Natural Resources at the Centre of Rural Livelihoods: Looking Beyond 50 Years of Botswana’s Independence”** echoes the voices of many Batswana who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. The theme challenges

national policies to strengthen the link between nature conservation, rural economies and community governance; it challenges practitioners to embrace the changing conditions under which CBNRM operates; and the rural development practitioners to include natural resources in the economic profiles of the villages and districts. It challenges our communities to seek integrated planning as a means of maximizing the economic benefits of the natural resources they live with, and reduce wasteful competition such as that which we see between agriculture and tourism.



The KCS CEO, Mr Leonard Dikobe outlining the Purpose and Objectives of the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference in Maun.

These were the words of the Chief Executive Office of Kalahari Conservation, Mr Leonard Dikobe in his welcome note to the participants of the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference held in Maun from 4th to 5th July 2016.

Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS) is the Secretariat of the Botswana National CBNRM Forum hosted this conference to enable the participants to learn from each other, to reflect on policy and individual actions needed to transform the economies of rural Botswana into solid vibrancy. The conference enjoyed the support and the leadership of the Ngamiland District Commissioner, the traditional leadership and the District Council.

It also drew representatives of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) from over nine districts and sub-districts in Botswana. CBNRM in Botswana currently touches the lives of over half of Botswana’s rural population with many more communities still yet to join the programme. In introducing guests at the conference, the District Commissioner of Ngamiland, Ms Chabongwa Matseka stated the importance of coordination of CBNRM activities at district



The Official Table at the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference. For left to right is District Commissioner for Ngamiland, Chairperson of NGO Council, Country Director for SASSCAL, National CBNRM Coordinator and KCS CEO.

level and the importance of involving local communities in the development of projects and programmes.

The conference also illuminated the need for sustainable financing of CBNRM as well as the need to diversify CBNRM activities beyond wildlife and plants to include management of water, sand, rocks and clay resources. The conference also noted the need for CBOs to diversify the investment portfolios so they can be more economically resilient. The expert panel shared ideas on many ways CBNRM could be financed including partnerships with universities for research and application of research findings, and how CBOs can invest in their own people and raise the standard of living while creating wealth for the CBO. The Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust had some interesting examples.



A panel of discussants on Sustainable CBNRM Financing consisted of (left to right) Botswana University Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust, Southern Africa Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL) and Forest Conservation Botswana.

Since 1989, various communities in Botswana’s rural areas have been piloting the management of natural resources within the localities. Beyond the challenges of finding self-sustaining economic activities, many rural areas face challenges of inadequate infrastructure, roads, communication, markets and skills. These assets are not usually provided through sector ministries of water, wildlife, tourism and agriculture. The currently limited scope of engagement of the technical ministries compromises the potential of CBNRM to transform rural Botswana. This sentiment was shared by many of the participants and the guest speakers. CBNRM has gained support of communities, government and the civil society alike. Following from the 6th Biennial National CBNRM Conference held in Gaborone in 2012, the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism has since established a senior position of CBNRM Coordinator based at the ministry. Since inception, CBNRM has brought to rural Botswana an income in excess of BWP300 million. The bulk of this income was derived from wildlife utilisation, including safari hunting. Significant reduction in CBO income was experienced by many CBOs after Botswana stopped safari hunting. These were mainly CBOs operating in the drylands with limited permanent surface water.



Ms Phatsimo Kwenane of the United States Embassy, facilitating a Panel Discussion on CBNRM Financing.



Chairperson of the NGO Council, Ms Bookie Kethusegile, facilitating the Panel Discussion on CBNRM Policy Challenges.

In his report to the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference, the CBNRM Coordinator Mr Boatametse Modukanele stated that many of the CBOs suffered capacity deficits and were therefore unable to fully utilise the financial support available from government for projects aimed conservation and utilisation of natural resources. The panel discussion on CBNRM Financing also noted the capacity deficits and the challenges of CBOs working with Non-Governmental Organisations to develop and implement proposals. These include the reluctance of funding agencies to cover the real costs of project development and implementation

incurred by NGOs. A number of financing opportunities were

noted and these included Forest Conservation Botswana, Global Environment Facility, National Environment Fund and Conservation Trust Fund.

The conference ended with election of a new CBNRM Forum Committee. The members in picture below are without the private sector representatives as the representatives were not in attendance. We wish the new committee all the best of success in implementing the resolutions of the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Conference. The next conference will be in 2018.



Executive Committee of the National CBNRM Forum elected at the 7th Biennial National CBNRM Forum. Left to Right Standing is Mr L. Dikobe (Kalahari Conservation Society – Secretariat), Mr B. Modukanele, Mr D. Thamage, and Mr O. Molosiwa. Left to Right sitting is Mr D. Letsholo, Mr S. Mopalo, Dr J. Lepetu, and Dr G. Masunga. NB: Representatives of the Private Sector are not included in the photo as they were not in attendance but will be included in the committee.