

EXHIBIT 3

**DECLARATION OF DR. MICHAEL H. KNIGHT
CHAIR, IUCN AFRICAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP AND SADC (SOUTHERN
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY) RHINO MANAGEMENT GROUP**

I, Dr. Michael Knight, Chair of the African Rhino Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Species Survival Commission and Chair of the SADC Rhino Management Group make the following declaration upon my personal, first-hand knowledge.

1. I have been a long standing member of and am current Chair of both the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (IUCN SSC AfRSG) and SADC (Southern African Development Community) Rhino Management Group (SADC RMG). The AfRSG has a reputation of being one of the most active and applied of IUCN's Specialist Groups; and has over the years assisted many range states (including Namibia) with the development and revision of their rhino plans and strategies.
2. I can confirm that Namibia's Ministry of Environment (MET) are officially represented on and have been active participants in both groups; and have been providing annual black rhino status reports to the SADC RMG since SADC RMG status reporting commenced in 1991.
3. I can confirm Namibia's MET as requested also regularly provides country reports to the AfRSG to assist it fulfilling its rhino reporting mandate to the Conferences of the Parties of CITES (Convention on Trade of Endangered Species).
4. I have travelled widely throughout the continent as part of this work. I have visited Namibia on a number of occasions, and through these visits, and networking with MET's nominated representatives on the two groups I now chair and AfRSG and SADC RMG meetings, I have personal experience and knowledge of Namibia's rhino conservation and management programs.

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5. In 2004, Namibia and South Africa both had annual export quotas of up to five black rhino bulls approved by CITES. An attempt to overturn these quotas at a subsequent CITES Conference of the Parties was soundly rejected by CITES Parties.
6. The Namibian quota of up to 5 animals per year is very small, representing only 0.25% of estimated black rhino numbers in Namibia in 2014. Such a low quota is demographically easily sustainable.
7. Neither Namibia nor South Africa have hunted all the black rhino they could have under their quotas, indicating it is conservation and not revenue generation that has been driving the hunting of black rhino bulls.
8. Dealing with surplus black rhino males is an issue dealt with in many national strategic rhino conservation plans.
9. The estimated number of black rhinos in Namibia in 2014 was 2,003 (Source Namibian MET). This is up 95% from the estimated 1,027 (SADC RMG data – revised up from initial 1,022) in 2004 when the limited black rhino hunting quotas were first approved by CITES. Since their black rhino hunting quota was approved at CITES, black rhino numbers in Namibia have increased by an average net +6.91% per annum. This performance far exceeds the usual minimum metapopulation growth target of 5% per annum. Clearly very limited hunting has not be detrimental to overall metapopulation performance in Namibia.
10. Namibia has over the years also hunted limited numbers of white rhino, whose numbers continue to increase in the country.



11. In the case of Namibia's black rhino all rhino (including those on private and community conservancies) belong to the state and all decisions on which and how many specific certified "surplus" black rhino bulls can be made available for hunting are made by Namibia's MET.

12. I appreciate it can be confusing for members of the public to understand why one might wish to sport hunt an endangered species at a time when poaching has been increasing. Counter intuitively there are a number of good reasons why the removal of the odd specific individual surplus male black rhino can actually enhance black rhino demographic and genetic conservation, whilst also generating additional funding to help fund and incentivize rhino conservation. The following reasons have been advanced for hunting the occasional specific male black rhino (identified as surplus) in Namibia and South Africa:

- a. By removing older bulls that have dominated the breeding for many years the probability of inbreeding can be reduced. Inbreeding has been shown in many species to reduce genetic diversity (reducing longer term population viability) and increase the chances of poorer reproductive success and increased mortality.
- b. Analysis of SADC RMG data has shown that black rhino calving significantly declines as the ratio of adult males to females in a population increases. SADC RMG data also confirms that there is on average a statistically significant small bias in favour of male calves being born (53:47). Due to chance, population birth sex ratios in populations will vary around this mean. The result is some populations can end up with more markedly male skewed birth sex ratios.

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Managers of populations with more females are understandably unwilling to take any such excess males. Simply leaving excess males in populations runs the risk of increased fighting and mortalities and slower population growth rates.

- c. Black rhino breeding performance improves when better quality nutrition is available to breeding females (as cows on a better quality diet experience lower calf mortalities, and have lower inter-calving intervals and lower ages at first calving). The removal of an older surplus bull can therefore free up food resources for females, potentially enhancing their breeding.
- d. Very occasionally an infertile but dominant bull can negatively impact on breeding in his area. The hunting or removal of such a bull results in other bulls being able to mate resulting in cows conceiving again and a net gain in rhino numbers.
- e. Ensuring rapid population growth not only enhances long term population viability (minimizing loss of genetic diversity through a process called genetic drift), but also provides an important buffer against poaching. Thanks to the effects of compounding increasing population growth rates by a small amount can translate to many more rhinos in a few years.
- f. Occasionally “problem” bulls have killed other rhinos. One cannot simply export such problem animals elsewhere.
- g. Older bulls are often pushed out to peripheral areas by younger stronger bulls. Bulls pushed into communal areas north of Etosha National Park are vulnerable



to poaching if not removed. The Namibian MET has found from experience that introducing such older (>25 years) animals back into the established Park population has often resulted in fighting mortalities or other breakouts. In one case MET reports that one bull broke out of Etosha three times despite on one occasion having been taken 60km into the Park. MET have therefore taken a decision to stop relocating such older bulls back into Etosha, so their limited resources can be better spent on rhino conservation and protection. Such bulls have been taken to an alternative site as nominated candidates for hunting. The bull recently hunted by the Dallas Safari Club Auction top-bidder was one such animal (according to MET the animal in question was at least 29 years old).

- h. Older bulls also will have had an opportunity to breed and contribute their genes. If pushed to marginal areas they may not breed again and therefore whether or not they are hunted will have little or no impact on the gene pool.
13. The increased costs of Namibian efforts to combat the escalating poaching are significantly impacting on budgets. Any additional revenue that can be allocated to fund conservation and anti-poaching efforts is especially welcome at this time.
14. The Namibian Game Products Trust Fund (GPTF) established in 1997 has a proven track record of channeling revenue from wildlife use back into conservation. In the case of Namibia's black rhino hunts, all proceeds after expenses, will be ring-fenced and can **only** be used for approved rhino conservation related projects.
15. Escalating poaching is currently the greatest threat; but there are also risks from devaluing wildlife like black rhino in the eyes of local communities who live beside parks

with wildlife populations. If MET loses funding for law enforcement and anti-poaching, the black rhino will be worse off and at greater risk from the types of commercial poaching operations that have infiltrated South Africa and some other range states.

16. In addition, if local communities and/or private sector custodians were to receive fewer benefits from the sustainable use of black rhino, their current protective attitudes towards black rhino could change, and black rhino will be threatened on three fronts: by external poachers, by local antagonism (opportunistic poaching) or complacency, and by reduced budgets to pay for and incentivize conservation.
17. Trophy hunting of white and black rhino has also been playing a positive role in neighbouring South Africa. Trophy hunting of white rhino started in 1968 when there were only an estimated 1,800 southern white rhino remaining, Numbers have increased over 10 fold since trophy hunting commenced. Numbers of black rhino in South Africa have also continued to increase since the limited hunting quotas were first approved by CITES in 2004.
18. In the light of this evidence the member governments and conservation organisations of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) agreed in 2012 at its World Conservation Congress on *“the important role that commercial wildlife enterprises including trophy hunting has played in generating incentives for conservation and stimulating population increases of rhinos in Africa”*.
19. It has often been suggested that an equivalent amount should be paid for such surplus bulls to “save them from hunters” without considering who would pay the expensive costs of the animal, its capture and relocation, its relocation site and the ongoing monitoring and protection such an animal would continue to require. 

20. As a scientist concerned with the ultimate survival of rhino species and subspecies I believe that focusing on the entire population and not on one individual is a wiser approach to addressing the far bigger problem of escalating poaching and other management challenges. The evidence shows that well-managed sustainable use-based programs like Namibia's, which give black rhino value to governments and local people by providing economic incentives and benefits, are important to the survival of the black rhino and other species.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 14 July 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Knight".

Dr Michael Knight, (Ph. D)