



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Directorate of Environmental Affairs

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March 19, 2004

Mr Leonard Good

Chief Executive Officer
Global Environment Facility
GEF Secretariat
1818 H Street, NW
Washington DC 20433, USA

**RE: LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT: STRENGTHENING THE NAMIBIA SYSTEM OF
NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS**

Dear Mr Good,

Namibia has a rich biodiversity of global significance, acclaimed for its species richness, habitat diversity and biological distinctiveness. The nationally owned protected area network is the cornerstone of Namibia's efforts to protect flora and fauna *in situ*, allowing intensive and relatively permanent conservation activities. Namibia's protected area network now occupies approximately 14% of the total land area of 824,000 sq km, but requires expansion to cover all sensitive biodiversity and ecological hotspots. Limited available financial resources have restricted the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's ability to provide adequate and efficient service to the existing network.

The proposed new initiative is to strengthen the MET's capacity to conserve biodiversity in the protected areas in Namibia.

This project will remove many barriers that currently hinder effective management of protected areas; e.g. lack of park management plans, inadequate policy and legal framework, institutional/individual capacity, under-valuation of parks and associated inadequate financing. This project will address these critical issues and is fully in line with the government's priority

through the National Development Plan II, and with the existing and planned programmes of the MET. It is also identified as the top priority in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

Although we have done a considerable job in the development of our protected areas, further GEF support is needed to accelerate progress and to attain sustainable institutional and financial mechanism for long-term biodiversity conservation in protected areas.

This concept/proposal has been developed jointly by the MET and UNDP through a series of intensive consultations over the last two years. The MET is taking full ownership of this project and is determined to internalise the project functions into the existing structure of the Ministry, ensuring full involvement of key personnel in relevant directorates. The MET has also started an active resource mobilisation drive to secure co-financing for the full phase.

Accordingly, I, as the GEF Operational Focal Point in Namibia, fully support and subscribe the aims and objectives of this project.

The proposal and the activities it seeks to undertake are hereby endorsed by copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Teofilus Nghitila

DEA: Director (GEF Operational Focal Point)