



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**Speech by Ambassador Attilio PACIFICI
The Head of Delegation
of the European Union to the Republic of Uganda
at Press Briefing Announcing EU adoption of Baby Rhino
EUROPE
at Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities Board Room,
May 30, 2018**

Honourable Minister of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities,
Prof. Ephriam Kamuntu,
Officials from the National Authorising Office, the
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development,
Representatives of the Uganda Wild Life Authority,
Board Members and Rangers of the Rhino Fund Uganda,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

It is an absolute pleasure and honour to address the media
in Kampala this morning to share very important and good
news together with our dear friends and partners working in
support of conservation and management of biodiversity.

The European Union in partnership with the office of the Minister of Finance, the National Authorizing Office (NAO), have adopted a baby Rhino born at the Uganda Rhino Sanctuary, Ziwa Farm.

The baby is now named **EUROPE**.

Let me tell you something about **Baby Europe**. Europe was born in February 2018. He is the 17th calf to have been born in Uganda in recent times and the fifth calf of the mother Kori, who was brought from Kenya to Uganda in 2005 along with three others to start the re-introduction project of the NGO Rhino Fund Uganda (RFU).

He is the most recent rhino to have been born in the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, the only place in Uganda where there are rhinos living in the wild. While there used to be hundreds of rhinos in Uganda, due to heavy poaching throughout East Africa, the last one was killed in 1983.

Keeping rhinos safe in the face of the recent surge in demand for rhino horn from Asian countries is costly. That is why, in adopting Baby Rhino Europe, we are directly

supporting Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to continue its excellent breeding and management conditions.

The European Union has a strong and proud record of supporting conservation worldwide. Within the EU, it has created the largest network of protected areas in the world, Natura 2000. Globally, it works to protect animal and plant species that face particular threats (such as Baby Rhino Europe) and to fight the illegal wildlife trade.

In EU international development cooperation, we place a strong emphasis on protecting wildlife and ecosystems to combat poverty and improve livelihoods. For the past 30 years, EU support for conservation in developing countries has focused on enabling our partners to create, manage and maintain key protected areas. Protected areas depend on sustained political commitment and financial support in order to deliver on environmental, social and economic objectives. In developing countries, protected areas that function effectively mostly depend on external financial support. EU funding for protected areas is provided through

bilateral cooperation with partner country governments or through grants to international or local NGOs, which take charge of managing activities.

That is why, in adopting Baby Rhino Europe, we are partnering with Rhino Fund Uganda (RFU), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, to support biodiversity conservations efforts, and to repopulate the Uganda National Parks, to contribute to attract visitors coming to appreciate Uganda's natural heritage.

Our partnership with UWA and RFU dates back more than a decade ago. In 2004, the European Union supported efforts to extend the fight for environmental conservation specifically wildlife in Uganda. With direct EU funding, we supported our partners UWA and RFU to rationalize and demarcate protected area boundaries, improve protected area management, and reintroduce endangered wildlife species of the Rhino. It is no surprise therefore that we

come back today to announce our adoption of Baby Rhino Europe!

Ladies and Gentlemen of the press,

2018 has been designated as the European Year of Cultural Heritage. It is a celebration aiming to showcase our joint heritage as a unique, rich and diverse mosaic of cultural and creative expression. This Year we pay tribute to museums, monuments, artworks, historic cities, literature, music, audio-visual works, and natural, built, and archaeological sites of interest. In doing so, we recognise the intangible elements of cultural heritage, including the knowledge, practices, and traditions of European people and our partners around the world, including in Uganda.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda are at the heart of EU development policy. Our support for conservation contributes to the delivery of Goals 14 and 15, in particular: Goal 14: Life below water - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine

resources and Goal 15: Life on land - Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

But you may wonder, why are we doing this? We do this for the following reasons:

- Reduce rates of habitat loss and maintain species population levels.
- Preserve ecosystem services that most rural communities depend on, and so contribute to sustainable livelihoods.
- Provide sustainable economic benefits, through tourism and small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Contribute to improving security for local communities in areas affected by conflict.

Protected areas are also fundamental to the global response to climate change, storing and capturing carbon in vegetation and soils (mitigation); and offering protection against climate change impacts such as storms and sea-level rise, changes in water supplies, fisheries, disease and agricultural productivity (adaptation).

In countries that have limited capacity to manage protected areas, public-private partnerships (PPP) have proven successful, contributing to better governance locally.

We are proud of our partnership with the Government of Uganda and private actors such as the Rhino Fund Uganda. Soon, we will invite you to join us on a visit to the Uganda Rhino Sanctuary, Ziwa Farm, where you will all get to see Baby Rhino EUROPE in his full glory.

We applaud our partners for all the good work and we pledge our continued support to these great initiatives.

Thank you.

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