

UNITY IN THE HUNTING FRATERNITY

In recent years, several leaders in the hunting industry have expressed the need for a national organisation to represent all hunters in South Africa. The *status quo* is that the hunting industry in South Africa currently comprises a number of individual organisations not represented by one national organisation. Over the last few months, discussions have taken place between the role players in the industry, with a view to establishing such a national body based on federal principles. The organisations that took part in these discussions represent the majority of hunters in South Africa and include:

- Confederation of Hunters Associations of South Africa (with 23 member Associations)
- South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association
- Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa
- National Shooting Association
- SA Wingshooters
- Lowveld Hunters-, Firearm collectors-, Sport Shooting- and Game Conservation Association

The participating organisations have already reached consensus on the objectives of such a national body, viz. to:

- act as mouthpiece at national level for all hunters, give input and influence processes of policy formulation and application with respect to inter alia hunting-, fire arm- and conservation issues
- promote conservation activities through the principle of conservation through sustainable utilisation
- enhance mutual cooperation between member associations with the view to improved service delivery and unity in the hunting fraternity
- develop uniform norms and standards with respect to hunting
- develop and apply a uniform and enforceable code of conduct and disciplinary procedure for the federation and/or member associations
- set minimum national standards for hunters education and coordinate the application hereof by member associations
- promote the principal of hunting as a tool for sustainable utilisation of natural resources, the value thereof in the management of the biodiversity as well as to stress the important role of the public in the conservation of our natural heritage
- promote the use of scientific knowledge, and independent research results in policy formulation and application with respect to hunting-, fire arms-, and conservation
- contribute towards research on topical aspects of hunting-, fire arm- and conservation issues
- solicit funds for the attainment of above objectives
- acknowledge persons or organisations who have made a meritorious contribution towards hunting and conservation

Agreement in principle has been reached about the process to be followed to establish the national body. The current discussions are aimed at reaching consensus amongst participating organisations on the purpose, nature and structure of the envisaged Hunters Federation. Should these discussions be successful a constitution will be drafted and presented to participating associations' decision makers for ratification. The eventual establishment of the Hunters Federation can thus take place once the organisations' decision makers are satisfied with the product that has been developed.

It is important to note that the process to establish the federation is still in infant stage and that there is some hard work ahead before the federation can be operational. It is however encouraging that the discussions have been conducted in a spirit of goodwill and that consensus had already been reached on several important aspects.

All hunters associations wishing to be a part of the federation are invited to participate in the process before the formal drafting of the constitution starts. The aim is to be inclusive and not exclude any hunters association from the exciting prospect of unity in the hunting fraternity.

Interested parties or associations may contact any of the following persons for more information on participation in the e process.

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