The government of Botswana has said it supports the European Union’s plan to ban the importation of trophies and proceeds from trophy hunts conducted in Southern Africa in a bid to prevent poaching and illegal hunting. Early this month, the EU pledged to follow the United States example of banning the importation of trophies and trophy hunting products into the bloc to prevent the mass poaching of African wildlife, a move that has been bitterly opposed by the governments of Namibia and Zimbabwe as detrimental to conservation.

However, Botswana’s minister of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife Tshekedi Khama has come out in full support of the proposed ban, saying it would help to control poaching and limit the proliferation of illegal firearms. “I think the ban is a welcome move. They should go all the way and see how best they can use it to help in anti-poaching efforts. They should do more to end poaching, especially to control the flow of the guns which are used by poachers.”

“They haven’t informed us officially of the plan, and we are waiting to hear how they intend to achieve it, but we support them fully in this regards,” Khama said.

According to a draft EU policy plan released in Brussels early this month, the 28-member bloc wants to impose a complete ban on the importation of trophies and trophy hunting proceeds into the EU.

It also calls for the tightening of existing legislation to ensure that all trophies imported into the EU are legally obtained. Global calls for the curtailment of trophy hunting in African conservancies erupted into a global outrage in July last year after the killing of ‘Cecil the Lion’ in the Hwange National Park by American doctor Walter Palmer.

It was also heightened by the hotly contested trophy killing of an endangered Namibian black rhino by yet another American citizen, Corry Knowlton. The ensuing debates on the thin line between ethical trophy hunting and poaching have raged on since then and forced the US government to ban the importation of trophies from Africa.

Several airlines have also followed suit by banning the transportation of trophies and trophy hunting products from Africa to the US.

Source: SABC