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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MINISTER LAUNCHES TASKFORCE TO STRENGTHEN LION CONSERVATION IN UGANDA

Kampala, 10 November 2026 – The Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Hon. Col. Tom Butime, has today launched the National Lion/Large Carnivore Conservation Taskforce to support efforts to protect and recover Uganda's lion population and other large carnivores.

The Taskforce brings together experts from government, conservation organisations, universities, research institutions and the tourism industry to advise the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) on measures to strengthen large carnivore conservation.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister expressed concern about the threats facing lions and other large carnivores, noting that their protection is important not only for maintaining healthy ecosystems but also for Uganda's cultural heritage and tourism industry. "Protection of lions and other iconic wildlife species should be prioritised because they attract tourists and immensely contribute to revenue generation, employment and livelihoods of our people," he said.

Recent wildlife population assessments have pointed to the need for greater conservation efforts, particularly in Kidepo Valley and Queen Elizabeth National Parks. Lions and other large carnivores continue to face threats from habitat loss, retaliatory killings, poisoning, snaring, declining prey populations and illegal trade in wildlife body parts.

The Taskforce will support the implementation of Uganda's Strategic Action Plan for Large Carnivore Conservation (2024–2034), which aims to increase viable large carnivore populations by 30 per cent over ten years and reduce poaching by at least 50 per cent. The plan places particular emphasis on protecting habitats, reducing human wildlife conflicts, involving neighbouring communities in conservation and strengthening research and monitoring.

The Minister said the Taskforce had been deliberately constituted to bring together people with different skills and experience who can help UWA and the Ministry identify practical solutions to the challenges facing large carnivores. Its establishment

also builds on Uganda's commitments under the African Carnivores Initiative and ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation in wildlife conservation.

The Taskforce will be chaired by Mr. Michael Keigwin, MBE, Founder Trustee and Director of the Uganda Conservation Foundation. Other members are Dr. Alex Braczkowski, Prof. Charles Masembe, Mr. Charles Tumwesigye, Dr. Simon Nampindo, Dr. Ludwig Siefert, Mr. Candia Leone, Prof. Moses Muhumuza and Mr. Benon Ssebina Katumba.

The Taskforce will review ongoing conservation efforts, advise on priority interventions, identify emerging threats and help mobilise resources to support large carnivore recovery. UWA will serve as the Secretariat to the Taskforce and work with the Ministry and conservation partners to follow up on its recommendations.

The Authority welcomes the establishment of the Taskforce and looks forward to working with its members, conservation partners, tourism operators and communities neighbouring protected areas to ensure that lions and other large carnivores continue to thrive in Uganda's wild spaces.

ENDS

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