

I READ with interest and some amusement your editorial of Friday September 8 2000 on what you referred to as "muddling of words".

Being a journalist myself, I know exactly what you are talking about. I have also experienced the frustration of trying to figure out the meaning of sentences and paragraphs in media releases.

However, I have realised that it can be dangerous to make assumptions on the ground of statements made in such releases.

Since you referred in your editorial to a media release issued by the Min-

# Reading Between The Lines

istry of Foreign Affairs, Information and Broadcasting, I feel compelled to point out to you the dangers of assuming the meaning of statements. You quoted me as saying that: "The future of the elephant that attacked the tourists will be decided once a full investigation into the circumstances of the incident has been completed." From this you deduced and even suggested that it would have been better to

straightforwardly inform the public that the elephant will be killed.

Your assumption, which you clearly qualified with "we think" in brackets, was wrong. In fact the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has already confirmed, upon the outcome of the investigation, that the elephant cow that was responsible for the attack would not be killed.

It is, therefore, clear that your assumed option was incorrect. The other

options that we considered were to leave the animal in peace or to drive it back to the possible restricted area from where it escaped, which was not the case in this instance.

Being aware of at least three options to be considered insofar as the future of the elephant was concerned it would have been very irresponsible if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information and Broadcasting phrased the sentence, which moti-

vated you to mention our release in your editorial, differently.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism informed me that the circumstances surrounding attacks of wild animals on humans would determine what action to be taken.

Very often animals are not to blame, but rather people who disregard all safety aspects when it comes to encounters with wild animals. If an ani-

mal attacks when it is stalked to be photographed, the animal cannot be branded a problem animal.

Such an animal reacts on instinct to protect itself, its territory or its offspring. It is exactly because of the unpredictability of wild animals that people, and especially tourists, are cautioned not to leave their vehicles or come too close to such animals.

I want to conclude my

letter by echoing the sentiments expressed in a media release by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, which clearly stated that the elephant cow which killed the American tourist could not be blamed for defending her calf. In fact, the Minister of Environment and Tourism, Honourable Phillemon Malima, gave his personal assurances that the elephant would not be killed, as she was only defending her calf.

**Mocks Shivute**  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Information  
WINDHOEK

C... T... Situation Must Be Probed

Let The Deaf Police Too