



END THE TRADE IN ELEPHANTS!



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4 PROPOSALS TO PREVENT THE EXTINCTION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS



The recent IPBES Global Assessment report estimates that over 1 million species are now threatened with extinction, many within mere decades. One of the major drivers for what is being termed the planet’s ‘sixth mass extinction’ and highlighted in the 2019 IPBES report, is the ‘direct exploitation of organisms’ by humans.

The rate of global change, in the last 50 years alone, is unprecedented in human history with wild-life populations declining by 60% in just 40 years.

Over 20,000 elephants are still being illegally slaughtered every year for their ivory in spite of intense global investment and attention in their plight. The question is: how high does the death toll have to rise before governments and stake-

holders realise that any trade or exploitation of species is driving them to extinction?

Governments, civil society and concerned individuals are recognising the urgency in closing domestic ivory markets and to put an end to all trade in ivory. However, the ongoing threat from a few countries pushing to re-open the international ivory trade and sell their ivory stockpiles for short-sighted economic gains, is driving elephant populations to irrecoverable levels. Both Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) and the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation (DSWF) have long campaigned for the end to all trade in ivory and firmly believe that any commercial value placed on wildlife products for human consumption is unacceptable. No one – except elephants – needs ivory.

Both FFW and DSWF support the following Proposals and Working Documents submitted to CITES CoP18 by the African Elephant Coalition (AEC). These proposals are designed to improve international elephant protection by prohibiting the ivory trade.

CoP18 Prop. 12: Proposal for the transfer of elephant populations of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I.

- From 1980-2015, the continental African elephant population has declined by 68%.
- The only measure to date that has worked to curb poaching and ivory trafficking was the listing of all African elephants on CITES Appendix I in 1989.
- Poaching remains high across Africa. Hotspots have moved from East Africa into Southern Africa (notably Botswana) where over half of Africa’s elephants live.
- As a highly migratory, transboundary species, the CITES listing criteria should be applied to African elephant populations on a continental rather than a country-by-country basis.
- In light of the ‘marked decline’ suffered by the species (over 50% since 1980) due to the on-going poaching epidemic for ivory, the biological criteria for an Appendix I uplisting have been met.

We support the transfer of the populations of African elephants in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I.

CoP18 Doc. 44.2: Calling to restrict the trade in live elephants by amending the definition “appropriate and acceptable destinations”.

- CITES allows the capture of wild African elephants, including calves, to be sent to zoos abroad. From 2012, over 100 elephant calves have been sent from Zimbabwe to Chinese Zoos.
- The trade in live elephants causes the deaths of many wild-caught elephants either in transit or on arrival at destination mainly due to trauma and other circumstances.
- The only acceptable destination for live wild-caught elephants are in situ conservation sites within their wild natural range.

We support the proposed amendments to restrict the definition of “appropriate and acceptable destinations” to “in situ conservation programmes or secure areas in the wild within the species’ natural range, except in the case of temporary transfers in emergency situations.”

We also support the amendments recommending parties to implement measures to minimise the risk of negative impacts on wild populations and promote their social well-being.



CoP18 Doc. 69.5: Calling for the closure of all domestic ivory markets as they impact directly on the illegal trade and poaching.

- Momentum is building worldwide to close domestic ivory markets as they impact directly on the illegal trade and poaching.
- Japan and the EU’s legal ivory markets play a significant role in perpetuating ivory trafficking.

- Current loop holes in CITES literature specifies that only markets “contributing to poaching or illegal trade” should be closed.
- Evidence shows a dramatic rise in poaching rates after the one-off ivory sales of 1999 and 2008. Legal markets and sales give the impression that ivory is a high-value product and place a commercial value on ivory which drives illegal killing.

We support the recommended revisions proposed that ‘ALL’ parties and non-parties should close their domestic markets for commercial ivory and that any trade under narrow exemptions is controlled.



CoP18 Doc. 69.4: Calling to improve the management of official ivory stocks.

- Many governments still hold ivory stockpiles, which are a financial and security burden. There is a high risk of theft and leakage into illegal markets.
- Government stockpiles create an expectation that the ivory trade may reopen.

- There is currently a lack of data on global ivory stockpiles, management challenges (including theft and leakage into trade) and a lack of progress with CITES guidance on stockpile management.
- Poaching significantly increased following the one-off ivory sale in 2008. This was based on a study published in 2016 (CoP17. Inf. 96 Ibid. Hsiang, S. & Sekar, N. Does Legalization Reduce Black Market Activity? Evidence from a Global Ivory Experiment and Elephant Poaching Data. NBER Working Paper, June 2016.).

We support the recommendations of the African Elephant Coalition (AEC) to finalise and disseminate delayed guidance for the management of stockpiles, which includes the disposal of stockpiles.

We SUPPORT CoP18 Prop. 13 – Listing of the Woolly mammoth in Appendix II CITES, to help prevent the laundering or mislabelling of elephant ivory as mammoth ivory that threatens living elephants, despite the extinction of the species.

We recommend that CoP18 REJECT the following proposals which are incompatible with the protection of the African elephant:

- **CoP18 Prop. 10:** Down-listing of the Zambian elephant populations to CITES Appendix II.
- **CoP18 11:** Amendment to Annotation 2 pertaining to the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa to allow the resumption of ivory trade.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION ON THE 4 PROPOSALS OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT COALITION



- The African Elephant Coalition (AEC) is an alliance of 32 African countries that aims to protect African elephants from threats related to the international ivory trade.
- CITES stands for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The objective of the convention is to ensure international cooperation to prevent the international trade in wild animals and plant species from threatening their survival.
- Elephants are massacred at an unsustainable rate. The illegal wildlife trade kills an average of 20,000 to 30,000 elephants each year.
- Legal ivory markets fuel the illegal trade and killing of elephants. Despite this, Japan and several EU member states still maintain that their domestic ivory markets do not contribute to illegal trade and poaching of African elephants. African countries are in the best position to observe what is happening in the field every day. For them, the connection is obvious.
- Legal ivory markets provide a perfect guise under which to launder illegally obtained ivory from poached elephants into legal markets.
- Allowing ivory sales creates the impression that this product still has a commercial value, which stimulates the illegal market and transnational wildlife crime. Ivory trafficking heightens conflicts, corruption, poverty, and threatens national security – not only in Africa, but worldwide.
- A public consultation at the end of 2017 saw tens of thousands of EU respondents calling for tighter EU rules on the ivory trade. The European Commission must respect the will of the people and take urgent measures to close their domestic ivory markets.
- Measures by the EU to suspend raw ivory exports in May 2017 are an insufficient response and continue to allow the trade in worked ivory antiques, which can be sold domestically and re-exported without a permit. More and more illicit ivory is worked in Africa and then illegally exported to Asian markets. This ivory is laundered into European markets as 'antiques'. While legal markets exist, criminal networks will continue to take advantage of loopholes in the European system.
- We welcome the actions taken by many countries to close of their domestic ivory markets, notably China, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and the United States. France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and Belgium also recently took restrictive measures to close their markets.
- Japan is now the largest remaining legal market for ivory despite the clear links between legal markets and the killing of elephants.

