

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

AMENDMENTS TO THE ANNOTATIONS FOR AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

A. Proposal

- i) Remove the following paragraph from the annotation regarding the populations of *Loxodonta africana* of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe:

“h) no further proposals to allow trade in elephant ivory from populations already in Appendix II shall be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for the period from CoP14 and ending nine years from the date of the single sale of ivory that is to take place in accordance with provisions in paragraphs g) i), g) ii), g) iii), g) vi) and g) vii). In addition such further proposals shall be dealt with in accordance with Decisions 14.77 and 14.78.”

- ii) Include an annotation regarding **ALL** populations of *Loxodonta africana*, as follows:

“No further proposals concerning trade in African elephant ivory, including proposals to downlist elephant populations from Appendix I to Appendix II, shall be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for the period from CoP14 and ending twenty years from the date of the single sale of ivory that took place in November 2008. Following this twenty year resting period, any elephant proposals shall be dealt with in accordance with Decisions 14.77 and 14.78.”

- iii) Remove paragraph (f) in the annotation to the CITES Appendices governing the elephant populations of Namibia and Zimbabwe:

f) trade in individually marked and certified ekipas incorporated in finished jewellery for non-commercial purposes for Namibia and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe;

B. Proponents

Kenya, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo, Republic of Congo & Rwanda

C. Supporting statement

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Mammalia

1.2 Order: Proboscidae

1.3 Family: Elephantidae

1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year: *Loxodonta africana*
(Blumenbach, 1797)

- 1.5 Scientific synonyms: None
- 1.6 Common names: English: African Elephant
French: éléphant d'Afrique
Spanish: elefante africano
- 1.7 Code numbers: CITES A-115.001.002.001
ISIS 5301415001002001001

2. Overview

International trade in ivory has probably been the single most contentious issue considered by CITES Parties since CoP7 in 1989. Ivory trade, both international and domestic, and the protection of elephants from poaching for ivory, have dominated the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES since that time.

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (The Hague, 2007), the African elephant range States and other CITES Parties participated in almost three weeks of debate and negotiations concerning African elephants and international trade. These discussions resulted in the approval of a number of Decisions (14.75 – 14.79), a 'one-off' sale of 108 tonnes of stockpiled ivory from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana, and an agreement that there should be no further proposals to trade in ivory entertained by the CITES Parties for a period of at least nine years.

The purpose of this nine-year 'resting period' was to send a clear and simple message to the international community that there would be no further discussions about the resumption of ivory trade at CITES meetings during this period. At that time, nine years was the **minimum** that the majority of African Elephant Range States were willing to agree to, and it was their presumption that no ivory trade proposals would be considered until **at least** nine years after the one-off sales were concluded. It was envisaged that this would enable the consequences of the one-off sale to be determined and the longer term impacts on poaching and the illegal ivory trade to be properly understood.

These sales took place in October-November 2008 and so the 9 year resting period is currently due to last until November 2017.

Regretfully, the wording of the annotation inadequately reflects the spirit of what was agreed at CoP14 and does not correspond with what the majority of African elephant range States understood to be the conclusion. As it stands, the annotation only applies to those African elephant populations already listed on Appendix II.

The proponents of this document [Amendments to the Annotations for African Elephants], many of the African elephant range States, and all those present at the CoP14 elephant meetings, including representatives of Germany and the EU, together with the CITES Secretariat, will remember clearly the spirit of what was agreed *and what it was intended to achieve*.

However, the proponents of this proposal [Amendments to the Annotations for African Elephants] have been made aware that certain Parties do not intend to abide by the spirit of that agreement and have announced that they intend to submit downlisting proposals for their elephant populations at CoP15. Clearly, this is a precursor to proposals for further trade.

Therefore, this proposal [Amendments to the Annotations for African Elephants] is intended to prevent any actions which undermine the spirit of what was agreed at CoP14, by properly establishing an effective resting period applied to all countries during which no proposals for trade in African elephant ivory shall be submitted. This will also allow for implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through the African Elephant Fund, which aims to address priority elephant management and conservation activities that have been identified by the range States.

Furthermore, recalling that originally a 20 year resting period was proposed at CoP14, and taking into consideration the significant ivory seizures (see Section 6.4) and reports of widespread and increasing

levels of poaching that have taken place since then and the potentially negative but as yet unquantifiable impacts of the ivory sales to Japan and China that took place in October- November 2008, this proposal [Amendment to the Annotations for African Elephants] further seeks Conference approval for an extension of the resting period from 9 years to 20 years.

This proposal [Amendment to the Annotations for African Elephants] additionally seeks to ensure that ALL trade in ivory is suspended until the end of the resting period, to enable a full and proper analysis of the effect of a complete cessation of all trade. This proposal therefore includes a recommendation to suspend trade in ivory for non-commercial purposes from Namibia and Zimbabwe (see Section 6.2)

3. Species characteristics

3.1 Distribution

Elephants are distributed over 37 sub-Saharan African countries, covering a range of over an estimated 3.3 million km² (3,335,827 km²) of the African continent. This is nearly 1.6million km² (or 32%) less than the range estimated in 2004. This change in the estimated range is thought to be primarily due to the updating of previously unreliable information on elephant distribution, particularly in Central Africa (AfESG 2007). Although this reduction cannot be attributed to a significant *recent* reduction in habitat availability, it does reflect a significant reduction in space available to elephants over time.

Protected areas account for only 31% of estimated elephant range (circa 1 million sq km).

3.2 Habitat

African elephants cover a wide range of habitat across sub-Saharan Africa. Most forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) live in central and western African rainforests, while the savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana africana*) is found throughout the grassy plains, woodlands, swamps and bush lands from sea level to high mountains. In north-western Namibia and in Mali, elephant populations exist in extremely arid and desert areas.

3.3 Biological characteristics

African elephants are the largest living terrestrial mammals (shoulder height up to 4m; weight up to 7,500 kg). Female elephants between 14 and 45 years may give birth to calves approximately every four years. Inter-birth intervals of up to 13 years may occur depending upon habitat conditions and population densities (AfESG 2009). The gestation period is 22 months on average. Under favourable conditions, elephant populations increase at an annual rate of between 4% and 5%. Although males reach sexual maturity at about 10 years, they are unlikely to successfully compete for mating until the age of 20. In the absence of human intervention and natural disasters (e.g. drought) life expectancy is about 50-70 years. Elephants are found in a broad range of habitat types including deserts, swamps, open savannahs, woodland and forest. Individual home ranges vary from 15 to 3,700 km², depending on population and habitat (AfESG 2009). If food and water are available, elephants may not venture far; if such resources are scarce, they may make seasonal migrations of several hundred kilometres (Nowak 1991).

3.4 Morphological characteristics

Currently, two subspecies of the African elephant are recognised, the forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) and the savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana africana*). The forest elephant can be distinguished from the savannah elephant by its smaller body size, smaller ears and straighter, downward-projecting tusks (Roca et al 2001).

3.5 Role of the species in its ecosystem

Elephants play a vital role in the ecology of their habitats. For example, their feeding habits open up thick bush and forest for grazing species; their impact on trees creates habitat for small vertebrates (Pringle 2008) and they maintain waterholes and keep open forest pathways used by wildlife and

humans (Carroll 1988). Elephants are also important dispersal agents for seeds from a number of tree species (Blake et al 2009, Alexandre 1978).

4. Status and trends

4.1 Habitat trends

Habitat loss is widely recognised as a significant threat to the survival of elephant populations in many parts of their range. Loss is due to changes in human land-use practices including: agriculture; ranching, human habitation, deforestation, extractive industries, water extraction and desertification.

4.2 Population size

The known continental elephant population in 2006, the latest year for which population data on a continental basis are available in the IUCN AfESG African Elephant Status Report, was 472,269. In addition, 82,704 elephants were estimated as "probable", another 84,334 as "possible" and another 50,364 as "speculative" (Blanc et al 2007).

The quality of available data concerning the size of elephant populations varies greatly across elephant range, and for many populations there are no reliable estimates available at all - only 51% of populations in known elephant range have reliable population estimates. Data for Central Africa is particularly sparse, with reliable population estimates only available for 13% of assessed range, while guesses still account for 73%. In Eastern African, elephant population estimates are only available for 45% of estimated range, and in Southern Africa elephant population estimates are only available for 53% of estimated elephant range. In Western Africa, the population estimates cover a greater percentage of estimated range (66%); however, two thirds of these estimates are only guesses.

Population sizes also vary greatly across the four sub-Saharan African regions. According to population estimates from the IUCN AfESG, Southern Africa has 58% of the continental total, (in the 'definite' and 'probable' categories). Eastern Africa has 30% of the continental total, and Central Africa is home to 10.7% of the known and probable populations, while West Africa holds just 1.7% of the continental total. The small and fragmented populations in West Africa are of particular concern. Significant efforts are required to protect these populations to prevent localised extinction as has already happened in Burundi, Gambia and Mauritania, and may very soon occur in Senegal. An overarching objective of the African Elephant Action Plan is to prevent this national and regional extinction from occurring (see section 5) and to ensure the adequate management and protection of elephant populations across their range.

4.3 Population structure

African elephants are known to have complex social structures. Both poaching and culling have been reported to result in the breakdown of social structures among the surviving members of elephant societies (Bradshaw et al 2005, Nyakaana et al 2001) and thus affect the entire herd's chances of survival. The drastic decline of some elephant populations in the past has also resulted in a reduction in the amount of genetic diversity in the surviving populations, for example in Uganda (Nyakaana and Arctander 1999).

The social structure of many elephant populations was greatly affected by the high levels of poaching for ivory before the 1989 ban. Elephant poaching in particular targets adult animals with the largest tusks, i.e. old bulls and matriarchs (Cobb and Western 1989). Studies have shown that the long-term impacts of the high levels of poaching pre-1989 have persisted to date, more than 15 years after the ban was implemented (Gobush et al, 2008). Research from Zambia's North Luangwa National Park found that 6 years after the decrease of severe poaching, despite a high reproductive rate, the density of the population had not increased; indicating that removal of older matriarchs has severe repercussions on the recovery of a population after poaching (Owens and Owens 2009).

4.4 Population trends

It is estimated that between 1979 and 1989, more than 600,000 African elephants died, primarily due to poaching for ivory, resulting in a decrease in the continental population from an estimated 1.2 million to an estimated 600,000. In some regions up to 80% of elephant herds were lost, and many have not recovered to their original size.

Many populations, particularly in Western Africa are extremely small and fragile (see section 4.2) and the loss of just a few elephants from a single population can have a severe and negative impact on that population.

It is impossible to identify significant trends in the continental elephant population, due to the paucity of data for many populations (see Section 4.2), particularly for West and Central Africa, as well as ongoing changes in survey techniques and area of survey spread (Blanc et al 2007). Nevertheless, while some populations are thought to be stable or increasing, there are reports indicating disturbing declines in populations at some sites (see Section 5). There are a variety of reasons for such declines including civil unrest and loss of habitat. However, poaching for ivory continues to be a very significant threat.

4.5 Geographic trends

The range of the African elephant once spanned the entire continent outside the Sahara (Mauny 1956; Douglas-Hamilton 1979). Elephants occurred in parts of northern Africa until the beginning of the current era (Scullard 1971), and are presumed to have been widespread everywhere south of the Sahara. (Blanc et al 2003).

The total range area (known and possible) reported in the 2007 IUCN African Elephant Status Report is nearly 32% smaller than reported in the 2002 report. However, it is suggested that this is primarily due to improved available information in recent years. It should be noted that 63% of the total reported range is considered to be in the "known" category, whereas 37% is in the "possible" category, and that a significant amount of the information in the possible category is more than 10 years old. Therefore there is a likelihood that known range may shrink further over time.

The trade in ivory has contributed significantly to the contraction of the range of the species (Douglas-Hamilton 1979; AERSG 1987). Pressure from poaching has, in many areas, either eliminated entire elephant populations or reduced population densities to very low levels (Burrill and Douglas-Hamilton 1987). It has been documented that from about 1970 onwards, hunting rather than habitat loss has been the dominant influence on elephant population dynamics. In 1987, elephant population size was estimated to be only 8% of the carrying capacity (Milner-Gulland and Beddington 1993).

While poaching may have been the primary factor effecting elephant population trends in recent times, habitat loss is nevertheless substantial. Increasing human populations, conversion of habitats for agriculture and the impact of droughts (possibly exacerbated due to climate change) have confined elephants to isolated pockets of national parks and reserves in West Africa. In Central Africa, thousands of square kilometres of lowland rainforest contain suitable elephant habitat; the range, however, is increasingly being fragmented due to habitat loss. In Eastern Africa, loss of habitat due to human activity is contributing to the decline and compression of elephant populations. In Southern Africa, elephant habitat is highly fragmented by human activities. Locally, high numbers and density have resulted from the artificial supplementation of water, fencing and the reduction and fragmentation of landscapes (van Aarde and Jackson 2007).

5. Threats

African elephant populations are confronted by a number of serious threats. These threats vary according to specific populations, but situations are often fluid, with certain threats developing or diminishing over time. All threats listed below are relevant to all four regions in which African

elephants are found (West, Central, East and Southern Africa). While elephants outside protected areas are particularly vulnerable, those in some protected areas are also facing serious pressures.

Some current estimates indicate that as many as 38,000 elephants are being poached annually for their ivory (Wasser et al, 2009). In Tchad, a recent survey found the population of Zakouma National Park had reduced from 3,885 elephants in 2005, to just 617 elephants in 2009, due to poaching for ivory. This is a reduction of 84% in just 4 years (WCS, 2009). Additionally reports of poaching in small and fragile populations, such as the loss of 14 elephants in one month in Virunga National Park, in June 2009, are serious cause for concern. Some elephant populations are believed to have disappeared entirely. The elephant population in the lowland sector of Kahuzi Biega National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) has been eliminated entirely due to poaching pressure, while in the highland sector no more than 10-20 elephants remain (WCS, 2007). Previously, the park was home to an estimated 3,720 elephants (Barnes et al, 1998). Unfortunately the status for many populations is simply unknown, as resources are unavailable for monitoring and survey activities. In Niokolo Koba National Park in Senegal, there may be just two animals remaining. The population has been completely wiped out from Sambisa National Reserve in Nigeria and in Kenya, poaching of elephants for their ivory has reached an all time high this year, with 140 individuals killed. This is the worst it has been since the ban in 1989.

In response to the situation, at CoP14, the Parties adopted Decision 14.75, which directed all African elephant range States to develop an African Elephant Action Plan. This Action Plan is in the process of being finalised by all range States. It highlights, and prioritises, the threats that face the African elephant, and identifies those specific activities which require immediate support in order to mitigate against these threats.

Some of the threats identified by the range States in the African Elephant Action Plan are as follows:

i) **Illegal killing and illegal trade in elephant products** (identified as the most important priority by the African elephant range States). Although the listing of African elephants on Appendix I of CITES in 1989 succeeded in reducing the scale of killing that took place in the preceding decade, it is clear that poaching and illegal trade continue to pose very serious threats to many African elephant populations. Indeed, the threat of ivory poaching appears, in some areas, to be increasing. For some countries, particularly those with fragile and vulnerable populations, the scale of illegal poaching for ivory threatens the long-term survival of those populations. DNA analysis techniques, led by Dr. Sam Wasser at the University of Washington, are revealing the exact source of seized ivory, and it is now clear that all four sub-Saharan regions are affected by poaching and illegal ivory trade (Wasser et al 2009).

ii) **Degradation and fragmentation of elephant habitats.** Across the continent, elephant habitats are becoming increasingly degraded, fragmented and in some cases lost entirely, due to human-induced threats such as agricultural expansion, logging and mining. Such pressures limit the unrestricted movement of elephants and other species within their traditional range, thereby limiting elephants' access to essential food and water resources. There is an urgent need to maintain extensive landscapes for elephants and restore and maintain connectivity wherever possible. Historically, for the majority of elephant range States, local and national land-use planning has been undertaken with limited consideration for wildlife and wildlife habitats. As pressure continues to grow across the continent, a larger, ecosystem-based vision with a longer-term planning horizon is needed. Therefore, elephant-friendly policies, which take into account socio-economic development aims and the tenure or other property rights of local communities, are essential.

iii) **Human Elephant Conflict.** Elephants can have severe impacts on local livelihoods, such as through crop-raiding and competition for scarce water resources. Such competition for resources can result in conflict and loss of human life and the lives of domestic stock. Many elephants are also killed, both legally and illegally, as a result of both formal and informal actions to control the damage they cause. For some elephant populations, the scale of removal of "problem animals" through such control measures may be negatively impacting the elephant populations concerned while failing to address the underlying causes of the problem. To date, no permanent, 'fool-proof' solutions have been discovered to prevent Human-Elephant Conflict. Therefore, a variety of mitigation tools must be

used, and potential solutions must take into consideration the origin and causes, as well as the extent, of these conflicts.

Further threats identified by the range States include a lack of knowledge about certain elephant populations – their range, population size and the extent of the pressures they face. Given that resources are currently inadequate to investigate, analyse and monitor certain elephant populations, let alone address specific issues, the pressures facing some of these populations may be even greater than are currently known.

It is the hope of the African elephant range States that donors will contribute to the African Elephant Fund, which is soon to be established, and thereby support the implementation of the activities identified in the African Elephant Action Plan (see CITES Decisions 14.75, 14.78 and 14.79).

6. Utilization and trade

6.1 National utilization

Elephants are utilised in a variety of ways in Africa: ivory, skin and hair are made into a variety of products; elephant meat is consumed in parts of West, Central and Southern Africa; elephants are hunted for sport; and live elephants are captured for entertainment purposes.

6.2 Legal trade

The annotations governing legal international trade in African elephants are as follows:

Populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe (listed in Appendix II):

For the exclusive purpose of allowing:

- a) trade in hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes;*
- b) trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations, as defined in Resolution Conf. 11.20, for Botswana and Zimbabwe and for in situ conservation programmes for Namibia and South Africa;*
- c) trade in hides;*
- d) trade in hair;*
- e) trade in leather goods for commercial or non-commercial purposes for Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe;*
- f) trade in individually marked and certified ekipas incorporated in finished jewellery for non-commercial purposes for Namibia and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe*

Paragraph f) of the elephant annotation, which permits Namibia and Zimbabwe to export ivory carvings, has created a grey area and opened up loopholes for illegal trade in ivory. Reportedly, Namibia has been unable to prevent import and sale of ivory of 'unknown origin' while in Zimbabwe ivory from government owned stocks has repeatedly been exported in contravention of CITES. In addition, paragraph f) poses no quantitative limits to the export of ekipas from Namibia or ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes from Zimbabwe. In addition, the terms "ekipas" and "non-commercial" are not defined, rendering the annotation open to varied interpretations.

The approval of trade in ekipas for Namibia was based on the announcement that trade would be limited to ivory from government-owned stocks and linked to a "very strict trade control framework". Paragraph f) of the annotation requires Namibia to make and certify ekipas, However, on September 1st, 2008, the government of Namibia banned all trade in ekipas because it was unable to comply with CITES and prevent import and sale of newly carved ekipas of unknown origin. Namibia had failed to establish control mechanisms before permitting trade to commence. It was announced that trade would be suspended until a new law was passed, regulating domestic trade in ivory, including registration of ivory importers, traders and carvers, and certification of ekipas.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly how many elephant tusks are exported annually as a result of sport hunting activities, given the disparity in the way trophy exports are recorded by Parties (as recorded on the UNEP-WCMC CITES trade database). Some are recorded as "tusks" using the purpose code

“P” or “H” while some are exported as “trophies”, again using purpose code “P” or “H”. It is assumed, for example, that the 12 tusks exported from Zimbabwe to China in 2006 under purpose code “P” are hunting trophies, but this is unclear and requires clarification – as does a similar export from Zimbabwe of 10 tusks to Austria in 2007.

Between 2006 and 2008, the UNEP-WCMC CITES trade database records the export of 2468 tusks and 1496 trophies from African elephant range States (noting that at the time of writing, data for 2008 is still being added to the WCMC database).

Between 2006 and 2008, 780 exports termed “hair” or “hair products” were exported. Nearly 41% of hair products imported were imported into an unidentified country – marked ‘xx’ on the trade database. This requires clarification.

Additionally, between 2006 and 2008, 11,332 sq metres of elephant skin and skin pieces were exported. Other exports in this time period include 302 ears, 566 feet and 110 tails.

6.3 Parts and derivatives in trade

See 6.2: ivory (raw tusks and worked), skin, leather, hair, meat, parts and live specimens are all traded.

6.4 Illegal trade

There is substantial amount of information available concerning illegal trade in elephant ivory. The following data therefore provide just a brief overview of illegal trade.

At the time of writing (September 2009), nearly **20,000kg** of ivory have been reported seized in 2009 alone, since the one-off legal sale of 108 tonnes of ivory from Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, to China and Japan, took place (November 2008).

Since CoP14, in June 2007, AT LEAST **23.2 tonnes** of ivory have been reported seized.

Many seizures have been of a significant size which, according to the ICPO, indicates the involvement of serious organised criminal syndicates. These seizures (many of which have taken place in 2009) include: **532kg** in Kenya (September, 2009), **637kg** in Ethiopia (September 2009), **1,250kg** in Cameroon (September 2009), **94kg** in India (September 2009), **2,000kg** in Vietnam (August 2009, originating from Tanzania), **94kg** in Vietnam (August 2009), **812.50kg** in Thailand (August 2009, originating from Qatar), **611kg** in Vietnam (July 2009), **300kg** in Kenya (July 2009), **500kg** in China (June 2009, originating from Zimbabwe), **703kg** in Kenya (April 2009), **50kg** in South Africa (April 2009), **3,346kg** in Philippines (April 2009, originating from Tanzania), **1,483kg** in the Philippines (April 2009), **6,232kg** in Vietnam (March 2009, originating from Tanzania), **360kg** in Zambia (March 2009), **898kg** in Thailand (January 2009, originating from Uganda), **600kg** in Kenya (August 2008), **108kg** in Kenya (May 2008), **40kg** in the Democratic Republic of Congo (April 2008), **45kg** in India (March 2008), **38kg** in India (January 2008), **790kg** in China (March 2008), **30kg** in India (November 2007), **22kg** in South Africa (October 2007), **93.9kg** in Zambia (October 2007), **100kg** in India (August 2007).

In addition, more than 346 tusks were seized, but reported without a weight. Using a weight of 3.65kg per tusk this equates to a further **1,262kg** of ivory, including **223 tusks** seized in Tanzania (July 2007).

Given that customs and enforcement officials estimate that between 10 - 15% of illegal products in trade are intercepted the actual volume of illegal ivory in trade is likely to be considerably higher. Therefore in 2009, it is possible that between 132 and 199 tonnes have been seized (representing between 20,000 and 30,000 elephants).

Ivory markets are also flourishing across Africa and Asia. Recent reports include a 2008 TRAFFIC report which revealed the discovery of 9,000 pieces of ivory on sale across 14 markets in Myanmar. While a survey of US markets found there to be more ivory on sale in US markets than in any other

country (except China) (Stiles and Bradley-Martin, 2008). The price of ivory in the illegal marketplace has been reported to be as high as \$1,863/kg. (TRAFFIC 2009).

6.5 Actual or potential trade impacts

Poaching of African elephants for ivory has had a profound and well-documented impact on African elephant populations – see above.

7. Legal instruments

7.1 National

African elephants are afforded varying degrees of legal protection in all range States.

7.2 International

All populations of African elephants are on CITES Appendix I except those of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which are on Appendix II, subject to certain annotations.

8. Species management

8.1 Management measures

The African elephant range States have adopted a wide variety of different management measures with regard to their elephant populations, including transboundary approaches.

8.2 Population monitoring

While some African elephant populations are monitored, a number of range States lack the institutional capacity and resources to undertake regular monitoring of their elephant populations. This is one of the significant challenges to be addressed by the range States in the African Elephant Action Plan.

While the MIKE process enables monitoring of certain populations, its site-specific nature means that it does not provide comprehensive national or regional monitoring coverage.

8.3 Control measures

8.3.1 International

The ability of range States to manage elephant populations, to regulate legal trade (where permitted), and to prevent poaching, varies greatly. Agencies working on international ivory trade issues, in addition to CITES, include the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) and ICPO Interpol. Additionally, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network is becoming increasingly active.

MIKE: The programme for the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants was agreed by the CITES Parties in 1997 as a method for monitoring trends in elephant poaching. Although it has taken many millions of dollars and a long time to be implemented, at this stage, the degree to which MIKE has been implemented across the MIKE sites is only patchy. (Note: MIKE has yet to be effective to any significant degree in Asia)

MIKE has the potential to play an important role in providing technical and financial support to range States and developing their capacity for elephant monitoring. However, the long-term funding of MIKE continues to be an issue, calling into question the sustainability of the programme. Additionally, concerns have been raised that MIKE is biased toward representing the best conservation conditions available (Blake and Hedges 2004). MIKE sites only cover a sample of the continental elephant range and are, on the whole, heavily biased toward protected areas. This despite the fact that 69% of elephant range is outside protected areas (AfESG 2007).

ETIS shares the same objectives as MIKE (set out in Resolution Conf. 10.10. (Rev. CoP14)) but aims to record and analyse levels and trends in illegal trade. It is run by TRAFFIC and based on an earlier database dating back to 1989.

8.3.2 Domestic

Trade control measures and law enforcement capacity vary greatly among the different range States. Many find the level of poaching and illegal trade an increasingly difficult challenge to tackle given limited resources and institutional capacity, and many require external support for such enforcement activities, especially those identified in the African Elephant Action Plan (see Section 5).

8.4 Captive breeding and artificial propagation

Captive breeding presents no direct benefit to *in situ* conservation of African elephants (AfESG 2004), and is therefore not relevant to this proposal.

8.5 Habitat conservation

Conservation of habitats has been identified by the African elephant range States as a priority action under the African Elephant Action Plan (see Section 5).

8.6 Safeguards

CITES does not have any emergency mechanisms to quickly assess, report on and address escalating poaching pressure. Any response relies on the ability of the range State involved. As monitoring programmes, MIKE and ETIS are unable to fulfil that role.

9. Information on similar species

Listed on Appendix I since 1976, the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) has a long history of being exploited by poaching for ivory and illegal trade. Classified as 'E' (endangered) and in decline by the IUCN, the disjointed populations of this species are skewed towards females due to selective poaching of male Asian elephants (only the males known as 'tuskers' carry significant ivory). Indeed, some estimate that, in certain populations, females now outnumber males by 10 to 1. Therefore any increase in demand for ivory is likely to have a major impact on wild Asian elephants. In 2009 it was reported that "Vietnamese illegal ivory prices could be the highest in the world, with tusks selling for up to \$1,500 per kilogram...and small, cut pieces selling for up to \$1,863 per kilogram" (TRAFFIC, Feb 2009).

10. Consultations

All range States were consulted on 6 October 2009 through official emails with request to send in comments by 12 October. Responses received were both in support and others against, formal letters sent as email attachments and others as emails. Only responses received as email attachments are annexed to this proposal.

11. Additional remarks

12. References

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