

## **AFRICAN ELEPHANT COALITION POSITION STATEMENT ON ELEPHANTS (*Loxodonta africana*)**

**REGARDING THE CITES COP15 MEETING, DOHA, QATAR, 13-25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2010**

### **Decision at CoP14 for a 9 year moratorium on ivory trade**

At the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP14) which took place in the Hague, Netherlands in June 2007, Parties negotiated a nine year 'resting period' or moratorium on ivory trade to be effected following execution of the approved 'one-off' sale of 105,000 Kilograms of ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The sales took place in October/November 2008 and the ivory was shipped to China and Japan as approved importing countries in February 2009. The Parties at the CoP14 agreed to support the nine year moratorium to create a substantive timeframe during which no further Proposals relating to ivory trade would be submitted to CITES. This would allow for full assessment and understanding of the impact of the approved one-off sales on poaching, illegal ivory trade and elephant conservation.

### **Dismay at new ivory trade proposals**

The 22 African Elephant Coalition member countries are dismayed that United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia have submitted Proposals (CoP15 Prop 4 and 5) for consideration at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, which will take place in Doha, Qatar from 13<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010. CoP15 Prop 4 and 5 seek approval for a downlisting of Tanzania and Zambia's elephant populations from Appendix 1 to Appendix II and permission to trade in a total of 111,500 Kilograms of elephant ivory.

The Coalition did not want elephants to be brought back to the agenda of CITES until at least 2017. The Coalition firmly believes that the Proposals by the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia fundamentally undermine the integrity of the CoP14 decision concerning the moratorium. Furthermore, the ability of CITES and the Parties to properly monitor the effects of the one-off trade that was approved at CoP14 and sales conducted in late 2008 has now been severely compromised. In addition, the rationale and spirit of unity behind the agreement made at CoP14, has been deeply undermined.

### **Addressing the loophole relating to the resting period agreed at COP14**

All those present at the negotiations at CoP14 including, representatives of the EU who mediated during the discussions, will surely recall the final agreement reached by the range States after two weeks of intense negotiations – that is, that the nine year resting period would apply to ALL African elephant populations. Unfortunately, the final wording that was adopted by the Parties does not reflect that agreement. The text of the

annotation contains a loophole, which means that it applies only to those populations already listed on Appendix II. Therefore, any elephant range State with an elephant population listed on Appendix I is able to submit proposals for downlisting and trade. This is exactly the loophole that United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia are now seeking to exploit.

Preliminary data, provided by range States and published by the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Program, the Trade and Research Analysis of Fauna and Flora in International Commerce (TRAFFIC) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) demonstrate that ivory seizures and poaching have significantly escalated since the 'one-off' ivory sales of October/November 2008. Concerned by the impact of this potential trend, and also in response to the indications from Tanzania and Zambia that they would be submitting elephant proposals to CoP15, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Republic of Congo and Rwanda) submitted **CoP15 Proposal 6** for consideration at CoP15, which seeks to address the loophole in the wording of the annotation to the CITES Appendices governing the nine-year moratorium.

#### **Support for CoP15 Proposal 6 by the African Elephant Coalition (AEC)**

The seven Governments that have authored and submitted CoP15 Proposal 6 are also members of, and are supported, by the African Elephant Coalition (AEC). The AEC constitutes a total of 21 African countries that share a common vision regarding elephant conservation issues, including that there should be no CITES proposals, submitted or approved, which could lead to trade in ivory in any form, legal or otherwise. The AEC additionally champions an increase in conservation efforts for elephants across their range, through initiatives such as the recently completed African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and the soon to be established African Elephant Fund (AEF).

19 African governments of the AEC, meeting in Brussels, Belgium, this January, have resolved to call on all CITES Parties to unequivocally uphold the spirit of the agreement made in the Hague\*. This agreement, for a nine year Moratorium on proposals relating to the trade in ivory must apply to all range States. This should be affirmed by supporting CoP15 Proposal 6 and rejecting down listing and trade proposals, CoP15 Proposals 4 and 5.

### **Call for focus on the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)**

At CoP15, the AEC will also be appealing to the other African elephant range States, and all CITES member Parties, to focus their energies and resources on the operation and implementation of the AEAP – a truly representative continental plan for the comprehensive conservation and protection of elephants. The AEAP was completed at the end of 2009, with the full participation and ownership of all African elephant range States and has identified 8 priority objectives that, if implemented, would safeguard not just the AEC's populations but indeed secure, protect and conserve elephants across the breadth of Africa. However, importantly, the AEC member countries and many other range States believe this can only be done within the context of a 'resting period' that removes ivory trade issues from the CITES agenda until 2028, as set out in CoP15 Proposal 6.

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African Elephant Coalition (AEC) members are the governments of: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Government of Southern Sudan and Rwanda. Kenya and Mali are the co-Chairs of the AEC.