

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



Fifty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6-10 July 2009

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Elephants

AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN AND AFRICAN ELEPHANT FUND

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 14.75, 14.76 and 14.79 concerning Elephant conservation as follows:

Directed to African elephant range States

14.75 *The African elephant range States shall continue their constructive elephant dialogue aiming to develop joint conservation policies and exchange of management experience in order to improve the management of elephant populations.*

The African elephant range States through the African elephant dialogue process shall develop an overall African elephant action plan for improved elephant management aiming at:

- a) *accessing and directing resources, towards strengthening enforcement capacity in African elephant range States to combat poaching and illegal trade in ivory;*
- b) *the implementation of the Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory; and*
- c) *enhancing capacity building, managing translocations, reducing human-elephant conflicts and enhancing community-conservation programmes and development programmes within or adjacent to the elephant range.*

The elephant range States will report to the Standing Committee on progress made under this decision with a view to providing the information necessary for the reviews referred to in Decision 14.78.

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations

14.76 *Parties, trading countries, the ivory carving industry, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other donors are called upon to contribute significantly to the African Elephant Fund for the implementation of the African elephant action plan and the programme for Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) to ensure their establishment and maintenance.*

Directed to the Secretariat

14.79 *The Secretariat shall establish an African Elephant Fund that will be applied to the implementation of the African elephant action plan.*

The Secretariat shall establish a steering committee consisting of representatives of the range States and donors to govern the African Elephant Fund and to support and advise African elephant range States on the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Steering Committee shall decide on the organization of the administration of the fund.

The Secretariat shall, as far as possible through MIKE funding, convene an African elephant meeting before 31 July 2008 and at later dates as necessary.

3. None of these Decisions requires reporting by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee. However, the Secretariat is of the opinion that it should keep the Standing Committee informed about progress with the implementation of these two interconnected Decisions as they may be relevant to other tasks on elephants that are assigned to the Standing Committee. The Secretariat therefore provided an update at the Standing Committee's 57th meeting (SC57, Geneva, July 2008; see document SC57 Doc. 33.3) and the present document provides further information on these issues.

Progress since SC57

4. The Secretariat organized the first African elephant meeting in compliance with Decision 14.79 in Mombasa, Kenya, from 23 to 25 June 2008, and reported orally on its outcomes to the Standing Committee at SC57. It circulated documents SC57 Inf. 12 and Inf. 13 for further information. Both the *African elephant action plan* and the African Elephant Fund featured on the agenda of this meeting, and considerable progress was achieved in developing a 'Strategic Framework for the *African elephant action plan*' and improving the understanding of possibilities for establishing and operating an accompanying African Elephant Fund.
5. Thanks to the European Commission's support to the MIKE programme in Africa, it was possible for the Secretariat to organize the second African elephant meeting to further dialogue on conservation policies for and management of elephant populations, including the *action plan* and the Fund. This meeting took place in Gigiri, Kenya, from 9 to 11 March 2009. The Secretariat summarized the main items presented at this meeting and its overall outcomes in a Summary record, which also outlines the progress with the implementation of Decisions 14.75 and 14.79 since SC57 (see the Annex to the present document).
6. The Secretariat is grateful to Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Commission for having contributed to the African Elephant Fund and MIKE in compliance with Decision 14.76.

African elephant action plan

7. The African elephant range States agreed at the meeting in Gigiri on a process towards the development of a comprehensive, detailed *African elephant action plan* in the context of an overarching 'Strategic Framework for an *African elephant action plan*' that was finalized and endorsed at the same meeting. This process involves the establishment of an African Elephant Action Plan Working Group, tasked with drafting the *action plan* on the basis of priority activities identified at the meeting, compiling comments and producing a final version by June 2009. The time-frames reflect an urgent call from the donor representatives to finalize the *action plan* as soon as possible so that the accompanying Fund can be created and the existing pledges bestowed. The urgency of concluding the *action plan* was fully recognized by the African elephant range States.
8. An important step in the process is a meeting of the Working Group, originally scheduled to take place in Dar Es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, in April 2009. However, its convenor, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, has announced that it had to postpone the meeting

until 22-27 June 2009. It therefore seems unlikely that the African elephant range States will be able to implement Decision 14.75 within the time-frames envisaged at the meeting in Gigiri.

African Elephant Fund

9. In accordance with Decision 14.79, the Secretariat is tasked with establishing firstly an African Elephant Fund that will be applied to the implementation of the *African elephant action plan*, and secondly a steering committee for this Fund, composed of representatives from donors and African elephant range States.
10. At the meeting in Gigiri, it was decided to establish a Working Group on the African Elephant Fund that would meet virtually and communicate electronically. It is composed of representatives of eight African elephant range States and representatives of the three donors present at the meeting. This Working Group was to be convened and moderated by the Secretariat. Its mandate is to formulate recommendations on the composition and *modus operandi* of the Fund's steering committee, and on the nature of the Fund. The recommendations of the Working Group are to be made available to the Secretariat by 1 June 2009. The Secretariat could then try to establish the African Elephant Fund during the present meeting and set up the Funds' steering committee which, as agreed at the meeting in Gigiri, should be balanced, credible and competent.
11. However, as indicated in paragraph 8 above, it is likely that the *African elephant action plan* will not have been finalized and agreed on by 6 July 2009. This could result in the postponement of the establishment of the African Elephant Fund *sine die*.
12. The Secretariat will provide an oral update to the Standing Committee about the developments with regard to the implementation of Decision 14.79 as well as its views on establishing the African Elephant Fund, based on *inter alia* inputs from the Working Group mentioned in paragraph 10 above.

Recommendations

13. The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this document and to request the African elephant range States to report on progress made in implementing Decision 14.75.

SECOND AFRICAN ELEPHANT MEETING
GIGIRI, KENYA
9-11 MARCH 2009

SUMMARY RECORD

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. The CITES Secretariat convened the second African elephant meeting in Gigiri, Kenya, from 9 to 11 March 2009, in compliance with Decision 14.79, and as a follow-up to the first African elephant meeting that it had organized (Mombasa, June 2008). The meeting was funded through the Secretariat's programme on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). The meeting was attended by representatives of 29 of the 37 African elephant range States (invitees Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland and Zambia were not at the meeting) and of three donor countries that made significant pledges to the African Elephant Fund; the CITES Secretariat and its MIKE programme; United Nations Environment Programme-Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (UNEP/DELIC); UNEP's Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of wild animals (CMS); and IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG).
3. As proposed by the CITES Secretariat, the meeting was chaired by Mr Robert Wabunoha, representative of UNEP/DELIC. In an opening message presented by the Secretariat, the Secretary-General of the CITES Secretariat conveyed his welcome to the African elephant range States and the representatives of donors that made significant pledges to the African Elephant Fund (of the four donors concerned, only the European Commission was unable to be present). He thanked the European Commission for supporting the MIKE programme in Africa through which this meeting could take place. He reiterated the importance of moving the *African elephant action plan* and the African Elephant Fund forward, and the facilitating role of the Secretariat in this regard. Later in the meeting, an address from the Executive Secretary of the CMS Secretariat was presented in which he outlined the collaboration between CMS and CITES in the area of African elephants and announced relevant CMS and joint CMS/CITES-MIKE meetings in Accra, Ghana, in March 2009.
4. The participants adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting, but suggested to change the provisional working programme which the Secretariat had circulated together with the agenda. They noted that Theme 1 [The *African elephant action plan* (Decision 14.75)] would need two days of discussions and Theme 2 [The African Elephant Fund (Decision 14.75)] most of the third day. Any remaining time could be devoted to items under Theme 3 [Conservation policies and management of African elephant populations (Decision 14.75)]. Theme 2 concerned the representatives from range States as well as donors. It had originally been scheduled for the second day but in view of the presence of the donor countries until the end of the meeting, the proposed changes in the working programme could be agreed to.
5. The participants agreed to the Secretariat's proposal to summarize the meeting and its outputs in a short summary as had been the case for the first African elephant meeting (see document SC57 Inf. 13). The various presentations that were provided during the meeting would be circulated to all participants.

Theme 1: The *African elephant action plan* (Decision 14.75)

6. The Secretariat introduced Theme 1 by providing an overview of the implementation of Decision 14.75 to date. This had involved the following steps:

June 2007 Adoption of Decision 14.75 and the accompanying Decision 14.79 at the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties.

January-June 2008 In support of the implementation of Decision 14.75, the Secretariat contracted AfESG to compile relevant background material for discussion by the African elephant range States.

June 2008 The first African elephant meeting was convened by the Secretariat in Mombasa, Kenya, on 23-25 June 2008 in compliance with Decision 14.79.

The African elephant range States agreed on the outline and general content of a 'Strategic Framework for the *African elephant action plan*'. They concurred that this was the beginning of a process towards the development of a comprehensive *African elephant action plan*, and that further meetings would be necessary to elaborate on subsequent drafts, establish priorities and assess budget needs.

July 2008 The African elephant range States reported on progress in the implementation of Decision 14.75 to the Standing Committee at its 57th meeting (see Document SC57 Doc. 33.3).

July-December 2008 The AfESG collated inputs and drafted the 'Strategic Framework for an *African elephant action plan*', which was circulated by the Secretariat to all African elephant range States on 28 November with a request to provide comments by 19 December 2008.

December 2008-January 2009 Comments from range States were consolidated by AfESG in a further version of the draft 'Strategic Framework for an *African elephant action plan*'. This document was commonly referred to as the "Mombasa document".

As agreed in Mombasa, the Secretariat disseminated this document to the African elephant range States on 23 January 2009, prior to the second African elephant meeting.

March 2009 The second African elephant meeting was convened by the Secretariat in Gigiri, Kenya, on 9-11 March 2009.

The Theme of moving from the 'Strategic Framework for an *African elephant action plan*' to a detailed *African elephant action plan* featured prominently on the meeting's agenda.

7. The AfESG gave an overview of the content of the 'Strategic framework for an *African elephant action plan*' that resulted from the first African elephant meeting and subsequent consultations (the so-called "Mombasa document"). It drew attention to seven Objectives therein that address broad continent-wide issues facing African elephant conservation and management, within their socio-economic context:

- a) improve knowledge and management of elephant populations and their habitats;
- b) reduce illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products;
- c) maintain elephant habitats and restore connectivity;

- d) reduce human-elephant conflict;
- e) strengthen understanding and cooperation among range States;
- f) assess the costs and benefits of elephants to people; and
- g) implement and monitor the African elephant action plan.

Additionally, two cross-cutting Objectives were identified that pertain to each of the seven Objectives mentioned above:

- h) Increase awareness on elephant conservation and management across all levels; and
- i) Build capacity in elephant conservation and management.

Under each of these nine broad Objectives, one or more Results had been listed with, for each, a series of examples of pertinent Activities.

8. The range States were invited to submit additional inputs in writing with the understanding that the document could be enriched with further proposals for activities. These were compiled by AfESG in the course of the meeting and presented to the participants. The additions, all provided by Kenya, were agreed to and subject to their incorporation into a final version, the 'Strategic framework for an *African elephant action plan*' was adopted.
9. In view of the urgency with which an *action plan* would have to be agreed upon for the existing donor pledges to be made available, and to continue the process towards the development of a comprehensive *African elephant action plan*, four working groups (Central, East, Southern and West Africa) were established to identify three key priority actions under each of the nine Objectives contained in the "Mombasa document". These were either activities already mentioned in the document or new ones. The regional working groups also ensured that the development of the *action plan* was undertaken by the African elephant range States themselves.
10. The results of the priority-setting exercise were presented in plenary, compiled and clustered per Objective, and disseminated in a combined French and English version. The resulting draft document (the so-called "Gigiri document") is to provide additional input into the *African elephant action plan*.
11. The African elephant range States then agreed to establish an African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) Working Group, composed of the United Republic of Tanzania and two representatives per subregion (the Congo and Gabon for Central Africa; Kenya and Uganda for East Africa; South Africa and Zimbabwe for Southern Africa; Mali and Nigeria for West Africa). Range States were given up to one month to provide comments on the "Gigiri document" for consideration by the AEAP Working Group.
12. The United Republic of Tanzania offered to host a meeting of this Working Group in April 2009 and to cover the cost of accommodation, venue and food. This was gracefully accepted by the range States, which acknowledged that additional needs for the workshop included the participants' air tickets and translation/interpretation costs. The range States called upon the donor representatives to cover interpretation and translation costs for the workshop. The Terms of Reference for the AEAP Working Group were decided to be as follows:
 - a) take the "Gigiri document" forward;
 - b) integrate the "Gigiri document" into the 'Strategic framework for an *African elephant action plan*';
 - c) establish budgeted, time bound business plans for priority activities;
 - d) circulate the outcome by email for comments within a certain time-frame;
 - e) incorporate comments from range States; and

- f) finalize the resulting document by June 2009.
13. The finalized document resulting from the revisions and inputs of the AEAP Working Group should be the *African elephant action plan* as envisaged under Decision 14.75. The range States kept the possibility open for revising or updating this *Action Plan* after two or three years' time. The African elephant range States agreed to report on progress with the *African elephant action plan* at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58, July 2009) in compliance with Decision 14.75, expressing the hope to be able to present an African-wide agreed, final *African elephant action plan* on that occasion.

Theme 2: The African Elephant Fund (Decision 14.79)

14. The Secretariat gave a presentation on mechanisms for financing and running an African Elephant Fund, largely based on the study and presentation that it had provided for the first African elephant meeting in 2008. The Secretariat reiterated that, in accordance with Decision 14.79, it was tasked with establishing (a) an African Elephant Fund that will be applied to the implementation of the *African elephant action plan*, and (b) a steering committee, composed of representatives from donors and African elephant range States. The steering committee is to govern the African Elephant Fund, support and advise African elephant range States on the implementation of the *action plan*, and decide on the organization of the administration of the Fund. The Secretariat stated, and the meeting participants agreed, that the steering committee should be balanced, credible and competent. It was seeking input from the meeting representatives on the composition and operation of the steering committee.
15. The donor representatives expressed commitment to the African Elephant Fund, urged others to support and fund it, and called on range States to finalize the *action plan* as soon as possible so that the accompanying Fund could be created.
16. The participants decided to establish a Working Group on the African Elephant Fund that would meet virtually and communicate electronically, composed of representatives from eight African elephant range States (two per subregion: the Congo and Gabon for Central Africa; Kenya and Rwanda for East Africa; South Africa and Zimbabwe for Southern Africa; Mali and Nigeria for West Africa) and representatives of the three donors present at the meeting. The Working Group is to be convened and moderated by the Secretariat with the following mandate:
- a) to formulate recommendations regarding:
- the composition of the steering committee;
 - a definition of 'donor';
 - the nature of the fund (i.e. endowment, revolving or sinking);
 - the internal procedures;
 - project selection criteria; and
 - the practical management of the Fund (by a secretariat?); and
- b) to forward recommendations to the CITES Secretariat by 1 June 2009, allowing it to establish the African Elephant Fund and its steering committee at SC58.
17. The African elephant range States agreed that their members in the working group would meet in the United Republic of Tanzania in April 2009 in the sidelines of the meeting mentioned in paragraph 12 above to discuss and coordinate their contributions.
18. The Secretariat clarified that it had secured funding for the main operations and activities of its MIKE programme in Africa until April 2011 and that, until that time, it had no intention or need to seek funding from an African Elephant Fund. It also explained that the ETIS programme was implemented by TRAFFIC, which had been seeking and securing external funding for it since its initial creation. The Secretariat assumed that TRAFFIC had sufficient resources to run the monitoring programme until CoP15 and provide an analytical ETIS report on that occasion, but it was not aware of TRAFFIC's funding situation for ETIS-related activities beyond that time.

Theme 3: Conservation policies and management of African elephant populations (Decision 14.75)

19. The CITES Secretariat gave an overview of CITES and current elephant conservation issues, including the status of implementation of relevant Decisions adopted at CoP14.
20. The AfESG gave a presentation on challenges for elephant conservation in Central Africa, widely believed to be badly affected by poaching and the source of much illegal ivory. Opportunities to address these concerns included an African elephant sub-regional strategy ready to be implemented; many involved and committed organisations that operated in Central Africa; the possibility for undertaking significant multi-species initiatives; a large private sector (with funding and partnership opportunities); climate change negotiations that could provide opportunities for habitat and forest conservation; and the existence of the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC).
21. GRASP gave a presentation on the partnership, which was registered as a World Summit on Sustainable Development Type II Partnership in 2002. It has currently 54 signatories which include great ape range States and other countries, NGOs, UN agencies, Convention secretariats and the private sector. Its secretariat was provided by UNEP and UNESCO. Like great apes, elephants inhabit tropical forest in two of the three “green lungs” of the planet in Southeast Asia and in the Congo Basin. GRASP promotes development and conservation activities with strong human livelihoods components, which are also central to elephant conservation and to reducing human-elephant conflicts.

GRASP explained the vital importance of the world’s remaining tropical forests in removing CO₂ emissions from the atmosphere that are released by burning fossil fuels, and the central role that forests in Africa and Asia play in efforts to avoid dangerous climate change. Elephants are super-keystone species in these ecosystems, dispersing billions of seeds which have higher germination and seedling survival rates than seeds that just fall to ground. Therefore, it was argued that there was a strong scientific case for carbon finances (whether public, private or both) to make significant contributions to the African Elephant Fund. In this regard, GRASP asked whether Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), designed to provide financial alternatives to biofuels and timber exploitation, could play a role. GRASP furthermore tabled the question of whether it was time to consider developing a non-legally binding instrument on elephants in the form of a global partnership, similar to GRASP.

Conclusion and closure of the meeting

22. The Secretariat proceeded with presenting the main conclusions of the meeting in bullet notes. These were all agreed to. The meeting was closed at 17.30.