

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



Fifty-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 14-18 July 2008

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Elephants

REVIEWS OF THE STATUS OF THE ELEPHANT, TRADE IN ITS SPECIMENS
AND THE IMPACT OF THE LEGAL TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 14th meeting (The Hague, 2007), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 14.78 as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

14.78 The Standing Committee shall conduct ongoing comprehensive reviews of the status of the elephant, trade in its specimens and the impact of the legal trade, based on data from MIKE, the Elephant Trade Information System and the implementation of the Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory and the African elephant action plan referred to in Decision 14.75.

3. Connected with this Decision, Decision 14.75 was adopted 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.

Implementation of Decision 14.78

4. In the paragraphs below, the ongoing comprehensive reviews that the Standing Committee should undertake and the sources of information that should form the basis for these reviews are briefly commented upon.

Review of the status of elephants

5. Firstly, the Standing Committee is directed to conduct “ongoing comprehensive reviews of the status of the elephant”. The Decision does not specify how these reviews should take place or what information on the status of *Loxodonta africana* and *Elephas maximus* should be considered by the Committee. The Standing Committee could perhaps rely on background information contained in the *African elephant action plan* once it is finalized. However, this will exclude *Elephas maximus* and would probably not allow ongoing reviews of the conservation status of *Loxodonta africana*. The Standing Committee may therefore wish to invite African and Asian elephant range States and IUCN/SSC to comment on the current knowledge of the populations, population trends and conservation status of both species.

Review of trade in elephant specimens

6. Secondly, the Decision directs the Standing Committee to review trade in elephant specimens and the impact of legal trade. This seems to reiterate or duplicate a number of tasks regarding various aspects of the trade in elephant specimens that have already been assigned to the Standing Committee. These concern the following:
 - undertake a regular review of actions taken by consumer States to improve legislation and enforcement measures regarding control of internal ivory trade and to report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) on *Trade in elephant specimens* under **Regarding control of internal ivory trade**];
 - review the Secretariat’s reports on its findings, recommendations or progress concerning compliance by Parties with controls of internal ivory trade, and consider appropriate measures, including restrictions on the commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species to or from Parties as necessary [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) under **Regarding compliance with control of internal trade**];
 - supervise the systems known as Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) under **Regarding monitoring of illegal hunting of and trade in elephant specimens**];
 - review as appropriate ETIS reports from TRAFFIC, submitted via the Secretariat, in the event that there is a need for urgent intersessional action [Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14), Annex 1];
 - review at each of its regular meetings reports from the Secretariat on the implementation of the *Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory* [Decision 13.26 (Rev. CoP14)]; and
 - agree on conditions and trading partners for trade in raw ivory of Appendix-II listed populations of *Loxodonta africana* from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe and, on a proposal from the Secretariat, decide to cause this trade to cease partially or completely in the event of non-compliance by exporting or importing countries, or in the case of proven detrimental impacts of the trade on other elephant populations [in the annotation for populations of *Loxodonta africana* from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, included in Appendix II].

The Standing Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, is furthermore instructed in Decision 14.77 to propose for approval at the latest at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties a mechanism

for trade in ivory. In this context, the Standing Committee will probably be required to examine legal and illegal trade in elephant specimens. Given the considerable work that the Standing Committee is already undertaking on trade in elephant specimens, it is not entirely clear how the “ongoing comprehensive reviews” envisaged in Decision 14.78 should differ from or add to it.

7. To assist the Standing Committee in its review of trade, the Secretariat requested UNEP-WCMC to provide a summary of recorded trade in elephant products between 2002 and 2006 as indicated in the annual reports of Parties, with an indication of mean annual volumes for these five years (see Annex). Legal trade is limited to:
 - certain specimens of the Appendix-II listed populations of *Loxodonta africana* from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe;
 - trade in raw ivory and worked ivory of elephants in compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14), which applies to elephant populations in Appendix I and II; and
 - trade in other specimens of *Elephas maximus* and Appendix-I listed populations of *Loxodonta africana* in compliance with Article III of the Convention.

Between 2002 and 2006, 37,000 trade records concerning elephant specimens were reported, involving 153 countries as importers or (re-) exporters of such specimens. The majority of transactions involved pre-Convention material, hunting trophies and tourist souvenirs. Data on illegal trade in elephant ivory are collected under ETIS (see paragraph 10 below).

MIKE data

8. MIKE data collated between 2000 and 2006, and a preliminary analysis thereof, were presented at the 55th meeting of the Standing Committee (The Hague, June 2007) in document SC55 Doc 10.2 (Rev. 1). Since then, data have continued to be collected from MIKE sites and their future management and analysis have been discussed at the 6th meeting of the MIKE Technical Advisory Group (Entebbe, March 2008). The TAG concluded that the statistical methods that had been used in 2007 for producing a preliminary analysis remained valid, but needed to stay flexible to accommodate evolving analytical techniques, more MIKE data that will become available over time, and the MIKE standard and analytical reporting framework.
9. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14), the CITES Secretariat should provide an updated report on information collected as part of the MIKE programme at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the next one being scheduled for 2010. However, the Secretariat’s MIKE programme intends to undertake an analysis of all available MIKE data in May 2008, the results of which should be presented for review to African elephant range States in June 2008. At the present meeting, the Secretariat could report orally on the results of this analysis.

ETIS data

10. In compliance with the Resolution on trade in Elephant specimens [now Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14)], TRAFFIC submitted a comprehensive report on ETIS data at CoP14 in document CoP14 Doc. 53.2. As indicated in paragraph 6 above, this Resolution states that “in the event that there is a need for urgent intersessional action, TRAFFIC will report to the Standing Committee via the Secretariat as appropriate”. At the time of writing of this document (mid-April 2008), no such action was deemed necessary. The Standing Committee may however wish to invite TRAFFIC to comment on any updated ETIS data and analysis thereof that are available.

Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory

11. The status of the implementation of the *Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory* is presented to the Standing Committee in document SC57 Doc. 33.2.

African elephant action plan

12. Information on the *African elephant action plan* is provided in document SC57 Doc. 33.3, presented in compliance with Decision 14.75.

Recommendations

13. It seems that the intention of Decision 14.78 is for the Standing Committee to undertake a wide-ranging, ongoing examination of the conservation status of and trade in elephants. The Standing Committee needs to resolve how this examination should relate to the reviews that it is already conducting concerning elephants and what, if any, additional activities it wishes to undertake in compliance with the Decision, bearing in mind the cost implications. Decision 14.78 refers to various sources of data that the Standing Committee should consider but it is not certain that these would allow the Standing Committee to conduct the "ongoing comprehensive reviews" mentioned in the Decision. Moreover, it is unclear in what form or format, how, when and by whom the data should be made available to the Standing Committee.
14. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:
 - a) agree that the implementation of Decision 14.78 should not lead to duplicative reporting and reviews; and
 - b) request the Secretariat, in consultation with IUCN, TRAFFIC and UNEP-WCMC, to research and compile relevant information on the conservation status of and trade in elephants, and provide an overview thereof at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee pending the availability of external funding.
15. At the present meeting, the Standing Committee may wish to invite African elephant range States to provide their report on progress made under Decision 14.75 with a view to providing the information necessary for the reviews referred to in Decision 14.78. It may also follow up on the suggestions made in paragraphs 5, 9 and 10 with regard to requests for updated information.

SUMMARY OF RECORDED GROSS TRADE IN ELEPHANT PRODUCTS, 2002-2006
(WITH 5-YEAR MEAN) UNEP-WCMC, APRIL 2008¹

Taxon	App.	Term	Unit	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	mean
Elephantidae spp.	1	carvings		964	1565	1883	3541	788	1748.2
Elephantidae spp.	1	carvings	kg			260.793	75.08	3	67.7746
Elephantidae spp.	1	carvings	pairs		92	79	34	16	44.2
Elephantidae spp.	1	carvings	sets	79	97	51	29	18	54.8
Elephantidae spp.	1	feet		1	2		2		1
Elephantidae spp.	1	ivory pieces		23	151	102	87	15	75.6
Elephantidae spp.	1	ivory pieces	kg	1		8.1			1.82
Elephantidae spp.	1	live			3		2	6	2.2
Elephantidae spp.	1	skins		1	7		13		4.2
Elephantidae spp.	1	teeth		4	8	1	1	10	4.8
Elephantidae spp.	1	teeth	g	120	204			123	89.4
Elephantidae spp.	1	tusks		14	9	16	24	10	14.6
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	carvings		494	1095	1701	1764	1795	1369.8
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	carvings	kg				100		20
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	carvings	pairs	6	114	10	1		26.2
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	carvings	sets	16	3	4		1	4.8
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	feet		2	6		8	3	3.8
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	ivory pieces		95	73	56	10	17	50.2
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	live		127	158	117	95	71	113.6
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	skins			14		8		4.4
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	teeth		13	1	6	20	1	8.2
<i>Elephas maximus</i>	1	tusks		3	9	3	1	7	4.6
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	carvings		5054	6062	5608	14725	5890	7467.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	carvings	g	880			400		256
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	carvings	kg	123.9	29.855	227.44	1664.83	8.16	410.837
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	carvings	pairs		41	3	7	5	11.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	carvings	sets	105	183	192	133	178	158.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	ears		6	7	6	3	19	8.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	feet		12	7	15	14	37	17
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	ivory pieces		178	62	854	398	268	352
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	ivory pieces	kg	44.1	235.76	79.25	358.15	22	147.852
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	ivory scraps				153			30.6
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	ivory scraps	kg			8.1			1.62
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	live		30	33	21	18	1	20.6
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	live	kg			25			5
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	small leather products		491	4892	609	63	41	1219.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	small leather products	pairs	29	126		9	5	33.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skins		16	60	18	142	32	53.6

¹ For further information on the CITES trade database, maintained for the CITEERS Secretariat by UNEP-WCMC, gross trade tabulations and terms and units see A Guide to Interpreting Outputs from the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database, available from the CITES website.

Taxon	App.	Term	Unit	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	mean
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skins	dm2	1153			32432		6717
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skins	ft2			108.1			21.62
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skins	m2					329.21	65.842
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skin pieces	ft2	689.3					137.86
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	skulls		14	4	2	5	2	5.4
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	teeth		8	3	10	8	3	6.4
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	trophies		65	208	149	304	158	176.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	trophies	kg			2			0.4
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	tusks		267	216	247	343	352	285
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	1	tusks	kg	46.5	544.96	6669.25*	109.55	22.5	1478.552
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	carvings		673	617	137	249	214	378
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	carvings	sets	14	13	64	6	4	20.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	ears		29	100	35	57	164	77
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	feet		69	246	73	93	260	148.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	ivory pieces		36	11	56	40	45	37.6
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	live		75	70	19	10	8	36.4
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	large leather products		465	331	2657	201	542	839.2
		small leather products							
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	small leather products		693	6087	3413	2858	1098	2829.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins		1331	1434	3071	1947	3696	2295.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins	kg		93.6	108			40.32
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins	m		4559.4				911.88
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins	dm2	61919	320000	24462	59076	34000	99891.4
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins	ft2	84645.7	13745	7319.1	41436.8	30210	35471.32
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skins	m2	18922	18644.6	7516.42	3657.14	401.9	9828.412
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skin pieces	ft2		659.2		2474	70	640.64
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	skin pieces	m2	262.9	177		162	42.82	128.944
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	teeth		18	12	11	16	14	14.2
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	trophies		424	437	445	538	585	485.8
<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	2	tusks		752	945	609	733	353	678.4

*includes 6,500 kg seized by Singapore and returned to Kenya