

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



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Species specific matters

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.)

IMPLEMENTING ASPECTS OF DECISIONS 17.171 TO 17.172  
ON STOCKS AND STOCKPILES (ELEPHANT IVORY)

1. This document has been submitted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of Malawi.\*

Summary

2. This document presents to the Standing Committee an update on tools and initiatives for ivory stockpile management that relate to the Decisions 17.171-172 of CoP17. In particular it seeks the support of the Committee in securing the completion and dissemination of CITES guidance for the management of stockpiles, for which external funding was offered in December 2017. It also seeks the acknowledgement of a complementary project approved very recently to develop “gold-standard” stockpile management system in three Africa elephant range states.

Background

3. The latest information from the CITES MIKE Programme released in March 2017<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that the levels of poaching of African elephants remains high. According to MIKE data for 2016, “Africa-wide elephant populations are still in decline, with serious threats to populations in Central and West Africa, and some improvements in parts of Eastern Africa.” The poaching of elephants and flow of ivory out of Africa is a continuing crisis.
4. The CITES Parties have adopted Resolution 17.8 “Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species”, which recommends that “... *Parties dispose of confiscated and accumulated dead specimens of Appendix-I species, including parts and derivatives, only for bona fide scientific, educational, enforcement or identification purposes, and save in storage or destroy specimens whose disposal for these purposes is not practicable.*”<sup>2</sup>
5. While a small proportion of seized ivory is destroyed by Government authorities after seizure, in most cases, especially in countries on the main global ivory trafficking routes, seized ivory is added to official stockpiles. This presents governments with a continuing logistical and resource allocation challenge of destroying this ivory or storing it securely; such government-held stockpiles also pose serious security and safety risks. In

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

<sup>1</sup> [https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2016\\_trends\\_in\\_African\\_elephant\\_poaching\\_released\\_%E2%80%93\\_CITES\\_MIKE\\_programme\\_03032017](https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2016_trends_in_African_elephant_poaching_released_%E2%80%93_CITES_MIKE_programme_03032017)

<sup>2</sup> Resolution Conf. 17.8, at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/document/E-Res-17-08.pdf>

many cases, seized ivory becomes part of Government stockpiles while criminal cases are investigated and prosecuted, but the storage or disposal of these stockpiles of seized ivory remains a significant issue after legal cases are closed.

6. The CITES Parties have adopted Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), "Trade in elephant specimens" which among other elements urges Parties to "*maintain an inventory of government-held stockpiles of ivory and, where possible, of significant privately held stockpiles of ivory within their territory, and inform the Secretariat of the level of this stock each year before 28 February, inter alia to be made available to the programme Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) for their analyses, indicating the number of pieces and their weight per type of ivory (raw or worked); for relevant pieces, and if marked, their markings in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution; the source of the ivory; and the reasons for any significant changes in the stockpile compared to the preceding year;*"<sup>3</sup>

7. At CoP17, Parties adopted the following two Decisions, directed to the CITES Secretariat and Standing Committee respectively:

- a) **Decision 17.171 directed to the Secretariat**, which states:

*Where appropriate, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with Parties and subject to external funding:*

- a) *develop practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, based on an analysis of best practices and in accordance with provisions in Resolutions Conf. 17.8 on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species and Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on Trade in elephant specimens;*
- b) *disseminate the guidance to the Parties and make it available on the CITES website; and*
- c) *report on the implementation of this Decision as part of its regular reporting to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

- b) **Decision 17.172 directed to the Standing Committee**, which states:

*The Standing Committee shall make recommendations for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.*

8. Decision 17.171, directing the Secretariat to develop practical guidance on the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, is essentially an adoption of the Standing Committee's agreement, at its 66th meeting in January 2016, "*to propose a decision for consideration at CoP17 to request the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to provide guidance in accordance with the provisions of Resolutions Conf. 9.10 (Rev. CoP15) and Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) on "best practices" for the management of legal and illegal ivory stockpiles.*"

- a) This recommendation reiterates a previous request by the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting in July 2014, that the Secretariat "*provide guidance, in accordance with the provisions of Resolutions Conf. 9.10 (Rev. CoP15) and Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) on "best practices" for management of legal and illegal ivory stockpiles and make it available to Parties*" and report on progress made to the 66th Standing Committee meeting.

9. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia submitted document SC69 Doc 51.4 <sup>4</sup>, which invited the Committee to "...Take note of the standardized ivory Inventory Protocol and Inventory Technology developed by Stop Ivory on behalf of the EPI [Elephant Protection Initiative], which was developed **with the aim of assisting Parties to CITES** with the recommendations under Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16)<sup>5</sup>".

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<sup>3</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/document/E-Res-10-10-R17.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/E-SC69-51-04.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [Resolution Conf. 10.10 \(Rev. CoP16\) Trade in Elephant Specimens](#)

The following action by the EPI<sup>6</sup> was highlighted .... “Development of a standardized ivory Inventory Protocol and Inventory Technology, designed to ensure the process adheres to the requirements of CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16), which has been used for 13 inventories of ivory stockpiles since its development. In 2016 alone, inventory trips were undertaken to Kenya, Gabon, Malawi, Congo Brazzaville, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola and Uganda. Across these countries, 18.37 tonnes of ivory were inventoried, and 133 personnel from wildlife departments and law enforcement agencies were trained in the use of the inventory protocol, with senior staff also trained in the Stockpile Management Software developed by Stop Ivory in partnership with EPI member countries and partner organisations.”

10. Burkina Faso, Congo, Kenya and Niger submitted document SC69 Doc. 51.3 <sup>7</sup>, to SC69 which presented Stockpile Management System (SMS) material, developed by Stop Ivory on behalf of the EPI (see point 7 above), in order to help compile the proposed guidance under Decision 17.171 CoP17. Inventories have been conducted in ten elephant range states using the Stockpile Management System, of which nine are CITES Parties. SC69 Doc. 51.3 states:

*“... much of the material needed to compile the guidance proposed is already available, covering, for example, ivory inventories, sampling and management”*

*“Key documents can be accessed at <http://stopivory.org/resources/> and include: – a 30-page Protocol for Planning and Conducting Ivory Inventories (available in English, French and Portuguese) – a training presentation on stockpile management using a case study from East Africa – a briefing note on the Stockpile Management App – 3 user manuals for the Stockpile Management System covering: a) use of the App; b) use of the server; and c) administration (available from SI) – a briefing note on destruction via the most common method (burning), also available from SI.”*

11. In response the Standing Committee agreed to “...Seek a timeframe and detailed cost estimate from the Secretariat for completing the work detailed in Decision 17.171, taking into account and making use of the available existing material, and further information to be obtained from Parties and experts”<sup>8</sup>
12. During the discussions at SC69 it was clear that external funding as well as support in kind was urgently needed to enable the Secretariat to produce guidance on ivory stockpiles which Parties had agreed at the 2016 CoP under Decision 17.171. A joint offer from NGOs was made from the floor. The summary of the meeting records that Parties “...renewed the call for further external contributions to ensure that the Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting can be fully and swiftly implemented; and acknowledged the contributions in kind already made as well as any subsequent financial or other contributions made prior to, or during the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee”.<sup>9</sup>
13. Two weeks after the Standing Committee meeting in December 2017, the offer of funding made during the meeting was confirmed in writing on behalf of 9 NGOs who agreed to contribute a total of \$20,000. This was acknowledged, and the Secretariat later confirmed to the donors in April 2018 that the necessary work was under way, in which TRAFFIC were to carry out an analysis of “best practices”. The Secretariat wrote that they “hoped to post details of a stockpile management system on the CITES website in time for SC 70 as required”.
14. There have been large scale ivory thefts and losses due to weaknesses in individual Parties’ stockpile management systems, and as such it is urgent that progress be made on this issue<sup>10</sup>

#### New Project in 3 African Countries for “Gold Standard” Ivory Stockpile Management Systems

15. In response to Decision 17.171, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi, on behalf of the EPI and its Members, and in collaboration with Stop Ivory is working to build on the existing ivory stockpile management tools. This work is supported by the United Kingdom government, under Round four

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<sup>6</sup> The EPI is a government-led Intergovernmental initiative, with 18 member States. See <https://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/E-SC69-51-03.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/sum/E-SC69-SR.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/sum/E-SC69-Sum-03-R1.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/Government-Stockpile-Thefts-Simplified-Data.pdf>

of the Defra Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund from July 2018 until March 2021<sup>11</sup>. The project aims to secure Africa's ivory by developing gold-standard stockpile management systems, and embed this in national policy. The current SMS materials create a digital record of store inventories, and sets-out procedures for inventorying stockpiles and collecting samples for forensic analysis, complimenting procedures to improve storeroom security and chain of custody. Through field evaluation, wider expert and stakeholder consultations, and field testing this project will:

- a) Define the stockpile management standard, and develop complementary tools for implementing the standard thereby improving storeroom security and management: (1) *Ivory stockpile management standards and guidelines*, and (2) *Template Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for storeroom management and chain of custody (CoC) from point of seizure to decentralised and centralised storerooms*.
- b) Improve ivory storeroom management and security in the three partner countries by providing capacity to implement the developed guidelines and Procedures, and financial support to make improvements to the ivory storerooms

#### Recommendations to the Standing Committee

16. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) Consider a progress report from the Secretariat on the preparation and dissemination of CITES guidance on ivory stockpile management commissioned under Decision 17.171. If this work has not been completed prior to the 70th Standing Committee, then the report should include a detailed timetable for completing work, and a budget for any further funds needed beyond the \$20,000 already donated
- b) Take note of a new and complementary EPI project mentioned in paragraph 13 to develop gold-standard stockpile management systems which also responds to Decision 17.171, and request the Secretariat to consider the project's outputs in the preparation or later development of the CITES guidance for stockpile management.
- c) Urge Parties, the Secretariat, IGOs, and NGOs to contribute to and participate, where appropriate, in the development of the stockpile management tools.
- d) Make any further recommendations which would address the high, continuing risks and impacts of ivory theft or losses from government-held stockpiles and circulation into trade markets, acknowledging the limited technical and financial capacity of many CITES Parties to develop and implement measures needed to safeguard stored ivory.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721429/iwt-challenge-fund-list-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721429/iwt-challenge-fund-list-2018.pdf)