

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

Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Ottawa (Canada), 12 to 24 July 1987

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

Trade in Ivory from African Elephants

MARKING OF RAW IVORY CUT PIECES

This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

1. Resolution Conf. 3.12, adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (New Delhi, 1981), defines raw ivory as including "all whole African elephant tusks, polished or unpolished and in any form whatsoever, and all African elephant ivory in cut pieces, polished or unpolished and howsoever changed from its original form except for worked ivory" (emphasis added).
2. Resolution Conf. 3.12 recommends that each tusk or piece of raw ivory be marked normally at the "lip mark", with a unique number consisting of the two letter country of origin ISO code, serial number for the year of marking, the last two digits of the year, and the weight in kilogrammes (e.g. KE 127/81/10.5). Some countries also include a one or two letter code following the ISO code letters, designating the district where the ivory was taken or marked.

In addition, previously unmarked tusks included in registered stocks should be marked in the same way but using the two letter ISO code for the country in which registration occurs.
3. Resolution Conf. 5.12 adopted at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Buenos Aires, 1985) stated that the Resolution Conf. 3.12 definition of raw ivory should be used and that marking should be in accordance with that Resolution or with the Secretariat's implementation manual.
4. At Buenos Aires the Parties also accepted document Doc. 5.22.1 (Rev.) prepared by the Secretariat, which, among other things, outlined the procedures envisaged for inclusion in a manual to be developed as practical guidelines for implementation of the ivory trade control procedures prescribed by Resolution Conf. 5.12. An implementation manual, Ivory Trade Control Procedures was prepared and distributed by the Secretariat at the end of 1985 and offered some limited guidance on marking in addition to the recommendations of Resolution Conf. 5.12.

5. Countries such as Japan and Hong Kong have significant trade in raw ivory scraps and other cut pieces and strict application of the marking requirements of Resolution Conf. 3.12 is an impossible burden. Virtually all scraps and most other cut pieces traded are certainly too small for marking with punch dies, and many cut pieces are even too small for the use of felt tip markers. Additionally, all scraps and cut pieces need not be marked to provide reasonable trade controls for raw ivory.
6. The provisions of Resolution Conf. 3.12 should be modified with respect to marking raw ivory cut pieces so that the requirements are realistic and practical, yet do not furnish a loophole for the evasion of CITES controls.

Proposed Resolution

7. A draft resolution which modifies the raw ivory cut piece marking provisions of Resolution Conf. 3.12 is presented in the Annex.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Marking of Raw Ivory Cut Pieces

WHEREAS Resolution Conf. 3.12, adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (New Delhi, 1981), defines the term "raw" African elephant ivory and recommends that each tusk or piece of raw ivory be marked;

WHEREAS Resolution Conf. 5.12, adopted at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Buenos Aires, 1985), recommends that marking of raw African elephant ivory should be in accordance with Resolution Conf. 3.12 or with an implementation manual to be prepared by the Secretariat;

RECOGNIZING that it is not necessary that all raw ivory cut pieces be marked to provide reasonable trade controls;

NOTING that it is not possible to comply strictly with the marking requirements of Resolution Conf. 3.12 for all raw ivory cut pieces traded;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS

- a) that "raw" African elephant ivory continue be defined as described in Resolution Conf. 3.12, recommendation b);
- b) that raw ivory be marked as recommended in Resolution Conf. 3.12, recommendation e), except that:
 - i) where it is not practicable to mark by means of punch dies, indelible ink may be used;
 - ii) only whole tusks of any size and ivory cut pieces 20 cm. or longer and one half kilogramme or heavier must be marked; and
 - iii) ivory cut pieces that are not both 20 cm. long or longer and one half kilogramme in weight or heavier need not be marked; and
- c) that export permits and re-export certificates for consignments which include raw ivory cut pieces exempted from marking under b) above specify the tusk numbers (marks) from which these cut pieces were derived.