

SPEECH BY HRH PRINCE BERNHARD OF THE NETHERLANDS,
FOUNDER PRESIDENT OF WWF-WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the honour of addressing you this morning. I do so as a long-time friend of CITES and as Founder-President of WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature.

In 1970 hardly anyone had heard of the environment. The media gave much greater prominence to cookery lessons and gardening.

But, in 1972 the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, brought concern for the conservation and wise use of the earth's living resources to the fore.

The foundation of the United Nations Environment Programme - whose role in providing secretariat facilities for CITES I warmly acknowledge - was a direct consequence of that Conference.

Since then, international conventions and agreements have multiplied. There are now over a hundred of them. Among them, CITES stands proudly as a pioneer and the chief international instrument that advances conservation by regulating trade in endangered plants and animals.

Concern continues to grow. At the end of last year, Time magazine declared Earth as 'Planet of the Year'. You no longer need to search for conservation news - it is right there on the front page, telling us we have despoiled this earth of ours to such an extent that the future of mankind is at risk.

A Louis Harris poll conducted for UNEP in 14 countries, both in the North and the South, found that "alarm about the deterioration of the environment and support for much tougher environmental programmes are not confined to the western countries, but are found in the East and West, in the South and North, and in the rich and poor countries of the world".

In the United States of America, a Gallup poll released just prior to the last presidential election showed that 95% of the respondents believed that environmental issues should be a priority of the next administration, and 65% felt that "proposing laws to increase protection of the environment" should be the new President's top priority.

And here in seemingly idyllic Switzerland, a survey last year by the Swiss Credit Bank revealed that 74% of those questioned consider the environmental question to be Switzerland's most important issue, ahead of drug addiction, youth problems and fears of unemployment.

I don't have to tell you that politicians react to public opinion. If they don't, they become ex-politicians.

As the Economist magazine said: "Green is the world's new political colour".

CITES can, and should, take credit for part of the increased awareness and public concern about threats to wildlife and to the natural environment.

Over the years you have recorded several significant conservation achievements. For example, because of your efforts, the trade in spotted cats is no longer the grave threat to cat species that it once was.

But while you, the CITES delegates, are justified in taking part of the credit for the explosion in conservation awareness, I would like to remind you that with age comes responsibility. The world is watching to see what the next stage of development will be for CITES.

You are dealing with many controversial issues, and during your deliberations in the next two weeks you will consider problems involving some 300 species.

The issue that has generated the most urgent pre-conference debate is that of the African elephant. There is, of course, merit in the argument that those states whose elephant populations can sustain humane harvesting should be allowed to continue trading in ivory. However, the world trade in ivory in recent years has greatly exceeded the sustainable yield from the whole continent of Africa and poaching of elephants has reduced the total population alarmingly. All of us who support the CITES ivory control system must admit that it has failed to control illegal ivory trade.

You are now faced with some difficult choices. I would not, on this occasion, presume to advise how to decide on any one of them. However, I submit that there is one choice you never have. That is, if there is doubt about the way you should go on any issue - for or against trade - you must give the benefit of the doubt to the survival of the species. Don't forget, once a species has gone, it has gone forever.

It is, of course, important to remember, and I hope the media will stress the point, that even a ban on international trade in ivory will not alone save the elephant. Public demand for ivory should be reduced by making its use unfashionable and by recommending substitute products. Developed country governments, aid agencies, and NGOs must contribute substantially to strengthening wildlife management and conservation institutions in Africa. They must support anti-poaching operations and efforts to track and stop the illegal trade in ivory.

As our contribution, WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature has already spend 14 million Swiss francs on conservation of the elephant and its habitat. We are committed to spend at least another two million Swiss francs over the next twelve months.

In support of CITES efforts generally, WWF spends over two million Swiss francs annually to support eleven wildlife trade monitoring offices worldwide in its joint TRAFFIC programme with IUCN, and we hope to add three regional offices soon, two in Africa and one in South-East Asia.

WWF also helps pay for developing country representatives to attend CITES meetings, and we finance a number of projects to help improve implementation of CITES.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world today is a complex place. Actions taken in one country affect environments and people on the other side of the earth.

This global inter-dependency is clearly seen by examining the trade in wildlife and wildlife products. The North, which lacks certain valuable natural resources, has the money to pay the South for these products. The result is environmental degradation in the South and moral impoverishment for us all.

Illegal wildlife trade, as you know all too well, is the second largest illicit trade in the world after drugs. Increasingly, the same people who deal in drugs are also trading illegally in wildlife. The stopping of such activities is not a profession for the weak, and I salute the men and women fighting on the front line.

I urge you also to consider several issues which will determine how relevant CITES will be in coming years.

The first issue concerns credibility. CITES will retain credibility, in my view, by making decisions based on scientific evidence, not political or commercial expedience nor emotion, and by its Secretariat at all times maintaining objectivity and impartiality.

The second is the question of funding. Parties to CITES must give the Secretariat the finances with which to do its job and not oblige it to raise its own funds in ways which lead to question and criticism.

The third issue is that of enforcement. Shutting down the illegal wildlife trade must become a higher national priority in all member states, but particularly in the major importing countries which provide the market demand that drives particularly the ivory trade. Some of the biggest violators are in some cases those countries best equipped to intercept illegal shipments.

Each day, the Convention is disregarded and laws are broken. What support do you, the member states, require to implement the treaty? Do you need technical help to train customs officials? New laws? Better identification techniques? I think you will all agree that there is no point in having a law if it cannot be enforced.

Lastly, the decisions you will be called upon to take will become more and more complex, and more and more explosive. Now is not a time for the faint-hearted. There is no room for those who would postpone confronting major issues.

During the next two weeks, I urge you to take clear and wise decisions regarding the future of elephants and sea turtles, parrots and wild cats, orchids and even such little-known creatures as the living fossil, the coelacanth.

As our good friend Sir Peter Scott, who died recently, once said: "the animals and plants of the world have no political voice of their own". So please continue to protect them.

My friends, I wish you well in your deliberations. You have an exciting challenge ahead of you, and the world is watching.

Thank you.

WELCOMING SPEECH OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MR. FRANZ BLANKART

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me, in the name of the Federal Council, to bid a welcome to the participants at the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The President of the Confederation, Mr. Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, wanted to greet you personally here in his home town. As that was unfortunately not possible for him, he has asked me to pass on to you his wishes for every success at this meeting.

It gives me particular pleasure that CITES has its headquarters in our country, as Switzerland considers that the Convention has an important role to play. It is not only a common assertion but a bitter truth that man has for too long treated the resources of our planet as if they were inexhaustible; over which he was master. He has practised - and the term is not too strong - a frenzied over-exploitation of its resources. As we know today, the fatal philosophy that says one must "subdue" the entire world has made us forget the higher responsibility towards creation as an entity. It is only recently that we have become conscious of the necessity to conserve and protect the environment. The signing of the Convention marks an important step for this idea. In this context, let me remind you of the verity that it is necessary to study intensively the past, to understand the present, and influence the future. Regarding prospects for the future, we place our hopes in a young generation that, in the large majority, is sensitive to environmental questions, especially those concerning flora and fauna. Nevertheless, as long as natural resources are being over-exploited at the current rate, so much so that every minute approximately 30 hectares of forest is disappearing from our world; that without any management plan based on scientific information animals are being captured and killed on a grand scale; the objectives of this Convention will remain essential.

Another important goal, to which we should devote every effort, is the establishment of a synergism between the economy and ecology. In the interest of all, the two terms must not be found to be contradictory but complementary. Although the participants at the Stockholm Conference on the Environment which, in 1972, accepted the principle of the creation of CITES, were fully conscious of the necessity of this synergism, there remains much to be done for it to become a reality. I am, however, convinced that in the medium and long term, this synergism will impose itself in our efforts, to the mutual benefit of the economy and ecology.

At the European level, the Council of Europe -- of which our country is a member -- undertakes a particularly intense level of activity in favour of the protection of nature. A meeting of European Environment Ministers, which was held in 1979 at Berne, saw the creation of the "Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats" also called the "Berne Convention". Switzerland has also ratified this convention, as it has the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat".

Among the many diverse conventions in the realm of environmental protection, Switzerland recognizes a special role for CITES. Our country not only plays the role of Depositary Government, but it is also heavily involved through its

staff and financial contribution to the treaty. In addition to its contributions to many different projects -- including the organization of the present meeting -- Switzerland organized, in Berne 1976, the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Federal Government actively supports the efforts of the Secretariat, and I want to underline the quality of their work. Furthermore, it was Switzerland that provided the first "Acting" Secretary General, the first Chairman of the Standing Committee, and the first Chairman of the Identification Manual Committee.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will finish by addressing to you my thanks, and appeal:

I thank you for the extensive and valuable work that you have accomplished since the signing of CITES. At the same time, I ask you not to relax in your efforts to maintain species and the environment. It is for our Earth, our life, and that of generations to come.

Thank you.

SPEECH BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE,
MR. RALPH MORGENWECK

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Standing Committee and the United States of America, I thank you for this opportunity to address this assembly. As North American Regional Representative and Chairman of the Standing Committee I and my predecessor, Ronald Lambertson, have been challenged by the enormity of the job that confronts the Standing Committee, this seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and CITES.

Since 1981, we in CITES have been concentrating our efforts on stopping or reducing the trade in illegal African elephant ivory. I believe our efforts, while strenuous, have largely failed, resulting in proposals from a number of countries to list the elephant in Appendix I. At this meeting, and subsequently, we must try with all our will to stop all poaching and illegal ivory trade. At the same time, law enforcement and education must be significantly strengthened in both exporting and importing countries to cool the fires of supply and demand. As those fires cool, new long-range plans recognizing all of the benefits of this wonderful species have to be put into place to rebuild African elephant populations.

In 1979, CITES recognized the significant trade problem. This important initiative requires renewed effort. In 1983, we asked the Technical Committee to identify the Appendix II species of concern. In 1987, we called upon the Technical Committee for a more detailed investigation in conjunction with the IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre which resulted in a three volume publication indicating that there were about 89 species subjected to significant trade for which there was insufficient information upon which to base non-detriment findings.

The Secretariat has, with its limited staff, done a commendable job in launching several significant trade studies. But we must do more. We must go forward to conduct the studies of these species on a major scale. There is a proposal before this meeting recommending that co-ordination of this large and vital task be given much greater emphasis. I ask you all to consider involving the IUCN and its Species Survival Commission's Trade Specialist Group as well as other appropriate organizations in this work. Much good can come from this venture. I urge the range states to join in the execution of these projects. I hope that a new sense of mission will pervade this Convention as a result of this significant trade venture. This work is the lifeblood of CITES. If we cannot trade Appendix II species at levels that are known to be not detrimental to their survival, then our scientific knowledge is inadequate and our treaty is threatened.

We must have action on humane transport. Since 1983 CITES has been passing Resolutions recommending the adoption of a checklist to be used on import and export of live animals. The Live Animals Board of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has recommended that some changes be made in the checklist. Let's examine them and work to write a final version and implement it. It's time to make it work. I would point out that the user of the checklist has to have some knowledge in the use of IATA's Live Animals Regulations. I would hope that these regulations get wide circulation throughout the Parties and the airline industry. Those that are actually handling the animals as well as the inspectors must have them readily available.

Although CITES has already taken its most restrictive action on trade (Appendix I listing) to protect endangered species of rhinoceros, unfortunately the illegal trade in rhino horn continues. I fear that, in the year of the African elephant, the rhino will not get the consideration it deserves. What steps can the 102 nations of CITES take to reduce the illegal take of rhinoceros and the subsequent trade in its horn? Certainly, there must be collective and unilateral actions we can take to better the plight of the rhino. Let us take the time to consider such action. Perhaps our efforts to save the African elephant will help the rhino also because we must protect African ecosystems to protect elephants or rhinos.

Lastly, let me try to convey to my strong belief and hope that we as Parties, the Secretariat and non-governmental organizations must rededicate ourselves and provide the leadership to make CITES what its drafters intended it to be -- the most important and effective convention for the conservation of wild fauna and flora. I understand that CITES cannot, by itself, prevent destruction of species and their habitats. But by requiring that export of species not be detrimental to their survival, CITES is expressing its concern for their survival whatever the threat. Let's refer once more to the very first words of CITES: "That wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth which must be protected for this and the generations to come..."

I and my predecessor, Ron Lambertson, wish to thank the other members of the Standing Committee for their support and participation during these past 2 years, and I wish to thank the Secretariat for organizing our meetings and for the hospitality they have shown us. Thanks and appreciation also go to the Governments of Costa Rica and Switzerland for hosting the Standing Committee's 1988 and 1989 meetings, as well as to the Governments of Kenya and Botswana for hosting meetings of the African Elephant Working Group.

Thank you all very much.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, MR. WILLIAM H. MANSFIELD III

His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a pleasure for me to join in the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. UNEP's Executive Director, Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba, has asked me to bring you his greetings and his best wishes for a successful meeting - he knows it is an important meeting - and his regrets that obligations at the United Nations General Assembly in New York City make it impossible for him to be here with you.

Dr. Tolba has observed a number of times recently that in 1989 environmental issues have risen to the top level of the global political agenda. The communiqués of summit conferences, the statements of governments, election results, public opinion polls, and the daily headlines all bear witness to a revolution of awareness of - and of apprehension about - the state of the world's environment.

Events of the past year suggest that the world is awaking to the fact that something enormous is happening to the earth's wealth of life and that we are pressing beyond limits we should not exceed. Ordinary people as well as their leaders now feel we must change our current behaviour and take urgent, concerted steps to make our development process environmentally sustainable.

For many millions of people newly aware of the threat to the health of our planet, the focus of attention is the great masterpieces of nature - animals, birds, forests and flowers - for the natural world inspires great spiritual and emotional bonds to all of life. The forests of the tropics, the whale, the panda, the mountain gorilla, the rhino and today especially the African elephant are part of the public concern for the wider environment.

And, consequently, each of the 103 Parties and states non-members to this Convention has a special responsibility for the stewardship of the Earth's living resources.

The electric international concern generated by the slaughter of the African elephant and the debate over the ivory trade illuminates vividly this world concern. There is no question that the protection of the African elephant is the most important single issue before our meeting this year. Concerned people the world around have brought forward a great deal of information and voiced many different situations, viewpoints and approaches to protecting this magnificent animal.

CITES finds itself in the spotlight and the headlines. The Convention, its Parties and the Secretariat face additional challenges, burdens and responsibilities.

But this should neither be a cause for undue anxiety, nor acrimony. There is no disagreement on the goal. All of us believe that the survival of the species is our foremost concern, and we all have confidence that everyone here today will work to achieve that end.

Also, we have the reassurance that one of the overriding achievements of the Convention has been the ability to bring together in one place the full range of divergent views on wildlife conservation and then to find a course of action which commands consensus and a solution that will protect the species. This we must do again at this session.

At the same time CITES' role has become an even greater part of two broad global themes - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT and BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. UNEP is closely involved in initiatives on both. And CITES is one of the cornerstones of our efforts in these fields. Conservation of species diversity preserves the important biological linkages and interdependence of all the organisms and habitats that make up our living Earth and its rich arrays of life forms. The very first words of the CITES treaty attest to this:

"The Contracting States, Recognize that wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth which must be protected for this and generations to come".

UNEP is working closely with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) to develop a global convention on biodiversity. The UNEP Governing Council in May requested the Executive Director to expedite this work with the aim of having the proposed new international legal instrument ready for adoption as soon as possible.

The Council also urged him to continue to support actions to promote effective co-operation in implementing existing international instruments and agreements in this field. This calls for continued effective implementation of CITES, which is the leading international treaty engaged in conserving biological diversity.

CITES is also directly involved in the quest for sustainable development. CITES' goal is to ensure that international trade does not threaten the continued existence of any species not simply by regulating trade in any species, but by ensuring that there is sufficient information available to create and implement proper management plans central to sustainability.

The wildlife resources of many regions represent an important, even critical, portion of their economic resources. They can be managed to provide economic benefits on a renewable basis. They can and must be developed in ways that do not deplete the environment, and their economic contribution can bring a respect and an incentive for treating the resources and environment with care.

CITES can highlight the economic benefits of proper conservation and wise use. Recently a great deal of work has been devoted to developing projects in Latin America that will bring us more information about the caiman species of that region. And studies of Nile crocodiles have resulted in the presentation of information that the Parties can use at this meeting as they consider proposals concerning ranching of this species.

When we met in Ottawa in 1987 at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, I spoke at some length on the serious financial situation facing the Convention.

Because of the funding shortage, I referred to the Secretariat then as a potential endangered species. The rise in the value of the Swiss franc and the late payment of contributions to the CITES Trust Fund by some Parties - and the complete failure to pay by a few - left insufficient money in the Trust Fund to pay the Secretariat salaries for that year. The Convention was in the red and the Secretariat was kept in being by UNEP advancing funds for essential expenditures from its Environment Fund. At one point the level of advances exceed US\$ 600,000.

I am, therefore, pleased to say today that the situation is much improved. A number of Parties reacted to that very serious situation by accelerating payment of their contributions in the following year. Some contributed at a higher level than they had agreed during the meeting either directly, by financing staff to help out the hard pressed Secretariat, or by contributing to specific activities.

The Secretariat was obliged to live with the means afforded in the Trust Fund, while at the same time paying back the advances provided from UNEP'S Environment Fund. The going has been tough since Ottawa, and as a result not all of the programmes approved at that meeting have been implemented.

But today we see light in the tunnel. If all countries pay their contributions to the Trust Fund so that outstanding expenses are eliminated by the end of this year, the Trust Fund will have repaid all of the advances provided by the Environment Fund, and all of your contributions next year can be used to finance the Secretariat and its activities.

This provides a firm basis from which you can at this meeting plan the way forward for the next two or three years. I have to reiterate, however, that you can only expect to receive under this Convention what you are prepared to pay for.

The proposed budget for the Secretariat for the next three years was presented to the Parties three months ago. I am informed by the Secretary General that the early comments on it are positive.

The Secretariat is seeking several important additions to the current core budget, as a result of the suggestions made by the Standing Committee. Assuming that the Ivory Trade Control System is retained in place, we are seeking the inclusion of the Ivory Unit in the core budget. We are also requesting the addition of two professional staff members to the Lausanne office and the creation of three regional officer positions in the main producer regions. Part of the budget presentation involves the tabling of a Strategic Plan that enunciates the long-term goals and objectives of the Secretariat. In the context of the budget debate the Parties will be asked to consider a proposal that the interval between meetings be extended to three years from the current practice of two years.

Recent years have seen the emergence of unexpected environmental threats, new direct evidence of environmental degradation and, on occasion, success stories in our efforts to address the dangers. But the pace of the threats to the biosphere and its life forms accelerate.

Almost three decades ago United States President John Kennedy said to an American environmental group: "It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours".

I have no doubt that everyone in this assembly shares this sentiment. And all of us here as well know that CITES is one of the principal international instruments that can help pass the torch of life from one generation to the next. All that we can do together to sustain and enhance the effectiveness of CITES will contribute to preserving individual species and biological diversity as well as all of humanity. We must succeed in this task.

Thank you.

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE OF THE
CANTON OF VAUD, MR. JEAN-FRANCOIS LEUBA

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, delegates to the seventh meeting of the the Conference of the Parties,

In the name of the Council of State of the Canton of Vaud, which is the regional government in this area, I thank you for having chosen Lausanne for your seventh meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The Canton of Vaud is proud to be able to offer you the hospitality of its territory, the facilities of the Palais de Beaulieu, and its hotel infrastructure for your sessions. As the Swiss Confederation does in its foreign policy, we feel that it is our duty to welcome to our Canton all men of goodwill, regardless of the country they represent, regardless of their political beliefs, who are desirous of bringing their contribution to the solution of an international or universal problem. Switzerland, which is not a member of the United Nations, but which participates actively in its specialized institutions and which, furthermore, means to practice a policy of active neutrality, wishes to be the country that welcomes those who are filled with a spirit of international co-operation in the search for solutions favourable to all.

Our neutrality, often misunderstood outside our borders, where some confuse it with egotism, should be seen as active and solid. Swiss are becoming more and more conscious that they are not isolated from the affairs of the world. The refusal, through a referendum, by the people to approve an application to the United Nations should not be seen as a desire to retire within our borders, but more as a willingness to be available, to be open to a full 360 degrees, to refrain from taking part in political quarrels. We hope to be perfectly open to all because we condemn none.

In this perspective, the Canton of Vaud is also proud to host the Secretariat of CITES. We do not have the international calling of Geneva, the European seat of the United Nations. But we intend to support the institutions that have freely chosen to situate in our Canton, such as the International Olympic Committee and CITES. Lausanne, 60 kilometres from Geneva, using the same airport, offers the advantages of proximity to that grand international city without suffering the sometimes difficult inconveniences of diplomatic life, which can develop at the expense of effectiveness. The relationship that your Secretary General, our friend Mr. Eugène Lapointe, has developed with the authorities of the Canton and the City are excellent and are the guarantee of the harmonious development of the Secretariat in our capital.

I have just said that we welcome with joy men of goodwill who wish to look for solutions to universal problems. We are convinced that dialogue -- that understanding between men and the coming together of divergent views -- is a solution which permits an infinitely better resolution to multinational problems than insults and decrees. CITES offers the considerable advantage of bringing together not only the representatives of states and organizations focussing on conservation of wild fauna and flora but also representatives of the trade, without whom, we are convinced, no concrete results could be obtained. Everyone must be persuaded not to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. In addition to the scientific interest in keeping endangered species alive, there is also the interest of mankind in general in not destroying the balance of nature. The modification of our environment sets in motion changes

in the human species. Technological advances have upset our way of life, with some considerable benefits, in the field of health care for example, but also with some grave threats, such as pollution of the air and water.

The maintenance of endangered species of fauna and flora is part of the balance of nature. You have understood completely that it is in the interest of mankind to permit all species of animals, to whom nature has given a role, to be able to survive. It remains for you, as it remains for all authorities on this earth, to persuade the general population. There is then an immense information task, for the authorities first and the people afterwards.

Mankind has not received the earth to massacre it, but to manage it. The believer who considers nature as a gift from God joins in this with the scientist, even if he is an agnostic, and the businessman worried about preserving his business for the future, so long as the three are of goodwill.

It is you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, who are the ones working for endangered species. In the name of the authorities of my Canton, I thank you and congratulate you.

May the work that awaits you have fruitful results.

SPEECH OF THE MAYOR OF LAUSANNE, AND NATIONAL COUNSELLOR,
MR. PAUL-RENE MARTIN

The President of the Government of the Canton de Vaud has just told you of the esteem that the City of Lausanne and the Canton of Vaud, like that of the Government of the Swiss Confederation, have for the work you are accomplishing. Your preoccupations are ours, and we are proud to offer you our hospitality, here in Lausanne, not only for a plenary session, but also for your daily activities.

I repeat what I said at the Opening Ceremony of this Conference on Monday October 9: "Lausanne is fully committed to keeping within its borders the Secretariat and offices of CITES".

The activities that you have undertaken these past days cause us to repeat, more than ever, our support and to say to you: CITES is properly situated with us, in Lausanne!

Everything is in place for the office and administration of the Convention to be able to work actively and efficiently in our city.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to speak of my friendship, and recognition of the delicate work done by Mr. Lapointe, the Secretary General, and his team.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES has caught the attention of the Swiss people. You have taken note of the many demonstrations at the Palais de Beaulieu and elsewhere in the city. Moreover, the media has loudly echoed your efforts on the behalf of endangered species. Your meeting has been "number one" with the Swiss dailies; it has also brought out some considered thoughts about the solutions to be sought to the problems of the survival of endangered species, especially among the general public. CITES has succeeded in heightening public awareness the world over. Is this not already a success?

We must say that CITES is sowing fertile ground. A recent public opinion poll taken in all of Switzerland shows that the principal worries of the Swiss in 1989 are, firstly, drugs (72% of persons interviewed) and secondly the protection of the environment (71%). Other topics and worries come far behind.

Protection of the environment implies, it hardly needs to be said, protection of endangered species.

In effect, you have been able to notice, during your stay in Lausanne and your travels in the country, posters reminding everyone of his responsibility for the protection of endangered wildlife and flora among us, especially in the Alps and in wetlands.

The seventh meeting of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, has ended. It is not, thank God, a species on its way to extinction. We already hope that the eighth meeting in Japan will be as animated and fruitful. It will take up again, no doubt, consideration of the central problem of this meeting, the conservation of African elephants.

Permit me, at this time, to cite for you the thoughts of a German naturalist of the last century, Alfred Edmund Brehm:

"Das Wesen des Elefanten ist mild und ruhig. Ungereizt greift niemals an. Er lebt mit den meisten anderen Tieren in friedlicher Koexistenz. Er weicht allen, sogar den kleinsten, eher aus".

These peaceful thoughts date from 1865. What else can be concluded but this: Let us be good to elephants, and only use their tusks to good ends, for they are not attacking us.

Such is the lesson of politics that you are able to leave your stay in peaceful Switzerland, neutral, disposed to serve the rights of man and animals, fiercely animated by the spirit of peace and agreement.

The atmosphere of Lausanne is one of conciliation and friendship. It has helped you. As Mayor of this city I am pleased with this, and hope that you keep for a long time the scent of friendship. CITES, we like you a lot, you are our hope for our children.