

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

Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Species specific mattersElephants (Elephantidae spp.)IVORY STOCKPILES: PROPOSED REVISION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. COP16)  
ON TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS

1. This document has been submitted by Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.\*

Introduction

2. African elephants, which are listed in Appendix I of the Convention, with four populations in Appendix II<sup>1</sup>, are under intense and sustained pressure from poaching and ivory trafficking to meet global demand for ivory products. It is estimated that in 2010-2012, 35-50,000 African elephants were illegally killed annually to meet this demand<sup>2,3</sup>. According to the latest data from the CITES programme for Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) released in March 2016, poaching levels remain unacceptably high, with populations continuing to decline<sup>4</sup>. Asian elephants, which are all listed in Appendix I, are also affected by global demand for ivory.
3. One of the consequences of this crisis is the growth in official ivory stockpiles held in range States and transit countries. Over the last five years a number of CITES Parties have begun to reduce those stockpiles through destruction, commonly through events designed to educate the public about the threat to elephants from poaching and smuggling of ivory. The purpose of this document is to build on two earlier papers on ivory stockpiles and destructions which were submitted to the CITES Standing Committee meetings in July 2014 (SC65 Doc. 42.7) and January 2016 (SC66 Doc. 47.3) and led to constructive discussions on stockpile management.
4. We seek the support of Parties for the accurate recording and managed destruction of ivory stockpiles; the provision to Parties of the best available technical guidance, including advice on the recording and audit of stockpiles and the DNA sampling of ivory prior to destruction in order to determine its origin; and the continued engagement of other bodies able to provide expertise and resources to facilitate planned ivory disposals.

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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> Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup> Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J., Blanc, J., Douglas-Hamilton, I., Omondi, P., & Burnham, K. (2014) Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants. *PNAS*, vol. 111 no. 36. Available at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/36/13117.abstract>

<sup>3</sup> Data on the unsustainable levels of elephant losses and record levels of illegal ivory trade can be found in papers submitted to the most recent Standing Committee meetings in 2014 and 2016: SC65 Doc. 42.1 Annex 1 Elephant Conservation, Illegal Killing and Ivory Trade. Available at: [https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-42-01\\_2.pdf](https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-42-01_2.pdf) and SC66 Doc. 47.1 Annex 1 Elephant Conservation, Illegal Killing and Ivory Trade. Available at: <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/E-SC66-47-01.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> CITES Press Release Geneva/New York/Nairobi, 3 March 2016: African elephants still in decline due to high levels of poaching.

## Problems presented by ivory stockpiles

5. Despite on-going national and international efforts, elephant poaching has continued at dangerously high levels, fuelled by the substantial demand for ivory. Sustained poaching means that ivory is continually entering the market illicitly. Some is intercepted by enforcement agencies, a small proportion of which is destroyed by authorities after seizure, but in most cases, especially in countries on the main global ivory smuggling routes, seized ivory is added to official stockpiles. In range States, ivory is also accumulated from natural mortality or elephants killed in management actions. These stockpiles have been gradually increasing in both range and non-range States since the decision to list African elephants in Appendix I in 1989. Although CITES Parties have been required to report their ivory holdings to the CITES Secretariat since 1997<sup>5</sup>, comprehensive, and accurate ivory inventories have not been available to the CoP or the Standing Committee<sup>6</sup>. An estimate of global ivory stocks was made for the Standing Committee in SC65 Doc. 42.7 (July 2014), which reached the following conclusion<sup>7</sup>:

*“Though no recent inventory of stockpiled ivory is available, when the estimates of ivory stockpile quantities and ivory seizure data provided above are considered together, a minimum of 816 tonnes of African elephant ivory has been stockpiled or seized from 1989 through October 2013. Some of these stockpiles are very large, in the range of 50-100 tonnes. Even this is likely to be a significant underestimate of global ivory stocks since, even if ivory sold in the one-off sale in 2008 (102 tonnes) and ivory stockpiles destroyed by governments between 2011 and the present (approximately 32 tonnes) is deducted, ETIS data does not include ivory collected from culled or naturally deceased elephants from 1997 to 2013; stockpiled Asian elephant ivory is not included; seized ivory collected by non-range States prior to 1989 is not included; and not all seizure data is reported.”*

6. As noted in SC 65 Doc 42.7, the figure estimating global ivory stocks to be a minimum of 816 tonnes in 2013 was likely an underestimate, in particular because it did not include stocks of ivory from both elephant species held in Asian countries or ivory retrieved from animals dying naturally. It also did not allow for an historic tendency for the under-declaration of stockpiles in response to questionnaires. Taking into account these factors, it is reasonable to conclude that by the time of writing (April 2016), the steadily growing global stockpiles of elephant ivory would amount to approximately 1,000 tonnes - or 1 million kilograms.
7. Three of the Parties with elephants listed in Appendix II sold ivory from their stockpiles through CITES to Japan in 1999, and all four Parties sold ivory by the same method to Japan and China in 2008. Until recently, there has been a perception in some range States that by providing income, ivory sales could provide a net benefit. However, this viewpoint has lost support in recent years; countries that may have considered in the past that keeping ivory stockpiles was worthwhile are now realizing that the costs outweigh potential benefits. Given the high value of ivory, these stockpiles must be maintained in secure facilities, often under 24-hour guard to prevent theft. Instances of stockpiled ivory disappearing or being stolen are reported regularly<sup>8</sup>. A 2010 TRAFFIC report suggested that almost one third of stockpiles had *decreased* through illegal leakage<sup>9</sup>. Stockpiled ivory is, in fact, an economic and security burden for most countries<sup>10</sup>. This added responsibility diverts scarce resources from wildlife conservation, including the

<sup>5</sup> See Resolution Conf. 10.10, as revised at subsequent CoPs including most recently at CoP16.

<sup>6</sup> Comprehensive data about the number, location and size of global or country-specific stockpiles is not presently available. CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) includes a provision urging 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, 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.” This provision updates a long-standing recommendation dating back to 1997 that Parties maintain an inventory of their raw ivory stocks and inform the Secretariat annually of its level, and the source of the ivory. It appears that inadequate data from these returns is the main reason why comprehensive, updated CITES data on raw ivory stockpiles is unavailable to Parties. The CITES Secretariat issued notifications in December 2013 and January 2015 reminding CITES Parties of the revised reporting provision but, as yet, no data on country-specific ivory stockpiles has been published.

<sup>7</sup> SC65 Doc. 42.7, Disposal of Ivory Stocks. Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-42-07.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See e.g., News24.com, ‘Concerns over stockpile ivory theft,’ June 2012. Available at: <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Concerns-over-stockpile-ivory-theft-20120622>

<sup>9</sup> Milliken, Tom. ‘Report on the results of the Elephant and Ivory Trade Questionnaire pursuant to Decision 13.26 (Rev. CoP14) on the Action plan for the control of trade in elephant ivory’. April 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Namibia, for example, was holding approximately 30 tonnes of stockpiled ivory that was costing USD 75,000 per year to store; see: ‘Ivory Stockpiles’ the Case For Non-Commercial Disposal’, Stop Ivory, January 2013. Available at: [http://uat.mccannlondon.co.uk/stopivory/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SI\\_IvoryDisposal.pdf](http://uat.mccannlondon.co.uk/stopivory/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SI_IvoryDisposal.pdf). Similarly, in 2010, The East African reported Tanzania spent \$75,000 annually to secure its stockpile; see Riungu, Catherine. ‘EU, UK favour Dar’s ivory sale bid’, East African, March 2010. Available at: <http://newsroom.wildlifedirect.org/tag/eu/>

direct protection of elephants and other threatened species. If the costs incurred to secure stockpiles were fully accounted for against estimates of potential income from ivory sales, the net income would be small, or more likely negative, undermining claims of sales benefitting conservation.

8. The existence of ivory stockpiles also provides poachers, traders, speculators, and consumers with a reason to believe that global ivory trade may be restored and that the value of ivory as a commodity could ultimately exceed the value of elephants as live animals<sup>11</sup>. This belief, in turn, maintains or expands demand for ivory products, increasing the pressure on elephant populations.

**Recent Growth in Ivory Destructions**

9. In response to the current poaching crisis and to reduce the burden of maintaining and securing their stockpiles, an increasing number of governments have begun to destroy them and so remove such ivory from the market permanently. These destructions have occurred at a series of public events throughout the world in which governments have crushed or burned ivory stockpiles, sending a clear message to wildlife criminals of their opposition to elephant poaching and illicit trade in ivory, and their collective support of elephant conservation. Some of these destructions have taken place with assistance from the Elephant Protection Initiative<sup>12</sup>.
10. Prior to 2011, there had been just three public destructions of ivory: two by Kenya in 1989<sup>13</sup> and 1991 totalling 18.8 tonnes and one by Zambia (9.5 tonnes)<sup>14</sup> in 1992. After a gap of almost two decades, 25 ivory destruction events have taken place in four continents between 2011 and April 2016<sup>15</sup>. These actions have involved the crushing or burning of ivory in 20 different countries (including 3 instances in China, 3 in the EU, 2 in Kenya and 2 in the US). Most events received extensive media coverage. The data on these recent destructions is summarized chronologically in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1: IVORY DESTRUCTIONS 2011 - APRIL 2016**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Ivory destroyed (m. tonnes if known)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Kenya	2011	>5.0	2002 seizure in Singapore repatriated to Kenya in 2004 under auspices of Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF)
Gabon	2012	4.8	
Philippines	2013	>4.2	
India	2013	Unknown	Some doubts about whether this took place
US	2013	5.4	
China	2014	6.0	Guangdong

<sup>11</sup> Elephants are arguably of far more value to a multi-billion dollar tourism industry than as a resource to be exploited for ivory. Economic studies show that the value of ivory is falling compared with other non-consumptive uses of elephants, e.g. James Blignaut, Martin de Wit and Jon Barnes (2008), 'The Economic Value of Elephants', in RJ Scholes and KG Mennell (eds) *Elephant Management: A Scientific Assessment of South Africa*. Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg.

<sup>12</sup> See SC66 Sum. 3 (Rev. 1) (12/01/16). Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/ExSum/E-SC66-Sum-03.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Perlez, Jane. 'Kenya, in gesture, burns ivory tusks', July 1989. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/19/world/kenya-in-gesture-burns-ivory-tusks.html>

<sup>14</sup> Jackson, Tim. 'Ivory Apocalypse', *Africa Geographic*, April 2013. Available at: <http://www.elephantswithoutborders.org/downloadpapers/Ivory%20Apocalypse.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> At the time of writing (21 April 2016), the destruction of over 2 tonnes of ivory by Cameroon is the most recent event. Available at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2016/4/19/cameroon-destroys-2000kg-of-ivory-tusks.html>

China HK SAR	2014	>28.0	In monthly tranches from May 2014. By Jan 2016, about 22 tonnes of ivory had been destroyed; rest to be disposed of in 2016. <sup>16</sup>
France	2014	3.0	
Chad	2014	1.1	
Belgium	2014	1.5	
Portugal	2014	>1.0	

**CITES Standing Committee Meeting, July 2014 (SC65): Decision on Ivory Stockpiles**

India	2014		Incinerated various wildlife products – Delhi
Kenya	2015	15.0	Commitment to destroy rest of stocks soon
Ethiopia	2015	6.1	
United Arab Emirates	2015	>10.0	Dubai
Republic of Congo	2015	4.7	Entire stockpile
China	2015	0.6	Commitment to phase out domestic ivory trade
USA	2015	1.0	>1 US ton (Times Square)
Mozambique	2015	2.4	
Thailand	2015	>2.0	Ceremony involved faith leaders
Sri Lanka	2016	1.5	Entire stockpile. Ceremony with faith leaders
Malawi	2016	2.6	
Italy	2016	<1.0	
Malaysia	2016	9.5	
Cameroon	2016	>2.0	
<b>Total events: 25<sup>17</sup></b>			

11. It is notable that Table 1 includes both developing and developed countries, and range and non-range States. The total ivory destroyed from 1989 to April 2016 amounts to over 100 tonnes. The momentum of ivory destructions accelerated from 2014. The reasons behind this increase are believed to include: the

<sup>16</sup> Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, *Update on the Protection of Endangered Species and Biodiversity in Hong Kong for the Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs, February 2016.*

<sup>17</sup> The Table above does not include relatively small quantities of mainly worked ivory destroyed symbolically by some NGOs, or the countries which regularly destroy ivory alongside other illegal wildlife items seized by their enforcement authorities of which Germany and UK are examples. Symbolic ivory crushing events conducted by NGOs, include one outside Parliament in London by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (February 2014) and another by the Born Free Foundation for a popular British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programme (March 2014). Much of the ivory items crushed comprised worked objects donated by the public and the total amounts are understood to have been small.

authority given by the CITES Standing Committee paper and decision on stockpiles in 2014<sup>18</sup>; steady campaigning for destruction by a number of NGOs at both national and global level; technical and financial support from bodies such as the Elephant Protection Initiative; and reports of continued pressure on elephant populations and ruthless poaching to supply illegal ivory markets. However, only about 10 per cent of the minimum estimated stockpiled ivory (see paragraph 6 above) has been destroyed by April 2016, leaving considerable – and continually growing – stocks to deal with.

12. Further ivory stockpile destructions are scheduled to occur in the future. Notably, Kenya will destroy 105 tonnes of ivory on 30 April 2016, which is understood to comprise the bulk of its remaining stockpile<sup>19</sup>. The destruction would account for more than 10% of the estimated global ivory stocks, and include 8 times more ivory than the previous largest destruction, which was also by Kenya. There have also been commitments or reports that ivory destruction events are being considered by two other countries: New Zealand<sup>20</sup> and Vietnam<sup>21</sup>.
13. Many countries have retained some raw and worked ivory for public awareness, education, and research purposes, but only small quantities should be needed for these uses. The United States anticipates using crushed ivory for educational purposes; while the Philippines has announced it will mix its crushed ivory with concrete and turn it into a sculpture of an elephant protecting its calf as a monument and reminder of its historical action<sup>22</sup>. There is concern that merely crushing ivory could create a third category of ivory in addition to raw and carved ivory that traffickers could market for profit. There is also concern that using ivory in sculptures or public displays, no matter how educational in intention, may continue to promote its value to lovers (and consumers) of art. In two recent destructions, Sri Lanka and Malaysia first crushed then incinerated the ivory<sup>23</sup>.

#### The Role of CITES

14. Elephant conservation, including the ivory trade, has been a dominant issue within CITES and the wider conservation community for more than 30 years. Recent increases in poaching and smuggling have attracted high level attention in both range and consumer States. The destruction of ivory stockpiles has been endorsed and implemented by a number of key CITES Parties over the last three years. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also applauded the destruction of ivory<sup>24</sup>, while the CITES Secretary General has attended destruction events, most recently in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, and recognized countries that have taken such decisive action<sup>25</sup>.
15. It is essential that CITES as the preeminent global treaty regulating wildlife trade supports the process of ivory stockpile destruction and provides a legal and technical framework to facilitate destruction events. Following an initiative by Chad and the Philippines, for the first time the CITES Standing Committee gave recognition in July 2014 to the process of destroying legally and illegally obtained ivory. In Document SC65 Com 9, entitled *DISPOSAL OF IVORY STOCKS*<sup>26</sup>, the Standing Committee agreed the following recommendations:

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<sup>18</sup> SC65 Doc. 42.7 and SC65 Com. 9, *Disposal of Ivory Stocks*

<sup>19</sup> 'Kenya prepares to burn 105 tonnes ivory', *Africa Review*, 20 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.africareview.com/news/Kenya-prepares-to-burn-tonnes-of-ivory/-/979180/3168222/-/vxb3ak/-/index.html>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.parliament.nz/resource/minz/50SCFDT\\_EVI\\_50DBHOH\\_PET3203\\_1\\_A401613/5a948b6a5e2e69c8f34d82bd39bf064b023afee7](http://www.parliament.nz/resource/minz/50SCFDT_EVI_50DBHOH_PET3203_1_A401613/5a948b6a5e2e69c8f34d82bd39bf064b023afee7)

<sup>21</sup> <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/155068/ivory-and-rhino-horn-to-be-destroyed-at-thang-long-imperial-citadel.html>

<sup>22</sup> 'Philippines to build elephant monument from destroyed ivory,' *Agence France Press*, March 2014. Available at: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140313/philippines-build-elephant-monument-destroyed-ivory>

<sup>23</sup> Laurel Neme, 'One Country Will Destroy Its Ivory—and Pray for Elephants (Sri Lanka)', *National Geographic*, January 2016 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/01/160125-sri-lanka-elephants-buddhism-ivory-stockpile-cites/>  
<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/04/14/crush-and-burn-malaysia-destroys-huge-ivory-trove/>

<sup>24</sup> 'UN Applauds China Efforts to Combat Illegal Ivory Trade', *UNEP News Centre*, January 2014. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2758&ArticleID=10688>

<sup>25</sup> [https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri\\_lanka\\_ivory\\_crush\\_cites\\_secretary\\_generals\\_remarks\\_26012016](https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri_lanka_ivory_crush_cites_secretary_generals_remarks_26012016) and  
[https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/malaysia\\_confiscated\\_ivory\\_destruction\\_cites\\_sg\\_remarks\\_140416](https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/malaysia_confiscated_ivory_destruction_cites_sg_remarks_140416)

<sup>26</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/com/E-SC65-Com-09.pdf>

- a) *Notes the action taken by Kenya, Gabon, the Philippines, India, United States, China including Hong Kong SAR, France, Chad, Belgium, and Portugal in destroying stockpiles of mainly illegally sourced ivory since 2011;*
- b) *Requests 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 management of legal and illegal ivory stockpiles and make it available to Parties.*
- c) *Encourages governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, if requested, to provide support to range States and other countries if needed to plan for and implement the management of ivory stockpiles for the purposes of these recommendations.*
- d) *Requests the Secretariat to report on progress made with regard to paragraph b) to the 66th Standing Committee meeting.*

*\* Guidance can include inter alia security, inventory procedures, transparency in tracking, reporting costs of storage/security, destruction options, DNA sampling and analysis, pre- and post- destruction monitoring, and the use of residual material.*

16. Fourteen Parties have carried out further ivory destructions since the Standing Committee meeting in 2014. The destructions up to January 2016 were noted by the Standing Committee at SC66<sup>27</sup>, and the CITES Secretary General commended the public destruction of seized African ivory by Sri Lanka following the meeting<sup>28</sup>. It is now important for the Conference of the Parties to take even firmer steps not only to support ivory stockpile destruction, but also to ensure that high standards, particularly in ivory audit and DNA sampling prior to destruction, are encouraged. This need was recognized again at SC66, where the Standing Committee ‘agreed 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’.<sup>29</sup> The CITES Secretariat is the right body to assemble information from range and non-range States, and from bodies such as the EPI / Stop Ivory which have already developed and tested destruction protocols in the field. This information can then be incorporated in CITES guidance to ensure that “best practice” is adopted in future ivory stockpile monitoring and destruction events.

#### Illustration of Ivory Destructions since 1989

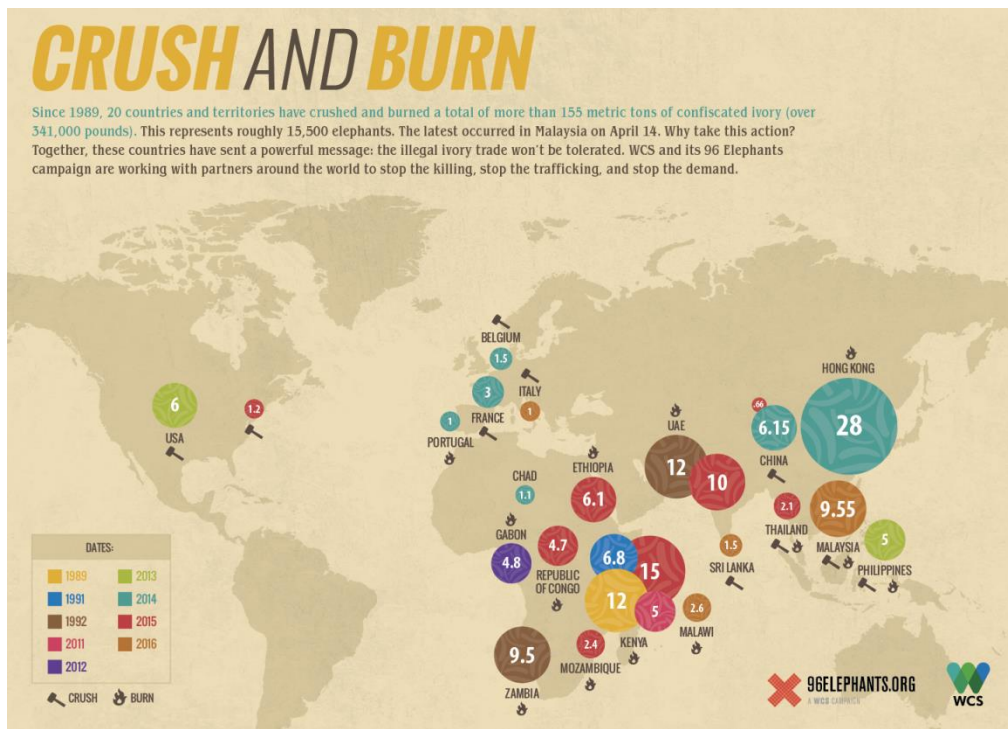
17. The following infographic produced by Wildlife Conservation Society illustrates ivory destructions since 1989, up to and including the destruction by Malaysia on 14 April 2016<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> SC66 Sum. 3 (Rev. 1) (12/01/16). Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/ExSum/E-SC66-Sum-03.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> [https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri\\_lanka\\_ivory\\_crush\\_cites\\_secretary\\_generals\\_remarks\\_26012016](https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri_lanka_ivory_crush_cites_secretary_generals_remarks_26012016)

<sup>29</sup> SC66 Sum. 3 (Rev. 1) (12/01/16). Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/ExSum/E-SC66-Sum-03.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> *Elephants. A WCS Progress Report, Wildlife Conservation Society, New York (2015, infographic up-dated April 2016)*



## Budgetary Implications for CITES

18. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16), consideration has been given to the budgetary and workload implications of this proposal for the CITES Secretariat. The authors of this document do not consider the proposals to have substantial funding requirements. Most of the material needed to compile the guidance proposed in paragraph 15 above should be available from not-for-profit bodies already dealing with ivory sampling, management and disposal. It is considered that the Secretariat's role should be manageable by giving reasonable priority to the task within existing work plans.

## Recommendations

19. The Conference of the Parties is requested to adopt the amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) proposed in Annex 1 and accompanying draft Decision proposed in Annex 2.

## COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The document proposes amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) to welcome the destruction of ivory stockpiles that several Parties have engaged in since 2011, and recommend that all Parties with government-held ivory stockpiles destroy all ivory which is surplus to *bona fide* scientific, educational, enforcement or identification purposes.
- B. Resolution Conf. 9.10 (Rev. CoP15) provides guidance on the disposal of illegally traded and confiscated ivory specimens from elephant populations included in Appendix I, or ivory specimens from African elephant populations included in Appendix II that are deemed to be in Appendix I, such as raw ivory (possible revisions of this Resolution are discussed under agenda item 34). For Appendix-I specimens, seized or confiscated specimens should be restricted to four uses, namely *bona fide* scientific, educational, enforcement or identification purposes. Where this is not practicable, two options are provided in the Resolution, i.e. to save the specimens in storage or to destroy them.
- C. The Secretariat considers that the available guidance is adequate in addressing the concerns expressed in the document, and that it is for each Party to decide how it wishes to deal with government-held ivory stockpiles. On several occasions, the Secretariat has expressed a view that when a Party, such as Sri

Lanka early in 2016,<sup>31</sup> takes a decision to publicly destroy its confiscated stockpiles of elephant ivory, this presents an opportunity to *inter alia* draw public attention to the scale, nature and impacts of the serious crimes that lie behind these confiscations. The Secretariat notes that several commentators have indicated that the impact of the destructions of ivory stockpiles on the dynamics of illegal ivory markets remains little understood, and a matter of ongoing debate.

- D. Regarding the draft paragraph proposed for the preamble in Annex 1, Parties may recall that the Standing Committee, at its 65th and 66th meetings, was recommended (in document SC65 Doc. 42.7 and in document SC66 Doc. 47.3) to “endorse” the destruction by Parties of ivory stockpiles. However, the Standing Committee decided on each occasion to “take note” of such actions. While, over the last six years, 20 Parties have decided to destroy various quantities of government-held ivory, it may be that not all Parties would “welcome” such actions, particularly those that have taken the view that ivory stockpiles should be kept in storage. To be consistent with the approach taken by the Standing Committee, the paragraph could be amended as follows:

~~“WELCOMING~~ NOTING the actions taken by ~~many~~ several Parties since 2011 in destroying government-held ivory stockpiles in response to the elephant crisis caused by an upsurge in poaching and ivory trafficking”

- E. At the request of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat proposes in document CoP17 Doc. 57.1 several amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16) concerning the handling and sampling of ivory stockpiles, and draft decisions on guidance for ivory stockpile management. Several proposals in the present document overlap with those made by the Secretariat on behalf of the Standing Committee. This is the case for the first and the second DIRECTS, and the ENCOURAGES in Annex 1; and for the draft decision directed to the Secretariat in Annex 2. The Conference of the Parties may wish to seek to consolidate these elements with the relevant recommendations in document CoP17 Doc. 57.1.
- F. The Secretariat considers that Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16), with the amendments proposed in document CoP17 Doc. 57.1, contains sufficient recommendations and instructions to the Standing Committee to regularly revise the implementation by the Parties of the provisions in this Resolution, and that the draft decision directed to the Standing Committee in Annex 2 of the present document is not necessary.
- G. The Secretariat considers that the management of government-held ivory stockpiles is a potentially sensitive matter and that sufficient guidance exists to guide each Party in deciding on whether to store or destroy them within the framework of the Convention’s existing provisions, It therefore recommends the Conference of the Parties not to adopt the second RECOMMENDS in Annex 1, or the draft decision directed to the Standing Committee in Annex 2.

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<sup>31</sup> See: [https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri\\_lanka\\_ivory\\_crush\\_cites\\_secretary\\_generals\\_remarks\\_26012016](https://cites.org/eng/news/sg/sri_lanka_ivory_crush_cites_secretary_generals_remarks_26012016)



DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. COP16) ON  
TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS

The following new provisions on management and destruction of ivory stockpiles are proposed for inclusion in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16):

Preamble:

WELCOMING the action taken by many Parties since 2011 in destroying ivory stockpiles in response to the elephant crisis caused by an upsurge in poaching and ivory trafficking;

Operative section:

Regarding management and destruction of ivory stockpiles

RECOMMENDS that Parties 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, 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;

*[Note: this provision is already in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16); the amendment would move it to this new section as a recommendation to Parties.]*

DIRECTS the Standing Committee, in its review of actions taken by Parties to implement the provisions of this Resolution, to determine what further actions are necessary in the case of Parties who fail to provide annual inventories of government-held stockpiles of ivory and, where possible, of significant privately held stockpiles of ivory within their territory;

CONSIDERS that ivory stockpiles place an economic and security burden on countries, diverting scarce resources from the conservation of elephants, particularly implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan and actions to combat poaching and trafficking of ivory, and therefore;

RECOMMENDS that all Parties with government-held ivory stockpiles:

a) destroy all ivory which is surplus to *bona fide* scientific, educational, enforcement or identification purposes, after taking forensic samples to determine its origin, in order to prevent the ivory from entering the market and to send a clear message that the poaching of elephants and trafficking in ivory must end; and

b) establish protocols to continue destroying such ivory that may be acquired in the future;

*[Note: this recommendation is consistent with Resolution Conf. 9.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Disposal of Confiscated and Accumulated Dead Specimens, noting that the proponents consider destruction the “best manner possible” for disposal of ivory in order to ensure the survival of elephants and achieve the purposes of the Convention<sup>32</sup>.]*

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<sup>32</sup> Resolution Conf. 9.10 (Rev. CoP15) recommends: e) 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; f) as a general rule, confiscated dead specimens, including parts and derivatives, of Appendix-II and Appendix-III species be disposed of in the best manner possible to achieve the purposes of the Convention, and steps be taken to ensure that the person responsible for the offence does not receive financial or other gain from the disposal; (emphasis added).

DIRECTS the Secretariat to provide technical guidance to Parties on best practices for ivory stockpile management and destruction, drawing on the experience of Parties, as well as relevant tools developed by research and forensic institutions and non-governmental organizations; and

ENCOURAGES Parties and the Secretariat to work with research and forensic institutions and non-governmental organizations that have developed tools reflecting best practices in planning for and implementing ivory audits and stockpile destructions.

## DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

### **Directed to the Standing Committee**

*The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *at its 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> meetings review the provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev.CoP17) regarding management and destruction of ivory stockpiles and determine what further actions are necessary;*
- b) *no later than its 69<sup>th</sup> meeting, approve technical guidance to Parties on best practices for ivory stockpile management and destruction, as provided for in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev.CoP17); and*
- c) *report to the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties on implementation of the provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev.CoP17) regarding management and destruction of ivory stockpiles.*

### **Directed to the Secretariat**

*The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *review methods used for the destruction of ivory stocks; and*
- b) *prepare for approval at the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, technical guidance to Parties on best practices for ivory stockpile management and destruction, addressing inter alia security, inventory procedures, digital photography of all tusks and ivory pieces, DNA sampling and analysis, transparency in tracking and reporting costs of storage / security, destruction options, pre- and post-destruction monitoring, and use of residual material, and drawing on tools developed by the Elephant Protection Initiative, the University of Washington Center for Conservation Biology and other relevant institutions, as well as the review of methods used for the destruction of ivory stocks.*