



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

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Date:..... **22/07/2016**.....

**John Scanlon, CITES Secretary General
International Environment House
Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva
Switzerland
21 July 2016**

Subject: Nigeria's position on CITES CoP17 proposals – response to CITES Notification 2016/043

Dear Mr Scanlon,

Many of Africa's unique species of wild animals are facing a variety of threats, including international trade in many cases. The region of West Africa has been particularly badly affected by species declines in recent years. In recognition of this, Nigeria participated in the meeting between 18 West and Central African countries that took place in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2016, and is a signatory to the Dakar Declaration (<https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/Dakar-declaration-English-French.pdf>). Nigeria is also an active member of the African Elephant Coalition and is a signatory to the Cotonou Declaration that emerged from the meeting in Cotonou, Benin, in November 2015 (<http://www.africanelephantcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/cotonou-declaration.pdf>), and the Montreux Elephant Manifesto that emerged from the meeting in Montreux, Switzerland, in June 2016 (<http://www.africanelephantcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Manifesto.pdf>). Nigeria was the first African nation to join CITES in 1974. We recognise the importance of the Convention in addressing the threat of uncontrolled international trade in wildlife and wildlife products. We urge Parties to make full use of the Convention to protect our precious biodiversity in this time of crisis for many species.

Nigeria is a co-proponent of Proposal 4 to transfer all populations of African lions to CITES Appendix I, and urges all parties to support this important proposal. Africa's lions have declined in number by more than 95% over the past century, and the IUCN assessment from 2015 infers a 43% decline over the past 21 years (3 generations), with the authors recognising that this estimate is probably conservative. In the absence of concerted action, further devastating declines are predicted. International trade in lion body parts is increasing markedly and international concerns over the sustainability of trophy hunting operations in many countries point to the need for greater regulation. An Appendix I listing would help prevent international trade further threatening already beleaguered and fragmented lion populations, and would bring greater scrutiny to the lion trophy hunting industry. Nigeria urges all Parties to

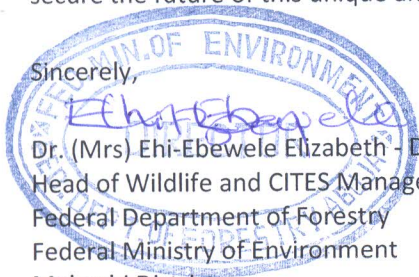
recognise the important role CITES has in helping to prevent further lion declines, and to support the listing of African lions in CITES Appendix I.

Nigeria is also a co-proponent of Proposal 12 to transfer all four species of African pangolins to CITES Appendix I, and urges all Parties to support this proposal, and proposals 8-11 relating to the four Asian species of pangolins. International trade in pangolins and products derived from them is the cause of serious population declines. IUCN recently estimated that populations of all African pangolin species have been declining and will continue to decline at least 30-40% over a 21-27 year period. IUCN also inferred population declines of over 90% for the Chinese pangolin (*M. pentadactyla*) and 80% for the Sunda pangolin (*M. javanica*) over the last 21 years and predicted continuing declines of similar magnitude within the next 21 years; and projected that populations of the Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) will fall by at least 50% in the next 21 years. In addition, pangolins have very low reproductive rates (one young per year) which makes them extremely vulnerable to excessive mortality and rapid population declines. The identification of the species from which pangolin products in trade are derived is extremely challenging, so in order to facilitate enforcement efforts and effectively bring international trade under control it is vital that all pangolin species are listed in CITES Appendix I. We therefore urge Parties to adopt proposals 8 through 12.

Nigeria is a co-proponent of Proposal 16, which would return all African elephant populations into CITES Appendix I, where they clearly belong. The killing of Africa's elephants for their ivory has reached unprecedented levels in recent years, devastating elephant populations across much of West, Central and East Africa, and increasingly affecting Southern Africa's populations. There is wide recognition that in order to prevent further declines, the trade in ivory, both international and domestic, must be shut down. The return of all elephant populations to Appendix I will send a clear message that international ivory trade will not be reopened, which in turn will compliment efforts to protect remaining elephant populations and reverse the catastrophic recent declines. Nigeria therefore urges all parties to support Proposal 16, and to reject Proposals 14 and 15 which would send completely the wrong message to potential ivory consumers and traders.

Nigeria is a co-proponent of Proposal 19 to transfer the African grey parrot to CITES Appendix I. African grey parrots have declined by more than 50% over three generations in many range States, primarily because of trapping for the live pet trade. The unsustainable nature of this trade is recognised by the European Union and USA, two of the major markets for African grey parrots, both of which are co-proponents of the Proposal. The vast majority of birds that are trapped from the wild do not reach their end markets alive, and there is significant corruption associated with the trade with many wild-caught birds being laundered as captive-bred. Nigeria urges all parties to support this proposal in order to help secure the future of this unique and highly intelligent species.

Sincerely,



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