

(Check against delivery)

Remarks at China Confiscated Ivory Destruction Ceremony
By Zhao Shucong, Minister of the State Forestry Administration
(May 29, 2015)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Today, the State Forestry Administration and the General Administration of Customs of China co-host the China Confiscated Ivory Destruction Ceremony to destruct about 660 kilograms of confiscated ivory of the concluded cases since 2014. This event further demonstrates the firm resolution of the Chinese government in advancing ecological civilization, conserving wildlife and combating illegal trade of wildlife and its products including ivory.

China attaches great importance to wildlife conservation and has taken a series measures accordingly. First, we have promulgated and implemented *Wildlife Conservation Law, Forest Law, Customs Law, Criminal Law, Regulations on Nature Reserves* and *Regulations on the Import and Export of Endangered Wildlife*. A relatively comprehensive legal system on wildlife conservation has come into being. Second, we have improved the wildlife conservation system composed of field protection, rescue and breeding, scientific backup, enforcement and regulation, monitoring and prevention of wildlife-born epidemic diseases and established an inter-agency wildlife conservation coordination mechanism. Third, we successively conducted such specialized enforcement operations as “Skynet Action”, “Alarm Bell Action” and “Guardian Action” to curb illegal wildlife hunting, transaction and trafficking. Fourth, we have implemented the *Program of Wildlife Conservation and Nature*

Reserve Development and established 2,729 nature reserves with an area of 147 million hectares, covering 15.3% of the national territory. The status of wildlife habitat has been gradually improved. Fifth, we have conducted rescue protection on priority endangered wildlife, enabling the steady increase of the population of *giant panda* and *crested ibis*.

The Chinese government has actively involved in international cooperation in wildlife conservation. We successively acceded to *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*, *Ramsar Convention* and *Convention on Biodiversity*. We earnestly fulfill related international obligations and endeavor to safeguard global ecological security. In particular, for the sake of protecting such endangered wildlife as African elephant, we have actively participated in and promoted global initiatives and fruitful cooperation in this regard, including coordinating related countries to conduct *Operation Cobra*. We have signed bilateral cooperation agreements or MOUs with related countries in conserving wildlife and fighting against wildlife trafficking, and also aided capacity building activities for related countries. In 2014, the mainland and Hongkong SAR of China destructed 6.1 tons and 28 tons of confiscated ivory respectively. Today, we are destructing the ivory confiscated since last year. We have also decided that, from February 26, 2015 on, the import of African ivory carvings obtained after CITES coming into effect will be temporarily prohibited. All these measures have made positive contributions to wildlife conservation including African elephant.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of ecological civilization. President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have made important instructions on how to better conserve wildlife including elephant on various occasions.

On April 25 this year, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council jointly issued the *Decree on Accelerating the Development of Ecological Civilization*, in which comprehensive arrangements for advancing ecological civilization were made. In future, the Chinese government will continue to enhance wildlife conservation with no hideout for illegal wildlife trade including ivory trafficking in China. We plan to take the following 10 major measures:

First, In the process of formulating the 13th Five-year Plan, we will implement the national strategy of wildlife conservation and further enhance the conservation of wildlife including elephant. Second, according to the legislative plan of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, we will promote the amendment of *Wildlife Conservation Law* so as to improve the rule of law in wildlife conservation. Third, we will earnestly implement the *Program of Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Development*, giving priority to improving habitat status and adopting special conservation measures for priority wildlife species. Fourth, we will issue policies and measures to further enhance wildlife conservation and update the *List of Wildlife under National Priority Protection*. Fifth, we will take stricter measures to prohibit the transport and delivery of illegal wildlife and its products including ivory by enterprises engaged in transport, post and express delivery. Sixth, we will continue to combat online illegal ivory trade, and monitor those bank accounts and websites ever involved in such unlawful conducts. Seventh, under the legal framework of CITES and domestic laws and regulations, we will strictly control ivory processing and trade until the commercial processing and sale of ivory and its products are eventually halted. Eighth, we will improve the inter-agency law enforcement mechanism and enhance synergy

of the enforcement and control efforts in combating illegal wildlife trade including ivory trafficking. Ninth, we will strengthen the publicity efforts including reminding and educating overseas Chinese so as to improve the public awareness of protecting wildlife consciously. Tenth, we will enhance international cooperation in the fight against illegal wildlife trade and promote joint actions and measures accordingly.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is the common responsibility of the countries and international community to conserve wildlife and combat illegal wildlife trade, which requires all parties to join in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade. All the related countries must take concrete actions to strengthen surveillance and combat illegal activities, so as to effectively curb illegal inflow and outflow as well as domestic spread of illegal wildlife and its products. We need to respect the predominant role of the countries in wildlife conservation, motivate the international community to support the developing countries with limited capacities in wildlife conservation and enforcement, so as to curb illegal wildlife trade from the source and promote the rehabilitation and growth of wildlife population. While promoting ecological civilization in an overall manner, the Chinese government will participate in international cooperation more actively and provide support to range countries of African elephant according to our capacity and make due contributions to safeguarding global ecological security.

Thank you.