

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



**Second African elephant meeting
Gigiri, Kenya
9-11 March 2009**

MEETING NOTE/NOTE VERBALE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. The CITES Secretariat convened the second African elephant meeting in Gigiri, Kenya, from 9 to 11 March 2009 in compliance with Decision 14.79, and as a follow up to the first African elephant meeting that it had organized (Mombasa, Kenya; 23-25 June 2008). The meeting was funded through the Secretariat's programme on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). The meeting was attended by representatives of 29 of the 37 African elephant range States (invitees Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland and Zambia were not at the meeting) and of 3 donor countries that made significant pledges to the African Elephant Fund; the CITES Secretariat and its MIKE programme; United Nations Environment Programme - Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (UNEP/DELIC); United Nations Environment Programme - Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS); and IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) (see [Annex 1](#)).
3. As proposed by the CITES Secretariat, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Robert Wabunoha, representative of UNEP/DELIC. In an opening message presented by the Secretariat, the Secretary-General of the CITES Secretariat conveyed his welcome to the African elephant range States and the representatives of donors that made significant pledges to the African Elephant Fund. He thanked the European Commission for supporting the CITES-MIKE programme in Africa through which this meeting could take place. He reiterated the importance of advancing the *African elephant Action Plan* and the African Elephant Fund, and the facilitating role of the Secretariat in this regard. Later during the meeting, an address from the Executive Secretary of the CMS Secretariat was presented in which he outlined the collaboration between CMS and CITES in the area of African elephants and announced relevant CMS and joint CMS/CITES-MIKE meetings in Accra, Ghana, in March 2009.
4. The participants adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting (see [Annex 2](#)), but suggested to change the provisional working programme which the Secretariat had circulated together with the agenda. They noted that Theme 1 [The *African elephant Action Plan* (Decision 14.75)] would need two days of discussions and Theme 2 [The African Elephant Fund (Decision 14.75)] most of the third day. Any remaining time could be devoted to items under Theme 3. In view of the presence of the donor countries until the end of the meeting, these proposed changes were agreed to.
5. The participants agreed to the Secretariat's proposal to summarize the meeting and its outputs in a short Meeting Note as had been the case for the first African elephant meeting (see document SS57 Inf. 13). The various presentations that were provided during the meeting would be circulated to all participants.

Theme 1: The African elephant Action Plan (Decision 14.75)

6. The Secretariat introduced Theme 1 by providing an overview of the implementation of Decision 14.75 to date. This had involved the following steps:

June 2007	Adoption of Decision 14.75 and the accompanying Decision 14.79 at the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties.
January-June 2008	In support of the implementation of Decision 14.75, the Secretariat contracts AfESG to compile relevant background material for discussion by the African elephant range States.
June 1008	<p>The first African elephant meeting is convened by the Secretariat in Mombasa, Kenya, on 23-25 June 2008 in compliance with Decision 14.79.</p> <p>The African elephant range States agree on the outline and general content of a 'Strategic Framework for the <i>African elephant Action Plan</i>'. They concur that this is the beginning of a process towards the development of a comprehensive <i>African elephant Action Plan</i>, and that further meetings would be necessary to elaborate on subsequent drafts, establish priorities and assess budget needs.</p>
July 2008	The African elephant range States report on progress in the implementation of Decision 14.75 to the Standing Committee at its 57 th meeting (see Document SC57 Doc. 33.3).
July-December 2008	The AfESG collates inputs and draft the 'Strategic Framework for an <i>African elephant action plan</i> ', which is circulated by the Secretariat to all African elephant range States in November with a request to provide comments, if any, by 19 December 2008.
December 2008- January 2009	<p>Comments from range States are consolidate by AfESG in a further version of the draft 'Strategic Framework for an <i>African elephant action plan</i>'. This document is referred to as the "Mombasa document".</p> <p>As agreed in Mombasa, the Secretariat disseminates this document to the African elephant range States early in 2009, prior to the second African elephant meeting.</p>
March 2009	<p>The second African elephant meeting is convened by the Secretariat in Gigiri, Kenya, on 9-11 March 2009.</p> <p>The Theme of moving from the 'Strategic Framework for an <i>African elephant action plan</i>' to a detailed <i>African elephant action plan</i> features prominently on the meeting's agenda.</p>

6. The AfESG gave an overview of the content of the Strategic framework for an *African elephant Action Plan* that resulted from the first African elephant meeting and subsequent consultations (the so-called "Mombasa document"). It drew attention to seven Objectives therein that address broad continent-wide issues facing African elephant conservation and management, within their socio-economic context:

- 1) Improve knowledge and management of elephant populations and their habitats
- 2) Reduce illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products
- 3) Maintain elephant habitats and restore connectivity
- 4) Reduce human-elephant conflict
- 5) Strengthen understanding and cooperation among range States
- 6) Assess the costs and benefits of elephants to people

- 7) Implement and monitor the African elephant action plan

Additionally, two cross-cutting Objectives were identified that pertain to each of the seven Objectives mentioned above:

- 8) Increase awareness on elephant conservation and management across all levels
- 9) Build capacity in elephant conservation and management

Under each of these nine broad Objectives, one or more Results had been listed with for each a series of examples of pertinent Activities.

7. The range States were invited to submit additional inputs in writing in the understanding that the document could be enriched with further proposals for activities. These were compiled by AfESG in the course of the meeting and presented to the participants. The additions, all provided by Kenya, were agreed to and subject to their incorporation into a final version, the Strategic framework for an *African elephant Action Plan* was adopted (see [Annex 3](#)).
8. In view of the urgency with which an action plan would have to be agreed upon for the existing donor pledges to be made available, and to continue the process towards the development of a comprehensive *African elephant Action Plan*, four working groups (Central, East, Southern and West Africa) were established to identified three key priority actions under each of the 9 Objectives contained in the "Mombasa document". These were either activities already mentioned in the document or new ones.
9. The results of the priority-setting exercise were presented in plenary, compiled and clustered per Objective, and disseminated in a combined French and English version. The resulting draft document (the so-called "Gigiri document"; see [Annex 4](#)) is to provide additional input into the *African elephant Action Plan*.
10. The African elephant range States then agreed to establish an African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) Working Group, composed of the United Republic of Tanzania and 2 delegates per subregion (Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Gabon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali and Nigeria). Range States were given up to one month to provide comments on the "Gigiri document" for consideration by the AEAP Working Group.
11. The United Republic of Tanzania offered to host a meeting of this Working Group in April 2009 with Tanzania covering the cost of accommodation, venue and food. This was gracefully accepted by the range States, which acknowledged that additional needs for the meeting included the participant's air tickets and translation/interpretation costs. The Terms of Reference for the AEAP Working Group were decided to be as follows:
 - a) Take the "Gigiri document" forward;
 - b) Integrate the "Gigiri document" into the Strategic framework for an *African elephant Action Plan*;
 - c) Establish budgeted, time bound business plans for priority activities;
 - d) Circulate the outcome by email for comments within a certain timeframe;
 - e) Incorporate comments from range States; and
 - f) Finalize the resulting document by June 2009.
12. The finalized document resulting from the revisions and inputs of the AEAP Working Group should be the *African elephant Action Plan* as envisaged under Decision 14.75. The range States kept the possibility open for revising or updating this *Action Plan* after two or three year's time. The African elephant range States agreed to report on progress with the *African elephant Action Plan* at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58, July 2009) in compliance with Decision

14.75, expressing the hope to be able to present an African-wide agreed, final *African elephant Action Plan* on that occasion.

Theme 2: The African Elephant Fund (Decision 14.79)

13. The Secretariat gave a presentation on mechanisms for financing and running an African Elephant Fund, largely based on the study and presentation that it had provided for the first African elephant meeting in 2008. The Secretariat reiterated that in accordance with Decision 14.79, it was tasked with establishing (a) an African Elephant Fund that will be applied to the implementation of the *African elephant Action Plan*, and (b) a steering committee, composed of representatives from donors and African elephant range States. The steering committee is to govern the African Elephant Fund, support and advise African elephant range States on the implementation of the *Action Plan* and decide on the organization of the administration of the Fund. The Secretariat stated that the steering committee should be balanced, credible and competent. It was seeking input from the meeting representatives on the composition and operation of the steering committee.
14. The donor representatives expressed commitment to the African Elephant Fund, urged others to support and fund it, and called on range States to finalize the *Action Plan* as soon as possible so that the accompanying Fund could be created.
15. The participants decided to establish a virtual working group on the African Elephant Fund, composed of 8 representatives from African elephant range States (2 delegates per subregion: Kenya, Rwanda, Congo, Gabon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali and Nigeria) and representatives of the 3 donors present at the meeting. The virtual working group is to be convened and moderated by the Secretariat with the following mandate:
 - a) to formulate recommendations regarding:
 - the composition of the steering committee
 - a definition of 'donor'
 - the nature of the fund (i.e. endowment, revolving or sinking)
 - internal procedures
 - project selection criteria
 - the practical management of the Fund (by a secretariat?)
 - b) to forward recommendations to the CITES Secretariat by 1 June 2009, allowing it to establish the African Elephant Fund and its steering committee at SC58.
16. The African elephant range States agreed that their members in the virtual working group would meet in Tanzania in April 2009 in the sidelines of the meeting mentioned in paragraph 11 above to discuss and coordinate their contributions.
17. The Secretariat clarified that it had secured funding for the main operations and activities of its MIKE programme in Africa until April 2011 and that until that time, it had no intention or need to seek funding from an African Elephant Fund. It also explained that the ETIS programme was implemented by TRAFFIC, which had been seeking and securing external funding for ETIS since its initial creation. The Secretariat assumed that TRAFFIC had sufficient resources to run the monitoring programme until CoP15 and provide an analytical ETIS report on that occasion, but it was unaware of TRAFFIC's funding situation for ETIS beyond that time.

Theme 3: Conservation policies and management of African elephant populations (Decision 14.75)

18. The CITES Secretariat gave an overview of CITES and current elephant conservation issues, including the status of implementation of relevant Decisions adopted at CoP14.

19. The AfESG gave a presentation on challenges for elephant conservation in Central Africa, widely believed to be badly affected by poaching and the source of much illegal ivory. Opportunities included an African elephant sub-regional Strategy ready to be implemented; many involved and committed organisations; the possibility for significant multi-species initiatives; a large private sector (with funding and partnership opportunities); climate change negotiations that could provide opportunities for habitat and forest conservation; and the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC).
20. GRASP gave a presentation on the partnership, which was registered as a World Summit on Sustainable Development Type II Partnership in 2002. It has currently 54 signatories which include Great Ape range States and other countries, NGOs, UN agencies, Convention secretariats and the private sector. Its secretariat was provided by UNEP and UNESCO. Similar to Great Apes, elephants inhabit tropical forest in 2 of the 3 “green lungs” of the planet in Southeast Asia and in the Congo Basin. GRASP promotes development and conservation activities with strong human livelihoods components, which are also central to elephant conservation and reducing human-elephant conflicts.

GRASP explained the vital importance of the world's remaining tropical forests in removing CO₂ emissions from the atmosphere that are released by burning fossil fuels, and the central role that forests in Africa and Asia play in efforts to avoid dangerous climate change. Elephants are super-keystone species in these ecosystems, dispersing billions of seeds which have higher germination and seedling survival rates than seeds that just fall to ground. Therefore, it was argued that there was a strong scientific case for carbon finances - whether public or private or both - to make significant contributions to the African Elephant Fund. In this regard, GRASP asked whether Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), designed to provide financial alternatives to biofuels and timber exploitation, could play a role. GRASP furthermore tabled the question whether it was time to consider developing a non-legally binding instrument on elephants in the form of a global partnership, similar to GRASP.

Conclusion and closure of the meeting

20. The Secretariat proceeded with presenting the main conclusions of the meeting in the form of in bullet notes. These were all agreed to. The meeting was closed at 17.30.