



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2024/111

Geneva, 3 October 2024

CONCERNING:

AFRICAN ELEPHANT DIALOGUE MEETING *Maun, Botswana, 23-26 September 2024*

1. At its 77th meeting (SC77, Geneva, November 2023) and pursuant to Decision 19.167, the Standing Committee called for the CITES Dialogue Meeting for African elephant range States as per Resolution Conf. 14.5 on *Dialogue meetings*, noted the draft terms of reference agreed by the range States present at that meeting, and welcomed Botswana's offer to host the Dialogue Meeting in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee and the range States (see summary record SC77 SR).
2. As announced in Notification to the Parties No. 2024/078 of 3 July 2024, the African elephant Dialogue Meeting took place from 23 to 26 September 2024 in Maun, Botswana and was attended by 31 of the 37 African elephant range States.
3. The range States of the African elephants adopted by consensus the communiqué contained in the Annex to the present Notification.

Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

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



COMMUNIQUÉ

CITES Dialogue Meeting for African elephant range States

23 – 26 September 2024

Maun, Botswana

1. This document was prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, as well as the two Vice-Chairs of the CITES Dialogue Meeting for African elephant range States (hereinafter referred to as “Dialogue Meeting”), and has been adopted by the African elephant range States attending the Dialogue Meeting (hereinafter referred to as “range States”) as the official record of the outcome of the Dialogue Meeting.

Background

2. At its 19th meeting (Panama City, November 2022) the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.167- 19.168 on Trade in live African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.167 The Standing Committee shall call a CITES dialogue meeting as per Resolution Conf. 14.5 on *Dialogue meetings* for African elephant range States to consider a harmonization of the conditions to trade in live African elephants and propose relevant changes to Resolutions to CoP20 as well as relevant changes to annotation 2 (after CoP19, footnote annotation A10), including changes to streamline and simplify the annotation; and recommend other Parties, the CITES Secretariat and technical experts to participate in the meeting in accordance with the Annex to Resolution Conf. 14.5 on *Dialogue meetings*.

Directed to Parties

- 19.168** The Parties agree that, while the process for the dialogue meeting is under way, any export of live wild-caught African elephant will be limited to *in situ* conservation programmes or secure areas in the wild, within the species’ natural and historical range in Africa, except in exceptional circumstances where, in consultation with the Animals Committee, through its Chair with the support of the Secretariat, and in consultation with the IUCN African elephant specialist group, it is considered that a transfer to *ex situ* locations will provide demonstrable *in situ* conservation benefits for African elephants, or in the case of temporary transfers in emergency situations.
3. Pursuant to Decision 19.167, the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting (SC77, Geneva, November 2023) called for the *CITES Dialogue Meeting for African elephant range States* as per Resolution Conf. 14.5 on *Dialogue meetings*, noted the draft terms of reference found in the Annex to [document SC77 Com. 7](#), and welcomed Botswana’s offer to host the Dialogue Meeting in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee and the range States ([SC77 SR](#)).
4. The Dialogue Meeting took place from 23 to 26 September 2024 in Maun, Botswana and was attended by 31 of the 37 African elephant range States. The list of range States and other participants present at the Dialogue Meeting is contained in **Annex 1** to this communiqué.
5. The range States and the Secretariat are grateful to Botswana, the European Union, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for their generous financial support to make the Dialogue Meeting possible. The range States expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to meet to discuss elephant conservation matters as range States.

6. The remarks by the Minister of Environment and Tourism of Botswana during the opening ceremony reflected on the importance of African elephant range States to unify in the conservation of elephants across the continent.
7. The range States designated by consensus Botswana and Côte d'Ivoire as Vice-Chairs of the Dialogue Meeting.

Status of African elephant populations and related assessments

8. Representatives of the African elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) presented information relating to the current status of the African elephant populations and the range of the two species recognized by the IUCN (*Loxodonta africana* and *Loxodonta cyclotis*).
9. The CITES Secretariat presented an update on the information relating to the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme with a focus on the data submitted by African elephant range States and the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) trend analysis.
10. The range States:
 - a) Noted the presentation made by the AfESG relating to the current status of *Loxodonta africana* and *Loxodonta cyclotis* and, acknowledging the scientific independence of the AfESG requested the AfESG to establish mechanisms to ensure that relevant government authorities in African elephant range States share survey information and are consulted before status reports and population estimates are published;
 - b) Noted the presentation made by the CITES Secretariat on the MIKE data submitted by African elephant range States and the PIKE trend analysis and expressed appreciation for the support provided to African elephant range States by the CITES Secretariat MIKE Programme. The discussions also referred to the possibility to expand the network of MIKE sites to other sites in African elephant range States; and
 - c) Further noted the MIKE Programme as an example of how governments can be actively involved in the field data collection that inform decision-making on elephant conservation.

Harmonization of Conditions for Trade in Live African Elephants (Decision 19.167)

11. The range States considered and discussed proposed amendments to Annotation A10 in the CITES Appendices presented by Botswana on behalf of Parties with elephant populations in Appendix II and proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) on *Trade in elephant specimens* and Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP18) on *Definition of the term 'appropriate and acceptable destinations'* presented by Kenya.
12. The range States agreed to the amendments to Annotation A10 pertaining to the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to harmonize the conditions of trade in live African elephants set out in **Annex 2** to the present communiqué.
13. Based on this consensus on amendments to annotation A10 and on the understanding that no changes would be made to Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP18), the range States did not discuss the matter further.

Implementation of the revised (2nd Edition) African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)

14. A representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the Secretariat of the African Elephant Fund (AEF) Steering Committee and administrator of the AEF provided an update on the current status of the implementation of the [AEAP](#) through the fund and the projects financed by the AEF. The range States noted the update on the status of the AEF and the projects funded to date.
15. Nigeria proposed the establishment of a regional coordination committee responsible for the oversight and coordination of the implementation of the AEAP activities and to strengthen regional cohesion and cooperation. The proposal included the designation of focal points for AEAP implementation and the creation of a regional fund.

16. The proposal by Nigeria was noted especially the importance of regional collaboration and coordination and the need to continue discussions relating to innovative financing solutions, while recognizing the role of the AEF as one of the funding mechanisms to implement the AEAP.

Sustainable financing for the African elephant conservation and management

17. The Democratic Republic of the Congo presented information relating to the challenges associated with securing funding for African elephant conservation in conflict zones, especially for sites where there is also no support from non-governmental organizations. The need to establish Private Public Partnerships, the creation of a trust fund and the need for special expertise to support conservation in these areas were highlighted.
18. In its presentation and recalling its proposal to CoP19 in document CoP19 Doc. 66.2.2, Kenya reflected on the need for African elephant range States to coordinate efforts to secure resources for conservation of elephants and proposed that range States should consider various mechanisms to access funding. Botswana invited the range States to focus on the common ground and suggested the need to explore how to leverage funding on the basis of conservation successes.
19. The range States noted the presentation by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the introductions by Kenya and Botswana. They agreed that wider options should be explored and that further discussions and studies relating to the feasibility of potential sustainable financing mechanisms are needed. In this regard, the range States agreed on the text of possible draft decisions for consideration at CoP20 contained in **Annex 3** to the communiqué.

Structure and mechanisms for building regional cohesion and coordination across the range States and in the region

20. The range States discussed the existing mechanisms available and used to coordinate processes, especially relating to coordination prior to meetings of the Conference of the Parties. It was agreed that the African Union (AU), through the AU Commission (AUC), is the main body responsible to convene countries in Africa, but noted challenges and requested the AU to address these. The range States expressed their regret that the AUC although invited was not represented at the Dialogue Meeting, but trust that it will support African elephant range States in future endeavours.
21. The range States agreed to impress on the AUC the need for timely coordination prior to meetings of the CoP to strengthen coordination and unity. This should include preparatory meetings prior to the deadline for submission of documents for consideration by the CoP as well as coordination meetings before and during the meetings of the CoP to discuss documents affecting the African elephant range States. Adequate funding to support these coordination meetings should be secured and the range States invite donors to provide this support.
22. The range States agreed that proposals should not be submitted for consideration at the meeting of the CoP without prior consultation with most affected and other range States of the species.
23. The range States furthermore emphasized the need for the Secretariat to provide technical training to new CITES focal points appointed by Parties.

Closing

24. The range States agreed that the communiqué will be shared through a Notification to the Parties and that the Chair of the Standing Committee would report on the outcomes to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting. Botswana offered to submit a proposal relating to the proposed amendments to annotation A10 as contained in Annex II and called for other range States to be co-proponents.
25. Following the remarks by the range States and the Secretariat, the Chair thanked all participants for their cooperation, the Secretariat and the interpreters, and closed the meeting.

Participants at the African elephant Dialogue Meeting

African elephant range States:

Angola
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Gabon
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Somalia
South Africa
Togo
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Other participants:

Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committee

United Nations Environment Programme as Secretariat of the AEF Steering Committee

African Elephant Species Specialist Group of the Species Specialist Commission of the IUCN (AfESG)

CITES Secretariat

Amendments to Annotation A10

Amendments to Annotation A10 pertaining to the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to harmonize the conditions of trade in live African elephants (deleted text reflected as ~~strike through~~ and text inserted underlined):

For the exclusive purpose of allowing:

- a) trade in hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes;
- b) trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations, ~~as defined in Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP18), for Botswana and Zimbabwe and for *in situ* conservation programmes for Namibia and South Africa;~~
- c) trade in hides;
- d) trade in hair;
- e) ~~trade in leather goods for commercial or non-commercial purposes for Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe;~~
- f) trade for non-commercial purposes in individually marked and certified ekipas incorporated in finished jewellery ~~for non-commercial purposes for Namibia and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe;~~
- g) ~~trade in registered raw ivory (for Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, whole tusks and pieces) subject to the following:~~
 - i) ~~only registered government-owned stocks, originating in the State (excluding seized ivory and ivory of unknown origin);~~
 - ii) ~~only to trading partners that have been verified by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Standing Committee, to have sufficient national legislation and domestic trade controls to ensure that the imported ivory will not be re-exported and will be managed in accordance with all requirements of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) concerning domestic manufacturing and trade;~~
 - iii) ~~not before the Secretariat has verified the prospective importing countries and the registered government-owned stocks;~~
 - iv) ~~raw ivory pursuant to the conditional sale of registered government-owned ivory stocks agreed at CoP12, which are 20,000 kg (Botswana), 10,000 kg (Namibia) and 30,000 kg (South Africa);~~
 - v) ~~in addition to the quantities agreed at CoP12, government-owned ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe registered by 31 January 2007 and verified by the Secretariat may be traded and despatched, with the ivory in paragraph g) iv) above, in a single sale per destination under strict supervision of the Secretariat;~~
 - vi) ~~the proceeds of the trade are used exclusively for elephant conservation and community conservation and development programmes within or adjacent to the elephant range; and~~
 - vii) ~~the additional quantities specified in paragraph g) v) above shall be traded only after the Standing Committee has agreed that the above conditions have been met; and~~
- h) ~~no further proposals to allow trade in elephant ivory from populations already in Appendix II shall be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for the period from CoP14 and ending nine years from the date of the single sale of ivory that is to take place in accordance with provisions in paragraphs g) i), g) ii), g) iii), g) vi) and g) vii). In addition such further proposals shall be dealt with in accordance with Decisions 16.55 and 14.78 (Rev. CoP16).~~

~~On a proposal from the Secretariat, the Standing Committee can decide to cause this trade to cease partially or completely in the event of non-compliance by exporting or importing countries, or in the case of proven detrimental impacts of the trade on other elephant populations.~~

All other specimens shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix I and the trade in them shall be regulated accordingly.

Draft Decision on sustainable financing

Decision 20 AA directed to Secretariat to convene, subject to the availability of external funds, a technical workshop for African Elephant Range States to consider mechanisms for sustainable management of elephants and ivory stockpiles, including non-commercial disposal of ivory stockpiles and other means for the purpose of mobilising the needed resources to support the conservation and management of elephants;

Decision 20 BB directed to the African Elephant Range States to provide the necessary background information needed for the workshop;

Dec 20 CC Directed to all Parties to report the status of stockpiles as of December 2024 pursuant to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP19) to facilitate the development of mechanisms for the sustainable management of elephants and ivory stockpiles;

Decision 20 DD directed to the Secretariat in consultation with the African elephant range States to develop the terms of reference, and to mobilise funding for engaging a consultant to consolidate the background technical information for the purpose of convening the technical workshop;

Decision 20 EE directed to CITES Parties, governmental organizations, intergovernmental, non-governmental donors and other entities to provide the necessary financial support to undertake the consultancy.

Decision 20 FF Secretariat to report results of the workshop, including any recommendations, to the Standing Committee.