



ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Declaration of the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the poaching of African elephants

In view of the discussions held within the Committee on social affairs and the environment, Louis Michel and Musikari Kombo, Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly have decided to adopt the following declaration on the poaching of African elephants.

The African elephant *Loxodonta africana spp.* is found in 37 countries, all of them ACP members. It is the world's largest terrestrial animal and is considered to be one of the most long lived charismatic mega-fauna, with complex family structures and inter-generational knowledge of their ranges. Its conservation has significant ecological, economic, cultural and aesthetic values, at both local and global levels.

The African elephant is facing the most serious threat to its long-term survival across most of its range. Habitat loss, human-elephant conflict and illegal killing for meat has been compounded by an explosion of organised poaching for ivory. 2011 was the worst year for elephants since the international ivory trade ban of 1989 with record levels of poaching for ivory. The ecological consequences of this decline are dire, and it is likely to be followed by a cascade of extinctions of other species dependent on elephants.

The African elephant is protected under the U.N. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Under CITES, the African elephant was transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I in 1989 when all international trade in elephants and their parts and derivatives was banned subject to certain limited exceptions, however some populations were transferred back to Appendix II, under a set of conditions in 1997 and 2000.

Poaching levels are reported to be increasing in all African subregions. In February 2012, heavily armed and well organised groups entered the Bouba N'Djida National Park in northern Cameroon killing over 450 elephants, clearly for their ivory. Illegal killing of elephants for the illegal international trade in ivory is now a serious threat to the remaining

elephant populations in many range States and may be leading to dramatic declines and the extirpation of some populations.

2011 was also the year of the highest number of large-scale seizures recorded, more than half the large-scale ivory seizures since 2000 have been in the last three years. In October 2012, in Hong Kong, four tons of ivory was seized, representing the death of more than 600 elephants.

The evidence shows that ivory is being smuggled to many parts of Asia. Demand for illegal ivory is recognised to be a key factor driving the killing of elephants. This reflects an increased demand for ivory and the growing involvement of organised crime in the ivory trade.

Poaching of elephants and the illegal trade in ivory is now recognised as a serious transnational organised criminal activity, linked with terrorist groups and militias. These crimes destroy wildlife and affect local communities and are often linked with exploitation, violence, conflict, money laundering, corruption and international criminal syndicates.

In 2010, African elephant range States adopted the 'African Elephant Action Plan' along with the establishment of the fund to finance its implementation (The African Elephant Fund). This plan includes common objectives, strategies and activities for ensuring the long-term survival of African elephants. The highest priority is given to “reducing illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products” through strengthening the capacity of law enforcement, and enforcing national policies and laws relevant to conservation and management of African elephants. The EU commitment to this has been in excess of €10m from 2007/12 through the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and other conservation programmes.

It must be recognised that good progress has been made in some regions to combat this poaching at great cost in lives and resources.

CITES reports highlight the current level of illegal killing is unsustainable and elephants are on a fast track to extinction across most of the continent. The poaching of elephants and illegal trade in ivory has reached their highest level for two decades, in most parts of Africa. There is a very urgent need to take effective immediate action to curb poaching and eliminate illegal trade in ivory.

The Co-Presidents call on all 37 ACP countries that are African elephant range States to fully implement the African Elephant Action Plan and to continue to take action to protect African elephant populations through improved monitoring, effective enforcement and to report their actions under CITES. Where human-elephant and environmental conflict is problematic, to develop effective strategies to reduce this;

The Co-Presidents urge the EU and ACP countries to assist elephant range States to improve their capacity to protect, manage and conserve their elephant populations through improved law enforcement, surveys and monitoring of wild populations, and the mitigation of human-elephant conflict;

The Co-Presidents call on the EU and ACP countries to strengthen laws and policies to combat poaching and illegal trade in ivory. ACP countries are encouraged to implement the 'Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytical Toolkit' developed by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) which is an effective tool for countries to strengthen laws and enforcement against wildlife crime;

The Co-Presidents encourage all parties to CITES and other international instruments such as the U.N. Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and U.N. Convention against Corruption, to comply with the treaties as well as related resolutions, funding and decisions and reporting requirements under CITES such as the MIKE programme and the 'Elephant Trade Information System' (ETIS);

The Co-Presidents urge the EU and ACP countries to join together, at this time of crisis for the elephant populations in Africa, to improve enforcement by securing meaningful convictions and sentences to poachers, ensuring the seizure of contraband ivory. The recovery of criminal assets and proceeds of the illegal trade would legitimately support conservation and law enforcement agencies;

The Co-Presidents call on the EU member states together with the ACP countries to support the CITES process in mutually determining when the time is deemed right for reclassification and tightly regulated occasional sales of registered governmental ivory stocks to approved trading partners when requested. The money so accrued must be spent strictly on conservations and community awareness programmes;

The Co-Presidents encourage all ACP and EU countries to adopt innovative measures for consumer education and demand-reduction programmes to eliminate the demand for ivory and ivory products and derivatives worldwide;

Paramaribo, 29 November 2012