

## Action to Stop the Illegal Killing of Elephants

This fact sheet sets out possible action items to combat the illegal killing of elephants throughout Africa at international and national levels.

### Background

1. All data show that the current demand for ivory exceeds any possible supply of elephants, and that demand needs to be reduced if elephants are to survive. By 2011, illegal killing of elephants was nearly triple that of the 1990s. (See KEF Fact Sheet 2-2013 that enumerates the current plight of Africa's elephants and the links between illegal killing and the ivory trade.)
2. Recognising that the bodies formulating and influencing policy are diverse, this document does not prescribe for any particular group. Rather, it calls for concerned individuals, scientists, NGOs, institutions and governments to unite to lower the demand for ivory. It sets out actions needed if our grandchildren are to share a world with free-living elephants shaping ecosystems that provide services to people.
3. At the international level, the key players are intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) such as UNEP, CITES and INTERPOL; international NGOs such as WCS, TNC, FFI, AWF, IFAW, WWF, STE; and international organisations, coalitions and networks comprising governments and/or civil society and/or IGOs such as IUCN, IIED, the Species Survival Network (SSN) and the African Elephant Coalition (see KEF Fact Sheet 1-2013).
4. At the national level, each country can easily identify its relevant government and parastatal agencies, NGOs, and key groups of local stakeholders.
5. Dealing effectively, fairly and sustainably with a cross-border issue of such magnitude requires a unified effort, concerted policy-making and action-planning at all levels: international, national and local.

### What Can be Done to Save Elephants?

#### At the International Level...

1. **Mount public awareness campaigns to reduce demand.** Governments, businesses, scientists, activists and civil society at every level should come together to educate people about the impact of ivory trade on elephants and the fact that demand now outstrips supply.
2. **Urge China to become a leader in elephant conservation and enforcement.** As we share our knowledge about elephants with consumer countries, China could use its considerable resources, local presence in Africa and international influence to support elephant conservation and enforcement agencies such as the Lusaka Agreement Task Force. China could provide leadership in Asia: first by shutting down its own domestic ivory markets; secondly, by influencing other consumer countries to crack down on ivory trafficking; and thirdly by raising awareness throughout the Far East about the impact of ivory trade on African elephants.
3. **Agree under CITES a permanent ban on the sale of ivory between and within nations.** The current 9-year ivory trade moratorium set in 2008 should be extended indefinitely (see KEF Fact Sheet 03-2013 *CITES and the Ivory Trade*).
4. **Do not sanction further sales of ivory stockpiles.** There is a strong possibility that one-off stockpile sales enhance demand for ivory and increase illegal killing of elephants (see KEF Fact Sheet 02-2013, *The Ivory Trade and Elephant Poaching*). The precautionary principle should apply given the uncertainty of true causal links.
5. **Critically examine the argument that ivory sales can effectively support elephant conservation.** Economically, the revenue generated is insignificant compared to funds needed for effective national conservation programmes; morally, the notion is akin to selling drugs to support anti-drug campaigns. (See KEF Fact Sheet 05, *Elephants and Ecosystems*).
6. **Enhance international enforcement cooperation** to step up coordinated operations and prosecutions against ivory traffickers.
7. **Support the African Elephant Coalition** in promoting and sustaining a united front for the long-term conservation of Africa's elephants and their habitats (see KEF Fact Sheet 01-2013) and in mounting campaigns, supported by organisations such as the Kenya Elephant Forum, to enable concerned governments and individuals to act against the killing of elephants.
8. **Support the African Elephant Specialist Group** in compiling and analysing at regular intervals data from the African Elephant Database. The latest compilation was in 2007, considerably out of phase with the accelerating poaching and out of date for useful contribution to preparations for the CoP16 CITES debate.

#### At the National & Regional Level...

1. **All countries ban domestic sales of ivory.** Internal domestic markets are fuelling illegal ivory trade and elephant poaching is increasing. As noted by TRAFFIC International, "...CITES mechanisms and strategies, for example compliance with the requirements for internal trade... are failing to produce positive results."
2. **All African states and entrepôt countries take steps to stop ivory trafficking through their sovereign territory** and investigate actively all companies, individuals and authorities suspected of colluding in ivory trafficking and prosecute where necessary.
3. **Launch social media and public awareness campaigns** to increase sensitivity to the immorality of killing or buying products from a highly intelligent, social networking, communicative, empathetic and self-aware animal like the elephant for luxury and profit (see KEF Fact Sheet 05, *Elephants and Ecosystems*).

4. **Stop the sale of ivory on the Internet.** Existing campaigns need to be expanded and service providers asked to take unified action to prevent sales of ivory on the Internet.
5. **Close trade loopholes** by tightening controls over the sale of antique or “pre-Convention” ivory and mammoth ivory.
6. **Establish national wildlife crime task forces** with the support of INTERPOL, providing inter-agency cooperation that is essential to enhance enforcement action against poachers and traffickers.
7. **Quantify the social and economic cost of elephant poaching and trafficking.** Calculate the costs of insecurity that results in criminality, loss of life and livelihoods. The costs should then be factored into national economic accounting to justify investment by the state (not just NGOs) in prevention, monitoring and mitigation.
8. **Review wildlife crime penalties and revise them if necessary** to punish wildlife criminals with penalties commensurate with their crimes. Initiate action against all persons, including government officials, suspected of colluding in poaching. Try and prosecute suspects under diverse legislation on corruption, economic crimes and organised crime, or illegal possession of fire arms. Seize perpetrators’ assets under the provisions of the Acts in the same way one would deal with drug traffickers.
9. **Scale up anti-poaching efforts on the ground and support enforcement cooperation.** Provide specialised training and equipment to wildlife enforcement officers. Establish mechanisms to enable collaboration with communities, landowners, conservancies and other government defence forces to detect and prevent poaching and trafficking. Create mechanisms through which the public and “whistle blowers” can provide information without fear or intimidation.
10. **Support community-based conservation,** recognising that wildlife belongs to the people and citizens have the right to participate in wildlife and ecosystem protection through community-based and other non-governmental organisations.
11. **Encourage elephant range states** to develop and then trade on socially responsible reputations of being ethical destinations for ecologically sensitive tourism.
12. **Elephant range States and entrepôt countries initiate bi-lateral dialogue with Far Eastern countries** to secure cooperation from governments of key ivory consumer countries. Range States use current trade and aid agreements with China and East Asian countries to facilitate dialogue to lower the demand for ivory and to persuade Far Eastern partners to crack down on illegal ivory traders.