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The Montreux Elephant Manifesto

7th Meeting of the African Elephant Coalition Montreux Switzerland 24-26th June 2016

African nations call on the world to join them in saving elephants!

The African Elephant Coalition (AEC), comprising 29 African countries¹ with a shared commitment to ensuring the survival of the African elephant, have met in Montreux, Switzerland, to consolidate their strategy in the run-up to the 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17) to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) from 24th September to 5th October in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Of the 29 countries represented in the Coalition, 25 of them are African elephant range States, comprising the majority (68%) of the 37 countries in which African elephants occur in the wild.

In April 2016 the Coalition submitted five complementary proposals to CITES to protect elephants by strengthening international CITES law.

They include:

- Banning international trade in ivory by listing all elephants in CITES Appendix I
- The closure of domestic ivory markets
- Improved ivory stockpile management and, where possible, destruction

¹ The 29 member countries of the African Elephant Coalition include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo and Uganda.

- Ending debate on the Decision-Making Mechanism for legalizing trade in ivory
- Limiting the trade in live African elephants to conservation projects in their natural habitat.

Taken together, the proposals would put an end to the ivory trade and afford elephants the highest protection under international law.

The package of five proposals is a decisive response to the poaching crisis facing African elephants today.

The Coalition reiterates its deep concern about the crisis facing elephants and its conviction that a ban on international and domestic trade in ivory is the best way to reverse the crisis and protect elephants.

Accordingly, the Coalition appeals to other country Parties of CITES, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to support its package of five elephant proposals.

The Coalition also appeals to citizens around the world to ask their respective governments and their representatives to CITES to support the five proposals and to help us in our mission to list all elephants in Appendix I.

The Coalition is launching a campaign – “#WorthMoreAlive, #EndIvoryTrade, #Vote4Elephants” – to gain support for the five CITES proposals. It also endorses the Twitter hashtags, #SupportAppendixI and #EndTrade.

The Montreux Elephant Manifesto follows the Cotonou Declaration released in November 2015 after an AEC meeting in Cotonou, Benin, in which the AEC countries reaffirmed their conviction that a “ban [on] international and domestic trade in ivory is essential for the long-term survival of the African elephant”.