



FIVE PROPOSALS TO CITES CoP 17 TO PROTECT ELEPHANTS

The African Elephant Coalition, comprising 29 African countries¹ sharing a commitment to ensure the survival of elephants, has submitted five proposals, together with other co-proponents, to the CITES² Conference (CoP17) to be held in Johannesburg, from 24 September to 5 October 2016. The proposals from the Coalition, which includes the majority of African elephant range States, are summarized below and provide an integrated package to protect elephants by strengthening international CITES law.

1. Listing all elephants in CITES Appendix I

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/prop/060216/E-CoP17-Prop-16.pdf>

This proposal seeks to list all African Elephants in CITES Appendix I, ending split-listing through the transfer from Appendix II of the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. All elephants in Africa and Asia will then enjoy the highest standard of protection under the Convention through a ban on all international ivory trade. The African elephant as a species is not constrained within State borders. Many are shared with more than one country, arguing for a unified approach to their regulation under CITES. The split-listing has stimulated poaching and smuggling of ivory. Elephant populations are declining significantly across most of Africa. A universal listing in Appendix I will outlaw the ivory trade, simplify enforcement and send a clear message to the world of a global determination to halt the extinction of African elephants. The proposal demonstrates that the Criteria³ for listing all African elephants in Appendix I of CITES are met.

2. Closure of domestic ivory markets

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-57-02.pdf>

This proposal complements Proposal I with a recommendation calling on countries to close all domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory. Domestic trade maintains demand for ivory and creates opportunities to launder poached ivory. The proposal would reinforce the message that all ivory sales are dangerous for elephants and should be stopped. Many countries including China and the United States are closing down domestic markets. The proposal extends that approach globally.

3. Ivory stockpiles <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-57-03.pdf>

This proposal builds on two earlier papers submitted to the CITES Standing Committee in 2014 and 2016⁴, which led to recognition by the Committee of the destructions of ivory stockpiles by governments

¹ The African Elephant Coalition (AEC) includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Chad, 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. Established in 2008 in Bamako, Mali, the AEC is united by a common goal: “*a viable and healthy elephant population free of threats from international ivory trade*”. <http://www.africanelephantcoalition.org>

² CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

³ <https://cites.org/eng/res/09/09-24R16.php>

⁴ See SC65 Doc 42.7 submitted by Chad and the Philippines, available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-42-07.pdf> and SC66 Doc. 47.3 submitted by Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Kenya, available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/66/E-SC66-47-03.pdf>

since 2011, and a recommendation to develop guidance on stockpile management. It encourages the highest possible standards of stockpile management and, where possible, destruction of government-held ivory stocks. It further requests the CITES Secretariat to provide the best available technical guidance on stockpile inventories, audit, management and disposal, including DNA sampling to determine the origin of items in the stockpile.

4. Ending the Decision-Making Mechanism for a process of trade in ivory (DMM)

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-84-02.pdf>

For nine years CITES has discussed a Decision-Making Mechanism (DMM) to open up a system of legal international trade in ivory. There is no prospect of agreement by Governments, while continuing the debate encourages poaching and stockpiling of ivory for future “legalized” trade, posing unacceptable risks for elephants. Economic analysis shows this would risk a runaway expansion of ivory trade with devastating effects on elephants. This proposal would end all CITES work on a DMM or equivalent mechanism, reinforcing the concerted global efforts to reduce demand for ivory.

5. Restricting trade in live elephants <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-57-04.pdf>

The proposal aims to end trade in African elephants outside their natural range, including export to zoos and other captive facilities overseas. This proposal would be consistent with IUCN findings that the removal of African elephants from the wild for captive use has no direct benefit for their conservation. Live trade disrupts wild populations and leads to high rates of mortality and disease in captivity.