

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

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INCREASING TRADE IN IVORY AS 'PRE-CONVENTION'  
OR FOR PERSONAL PURPOSES

This information document has been submitted by Chad and the Philippines<sup>2</sup> in relation to agenda item 42.6 on *Preventing the illegal ivory trade under Article VII and through the internet*.

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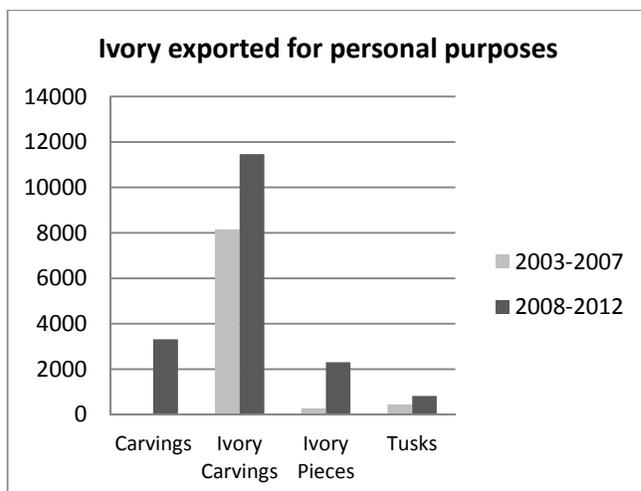
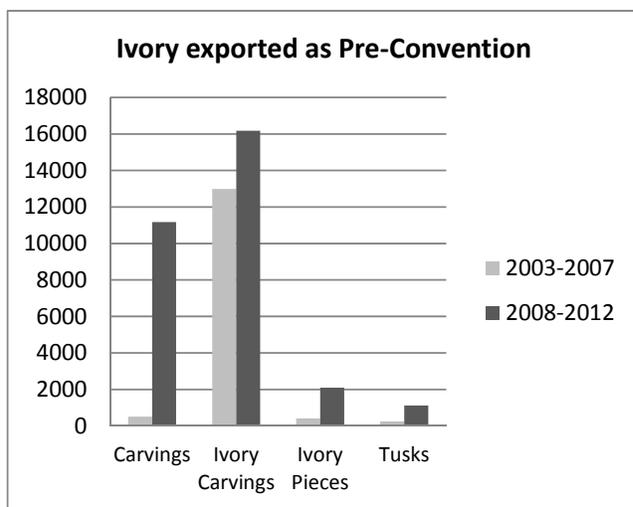
<sup>1</sup> *The two languages were kindly provided by the authors.*

<sup>2</sup> *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## Increasing trade in ivory as 'pre-convention' or for personal purposes

### Large and increasing trade volumes

Large volumes of African elephant ivory products have been traded over the last decade under the exemptions provided by CITES for pre-convention specimens as well as those imported for personal purposes. The trade has involved a large number of importing and exporting countries from all over the world. A comparison of trade records in the CITES trade database between the period 2003-2007 with data from 2008-2012 shows that exports increased for tusks, carvings, ivory carvings and pieces in the second 4 year period, both for specimens declared to have been sourced as 'pre-convention' as well as those traded for personal purposes.



The European Union is the biggest exporter of pre-convention ivory, both for tusks and worked ivory. There is a notable discrepancy between export and import figures, with only 20,044 carvings, ivory carvings and pieces reported as exports by EU Member States between 2002 and 2012 compared with 35,003 of these products reported by importing countries. China and Hong Kong are the biggest importers of pre-convention ivory exported from the EU. The United States is another major exporter as well as importer of pre-convention ivory.

### **Discrepancies in trade records**

Generally, when comparing data reported by exporting countries with those of importing countries large discrepancies become apparent (see Annex). There is also a large discrepancy between source codes used by importing and exporting countries: While origin in the wild (W) was the source code most frequently used by exporting countries for specimens imported for personal purposes, importing countries most frequently used “pre-convention” (O) as the source. In total, importers reported 15,812 carvings, ivory carvings, ivory pieces and tusks traded for personal purposes (P) with a “pre-convention” source while exporters reported only 8,573. With regard to wild origin, importers reported only 3,945 as originating from the wild and exporters 10,184. 2,030 of the carvings, ivory carvings, ivory pieces and tusks imported for “personal purposes” were seized (source code “I”).

## ANNEX

**Figure 1: Carvings, ivory carvings, ivory pieces and tusks of *Loxodonta africana* recorded from ‘pre-convention’ sources** by importers and exporters (in brackets), for all purposes. Source: UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database (viewed 30 April 2014)

Source Code: Pre-Convention			
	2003-2007	2008-2012	Totals
Carvings	139 (506)	5558 (11170)	5697 (11676)
Ivory Carvings	28506 (12985)	12483 <sup>3</sup> (16182)	40989 (29167)
Ivory Pieces	742 (414)	2062 (2097)	2804 (2511)
Tusks	199 (247)	573 (1122)	772 (1369)

The majority of all transactions of pre-convention specimens were for trade purposes (T), followed by personal (P). The origin of the majority of traded pre-convention ivory is unknown (XX).

**Figure 2: Carvings, ivory carvings, ivory pieces and tusks of *Loxodonta Aaricana* recorded for “Personal Purposes”** by importers and exporters (in brackets), for all sources. Source: UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database (viewed 30 April 2014)

Purpose Code: Personal			
	2003-2007	2008-2012	Totals
Carvings	129 (45)	1169 (3316)	1298 (3361)
Ivory Carvings	14335 (8150)	7482 <sup>1</sup> (11468)	21817 (19618)
Ivory Pieces	837 (282)	1693 (2308)	2530 (2590)
Tusks	457 (450)	524 (826)	981 (1276)

<sup>3</sup> Reported imports of ivory carvings traded as pre-convention and for personal are the only data not showing an increasing trend. However, this may be due to the fact that trade in ivory carvings has increasingly been entered into the UNEP-WCMC CITES trade database using weight as unit rather than pieces, making the datasets not comparable. Weight units needed to be excluded from this analysis however, because the data output was incorrectly produced as date format by the database, rather than in gram or kilogram.