

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



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COMMENTS OF UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO DOC. COP 15 DOC.68 ADDENDUM

This document has been submitted by the United Republic of Tanzania.*

* *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.*

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Taking cognisance of the recommendations from the CITES Secretariat and the detailed report from the Panel of Experts, it is evident that they both acknowledge the importance of transferring the Tanzania elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II. (COP 15 Doc.68 Addendum-pg.4)

Taking note of the pertinent issues raised by the CITES Secretariat it appears that the Secretariat is not adequately informed about wildlife management in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Panel of Experts was in Tanzania for only five working days and due to the expansive size of the country could not investigate pertinent issues in depth.

Recognizing that the United Republic of Tanzania, is among the developing countries, issues of poor governance, ineffectiveness of law enforcement and inadequacy of resources as indicated by the CITES Secretariat can not be overemphasized. Nevertheless, the World Transparency Report recently noted that the United Republic of Tanzania has made significant achievement in improving governance and restrictive laws in all sectors including the management of wildlife.

The United Republic of Tanzania would therefore like to clarify the following points raised by the Secretariat;

1. Anti-Poaching efforts in some parts of the country seem inadequate.

Poaching incidents take place in various areas in the world and it is not unique to Tanzania. Nevertheless the level of poaching in Selous Ecosystem is not as high as it has been reported in the various sources of information including the media. Following international reported ivory seizure in 2009, Tanzania conducted three special operations to address poaching countrywide, with more operations being conducted in Selous Ecosystem. The operations involved various stakeholders including Police, Wildlife Authorities, District and Local Government Authorities. The results indicate that there was no significant increase in poaching as is reported by the CITES Secretariat.

Despite the shortfalls raised by the Secretariat, Tanzania has continued to manage and monitor its elephant's populations with some efforts being made. Since 1989 to 2009, Tanzania has effectively conducted 13 special operations to address elephant poaching and trade. The elephant population has doubled from 55,000 in 1989 to 110,000 in 2009. Following the above, the recent (new) ETIS data analysis rated Tanzania into very good law enforcement category with 86.57% score (CoP15 Doc. 53).

The United Republic of Tanzania is aware of concerns of some Parties and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the issue of reduced retention scheme which was accorded by the Government for the Selous Game Reserve. Indeed, this has caused an impact on the capacity of Selous Management to execute its responsibilities as expected from them. However, it should be noted that the Government has already passed the New Legislation (Wildlife Conservation Act No. 5 of 2009) that provides for the establishment of the new Wildlife Authority. This Authority will have a semi autonomy status of collecting revenue and use it as budgeted for without involving Treasury.

2. The Ivory Stocks cannot be fully verified

Tanzania has a very good electronic elephant database which was developed in 2006. The information to develop the database were based both in the ledger and inventory sheets.

Although some documents were destroyed by fire that occurred in May, 2009 affecting one of the stores of the Wildlife Division (not the ivory warehouse), not all documents were destroyed by the fire. The remaining documents when checked had information that tallied well with physical inspection of the stockpile. But more importantly as mentioned above, the Government keeps electronic Data base that was not affected by the fire. The Data base is available for any audit or inspection should there be a need. This is yet having backup information from the source districts and protected areas offices.

3. Controls of seizures of ivory from or transiting through the United Republic of Tanzania appear to be unsatisfactory.

During the year 2009 Tanzania noted major ivory seizures shipped through her ports. The Government of Tanzania took a deliberate initiative to establish investigation teams including members from the Police, INTERPOL (Dar es Salaam National Central Bureau (NCB), Customs and Lusaka Agreement Task Force. As a result Thirteen (13) suspects associated with the seized ivory in Philippines and Vietnam in 2009 were arrested. The prosecution and investigation are going on. A team of investigators from the aforementioned authorities, which left Tanzania on March 10, 2010 and scheduled to work for 10 days, is in the Philippines to investigate one of the recent seizures.

Tanzania Wildlife Authorities furthermore, in collaboration with other law enforcing institutions have addressed the problem by doing the following;

- Several special law enforcement operations especially in Selous ecosystem area;
- Reward schemes in Selous Ecosystem under Wildlife Conservation Foundation of Tanzania. (From December 2009 to March, 2010 eleven poachers were arrested together with 12 pieces of ivory weighing 85.7 Kg, 25 Kg of elephant meat and 2 short guns.
- Undertaking interagency law enforcement awareness workshops which bring together law enforcement officers from different agencies and strategize on how to address the problem (A recent workshop held in Dar es Salaam in Jan 2010 recommended for the establishment of the FORUM that will involve officers from different Law Enforcement Institutions)
- Capacity building for law enforcement officers particularly with more intelligence gathering and investigation skills to enable them follow up the criminal syndicates involved in illegal trade;
- Formation of collaborative intelligence group which collect information regarding elephant poaching. This exercise involves house-to-house searches.

Conclusion

The CITES Secretariat acknowledges that the Elephant population of Tanzania meets the biological criteria of being down listed to Appendix II. However it concludes that the proposal should be rejected mentioning only issues pertaining to the ivory sale component of proposed annotation and NOT to the remaining part.

The United Republic of Tanzania has noted with satisfaction the fact that the Secretariat is supporting down listing of the elephant population to Appendix II without ivory trade. It has not been satisfied by the "raison d'être" behind its rejection of the ivory component of the annotation.

The United Republic of Tanzania feels that the CITES Secretariat report is biased, inadequate and incorrect; hence unsatisfactory. A visit of only five days can not do justice to write a report of a country like Tanzania whose 30% of the landmass area (362,000 square miles) is allocated to wildlife national parks and other protected areas.