

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

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Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Strategic and administrative matters

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT DIALOGUE MEETING

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 From the 28th to 30th of September 2004, the sixth Dialogue meeting of African elephant range States was convened at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand. As at the previous Dialogue meetings, this meeting was called to discuss and review the implementation of the important decisions on African Elephant issues that were taken at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP12) held in Santiago, Chile in November 2002. The agenda of the meeting is attached to this report as Annex I
- 1.2 The dialogue was attended by 28 of the 37 range States (see attached Annex II). On the proposal of the participants, Mr Bourama Niagaté on behalf of Mali took the Chair for the meeting. Vice Chairs were nominated from each of the four sub-regions: Eastern Africa (Kenya), West Africa (Ghana), Central Africa (Chad) and Southern Africa (Zambia). The Governments of Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America financed and also attended the meeting.

2.0 Update on MIKE

- 2.1 The status of MIKE implementation in the four sub-regions of Africa was presented by the Director of the MIKE programme, Nigel Hunter. The report covered population surveys and mortality data in various categories, highlighting the different stages of progress towards providing baseline information for all MIKE sites. It was stated that the MIKE baseline data at a global level would not be in place before 2005 as envisaged, due to delays in implementation in Southeast Asia. The Director noted that the dataset from West Africa was too small to be included in the analyses. Mortality data from the other three African regions, available for the first time, demonstrated patterns of illegal killing across the MIKE sites. MIKE data from sites in Central Africa showed an inverse relationship between levels of human activity and elephant population density. Preliminary analyses of data from this region from sites that are both inside and outside of protected areas revealed a strong cause for concern with regard to illegal killing for both ivory and bush meat. The report further demonstrated a strong connection between the illegal killing of more than four thousand (4,000) of African elephants per year and the ongoing unregulated domestic ivory markets in Africa and to a lesser extent those in Asia.
- 2.2 The range states expressed appreciation for the progress MIKE had achieved and went on to discuss issues in the context of respective country experiences. Delegates expressed special interest in the mortality categories and the need to be able to differentiate between motives for killing whether for bush meat or ivory. Delegates expressed difficulties in collecting and transmitting relevant data into the MIKE system. It was pointed out that MIKE alone could not provide the complete solution to elephant conservation in Africa and that partnerships as well as a demonstration of strong political will, among the range States, could facilitate the overcoming of some of the difficulties and limitations encountered by them.

3.0 Update on ETIS

- 3.1 An overview of progress made by ETIS was provided the Director, Tom Milliken. The processes of data collection, verification, and analysis were clarified. Country reports were provided to each range

State present and countries were encouraged to review the information, provide updates and provide suggestions for improvements. It was noted that despite the directive to Parties to report seizures to ETIS within 90 days, it is common to experience a time lag of up to two years between the occurrence of seizures and the capture of the information into ETIS data base.

- 3.2 Analyses from the ETIS information system, which includes data on seizures and other factors such as law enforcement effort, were presented. The most important factors identified in relation to illegal trade in ivory are the presence of large-scale, poorly regulated domestic ivory markets and poor law enforcement effort. The ETIS information since 1989 reports an immediate decline in illegal trade in ivory up to 1994 followed by a gradual increase since that time and the rate of growth has slowed somewhat in recent years largely attributed to growing demand in China.
- 3.3 It was reported that the level of illegal trade in ivory in recent years is still below the level at which it was prior to 1992. A spatial analysis highlighted the role of Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Nigeria in Africa, as well as China and Thailand in Asia, in illicit trade in ivory. Other countries in Africa play a lesser but still important role. Among the six countries of most concern, only China had demonstrated significant improvement of its law enforcement effort since CoP12.
- 3.4 The range States appreciated the ETIS report and some of them expressed alarm at the information contained within respective national reports. While range States were committed to taking remedial action, they urged TRAFFIC to verify the authenticity of information received, as much as possible. Delegates noted the difficult conditions under which many African wildlife management authorities are currently operating, including civil war, lack of resources and infrastructure, poor cross-sectoral cooperation among key enforcement agencies and communication failures. Some of these constraints also impacted on their ability to submit reports to ETIS and to take timely action on the information provided by ETIS. The MIKE and ETIS reports highlighted coordination and collaboration between the two programmes.
- 3.5 While commending the progress made by the two programmes to date, delegates emphasized that the information from MIKE and ETIS should not be considered in isolation but rather in the context of the status of elephant populations and management capacity within the range States. It was agreed that remedying problems of illegal killing of elephants and illegal ivory trade requires the active participation and commitment of range States, consumer countries and the international community, in effectively implementing concrete recommendations.
- 3.6 Some delegates indicated that a study to established whether there is a relationship between regulated and unregulated domestic markets with poaching, conducted under the auspices of CITES would facilitate decision making process on proposals at Dialogue Meetings.
- 3.7 Some delegates expressed the wish to return the entire African elephant population to Appendix I. However, it was pointed out that the role of CITES is not to inhibit trade, but to facilitate regulated trade in endangered species at sustainable levels.

#### 4.0 African elephant proposals for CoP13

- 4.1 Both Namibia and South Africa provided brief summaries of their proposals submitted to the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties. Namibia circulated additional information and clarifications on a number of aspects of the proposal. After some extensive discussion, South Africa addressed questions regarding their annotation amendment and clarified specific concerns mentioned by participants. Currently, South Africa is permitted to export only raw hides for commercial purposes. Participants recognized that the proposed amendment would allow South Africa to capture the additional benefit of domestic manufacturing of leather goods made from these hides, for international commercial trade and agreed by consensus to support their proposal.
- 4.2 Some delegates concerned with possible connection between trade in ivory and elephant hides expressed the need to have more information on elephant hides and hair.
- 4.3 Namibia provided further clarification and amendments to the original proposal. Some delegates opposed the amendment regarding the request for an annual ivory quota prior to the completion of

the one-off sale of a stockpile of 10 tonnes of ivory that had been approved at CoP12. Others supported the Namibian proposal.

- 4.4 Namibia indicated that it would consider withdrawing the item of annual quotas of raw ivory from its CoP13 proposal if it gets a written commitment from the range States to support this aspect of the proposal during the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Some delegates rejected the conditional withdrawal. Namibia also made a non conditional offer to help other range States with problems related to elephant conservation and unregulated domestic ivory markets.
- 4.5 Some Delegates also noted that the requested annotation with respect to leather and hair goods was similar to that proposed by South Africa which had received support from the range States. No conclusion was reached on the proposal.

#### 5.0 Internal Ivory Controls

- 5.1 The Secretariat presented two documents on trade in elephant specimens and the control of internal ivory trade. These had been prepared on behalf of and in response to a request from the Standing Committee, which had agreed that a continent-wide approach should be taken in Africa to eliminate unregulated domestic ivory markets. The Secretariat outlined particularly an action plan for the control of trade in African elephant ivory.
- 5.2 During this discussion Kenya suggested that its document CoP 13 Doc 29.4, which included some common issues, be considered at the same time, as the action plan presented by the Secretariat, since the two had some common aspects. The delegates agreed to the action plan presented by the Secretariat with one amendment in paragraph 1 a) where 'domestic' should be replaced by 'unregulated domestic'. The amended document was recommended for adoption by the Conference of the Parties.
- 5.3 Some delegates questioned the need for two separate documents and the validity as well as the relevance of some of the information on which Kenya's proposals are based. After discussion, some delegates suggested that relevant sections of document CoP13 Doc. 29.4 be used to enrich the action plan drafted by the Secretariat while others requested Kenya to withdraw the document.
- 5.4 Kenya however said that it would not withdraw the document and would present a modified version to CoP13.

#### 6.0 Conditions for export of registered stocks of ivory

Recognizing the progress and positive outcome of MIKE activities, Kenya informed that it did not intend to present document CoP13 Doc 29.5 at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The country appreciated that all concerns raised in the document had been addressed in the MIKE report to CoP13. No debate was therefore conducted at this Dialogue meeting on this matter.

#### 7.0 Ivory stocks in Burundi

- 7.1 The Secretariat provided a brief summary on a stockpile of ivory of illegal, unknown origin held in Burundi for over 15 years. The representative from Burundi was invited to brief the meeting on this topic. Delegates sympathized with Burundi's predicament but emphasized that re-export of this stockpile under current provisions of CITES was not possible and that a buy-out of the stock would raise significant legal, economical and ethical concerns.
- 7.2 Delegates noted that many other countries in Africa experience similar challenges in dealing with stocks of confiscated ivory of unknown origins. The delegates recommended that the Secretariat should investigate this matter further and prepare guidance on mechanisms for dealing with confiscated stocks of ivory and other wildlife products, particularly those of unknown origin, for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

## 8.0 Human Elephant Conflict

- 8.1 In response to requests from some African elephant range States for technical assistance on mitigating human elephant conflict, the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group presented an initiative to develop guidance for long-term management of this challenge, building on existing data collection mechanisms under MIKE.
- 8.2 Delegates agreed that the human elephant conflict was a pervasive and complex issue which should not detract attention from the need to implement MIKE fully, as soon as possible, while emphasizing the need for short-term solutions.
- 8.3 Delegates endorsed the concept of developing some pilot projects in range States in relation to this initiative.

## 9.0 Conclusion

The participants concluded the meeting by thanking the interpreters and expressed their appreciation to the donors for their financial support of the Dialogue process.

Sixth dialogue meeting of African elephant range States

Bangkok, Thailand (28-30 September 2004)

AGENDA

1. Opening statements

CITES Secretariat

2. Election of the Chairman

The Secretary of the Dialogue shall propose a Chairman (Annex 6 to document CoP12 Doc. 20.1). The Secretary proposes Sierra Leone for consideration by the Parties to the Dialogue.

3. Election of Vice-Chairmen

Four Vice-Chairman representing the four sub-regions of Africa with extant elephant populations, namely West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa, shall be nominated by the representatives of each sub-region during each meeting.

4. Adoption of the agenda

5. CoP13 Proposals to amend the Appendices

5.1 Introduction to the proposals

CITES Secretariat

5.2 (CoP13 Prop. 7) Amendment of the annotation regarding the population of Namibia to include:

- an annual export quota of 2,000 kg of raw ivory (accumulated from natural and management-related mortalities);
- trade in worked ivory products for commercial purposes; and
- trade in elephant leather and hair goods for commercial purposes.

Namibian delegation

5.3 (CoP13 Prop. 8) Amendment of the annotation regarding the population of South Africa to allow trade in leather goods for commercial purposes.

South African delegation

6. Other CoP13 agenda items relating to African elephant

6.1 CoP13 Agenda Item 29.3, Monitoring of illegal hunting in elephant range States (CoP13 Doc. 29.3)

CITES Secretariat

6.2. CoP13 Agenda Item 29.2, Monitoring of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant specimens (CoP13 Doc. 29.2)

CITES Secretariat/IUCN

### 6.3 Links between poaching and African elephant markets

CITES Secretariat/IUCN

- 6.3.1 CoP13 Agenda Item 29.1, Trade in elephant specimens (CoP13 Doc. 29.1)  
[Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP12)]

CITES Secretariat

- 6.3.2 CoP13 Agenda Item 29.4, Illegal ivory trade and control of internal markets

Kenyan delegation

- 6.4 CoP13 Agenda Item 29.5, Conditions for the export of registered stocks of ivory in the annotation to the Appendix-II listing of populations of *Loxodonta africana* in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa (CoP13 Doc./ 29.5)

Kenyan delegation

- 6.5. CoP13 Agenda Item 29.6, Ivory stocks in Burundi

Secretariat

## 7. Other African elephant issues

- 7.1 Human/Elephant conflict

IUCN

- 7.2 Any other business

## 8. Adoption of communiqué

## 9. Concluding remarks

List of participating African elephant range States

Benin  
Botswana  
Burkina Faso  
Cameroon  
Central African Republic  
Chad  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Gabon  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Kenya  
Liberia  
Mali  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Senegal  
South Africa  
Sudan  
Togo  
Uganda  
United Republic of Tanzania  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe