



# Global March for Elephants and Rhinos

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September 11, 2022

Dear CITES Representative | Elected Official | Community Leader,

We are a coalition of concerned citizens. We write to you demanding urgent action at CITES-CoP19, scheduled for November 2022 in Panama City, Panama (<https://cites.org/eng/cop19>).

The Earth is experiencing its sixth mass-extinction. Functionally indistinguishable, both the legal and illegal trade of wildlife accelerates the demise of imperiled species. Buttressed by a lack of culpability, the networks sponsoring poaching, trafficking, trophy hunting and traditional medicines exploit loopholes and circumvent the law. The unmitigated trade of endangered fauna and flora underwrites degraded habitat, geo-political unrest, depleted wild populations and zoonoses.

Framed in this backdrop, CITES-CoP19 and its member nations must guarantee regulation ensuring the protection of Earth's last wild inhabitants. Failure to fortify the interface between human activities and the lives of wild animals and plants will set the stage for future pandemics, economic failure, extinction events, and ecological collapse.

Even as economic considerations are factored, nature must be valued over money. *#NatureNotMoney*.

We respectfully call on CITES' member nations to support the following at CoP19:

1. **List all African elephants on Appendix I.** Specifically:
  - a) **Support** the proposal by Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, and Senegal to transfer African Elephant populations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I, as follows: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop19/prop/as\\_received/E-Loxodonta\\_africana-Transfer\\_App\\_I.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop19/prop/as_received/E-Loxodonta_africana-Transfer_App_I.pdf)
  - b) **Oppose** Zimbabwe's proposal concerning elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, as specified here: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-Prop-04\\_1.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-Prop-04_1.pdf)
2. **Close all loopholes in Appendix I and Appendix II permitting the live capture and trade of elephants.**
3. **Maintain the international ban on rhino horn trade.** Specifically:
  - a) **Oppose** the proposal by Namibia and Botswana to transfer Namibia's population of southern white rhinos from Appendix I to Appendix II to facilitate trophy hunting and live animal trade for in-situ conservation purposes, as specified here: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop19/prop/as\\_received/E-Ceratotherium\\_simum\\_simum-Namibia.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop19/prop/as_received/E-Ceratotherium_simum_simum-Namibia.pdf)
4. **Move Orophaga vicentii to CITES Appendix I.**
5. **Prohibit the import and export of trophies.**
6. **Regulate the trade of Traditional Medicines using the body parts of IUCN red-listed animals.**
7. **Implement and enforce an e-permit registration system in all participating member-nations.**

*The mission of the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (#GMFER) is to #MarchAgainstExtinction and work with indigenous communities to influence governments and world leaders to STOP the poaching of elephants and rhinos; our vision is to END the trade in ivory and rhino horn and to strive for a livable Earth for all living things.*

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## Additionally:

### 1. We call on Japan, Canada, and the EU to close domestic ivory markets:

- In 2016, delegates to CITES-CoP17 agreed on a resolution recommending:

"All Parties and non-Parties in whose jurisdiction there is a legal domestic market for ivory that is contributing to poaching or illegal trade, take all necessary legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory as a matter of urgency."<sup>2</sup> Countries that have closed their markets include China, US, Singapore, and the UK who recently enacted one of the toughest ivory bans in the world. Japan, Canada, and the EU need to close their domestic ivory markets that continue to facilitate the laundering of illegal ivory and horn from poached elephants and rhinos through legal markets."<sup>3</sup>

### 2. We call on all nations to:

- **Address human/wildlife conflict so all species can live in harmony** by seeking cohabitation solutions which don't involve detrimental harm to either communities, human or otherwise
- **Recognise the Climate and Ecological Emergency** as the greatest threat to life on our shared planet and implement measures addressing climate mitigation and adaptation. There is no trade on a dead planet.

## JUSTIFICATION

CITES' member-nations must consider the following factors justifying our demands:

- In a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Finance and Development department, the carbon value of a single forest elephant is worth \$1.75 million dollars.<sup>4</sup> Elephants help mitigate climate change by maintaining forest and savanna ecosystems for other species and are integrally tied to rich biodiversity.<sup>5</sup> The health of our planet is ultimately dependant on healthy ecosystems globally.
- The African forest elephant, *Loxodonta Cyclotis*, was listed in March 2021 as critically endangered and the African savanna elephant, *Loxodonta Africana*, as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. The causes are identified as poaching for ivory in the short term and habitat loss in the longer term. The number of African forest elephants fell by more than 86% over a period of 31 years, while the population of African savanna elephants decreased by at least 60% over the last 50 years.<sup>7</sup>
- According to an IUCN Report, approximately 111,000 elephants were lost between 2006-2015 leaving an estimated 415,500.<sup>8</sup>
- In the last forty years, elephant habitat has decreased by nearly two thirds largely due to human activities.<sup>9</sup>
- CITES authorized two one-off sales of stockpiled ivory in 1999 and 2008. Lifting the international trade-ban flooded the Asian market with ivory and resuscitated the demand for elephant tusks. The ill-conceived sale proved devastating for elephants; it triggered an escalation in poaching, trafficking and illegal trade.<sup>10</sup>
- In May of this year, Zimbabwe hosted an elephant summit inviting 14 other African nations; the intention of the summit was to sign a declaration renewing -legal- international trade in ivory. 5 countries attended: Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia. **Zimbabwe's efforts failed at reopening the trade.**<sup>11</sup>

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- In the words of Dr Bruno Oberle, IUCN Director General, "Africa's elephants play key roles in ecosystems, economies and in our collective imagination all over the world. Today's new IUCN Red List assessments of both African elephant species underline the persistent pressures faced by these iconic animals. **We must urgently put an end to poaching and ensure that sufficient suitable habitat for both forest and savanna elephants is conserved.** Several African countries have led the way in recent years, proving that we can reverse elephant declines, and we must work together to ensure their example can be followed."<sup>19</sup>
- Sumatran, Javan, and Black rhinoceros are listed as critically endangered by the IUCN.<sup>12,13,14</sup> It is thought that fewer than seventy Javan and one hundred Sumatran rhinos are left in the world. In the past forty years, the Earth has lost 95% of its rhinos. There has been a ban on rhino horn trade by CITES since 1977.<sup>15</sup>
- A recent report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) finds a dominant global focus on short-term profits and economic growth, often excluding the consideration of multiple values intrinsic to nature when making policy decisions. "Biodiversity is being lost and nature's contributions to people are being degraded faster now than at any other point in human history," said Ana María Hernández Salgar, Chair of IPBES. "This is largely because our current approach to political and economic decisions does not sufficiently account for the diversity of nature's values."<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the points raised above, a joint position paper written by a coalition of non-governmental organizations on trophy hunting asserts that "killing to conserve" is neither an ethical nor a sustainable approach to wildlife conservation and is remnant of a colonial and imperial past that has no place in modern Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The majority surveyed in European countries, US, UK, and South Africa, strongly oppose trophy hunting, and view it negatively. **Trophy hunting exacerbates the extinction of wildlife and perpetuates biodiversity loss, raises deep ethical concerns, and fails to deliver economic benefits to the communities it proclaims to support. But, above all else, it threatens the genetic integrity and survival of species by targeting the healthiest and strongest of the gene pool leading to genetic erosion and a decrease in population size, health, and resilience.** Removing these frontline animals undermines social cohesion and can leave members vulnerable to attack by their own species.<sup>17</sup>

The Earth is experiencing severe consequences from the loss of biodiversity, climate change, and the extinction of critical species, species central to the healthy function of ecosystems, ecosystems on which humans depend. Our mistreatment of nature has resulted in the extinction of over a million species. The trend must be halted before further harm is done. Our own survival as a species depends on a living and livable Earth.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Alles, President and Co-founder, Global March for Elephants and Rhinos



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## #NatureNotMoney

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