

Secretary-General John Scanlon
International Environment House
Chemin des Anémones
1219 Châtelaine
Geneva
Switzerland

July 2015

Re: Capture and transportation of Zimbabwean elephants

Dear Mr Scanlon,

As a supporter of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT), a wildlife conservation charity based in Kenya, I would like to express my deep concerns regarding the capture and transportation of 24 infant elephant calves from Zimbabwe to Chimelong Safari Park in July 2015.

I was shocked to learn that these wild elephants would be confined to a life in captivity following CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) authorisation of an application from the Zimbabwean Government. It is well known that in China, there are currently no enforceable welfare standards in the current laws and regulations to protect elephants in captivity. Chimelong Safari Park is by no means an acceptable and appropriate destination for these calves.

Aside from the unethical treatment of these wild animals by the Zimbabwean Government, from point of capture through to shipment, CITES failure and oversight on this matter is of deep concern. As it stands, one elephant is killed across Africa every 15 minutes for its ivory and in 2013; 300 elephants were killed by poachers with cyanide in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's elephants are clearly at risk, making the fact that they can legally be traded even more shocking. I am therefore appealing, on behalf of thousands of concerned citizens, for CITES classification of Zimbabwe's elephants to be urgently addressed. Whilst *Loxodonta Africana* remains in Appendix II, the prospect of corruption and financial gain from the country choosing to trade species is high.

I am appealing for you to recognise the pleas from thousands of concerned citizens and conservation experts, and I call on you to:

- (1) Propose to the 66th Meeting of the Standing Committee, 11-15 January 2016, that all trade in wild elephants cease with immediate effect.
- (2) Employ an independent 'body' to undertake a detailed investigation into the capture, confinement and trade of 24 elephant calves from Zimbabwe to China, so as to verify the compliance of both Nations to the regulations imposed in such trade – as defined by Article IV of CITES, with particular attention to section 2(b).

As Secretariat, it is in your remit to propose to the Standing Committee to cease all trade in elephants by Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, where there is non-compliance by exporting or importing countries, or in the case of proven detrimental impacts of the trade on other elephant populations. This recent trade has created the belief that elephants are commodities that can be utilised by a nation to generate income, in the face of failed efforts to conserve the species. Selling a species to plug a shortfall in National income can in no way be acknowledged as a viable conservation measure or one that protects the future of a species.

Finally, CITES must acknowledge that allowing this abuse of elephants to occur, while calling on the world to do more to protect elephants sends a mixed message and one that does little to help the species.

The recent trade has cast a shadow over CITES and I urge you to take the steps available to end the exploitation of a species that is desperately in need of our assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[FULL NAME]
[ADDRESS]