{CHINESE AMBASSADOR NAME}  
{POSITION}  
{ADDRESS}  
{ADDRESS}

{DATE}

**Re: Ivory trade regulations**

Dear {FORENAME, SURNAME}

Following the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which was held in Bangkok from 3rd-14th March 2013, I would like to bring to your attention my concerns surrounding the outcome with a close emphasis on ivory trade and elephants.

As the main aim of CITES is ‘to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival’ I feel the current decisions made surrounding the ivory trade do not adhere to the above. Fortunately however, some regulations have been put in place following the meeting. Forensic DNA testing of large stockpiles to determine the origin of the ivory will provide researchers with a deeper understanding into the source of the ivory. Those nations in question will be informed into the scale of the problem and the appropriate action will be taken.

However, it seems CITES is failing to **protect** the elephant as a species and is **acting** more in the interests of the trade. Yingluck Shinawatra, Thailand’s Prime Minister pledged to end all trade in illegal ivory in Thailand, a positive and very encouraging step – however no timeframe has been set for this. Similarly to the July 2014 deadline which has been stamped upon the ‘Gang of Eight’ nations who are to make productive changes in their trade in ivory or face heavy sanctions. What is difficult to digest is the lack of urgency that runs throughout many of the decisions made, essentially CITES has postponed any decision until CoP 17 in 2016. At current poaching levels, we could see another 120,000 elephants killed! Are we to sit back and watch this slaughter of elephants fuelled by demand from Asia, with China the number one consumer country for ivory?

China brings huge financial benefits to much of Africa, creating jobs, transferring skills and investing in local economies, yet in turn this is forcing officials to turn a blind eye to illegal ivory, which is being smuggled through ports daily. The protection of wildlife is no longer at the forefront of official’s minds, as the trade in ivory is lucrative and with such a high demand, millions of people are turning to the trade, legal or not. The majority of ivory that ends up in China comes through Kenya, the historic and defining tusks of an African Elephant to be carved into a bracelet or a trinket to satisfy an increasing affluent Chinese consumer.

The trade in ivory will not stop until a complete ban is put in place, not with the idea to allow for a future ‘one-off’ sale but a complete ban – permanently.

CITES has failed the elephant at CoP 16 and the pressure we were hoping would be laid on China and those supplying demand was not to be seen, in turn leaving elephants in the balance. China and Thailand were said to be a ‘primary concern’ with the vision to produce a ‘national ivory action plan’ by July 2014 but where is the urgency? African Elephants will disappear from the wild by 2025 if poaching continues. **Poaching will continue if there is a demand for ivory.**

I am calling upon you to please recognise these demands, see the problems for what they are. My message is: **Please accept action is needed, China must take action to tackle illegal trade in its country.   
  
Help us protect the elephant; we still have a chance to save the species before it’s too late.**

Yours sincerely,

{FORENAME, SURNAME}  
{COUNTRY}