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BACKGROUND

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), the Parties adopted Decisions 14.75 to 14.79 regarding the African elephant *Loxodonta africana*.

These Decisions were developed following extensive dialogue and, ultimately, in recognition of the fact that many of Africa's elephants are under threat and require coordinated and immediate action to provide effective protection of remaining elephant populations.

THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN

Vision: To ensure a secure future for the African Elephants and their habitats to realize their full potential as a component of land use for the benefit of human kind.

Goal: To secure and restore where possible sustainable elephant populations throughout their present and potential range in Africa, recognizing their potential to provide ecological, socio-cultural and economic benefits.



THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

Reducing illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products

Between 1979 and 1989 more than 50% of Africa's elephants were poached for their ivory. Many elephant populations have not yet fully recovered from this slaughter, and most will never regain their pre-1979 population levels.

All regions of the African continent are affected by poaching and illegal ivory trade - ivory seized from illegal trade has been identified as originating from countries from all four regions, East, West, Central and Southern Africa.

A national, regional and international approach to this serious problem is, therefore, essential.

Maintaining elephant habitats and restoring connectivity

Across the continent, elephant habitats are becoming increasingly degraded, fragmented and in some cases lost entirely, due to human-induced threats such as agricultural expansion, logging and mining.

Reducing human-elephant conflict

Elephants can have severe impacts on local livelihoods, such as through crop-raiding and consumption of scarce water sources. Such competition for resources can result in conflict and loss of human life and the lives of domestic stock.

As a consequence, many elephants are also killed, both legally and illegally, as a result of both formal and informal actions to control the damage they cause.

Increasing awareness on elephant conservation and management of key stakeholders that include policy makers and local communities among other interest groups

Essential to the success of the African Elephant Action Plan is the need to stimulate the awareness of and involvement of the wider community in African elephant conservation and management principles.

Current up-to-date information is often difficult to find, not synthesized, too scientific or not disseminated effectively, therefore making it difficult for people, particularly policy-makers, to fully understand the key issues.



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Strengthen range states knowledge on African elephant management

An understanding of elephant populations and their distribution is essential to maximize the impact and effectiveness of elephant conservation and management policies and activities.

Strengthen cooperation and understanding among range States

Regional elephant conservation policies and strategies have been developed for Central, Southern and West Africa. Eastern Africa is in discussion about the development of its own Strategy, whilst a number of transboundary plans and projects have been initiated to facilitate the development by neighboring elephant range States of joint management activities and protection for the species and their habitats.

Improving local communities cooperation and collaboration on African elephant conservation

It is often the case that communities that share land and resources with African elephants, suffer the costs of living with elephants (such as loss of food crops), while the benefits (such as revenue from tourism) are largely gained by those living further afield. It is important to recognize and address this imbalance, as the accrual of greater and more tangible benefits at a local level is more likely to translate directly into increased tolerance for elephants by those communities most affected.



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African Elephant Action Plan is effectively implemented

A number of initiatives addressing the AEF are being implemented. The African elephant range States are committed to the following procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Action Plan.

THE RANGE STATES ADOPTED THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN IN 2010 BY CONSENSUS

The African Elephant Range States are:

Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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