

29 November 2021

HE Mr Espen Barth Eide

Your Excellency,

**Ministerial Declaration for the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly -
“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”**

I am writing to you regarding the draft UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration.

We would like to extend our thanks to you for the opportunity to comment on the Zero Draft. Let me also take this opportunity to briefly introduce the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI), which is a unique pan African alliance of 21 member states, determined to conserve their elephants whilst also meeting the aspirations of their people.

EPI countries are home to the majority of Africa’s remaining elephants, sharing common policies on elephant conservation. This includes committing to implementing the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP), a blueprint to save the species agreed by all elephant range states in 2010; putting ivory stockpiles beyond economic use; closing domestic ivory markets; and maintaining the 1989 international ban on the ivory trade.

In 2020, the EPI Foundation (EPIF) adopted Vision 2030, in recognition of the growing challenge of human-elephant conflict (HEC), and its increased emphasis on supporting EPI countries to prevent and mitigate this issue. The EPIF Vision 2030 focuses on the harmonious coexistence between people and elephants, whilst continuing work to meet the objectives of the EPI declaration.

The EPIF is a small and innovative organisation that serves as the Secretariat to the EPI and its member states. The EPIF works directly with government Ministries and Wildlife Authorities in partnership with NGOs, IGOs and the private sector.

Within this context, we very much welcome the Zero Draft but consider that it would benefit from some further changes in how it addresses a number of key points. Specifically:

- Strengthening UNEP.
- Species loss.
- The role of certain species in sequestering carbon and maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- Land use planning and its links to wildlife corridors and addressing human-wildlife conflict.
- Illicit wildlife trafficking.
- Adopting a One Health approach.



We would be pleased to continue to engage in this process and look forward to your feedback to our proposed amendments, which are shown as strikethrough (text to be removed) and in bold (text to be added) in the attached document.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'John E L Scanlon AO', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John E L Scanlon AO
CEO