

Open Letter to the Prime Minister the Rt. Hon Mr John Key and the New Zealand Government.

To save elephants and other vulnerable species, we urge all nations to address every link in the illegal wildlife trade chain: we need to stop the buying, stop the trafficking and stop the killing.

We commend the New Zealand Government for its ongoing commitment to combat all illegal wildlife trade. New Zealand is a world-leader in border control, highly respected for building border security capacity in the Pacific and a respected member of the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group.

However, the killing of elephants for their tusks has surged since 2008 and poachers slaughtered on average one elephant every 15 minutes, about 35,000 elephants in 2012 alone. Current official CITES* data indicates that the rate of killing may be declining, but still remains far too high and some populations are still on a path to extinction. Strong enforcement actions, such as those taken at the New Zealand border, are a crucial part of the action needed to combat the illicit global ivory trade.

The poaching crisis poses serious development, environmental and security challenges, destroying lives and deepening poverty and inequality. Ivory trafficking fuels crime, corruption and violence in fragile African democracies and finances organizations that threaten global security.

Therefore, we encourage New Zealand to take further steps to support international collaborative efforts to stop the buying, stop the trafficking and stop the killing.

We understand that the domestic market for ivory in New Zealand remains strong, and that authorities have confiscated over 700 pieces of elephant ivory over 24 years (1989 – 2012). The nation witnessed its first ever conviction for illegally trading in ivory in 2013, and just recently further charges were filed relating to 31 pieces of elephant ivory.

Increasing awareness, reducing demand and strengthening our legislation will help to turn the tide for the elephants.

We urge the New Zealand Government to give full consideration to implementing a ban on all ivory trading.

We urge the New Zealand Government to lead by example in the Oceania Region, and to join the Philippines, United States, China, Hong Kong, France and Belgium, by publically destroying the confiscated ivory stockpile held by the Crown.

“When the buying stops, the killing can too” WildAid

Date: 16 July 2014

Sir Stephen Tindall on behalf of the **Tindall Foundation**
Dr. Gareth Morgan

Bob Kerridge MNZM, Executive Director **SPCA Auckland**
Rachel Hunter Patron of the **Born Free Foundation**

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton OBE **Save the Elephants**

Jane Goodall, PhD, DBE **Jane Goodall Institute**

African Wildlife Foundation David Thomson, Board Chair.

African Wildlife Foundation Dr. Patrick Bergin, CEO.

Big Life Foundation Richard Bonham, Co Founder and Director of Operations.

Born Free Foundation Will Travers, President.

Born Free USA Adam Roberts, Chief Executive Officer.

96 Elephants Campaign John Calvelli, Director.

Environmental Investigation Agency Mary Rice, Executive Director.

Humane Society International Dr. Teresa Telecky, Director, Wildlife Department.

IFAW- International Fund for Animal Welfare Isabel McCrae, Oceania Regional Director.

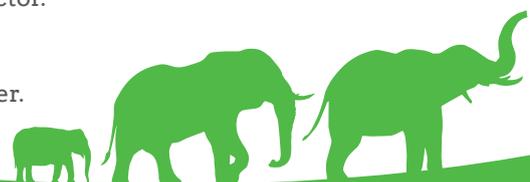
The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Angela Sheldrick, Executive Director.

WildAid Peter Knights, Executive Director.

Wildlife Conservation Network Charles Knowles, Executive Director.

Wildlife Conservation Society Cristian Samper, Chief Executive Officer.

*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)



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