

Resolution WCC-2016-Res-011-EN: Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory
Activity Report: January xx, 2018

This report on the implementation of Resolution WCC-2016-Res-011 “Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory” is submitted by Dr. Susan Lieberman, on behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). This report is in response to an invitation from IUCN to submit the report, stating, “You had either been nominated as the Members’ Assigned Focal Point (identified by sponsors of the original motion at time of submission) or as Commission Focal Point (identified by your Commissions chair) for follow-up and reporting on IUCN Resolution WCC-2016-Res-011 entitled *Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory* from the World Conservation Congress in Hawai’i”. WCS was not able to consult all IUCN members on their activities and efforts to implement this resolution; this is a summary of activities to our knowledge, and it is hoped that other IUCN members will also submit information and reports.

Background

The report will focus on the six paragraphs of the operative section of Resolution 011 (in bold, below):

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai’i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

- 1. CALLS ON the Director General to promote this Resolution, and encourage governments globally to close their domestic markets for elephant ivory as a matter of urgency;**

We are not fully informed of the extent to which the IUCN Director General, or IUCN Secretariat staff, have promoted this Resolution or encouraged governments (in general, or specifically) to close their domestic elephant ivory markets as a matter of urgency. We look forward to a report from the Director General on this matter. We can report that IUCN submitted Information [Document Inf. 61](#) to the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which transmitted the 10 motions adopted by WCC 2006 in Hawai’i, that relate to CITES. We also note that a representative of the IUCN European Regional Office made a statement quoting from this resolution in a public stakeholder meeting on the EU ivory market, which was convened by the European Commission on December 8, 2017. We are also aware that IUCN staff and representatives of the IUCN Species Survival Commission attended the in-session working group convened by CoP17, where text was discussed and negotiated on the CITES CoP17 resolution dealing with domestic ivory markets, but we are not otherwise aware of any promotion of Resolution 011 by IUCN at CoP17 or other fora.

- 2. REQUESTS the Commissions, especially the Species Survival Commission, the World Commission on Environmental Law, and other organisations with appropriate expertise, to provide relevant technical, legal and trade advice on the implementation of this Resolution to governments, upon request, on the issue of closing domestic markets for elephant ivory;**

Representatives of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) attended the in-session working group convened by CITES CoP17, where text was discussed and negotiated on the CITES CoP17 resolution dealing with trade in ivory and other elephant specimens (now [Resolution Conf. 10.10 \(Rev. CoP17\)](#)). However, the SSC Representatives did not engage actively in that working group. We are not aware of technical, legal, or trade advice requested by any governments to IUCN Commissions on the implementation of Resolution 011; we encourage the SSC in particular to report separately on its efforts or those of SSC Specialist Groups to implement this Resolution.

As an organization with significant expertise on domestic ivory markets, WCS has provided technical, legal, and trade advice to several governments on closure of their domestic ivory markets. Specifically, since WCC 2016, we have worked with and provided our expertise and input on ivory market issues to many governments, including but not limited to: the United States, United Kingdom (UK), Germany, the European Union (EU), China, Vietnam, Lao, and the Republic of the Congo. In particular, extremely detailed information was provided to the EU and the UK by WCS and other IUCN members in response to public consultations which closed in December 2017. We also provided our expertise and advice on this issue to all CITES Party governments leading up to and during CITES CoP17 (September/October 2016), and to all members of the CITES Standing Committee and other CITES Party Governments, leading up to and during the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC69, November/December 2017).

Several other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) also provided input and expertise to governments on the closure of domestic ivory markets (CITES CoP17, CITES SC69, and with individual governments). Government signatories to the [Elephant Protection Initiative](#) (EPI) (14 African elephant range States and 2 other governments), as well as the 24 EPI Partner IGOs and NGOs (see <http://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/the-solution/#signatories>) collaborate closely to achieve the goals of the EPI, two of which directly assist in implementation of WCC Resolution 011 (“*Close domestic ivory markets where they are still operating*” and “*Put ivory stockpiles beyond economic use*”). The EPI Secretariat, EPI signatory governments, and EPI Partner IGOs and NGOs, are all working to advise governments on the closure of their domestic ivory markets, and are thus working to implement Resolution 011.

3. URGES the governments of countries in which there is a legal domestic market for elephant ivory, or any domestic commerce in elephant ivory, to make all necessary legislative and regulatory efforts to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw or worked elephant ivory;

Since WCC 2016, several governments have taken steps towards legislative and regulatory efforts to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in elephant ivory, or have taken action at CITES meetings to urge all governments to close their domestic ivory markets.

- China officially closed its domestic ivory market (heretofore the world’s largest ivory market), effective December 31, 2017. China also spoke out strongly and publicly at IUCN WCC 2016, CITES CoP17, and CITES SC69, in support of closure of all domestic ivory markets.

- The EU banned raw ivory exports on July 1, 2017 and is currently considering whether or not it should take further action to close its domestic ivory market. On Sept. 15, 2017, the European Union launched a public consultation on the domestic ivory trade within the EU, and invited opinion and information from all stakeholders on whether the EU should take steps to close its domestic ivory market. A public stakeholder consultation meeting was held on December 8, 2017, the day the consultation closed at which WCS, the IUCN European Regional Office and other IUCN members made statements; 89,833 individuals and organisations submitted online consultation responses.
- On Oct. 6, 2017, the United Kingdom launched a [public consultation on the closure of its domestic ivory market](#). A public stakeholder consultation meeting was held on December 14, 2017, and the consultation closed on December 29, 2017. There were more than 60,000 responses to the UK consultation, and it appears that the overwhelming majority support a full closure of the UK ivory market.
- The Government of the UK has made very strong public statements supporting a strong closure of the UK domestic ivory market (with very limited exemptions), including statements from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Michael Gove.
- The government of Hong Kong SAR (part of China, but with separate administration of many issues, including wildlife trade) has recently taken major steps towards the closure of its domestic ivory market. In June 2017, Hong Kong lawmakers presented a Bill to amend the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, looking to phase out the Hong Kong ivory market by 2021.
- The Governments of Angola, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Niger and Senegal jointly submitted [Document CoP17 Doc. 57.2](#) to CITES CoP17, titled "*Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory*", calling for closure of domestic ivory markets (consistent with IUCN WCC Resolution 011). The submission of this document led to the adoption by CoP17 (by consensus) of amendments to CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev), calling on Parties to close their domestic ivory markets if they contribute to poaching and illegal trade.
- The Governments of Burkina Faso, the Republic of the Congo, Kenya, and Niger submitted [Document SC69 Doc. 51.2](#) for the consideration of the CITES Standing Committee at SC69, regarding closure of domestic ivory markets; that document cites IUCN WCC Resolution 011.
- In September 2017, the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted [UNGA Resolution A/RES/326](#), titled "*Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife*". The Member States of the UN discussed the issue of domestic ivory markets; paragraph 21 of this UNGA Resolution states, "...Also calls upon Member States to ensure that legal domestic markets for wildlife products are not used to mask the trade in illegal wildlife products, and in this regard urges parties to implement the decision adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora recommending that all Governments close legal domestic ivory markets, as a matter of urgency, if these markets contribute to poaching or illegal trade." Notably, the original draft Resolution was co-sponsored by Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary,

Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Viet Nam.

4. CALLS ON IUCN Members to take advantage of CITES COP17, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2016, to send an unambiguous message that elephants are protected globally and that in the face of extensive poaching, buying elephant ivory is harmful and unacceptable;

- The Governments of Angola, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Niger and Senegal jointly submitted [Document CoP17 Doc. 57.2](#) to CITES CoP17, titled "*Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory*", calling for closure of domestic ivory markets (consistent with IUCN WCC Resolution 011). The submission of this document led to the adoption by CoP17 (by consensus) of amendments to CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev), calling on Parties to close their domestic ivory markets if they contribute to poaching and illegal trade.
- There was significant momentum at CITES CoP17, with significant support from a wide range of IUCN members (governments, IGOs, and NGOs), in sending this message (that the purchase or marketing of ivory is unacceptable), and in discussing and supporting the closure of domestic ivory markets.

5. CALLS ON all governments, intergovernmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations to provide technical expertise and funding to states' governments and other entities engaged in combating wildlife trafficking to implement this Resolution, including clarifying definitions of closure appropriate to the national context, improving and implementing methods of tracing elephant ivory provenance and date of harvest, and building capacity for enforcement; and

- Government signatories to the [Elephant Protection Initiative](#) (EPI) (14 African elephant range States and 2 other governments), as well as the 24 EPI Partner IGOs and NGOs (see <http://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/the-solution/#signatories>) collaborate closely to achieve the goals of the EPI, two of which directly assist in implementation of WCC Resolution 011 ("*Close domestic ivory markets where they are still operating*" and "*Put ivory stockpiles beyond economic use*"). The EPI Secretariat, EPI signatory governments, and EPI Partner IGOs and NGOs, are all working to provide technical expertise and funding to governments on both the closure of their domestic ivory markets, and on putting their ivory stockpiles beyond economic use (including guidance on registration, monitoring, and disposal of ivory stockpiles).
- A large number of donor government agencies, multilateral donors, other IGOs, and NGOs (including WCS) provide technical and financial support to range States (including those of the African elephant), and transit and consumer States, in combatting wildlife trafficking—including efforts to implement this Resolution. One excellent source of information on donor support to combat wildlife trafficking is the [Global Wildlife Program of the World Bank](#), which has produced an [Analysis of International Funding to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade](#), a collection and analysis of significant international donor funding to combat illegal wildlife trade in Africa and Asia. In addition to the World Bank report, many other governments, IGOs, and NGOs are working to combat wildlife trafficking, and the implementation of this Resolution.

- 6. ENCOURAGES cross-border (transboundary) conservation projects focused on elephants, through policy and strategic development programmes, to contribute to strict compliance with bans on domestic markets for elephant ivory nationally and across boundaries.**
- WCS, and other NGOs, as well as IGOs and government, devote significant efforts to transboundary conservation projects focused on elephant conservation. Many African elephant range States have closed their domestic elephant ivory markets, in addition to transit and consumer States.