

CoP17 Prop. 16 [Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Uganda] Inclusion of all populations of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* in Appendix I through the transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I of the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

The elephant population of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe constitutes the largest population in Africa. Assessed either collectively or at the national level, none of these populations meet the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I under Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16), none have a restricted range, and none are currently undergoing a marked decline, although some level of decrease is noted for Zimbabwe. The proposal has not clearly demonstrated how the listing of these four contiguous elephant populations in southern Africa in Appendix II of the Convention has directly served to impact elephant populations elsewhere in Africa negatively.

The proponents consider that listing all African elephant populations in Appendix I is “the only way to send an unambiguous message that elephants are protected globally, and that buying ivory is unacceptable”. It should be noted that the annotations to the Appendix II listing allowed a one-off commercial sale of stockpiles which was completed in 2009 and that, under the annotation, no further commercial ivory sales can be proposed by the four countries until 2017. Any such future proposal to allow commercial ivory sales will require approval by the CoP—until then commercial international trade in elephant ivory remains prohibited under CITES, as is the situation now. The proposed transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I would not at all alter the current prohibition.

It should also be noted that changing the listing of any elephant population currently in Appendix II opens up the possibility of Parties placing reservations against the new listings. Currently, only Malawi holds a reservation against the listing of its elephant population in Appendix I, but that would not necessarily be the case following CoP17 if this proposal were accepted. Such an outcome would be counterproductive for elephant conservation and could place African Elephants at greater risk and effectively undermine CITES control mechanisms.

REJECT