



March 12, 2020



The Honorable Yuriko Koike
Governor of Tokyo
Secretarial Section, General Affairs Division, Office of the Governor for Policy Planning
Tokyo Metropolitan Government
8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku 2-chome
Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 163-8001
Japan



Dear Governor Koike:

On behalf of the 30 undersigned Japanese and international organizations and our millions of members and supporters worldwide, we would like to commend you and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government for taking progressive action to investigate the trade in ivory within your jurisdiction and to explore measures to prevent illegal ivory trade and export. Tokyo is an influential international city that will be hosting upwards of ten million visitors for the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in a few months and it is paramount that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government act urgently to prevent any illegal trade in and export of elephant ivory products.



In addition to being an Olympic year, 2020 is being called a “biodiversity super year” because of high-level events and activities that are taking place throughout the year, including World Wildlife Day on March 3rd with the theme “Sustaining all life on Earth,” the IUCN World Conservation Congress in June, and the adoption of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity. For the first time in 15 years, the World Economic Forum’s *Global Risks Report 2020* named biodiversity loss as one of the top five most pressing global problems. The latest comprehensive Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, produced by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) found that one million species are threatened with extinction, and that over-exploitation is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Nations and leaders across the globe are identifying next steps for urgent action to address the biodiversity crisis, including wildlife trafficking.



Japan’s large-scale trade in ivory undercuts laudable efforts being made by the organizing committees to make the 2020 Games’ more environmentally friendly pursuant to the sustainability theme, “Be better, together - For the planet and the people.” Ivory trade also undermines United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #15, which includes the Target to “Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.” As the Games draw closer, Japan overall and Tokyo in particular, will be under increasing scrutiny from the global community. It is important that Tokyo takes a stand on this critical issue.



Elephants are ecological keystone species, the loss of which has a catastrophic impact on the environment. Africa’s elephants are being killed by the tens of thousands annually for their tusks, all to supply the trade in ivory trinkets. Illegal wildlife trade also undermines good governance and harms local communities. The majority of African elephant range countries have called on the global community to close domestic ivory markets worldwide. In response, many countries have closed or are in the process of closing their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants. In 2016, governments agreed by consensus to a resolution under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)





to close domestic ivory markets contributing to illegal trade or poaching. Despite supporting this resolution, the Government of Japan has continued to protect its domestic ivory market and to grow its stockpile of whole tusks and cut pieces of ivory to supply the market.

At the 18th CITES Conference of the Parties in 2019, Japan was specifically called upon by African governments to close its domestic ivory market, along with the European Union. Japan's open legal market contributes to illegal trade and enables the illegal export of ivory from Japan to countries such as China, which has a domestic ban on ivory trade. Most seizures of ivory from Japan have been made by Chinese Customs.



Many countries and jurisdictions with ivory markets worldwide have closed them or are taking steps to do so, including the United States, China, United Kingdom, France, and Singapore. The European Union has started the process of closing its market following the 2019 CITES meeting. In Japan, while the federal government has failed to meaningfully act, leading private sector retailers have chosen to withdraw from the trade, deciding to end the sale of ivory products in lieu of government action, notably with the international Olympics in mind, including Yahoo! Japan, Rakuten, AEON, Ito Yokado, Mercari Inc., Amazon Japan Shopping, and Google Japan Shopping. In particular, AEON has stated it will end ivory sales in all stores in its malls across Japan effective March 2020, intentionally before the Games. While private sector action is welcome and influential, Japan needs government-level action for widespread impact.

With all this in mind, we again commend you for taking steps to evaluate Tokyo's trade and explore options that reflect the values of Tokyo as an international city. We believe the most impactful way forward is to end the sale of elephant ivory products as soon as possible.

We respectfully propose the following outcomes for your consideration:

- Prohibit the sale and purchase of ivory, as well as the display or advertisement of it for sale, within the Tokyo jurisdiction, as soon as possible through an Ordinance adopted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly;
- Recommend to the Government of Japan to close the domestic ivory market nationwide pursuant to CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18);
- Take emergency action before the start of the Olympics including: urgent declaration of a Tokyo policy to pursue being an ivory-free international city and delivery of a guideline to be in effect until a ban enters into force, which advises the ivory dealers in Tokyo to suspend ivory sales in accordance with the Tokyo policy; and implementation of an awareness campaign on the Tokyo policy and the regulation on ivory exports for Tokyo citizens and visitors; and,
- Elevate law enforcement efforts by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department to stop illegal trade in and illegal export of ivory during the 2020 Games.

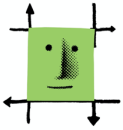
All eyes will soon turn to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the event that brings people and nations across the globe together. We hope that Tokyo will take urgent steps to end the trade in ivory and take a stand to protect the world's precious remaining elephants from the trade in and demand for their ivory.

Please note that for accountability and transparency for our supporters and others who are concerned about the future of Africa's elephants, we are going to make this open letter public. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue of Japan's domestic ivory trade further.





Yours sincerely,



ROBIN DES BOIS

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