



HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL



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WILDAID

October 31, 2018

Mr. Thomas Bach  
President  
International Olympic Committee  
Olympic Studies Centre  
Villa du Centenaire  
Quai d'Ouchy 1  
1006 Lausanne  
Switzerland  
thomas.bach@olympic.org

**Re: Appeal to the International Olympic Committee Regarding Japan's Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear President Bach:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world's elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan's legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

An estimated 20,000 African elephants are being poached each year for their ivory tusks, threatening the future of these majestic and iconic animals. Ivory poaching also fuels corruption, costs the lives of wildlife rangers, and destabilizes rural communities, many of which depend on elephant-based tourism. Legal markets stimulate and validate the demand for ivory. Only a cessation of ivory sales sends a signal that purchasing ivory is not acceptable and makes enforcement clear. Japan's open ivory trade is an affront to elephant range states suffering from elephant poaching and to the many consumer nations taking steps to close their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants.

In 2016, 180 nations party to the global endangered species treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed by consensus to a resolution calling for nations to close ivory markets where such trade is linked to illegal trade or poaching. The African Elephant Coalition members recently reiterated their demand for a global ban on ivory trade to protect Africa's elephants.<sup>1</sup> The United States and China have already banned the trade in ivory (in 2016 and 2018 respectively). The United Kingdom is poised to implement the strictest ivory ban to date. Other countries and regions in Asia, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and others have also announced their intent to ban domestic ivory trade. In contrast, Japan's legal ivory market is the largest legal domestic ivory market in the

<sup>1</sup> *More action needed to protect Africa's elephants' says the African Elephant Coalition.* June 9, 2018.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/elephant-campaign/more-action-needed-to-protect-africa-s-elephants-a8391536.html>

world, with more than 16,000 registered ivory traders (retailers, manufacturers and wholesalers). Japan is currently an outlier among major ivory consuming nations in the world.

Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Historically, Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants.<sup>2</sup> Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade. The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September 2017, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by its neighbor, China. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

The Government of Japan's refusal to abolish its ivory industry is badly out of step with the values embraced by the Olympics and cheapens the Olympics' declared commitments to sustainability and integrity. In advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, we encourage you to appeal for an ivory-free Japan and we respectfully ask you to raise these concerns about Japan's persistent legal ivory trade with the Japanese Olympic Committee and Tokyo Organising Committee and urge the Government of Japan to close its domestic ivory market before the end of 2019. Your influence has the potential to effect real, meaningful change to help secure the survival of Africa's elephants as a lasting legacy for future generations.

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May I kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this letter to Ms. Amy Zets Croke at the Environmental Investigation Agency at [amyzets@eia-global.org](mailto:amyzets@eia-global.org)? We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you or your nominated representative.

Sincerely,



Allan Thornton, OBE | President  
**Environmental Investigation Agency**  
[www.eia-global.org](http://www.eia-global.org)

On Behalf of:



Dr. Tom Ogilvie-Graham | Chief Executive Officer  
**African Wildlife Foundation**  
[www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)



Masayuki Sakamoto | Executive Director  
**Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund**  
[www.jtef.jp](http://www.jtef.jp)



Angela Sheldrick | Chief Executive Officer  
**David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust**  
[www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)



Motokazu Ando | President  
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**International Fund for Animal Welfare**  
[www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org)



Peter Knights | Chief Executive Officer  
**WildAid**  
[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

CC: Juan Antonio Samaranch, Vice President  
Uğur Erdener, Vice President  
Anita L. Defrantz, Vice President  
Zaiqing Yu, Vice President  
Mark Adams, Director of Communications



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WILDAID

November 6, 2018

Toshiro Muto  
Director General (CEO)  
Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

**Re: Appeal to the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Regarding Japan's Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear Toshiro Muto:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world's elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG) to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan's legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

An estimated 20,000 African elephants are being poached each year for their ivory tusks, threatening the future of these majestic and iconic animals. Ivory poaching also fuels corruption, costs the lives of wildlife rangers, and destabilizes rural communities, many of which depend on elephant-based tourism. Legal markets stimulate and validate the demand for ivory. Only a cessation of ivory sales sends a signal that purchasing ivory is not acceptable and makes enforcement clear. Japan's open ivory trade is an affront to elephant range states suffering from elephant poaching and to the many consumer nations taking steps to close their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants.

In 2016, 180 nations party to the global endangered species treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed by consensus to a resolution calling for nations to close ivory markets where such trade is linked to illegal trade or poaching. The African Elephant Coalition members recently reiterated their demand for a global ban on ivory trade to protect Africa's elephants.<sup>1</sup> The United States and China have already banned the trade in ivory (in 2016 and 2018 respectively). The United Kingdom is poised to implement the strictest ivory ban to date. Other countries and regions in Asia, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and others have also announced their intent to ban domestic ivory trade. In contrast, Japan's legal ivory market is the largest legal domestic ivory market in the world, with more than 16,000 registered ivory traders (retailers, manufacturers and wholesalers). Japan is currently an outlier among major ivory consuming nations in the world.

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Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Historically, Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants. Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also recently committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by its neighbor, China. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

The Government of Japan's refusal to abolish its ivory industry is badly out of step with the values embraced by the Olympics and cheapens the Olympics' declared commitments to sustainability and integrity. In advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, we encourage you to appeal for an ivory-free Japan and we respectfully ask you to raise these concerns about Japan's persistent legal ivory trade and urge the Government of Japan to close its domestic ivory market before the end of 2019. Your appeal has the potential to effect real, meaningful change to help secure the survival of Africa's elephants as a lasting legacy for future generations.

May I kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this letter to Ms. Amy Zets Croke at the Environmental Investigation Agency at [amyzets@eia-global.org](mailto:amyzets@eia-global.org)? We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you or your nominated representative.

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Sincerely,



Allan Thornton, OBE | President  
**Environmental Investigation Agency**  
[www.eia-global.org](http://www.eia-global.org)

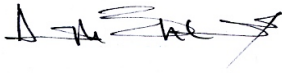
On Behalf of:



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Officer  
**African Wildlife Foundation**  
[www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)



Masayuki Sakamoto | Executive Director  
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Peter Knights | Chief Executive Officer  
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CC: Takeo Tanaka, Senior Director, Tokyo 2020 Sustainability Department  
Yusuke Hibino, Director of Sustainability Operations



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November 1, 2018

Mr. Tsunekazu Takeda  
President  
Japanese Olympic Committee  
Kishi Memorial Hall  
1-1-1 Jinnan  
Shibuya-ku  
Tokyo  
150-8050  
Japan  
JPN-NOC@JOC.OR.JP

**Re: Appeal to the Japanese Olympic Committee Regarding Japan’s Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear Mr. Tsunekazu Takeda:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world’s elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to Japanese Olympic Committee to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan’s legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

An estimated 20,000 African elephants are being poached each year for their ivory tusks, threatening the future of these majestic and iconic animals. Ivory poaching also fuels corruption, costs the lives of wildlife rangers, and destabilizes rural communities, many of which depend on elephant-based tourism. Legal markets stimulate and validate the demand for ivory. Only a cessation of ivory sales sends a signal that purchasing ivory is not acceptable and makes enforcement clear. Japan’s open ivory trade is an affront to elephant range states suffering from elephant poaching and to the many consumer nations taking steps to close their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants.

In 2016, 180 nations party to the global endangered species treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed by consensus to a resolution calling for nations to close ivory markets where such trade is linked to illegal trade or poaching. The African Elephant Coalition members recently reiterated their demand for a global ban on ivory trade to protect Africa’s elephants.<sup>1</sup> The United States and China have already banned the trade in ivory (in 2016 and 2018 respectively). The United Kingdom is poised to implement the strictest ivory ban to date. Other countries

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and regions in Asia, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and others have also announced their intent to ban domestic ivory trade. In contrast, Japan's legal ivory market is the largest legal domestic ivory market in the world, with more than 16,000 registered ivory traders (retailers, manufacturers and wholesalers). Japan is currently an outlier among major ivory consuming nations in the world.

Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants.<sup>2</sup> Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade. The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also recently committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by its neighbor, China. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

The Government of Japan's refusal to abolish its ivory industry is badly out of step with the values embraced by the Olympics and cheapens the Olympics' declared commitments to sustainability and integrity. In advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, we encourage you to appeal for an ivory-free Japan and we respectfully ask you to raise these concerns about Japan's persistent legal ivory trade and urge the Government of Japan to close its domestic ivory market before the end of 2019. Your appeal has the potential to effect real, meaningful change to help secure the survival of Africa's elephants as a lasting legacy for future generations.

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On Behalf of:



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[www.widaid.org](http://www.widaid.org)

CC: Mr. Eisuke Hiraoka, Secretary General



HUMANE SOCIETY  
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WILDAID

November 1, 2018

Mr. Zhongwen Gou  
President  
Chinese Olympic Committee  
TIYUGUAN ROAD 2  
BEIJING 100763  
People's Republic of China  
COC@OLYMPIC.CN

**Re: Appeal to the Chinese Olympic Committee Regarding Japan's Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear Mr. Zhongwen Gou:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world's elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to Chinese Olympic Committee to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan's legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

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Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants. Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also recently committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by China, which has demonstrated real leadership in the fight to protect elephants from the trade in ivory. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

Japan's refusal to abolish its ivory industry directly undercuts China's ivory market closure, and is badly out of step with the values embraced by the Olympics, cheapening the Olympics' declared commitments to sustainability and integrity. In advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, we encourage you to appeal for an ivory-free Japan and we respectfully ask you to raise these concerns about Japan's persistent legal ivory trade and its impact on China, and urge the Government of Japan to close its domestic ivory market before the end of 2019. Your influence has the potential to effect real, meaningful change to help secure the survival of Africa's elephants as a lasting legacy for future generations.

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May I kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this letter to Ms. Amy Zets Croke at the Environmental Investigation Agency at [amyzets@eia-global.org](mailto:amyzets@eia-global.org)? We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you or your nominated representative.

Sincerely,



Allan Thornton, OBE | President  
**Environmental Investigation Agency**  
[www.eia-global.org](http://www.eia-global.org)

**On Behalf of:**



Dr. Tom Ogilvie-Graham | Chief Executive Officer  
**African Wildlife Foundation**  
[www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)



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**International Fund for Animal Welfare**  
[www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org)



Peter Knights | Chief Executive Officer  
**WildAid**  
[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

CC: Mrs. Keqin Song, Secretary General



HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL



IFAW



WILDAID

November 1, 2018

Mr. Hugh Robertson  
President  
British Olympic Association  
60 Charlotte Street  
London  
W1T 2NU  
Great Britain  
BOA@TEAMGB.COM

**Re: Appeal to the British Olympic Association Regarding Japan’s Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear Mr. Robertson:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world’s elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to British Olympic Association to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan’s legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

An estimated 20,000 African elephants are being poached each year for their ivory tusks, threatening the future of these majestic and iconic animals. Ivory poaching also fuels corruption, costs the lives of wildlife rangers, and destabilizes rural communities, many of which depend on elephant-based tourism. Legal markets stimulate and validate the demand for ivory. Only a cessation of ivory sales sends a signal that purchasing ivory is not acceptable and makes enforcement clear. Japan’s open ivory trade is an affront to elephant range states suffering from elephant poaching and to the many consumer nations taking steps to close their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants.

In 2016, 180 nations party to the global endangered species treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed by consensus to a resolution calling for nations to close ivory markets where such trade is linked to illegal trade or poaching. The African Elephant Coalition members recently reiterated their demand for a global ban on ivory trade to protect Africa’s elephants.<sup>1</sup> The United States and China have already banned the trade in ivory (in 2016 and 2018 respectively). Other countries and regions in Asia, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and others have also announced their intent to ban domestic ivory trade. Great Britain is poised to implement the strictest ivory ban to date and has demonstrated real leadership in the battle to protect

<sup>1</sup> *More action needed to protect Africa’s elephants’ says the African Elephant Coalition.* June 9, 2018.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/elephant-campaign/more-action-needed-to-protect-africa-s-elephants-a8391536.html>

elephants from the trade in ivory. In contrast, Japan's legal ivory market is the largest legal domestic ivory market in the world, with more than 16,000 registered ivory traders (retailers, manufacturers and wholesalers).

Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants. Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also recently committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by its neighbor, China. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

The Government of Japan's refusal to abolish its ivory industry is badly out of step with the values embraced by the Olympics and cheapens the Olympics' declared commitments to sustainability and integrity. In advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, we encourage you to appeal for an ivory-free Japan and we respectfully ask you to raise these concerns about Japan's persistent legal ivory trade with the Japanese Olympic Committee and Tokyo Organising Committee, and urge the Government of Japan to close its domestic ivory market before the end of 2019. Your influence has the potential to effect real, meaningful change to help secure the survival of Africa's elephants as a lasting legacy for future generations.

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May I kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this letter to Ms. Amy Zets Croke at the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) at [amyzets@eia-global.org](mailto:amyzets@eia-global.org)? We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with you or your nominated representative.

Sincerely,



Allan Thornton, OBE | President  
**EIA US**  
[www.eia-global.org](http://www.eia-global.org)



Mary Rice, Executive Director  
**EIA UK**  
[www.eia-international.org](http://www.eia-international.org)

**On Behalf of:**



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**African Wildlife Foundation**  
[www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)



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Peter Knights | Chief Executive Officer  
**WildAid**  
[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

CC: Mr. Bill Sweeney, Secretary General



HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL



IFAW



認定NPO法人 野生生物保全論研究会 (JWCS)



NPO TEARS OF  
THE AFRICAN  
ELEPHANT  
NPO法人  
アフリカゾウの涙

WILDAID

November 1, 2018

Mr. Lawrence F. Probst III  
President  
United States Olympic Committee  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
United States of America  
INTERNATIONAL@USOC.ORG

**Re: Appeal to the United States Olympic Committee Regarding Japan’s Elephant Ivory Trade**

Dear Mr. Probst:

I am writing on behalf of my organization, the Environmental Investigation Agency, and the undersigned environmental organizations, to draw your attention to the plight of the world’s elephants, being poached for their ivory, and to respectfully appeal to the United States Olympic Committee to urge the Government of Japan to close Japan’s legal domestic ivory market in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. To further elaborate our concerns, we respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this matter with you or your nominated representative at your earliest convenience.

An estimated 20,000 African elephants are being poached each year for their ivory tusks, threatening the future of these majestic and iconic animals. Ivory poaching also fuels corruption, costs the lives of wildlife rangers, and destabilizes rural communities, many of which depend on elephant-based tourism. Legal markets stimulate and validate the demand for ivory. Only a cessation of ivory sales sends a signal that purchasing ivory is not acceptable and makes enforcement clear. Japan’s open ivory trade is an affront to elephant range states suffering from elephant poaching and to the many consumer nations taking steps to close their domestic ivory markets to protect elephants.

In 2016, 180 nations party to the global endangered species treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed by consensus to a resolution calling for nations to close ivory markets where such trade is linked to illegal trade or poaching. The African Elephant Coalition members recently reiterated their demand for a global ban on ivory trade to protect Africa’s elephants.<sup>1</sup> The United States and China have already banned the trade in ivory (in 2016 and 2018 respectively). The United Kingdom is poised to implement the strictest ivory ban to date. Other countries and regions in Asia, i.e. Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan and others have also announced their intent to ban domestic ivory trade. The United States has demonstrated true leadership in the battle to protect elephants from the trade in ivory.

<sup>1</sup> *More action needed to protect Africa’s elephants’ says the African Elephant Coalition.* June 9, 2018.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/elephant-campaign/more-action-needed-to-protect-africa-s-elephants-a8391536.html>



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Japan's ivory trade not only ignores the 2016 CITES resolution calling for domestic ivory bans but also conflicts with the Tokyo Olympics' sustainability theme. Notably, the trade in ivory is incompatible with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 15, including 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."

Historically, Japan has played a large role in the global ivory trade and the Japanese demand for ivory has driven the deaths of more than 262,000 African elephants. Evidence from Japan's burgeoning illegal ivory trade in recent years illustrates that Japan's legal ivory market is contributing to the illegal trade.<sup>2</sup> The Government of Japan has failed to implement controls on the trade as required by CITES, undermining the efforts to stop illegal ivory trade.<sup>3</sup> Despite recent attempts by the Government of Japan to control the trade by amending its legislation, Japan's ivory controls still cannot prevent illegal ivory from entering the market and its trade serves to launder illicit ivory and enable illegal export.

In spite of Japan's resistance to joining global leaders in banning ivory trade, we are encouraged by the actions of the private sector, including by the exemplary actions of leading Japanese retail companies. Globally, e-commerce retailers Alibaba, eBay, Amazon, Google, Tencent, Etsy and others have already prohibited ivory sales on their platforms. Japan's Rakuten, Aeon, Ito-Yokado, and Mercari, have also recently committed to ceasing all elephant ivory sales. For example, Rakuten ceased all ivory ads on its platform in August 2017 and in September, Aeon advised the 180 ivory selling tenants of its Japanese malls that all ivory trade must end by March 2020, before the Tokyo Olympics.

It is estimated that 10 million international visitors will travel to Tokyo for the 2020 Olympics. Without a domestic prohibition on ivory, it is likely that visitors to the Olympics will facilitate a major surge of illegal ivory exports that will continue to fuel ivory demand while threatening the ivory bans imposed by other nations, in particular by its neighbor, China. China has made over 100 seizures of illegal ivory from Japan in recent years while Japan has not prosecuted a single case of illegal ivory exports to China.

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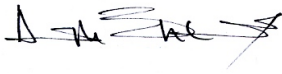
On Behalf of:



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**African Wildlife Foundation**  
[www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)



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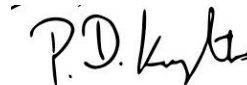
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CC: Ms. Susanne Lyons, Acting Secretary General