



Introducing

The Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI)

June 2021



The Situation

In recent years Africa has experienced dramatic growth in human-elephant conflict. Elephants are competing with people for land and dwindling natural resources. If existing conflicts are not resolved, and future conflicts not avoided, the prospect of Africa's elephants thriving across their range in 2030 and beyond are bleak.

At the same time, poaching for ivory remains a serious threat to elephant populations in some parts of Africa. Many elephants now live in small and isolated populations; if current trends continue, these could be wiped out in the next decade.

The EPI

The EPI is an alliance of 21 African countries determined to conserve their elephants whilst meeting the aspirations of their people. A majority of Africa's estimated surviving 400,000 elephants are in EPI countries, which are Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone.

The EPI was launched by the leaders of **Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon and Tanzania** during the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in February 2014, with the support of the British Government. **Uganda, Malawi, The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Eritrea and Benin** have joined since then. EPI countries are committed to:

- Implementing the African Elephant Action Plan agreed by all range States in 2010.¹
- Maintaining the international ban on the ivory trade.
- Closing down domestic ivory markets.
- Putting ivory stockpiles beyond economic use.



¹ Each EPI country aims to develop its own National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP), which is the mechanism whereby the continent-wide plan is implemented at national level. NEAPs are aligned to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The EPI Foundation (EPIF)

The EPI Foundation is the secretariat to the EPI, which galvanizes support for EPI countries to achieve their elephant conservation objectives. In 2020, the EPI Foundation adopted **Vision 2030**, in recognition of the growing challenge of human-elephant conflict, and its increased emphasis on supporting EPI countries prevent and mitigate this conflict.

The EPI Foundation Vision 2030's ambition is to:

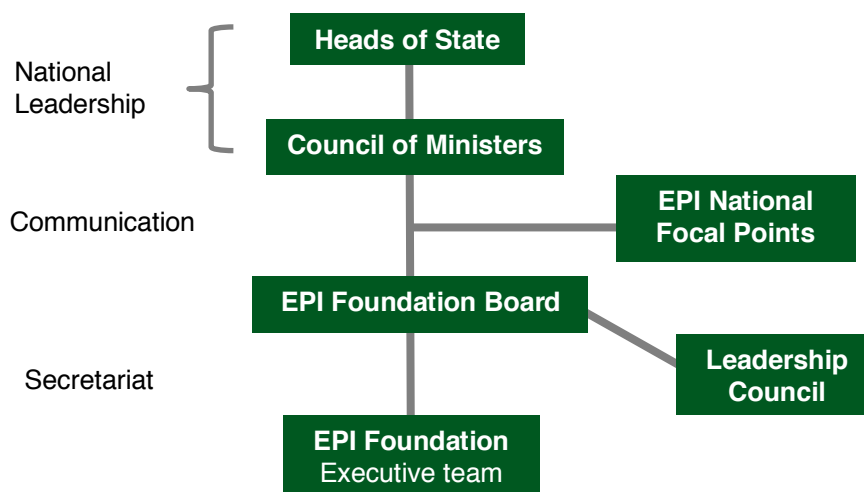
‘Ensure the harmonious coexistence of people and elephants with herds able to travel across their range, thereby protecting a diverse range of wild animals and plants, combating climate change, and supporting local livelihoods.’

The EPI Foundation is overseen by a Board and advised by a Leadership Council of eminent African politicians and conservationists, led by the former President of Botswana, H.E Ian Khama. The Leadership Council includes the First Ladies of Kenya and Sierra Leone, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and the Minister of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change of Gabon.

The Foundation works directly with government ministries and wildlife authorities in partnership with NGOs, IGOs and the private sector. It is comprised of a small and dedicated executive team, based in Africa and Europe.

EPI Structure

- **Summit:** Heads of State of EPI countries.
- **EPI Council:** Ministers from all EPI countries. To provide leadership and political support to the Elephant Protection Initiative to achieve its aims, including by growing its membership.
- **EPI National Focal Points:** appointed Ministry official in EPI countries to ensure effective communications between EPI countries, and between the Council of Ministers and the EPI Foundation.
- **EPI Foundation:** the Secretariat for the EPI and the legal entity charged with helping countries achieve the objectives of the EPI.



How the EPI Foundation supports EPI countries

- Convening member countries in addressing common challenges and facilitating the adoption of agreed policy positions.
- Sharing knowledge, experience, technologies and techniques on dealing with common challenges across range countries.
- Supporting the deployment of measures to manage existing human-elephant conflict and to avoid the conditions that could lead to future conflicts.
- Facilitating short and long-term resource mobilisation, including through advancing successful conservation governance models.
- Advocating for maintaining the international ban on trade in elephant ivory, for the closure of remaining domestic markets and supporting ongoing and effective stockpile management, and (if requested) stockpile destructions.
- The development and updating of National Elephant Action Plans.

The Benefits of Joining the EPI

The key benefits for a country in joining the EPI include:

- Assistance in leveraging technical and financial support for the resolution of human-elephant conflict, securing of national ivory stockpiles and development and implementation of National Elephant Action Plans, which will help conserve elephants and bring sustainable development opportunities to human populations that live alongside the animals.
- Membership of a continent-wide organization which works as a platform for Africa to articulate its needs and meet its goals in elephant conservation.
- Demonstrating to the international community a political commitment to elephant conservation and to fighting illicit wildlife trafficking.

How To Join The EPI

Countries can join the EPI by Presidential or Ministerial public declaration and signing of the pledge letter attached to this memo.

Partners (NGOs, IGOs, private sector) can pledge their support by public declaration and signing of a pledge letter.

EPI partners include: Africa Nomads, African Parks Network, African Wildlife Foundation, Big Life Foundation, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, Frankfurt Zoological Society, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, RSPCA International, Save The Elephants, Space for Giants, Stop Ivory, The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, The Environmental Investigation Agency, The Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, The Wildlife Conservation Society, The World Bank, The Zoological Society of London, Tusk Trust, UNDP, Wildlife Direct, Wildlife Impact, WildAid and the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and its program, the U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance (USWTA), The Nature Conservancy, Somali Wildlife & Natural History Society (SWNHS), Action For Elephants, The Mara Elephant Project, The Halo Trust, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF).



SIGNATORIES PLEDGE

The
[COUNTRY]

Being concerned about the future of Africa's elephants and determined to protect them, is taking up the invitation extended by the Governments of Botswana, Ethiopia, Chad, Gabon and Tanzania to join with them and the governments of The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Eritrea and Benin in the Elephant Protection Initiative ('EPI').

The Elephant Protection Initiative is a global initiative which brings together African Elephant range States, non-range States, IGOs, NGOs, the private sector and citizens to work to protect elephants and stop the illegal ivory trade. All EPI Signatories commit to work together to implement the African Elephant Action Plan and join the political global leadership to protect elephants, promote sustainable livelihoods and the harmonious co-existence of people and elephants. Through the EPI, all countries also commit to close domestic ivory markets, observe a moratorium on any future international trade in ivory until African elephant populations are no longer threatened and put any domestic stockpiles of ivory beyond economic use.

By becoming a signatory to the EPI, the [COUNTRY] expresses its full support for the EPI, and its agreement to work with EPI Signatories, the EPI Foundation, and relevant partners, to meet its EPI commitments and achieve the EPI's aims.

A **SIGNED**

dge letter

DATE

Coalition of major NGOs joins the Elephant Protection Initiative

We the undersigned organisations fully support and are pleased to announce our acceptance of the invitation made by the Governments of Botswana, Ethiopia, Chad, Gabon and Tanzania at the London Conference to join the Elephant Protection Initiative.

In doing so, we also join the Governments of Uganda, Malawi, The Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Nigeria.

We commit to work together to support the current and future EPI Governments to achieve:

- immediate and longer term funding for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through National Elephant Action Plans;
- the closure of domestic ivory markets;
- all stockpiles being put beyond economic use; and
- a moratorium on any consideration of future international ivory trade for at least 10 years and thereafter until African elephant populations are no longer threatened.

We support the call for other Governments, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector to bring together their efforts behind the EPI to secure the future for elephants.

Alexander Rhodes	Chief Executive Officer, Stop Ivory
Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton	Chief Executive Officer, Save the Elephants
Dr Cristián Samper	Chief Executive Officer, The Wildlife Conservation Society
Angela Sheldrick	Chief Executive Officer, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
Dr Max Graham & Keith Roberts	CEO & Director of Wildlife Security, Space for Giants
Prof. Jonathan Baillie	Conservation Programmes Director, The Zoological Society of London
Dr Paula Kahumbu	Chief Executive Officer, Wildlife Direct
Santosian Noor	President and Founder, Africa Nomads
Bhavik Shah	President, Big Life Foundation
Mary Rice	Executive Director, The Environmental Investigation Agency
Peter Fearnhead	Chief Executive Officer, African Parks Network
Charlie Mayhew, MBE	Founder and Chief Executive, The Tusk Trust
Jonathan Vaughan	Director, The Lilongwe Wildlife Trust
Daudi Sumba	Vice President of Program Design and Government Relations, African Wildlife Foundation
Azzedine Downes	Chief Executive Officer, International Fund for Animal Welfare
Peter Knights	Co-Founder and Executive Director, WildAid

Dr Christof Schenck	Director, Frankfurt Zoological Society
Mark Rose	Chief Executive Officer, Fauna and Flora International
David Canavan	Chief Executive, RSPCA
Michael O'Brien-Onyeka	Senior Vice President – Africa & Madagascar Field Division, Conservation International
Dr. Arend de Haas	Director, African Conservation Foundation
Raabia A. K. Hawa	Executive Director, Ulinzi Africa Foundation
Vladimir Russo	Executive Director, Kissama Foundation
David Richmond	Chief Executive Officer, The Brazzaville Foundation for Peace and Conservation
Ian Saunders	CEO, Tsavo Conservation Group
Neil Fitt	Acting CEO, Kalahari Conservation Society
Julie Sherman	Executive Director, Wildlife Impact
Daniel M. Ashe	President & CEO, The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and its program, the U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance (USWTA)
Richard Moller	CEO, Tsavo Trust
Jillian Blackbeard	Secretary, Tlhokomela Trust
Dr. Osman Gedow Amir	General Director, Somali Wildlife & Natural History Society (SWNHS)
Marc Goss	CEO, Mara Elephant Project
Maria Mossman	Founder, Action for Elephants
David Banks	Regional Managing Director, Africa, The Nature Conservancy
Maj-General James Cowan	CEP, The Halo Trust
Zhou Jinfeng	Vice Chairman, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF)

ELEPHANT PROTECTION INITIATIVE

WE, THE GOVERNMENTS OF BOTSWANA, CHAD, ETHIOPIA, GABON AND TANZANIA

ACKNOWLEDGE

1. **The Elephant Crisis:** the illegal killing of elephants and trade in their ivory is out of control across much of Africa. It threatens the survival not only of small exposed elephant populations, but also those which have previously been thought secure thereby harming the economic development of our countries and undermining the ecological integrity of our ecosystems. The poaching and illegal trade is driven by international criminal networks and cartels, which fuels corruption, undermines the rule of law and security, and, evidence suggests, provide funding to those associated with organised crime and terrorist activities.
2. Any **supply of ivory**, including that used within legal domestic markets, is inherently likely to increase the risk to elephant populations, those charged with their protection, and remote, vulnerable communities.
3. **The African Elephant Action Plan:** this agreement between the 38 African elephant range States, endorsed by the range States at CITES CoP15 and by the Parties to CITES at CoP16, sets out a range of agreed prioritised objectives and actions which if implemented across the African elephant's range would go a long way to address the current situation.
4. **The need to implement the 14 Urgent Measures agreed at the African Elephant Summit** in Gaborone, Botswana on 2-4 December 2013.
5. **The existence and accrual of ivory stockpiles:** these are costly to secure and maintain, diverts limited conservation resources, diverts scarce resources away from front line elephant conservation, protection and wildlife law enforcement; and may enter the illegal supply chain and drive speculation.
6. **The current restrictions on international trade:** range States with elephant populations currently on Appendix II of CITES may not apply to sell ivory until after 2017 at the earliest and so any such proposal would not be considered until CoP 18 (2019) at the earliest. Range States with elephants on Appendix I may not apply to sell ivory. The earliest any Appendix 1 state may apply to down list its elephant populations to Appendix II would be at the next Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17 in South Africa in 2016). No seized illegal ivory may ever be sold.

RECOGNISE

7. **Range States need urgent and sustained financial and technical support:** for anti-poaching work in the field, to strengthen and enforce national laws protecting elephants and preventing trafficking; to deliver regional and international intelligence-sharing and law-enforcement efforts; to safeguard habitats; and to support communities which live alongside elephants, particularly with regard to the development of sustainable livelihoods and the reduction of human-elephant conflict.

PROPOSE

8. **A global initiative, the "Elephant Protection Initiative",** in which range states, partner states, NGOs, IGO's, private citizens and the private sector work in partnership to:
 - i. **Provide both immediate and longer-term funding** to address the Elephant Crisis through full and timely implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan, by accessing public and private sector support through the creation of a long-term fund that provides guaranteed financial support for all participating range States for the implementation of the AEAP on the basis of threat to Elephant populations and need, and further provides incremental payments linked to overall elephant numbers and growth in elephant populations. This fund would also provide funds for world-wide citizen education on the issue; for addressing the various development needs of local communities, including poverty, for national conservation activities, and for regional co-operation;
 - ii. **Close domestic ivory markets in those participating states still operating a domestic market;**
 - iii. **Observe a moratorium on any consideration of future international trade** for a minimum of 10 years and thereafter until African elephant populations are no longer threatened; and agree to put all stockpiles beyond economic use.

AGREE

9. **To lead efforts to establish a financial and administrative mechanism to deliver the aims of the Elephant Protection Initiative as quickly as possible and by the end of 2014 at the latest, building on existing agreements, proposals and structures where.**
10. **To develop an initiative to federate national parks and wildlife agencies in Africa, in order to exchange lessons learned and technical experience aimed at promoting south-south cooperation and finding African solutions to this issue.**

13/02/2014