



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2017/0034, 31 January 2017

# Domestic Ivory Market in the UK

David Hirst  
Jacqueline Baker

The Petitions Committee have scheduled a debate in Westminster Hall on Monday 6 February 2017 at 4.30pm on the motion "That this House has considered e-petition 165905 relating to the domestic ivory market in the UK".

Luke Hall MP, a member of the Petitions Committee, will lead the debate.

Petition to Parliament and Government Response from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs):

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/165905>

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Summary

There has been rising international concern over the declining population of African savanna elephants. In the UK, the Government [announced](#) plans to ban the sale of ‘worked’ ivory produced since 1947 in September 2016. Internationally, the Conference of Parties to the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna \(CITES\)](#) accepted a non-binding resolution to phase out domestic ivory markets in October 2016.

## **E-petition: Shut down the domestic ivory market in the UK**

An [e-petition](#) on Parliament’s website with over 100,000 signatures calls on the Government to ‘Shut down the domestic ivory market in the UK’:

The Conservatives pledged to shut down the UK’s domestic ivory market in their manifesto for the past two elections. 30,000 African Elephants are slaughtered a year for their tusks yet, the government has still not outlawed the trade. From 2009 to 2014, 40% of UK customs seizures were ivory items.

Many African nations, the US, France and even China have committed to outlawing the markets. There are only around 450,000 African Elephants left, in another six years there will be almost half this amount if governments continue to turn a blind eye; the UK are putting Elephants at risk from extinction. If there were not a market, then the elephants would no longer be in danger. The UK needs to set an example that the only tusks of value are those on a live Elephant, before they cease to exist.

On 17 January 2017, the Petitions Committee decided to schedule a debate in Westminster Hall on the motion “That this House has considered e-petition 165905 relating to the domestic ivory market in the UK” on Monday 6 February 2017 at 4.30pm.

## **Savanna elephant population**

The “sharp upward trend” in poaching since the mid-2000s is thought to have peaked in 2011. However, between 2007 and 2014 the savanna elephant population declined by 30 percent, largely due to poaching. A recent [census of the savanna elephant population](#) found that “elephants are struggling both inside and outside parks.”

## **1989 ban on international ivory trade**

An international agreement in 1989 to effectively ban international trade in ivory was brought in under the [CITES](#). This agreement listed African elephant ivory on Appendix I to the Convention, meaning trade in ivory was limited to “exceptional circumstances.” This did not affect legal domestic markets, which were allowed to continue—and did so in many countries.

[The Control of Trade in Endangered Species \(Enforcement\) Regulations 1997 \(as amended\)](#) enforces CITES in the UK and provides for criminal offences. Under the regulations, the maximum penalty upon conviction is a two year prison sentence, a level five fine (£5,000), or both.

### **UK ban on modern day ivory sales**

On 21 September 2016, the Government announced plans to ban the sale of 'worked' ivory produced since 1947. Ornaments and works of art dating prior to 1947 are classified as 'antique' and trade in them will be permitted. DEFRA plan to consult with environmental groups, industry and other relevant parties to establish how and when such a ban could be introduced, as well as any necessary exemptions "early in 2017".

The Government has been criticised by several conservation groups for not going far enough in the ban.

### **International actions**

In October 2016, the 17th CITES Conference of Parties accepted a non-binding resolution to phase out domestic ivory markets. This was praised by conservation groups, such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

In September 2015, then US President Barack Obama and China's President Xi Jinping together pledged to enact "near complete bans" on the import and export of ivory. In June 2016 the US Government introduced new regulations and at the end of 2016, China announced that it would introduce a ban on all ivory trade and processing activities by the end of 2017.

France is another country which has recently introduced a "near complete ban" on ivory trading.

### **Commons Library Briefing Paper**

For further information, please see the Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP7875: [Trade in ivory: UK and international policy and regulation \(pdf\)](#).

## 2. News Items

Guardian

Jamie Doward

### **Prince William charity urges UK to back ivory trade ban**

7 January 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/07/uk-ivory-trade-fuels-poaching>

BBC News

### **China announces ban on ivory trade by end of 2017**

30 December 2017

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-38470861>

Metro

Georgia Diebelius

### **Someone has started a petition to ban all ivory sales in the UK**

28 November 2017

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/11/28/someone-has-started-a-petition-to-ban-all-ivory-sales-in-the-uk-6287151/>

Guardian

Patrick Wintour

### **Boris Johnson makes 'save African elephant' plea**

2 December 2016

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/dec/02/boris-johnson-makes-save-african-elephant-plea?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/dec/02/boris-johnson-makes-save-african-elephant-plea?CMP=share_btn_tw)

Daily Telegraph

Andrea Leadsom

### **We will defeat the illegal trade in wildlife**

17 November 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/17/we-will-defeat-the-illegal-trade-in-wildlife/>

Independent

### **Prince William calls for total ban on ivory trade in UK**

17 November 2016

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/prince-william-ivory-trade-ban-uk-a7422381.html>

Daily Telegraph

Joe Shute

### **Meet Britain's award-winning wildlife policeman hunting down animal poachers and smugglers**

9 November 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/meet-britains-award-winning-wildlife-policeman-hunting-down-anim/>

Independent

Ian Johnston

### **Ivory trade awash with tusks from freshly killed elephants, scientists prove**

7 November 2016

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/ivory-elephants-dated-poaching-study-nuclear-bomb-tests-extinction-a7403311.html>

Financial Times

### **Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall condemns ivory trade**

11 October 2016

<https://www.ft.com/content/1745d2ea-a4e0-11e6-8898-79a99e2a4de6>

Guardian

Damian Carrington

**Bid for strongest protection for all African elephants defeated at wildlife summit**

3 October 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/03/bid-for-stronger-protection-for-all-african-elephants-defeated-at-wildlife-summit>

Guardian

Damian Carrington

**Conservationists and MPs call for a total UK ban on ivory sales**

22 September 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/22/conservationists-and-mps-call-for-a-total-uk-ban-on-ivory-sales>

Elephant Protection Initiative

Kevin Freking

**US adopts near total ban on African elephant ivory sales**

2 June 2016 (via Associated Press)

[http://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/epi\\_in\\_action/us-adopts-near-total-ban-on-african-ivory-sales/](http://www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org/epi_in_action/us-adopts-near-total-ban-on-african-ivory-sales/)

## 3. Press releases

### World Wildlife Fund

#### China will close down domestic ivory trade by end of 2017

30 December 2017

#### Glyn Davies Acting CEO of WWF-UK, said:

“China has the largest market for illegal ivory which is fuelling the elephant poaching epidemic in Africa. After announcing this year that there would be a national ban on ivory trade, this commitment to put this in place by the end of 2017 symbolises the urgency with which this action is needed. After all, it’s estimated that on average poachers kill one elephant every fifteen minutes. There is an international trade ban in place, but legal ivory markets at a national level can create a cover through which illegal ivory can be laundered. China has shown good leadership and we are now looking to other markets implicated in the illegal wildlife trade to close legal trade and implement stricter enforcement measures. Governments worldwide must unite and send a strong message that poaching will not be tolerated.

“Tackling the illegal wildlife trade is an important step to protecting elephant populations, however, it is not the only threat. Climate change and habitat destruction are other key drivers contributing to declining populations of elephants and other species across the world including rhinos, tigers and snow leopards. Unless these key threats to species are immediately addressed, we are on course to see global wildlife populations decline by 67% on average from 1970 levels by the end of this decade and this could have devastating effects on both people and nature.”

### TUSK

#### Tusk and others call for a TOTAL ban on UK ivory sales

31 October 2016

Tusk is among almost 100 wildlife conservationists, biologists, wildlife trade experts, MPs and others that have sent an open letter calling on the British Government to implement a total ban on the ivory trade within the UK, and to continue taking a strong lead in the battle to stop the illegal wildlife trade.

The letter has been issued in response to the [Government’s announcement](#) in September that it would implement a ban on sales of “modern day ivory”. It also coincides with the broadcast of the second episode of BBC1’s [Saving Africa’s Elephants: Hugh And The Ivory War](#), which documents how illegal ivory is still being sold within the UK,

using a number of loopholes that would still exist if only the trade in ivory dated between 1947 and the present day were banned. Only the full closure of the UK's domestic market will effectively contribute to international efforts to tackle the illegal ivory trade and protect elephants.

The Government's previous announcement was made ahead of Tusk's [Time for Change](#) event at which HRH The Duke of Cambridge told an international audience that "Now is the chance to send an unambiguous message to the world that it is no longer acceptable to buy and sell ivory". The event was introduced by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, and features in the BBC documentary, in which he calls on the UK Government to toughen its plan of action in response to his findings.

The release of the open letter also follows the recent [CITES conference](#), at which Parties agreed that every country should "take all necessary legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory as a matter of urgency".

The letter can be read in full [here](#) in *The Telegraph*.

## **National Geographic Voices for Wildlife**

### **Process for Establishing Future Ivory Trade Rejected at CITES Conference**

**September 26, 2016**

For the last nine years, [CITES](#) parties have been negotiating a "decision-making mechanism," (DMM), which would establish a process for a future trade in ivory. Today, the parties of CITES voted to end the long-running discussion.

The notion of a DMM was [established](#) at CoP14 in 2007 as part of a compromise that put in place a nine-year moratorium on the international ivory trade. Namibia and several other countries agreed to the moratorium back then so long as a DMM was established.

Since then, the development of the DMM has only become more controversial as the poaching crisis escalated. There has been a net decline of approximately 110,000 African elephants from 2007 through 2015, according to a [report](#) released yesterday.

Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe put forward a [proposal](#) at this week's CoP17 conference in Johannesburg calling for the DMM to be established. A group of eight other African states put forward a counter-[proposal](#) calling for the discussions to be abandoned. Both proposals were rejected; the former by a secret ballot.

A third vote, on a [proposal](#) put forward by the CITES Standing Committee itself asking the parties to decide on whether DMM

discussions should be extended, was rejected. That was the final word—the DMM is off the table.

It's yet to be seen how Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe will respond. In their proposal calling for the establishment of the DMM, they essentially threaten to pull out of the ivory trade moratorium if DMM discussions are ended.

"It was on the basis of [establishing] this DMM that Namibia and others agreed to the moratorium," said the Namibian representative during debate before the vote.

But the debate isn't over yet: Later this week, CITES will be debating two other proposals from Namibia and Zimbabwe that could revive the ivory trade.

## **Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

### **UK ban on modern day ivory sales**

**21 September 2016**

Plans announced to help bring an end to illegal elephant poaching and ivory trafficking

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom today announced plans for a ban on sales of modern day ivory – putting UK rules on ivory sales among the world's toughest.

It comes as the UK government prepares to back urgent global action to end elephant poaching, which has reached crisis levels in recent years. New action to tackle the illicit trade will be discussed at the upcoming conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in South Africa.

Global demand for ivory has seen almost 150,000 elephants lost to poaching in under a decade, leaving numbers down by almost a third.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The UK has a strong record as a global leader in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade and I'm determined to do all we can to bring an end to poaching and ivory trafficking.

Elephants are some of our world's most iconic animals and it will take truly global action to stop the insidious criminals who selfishly prosper from the ivory trade.

This ban will send the message that the ivory trade is a thing of the past. I hope it increases pressure on other nations to implement bans and save our elephants before they disappear.

The announcement comes ahead of the start of the 17th meeting of the CITES conference in Johannesburg.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey, who will attend the conference, said:

Working with other governments, I want to see strong outcomes from this conference to protect our precious global wildlife, including elephants, lions and rhinos.

I hope the world takes note of the UK's decisive action at this important time.

The government will consult on plans for the ban early next year, seeking views from conservationists, traders and other relevant parties to ensure clear rules and guidance for those operating within the law, while cracking down on illegal sales.

*Notes to editors:*

- Figures on elephant poaching taken from the Great African Elephant Census.
- The ban will cover the sale of items containing ivory dated between 1947 and the present day. Trade in 'worked' items, such as works of art and ornaments dating from before 1947 (deemed 'antiques') will continue to be permitted.
- The UK already has a total ban on trade in raw tusks, or 'unworked' ivory, of any age.
- The government will consult with environmental groups, industry and other relevant parties to establish how and when a ban could be introduced, as well as any necessary exemptions, early next year.
- The CITES CoP17 will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24 September to 5 October 2016.

## **Environmental Investigation Agency**

### **UK's ivory trade 'ban' just so much smoke and mirrors**

**21st September, 2016**

UK Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom today announced plans for a ban on 'modern day' ivory sales, a move she claimed would put the country's rules on ivory sales among the world's toughest.

But the proposal outlined by the Government does not go nearly far enough and is effectively only a tightening of the present outdated regulations – the ivory trade in Britain will not be banned, nor even be further restricted.

Meanwhile, elephants throughout Africa will still be killed in their tens of thousands every year as domestic markets mask the illegal trade.

Other countries, including the US and France, have gone much further than the UK's proposals and have enacted near-total bans on the ivory trade, despite survey data showing that 85 per cent of the British public supports a total ban.

The UK must pull its weight in global conservation efforts and close its domestic ivory market as well as voting in favour of a resolution to close all domestic ivory markets which will be tabled next week at the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in South Africa.

Reacting to the Environment Secretary's statement, EIA Executive Director Mary Rice, in Johannesburg for CoP17, said: "Now is not the time for Britain to be shy in its global leadership. It's time for a decisive announcement of substantive action at home and meaningful leadership on the global stage to ensure elephant populations are not wiped out across Africa.

"A ban on all ivory trade in the UK has been in the Conservative Party's manifesto for some years now and it's clear the British public wants the trade shut down. Botswana, which holds the world's largest elephant population, announced this week that it wants to see a global ban on all international and domestic ivory markets – as clear a signal as could be wanted for all governments, including the UK, to follow.

"The evidence shows that the UK's legal market provides cover for the illegal international trade, a wholly unacceptable state of affairs for a country which has shown strong leadership on elephant conservation over the last three years in particular.

"The only meaningful way the UK can stop contributing to the killing of elephants is to close its ivory market and in so doing show others the way forward.

"Elephants no longer have time for these kind of half-measures. It is to be hoped that the Government ultimately announces a far stronger and more meaningful commitment."

## 4. Parliamentary material

### 4.1 Parliamentary Questions

#### [Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by:** Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op)

We do not have time to waste. Since the Westminster Hall debate in December, 4,007 elephants have been killed for their tusks. With China introducing a total ban on the ivory trade by the end of this year, will the Government reconsider their proposed and unworkable partial ban, which will still result in criminals being able to trade in ivory, and will the Government move immediately to a total ban on ivory, as Labour would?

**Answered by:** Andrea Leadsom | Conservative Party |

**Department:** Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

I am sorry to say that the hon. Lady is talking nonsense. The Government are not proposing a partial ban. At the meetings I held in China and Vietnam at the illegal wildlife trade conference last year, we were very clear that we will do everything possible not just to enforce a ban on the trading of post-'47 ivory—enforcement is absolutely key—but to minimise exemptions. The hon. Lady needs to work with us to assure the protection of the species, not make party political points about it.

19 Jan 2017 | Topical questions | House of Commons | 619 c1058

#### [Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by:** Rebecca Pow | Conservative Party

Illegal trading in wildlife is now the fourth most lucrative transnational crime, and it has a hugely destabilising effect on habitats and on many communities. On that note, will the Secretary of State tell me what his Department is doing to help to combat the poaching and illegal ivory trading in Africa?

**Answered by:** Boris Johnson | Conservative Party | **Department:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office

This Government have made it clear that combating the illegal wildlife trade is one of our priorities. We have a dedicated illegal wildlife trade team in London, working with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. As my hon. Friend will know, the Secretary of State recently came back from a highly successful conference in Hanoi on the ivory trade. We are supporting—

[Interruption.] With our funds, we are supporting—[Interruption.] Let me tell the hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry), who mocks the elephants, that the number of elephants is diminishing by 8% every year. Thanks to the efforts of this Government, that issue is being raised up the international agenda again. We are spending considerable sums of money to support those who are combating the poachers.

10 Jan 2017 | Topical questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons 619 c155

### [Elephants: India](#)

**Asked by:** David Mackintosh, | Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on ensuring elephants are given the highest level of international protection.

Dr Thérèse Coffey | Conservative Party | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government is committed to tackling the crisis facing the African elephant from poaching and illegal trafficking. We fully support the existing global ban on ivory trade. The UK has discussed the global level of protection afforded to the elephant with EU Member States on numerous occasions. In particular, the proposal submitted to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to include all populations of African elephant in Appendix I was debated in EU CITES meetings in preparation for CoP17.

10 Jan 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 58134

### [Ivory: Trade](#)

**Asked by:** Rachael Maskell | Labour Party.. Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans for her Department's consultation on proposals for a limited ban on the ivory trade to include a question on the feasibility of enforcing a ban which continues to permit the sale of items dated to before 1947.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Conservative Party | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We will consult on our proposal to ban sales of ivory products that are less than 70 years old as of March 2017, early next year. As part of this, we plan to seek evidence on options and impacts of taking further action. We will also consider further whether additional measures are

necessary to ensure a robust enforcement regime to accompany any new rules.

19 Dec 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 57574

[Ivory: Trade](#)

**Asked by:** Rachael Maskell, | Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when her Department plans to launch its consultation on proposals for a limited ban on the ivory trade; and whether she plans to include in that consultation a question on whether items dated to before 1947 should be included in such a ban.

**Answering member:** Dr Thérèse Coffey | Conservative Party | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We will consult on our proposal to ban sales of ivory products that are less than 70 years old as of March 2017, early next year. As part of this, we plan to seek evidence on options and impacts of taking further action. We will also consider further whether additional measures are necessary to ensure a robust enforcement regime to accompany any new rules.

19 Dec 2016 | Written questions | House of Commons | 57571

[Ivory: Trade](#)

**Asked by:** Rachael Maskell | Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had at (a) international, (b) EU and (c) UK forums on ending the trade in historic and antique ivory.

**Answering member:** Dr Thérèse Coffey | Conservative Party | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Officials discussed the closure of domestic ivory markets at the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) that took place in Johannesburg from 24 September to 5 October. The issue has also been discussed at a number of EU-level CITES meetings.

In the UK, my predecessor Rory Stewart met, and officials have had a number of discussions with, representatives of the arts and antique sectors over the past 18 months to discuss issues surrounding the sale of ivory in the UK. Officials have also discussed the UK's manifesto commitment to press for a total ban on ivory sales during regular CITES meetings with UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as bilaterally with individual and groups of interested NGOs.

06 Dec 2016 | Written questions | House of Commons | 55842

### [Ivory: Trade](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had at (a) international, (b) EU and (c) UK forums on ending the trade in historic and antique ivory.

Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Conservative Party | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Officials discussed the closure of domestic ivory markets at the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) that took place in Johannesburg from 24 September to 5 October. The issue has also been discussed at a number of EU-level CITES meetings.

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06 Dec 2016 | Written questions | House of Commons | 55842

## 4.2 Debates

UK Ivory Trade

HC Deb 08 Dec 2016 | House of Commons | Westminster Hall | 618 c183-208

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-12-8/debates/F3FDF9D0-A62-4135-9D94-ECEBA5C246E1/BackbenchBusiness>

## 4.3 Written Ministerial Statements

Statement by Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Secretary of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

### **Hanoi Conference on illegal wildlife trade**

<http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-12-01/HCWS295>

HC Deb 01 Dec 2016 | HCWS295

The Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade took place on 17-18 November 2016, bringing together leaders from across the world to secure international political commitment to action on tackling the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The Hanoi Conference was the third global conference on IWT to follow the London Conference in 2014 and Kasane Conference in 2015.

I was delighted to attend the Conference on behalf of the UK, alongside His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. The Conference was successful, with 42 countries and the EU adopting the Hanoi Statement by consensus and 23 countries, the EU and 6 international organisations pledging new and specific actions in the Statement Annex to deliver on their commitments from London and Kasane.

The UK played a key role in supporting Vietnam as chair and host, including direct financial support and seconding staff to the conference secretariat. Our contribution and leadership were widely recognised and commended by international partners. At the Conference, I was able to announce an additional £13million in UK funding for IWT and a number of new initiatives, including expanded British Military training for African park rangers; a project with China to deliver joint training to African border forces; additional funding for Interpol to expand their work with key nations, tracking and intercepting illegal shipments of ivory, rhino horn and other illegal wildlife products; and up to £4million for the International Consortium for Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).

Finally I was also pleased to announce that the UK will host a fourth high level meeting on IWT in 2018, to ensure that this urgent global issue stays at the top of the political agenda and that we continue to deliver on our manifesto commitment to lead the world in tackling IWT.

The UK was able to lead further progress in the margins of the Conference. I hosted a meeting of ASEAN Heads of Delegation, attended by the Duke of Cambridge, where I pressed for enhanced collaboration in this critical region, particularly on enforcement. The Philippines, chair of ASEAN in 2017, agreed that IWT would feature on the agenda.

In my meetings with Vietnamese Ministers, I welcomed recent positive steps taken by Vietnam to tackle IWT, and encouraged them to intensify further demand reduction and law enforcement efforts, including in respect of specific cases recently highlighted by NGOs and the media. I made clear the UK's commitment to ongoing practical cooperation between our two countries on these issues.

That so many countries and organisations came together once more in Hanoi to agree further action on IWT is a positive signal of ongoing political attention and also a consensus on the importance and urgency of the issue. We will remain focussed on driving forward this momentum and ensuring the commitments made in Hanoi are delivered in the lead up to the next event in London 2018.

Written Ministerial Statement made by Dr Therese Coffey MP  
(Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment  
and Rural Life Opportunities )

**17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on  
International Trade in Endangered Species**

<http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-10-18/HCWS198>

HC Deb 18 Oct 2016 | 198WS

The 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) took place in Johannesburg between 24 September and 5 October 2016. CITES is a vital international mechanism for protecting some of our most precious yet vulnerable global wildlife.

Having attended the conference, I can report it was a great success, delivering strong agreements to protect some of the world's most iconic species. I am pleased that much of this action was driven by the UK.

For example, the UK led negotiations on African Lions which saw the trade in wild lion bones banned and the establishment of a new CITES Task Force.

We also chaired discussions on rhinos, resulting in investigative action into failures to halt rhino horn trafficking in key destinations. A proposal to allow trade in rhino horn was also rejected.

Perhaps most significantly and in recognition of the peril facing many elephant populations, the conference voted against a resumption of trading in modern day ivory, in line with recent domestic UK action. There was also a clear direction to close national ivory markets where these fuel poaching and illegal trade and decisive action to strengthen National Ivory Action Plans which help combat ivory trafficking in key markets.

In addition, global rules on hunting trophies were enhanced, with export permits now mandated for almost all species listed as endangered.

The many victories for global wildlife are too numerous to detail, with action also delivered for Pangolins, as the world's most trafficked mammal, the African Grey Parrot and species of sharks amongst others.

Vitaly, while CITES deals with the legal trade in species, Illegal Wildlife Trade was also a strong focus, with agreements reached on increased global cooperation, and intelligence sharing to boost efforts to reduce demand for wildlife products and tackle corruption. This agreement is crucial as we look towards the Hanoi conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade which will bring together global leaders in November to push further action. Following on from the ground-breaking London Conference, the UK is providing funding and advice to Vietnam in

hosting this latest conference, assuring the Illegal Wildlife Trade's place at the top of the global political agenda and delivering on our manifesto pledge to continue to lead the world on this issue. The Secretary of State Andrea Leadsom will lead HMG's delegation to the Conference, which will also be attended by HRH the Duke of Cambridge. Their presence at this vital time will show that the UK continues to be at the forefront of global action, pushing for an end to this brutal trade.

UK leadership in this area is clear. At home, we are tackling wildlife crime through our National Wildlife Crime Unit, which will receive £1.2 million of funding over the next four years. Abroad, the British military is delivering anti-poaching training to rangers in Gabon, home of Africa's largest population of forest elephants. We are also investing £13 million in projects around the world to support communities and boost law enforcement through our Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, including specialised interception tracking courses to protect rhino and elephant populations across sub-Saharan Africa.

Decisions made in recent weeks will have a real impact in safeguarding some of the world's most vulnerable species. The UK has been at the forefront of driving this and we will remain committed to protecting global wildlife for generations to come.

## 4.4 Early Day Motion

### **Action to tackle the ivory trade**

Primary Sponsor: John Mann MP

EDM 859 1

3 January 2017

That this House recognises that African elephants are facing an unprecedented crisis with an average of one killed every 15 minutes for their ivory; welcomes the action taken internationally by the Government to combat the ivory trade and protect elephants in their natural habitat; further recognises that both the illegal ivory trade and the existence of legal domestic markets are helping fuel this trade; notes that ivory, both legal and illegal, is being traded on a daily basis within the UK; further notes that illegal ivory items seized by police and the Border Force in the UK have been falsely antiqued, using artificial stains or ageing techniques, clearly destined for the legal antique market; notes that domestic ivory markets are known to provide cover for the illegal trade in ivory and also reinforce the high value of ivory across the world; notes that China has announced a domestic ivory trade ban by the end of 2017; and therefore calls on the Government to implement its commitment to press for a total ban on ivory sales and close down the UK ivory market, including that of antique ivory, with immediate effect.

## E-Petition

### Shut down the domestic ivory market in the UK

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/165905>

The Conservatives pledged to shut down the UK's domestic ivory market in their manifesto for the past two elections. 30,000 African Elephants are slaughtered a year for their tusks yet, the government has still not outlawed the trade. From 2009 to 2014, 40% of UK customs seizures were ivory items.

Many African nations, the US, France and even China have committed to outlawing the markets. There are only around 450,000 African Elephants left, in another six years there will be almost half this amount if governments continue to turn a blind eye; the UK are putting Elephants at risk from extinction. If there were not a market, then the elephants would no longer be in danger. The UK needs to set an example that the only tusks of value are those on a live Elephant, before they cease to exist.

### Government responded

The Government shares concerns about the crisis facing African elephants from poaching and illegal trafficking and has proposed a ban on trade in modern day ivory as a step towards a total ban.

The Government is deeply concerned by the continued poaching of elephants for their ivory, which is why we are committed to maintaining the current global ban on any international trade in new ivory.

We have been actively exploring options to implement the Government's manifesto commitment to press for a total ban on ivory sales. On 21 September the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced a ban on sales of items containing ivory dated between 1947 and the present day, making UK rules on ivory sales among the world's toughest. The Government will consult on the ban early next year as a first step in meeting the manifesto commitment. This will complement our existing approach of not permitting sales of raw ivory tusks of any age.

Dr Thérèse Coffey, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, attended the recent 17th Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) during September 2016. The UK was pleased that at the CITES Conference, Parties voted against a resumption of trading in modern day ivory, in line with recent domestic UK action. There was also a clear direction to close national ivory markets where these fuel poaching and illegal trade and decisive action to strengthen National Ivory Action Plans, which help combat ivory trafficking in key markets.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

## 5. Further reading

**Traffic Report: A rapid survey of UK ivory markets**, August 2016

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/157301/27217988/1472570776477/UK-ivory-markets.pdf?token=8Tijf%2B0un%2BE4W6v%2Bb2wCJHC2QrE%3D>

Latest news from Traffic

<http://www.traffic.org/home/category/mammals-elephants>

**Estimating economic losses to tourism in Africa from the illegal killing of elephants**

Nature Communications:

1 November 2016

<http://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms13379>

**Illegal ivory mostly from recent elephant killings**

**Carbon-dating study suggests governments are not fuelling trade by selling off old tusks**

Nature – International Weekly Journal of Science - Brigitte Osterath

7 November 2016

<http://www.nature.com/news/illegal-ivory-mostly-from-recent-elephant-killings-1.20953>

**Born Free Foundation: The ivory trade**

<http://www.bornfree.org.uk/animals/african-elephants/projects/ivory-trade/>

**Save Me Trust: The ivory trade**

<http://www.save-me.org.uk/the-ivory-trade>

**University of Portsmouth School of Law: The Ivory Project**

<http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-law/research/the-ivory-project/>

**CITES Elephant Trade Information System**

<https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/etis/index.php>

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