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CANADA ENHANCES CONTROLS ON AFRICAN ELEPHANT IVORY IMPORTS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark and the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Lucien Bouchard, announced today strengthened restrictions on commercial and personal imports of raw or worked African elephant ivory.

The new regulations under the Export and Import Permits Act will be published in the Canada Gazette today and will cover such items as jewelry, artwork, statuary, sculptures, figurines, carved tusks or other artifacts and pianos with ivory keys.

"The enhancement of existing import controls demonstrates Canada's great concern over the plight of the African elephant. This action is in line with Canada's plan to press other members of the the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to provide the African elephant with the same level of protection as the endangered Asian elephant," Mr. Clark said.

Mr. Bouchard said, "Canada recognizes the need to work both within and outside the CITES framework to help conserve the world's wildlife heritage. We fully support wildlife conservation that is socially responsible."

The import restrictions will help stem the widespread poaching of African elephants. This poaching has led to an estimated reduction of the African elephant population from 1.4 million to 600 000 in the last 10 years.

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