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IMPORT RESTRICTIONS FOR AFRICAN ELEPHANT IVORY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark and the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Lucien Bouchard today announced their intention to take measures to impose further restrictions on imports of raw or worked African elephant ivory.

The enhancement of existing import controls will prevent Canada from becoming a country of convenience for purposes of laundering illegally obtained ivory during this period when signatories to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) are considering proposals to enhance the level of protection afforded to this elephant species prior to the October 1989 meeting.

Canada will be an active participant at the July meeting of the CITES Elephant Working Group to be held in Botswana. This meeting will help evaluate the complex socio-economic and ecological conditions which threaten the African elephant, in particular the networks engaged in illegal ivory trade.

Canada will also press this fall for CITES to give the same protection to the African elephant as that enjoyed by the endangered Asian elephant, by moving it to a classification under CITES which would prohibit commercial trade in African elephant ivory. Countries who are members of CITES will meet in Lausanne in October to address this issue.

Mr. Clark said "This action should serve to indicate Canada's desire to discourage any further speculative slaughter of these magnificent animals which may occur during current CITES deliberations and also signals Canada's grave concerns over the plight of this species".

Mr. Clark has asked his Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Patrick Boyer, MP (Etobicoke-Lakeshore) to monitor this issue and consult further with interested parties.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Jean Robillard
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada
(613) 997-1840

Ann Collins
Media Relations Office
Dept. of External Affairs
(613) 995-1874