



PRESS RELEASE

THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT TASK FORCE (LATF) ANNOUNCES THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT LAW ENFORCEMENT DAY

“Day to recognize the role of law enforcement in the conservation of the African Elephant while fostering cooperation to combat elephant poaching and ivory trafficking in Africa”

Nairobi, 14th July 2011... In a bid to combat illegal ivory trade in Africa, Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) has today announced The African Law Enforcement Day, to be held on July 20th 2011 marked by a host of activities whose climax will be the burning of 4,967 kg contraband ivory at the KWS Field Training School – Manyani .

The African Elephant Law Enforcement Day is an important day set aside to recognize the plight of the endangered African elephant and celebrate its importance, create awareness and appreciate the challenges faced in its conservation.

LATF Director, Mr. Bonaventure Ebayi notes that, “this day is important not only to LATF but its member states as well. It focuses on recognizing and demonstrating our solidarity with the wildlife law enforcement fraternity as it strives to curtail elephant poaching and illegal trade in elephant ivory as well as other wildlife products, thereby conserving our wildlife heritage for posterity. The main theme for the day is *‘Fostering co-operation to combat elephant poaching and ivory trafficking in Africa’*”, he said.

The Lusaka Agreement Parties and Signatories comprise Kenya, Congo, Lesotho, Liberia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia, Swaziland and South Africa.

The contraband ivory consists of 335 tusks and 41,553 ivory hankos which was part of the seizure by the Singapore Customs Authorities in June 2002 and subsequently brought to Kenya by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force in March 2004 for investigation purposes. The ivory was exported from Lilongwe, Malawi and seized in Singapore in June 2002. However after investigations and DNA



examination/profiling to determine its probable origins, it was discovered that the ivory could have come from savanna elephant populations in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

Inadequate funding has fraught wildlife crime prevention and detection efforts among party states of the Lusaka Agreement. In most member states, the basic implementation of the Agreement is severely constrained by the lack of adequate financial resources.

A special account; The **African Elephant Law Enforcement Special Account (AELESA)** aimed at mobilizing funds for facilitating joint law enforcement activities on conservation of the African elephant in the Lusaka Agreement member states will also be launched to facilitate and fund activities that will go towards protecting the African elephant.

Another important activity to mark the celebrations is the launch of the Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System (**WEMS**). LATF has entered into a tripartite partnership with ITC - University of Twente (Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation) in the Netherlands and United Nations University-Japan to acquire and implement this robust regional database and applications software among the Lusaka Agreement member states and eventually expand to cover all countries in Africa.

WEMS is an environmental governance model defined in accordance with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Development and assists in monitoring the effectiveness of enforcement and compliance of wildlife law at a national level. "It is a database that will monitor enforcement effort against trafficking and illegal trade in wildlife through joint efforts carried out by United Nations bodies, governments, private sector, civil society and research institutions, by building a common data collection and reporting mechanism at regional and national levels", said Mr. Ebayi.

LATF will also award Wildlife Law Enforcement Heroes, nominated from Lusaka Agreement member states. The award is designed to recognize outstanding achievement, commitment and/or leadership by law enforcement officers to the conservation and protection of the African Elephant.

The Director, Bonaventure Ebayi emphasised, "it is LATF's profound view that if poaching continues unchecked, the continent's rich wildlife heritage may be decimated. The illegal exploitation of wildlife



defrauds the African states substantial amount of revenues that would have otherwise been utilized to strengthen the economies of these countries and consequently reduce poverty”.

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