



## PRESS RELEASE

### **THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT TASK FORCE (LATF) REPATRIATES 1.6TONNES IVORY TO ZAMBIA WHICH WAS PART OF CONTRABAND IVORY SEIZED IN SINGAPORE IN 2002**

On 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011, LATF in collaboration with of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources of the Republic of Zambia and the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) with support from partnering agencies repatriates 1,653.4Kg of elephant ivory consisting of 150 tusks and 100 ivory hankos from Kenya. Today 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, the ivory has been handed over to the Government of Zambia by Director LATF. The consignment is part of contraband elephant ivory which was exported from Lilongwe, Malawi and seized by Singapore Customs Authorities in June 2002 and subsequently brought to Kenya by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force in March 2004 for investigation purposes. The investigations through DNA examination/profiling to determine its probable origins showed that the ivory could have come from savanna elephant populations in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia but centred in Zambia.

After completion of the investigations, in October 2008, the 9<sup>th</sup> Governing Council (GC) of Lusaka Agreement meeting in Kampala, Uganda through Decision IX/6(1&4) authorized LATF to dispose off the ivory contraband in accordance with CITES provisions and internationally agreed standards. In May 2010 LATF convened a Ministerial Consultative Meeting involving officials from Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya as observer at LAICO Regency Hotel, Nairobi which resolved that 150 tusks and 100 ivory hankos be repatriated to Zambia while 50 tusks and 50 ivory hankos repatriated to Malawi for



educational, Scientific and prosecution purposes and that the rest be destroyed by burning in Kenya.

In pursuant to implementation of decision of the 9<sup>th</sup> GC and resolutions of Ministerial Consultative Meeting, LATF organized the first ever African Elephant Law Enforcement Day Celebrations' on 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> **July 2011** during which at the main event held at Manyani Field Training School 4,966.5 kg of the contraband ivory were burned. The day was also 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. Five Wildlife Law Enforcement Heroes, nominated from Lusaka Agreement member states including Zambia received a Conservation Hero Award. 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.

On that day, LATF Director Mr. Bonaventure Ebayi noted that, "the day was 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 remains ***'Fostering co-operation to combat elephant poaching and ivory trafficking in Africa'***".

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.



*LATF Field Officer Mr. Adan Alio handing over ivory to Director of National Parks & Wildlife of Malawi Mr. Leonard Sefu.*