

# SPECIES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

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## AFRICAN ELEPHANT IN NAMIBIA

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Namibia is requesting Parties in Bangkok to approve developments in its national management programme for African elephant based on a broader range of export items in order to accommodate national conservation priorities for an increasing numbers of elephants against competing demands for economic land-use.

In addition to the non-commercial export of hunting trophies, Namibia is seeking approval for the export of live animals for *in situ* conservation, trade in hides, leather and hair goods for commercial purposes and worked jewellery items (ekipas). Namibia is also seeking approval for the one-off export of existing stock of legally derived raw ivory (maximum of 10,000kg) to be followed by an annual export quota (maximum of 2000kg) of raw ivory.

Implementation of the amended Appendix-II listing for the Namibian population of African elephant (and proposed export arrangements for raw ivory and worked jewellery items) will be subject to conditions that are specified in the annotations to the Appendix-II listing.

The conditions governing the export of all ivory (raw and ekipas) are regarded as more than adequate to ensure that export of the material from Namibia will not create any avenues for illegal trade in ivory or other products derived from either African or Asian elephant. If approved, the proposed amendments to the Appendix-II listing of the Namibian population of African elephant would institutionalise the management of elephants in Namibia and trade in their parts and derivatives – thereby precluding the need for Namibia to continually seek COP approval for actions that are routine elements of its conservation management programme.

The ability to export individually marked and certified ivory amulets (ekipas) incorporated in finished jewellery items, that are unique to northern Namibia and adjacent Angola, would not only preserve an important aspect of Namibian culture, but also confer an economic value on elephants that enable them to compete against other forms of land-use by contributing to the livelihoods of impoverished rural communities with limited scopes for deriving an income.

The present population of African elephant in Namibia is estimated to be in excess of 11,000 and increasing. This is clear testimony that Namibia has demonstrated a responsible approach to managing and conserving its elephant resource since the 1997 decision by CITES to permit limited international trade in African elephant ivory.

SMS believes there is no clear evidence to link the 1997 decision by CITES to permit limited international trade in African elephant ivory from the southern African countries to any increase in illegal activities elsewhere in the species range or indeed any illegal trade in Asian elephant. Prohibition of any commodity for which a demand exists is the single most important factor contributing to poaching and illegal trade. In fact there is good evidence (as exemplified by the history of trade in crocodilian skins) to suggest that illegal trade can be reduced when it is replaced well-regulated legal trade in the commodity.

SMS requests Parties to disregard all the misinformation (much of which is presented to support separate external interests and agendas) and consider the Namibian amendment proposal

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objectively on the basis of the achievements that made and the need for management flexibility in an ever-changing economic and social environment.

For further information and a copy of the SMS "**Guide to CITES**" go to: [www.speciesms.org](http://www.speciesms.org)