

**African, Japanese and international conservation NGO's call on President Kenyatta and Prime Minister Abe to agree on measures to save the African elephant.**

Nairobi, 26 August 2016: **Tokyo International Conference on African Development** (TICAD) is a conference held regularly with the objective "to promote high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and development partners." Japan is a co-host of these conferences. Other co-organizers of TICAD are the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (UN-OSSA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The next conference is scheduled for Kenya on August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 2016. It will be the first time the event will be held in Africa, previous conferences were all held in Japan.

TICAD has been an evolving element in Japan's long-term commitment to fostering peace and stability in Africa through collaborative partnerships. In this context, Japan has stressed the importance of "Africa's ownership" of its development as well as of the "partnership" between Africa and the international community. The exchange of views amongst the conference delegates serves to underscore the case for more, not less assistance from the major world economies. It is in this vein that Africa must seek Japan's support in saving the African elephant which is undergoing an unprecedented slaughter due to demand for ivory. Japan continue to be a major consumer, and, therefore, has a special responsibility to act in the interest of Africa and elephants.

In part due to Kenya's leadership position on the matter, most of Africa, Asia as well as the world's developed nations agree that to save elephants, global ivory markets should be closed. Both the US President Obama and China's President Xi have made commitments to close the domestic markets which will have a huge impact on demand. Now conservationists call on Japan to support China, USA and twenty-nine African countries by endorsing a plan to afford elephants the highest protection under international law.

The growing demand for ivory in Japan has come about due to thriving legal domestic ivory markets. Studies however show that these markets are used for the laundering of illegal ivory through loopholes in the regulations. Japanese conservation organizations estimate that in the three years between 2012, and 2014, at least **12 tons of whole tusks and pieces of**

**ivory were sold on Yahoo Japan Auction site.** These marketing and distribution channels have not been focused on by the law enforcement agencies.

In June 2014, the Government of Japan reported to CITES that there are 7,570 registered ivory dealers, 537 ivory wholesalers, and some 293 ivory manufacturers in Japan - the largest known numbers of any country in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike China where ivory is bought for prestige, 80% of the ivory consumed in Japan is used for Hanko, the traditional Japanese seal used as the only form of official signature accepted by banks. But most people buy these products without knowing that they are contributing toward the elephant slaughter and illegal trade.

We urge Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta, who is the head of the Giants Club of African presidents supporting elephant conservation, and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, to seize this unique opportunity at TICAD6 to discuss the issue as part of their duty towards the development agendas of Africa and Japan.

We also urge the H.E. the First Lady of Japan, Akie Abe, an ardent conservationist, to join H.E. the First Lady of Kenya, Margaret Kenyatta in raising awareness about elephants and their conservation needs.

Japan is one of Africa's most important development partners. They have made major contributions and commitments to support conservation. Now the conservation community call for 5 actions to be agreed at TICAD:

1. Japan to permanently close legal domestic markets of ivory, and aggressively close down online trading sites that deal in ivory, all to crush demand.
2. Japan to suspend ivory registration immediately, to prevent loopholes that allow fraudulent registration and laundering of illegal ivory.
3. Japan to support the Elephant Protection Initiative.
4. Japan to strengthen cooperation on elephant conservation initiatives and combating the trafficking of ivory to Japan through joint investigations and mutual legal assistance.
5. Japan's Prime Minister and First Lady to jointly issue statements to discourage the selling and buying of ivory in Japan and to initiate an education and outreach campaign to

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<sup>1</sup> (Japan, June 2014, pp. Government of Japan Report on trade control in ivory and ivoSC65, Doc 42.1 Addendum, Annex 2. )

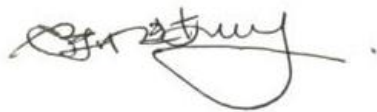
Japanese citizens on the importance of saving elephants by stopping poaching and ending ivory trade.

Kenya is proud to be hosting the first TICAD conference in Africa and we look forward to positive outcomes of the discussions that the conservation community

Signed



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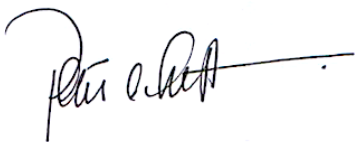
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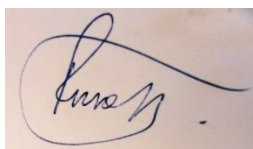
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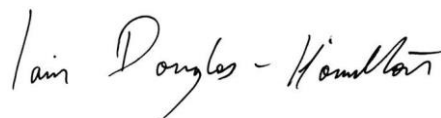
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