

For Immediate Release

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

RE: KENYA CELEBRATES GREAT CONSERVATION WINS

Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Hon. Najib Balala, has commended the country delegation to the just-ended international wildlife conference in Geneva, Switzerland, for achieving great conservation wins.

Briefing journalists at the iconic Ivory Burning site in Nairobi National Park, Hon Balala noted that Kenya had presented eight agenda items to the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18) to the global wildlife trade regulatory treaty – The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) - five on species listing and three on revision of resolutions and decisions for better implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Among the notable successes were: rejection of lifting international ivory trade ban as proposed by Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia. This in effect means international trade ban in ivory remains; Stringent regulation on live elephant trade to only allow any transfer of live elephants to appropriate and acceptable destinations within the elephant's natural range and requirements that countries that still have domestic ivory markets report to CITES on a regular basis with efforts being made to ensure their trade do not contribute to poaching and illegal ivory trade; Other conservation milestones that Kenya has achieved in the conference are the listing of Giraffes, Wedgefish shark and Teatfish in CITES Appendix (II) thus bringing under regulation trade in their specimens and listing the Pancake tortoise in Appendix I to prohibit any trade in wild caught live specimens. Trade in Giraffe, Wedgefish shark and Teatfish will now be regulated under the CITES permitting systems to ensure the trade is not detrimental to their survival in the wild.

Decisions adopted at the wildlife conference on the species listing will enter into force on November 26, 2019 for implementation, (90 days after the conclusion of the CoP18 meeting on August 28, 2019) . The CS thanked the CITES Parties for ensuring the international ban in ivory trade is sustained to help address the current laundering of ivory and poaching across countries that host elephant populations.

The CS applauded the strong team from Kenya led by the Ministry's Chief Administrative Secretary, IG (Rtd.) Joseph Boinett, delegations of the other 31 African Elephant Coalition member countries and partners who successfully lobbied support from the USA, China, European Union, Latin America, Asia and many other CITES Parties for Kenya's proposals.

The CS called upon donors and partners to come on board and fund conservation activities in Kenya and Africa as a whole in order to safeguard the continent's rich wildlife heritage.

He said that threats by some African countries to withdraw from CITES were retrogressive and called on the 37 African elephant range States to roll out implementation of the Africa Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and also contribute to the African Elephant Fund to save the continent's elephants.

Hon Balala credited the African Elephant Coalition, which consists of 32 African countries, majority being countries with elephants, and all partners who drummed up overwhelming support to the Kenyan delegation in Geneva. He also commended Kenya Airports Authority and Kenya Airways for supporting the month-long #StopIvoryTrade campaign.

The Kenya delegation to the conference was composed of Government representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya Wildlife Service, National Museums of Kenya, Office of the Director

of Public Prosecutions, and the State Department of Fisheries and Blue Economy and representatives from the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) and Conservation Alliance of Kenya(CAK)

The next CITES conference (CoP19) will be held in Costa Rica in the year 2022 to review progress in implementation of decisions adopted at CoP18