



25th February, 2020

Chair Amy Sheldon
House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife
Vermont General Assembly
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301, USA

Re: A letter in strong support of H. 99 to ban ivory trade from Tanzanian Elephant Foundation (TEF).

Dear Chair Sheldon, Vice Chair Lefebvre and Esteemed Representatives,

TEF is a Tanzanian non-profit elephant organization, founded in August, 2019. It is registered as a Non – Government Organization with a registration number 00NGO/R/0307 and TIN number 140 – 510 – 157, based in Moshi town, Kilimanjaro-Tanzania. A key component of TEF’s mission is to promote elephant conservation and management in Tanzania through ecological research and monitoring, enhancing human -elephant coexistence through facilitation of community - led projects and providing conservation education and outreach programs and apply them to curb the long - term challenges of elephant conservation across its range.

The African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) is the largest extant terrestrial mammal in the world. Elephants are highly intelligent and social animals and play an important role as ecosystem engineers. Elephants form an integral part of world’s natural and cultural heritage. They feature in our stories and our art, reflecting that people and elephants have co-existed for thousands of years. The ecosystems of the world have co-evolved with elephants, they shaped the savannah and the woodlands, and many of their paths became our roads. To lose our elephants would be to lose a cherished facet of our world and historical identity”.

Elephants are of conservation concern as their numbers are in decline. Between the last African Elephant Status Report (AESR) in 2007 and the most recent in 2016, there has been a decline of approximately 104, 000-114,000 elephants in Africa, predominantly due to poaching for the ivory trade (Thouless et al., 2016). We mourn the loss of these thousands of elephants, each of whom had family and friends, and who in their lifetime formed long-lasting memories, celebrated the births of new calves, and grieved deaths of companions.

We are happy by the efforts made by Tanzanian government for its effort in protecting elephants. The government of Tanzania has prosecuted the major ivory traders operating in the country and managed to remove locally the incentives and means to poach elephants and has broken down the poaching networks. These efforts have currently attracted the global attention, for the example the case of Yang Feng Glan (Queen of ivory) who was charged for trafficking 860 ivory tusks weighting almost 1.9 tons was convicted

and sentenced to serve 15 years imprisonment and Boniface Matthew Mariango (Devil) who was jailed for 12 years.

One of the biggest threats facing the African elephant is the continued market demand for ivory. An ivory market anywhere is a threat to elephants everywhere, especially considering that it is impossible to visually distinguish new, illegal ivory from legally acquired ivory. While China, the United Kingdom and other countries have or are considering to ban the domestic ivory trade, there are remaining legal markets that facilitate the demand for ivory and provide an easy cover for illegal ivory. No one should wear ivory except the elephants. We therefore express our strong support for H.99 pending in front of the Vermont legislature.

We call on the global communities by bringing all ivory trade to an end- this can be our legacy to the next generation!!

Respectfully,



Lameck Mkuburo,

Founder & Director, Tanzanian Elephant Foundation

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