



**HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL**

June 12, 2013

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Japan  
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**Re: Yahoo! Japan's Sale of Elephant Ivory and Whale and Dolphin Products**

Dear Masayoshi Son,

We are writing to introduce our organizations and to urge you to help protect the world's endangered elephants, whales and dolphins that are being commercially hunted in violation of international laws to supply the Japanese market.

SoftBank Corp. directly earns profits from Yahoo! Japan's ads that sell elephant ivory and whale products. Conservation and protection of these species is of global concern. We are mindful of SoftBank's current efforts to expand its reach internationally. As you expand, however, so too does your international constituency and your need to address broader social responsibility. We appeal to you to direct Yahoo! Japan to immediately end the sale of all elephant ivory and whale and dolphin products. We would also be grateful to receive a positive response from you or your representative at your earliest convenience. We intend to launch a public campaign next week; however, we would prefer to work with you directly to resolve this matter.

Since 2010, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and Humane Society International (HSI) have urged Yahoo! Japan to ban ads offering elephant ivory and whale and dolphin products. We have worked for over 30 years to protect the world's endangered elephants from ivory poaching and to protect threatened whales and dolphins from commercial hunting.

We note that Alibaba.com, of which SoftBank Corp. is a significant shareholder, enacted a ban on sale of all ivory products, shark fin and turtle products in 2009. In addition to Alibaba.com's ban on the sale of ivory, both Google and Amazon.com have enacted policies that prohibit the sale of ivory as well as whale and dolphin products. Amazon.com banned the sale of all whale and dolphin products in February 2012 to help conserve these threatened species

In March 2013, our researchers discovered ads on both Google and Amazon.com promoting ivory items. After this discovery, we persuaded both Amazon.com and Google to immediately remove all such ads in light of the widespread slaughter of these animals and the ongoing illegal ivory trade to both Japan and China. Sadly, after Amazon.com and Google removed ads promoting elephant ivory products in March, the number of ivory products offered for sale on Yahoo! Japan soared from around 2,800 ads to approximately 8,000 ads.

Africa's elephants continue to be slaughtered en masse to provide illegal ivory for the market demand in Japan, as well as China. Japan is the only country that has a specific demand for "hard ivory" derived from the highly endangered forest elephants in Africa. A recent report confirmed that a shocking 62% of Africa's forest elephants

have been wiped out in the past ten years, poached for their ivory to make trinkets. While there is a legal domestic ivory trade in Japan, the ivory trade regulation system has many flaws that allow illegal ivory to enter the market – illegal ivory smuggling continues to be a major problem in Japan. Around 80% of the ivory ads on Yahoo! Japan are for “hanko” (name seals) and evidence strongly indicates they derive from illicit ivory.

Recently, an EIA and HSI survey of whale products offered for sale on Yahoo! Japan revealed some 367 whale meat products on sale including: large amounts of meat from endangered fin whales illegally killed off Iceland; products from Taiji, where the Oscar winning documentary “The Cove” exposed the brutal slaughter of dolphins, and; pilot whales and Baird’s beaked whales – species whose meat is associated with high levels of mercury. Meat products from internationally protected species such as the sei whale, minke whale and Bryde’s whales killed in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary and in the North Pacific Ocean in violation of the laws of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) were also found.

In addition to the total ban on trade in whale products enacted by Amazon.com and Google, Japan’s top retailers and seafood companies, including AEON, Ito Yokado, Seiyu Group C2Network, Nippon Suisan, Kyokuyo and Maruha-Nippon, have all ended the sale of whale and dolphin products to align with existing international laws that protect whale species.

We respectfully request that SoftBank Corp. use its influence as the largest shareholder of Yahoo! Japan, with around 36% of total shares and another 6.5% held by SBBM Corporation, a consolidated subsidiary of SoftBank Corp., to urgently request that Yahoo! Japan end all sale of ivory, whale and dolphin products. We hope that SoftBank Corp.’s direct contact with Yahoo! Japan will yield positive results when all the facts concerning endangered elephants and threatened whales and dolphins are presented and considered.

We thank you in advance for your much appreciated efforts to help protect Africa’s beleaguered elephant populations and the world’s threatened whales and dolphins.

Sincerely,



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The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is an NGO that investigates and campaigns against a wide range of environmental crimes, including illegal wildlife trade, illegal logging, and trade in climate and ozone-altering chemicals. [www.eia-global.org](http://www.eia-global.org)

Humane Society International (HSI) and its partner organizations together constitute one of the world’s largest animal protection organizations. For more than 20 years, HSI has been working for the protection of all animals through the use of science, advocacy, education and hands on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide – on the Web at [hsi.org](http://hsi.org).

Enclosures: Yahoo! Japan Ivory Product Screenshots 6/11/2013  
Yahoo! Japan Whale Product Screenshots 6/11/2013