



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**

WILDAID



July 19, 2019

The Honorable Yuriko Koike
Governor of Tokyo
Secretarial Section, General Affairs Division, Office of the Governor for Policy Planning
Tokyo Metropolitan Government
8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku 2-chome
Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 163-8001
Japan

Dear Governor Koike:

We are writing this open letter on behalf of the undersigned international and Japanese organizations and our millions of supporters to raise our concerns about the trade in elephant ivory in Japan in light of the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As we approach one year before the start of the Games, we appeal to you to support international efforts to conserve and protect Africa's rapidly declining elephant population by closing the ivory market in Tokyo by January 1st, 2020.

As the former Environment Minister of Japan, we note your commitment to meaningful measures to protect the environment.

Around 20,000 African elephants are being poached for their ivory tusks every year. To protect elephants from the ivory trade, nations party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) agreed in 2016 to a resolution to close domestic ivory markets, and many nations with ivory markets worldwide have closed them or are taking steps to do so. Despite this, the Government of Japan continues to protect the country's domestic ivory market, which currently includes around 17,000 registered ivory manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers.

Japan, and Tokyo in particular, will be under increased international scrutiny leading up to and during the 2020 Games, with July 24th marking one year until the start of the Olympic Games. We are concerned that Japan's ivory trade undermines the Olympics' sustainability theme and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #15, which includes the Target to "Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products."

In May 2019, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio appealed to you to support efforts to prohibit the elephant ivory trade in Tokyo, as New York has done, and support the closure of Japan's domestic ivory market before the 2020 Games. We appreciate your engagement and interest at the press briefing following the letter's release. We welcome your comment on stressing "hanko-less" in Tokyo and suggestion of an alternative material, and we are grateful for your dedication to conducting a thorough investigation into the ivory trade in Tokyo/Japan, including the nature of distribution. As you suggested, 80 percent of the raw ivory in Japan is used for hanko, for

which there are a variety of substitute materials available. Ending the use of ivory hanko would significantly reduce the demand for ivory.

An additional concern about Japan's open ivory market is the risk of illegal export. We fear that there will be a substantial increase in illegal exports of ivory that will undermine the domestic ivory bans in China, Hong Kong SAR, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other nations and jurisdictions. Efforts by Chinese Customs so far in 2019 has resulted in an increased number of seizures made in China of ivory shipped through international mail from Japan. With more than 10 million tourists expected to visit Tokyo for the Games, it seems highly probable that there may be many attempts to illegally export ivory souvenirs purchased in Tokyo and across Japan.

Industry leaders in Japan have already ended ivory product sales, or intend to do so before March 2020 with the Olympics in mind, including Rakuten, AEON, Ito Yokado, Mercari Inc., Amazon Japan Shopping and Google Japan Shopping. Several hanko shops have also ceased ivory sales. These private sector actors have made progressive policy changes with their reputations and customers in mind, and may hope to welcome visitors to an elephant friendly Tokyo during Tokyo 2020.

We believe the leadership of Tokyo, and Japan, and a decision to make policy changes to close the domestic ivory market will demonstrate dedication to protecting elephants from the trade in ivory and respect for the 32 African nations of the African Elephant Coalition calling for the closure of domestic ivory markets.¹

With respect, we make the following recommendations for your consideration:

- Prohibit the sale and purchase of ivory, as well as the display or advertisement of it for sale, within the Tokyo Prefecture by January 1, 2020
- Invite the Government of Japan to close the domestic ivory market nationwide pursuant to CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).
- Launch a targeted "Ivory-free Tokyo 2020" awareness raising campaign in advance of the Olympics to educate Tokyo citizens and visitors to the 2020 Tokyo Games.
- Elevate law enforcement efforts by the Metropolitan Police Department of the above prohibition of ivory trade by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Please note that for accountability and transparency for our supporters and others who are concerned about the future of Africa's elephants, we are going to make this open letter public and post it on our websites and other outlets. We welcome the opportunity to discuss Japan's domestic ivory trade with you and your team further. We respectfully propose that your representative contact Masayuki Sakamoto, Executive Director of the Japan Tiger & Elephant Fund (e-mail: yukisakamoto@jtcf.jp, tel: +81-3-3595-8088) with any questions you or your staff may have concerning the prohibition of ivory trade before Tokyo 2020, or to provide any additional information.

¹ Press Release: Council of Elders of the 32-member African Elephant Coalition (AEC) calls on Japan to close its ivory market and support elephant protection. <https://www.africanelephantcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AFRICAN-ELDERS-CALL-ON-JAPAN-TO-CLOSE-ITS-IVORY-MARKET.pdf>

We look forward to supporting your efforts to help protect Africa's elephants and will follow up in the coming weeks to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,



Allan Thornton, OBE | President
Environmental Investigation Agency
www.eia-global.org



Iris Ho | Senior Specialist, Programs and Policy, Wildlife
Humane Society International
www.hsi.org



Peter Knights | Chief Executive Officer
WildAid
www.wildaid.org



Masayuki Sakamoto | Executive Director
Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund
www.itef.jp



Airi Yamawaki | Co-Founder and Co-Director
Tears of the African Elephant
www.taelephants.org