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Zambia wants to sell US\$100m ivory

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Lusaka - Zambia is exploring the possibility of domestically selling its US\$100 million ivory stockpile.

Last year, Zambia joined six other Southern African states in petitioning the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to be allowed to reduce ivory stockpiles.

CITES bars the trade in ivory as a measure to protect elephants from poaching.

However, some African governments and activists are increasingly agitating for the controlled sale of stockpiles that have accumulated from culling operations and from seizures of contraband from poachers.

Local media reports this week cited an internal Zambia Ministry of Tourism and Arts brief discussing the possibility of the country disposing of more than 40 tonnes of ivory to generate revenue for the country.

Tourism and Arts Ministry spokesperson Sakabilo Kalembwe could not be reached for comment.

“Domestic trade options need to be explored by carrying out a market research on potential buyers, despite the calls by CITES to close down domestic ivory trade. CITES does not have the mandate of domestic trade and regulate international trade,” the Tourism Ministry document reads.

SADC as a region is currently exploring traceable systems in trade in ivory and rhino horn stockpiles, using the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme for the trade in diamonds as a benchmark, the document adds.

Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe hold a huge proportion of the world’s elephant population, and there is a growing push by some of the countries to benefit from ivory instead of simply stockpiling it or burning it. The countries seek to create a latitude to allow them to dispose of the consignments secured in various forms—poaching culling or natural deaths.

CITES regulates the trade in around 36,000 species of plants and animals.

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