

HOME ENVIRONMENT NAMIBIA WANTS TO SELL MORE THAN 46 TONS OF IVORY

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Formal proposal already submitted

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7 HOURS AGO - - 2025-08-04 00:00:00

Namibia is pinning its hopes on the upcoming COP20 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) for approval to legally sell some of its ivory stocks. A formal proposal has already been submitted.

The summit will take place in Uzbekistan from November 24 to December 5.

According to the proposal submitted by Namibia, the country currently has just over 92 386 kg of ivory with a value of about N\$166 million. The ivory comes from population management and seizures, about half each. Namibia does not destroy its ivory.

"With this proposal, Namibia wants to trade an existing stock of 46 268 kg of registered raw ivory (whole teeth and pieces) of Namibian origin and owned by the government for commercial purposes," the request reads.

The document further states that the ivory stock accumulated from elephants that died of natural causes, as well as through management practices.

According to Namibia's proposal, trade will be conducted with partners approved by the CITES Secretariat to have adequate national legislation and domestic trade controls to ensure that ivory imported from Namibia will not be re-exported. It will also be managed in accordance with all requirements regarding domestic production and trade.

Namibia has been engaged in legal international trade in ivory since 1985, in 1999 and in 2008, as a highly regulated export totalling 19 870 kg to Japan and China. On both occasions, the CITES Secretariat confirmed that the trade had taken place successfully and that there had been complete compliance with all precautions.

REVENUE According

to the proposal, the revenue generated by the sales will be paid into the Wildlife Products Trust Fund.

It will be used exclusively for elephant conservation – including monitoring, research, law enforcement and other management expenditures – as well as for community conservation and development programmes.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism will further provide an annual report to the CITES Secretariat on the use of these funds.

Over the years, the Wildlife Products Trust Fund has funded key components of Namibia's community-based natural resource management system, including the provision of infrastructure to promote the coexistence of humans and elephants in conservation areas, the creation of additional water sources for elephants and the development of community-managed campsites.

The document also referred to the high financial and security implications of storing ivory stocks, as well as ivory due to natural mortality and management.

The controlled ivory trade will also directly benefit the conservation of the Namibian elephant populations by making elephants valuable to the communities with which they share resources outside protected areas.

ELEPHANT POPULATION

The elephant population in Namibia has grown from an estimated 7 000 in 1990 to more than 25 000 elephants at the end of 2024.

"Namibia has not directly exploited elephants for commercial trade or local consumption except through hunting and phototourism," the document reads.

Small numbers of elephants were shot in 1983 and 1985 to achieve specifically targeted population reductions for conservation purposes during periods of drought in the Etosha National Park.

In addition, Namibia has experienced a severe drought in recent years, with the cabinet making a decision in 2024 to shoot a small number of elephants.

All previously traded ivory has been accumulated from natural and management-related deaths and can therefore be considered a by-product of effective long-term management.

Emphasis was also placed on the fact that no elephants were or will be shot specifically to obtain ivory or other products for trade. Ivory is recovered from all recorded natural deaths, as well as from elephants shot as problem animals.

Strict national legislation also requires the public to hand over any ivory found.

Click on the link for a video from the World Wildlife Fund on illegal ivory trade: <https://q.my.na/OL74>