



EPI CO-SECRETARIAT

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2018**

**“STOP TALKING.
PLEASE STOP
TALKING. IT
IS NOW TIME
FOR ACTION.”**

H.E President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon,
EPI International Consultative Group Meeting, 11th October 2018

HELPING AFRICA BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR ELEPHANTS & PEOPLE.

The Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) is an African-led response to the elephant crisis. The EPI aims to fund and implement the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) at a national level. It builds on the objectives of the AEAP, which have been agreed by all African elephant range states, to protect elephants and to end the illegal trade in ivory.

Two non-governmental organisations, Stop Ivory and Conservation International, work in partnership as the Co-Secretariat of the EPI. They provide technical and financial support to EPI member states, as well as other elephant range states, to ensure the EPI achieves its conservation goals.

Launched by the leaders of Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon and Tanzania during the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in 2014, the EPI has since grown to 19 member states, with 30 leading NGO and IGO partners supporting its aims.

2018 AT A GLANCE



1

The EPI Foundation is launched, with Former President of Botswana H.E. Ian Khama agreeing to chair its Board of Directors.

The first EPI International Consultative Group Meeting is held in October, chaired by H.E. President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon.

7

7 Member states presented National Elephant Action Plans (NEAPs), complete with clear implementation plans and a time-lined budget, ready for funding: Angola, Chad, Gabon, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

10

10 Major grants received: for in-country project work spanning National Elephant Action Plan development, holistic ivory stockpile management, and improving investigation and prosecution capacity.

11

11 African elephant range states benefited from grant funding for the implementation of EPI commitments: Angola, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

19

19 EPI member states: as Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, joins the EPI.

30

30 NGO conservation partners: as The Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Wildlife Impact, Tsavo Trust and the Tlhokomela Trust pledge their support.



LETTER FROM THE CO-SECRETARIAT

Is the tide beginning to turn for the African elephant? After years of poaching and heavy losses, 2018 saw tentative signs of hope. Several key elephant populations are recovering and poaching has been reduced in some parts of the continent. It may be premature to attribute these positive developments to China's ivory ban, which came into full effect at the end of 2017, and which the EPI's member countries fought so hard to achieve. But, at the very least, predictions that a Chinese ban would lead to an instant upsurge in poaching, and increase in the price of illegal ivory across Africa, appear to be wrong. EPI countries also welcomed the passing of a strict new ivory law in the UK at the end of 2018. The tired old arguments about whether to trade or not to trade in ivory have still to run their course (with intra-African differences likely to dominate the next Conference of the Parties to the CITES convention, which controls trade in endangered species) but the focus of our nineteen member countries, and the EPI's Co-Secretariat, can turn more and more to long-term plans for elephant conservation.

The EPI's inaugural Consultative Group meeting in London in October 2018 brought together African Presidents, Ministers and First Ladies. At this meeting,

seven of our member countries presented National Elephant Action Plans (NEAPs); carefully-costed plans to ensure a secure future for African elephants while simultaneously strengthening governments' ability to achieve their wider development goals. One of the most important tasks of the Secretariat in 2019 is to help our member countries ensure that the warm words expressed by donors at the Consultative Group are matched by their commitments. As President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon said, **"if the international community is unable or unwilling to identify the finances required to implement these plans... then NEAPs are just pieces of paper"**.

As the EPI takes this challenge on, it needs a governance structure that is able to engage with the highest level of African leadership, and secure generous support from donors. The EPI Foundation was therefore launched in 2018, with the specific goal of helping member countries raise the finance to implement NEAPs. Member countries were delighted to welcome the former President of Botswana, H.E. Ian Khama, as the Chairman of the EPI Foundation.

The challenges our African member countries face are enormous, and diverse. In those countries where elephant populations are stable or increasing, governments are quite rightly preoccupied with growing conflicts between elephants and people. In others, we are still very focused on the scourge of ivory poaching. In several, the concern is how to protect small, relict elephant populations that are on the verge of extinction. Whatever their circumstances, the EPI Co-Secretariat remains devoted to serving their needs.

With enormous gratitude to all our partners and supporters,

**John Stephenson,
CEO Stop Ivory
&
Keith Roberts,
Executive Director
of Wildlife Trafficking for
Conservation International**

THE EPI WELCOMES NIGERIA

Nigeria is a giant on the African continent, and the EPI is delighted to welcome it into the fold. In August 2018 Nigeria became our 19th member country. However, Nigeria's own giants are critically endangered; with just a few hundred elephants remaining across the country's remaining wild places. The largest herd is in the Yankari Game Reserve, while smaller relict populations survive in the forests of Southern Nigeria and the savannah of Northern Nigeria. Nigeria is also a hotspot for trafficking, with widespread smuggling through its borders of ivory largely originating from neighbouring states - a situation exacerbated by its uncontrolled domestic ivory market. The EPI will now work with the Nigerian government to save the last elephants in the country, and also crack down on the illegal ivory trade, which endangers elephants across the continent.

The then Minister of Environment, H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Usman Jibril, met the Co-Secretariat at the London IWT Conference to discuss a strategy for shutting down Nigeria's ivory markets and developing a National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP). Minister Jibril confirmed Nigeria's commitment to the EPI and to engaging his African government counterparts and the international community to achieve its aims.

by Dr Winnie Kiiru,
Senior Technical Advisor



“Nigeria is committed, will continue to partner with other African countries and the world at large to ensure the intentions of the EPI are carried to the highest level.”

Ibrahim Usman Jibril, Nigeria's Minister of Environment
London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, October 2018



CLOSING IVORY MARKETS

Thirty years ago, the international community took a decisive step to end the ivory trade which was ravaging elephant populations across Africa. In 1989 the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) placed elephants on to Appendix I affording them the highest protection under the Convention and imposing a moratorium on the international ivory trade. This measure did not, however, compel countries to close down their domestic ivory markets – and ivory continued to be openly bought and sold in many countries around the world. In time, these domestic markets emerged as a critical weakness of the international ban: they provided the means for criminals to launder recently poached ivory and pass it off as legal. Ivory's continued availability in shops and markets also sent out a confusing message to people, validating it as a legal consumer good and perpetuating the demand that drives the illegal trade.



The international community has since adopted two further resolutions to try and address this loophole: at the 7th IUCN World Conservation Congress and at the 16th Conference of the Parties to CITES. Both called on governments to close domestic ivory markets that contribute to poaching or the illegal trade.

These have contributed to the significant progress of recent years. China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, France, the Netherlands, and several African countries have all effectively closed down their markets – and others including Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia, are considering or are in the process of implementing similar restrictions. The closure of major domestic ivory markets has coincided with both a drop in ivory prices and the stabilisation of some African elephant populations. A global shift in attitudes is under way. Ivory is no longer considered an acceptable commodity, and elephants are benefiting. The united advocacy of the EPI's member states, with the support of the Co-Secretariat, has played an important role in building and maintaining this momentum.

by Jasmine Williamson,
Director of Operations

“We believe the UK’s new law will have an impact not only within its borders but will also support and encourage enforcement efforts and initiatives to reduce ivory trafficking in Africa, and around the world”.

Statement by senior representatives from 13 African EPI countries

THE UK ENACTS A LONG-AWAITED IVORY BAN

In December 2018 the UK Government passed a bill which effectively closed down the UK's ivory market. Stop Ivory is proud to have worked alongside NGO partners in an alliance that encouraged the UK Government to accept the overwhelming public demand for an ivory ban, and live up to its own manifesto commitment. The 2018 Ivory Act represents a significant victory for the EPI.

Senior representatives from thirteen African EPI countries welcomed the Ivory Act. They said; ‘We believe the UK's new law will have an impact not only within its borders but will also support and encourage enforcement efforts and initiatives to reduce ivory trafficking in Africa, and around the world’.



ATTENTION TURNS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION & CANADA

The EU is now the world's largest exporter of legal ivory; it exported 1,258 tusks in 2014 and 2015 alone, more than the previous 8 years combined. The results of a public consultation released by the EU Commission at the end of 2018 show that more than 90% of the 90,000 respondents support an EU ivory trade ban. Despite promising to take action, the EU continues to permit trade between EU member states, as well as exports of some worked ivory, including to Asia. For “antique” ivory acquired before 1947, the EU does not require permits or evidence of legal acquisition. These loopholes are being used to launder new illegal ivory, from poached elephants, into the legal market.

The EPI joined a global campaign to pressurise the EU Commission to enact more effective restrictions on the ivory trade. A petition to EU Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella and EU Heads of Government, organised by citizens movement Avaaz, was signed by presidents and senior ministers from 15 African EPI member states, including former President Khama of Botswana, President Museveni of Uganda and President Bongo of Gabon.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the EPI Implementation Board, Mr. Kumara Wakjira of Ethiopia, wrote to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in Canada, Catherine McKenna, urging Canada to end its domestic ivory trade.

The EPI Co-Secretariat also supported a campaign led by Elephanatics, which rallied together a coalition of 95 Canadian and international scientists, politicians and conservation organisations, and whose petition attracted 125,000 signatures, urging the Canadian government to ban ivory.

With little tangible action from either Canada or the EU to date, these efforts will continue into 2019.

AN OPPORTUNITY IN JAPAN

Japan's largely unregulated domestic ivory market is a boon to criminals involved in the international illegal ivory trade. A recent study by TRAFFIC concluded that Japan is an important source for illegal exports to other countries in East Asia, especially China. In association with Zinc Network and Vimeo, and sponsored by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the EPI Co-Secretariat had the opportunity to lead an awareness campaign urging Japanese society to consider the impact of their country's ivory policies. A film, released in June 2018 in English and Japanese, features the EPI Co-Secretariat's Senior Technical Advisor Dr. Winnie Kiiru speaking from Nairobi to her new audience about the crisis facing elephants in Kenya and the other EPI member states.

MANAGING IVORY STOCKPILES

There's more to saving elephants than catching poachers. The effective management of ivory stockpiles may sound mundane in comparison, but it is crucial to elephant conservation.

Stockpiles of ivory, and other wildlife products, accrue from carcasses found in the wild, or are seized from traffickers. The storage and management of these objects is often woefully inadequate – enabling theft, or the neglect of evidence that is essential to securing wildlife crime prosecutions. The leakage of ivory back into the illegal market, and the weak enforcement of wildlife protection laws, perpetuate the ivory trade and the continued slaughter of elephants.

Stop Ivory has created a bespoke Stockpile Management System (SMS), a digital tool for secure storage of inventory data. Since its development in 2014, it has enabled countries to improve the management of their ivory stockpiles. Applicable to all wildlife products – from ivory and rhino horn to pangolin scales – it has been recognised by a wide range of EPI partners as well as the CITES Secretariat.

The SMS could also help expose patterns of poaching and trafficking, through the recording of information such as location of seizure, tusk size or (when established by DNA testing) origin.

In 2018, the EPI Co-Secretariat built on progress to advance the use of the SMS across Africa. Looking ahead to 2019, planning sessions or scoping trips have been undertaken for full SMS roll-out in Botswana and Côte d'Ivoire, and for preliminary work in India and Nigeria.

by Ruth Musgrave,
Technical Director for
Stockpile Management



10

10 African nations have SMS set up to date: Angola, Chad, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan and Mozambique.



7

7 countries this year submitted the annual report on their national ivory stockpiles requested by CITES, with support from the EPI Co-Secretariat: Chad, Gabon, Malawi, Republic of Congo, Uganda, Angola and Kenya.



99

99 smart tablets have been provided to government and NGO partners for the SMS so far, thanks to the generous support of Huawei Technologies.



730

730 government officials trained on use of the SMS to date - across inventory, administrator and user-training courses - with 22 trained in Ethiopia and Congo in 2018.





THE “GOLD STANDARD” FOR IVORY MANAGEMENT

The EPI Co-Secretariat, with funding from the UK Government through its Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and match-funding from longstanding partner Tusk Trust, is developing a Gold Standard for the overall management of national ivory stockpiles. Over the next 3 years, EPI member states Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi will work with us on the development, and roll-out of a system that will set new standards in this often neglected aspect of conservation. The Gold Standard will cover every aspect of a country’s stockpile management needs – from secure storage or disposal, transparent auditing, efficient reporting of inventory data on the SMS, and chain of custody oversight.

To kickstart the project, an EPI Co-Secretariat team travelled to Ethiopia in June with Kiprotich Biwott, our technical lead from Nairobi-based IT firm Bityarn Consult. They met officials from the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), for a preliminary assessment of needs. The same work got underway later in the year in Uganda, with project consultant Philip Stewart holding information-gathering sessions across the departments involved in ivory handling; including wildlife authorities, customs and police. The EPI Co-Secretariat will start work with Malawi on the Gold Standard in 2019.



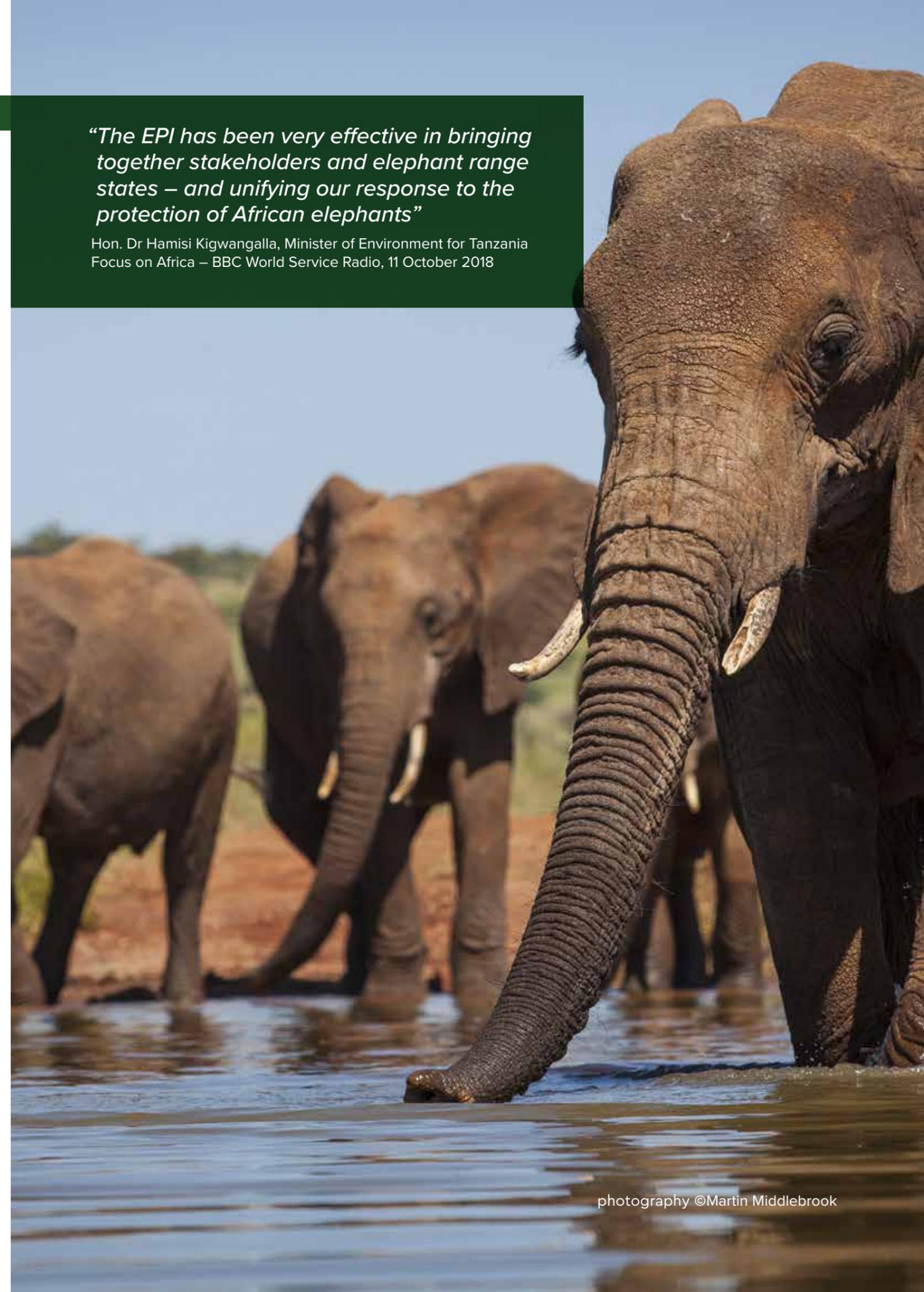
A NEW MISSION IN BOTSWANA

At the Inaugural EPI Consultative Group meeting in October, the President of Botswana H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi requested support for a roll-out of the SMS. Ruth Musgrave and Kiprotich Biwott conducted a scoping visit to Botswana in December, and held discussions with the Department for Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) on how to tailor the SMS to the country’s specific needs. It is an enormous undertaking: with about one third of Africa’s remaining elephants, Botswana has one of the continent’s largest stockpiles of ivory – the management of which is a significant strain on the government’s resources. Fortunately, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognized the importance of this project; confirming its support for a grant proposal to make it possible. Work will begin in 2019.



“The EPI has been very effective in bringing together stakeholders and elephant range states – and unifying our response to the protection of African elephants”

Hon. Dr Hamisi Kigwangalla, Minister of Environment for Tanzania
Focus on Africa – BBC World Service Radio, 11 October 2018



ACHIEVING EPI AIMS: PROGRESS TO DATE

1.

COMMITMENT

2.

IMPLEMENTATION

3.

DISBURSEMENT

	DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE EPI	DECLARATION AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TRADE	DOMESTIC TRADE CLOSED		INVENTORY (IN THE LAST THREE YEARS)	STOCKPILE BEYOND ECONOMIC USE *	NEAP DEVELOPED/ IN DEVELOPMENT	PRIORITY PROJECTS FUNDED
EPI FOUNDER STATES								
Chad	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Ethiopia	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Gabon	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Tanzania	✓	✓	✓					✓
Botswana	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
EPI MEMBER STATES								
Malawi	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Uganda	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Kenya	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Congo	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Liberia	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Angola	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
South Sudan	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Côte d'Ivoire	✓	✓	✓					
Somalia	✓	✓	✓					✓
Gambia	✓	✓	✓					
Mali	✓	✓	✓					
Guinea	✓	✓	✓					
Sierra Leone	✓	✓	✓					
Nigeria	✓	✓						
OTHER STATES								
Mozambique	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Ghana	✓	✓	✓					
DRC	✓	✓	✓					
Niger	✓	✓	✓					
AEC**	✓	✓						

* At minimum partial destruction of ivory stockpiles and/or no known loss of ivory from storerooms in the last 3 years

** Via the Cotonou Declaration, made at the 6th Meeting of the African Elephant Coalition at Cotonou, Benin, on the 4th November 2015, the following countries declared or, in some cases, restated their support for the EPI: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Togo.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES & THE SDGs

The EPI Co-Secretariat assists each member state with the development of a National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP). NEAPs are the mechanism whereby the continent-wide African Elephant Action Plan, agreed by all African elephant range states, is implemented at a national level. They are designed to establish priorities and long-term goals, with a clear path for implementation, and a realistic, time-framed budget.

In 2018, the EPI Co-Secretariat set itself a target of having at least 3 NEAPs with implementation plans and budgets to present at the Consultative Group meeting in October. We were delighted to exceed that target, ending the year with 7 complete NEAP documents; each one identifying what the respective country requires to protect its elephants, the priority projects and the resource gaps – which await the support of the international community. Key to this support is the alignment of NEAPs with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced in 2016 – specifically SDG 15, Life on Land, which calls for urgent action on the poaching and trafficking of protected species while ensuring local communities are able to achieve sustainable livelihoods with the wildlife living alongside them.

by Dr. Hugo Jachmann
Technical Director for NEAPs



NEAPs FINALISED
ETHIOPIA
KENYA
UGANDA
CHAD
ANGOLA
GABON
KENYA



NEAPs IN DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF CONGO
LIBERIA
TANZANIA
BOTSWANA



ANGOLA'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

The EPI Co-Secretariat and the Government of Angola worked closely together throughout 2018 to complete Angola's provisional National Elephant Action Plan, signed off by the Minister of the Environment Hon. Dr. Paula Coelho. This swift progress of EPI aims in a relatively new member state, and the continued strengthening of the EPI Co-Secretariat's working relationship with Angolan officials at a technical and Ministerial level, owes much to the ongoing support and involvement of Alexander Rhodes, former CEO of Stop Ivory.

In June, the EPI's Technical Director for NEAPs Dr. Hugo Jachmann, travelled to Luanda for meetings with Aristófanés Pontes, Director of Angola's National Institute of Biodiversity and Conservation Areas (INBAC), to discuss funding priorities. These include Angola's plans to revive and restore the protected areas and wildlife populations that were so severely damaged by decades of war, as well as strategies for mitigation of Human-Elephant Conflict.





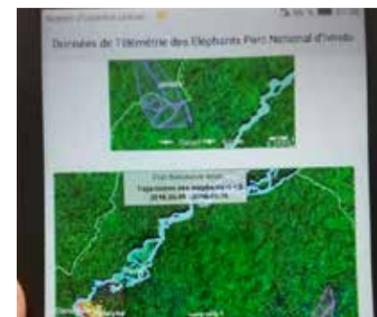
RESILIENCE IN CHAD

Chad's elephants are in a precarious situation, but all is not lost. The country is estimated to have only about 800 surviving elephants (2016 IUCN African Elephant Status Report). In September 2018, Chad's Environment Minister, H.E. Mr. Sidick Abdelkerim Haggar, signed off on Chad's National Elephant Action Plan (NEAP) in a ceremony held in the capital, N'Djamena. Technical and financial support from the EPI Co-Secretariat enabled Chad to complete the NEAP in time for it to be presented at the Consultative Group in October.

Earlier in the year, I visited Binder-Léré Reserve in South-Western Chad to develop a NEAP proposal: to turn part of Binder-Léré into a National Park. Binder-Léré's elephants have suffered from rampant poaching, and a fragile population of only about 100 remains after the loss of some 40 individuals, killed earlier in 2018 – probably by Seleka rebels travelling from neighbouring Central African Republic. I also travelled to the Chari Valley, some 500 kms south-east of N'Djamena, where a special unit of the Chadian government's anti-poaching unit is guarding a herd of some 300 elephants living outside any protected area. I will continue to promote the importance of Chad's NEAP amongst its leadership and population, and engage with local and international media to do so.



by Dr. Dolmia Malachie,
Regional Technical
Advisor for the EPI



TRACKING THE FOREST ELEPHANTS OF GABON

The EPI Co-Secretariat supported a trip by the Director of Communications for Agence Nationale Des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN) in Gabon, Christian Mbina, to work with Dr Hugo Jachmann at his home in the Netherlands – successfully fast-tracking the finalisation of Gabon's National Elephant Action Plan in time for H.E. President Ali Bongo Ondimba to present it in October.

Many of Gabon's NEAP priorities – acquiring base-level data, undertaking targeted conservation and anti-poaching activities, and monitoring and evaluating results – depend on the ability to track the movements of elusive forest elephants, a notoriously difficult undertaking. The EPI Co-Secretariat this year provided smart tablets and training to Gabon's National Park staff. These are now set up for use in key locations, including Ivindo National Park.



ELEPHANTS & LIVELIHOODS IN BOTSWANA

The EPI Co-Secretariat has been working with the Government of Botswana and in-country partner the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS) to finalise Botswana's NEAP. Home to approximately one third of the continent's remaining elephants, the challenge in Botswana is above all about finding ways for elephants and local communities to live in harmony.

By incorporating knowledge and experiences from across government ministries, wildlife departments, NGOs, and civil society through stakeholder workshops, Botswana's NEAP seeks to provide a holistic approach based on consultation and popular support.



With support from National Geographic, four community consultations were held across the country – in Nat, Kasane, Maun and Selibe Phikwe. When the findings from these workshops were collated, a technical workshop kick-started the drafting process: Dr. Hugo Jachmann joined officials and conservationists in the Mokolodi Game Reserve to hammer out the long-term vision and goals for Botswana's NEAP. When the NEAP has been completed, an implementation workshop will outline the timeline for its implementation.

“We see protection of elephants as a poverty reduction issue, not just as an elephant issue.”

Julia Bucknall, World Bank Director for Environment and Natural Resources, EPI International Consultative Group Meeting, 11th October 2018

“The EPI represents hope. Hope that our children and future generations will have the opportunity to observe elephants in the wild, coexisting with local communities who have a vested interest in protecting them and their habitats.”

HRH Prince William, Duke of Cambridge,
EPI International Consultative Group Meeting, 11th October 2018



ANGOLA TRAFFICKING LAWS

Angola's natural treasures, including its elephants, were devastated by decades of war. Today the country is full of promise, the focus of considerable interest for conservationists. The EPI Co-Secretariat worked closely with the Angolan authorities throughout 2018 and has developed a strong relationship with the Minister of the Environment, Dr Paula Coelho. We have agreed a strategic focus on strengthening the criminal justice system and building anti-poaching capacity on the ground.

FRONT LINE DEFENCE

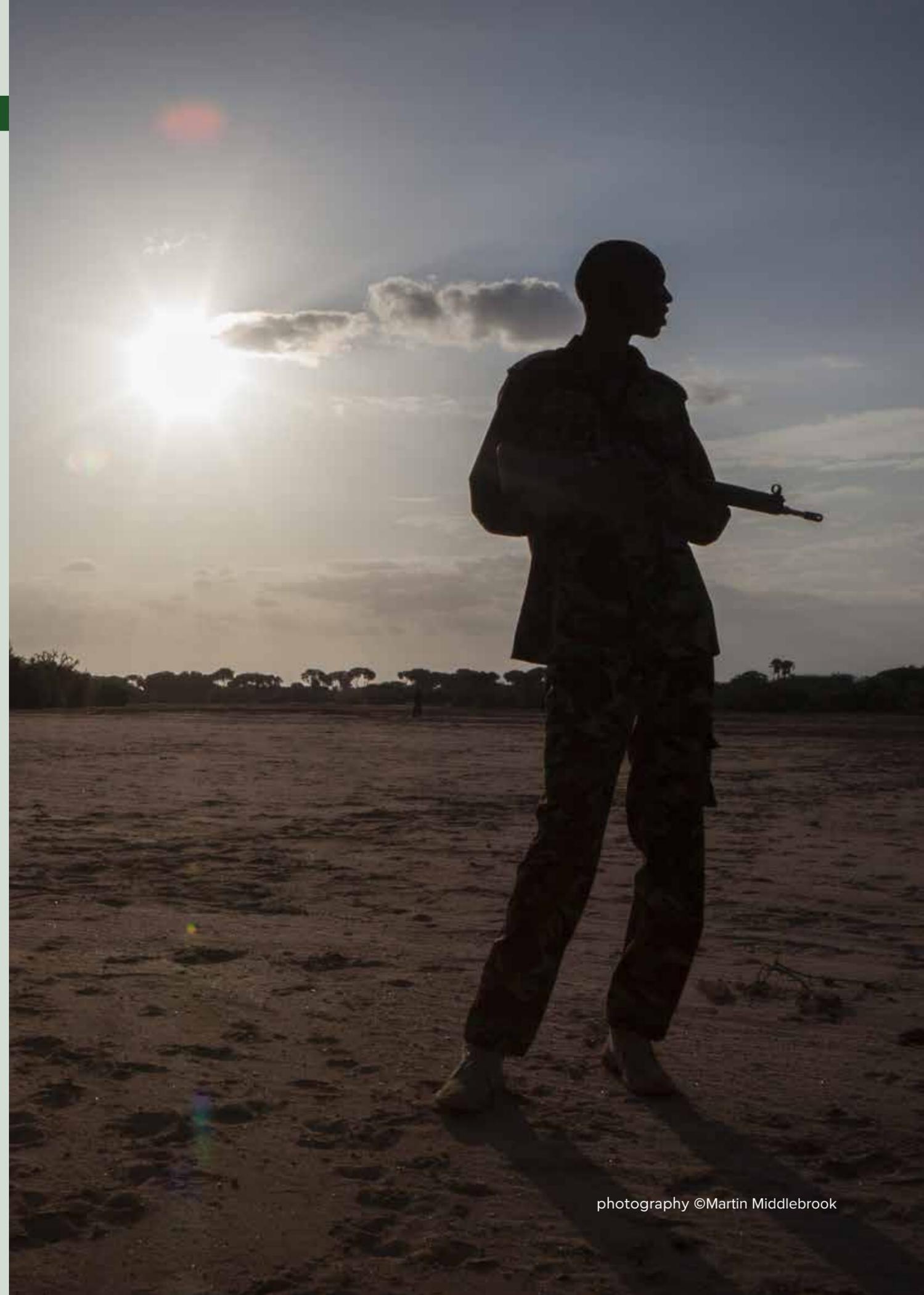
In 2018, Stop Ivory worked on ranger training in Angola, using a grant from GardaWorld. With implementing partners 51 Degrees, we carried out a Rapid Needs Assessment for two national parks; Quiçama and Luengue-Luiana. We also developed a three year ranger-training programme; including the training of trainers, and ongoing mentoring at the Menongue National Ranger Training School. The resulting reports have been officially approved by the Ministry of Environment.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE FROM THE COURTROOM

Angola needs effective wildlife crime legislation, the urgency of which was highlighted in recent months by the significant seizures made by the authorities in Luanda of ivory, rhino horn and pangolin scales. The UK's IWT Challenge Fund is supporting the EPI Co-Secretariat and the Angolan authorities as we work together over three years to strengthen legislation. In 2018 we conducted a preliminary review of existing legislation for the prosecution of wildlife crimes, and researched the scale of Angola's illegal ivory trade, with research undertaken by a partner organisation the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). At a workshop in Luanda we agreed amendments to a draft penal code to strengthen wildlife crime prosecutions. Angolan government experts, legal consultants and I worked together to write a Pocketbook Guide to Wildlife Crime Charges, and developed plans for Angola's first Wildlife Crime Sensitisation Workshop for police and prosecutors, which was scheduled for early 2019.



by Sophie Ledger,
Conservation
Programmes Manager



RESOURCE MOBILISATION STRATEGY (RMS)

The inaugural meeting of the EPI's International Consultative Group capped a successful collaboration with October's Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London, but we also hope it will lay the foundations for our Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS), the process of raising funds for NEAPs. As I wrote in the introduction to this report, this is the ultimate challenge for the EPI; to raise sufficient money that will secure a better future for elephants and the human populations that live alongside them.

The signs in London were encouraging. We brought African governments and high-level institutional donors together, united in support of the EPI's progress and next steps.



President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, who chaired the meeting, was joined by President Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, First Lady of Sierra Leone Fatima Maada Bio, and First Lady of Kenya Margaret Kenyatta. Other notable attendees included the Duke of Cambridge, former President of Botswana Ian Khama and UK DEFRA Secretary of State Michael Gove, as well as ministers from 14 EPI member states and representatives from 24 EPI partner organisations and the EU, the US, the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP and Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

The meeting positioned NEAPs at the heart of the EPI's efforts to implement the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP), while highlighting their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We called on donors to help finance their implementation. A new legal entity, the EPI Foundation, will follow up on the support expressed by donors such as the World Bank and the GEF. The former President of Botswana, Ian Khama, in announcing his chairmanship of the EPI Foundation, affirmed his commitment to support all member countries in their efforts to protect elephants for future generations.

by John Stephenson,
CEO Stop Ivory



President Masisi of Botswana



President Bongo of Gabon with the EPI's Winnie Kiiru



Delegates including Minister Kéita Aida M'Bo of Mali and Ambassador Georges Aboua of Cote d'Ivoire



A LION'S SHARE FOR ELEPHANTS

The UNDP says that the EPI will be one of the beneficiaries of its innovative 'Lion's Share' Fund. The Lion's Share provides a mechanism for the corporate world to give back to the natural world. Companies which pledge their support for the Lion's Share make donations for conservation each time they use wildlife to advertise their products.



ENGAGING THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)

Conservation International has led the EPI Co-Secretariat's engagement with GEF. At the 6th GEF Assembly in Danang, Vietnam, the team hosted a side-event, run by Peter Middlebrook of Geopolicy, which illustrated how elephant conservation and the Sustainable Development Goals align and how this represents an opportunity to channel GEF funding towards NEAPs. Attendees included the World Bank, the UNDP, and senior representatives from EPI countries including Ethiopia, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Botswana.



PIONEERING NEW ECONOMICS-BASED RESEARCH

The EPI Co-Secretariat is launching research into a critical aspect of the EPI's Resource Mobilisation Strategy: wildlife-based economies. We are trying to calculate the long-term costs and benefits of elephant conservation. Our models will take into account national development goals, such as poverty reduction and job creation, and will be consistent with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The resulting reports and country-specific case studies could form the basis for channelling international development finance into the conservation sector. With the backing of partners, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), the Oak Foundation, UNDP and Conservation International, our knowledge partners Geopolicy began their extensive research in 2018, with their first report expected in early 2019.

SPREADING THE WORD

The EPI's profile benefited considerably when Barnaby Phillips left behind a 27-year career in international journalism to join the EPI team in May. Communications is now an important part of the Co-Secretariat's mission. Broadening the EPI's exposure in Africa and beyond can help build and maintain relationships with member states and partners, and influence decision-makers. The digital monthly EPI Newsletter is now sent to more than 3,600 contacts worldwide – and its reach continues to grow. Our social media presence has expanded, and coverage of our activities in traditional media has also grown. The success of the EPI's NEAP development process depends on engaging stakeholders at all levels – and communications is an essential part of this.

Our communications focus for 2018 centred on the crucial Consultative Group meeting in October. In September, I travelled with the EPI's Dolmia Malachie to Chad's Chari Valley to film an isolated herd of elephants surviving in an unprotected area, where they compete for resources with farmers and herdsman. The pictures and interviews we collected provided a compelling window through which a global audience could understand the perilous situation for elephant populations and local communities in many EPI member states – but it was also an opportunity to broadcast an example of the progress made possible by the dedicated efforts of the EPI and its member states.

The Consultative Group meeting itself gained widespread coverage in British, Kenyan and Nigerian media. Highlights included BBC interviews featuring President Masisi of Botswana and the Tanzanian Minister of Environment Hon. Dr. Hamisi Kigwangalla.



Barnaby Phillips
Director of Communications

THE YEAR AHEAD

“The EPI member states are determined to halt the elephant slaughter and fight the wider threats to our biodiversity. But we are fighting the battle on behalf of all mankind. Is the rest of the world prepared to help us?”

H.E President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon,
EPI International Consultative Group Meeting, 11th October 2018

The EPI Co-Secretariat started 2018 with ambitious plans and much to prove. By the end of the year our plans had not just been delivered, but exceeded.

The international ivory trade is in retreat, and internal ivory markets across the world are being shut down. But it was the inaugural meeting of the EPI Consultative Group in London in October that was a defining moment. It proved that what makes the EPI unique is that it is an alliance of African governments with common policies on, and a commitment to, elephant conservation. Moreover, international donors in attendance – the World Bank, the UNDP and GEF – all expressed their willingness to support our National Elephant Action Plans (NEAPs).

In 2019 we must maintain this momentum. The EPI Co-Secretariat is under no illusions. We, and ultimately the EPI itself, will be judged by our success in raising the finance for NEAPs and their ambitious programmes for elephants and people. We estimate that EPI countries will need at least US \$1 billion over the next 12 years for NEAPs. It sounds like a lot of money, but when spread across eligible countries and several years, the sums involved are modest. We've created an EPI Foundation to help attain this goal.

We look forward to the challenges ahead.





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THANK YOU

Without our supporters and partners, none of the progress highlighted by this report would have been possible.

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Additionally we wish to extend our thanks to those who made the first EPI Gala Dinner, held in Hong Kong, a resounding success. The event would not have been possible if it were not for the dedication and support of The Loke Foundation, Bespoke Asia, Ms. J. Chang, Mr D. & Mrs. B. Joubert, Mr R. & Mrs. B. Payne, Mr R. & Mrs. T. Sherriff, David Yarrow, William Furniss, Investec, Spice Box, Hamilton Russell Vineyards, Elephant Gin, Four Fox Saké, Virgin Ltd Edition, The Datai, The Baglioni Resort, The Joali Resort, The Four Seasons, Goldman Sachs, UBS, Balyasny

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We thank our international NGO partners in conservation, who work with us to ensure that the many efforts underway around the world to protect African elephants move forward in a co-ordinated and collaborative manner, to effect genuine progress on the ground.

For further information or to pledge your support, please contact us at info@elephantprotectioninitiative.org.

Alternatively, if you'd like to speak to us in person, please call our office on +44 (0) 203 865 3126.

You can follow the EPI on Twitter @EPIAfrica, on Facebook, or through our website www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org

