

**The Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation Response to the
Ministerial declaration for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”**

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) was launched in 2014 by the leaders of 5 countries: Gabon, Chad, Tanzania, Botswana, and Ethiopia. Since then, it has grown to 21 member countries, across Francophone, Lusophone, and Anglophone Africa. The EPI aims to secure the harmonious coexistence of people and elephants with herds able to travel across their range. The EPI is supported by a small but effective Secretariat, the EPI Foundation.

For general inquiries, please contact:

Andrew Crichton (acrichton@elephantprotectioninitiative.org)

Head of Operations, EPI Foundation

For specific inquiries regarding this document, please contact:

John Scanlon AO (jscanlon@elephantprotectioninitiative.org)

CEO, EPI Foundation

Amendments proposed by the EPI Foundation are shown as strikethrough (text to be removed) or in bold text (text to be added).

PP2:

We recognize that a healthy nature is a prerequisite and foundation for sustainable development in all its dimensions, and that we depend on nature, and the solutions it provides, for ~~our~~ **human and animal** health, **our** wellbeing, resilience, economy and ultimately our existence.

PP3:

We note with profound concern the ~~loss~~ **estimated number of species threatened with extinction, the loss**, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats for biodiversity, affecting both life on land and life under water, due to multiple an interlinked threats such as unsustainable management of nature and its resources, **over exploitation of wild animals and plants**, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, and pollution and littering of water, air, and soil.

Note: there is an absence of reference to species, and species extinction throughout the draft, which does not align well with the IPBES Global Assessment of 2019.

NEW [Placeholder for reference to outcomes from COP 26 Glasgow]:

We recognise the carbon sequestration value of certain wild animals, including great whales and forest elephants, as part of well-functioning ecosystems.



PP5:

We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, as well as on economies and societies, further threatening our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and are aware that we face recurring risks of future pandemics if we maintain the current patterns of interaction with nature **and of the need to adopt a ‘One Health’ approach to wildlife trade, markets and consumption.**

PP7:

We reaffirm, as UNEP celebrates through a Special Session of UNEA 50 years since its establishment, its continued great importance as advocate for the global environment and express our support for further strengthening of UNEP **as the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.**

Note: language inserted taken from the Nairobi Declaration, also reaffirmed in the Future We Want.

OP9:

We commit to working across sectors and levels of government to halt the loss **of species of wild animals and plants, the loss**, degradation, and fragmentation of ecosystems, focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity, through sustainable land use, effectively managing protected areas, safeguarding especially vulnerable habitats, types of nature and eco-systems, and addressing illegal deforestation and **mining and the illicit trafficking of wild animals and plants** ~~wildlife trade, mining,~~ and other crimes that have serious impacts on the environment.

Note: ‘illicit trafficking’ is the language used in the UNGA Resolutions on ‘Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife’ of 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021.

OP11:

We commit to promote and strengthen nature-based solutions by actively protecting, sustainably managing, and restoring degraded ecosystems that provide us with food, water, and energy, are habitats for biodiversity and provide carbon storage and sequestration, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, for example natural forests, wetlands, and mangroves, **recognising the carbon sequestration value of certain wild animals, including great whales and forest elephants, as part of well-functioning ecosystems**, thus underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

OP13:

We will promote comprehensive land use planning backed up by robust national enforcement as an invaluable tool for sustainable development, **identifying and protecting wildlife corridors and preventing human-wildlife conflict**, and help create a conducive business environment that stimulates investments in sustainable production and value chains.



OP19:

We recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent **law and** policy frameworks at all levels, good governance and law enforcement at all levels, to be supported by effective means of implementation from all sources of finance, including domestic, international, private sector and innovative sources in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as further capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies, dedicated development partnerships, and a renewed and strong commitment to multilateralism.