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To: European Union Member State Environment Ministers

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International regulations concerning hunting trophies of species listed on the CITES Appendices

Dear Minister,

The signatories to this letter, representing a wide range of international organisations with an interest in wildlife protection, congratulate the European Union on its proposed resolution aiming to strengthen international trade controls for hunting trophies. This resolution has been submitted for consideration at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (Cites CoP17 Doc. 39.1).

We urge the European Union to robustly defend the key elements of its submission in any negotiations with other Parties, and to implement all aspects of its proposals internally, regardless of the outcomes at the CoP.

The killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe in July 2015 generated a great deal of public concern about the ethics and sustainability of trophy hunting. Subsequently, France announced a ban on lion trophy imports, and the Netherlands introduced a ban on the import of trophies derived from a large number of species, including lions. The United States also included lions on its list of threatened and endangered species in January 2016, introducing criteria that must be fulfilled before trophies can be imported. In addition, many airlines and transport companies have banned the carriage of trophy items derived from lions and other species.

In Objective 2.1 of its EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking communication, the European Commission included an expectation that implementation of EU rules on the importation of hunting trophies would be proactively monitored to ensure that such trophies are of legal and sustainable origin, with the first milestone set for the end of 2016. This goal has subsequently been endorsed by Council, reflecting the need for urgent action at an EU level to tighten controls on the import of hunting trophies.

The EU remains a major importer of hunting trophies. Signatories to this letter have written to and met with European Commission representatives in recent months to discuss the EU's processes in this regard, and have asked for greater clarity and transparency, and for high thresholds to be set before trophy imports into the EU are permitted.

The EU's proposal to CITES recommends a number of welcome changes aimed at tightening the rules which govern the movement of trophies from CITES-listed species between CITES Parties. These include:

- Extending the requirement for CITES export permits to hunting trophies from all CITES Appendix I or II-listed species;
- Urging exporting Parties to only issue export permits when *inter alia* sound biological data are collected from the source population and offtake levels are sustainable;
- Recommending that trophy hunting activities relating to CITES Appendix I listed species should produce tangible conservation benefits for the species concerned; and
- Reviewing CITES export quotas for hunting trophies and developing species-specific guidance for the harvest and export of African lion hunting trophies.

Notwithstanding our ethical concerns in relation to trophy hunting, we broadly welcome the EU's initiative. Regardless of the outcomes of the discussions in Johannesburg, we urge the EU to adopt as a minimum all of the key elements in its proposals to CITES. Specifically, we urge you to:

- Extend the requirement for import permits for hunting trophies to all species listed in the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations;
- Develop specific, obligatory, transparent, science-based and verifiable criteria based on the precautionary principle for adoption EU-wide, to guide Member States in their determinations of whether imports of trophies are legal, non-detrimental and produce tangible conservation benefits for the species concerned;
- Require source countries to have in place a publicly available and regularly reviewed management plan aimed at improving the conservation status of the species concerned which, *inter alia*, includes hunting and export quotas based on long-term science-based

population monitoring, total permitted offtake, restrictions on trophy size or animal age or sex, and permitted hunting methods, to inform future management; and

- Consider restricting the importation of hunting trophies to those exporting countries that are listed in Category I of the CITES National Legislation Project, and are therefore considered to have national legislation that effectively implements the Convention.

Finally, we urge the EU to adopt a highly precautionary approach to the issuance of import permits for hunting trophies derived from species listed in the Annexes of the EU regulations, and that where there is any reasonable cause for doubt, permits should not be issued.

We thank you for your consideration of this important matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rhishja Cota-Larson, Founder and President, Annamiticus

Jan Creamer, President, Animal Defenders International

Ilaria Di Silvestre, Programme Leader Wildlife, Eurogroup for Animals

Helmut Dangler, President, FOUR PAWS International

Sarah Dyer & David Nash, UK Representatives, Campaign Against Canned Hunting

Daniela Freyer, Co-founder, Pro Wildlife

Eduardo Gonçalves, CEO, League Against Cruel Sports

Adam Grogan, Head of Wildlife Department, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Birgit Hampl, Board member, Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V.

Heini Kaasalainen, chairwoman, Trophy Free EU group (representing Animalia, The Finnish Nature League, Suomen eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto SEY)

Christine Macsween and Dr Pieter Kat, Directors and Trustees, LionAid

Philip Mansbridge, Regional Director, IFAW UK and Sonja Van Tichelen, Regional Director, IFAW EU

Christophe Marie, Animal Protection Office Director, Fondation Brigit Bardot

Carter and Olivia Ries, Founders, One More Generation

Adam M Roberts, CEO, Born Free USA

Jill Robinson MBE, Founder & CEO, Animals Asia Foundation

DJ Schubert, Wildlife Biologist, Animal Welfare Institute

Stephen Sibbald, UK Country Director, World Animal Protection

Annelise Sorg, President, No Whales In Captivity

Dr Joanna Swabe, Executive Director, Humane Society International/Europe

Will Travers OBE, President and CEO, Born Free Foundation

Jonathan Vaughan, CEO, Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Stephen A Wiggins, Founder, International Wildlife Bond

Copied to:

- European Commission staff
- EU Member State CITES Management and Scientific Authorities