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# CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

#### STATEMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF GABON

- 1. The attached document has been submitted by Gabon.
- 2. The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

## MINISTRY OF FORESTRY, WATER, FISHING AND PROTECTED AREAS

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#### GABONESE REPUBLIC Union - Works - Justice \_\*\_\*\_\*\_\*

Libreville, on



### **STATEMENT**

Nature Protection and the Environment in Gabon

The Gabonese authorities are surprised by the ill will that seems to have developed during the CITES meeting in the Hague, Holland.

Over the last 5 years Gabon's President Omar Bongo Ondimba has greatly increased the government's commitment to the preservation of our natural heritage.

13 National Parks have been set up. A National Park management agency is being created in order to manage and develop the network. These strategic decisions represent a challenge, not only for Gabon, but for the African Continent and the World community as a whole. In so doing Gabon has chosen to forgo the immediate gains of natural resource exploitation and to gamble on the long-term gains of sustainable development.

Gabon would like to reiterate its commitment to preserve protected species such as gorillas and would like to point out that sport hunting has been banned for 20 years, in order to protect elephants in particular.

The Gabonese Authorities are particularly disappointed to note that certain of its partners have chosen to promote a needless debate about its intentions without consulting Gabon directly about its true motivations. Gabon would like to reiterate that all quotas requested were either at the request of scientific research institutes or destined to enable a number of expatriates to return home with their possessions made of ivory. We deeply regret the misinterpretation of our intentions.

Gabon shares the US Government's proposal to put more responsibility in CITES to advise and evaluate quota requests, particularly when, as in our case, the request is to facilitate export of scientific samples.

Regardless, Gabon would like to officially withdraw its 2007 request and will contact CITES to revise its quota needs, although we greatly regret the fact that our request for 100 tusks was erroneously represented as being for 50 sport hunting trophies.

Gabon regrets that the International Community has not proved able to mobilize sufficient resources for the MIKE program in the light of the increase in cross-border poaching which, for example, threatens the most important forest elephant sanctuary, Minkebe national park — with a population estimated at 20,000 individuals. Gabon would like to see the MIKE program promote greater South-South collaboration, particularly to permit the countries of East and Southern Africa to help Central African States to manage wildlife.

Finally, Gabon supports China's willingness to provide support to African countries in order to enable them to eliminate poaching and the illegal ivory trade as expressed at the 55th meeting of the standing committee immediately prior to the current COP.

Libreville, 12 June 2007

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