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ANIMAL ACTIVISTS WITH BLOOD-COVERED HANDS CONVERGE OUTSIDE CITES MEETING TO PROTEST IVORY TRADE

South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe "Have the Blood of Elephants on Their Hands" say Protesters

Den Haag – A group of protesters, each wearing a t-shirt with the name of an offending country on the front and "blood" dripping from their hands, will protest outside the CITES Conference of the Parties 14 (CoP14), where Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe are supporting proposals to sell ivory stockpiles and then to kill 13,000 elephants each year and sell the resulting 80 tonnes of ivory (Proposals 4 & 5).

Where: World Forum Convention Centre, Johan de Wittlaan, Den Haag, Netherlands

When: Tuesday, 5 June, 12 p.m.

Protesters from Animal Rights Africa (ARA) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) are calling on other countries to vote against the proposals which, if passed, would effectively kick-start the global ivory trade and lead to increased poaching, putting thousands of elephants in peril.

The move is being countered by Kenya and Mali, who have put forward their own proposal (Proposal 5), asking that the ivory trade moratorium be extended for 20 years, and this proposal has already garnered support from more than 20 other African nations.

Michele Pickover, of Animal Rights Africa, says, "We have seen elephant families rent asunder by wildlife agencies and governments seeking to make a profit from the sale of animals, dead and alive. We will have no choice but to launch a tourist boycott of any country that trades in ivory and sells out its wildlife simply to line its own pockets."

On the issue of elephant population control, PETA Director Debbie Leahy states that "wildlife biologists condemn slaughtering African elephants as scientifically unsound. Should the need ever arise in the future to control elephant numbers in certain areas, experts have proposed a number of non-lethal strategies including expanding habitats by establishing migration corridors. Allowing the sale of ivory will simply fuel the illegal trade and lead to increased poaching, something which is already rampant and unchecked in many parts of Africa."

The total quantity of "illegal" ivory reported seized since 1998 to date is 151,430 tonnes. This equates to approximately 24,380 elephants. The true number of elephants killed illegally is even higher.

For more information please visit www.AnimalRightsAfrica.org or www.PETA.org.

Further information and images relating to the killing of elephants and the ivory trade are available on request from **Andrew Butler +31 646 498 419 or email apcafrica@gmail.com**