



January 19, 2023

Honorable Yuriko Koike  
Governor of Tokyo  
Secretarial Section, General Affairs Division, Office of the Governor for Policy Planning  
Tokyo Metropolitan Government  
8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku 2-chome  
Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 163-8001  
Japan

**Re: Action on Tokyo's Ivory Trade**

Dear Governor Koike:

We applaud you and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) for your leadership in taking strides to end Tokyo's role in the illegal ivory trade.

As communicated in our [May 2022 letter](#), we welcomed the final [recommendations](#) released from the TMG designated Advisory Council on Regulation of Ivory Trade, an output resulting from the ivory trade assessment process you initiated in January 2020. We continue to urge the TMG to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Council to address concerns about Tokyo's ivory trade.

We were pleased to see the [letter you sent to three Ministers](#) of the national government, dated October 7, 2022, regarding ivory trade, especially the request that: "The national government should consider more effective measures as necessary, based on the situation of ivory trade and the moves of the international community". We acknowledge your statement that "local government's measures have limitations, so further efforts by the national government are indispensable", and concur that action within Tokyo is limited by the national government's position.

However, in November 2022 at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the national Government of Japan (GoJ) explicitly [insisted that](#) its current ivory trade controls are sufficient and that its domestic ivory market is [not contributing](#) to illegal trade. At the meeting, many of Africa's elephant range states raised [concerns](#) that Japan's domestic ivory market is a source of ivory that is [exported illegally](#) to China and other countries, and thus is clearly contributing to illegal international trade in ivory. The GoJ did not acknowledge these concerns.

Under these circumstances, we believe that the international community's greatest hope for progress in Japan lies with the TMG, and yourself, for unilateral action from Tokyo. We reiterate that the Council's third recommendation has the most potential and needs further attention: "[...] **The Tokyo Metropolitan Government should consider legal or other effective means** to ensure that the ivory trade does not contribute to elephant poaching and illegal trade, while appreciating the cultural and artistic aspects of Japanese ivory products." (emphasis added)

We therefore urge Tokyo to continue to heed the recommendations from the Advisory Council and enact an ordinance adopted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly to close the ivory market in Tokyo with only very narrow exemptions if necessary.

We also hope that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government will implement what the Advisory Council has recommended so that Tokyo can forge ahead with the international community in protecting elephants from the threats posed by ivory trade.

As always, we are sincerely grateful for your leadership and commitment to ensuring Tokyo does not contribute to the downfall of Africa's elephants and we stand ready to assist in whatever way we can.

Sincerely,

Animal Defenders International  
Association of Zoos & Aquariums  
Born Free Foundation  
Center for Biological Diversity  
David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation  
Environmental Investigation Agency  
Fondation Franz Weber  
Future for Elephants e.V.  
Humane Society International  
International Fund for Animal Welfare  
Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund  
Japan Wildlife Conservation Society  
Pan African Sanctuary Alliance  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Save the Elephants  
Species Survival Network  
WildAid  
Wildlife Conservation Society

CC: Mr. Rahm Emanuel, United States Ambassador to Japan  
Ms. Julia Longbottom, United Kingdom Ambassador to Japan