



**STATEMENT FROM THE AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION (AWF) AT THE 19TH
MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA
(CITES)
14 – 25 NOVEMBER 2022, PANAMA CITY, PANAMA**

About AWF at the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES

This statement is available online at www.awf.org/awf-cop19

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The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) works to ensure wildlife and their habitats thrive in modern Africa. One of Africa's oldest conservation organizations, AWF has a long history of investing in African conservation leadership as the surest way to secure a hopeful future where people and wildlife successfully coexist. Our strategies bridge science, on-the-ground solutions, policy, and education. With a 60-year history of investing in African conservation leadership and building conservation strategies in partnership with local communities, AWF is uniquely positioned to develop inclusive conservation solutions that are Africa-led and integrated into countries' development agendas.

To realize the most significant conservation impacts, AWF takes a holistic approach, addressing threats and building on opportunities from multiple angles. Our programs protect wildlife, conserve land and habitats, promote community well-being, and serve as a voice for wildlife. We work directly in 10 countries across 17 landscapes, and our networks, business development, and policy approaches span the continent (www.awf.org).

AWF at CITES

AWF values the role played by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in promoting conservation of the world's natural resources, protecting the environment, and enhancing human well-being. CITES aims to ensure that international trade is regulated to avoid the unsustainable exploitation of more than 38,700 species. AWF has participated as an observer at CITES since 1989. Understanding the importance of putting people at the centre of conservation, we promote the 2020 IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress [Kigali Call to Action for People and Nature](#) in our deliberations at CITES COP19. We believe that, when not in conflict with maintaining healthy local and continental populations of at-risk species, CITES can and should adjust resolutions to account for pragmatic realities, individual country circumstances, and the needs of local communities living in and around protected and conserved areas.

During CITES CoP19, AWF supports African institutions and peer organizations by encouraging dialogue among African parties, working towards the articulation of collective priorities, and

establishing a common African voice on as many issues as possible. We have collaborated with the African Union Commission (AUC) to provide technical and financial support for meetings that bring together wildlife and biodiversity experts from Africa. Meetings such as the pre-CoPs in Gaborone, Hwange, and Libreville have been essential for assessing Africa's preparedness for the Conference, as they have addressed key issues, documents, and proposals to amend appendices on the docket for consideration in Panama.

Our delegation to CoP19 is actively participating in all sessions and attending relevant working group discussions. We are also engaging African Parties, key non-African Parties (e.g., EU and Member States), influential NGOs, UN agencies, and other relevant non-state actors. AWF will endeavor to continue fostering this common African voice.

At CITES CoP19, AWF:

- Calls for African Parties to foster a common voice for the benefit of biodiversity conservation, human well-being, and sustainable development.
- Calls for African Parties to support the formation of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) for Wildlife recommended by the Libreville meeting and supported by the AMCEN meeting in Dakar, Senegal.
- Calls on African nations to find commonalities and build upon them for the benefit of people and biodiversity and commit to making progress despite differences. Ahead of CoP19, Africa countries should continue to reconcile disagreements on key issues like "CITES & Livelihoods," "One Health," and the participation of IPLCs.
- Calls for African Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention, including committing to transparent and rigorous implementation and reporting.
- Calls for African Parties to follow up on actions agreed upon at Libreville that will assist in resolving issues ahead of CoP19. AWF is willing to work with parties to enhance this process prior, at, and after CoP19.
- Urges national governments and members of CITES to utilize science within their proposals and debates that focus on conservation of species within their borders and in their entirety throughout Africa.
- Calls for African parties to amplify African leadership voices in shaping the agenda of CITES and act to meet people's needs through conservation, which is central to the success of the Convention.

<http://www.cites.org/>