

Statement welcoming UK ivory trade ban

3rd April, 2018

As a group of NGOs working together to halt the current elephant poaching crisis and campaigning to close the UK domestic market, we strongly welcome today's announcement by the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, of a comprehensive ban on the ivory trade in the UK.

The huge response, one of the largest ever, to the Government's consultation on its proposals at the end of last year demonstrated how important it is to the British public that we play our full part in closing domestic ivory markets.

The Government's announcement shows it has listened to the concerns of the British public. The ban will be one of the strongest in the world and is a further example of the leadership the UK has displayed on many conservation issues in the past.

There is a great deal of detail in the announcement which we will be studying over the coming days but, overall, it is clear that the UK ban will be tough, comprehensive and focused on the problem, while allowing limited legitimate trade with strict exemptions.

This is a significant step and we would encourage others who have yet to adopt similarly tough measures to follow suit, particularly the European Union, which recently carried out its own consultation on whether to further restrict trade in ivory, with the vast majority of respondents wanting the EU to take action. If it does not, the EU will be the largest legal market for ivory in the world, facilitating illegal trade.

The criminal syndicates who exploit legal markets to trade illegally in ivory and other wildlife products operate internationally and it will require coordinated global action to defeat them. Alongside China, the USA and other countries which have recently enacted ivory trade bans, the UK's action will be an important part of that global effort.

Born Free, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Environmental Investigation Agency, International Fund for Animal Welfare, National Resources Defense Council, Stop Ivory, Tusk, Wildlife Conservation Society, Zoological Society of London