



PRESS RELEASE

A Preposterous Christmas Gift from Canada to African Nations

Lausanne, 15 December 2023 - The lessons of history are short-lived. At a time when Canada still struggles with the negative impacts of the “*European Union ban on the importation of Canadian seal products*,” Canada has decided to impose its “*own Canadian ban on the importation of hunting trophies from elephants and rhinos*,” almost exclusively from Southern Africa.

Eugène Lapointe, former Secretary-General of CITES (1982-1990) and current President and CEO of IWMC World Conservation Trust, calls this decision, “outrageous, unconsidered, useless and revolting.” “Nothing authorises Canada to undertake such aggression on the livelihoods and food security of some of the poorest nations of the world, said Lapointe, not even the pseudo-objective of ‘Saving elephants and rhinos’”.

The safari/tourist hunting is an important source of income for African countries, playing a key role in their development and increasing their possibilities as well as their motivation to conserve wild species. “Wild species that can be hunted, constitute their bank account, a wealth that they alone shall be entitled to manage.”

In an open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada (attached), Lapointe provides arguments why he considers this decision is wrong, useless, and incomprehensible. “Inexplicable! How can Canada justify damaging African economy with a ban on hunting trophies of elephants and rhinos, when the European ban on seal products has created the same hardship to Canadian natives and Easterners.”

Even Canada’s attempt to diminish the impact of its decision on African countries (...just a few trophies) like the EU did with its ban on seal products from Canada (...just a few skins), cannot justify this interference in the activities of another Sovereign State.

Even worse, in its challenge of Africans’ livelihoods and food security, Canada is relying on tactics identical to those used by animal rights NGOs – Greenpeace, IFAW⁽¹⁾, HSUS⁽²⁾, HSI⁽³⁾ - in the late 70s, to destroy the Canadian sealing industry: false or inaccurate information, celebrities, emotions. “Unworthy of a respectful nation.”

In his closing remarks, Lapointe calls the Trudeau government “to reverse this decision which will bear only negative effects for both human beings and the wild species intended to be protected.

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(1) IFAW The International Fund for Animal Welfare

(2) HSUS The humane society of the United States

(3) HSI The Humane Society International (the international branch of HSUS).

Note: Eugène Lapointe is a Canadian citizen residing in Switzerland who was Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) from February 1982 to November 1990. In 1994, he created **IWMC** *World Conservation Trust* of which he is the President and CEO. On 8 December 2022, he was awarded the prestigious *Order of the Rising Sun Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon*, by the Emperor of Japan, in recognition of his life-time struggle for the acceptance of the principle of Sustainable Use of Wild Resources as necessary to social development and wildlife conservation.

Mr. Lapointe is reachable at iwmc@iwmc.org or at: elapointe@iwmc.org

OPEN LETTER

Lausanne, 14 December 2023

The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada

Object: News release of 20 November 2023, from Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Canada implements stricter measures for elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn trade.

The Right Honorable Prime Minister,

Canadians were rightly upset when, in the late seventies, extremist animal rights NGOs: PETA, Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd, IFAW ⁽¹⁾, HSUS ⁽²⁾, and HSI ⁽³⁾ mounted a sophisticated, nevertheless disrespectful, baseless, and irresponsible campaign against Canadian seal harvest, without the least consideration for the consequences their campaign could have on human beings. Wishing to revamp their image, former “celebrities” joined them and soon invaded Eastern Canada under the banner of “Saving the Baby Seals.” Unable to tame the resilience of the sealers, together, they then called upon the heavy artillery: the European Union.

Canadians’ outrage reached its peak when, in 2009, the European Union decided to “ban the importation of Seals products” from Canada. Canadians are still suffering from this ordeal which has led to important losses of their livelihoods, income, and food security. Even those not directly affected by the ban were hurt, humiliated, confused. What could have justified a group of sovereign states (EU) to take political actions destroying an important part of the economy of another independent state? How was it possible that purely political domestic interests could be used to trash human rights elsewhere?

It was hoped that never again would Humanity have to answer these questions...
But the hope did not last long.

With its unjustified decision to ban importation of hunting trophies of elephants and rhinos, the Canadian (your) Government - using a carbon copy of the NGOs’ strategy against sealing - is orchestrating a similar aggression on vital sources of livelihoods and food security for African rural communities.

This ban is what it is: a repeat of the animal rights assault on Canadian Sealing, this time, though, the ban is aiming at some of the poorest countries in the world. When the Greenpeace, the IFAWs, the HSUS and HSI, initiated their attacks on the Canadian Sealing industry, the then Prime Minister, the Right Honorable Pierre-Elliot Trudeau,

strongly opposed “this aggression” on Canadian culture, traditions, and livelihoods. Subsequent Prime ministers, Environment Ministers, Senators fought against this intrusion on Canadian affairs. The late Honorable Pierre de Bané, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, referred to it as “unjustifiable and incomprehensible bullying.”

Now, Canada is undertaking the same type of aggression - it was subject to with seals - on African rural communities and their respective governments that rely on Safari Hunting as a major source of income for their development and their conservation/management programmes.

The purpose, stated by the Minister of Environment, is “to protect these iconic species for generations to come.” They might be iconic for those watching them on television, but certainly not for those sharing their habitat with them. From his years with Greenpeace, the Minister should know that one will never achieve anything for future generations by denying the rights, ignoring the culture, and destroying the traditions of the current generation. Notwithstanding what its citizens have suffered with the “Save the Seals,” Canada has decided to “Save the Elephants and the Rhinos” in total disregard of the consequences for human beings and the negative consequences for conservation.

The importation of hunting trophies in Canada and elsewhere is crucial to the economies of the countries which have sufficient populations of wild animals to sustain rational harvesting which, in turns, can be profitable to their development and to their conservation efforts. The number of locals employed in the hunting industry is amazing: from guides to tracers, drivers, carvers, tanners, taxidermists (a medium size taxidermist I recently visited in South Africa employs 123 locals), meat cutters, processors and so on. Without the possibility of importing their trophies, hunters will not be present.

At no surprise there is minor difference, if any, between the assault by NGOs - and later the European Union - on the Canadian sealing industry and the assault by Canada, on the legitimate hunting of elephants and rhinos taking place in Southern Africa.

Following are disturbing similarities:

1. The European ban against Canada and the Canadian ban against African countries are strictly based on emotion, disregarding science.
2. Confusing hunting and poaching as being one of the same. (If such theory would be applied in Canada, half the population of the country would be in jail.)
3. Using misleading, inaccurate, and false information; the figures in your press release are wrong. According to the most recent survey, there is currently a minimum of 520,000 African elephants and likely over 600,000. Since 2013, the African elephant population has increased, the main threat being human/elephant conflict (HEC) and loss of habitat. A press release by HSI, that claims to be instrumental in the Canadian decision and quoted in the Canadian press release, is using outdated statistics, at least 10 years old.
4. The biggest falsehood is assuming that banning trophy imports will benefit the pachyderms in Africa. By far the biggest threat to any wild species is the loss of habitat. With no trophy hunting, huge areas of wildlife habitat currently protected as hunting blocks will lose that protection and eventually be converted to other uses - farming, grazing, mining, habitations, etc. This decision will have only negative effects on the conservation of elephants and rhinos.

5. The use of celebrities!!! In the eighties, against the Canadian sealers, Greenpeace *et al*/ used celebrities named Pamela Anderson, Paul McCartney, Richard D. Anderson, to give weight to their arguments. Now the celebrities used by Canada are Robert Bateman, Bryan Adams *et al*. Let us hope that our Canadian celebrities have not been infected by the Brigit Bardot Syndrome, the star of Greenpeace in 1977. The use of celebrities by money-hunger-financially-driven animal rights NGOs can be explained by the weaknesses of their arguments, but for a Sovereign State to do so is, at best, ludicrous. The rightfulness of your policies shall be self-evident.

In reading the Press Release of 20 November, one can easily understand why, during the Summit Canada-EU of 23-24 November in St. John's NF – the hearth of the Seals Saga – Canada carefully avoided requesting EU to abolish its ban on the importation of the seal products. It would have led to serious embarrassment considering that, 3 days earlier, Canada had decreed a similar ban on some of the poorest countries in the world.

In closing, Right Honorable Prime Minister, may I suggest that you, your Ministers, and collaborators, peruse the link below that demonstrates the tremendous economic advantages of trophy hunting in Africa. The figures are dated 2015, but current figures are even more revealing of the importance of hunting.

(https://safariclubfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Southwick-Associates-2015_FINAL.pdf) I recommend pages 38 and 39.

I hope, Right Honorable Prime Minister, that it will be possible to reverse this decision which will have only negative effects for both human beings and the wild species intended to be protected. Africans are quite capable of conserving their own species, if given the opportunity to do so by wealthy countries. They are not asking for assistance and/or donation, they are simply asking for the opportunity to use their wild resources within their culture and traditions, for their own benefit and that of the wild species.

Accept, The Right Honorable Prime Minister, the assurance of my highest consideration,



Eugene Lapointe
IWMC President
Former Secretary General of CITES (1982-1990)

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Copies to:

The Honorable Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Opposition

The Honorable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change

Mr. Gerard Deltell, Member of Parliament

Mr. Robert Kitchen, Member of Parliament

Mr. Blaine Calkins, Member of Parliament