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Ms Caroline Lucas MEP
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Our ref: PO 72707

20 March 2008

From Joan Ruddock MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary - Climate Change, Biodiversity and Waste

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February to Hilary Benn about China's trading partner status for the one-off sales of ivory.

We are keen to ensure that the stockpile sales do not lead to an upsurge in poaching or have a negative impact on elephant populations.

Trading nation status can only be granted once all the conditions contained in Conference Resolution 10.10 (Rev14) (www.cites.org/eng/res/10/10-10R14.shtml) have been complied with. The UK, along with our EU colleagues, will be looking at all information relevant to those conditions before coming to any conclusions. You can be assured that we will take into account all the information available to us, including that from CITES Secretariat visits, 3rd country visits and reports from Non-Governmental Organisations, before supporting any decision to approve China as a trading partner. If that information does not demonstrate that China has met all the conditions we will oppose any such application.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Joan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

JOAN RUDDOCK