Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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May 1, 2026

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

On behalf of Elephanatics, World Elephant Day and World Elephant Society, we are writing to highlight a critical opportunity for Canada to lead the global effort in protecting biodiversity and dismantling the criminal networks that threaten international security.

The 2021 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change established a clear priority to "work with partners to curb illegal wildlife trade." Following this directive, Canada achieved a significant milestone with the 2023 regulatory amendments to the Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations, which implemented a near-total ban on the domestic trade, import, and export of raw ivory and rhino horn.

As your government implements the "A Force of Nature" strategy to reach our 2030 biodiversity targets, the upcoming 35th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) this June in Vienna presents a timely opportunity to build on this success. We urge your government to formally sponsor the UNTOC Protocol against illicit wildlife trafficking at the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) in October 2026.

International wildlife crime is a US$199 billion annual industry that fuels transnational organized crime and directly undermines the global goals set forth in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. While existing trade agreements like CITES are vital for regulating trade, a dedicated UNTOC Protocol would provide the necessary criminal justice framework—including enhanced law enforcement cooperation and mutual legal assistance—to treat wildlife trafficking with the severity it deserves as a serious organized crime. Without this enforcement tool, achieving our "30x30" conservation goals remains at risk from illicit exploitation.

In recognition of the urgency of this issue, our organizations are preparing to launch a national public awareness campaign on July 22, leading into the annual global awareness campaign, World Elephant Day, on August 12, 2026. Our goal is to engage Canadians in supporting the government's progress on this mandate. It is our sincere hope that by the time of this launch, we can celebrate Canada’s proactive leadership at the June meetings in Vienna as a founding sponsor of this vital Protocol.

The upcoming session in June represents a decisive window for Canada to signal its support ahead of the UNTOC Conference of the Parties in October 2026. By sponsoring this Protocol, Canada will fulfill its mandate to work with international partners and solidify its position as a global leader in environmental and economic security.

We look forward to Canada’s continued leadership in securing a future for the world’s most vulnerable species.

Sincerely,

Fran Duthie
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Patricia Sims
Founder, World Elephant Day / President, World Elephant Society

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