



KAZA Summit 2024 and Wildlife Product Trade

For Prelims: Kavango-Zambezi Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA-TFCA), [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#), [Elephant Trade Information System \(ETIS\)](#), [International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime \(ICWC\)](#), [TRAFFIC \(Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network\)](#).

For Mains: Issue of Ivory trade and Solutions, Wildlife conservation, Human-wildlife conflict, Sustainable conservation, Wildlife management, International agreements.

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **2024 Heads of State Summit** for the **Kavango-Zambezi Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA-TFCA)** took place in Livingstone, Zambia, where member states renewed their calls to withdraw from the **Convention on [International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)**.

- The call came in backdrop of **repeated denying of permission** to sell off their **abundant ivory** and other wildlife products.

What are the Key Issues Discussed at the 2024 Summit?

- **The KAZA-TFCA Initiative:**
 - KAZA-TFCA spans **across five southern African nations namely**, Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe along the Okavango and Zambezi river basins.
 - About 70% of KAZA land is under conservation made up of 103 wildlife management areas and 85 forest reserves.
 - This region harbours over **two-thirds of Africa's [elephant population](#)** (approx 450,000) with Botswana (132,000) and Zimbabwe (100,000) alone holding significant portions of this population.
- **Historical Dispute with CITES:**
 - Like this summit, at the 2022 **Conference of Parties** in Panama, southern African countries advocated for **legalising the ivory trade** to finance conservation and reduce [human-wildlife conflicts](#).
 - Despite having large elephant populations and related challenges, their **proposal was rejected**, as these countries accused it of prioritising **anti-trade ideologies over scientific conservation methods**.
- **Key Issues Discussed at the 2024 Summit:**
 - Delegates at the Livingstone Summit **emphasized the economic pitfalls of existing CITES restrictions**, advocating for **wildlife product sales rights** while highlighting **elephant mortality rates** and the loss of economic potential from ivory stockpiles.
 - The **ban on ivory and wildlife product trade affects conservation funding**, as revenue from sales could aid **wildlife management**.

- Delegates argued that **decisions are not based on scientific evidence** but on populism and political agendas, undermining the effectiveness of CITES in promoting sustainable conservation.
- The summit **featured renewed appeals to exit CITES**, with proponents suggesting it could prompt CITES to **reconsider or empower KAZA states** to autonomously handle their wildlife resources.
- In response to increasing **restrictions on trophy hunting** imports by western countries, **Zimbabwe and other KAZA states** are **exploring alternative markets**, particularly in the East.
 - **Trophy hunting** involves **selectively hunting wild animals**, often large mammals, to obtain body parts like antlers or horns, **serving as symbols of achievement or for display**.

What is Ivory?

- Elephants' [ivory tusks](#), akin to oversized teeth, consist mainly of durable dentine encased in resilient enamel.
- Both **male and female African elephants have tusks, but only some male Asian elephants do**.
- [World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\)](#) highlights the issue of ivory poaching, noting that "**ivory**" **encompasses** materials from various species like **mastodons, mammoths, hippos, narwhals, and walrus**, which are not included in the US elephant ivory ban but may be regulated by other laws like CITES.
- Every ivory item, from tusks to trinkets, comes from an elephant killed by poachers, with about **20,000 elephants killed annually** to meet mainly Asian demand for ivory.

What are the Causes of the Wildlife Product Trade?

- **Organised Commercial Illegal Sourcing:** Organized crime engages in remote operations, including elephant and tiger poaching, often merging with other criminal **networks, exploiting power dynamics**, illicit weapons, and [money laundering](#) avenues.
- **Black Markets Create New Demands:** When **legal sales drop, illegal traders may find new ways to keep selling the product**, like rare animals or **endangered species trophies**, where scarcity can make illegal markets more appealing to buyers.
- **Supplementary Livelihoods and Opportunism:** While big criminal groups might be behind some trafficking, many poor people are just trying to make ends meet.
- **Corruption:** It significantly undermines efforts to disrupt and deter wildlife trafficking, ranging from **bribery at inspection points** to higher-level influence on permit issuance and legal decisions.
- **Cultural Roots of Poaching:** Wildlife poaching isn't solely driven by financial motives but can also be cultural.
 - For example, In **Chinko reserve in the Central African Republic** elephant hunting represents cultural heritage, symbolising courage and masculinity.
- **Existence of Legal Market for Wildlife Product:** Legal Market for Wildlife Product (E.g, **Lao PDR permits trade in bear bile**) makes it **difficult to recognise the product's origin as collected from wild or originated from illegal poaching**.
 - **Japan is the world's most significant legal legal ivory market.**

What are the Measures Needed to Tackle Wildlife Crime?

- **Banning Illegal Wildlife Products:** This approach aims **to reduce demand by making possessing or trading goods** derived from illegally obtained wildlife illegal.
- **Effective Funding for Wildlife Protection:** The funds should go directly to support agencies that protect wildlife, such as park rangers and anti-poaching teams.
- **Public Awareness and Empowerment:** Educating people about the consequences of wildlife trafficking and teaching them about the value of wildlife can lower the demand for illegal products.

▪ **Ivory Specific Measures:**

- Both sides could agree on an **independent scientific review** to assess the **sustainability of a potential ivory trade from KAZA countries.**
- CITES and KAZA countries could **collaborate** on exploring alternative sources of income for conservation, such as promoting ecotourism ventures and carbon offset programs within the KAZA region.
- **Best Practice:**
 - [Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce's \(TRAFFIC\)](#) technical expertise supported a [World Wide Fund for Nature \(WWF\)](#) campaign in Thailand, significantly **reforming Thai legislation and nearly eliminating the domestic ivory market.**
 - In China the office of WWF, alongside other [NGOs](#), also played **crucial role in implementing a domestic ivory ban.**
 - **Gabon, Congo, and the USA** have recently **destroyed stockpiles of confiscated ivory** to prevent its return to the black market and to condemn ivory trade and poaching publicly.

Legal Frameworks for Wildlife Conservation

▪ **Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts (India being Party):**

- [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)
- [Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals \(CMS\)](#)
- [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)
- [The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network \(TRAFFIC\)](#)
- [United Nations Forum on Forests \(UNFF\)](#)
- [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)
- [Global Tiger Forum \(GTF\)](#)

▪ **Legal Framework in India:**

- [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#)
- [Environment Protection Act, 1986](#)
- [The Biological Diversity Act, 2002](#)

Dristhi Mains Question:

Q. Explore the challenges and possible approaches in balancing trade regulation with the preservation of wildlife?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which of the following statements is/are correct? (2015)

1. IUCN is an organ of the United Nations and CITES is an international agreement between governments.
2. IUCN runs thousands of field projects around the world to better manage natural environments.
3. CITES is legally binding on the States that have joined it, but this Convention does not take the place of national laws.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of Trade Related Analysis of Fauna and Flora in Commerce (TRAFFIC): (2017)

1. TRAFFIC is a bureau under United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. The mission of TRAFFIC is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/kaza-summit-2024-and-wildlif-product-trade>