

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON IVORY AND RHINO HORN DESTRUCTION BY VIET NAM

12 November 2016

"It is with great admiration that we read about Vietnam's efforts to voluntarily destroy their inventory of ivory and rhino horn. We know that this decision has not been easy but it shows Vietnam's commitment to ensuring the preservation of the species and for that we say thanks from all of us here at OMG." Olivia Ries, Cofounder, **One More Generation** (OMG), USA. T: +1-678-491-6222, info@OneMoreGeneration.org.

"We visited the Hanoi region last year as guests of the US Embassy and we spent 16 days in the region meeting with students and adults alike as we gave presentations and met with government officials seeking their support. The level of concern for the preservation of elephants and rhinos expressed by everyone we met was overwhelming and seeing the organization of the public destruction of ivory and rhino horn gives us hope and sends a clear message to the rest of the world that elephants and rhinos are worth more alive than dead. We wish to thank everyone involved in the destruction of the 2 tonnes of seized ivory and rhino horns for their hard work and we especially thank our friends at HSI for their continued support and commitment to making sure these amazing animals will be around for generations to come." Carter Ries, Cofounder, **One More Generation** (OMG), USA. T: +1-678-491-6222, E: info@OneMoreGeneration.org.

"With the support of the caring people of Vietnam we are moving ever closer to the day when future generations will be able to visit herds of majestic elephant families thriving in wild because of the action we took here today." Michael O'Sullivan, **The Humane Society of Canada**. T: +1-416-368-0405, E: michael@humanesociety.com.

"Elephants and rhinos have survived for millions of years – now elephants may not survive the next two decades. Poaching, habitat loss, poverty, and human conflict have decimated their numbers. It is vital that we do not go down in history as the generation who let these wonderful creatures disappear forever. Animal Defenders International supports the public burning of confiscated ivory, in the hope that it will bring attention to the sheer scale of the problem and the devastating impact on elephants and rhinos." Jan Creamer, President, **Animal Defenders International**, U.K. T: +44 (0)20 7630 3340, E: AngieGreenaway@ad-international.org.

"Freeland applauds the Vietnamese government for destroying more than two tons of ivory and rhino horn. Today's destruction of these illegal wildlife products not only ensures they can never enter the market, it demonstrates the government's commitment to tackling wildlife crime and places Vietnam among the top five countries in ASEAN who have taken such steps to combat wildlife trafficking. While this is a bold step in the right direction, it needs to be followed by continued efforts across the country to bolster law enforcement capacity, reduce demand for endangered wildlife, and strengthen governance structures. Freeland commends the government of Viet Nam for this initiative and stands ready to work with all relevant government agencies and stakeholders to help create a world free of wildlife trafficking." Sulma Warne, Deputy Director, **Freeland**, Thailand. T: +66 (0) 818 262 045, E: sulma@freeland.org.

"Born Free USA fully supports and congratulates Vietnam on the decision to destroy two tons of seized ivory and 154 pounds of seized rhino horn this Saturday, November 12 at the Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade. The destruction of stockpiled ivory, which removes it from the market permanently, is a measure of vital importance in the fight against the ivory trade. Maintaining stockpiles sends mixed messages to consumers, traffickers, and speculators; it undermines demand reduction efforts, inadvertently promotes ivory as an item of value, and reinforces the perception that legal trade may someday reopen. In contrast, the destruction of ivory stockpiles sends the message that we need to reject ivory trade in order to give elephant populations a chance to recover. In April 2016, the government of Kenya burned 105 tons of ivory in Nairobi National Park. Similarly, in July 2015, Mozambique burned more than 2.4 tons of ivory and 440 pounds of rhino horn. In total, since 1989, 14 countries have destroyed more than 130 tons of ivory, and we are very pleased that Vietnam is joining these countries. Destroying stockpiles demonstrates to illegal

poachers that wildlife crime is not tolerated in Vietnam. It also directly contributes to a wider strategy that aims to put value on living animals, and not on their tusks or horns. Born Free USA therefore wishes to express our full support of the choice made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam. We hope that other governments will follow Vietnam's example." Adam M. Roberts, Chief Executive Officer, **Born Free USA**. T: +1 202 450 3168, E: Adam@bornfreeusa.org.

"Elephants have never been closer to extinction than now, and the world needs to take urgent action against those who rob our planet from wonderful creatures like the grey giants just for shortsighted illegal profit. We congratulate Vietnam to take this step of destroying such big amounts of ivory and rhino horn as it sends a clear signal to consumers and smugglers that Vietnam does not tolerate illegal wildlife trade," says Thomas Töpfer, Chairman of the German association **Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V.** (Save Africa's Elephants). *"With this action Vietnam is joining the nations that have already destroyed their ivory stockpiles, and we strongly encourage Vietnam to continue with ivory destruction until no stock is left, especially in view of the confiscations of more than four tons only within the recent few months."* Thomas Töpfer, Chairman, **Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V.** (Save Africa's Elephants), Germany. T: +49-0178-817 09 68, E: tt@reaev.de.

"Four Paws would like to congratulate the Vietnamese government in taking this commendable step in sending a strong message to its people that the trade in rhino horn and ivory is illegal and will not be tolerated. Four Paws would very much like to see this as a first step post CoP17 and at a time of Viet Nam hosting the IWT to accelerate efforts in curbing all illegal trade of wildlife in Viet Nam." Kieran Harkin, Head of Wild Animal Campaigns, **Four Paws International**, U.K. T: +44 7516986430, E: kieran.harkin@four-paws.org.uk.

"The Animal Welfare Institute commends the government of Viet Nam for destroying elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn to raise public awareness about the plight of elephants and rhinos and to reduce consumer demand for these products. We encourage Viet Nam to destroy its entire stockpile of seized ivory and rhino horn to send an unmistakable message to poachers, criminals, and criminal syndicates engaged in the illegal trade in these products that Viet Nam refuses to be complicit in the destruction of these magnificent animals and that it will fully enforce domestic law and international conventions to identify, arrest, and prosecute those involved in the trade." Cathy Liss, President, Animal Welfare Institute, USA. T: +1-202-337-2332, E: cathy@awionline.org.