



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Yuriko Koike  
Governor of Tokyo  
8-1 Nishi-Shinjuku 2-chome  
Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 163-8001  
Japan

Dear Governor Koike:

New York City has long enjoyed a close relationship with Tokyo, and our two cities are known around the world as leaders in nearly every industry. It is because of our enduring partnership and shared global influence that I write to you today to respectfully request that, in advance of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, you prohibit the elephant ivory trade in Tokyo and close Japan's domestic ivory market in an effort to protect Africa's elephants.

Sustainability is a key theme of next year's games as reflected in the guiding principle: "Be better together – for the planet and the people." Taking this landmark action would not only be an invaluable step in the worldwide effort to end elephant poaching, but would also help to protect the many international visitors attending the events. With millions of people traveling to Tokyo, many from countries with strict ivory regulations, tourists and participants may unknowingly engage in the illegal ivory trade by bringing home souvenirs that violate their local laws, causing undue distress and tarnishing their Olympic experience.

With support for conservation efforts growing around the world, we are seeing more and more countries choosing the lives of elephants over the ivory trade. Here in New York, environmental conservation and animal welfare are important priorities for our residents, and I believe that if Tokyo joins with New York and other cities around the world in this anti-ivory effort, it will send a powerful message of hope for a brighter future to people around the globe.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of a ban on the sale of ivory prior to the 2020 Olympics. Together, we can not only protect the lives of African elephants, but take one step closer towards the sustainable, resilient tomorrow that will benefit us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

BDB:el

cc: His Excellency Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan  
His Excellency Yoshiaki Harada, Minister of the Environment, Japan  
His Excellency Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan