

## **Appendix 1 – Letter Hand Delivered to Downing Street, 30 April 2016**

Dear Prime Minister,

We the undersigned wish to highlight the plight of African lions and the need for urgent and concerted action by the UK government to help prevent their continued disappearance across much of the African continent.

Lions are an iconic symbol in many cultures across the world. Lion statues and images abound across London and Great Britain, and the door knocker at Number 10 is in the shape of a lion. Africa without lions is unimaginable, yet this appalling scenario is fast becoming a reality. From probably well over a million in the 1800s, and around half a million as recently as the 1940s, there may now be less than 20,000 wild lions left in Africa. The situation is most desperate in West Africa where only some 400 individuals remain and where the species is considered to be critically endangered.

Lions now inhabit as little as eight percent of their historic range, and are believed to have disappeared completely from as many as 16 African countries in recent years.

The future survival of lions now rests on just five populations that exceed the viable population threshold of more than 200 reproductive adults, some of which are in heavily managed fenced reserves which limits their long-term growth potential and therefore their ability to contribute to the continental recovery of the species.

The reasons for these devastating declines are complex. They include loss of habitat, loss of natural prey largely due to poaching, and increased conflict with people and their livestock.

Unsustainable and unethical trophy hunting practices are also having an impact; in the decade to 2013, almost 3,000 lion 'trophies' were declared to have been exported to EU countries alone, almost half of which were derived from wild lions. Trade in lion parts and products, including skins and bones, represents an emerging additional threat; in the decade to 2012, nearly 30,000 lion items were declared to have been legally exported from more than 50 countries.

In recognition of the increasingly desperate plight facing lions, several countries have already taken action. Australia and France announced bans on the import of all lion products, and the United States has recently listed lions under its Endangered Species Act which will facilitate the release of funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to assist conservation measures as well as significantly restricting imports of lion trophies and products.

We hereby call on the British Government to take strong and immediate action to join these nations in support of lion conservation and to implement a complete ban on the import into the UK of any lion product including sport hunting trophies. We call on the British Government to urgently support independent and scientifically verifiable population censuses to guide future lion conservation needs in partnership with African range states. We further call on the British Government to declare its support for providing lions with the highest level of protection against international trade by calling for lions to be placed on Appendix I of the United Nations Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species (CITES) at its forthcoming meeting in South Africa later this year, and to persuade its European Union and African range State partners to do likewise.

Finally, we call on the British Government to take action through its Commonwealth partners, development programmes and international trade agreements to provide whatever scientific advice and resources are needed for African lion range states to implement dedicated and effective conservation measures for this iconic species.

We can no longer stand idly by and allow this magnificent animal to disappear on our watch.

Signed by

Dr Pieter Kat – LionAid

Christine Macsween FCMA, FRSA – LionAid

Melody Lee-Gattenby – LionAid

Virginia McKenna OBE – Born Free

Will Travers OBE – Born Free

Dominic Dyer – Born Free

Mark Jones – Born Free

Brian da Cal – Four Paws

Cordelia Britton – Four Paws

Philip Mansbridge – IFAW

Jordi Casamitjana – IFAW

Adam Sugalski – One Protest

Marc Abraham BVM&S MRCVS – PupAid

Brigitte Bardot – President Fondation Brigitte Bardot

Catherine Bearder MEP Liberal Democrat

Jilly Cooper OBE – Author

James Cosmo – Actor

Peter Egan – Actor

Lady Annabel Goldsmith

Professor Stephen Hawking CH, CBE, FRS, FRSA

Greg Hunt MP – Minister Environment Australia

David Jones MP Conservative

Diane Keen – Actress

Jean Lambert MEP Green

Raymond J Lesniak New Jersey State Senator

Joanna Lumley OBE – Actress

Dr Brian May CBE – Founder, Save Me Trust

Kerry McCarthy MP Labour

Stephen McIntosh – Actor

Ian Michler – Lion conservationist

Paul O’Grady – Actor

John Rendall – Lion conservationist

Kevin Richardson – Lion conservationist

Rumer – singer/songwriter

Dr Dame Daphne Sheldrick DBE, MBS, Founder David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust