

Reference: Law/UNE-2020-00443/AK/MSM

1 April 2020

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for your message of 10 February 2020 and the attached open letter of the same date, which you updated on 11 and 25 February 2020. In the open letter, representatives of 235 organizations urge the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Director General of the World Health Organization and the Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health “to strongly encourage governments across the world to introduce and enforce legislation to close wildlife markets, particularly those at which trade in live animals is commonplace, and to introduce mechanisms designed to significantly and demonstrably reduce demand for live wild animals and products derived from them.” You also urge our organizations “to commit to working with Governments across the world, with the aim of ending the exploitation of wild animals for trade, closing markets that trade in wild animals, and reducing the commercial demand for live animals for food and other purposes, including from specimens that have been bred in captivity.”

UNEP thanks you for your continued commitment to protecting wild animals and their ecosystems. Biodiversity is under threat like never before in history, and UNEP supports concerted actions of all stakeholders to curb this loss.

The trade in wild animals from species that are not threatened with extinction, when conducted legally and sustainably (in accordance with national legislation, including provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora where appropriate), can positively contribute to the conservation of both species and their habitats, and provides a source of livelihood for many indigenous peoples and communities. However, such trade should be subject to rigorous health regulations and standards, to minimize the risk of emergence of new zoonotic diseases, among others. If the trade allowed by international and national laws is shut down, there is a significant risk of that activity being driven underground, making it extremely difficult to control and regulate, depriving rural communities of their livelihoods and increasing the sanitary risks that the suggested measures are trying to mitigate.

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UNEP renews its commitment to the adoption of multilateral solutions to global problems. UNEP supports multilateral environmental agreements and governments in the regulation of legal trade in wildlife, and the prevention, detection and penalization of illegal trade in all wildlife products and in markets commercializing products obtained from illegal sources

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arnold Kreilhuber', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Arnold Kreilhuber
Acting Director

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