FAITH STATEMENTS ON WILDLIFE TRADE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN FAITH LEADERS

Christian:

We know from the Bible and from our belief in God as Creator (*Genesis,* Chapters 1, 2, 9) that all life on Earth has been created in love and that God values and delights in every aspect of His Creation (*Job,* Chapters 38-40). We also know that Adam was given responsibility to name all the creatures (*Genesis,* Chapter 2: 18-20) and therefore to have a special protective relationship with them. In the covenant with Noah and all human descendants, God promised not only to protect humanity but also "everything that flies in the sky, crawls or walks upon the Earth and swims in the seas". We therefore believe and know that it is part of our divine responsibility to ensure that our side of the covenant is kept and that all creatures are protected.

When we look with eyes of faith at the wonders of all that God has created: at the strength of the lion, the beauty of the gazelle, the swirling patterns of the birds of the air and the fish in the waters. When we see the flowers of the field greater in their beauty than even Solomon in all his riches, we should rejoice that God has placed us in the midst of such a glorious world. Therefore, when we see this glory diminished by our sin, greed and foolishness, we should he horrified and speak out against this wanton destruction of the wonder that God has created. We should both repent and seek to do all in our power to protect all that God has created.

In the light of this, our faith, we call upon all Christians, but especially those of our tradition, to protect the gifts of God in nature. In particular, in this time of deep crisis of creation, caused by human folly and sin, we ask all Christians to protect and defend our most endangered species in Africa, such as the rhinoceros, gorillas and the elephant.

As Christians we can defend these fellow creations of God through preventing poaching, refusing to participate in any illegal trade and in bringing to justice, both human and divine, those who seek to destroy that which we know God loves.

Signed,

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