

**ROUND TABLE ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN AND
POACHING OF ENDANGERED SPECIES
(PARIS, 5 DECEMBER 2013)**

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Excellencies Heads of State, Government and Delegation,

On behalf of the delegation accompanying me and on my personal behalf, I would like to hail the positive initiative taken by France to organize a special meeting on endangered species, particularly elephants, on the sidelines of the Summit. The threat posed to elephants by heavily armed and well-trained poachers also jeopardizes peace and security in the regions where they operate. To effectively combat them, it is necessary to adopt concerted action. Such are the expectations of this meeting.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, my country suffered repeated assaults by poachers recently. We have not forgotten the sad display of elephants slaughtered at Bouba Ndjidda by these heavily armed and well trained lawless men, as I have said, attracted by ivory.

To address this situation which reached its climax in early 2012, I took a number of measures at national level, and others in consultation with neighbouring countries which also suffer from this scourge.

At national level, we have taken vigorous actions in favour of national parks and protected areas in general. Accordingly, we have decided to:

- deploy specialized defence forces in the Bouba Ndjidda area;
- increase the number of eco-guards;
- purchase ultra-light aircraft for aerial surveillance of protected areas;

These measures have helped to curb the phenomenon, sending poachers far away from our borders.

I have also prescribed the implementation of stringent measures, including a five-year contingency plan to secure protected areas, with special emphasis on the protection of elephants, on the one hand, and to equip and manage conservation areas, on the other.

To combat cross-border poaching, we signed the following agreements with neighbouring countries:

- The Sangha Tri-National Cooperation Agreement, for protected areas between Cameroon, CAR and Congo;
- The so-called Tridom Cooperation Agreement, for protected areas between Cameroon, Congo and Gabon, and;
- The Tri-National Anti-Poaching Agreement between Cameroon, CAR and Chad.

Recently, Yaounde hosted a meeting of the Ministers in charge of Wildlife of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. It should be noted that this meeting was convened to adopt an Extreme Emergency Anti-poaching Plan (PEXULAB) in the sub-region.

Besides this meeting, we embarked on other cross-border biodiversity conservation activities with Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea.

Given the seriousness and importance of this issue, we deem it urgent to include a specific anti-poaching item on the agenda of the next ECCAS meeting.

Excellences Heads of State, Government and Delegation,

To be effective and sustainable, these actions must be backed by the international community. Such support may take several forms, three of which are a priority:

- Building the capacities of anti-poaching frontline States (training, equipment and development of protected areas). The cost of such a programme, for Cameroon, is estimated at EUR 7 000 000;
- Financing Cameroon's National Protected Areas Emergency Securement Plan, estimated at EUR 192 000 000 for the period 2012-2017;
- Closing markets where ivory and its by-products are sold.

We hope that today's meeting marks the dawn of collective awareness in Europe and Africa. To this end, it must put forward proposals for concerted action to mobilize international public opinion to support this crusade in the interest of mankind.