



TAKING ELEPHANTS OUT OF THE ROOM INDABA ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY: AFRICA'S ROLE

BACKGROUND

The Organisers

This event will be dealing solely with issues relating to captive elephants and is being organised by the EMS Foundation (www.emsfoundation.org.za).

Why this Discussion? Why Now? Why Hermanus?

We have brought together a number of key experts, specifically in the area of elephants and elephants in captivity – they are from different disciplines, including scientists, ethologists, ecologists, lawyers and NGOs.

There is a convergence of issues coalescing around Africa, elephants in captivity and the issue of “appropriate destinations”. There is a need to connect all these dots into a coherent response.

In South Africa the government is in the process of crafting a national strategy on elephants (it's been 10 years since the Elephant Assessment) –captive elephants need to get back on the agenda.

There is also concern and questioning about the SADC ideological position of ‘sustainable use’ which is at the heart of their position on trade in live animals and their body parts. The panellists will also be unpacking this for us particularly in relation to the trade in young elephants to zoos overseas, i.e. The USA, China and Pakistan.

The CITES COP 18 meeting is currently taking place in Geneva. The Proposals and outcomes of that meeting have a direct impact on Africa's elephants and government policies in relation to them.

This event is being held in Hermanus because the Western Cape has the highest number of captive elephants in the country. Moreover, Craig Saunders (Tuli elephants) plans on opening up a captive elephant business in the Hermanus area and there is as a consequence much local and national discussion. In addition, Hermanus is known for the whales that frequent the area – this highlights the different and inconsistent position that South Africa has in relation to different species – in this case elephants and whales and its interpretation of ‘sustainable use’.



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The aim of the Event is to:

- Highlight *Who* elephants are
- Place the plight of captive elephants, including the methods of ‘training’ into the public consciousness.
- Share the findings of an updated review/audit of captive elephant facilities in South Africa
- Talk about the need to rehabilitate and re-wild and the framework and protocol developed in SA for this
- Highlight the capture and sale of young elephants from Zimbabwe and Namibian to zoos and circuses in China, Pakistan, etc.
- Probe the policy contexts including trade, sustainable use and the CITES “acceptable destinations” issue
- Look at legal interventions in relation to captive elephants.

Target Audience

The target audience for this Panel are the general public, academics working in the field of elephant behaviour), NGOs, provincial conservation departments, national government and the local and national media.

Outcomes

The intention is for the Panel to produce a summary statements and recommendations via a Chairperson’s Report. This will go to all the relevant Ministers and their departments in the SADC region and beyond, including CITES Secretariat and importing countries.

The aim is also to assist with the setting policy for elephant management in SADC countries.