



January 31, 2005

His Excellency The Hon. Mwai Kibaki C.C.H.; M.P.
President of the Republic of Kenya
Office of the President
Harambee House,
Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 8.5 million members and constituents of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) – the largest animal protection group in the world - which has long had an interest in Kenya and its natural heritage. Recently, I returned from Kenya with a delegation from The HSUS, and we had the privilege of visiting a number of your country's extraordinary natural areas, including Tsavo National Park, Lewa Downs, and the Maasai Mara. Our purpose was to examine a number of potential conservation and animal welfare projects, and to that end we met with conservation leaders and public officials throughout the country. We took particular interest in community-based programs where the benefits of wildlife programs are also beginning to benefit native peoples living on or near protected areas.

Prior to our visit, we closely tracked the progress of the legislation introduced last year in Parliament to reverse the long-standing ban on sport hunting in Kenya. We were most pleased that you rejected this ill-conceived legislation. By supporting a policy that has endured for more than a quarter century, you have preserved the special niche that Kenya occupies as one of the few nations with abundant wildlife populations where the creatures are protected from direct harm as a matter of government policy. In short, Kenya has an advantage over South Africa, Botswana, and other African nations in attracting wildlife-loving tourists because Kenya does not sanction the killing of her wildlife by trophy hunters. We hope to assist in highlighting Kenya's progressive wildlife policies and that the dissemination of this important information can play a decisive role in influencing tourists to include Kenya in their eco-tourism plans.

It was with considerable disappointment though that we have more recently learned of the government's plan to capture up to 300 wild animals in Kenya and transport them to a zoo in Thailand. If this plan is executed, it will not only threaten the animals who will be captured and exported to Thailand, but it threatens to damage Kenya's reputation as a wildlife friendly nation, undercutting decades of work in protecting wildlife and fostering the successful and renowned relationship between Kenya's natural heritage and her people.

There is no compelling social or conservation purpose for this capture and export plan. The capture of wild animals from their native habitat for transport to and exhibition in zoos is an increasingly discredited idea, principally because of the adverse effects on the welfare of the animals and the negative consequences to wild populations. Animals captured in the wild and

transported long distances experience severe stress and high mortality rates. At the end of the process, the animals are housed in a captive setting that cannot possibly reproduce the diverse and expansive environments that they evolved to survive in. This plan offers only risks for Kenya, and no rewards.

Mr. President, it is with the greatest respect that I ask you to table your plan to provide wild animals to Thailand. We are anxious to work with you, Dr. Julius Kipng'etich of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and other dedicated Kenyans on a range of conservation projects, so we can collectively assure that Kenya benefits from the presence of its wildlife populations. Preserving these populations is an economic and ethical imperative for the people of Kenya.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Pacelle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to its right.

Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO

WP/pag

cc: Dr. Julius Kipng'etich, Director, Kenya Wildlife Service