

Fourth Asian Elephant Range States Meeting Successfully Convened in Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Government representatives from the 13 Asian elephant range countries, members of the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), and of the Center for Species Survival: Asian Elephant (CSS Asian Elephant), convened for the Fourth Asian Elephant Range States Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from February 5–7, 2025. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Cambodia and facilitated by the AsESG, with funding support from the CSS Asian Elephant, a collaborative partnership between IUCN Species Survival Commission, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Wildlife Trust of India, and the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department of Odisha.

Over three days, the meeting included 14 technical sessions, bringing together participants to discuss key conservation challenges, exchange solutions, and explore collaborative strategies. The first day began with country presentations, where government representatives provided updates on the conservation status of elephants in their respective countries. This was followed by sessions that delved into critical issues such as elephant corridor management, habitat connectivity, minimising the impact of linear infrastructure, human-elephant conflict mitigation, and management of captive elephants.

Discussions also focused on the development of national elephant conservation action plans, enhancing transboundary collaboration, securing sustainable funding for conservation efforts, and harnessing technology to advance elephant conservation. Delegates examined best practices for conducting elephant population surveys, emphasising the use of modern technologies such as genetic databases, infrared cameras, drones, and AI to more effectively monitor and manage elephant populations. A dedicated

session on the Asian Elephant Database addressed the challenges faced by the range countries, particularly in data collection, sharing, and standardisation. Participants engaged in discussions on strengthening data-driven conservation, improving regional coordination, and supporting informed decision-making.

The meeting concluded with the launch of the 2025 Siem Reap Declaration for Asian Elephant Conservation, reaffirming the commitment of participating countries to continued regional collaboration. Expanding on the foundation of the 2022 Kathmandu Declaration for Asian Elephant Conservation, the updated 2025 declaration provides a comprehensive framework for range-wide conservation efforts, ensuring the long-term protection of wild elephant populations and their habitats across Asia.

The launching ceremony featured remarks from His Excellency Dr. Kim Nong, Undersecretary of State and Chair of the Technical Working Group on Elephants, Ministry of Environment, Government of Cambodia. He highlighted the significance of the Asian Elephant Range States Meeting as a platform for dialogue and collaboration in conserving this endangered species. He also shared the Government of Cambodia's vision and ongoing efforts to enhance the management and conservation of Asian elephants.

A comprehensive meeting report can be downloaded at [https://asesg.org/PDFfiles/2025/Fourth%20Asian%20Elephant%20Range%20States%20Meeting%20Report%20\(1\).pdf](https://asesg.org/PDFfiles/2025/Fourth%20Asian%20Elephant%20Range%20States%20Meeting%20Report%20(1).pdf). We are grateful to the Government of Cambodia for hosting this important meeting, and we thank AsESG members, in particular those from Cambodia, for helping to facilitate the meeting discussions.



***The Siem Reap Declaration
for Asian Elephant Conservation
Siem Reap, Cambodia
February 7, 2025***

We, the representatives of the government agencies from Asian Elephant Range States including the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, Kingdom of Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Malaysia, Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, declare our common goal to conserve the Asian Elephant within its Range States, and:

Recognizing that the Asian Elephant, a seriously endangered species and one of the most iconic animals, faces a challenging future with the loss of its habitat, fragmented populations, high levels of human-elephant conflict, illegal killing, as well as other factors that have resulted in population declines in some of the Range States, and that we should have a common vision to promote Asian Elephant conservation;

Acknowledging that the Asian Elephant is a keystone species and an umbrella species whose conservation helps ensure the conservation of myriads of other species. Asian Elephants are also culturally significant across Asia. A failure to protect Asian Elephants and their habitat will therefore not only result in the loss of elephants but also the loss of biological and cultural diversity and the tangible and intangible benefits provided by elephants and the ecosystems they inhabit;

Noting that while elephant conservation is primarily a national responsibility, there is an urgent need to synergize national actions with international cooperation amongst the Range States for the long-term conservation of Asian

Elephants. The reversal of the crisis facing Asian Elephants is additionally dependent upon political, financial, and technical support from the international community;

Understanding the role of international agreements on the conservation of biological diversity and protection of endangered species, including the Asian Elephant, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and to align with the global targets for 2030 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

Acknowledging the presence and support of other governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other supporters of Asian Elephant conservation;

Building upon the Declarations for Asian Elephant Conservation of the Asian Elephant Range States Meetings of 2017 and 2022;

Thus, we declare:

- To enhance cooperation between the 13 Range States both bilaterally and multilaterally, promoting transboundary conservation of the Asian Elephant, and sharing and learning to enhance national conservation measures;
- To promote coexistence by minimizing the negative impacts of humans on Asian Elephants and their habitats, address the root causes of human-elephant conflict, and develop long term solutions to minimize such conflict; engage with local communities to gain their participation in biodiversity

conservation and land-use planning; and provide sustainable and alternative livelihoods through financial support, technical guidance and support, and other measures;

- To ensure effective law enforcement across the species' range to prevent illegal killing of Asian Elephants and the illegal trade in live Asian Elephants, ivory and its derivatives, and other elephant body parts;
- To promote and ensure the welfare of captive elephants is maintained at all times;
- To strengthen international collaboration, coordination, cooperation and communication based on bilateral and multilateral agreements where relevant, involving specialized expertise from national and international organizations, including but not limited to AsESG, IUCN SSC, CITES, INTERPOL, CBD, CMS, UNEP, ASEAN-WEN, SAWEN, and UNODC;
- To set up through appropriate mechanisms an Asian Elephant Fund, accessible to Range States and Range State civil society, to promote conservation of the species and its habitat;
- To develop an appropriate data sharing mechanism among Range States;
- Commit to develop, where necessary, and where applicable implement National Asian Elephant Conservation Action Plans that include, but are not limited to, the priorities listed in the annex to this Declaration.

And call upon the international community to join us in addressing the challenges facing Asian Elephants and achieving a harmonious coexistence between humans and Asian Elephants.

Annex: Priority Commitments by 2030

(In order to align with Target 4 of the Global Biodiversity Framework)

- Promote the maintenance and connectivity of large Asian Elephant conservation landscapes where new permitted developmental activities such as linear infrastructures are elephant- and biodiversity-appropriate;
- Promote the development of national guidelines on wildlife friendly linear infrastructure, including elephant, based on those developed by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC and Connectivity Specialist Groups after Range States consultations;
- Develop bilateral transboundary agreements, protocols or understandings in relevant countries to ease movement of Elephants through appropriate corridors and transboundary protected areas;
- Collectively develop, where relevant, and coordinate captive Asian Elephant registration programs in relevant countries, based on scientific research including, where appropriate, microchipping and/or DNA-based systems, and ensure cross-border movements of captive Asian Elephants are in compliance with all national and international laws and regulations;
- Ensure that all Range States have a National Asian Elephant Conservation Action Plan;
- Promote, where applicable, the development of national guidelines on Human Asian Elephant Conflict mitigation based on those developed by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC after Range States consultations;
- The Range States support the development of a range-wide Asian Elephant Conservation Plan by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC;
- The Range States initiate the establishment of national Asian Elephant Databases where applicable, and with the technical support of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC develop a standardized data sharing mechanism for countries;
- The Range States jointly initiate the creation of an Asian Elephant Fund based on identified priority actions and assisted by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC;
- Build capacity of Range States towards the aforementioned actions as appropriate;
- Report on progress towards such actions at the stocktaking session to be held during the next Asian Elephant Range States Meeting.

DONE in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on the Seventh Day of February in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Five, in a single original copy in the English language.