

## Functions of the Group

For the benefit of our new Members, some of whom have asked me to enlighten them on the Terms of Reference of the AESG, I give below the list of what is expected of the Group:

- A. The distribution and numbers of all remaining Asian elephant populations should be known as accurately as possible.
- B. The pressures on all known populations should be assessed and monitored as far as possible by regard to the following indicators:
  - (i) Sufficiency of natural habitat. Is there enough? If so, at what rate, and in what is it being reduced? How serious is this for elephants? Is there, and of what type, man-induced competition for elephant-important resources?
  - (ii) Poaching for ivory. The existence and seriousness of this is to be investigated. Efforts should be made to acquire annual records for legal/illegal imports/exports/confiscations/sales of ivory from the Government agencies concerned.
  - (iii) Deaths and captures. Records should be acquired of exact numbers known to have been removed from the wild population annually through human agency and the reason given. Diseases and epidemics should be recorded.
  - (iv) Crop damage. This should be monitored and localities noted and its annual cost and seriousness assessed. Any deterrent activities (or lack of) by public or authorities should be recorded so that the Group can advise accordingly.

Additionally, there is now the distinct possibility of bringing in an element of ex-situ Conservation into Action Plans because such vast studies have been made on Captive Breeding. The availability of captive-bred animals in fair numbers will certainly reduce the demand for capture from the wild for timber extraction, logging and cultural uses. Sri Lanka is a case in point where the domesticated population has declined from 600 plus in 1969 to about 375 in 1981. The demand here is for use in temples, not so much in logging.