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21 November 2011

**To: Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo**  
**Re: Toronto Zoo Elephants**

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Elephant Taxon Advisory Group/Species Survival Plan® (TAG/SSP) wishes to thank the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo for the opportunity to provide information to you about one of our partners in elephant conservation, the Toronto Zoo.

AZA is comprised of caring, trusted experts committed to ensuring that elephants are part of the world's future. Through our conservation, education and research programs, elephants in our care play an essential role in the survival of the species in the wild. AZA advocates on behalf of elephants with a unified and consistent voice and collaborates with others committed to the long-term survival of elephants.

Toronto Zoo is an AZA accredited facility and a participant in the AZA Elephant TAG/SSP. A member of AZA since 1977, this facility's historical and current value to the Elephant TAG/SSP is great and its contribution to the global conservation effort for elephants is extraordinary. It is the Elephant TAG/SSP's expert opinion that Toronto Zoo has historically provided and continues to provide a significant benefit to *ex situ* and *in situ* elephant conservation in the following ways:

- The Toronto Zoo has managed a successful African elephant care program for nearly four decades and the Elephant TAG/SSP has historically benefitted and continues to benefit from partnering with such a successful program.
- The Toronto Zoo's elephant program has a history of meeting and/or exceeding AZA's Standards for Elephant Management and Care.
- The Toronto Zoo has a long history of cooperation with Elephant TAG/SSP-recommended transfers and breedings and has celebrated successful elephant births, a great contribution to the long-term sustainability of the Elephant TAG/SSP population.

The Toronto Zoo's association with AZA allows the Zoo to be a part of the Elephant TAG/SSP, a community of professional elephant managers and caretakers and an extensive network of scientific advisors – experts in the disciplines of welfare, nutrition, veterinary medicine, behavior, reproduction, population management, education and research. By relocating Toka, Thika and Iringa to an AZA accredited facility, you can rest assured that your elephants will continue to have the highest quality of care and access to the important network of AZA elephant care and welfare experts.

The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo should be very proud of its team of talented and dedicated elephant care professionals. The Toronto Zoo elephant curators, managers, caretakers and vets are, without question, the world's experts on Toka, Thika and Iringa given that they have cared for these elephants for most of their lives, and in Thika's case, for her entire life. They are, undoubtedly, in the best position to know and to recommend what is best for these three elephants.

The thoughtful and methodical process the Zoo team is using to evaluate and implement the transfer of the Toronto Zoo's elephants to a new home is appropriate and in line with the high standards expected of any professional elephant care facility working through the complex and multi-faceted process of relocating a herd of elephants. The Elephant TAG/SSP fully supports the systematic and careful process the Toronto Zoo team is using as they plan their elephant herd's future.

Since the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo meeting in May of 2011, the Elephant TAG/SSP has been working closely with the Toronto Zoo team to identify an AZA accredited facility to be the future home for your Zoo's three elephants. In addition, the Elephant TAG/SSP has been of service in helping to locate elephant crates and equipment that can be borrowed for training and transport and in identifying elephant experts who can help with the process of training and moving these elephants to their future home.

The AZA Elephant TAG/SSP and its expert Advisors continue to be available as needed to the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo and to the Toronto Zoo team as you all continue to evaluate the future of the Toronto Zoo's elephants. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Martha Fischer  
Chair, AZA Elephant TAG/SSP