

Notification to the Parties No. 20014/006
Annex

CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force Meeting

Nairobi, Kenya: 28 - 29 October 2013

**Strategies and proposed actions to combat poaching of
and illegal trade in rhinoceros**



Introduction

At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) adopted Decision 16.89, paragraph a), on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

16.89 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external funding, convene a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force consisting of representatives from Parties affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime partner organizations, EUROPOL and, as appropriate, other Parties and experts. The Task Force should develop strategies to improve international cooperation, taking into consideration ongoing initiatives [such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between South Africa and Viet Nam], and promote similar MoUs as appropriate;*

The Secretariat convened this CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 to 29 October 2013, in close cooperation with its partners in the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC)¹. The meeting brought together a variety of experts, and 52 representatives from 21 countries affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn (Botswana, Cambodia, China, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Malaysia,

¹ *ICWC comprises the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO).*

Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Viet Nam and Zambia).

Strategies and actions

As required in Decision 16.89, paragraph a), participants in the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting developed strategies and proposed actions to improve international cooperation and combat the growing trends in rhinoceros poaching and the associated illegal trade in rhinoceros horn. The strategies and proposed actions are listed below.

1. All Parties should:

- a) Implement programmes to build the capacity of national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement to target criminal groups involved in rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade through risk profiling, intelligence-driven investigations and other investigation techniques, as appropriate;
- b) Increase their use of existing forensic technology and seek resources for the collection and submission of samples from all seized rhinoceros horns to designated accredited forensic laboratories;
- c) Implement programmes to build the capacity of national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement to conduct anti-money laundering investigations and to identify suspicious transactions, to ensure that criminals do not benefit from the proceeds of their crimes, to uncover the criminals who are organizing the poaching and illegal trade, and to bring them before the courts;
- d) Implement measures that will facilitate contact between national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement and their designated national competent authority for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), for guidance on the tools and services provided by UNTOC that could be deployed to combat illegal rhinoceros horn trade (see <http://www.unodc.org/compauth/en/index.html>);
- e) Implement measures that will facilitate contacts between national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement and their designated national competent authority, to promote the use of formal requests for Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) to obtain evidence located in one country to assist in criminal investigations or proceedings in another country (see http://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Publications/Mutual_Legal_Assistance_Ebook_E.pdf);
- f) Raise awareness of the strategic and operational law enforcement Decisions on *Rhinoceroses* (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*) adopted at CITES CoP16 (Decisions 16.84 to 16.92), amongst all national law enforcement agencies, to facilitate the full implementation of these Decisions (see http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid16/16_84-92.php);
- g) Increasingly draw upon the comprehensive INTERPOL global databases on names of individuals, fingerprints, DNA, firearms, identification and travel documents, and in particular INTERPOL Notices, to combat transnational organized crime syndicates involved in rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade (see <http://www.interpol.org/> and <http://www.interpol.int/INTERPOL-expertise/Notices>);
- h) As appropriate, encourage national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement to engage with their INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) and apply to gain direct access to the INTERPOL I-24/7 global communication system and databases (see <http://www.interpol.int/INTERPOL-expertise/Data-exchange/I-24-7>). INTERPOL is focusing on extending access to its services beyond the NCB and out to frontline officers;
- i) Implement programmes to enhance awareness amongst judges and prosecutors of the serious nature and economic, social and environmental impacts of illegal trade in wildlife, in particular rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade;
- j) When appropriate, use bilateral agreements on mutual administrative assistance in Customs matters to facilitate investigations into illegal rhinoceros horn trade (see http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/~/_/media/DFAAF3B7943E4A53B12475C7CE54D8BD.ashx);

- k) Implement measures to monitor the activities of auction houses, auctioneers and the antiques trade, as appropriate, to prevent the illegal trade in rhinoceros horns;
- l) Develop a media strategy to ensure that, when a seizure of rhinoceros horn is made by a country, all relevant information is shared with the countries of origin, transit and destination of the seized specimens for follow-up investigations to be conducted, before information on the seizure is released to the media. The release of seizure information to the media should as far as possible be coordinated with the countries of origin, transit or destination that engage in follow-up investigations, to ensure that ongoing investigations are not jeopardized;
- m) Examine how new technology such as the e-RhODIS mobile application (see www.erhosis.co.za) can be used in support of efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade;
- n) Implement programmes to combat corruption (see: www.track.unodc.org);
- o) Encourage the use of tools and capacity building materials provided to the law enforcement community through the CITES Virtual College, as part of training interventions for national law enforcement authorities (see: <https://cites.unia.es/cites/>), in particular the “Training course for enforcement officers and information module for prosecutors and the judiciary” and the “Introduction to CITES for Customs” courses, as well as other law enforcement material such as the Wildlife Smuggling Concealment case study handbook, the Questioning Wildlife Smugglers handbook, the Arguments for Prosecutors of Environmental Crimes handbook and others; and
- p) As appropriate, engage with universities and academia to conduct analytical research on rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade, in support of the development of appropriate law enforcement responses.

2. All countries implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as a range, transit or destination State should:

- a) Consider the development of appropriate cooperation mechanisms to increase international cooperation, for example Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), and initiate targeted intelligence-driven bilateral, trilateral, subregional, regional or international operations when illegal rhinoceros horn trade routes and trends are identified;
- b) In accordance with relevant legislation regulating the exchange of information and national protocol, appoint a national focal point for matters related to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn to facilitate increased collaboration and timely communication. The focal point should be responsible for the facilitation of initial contacts between relevant enforcement agencies within his or her country, and the authorities from the requesting country, on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade. CITES Management Authorities are encouraged to engage with their national law enforcement agencies to identify a national focal point, and to provide their contact details to the CITES Secretariat by 28 February 2014. The CITES Secretariat will prepare a consolidated list of all focal points and make it available to the law enforcement community through the CITES Enforcement Authorities Forum, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, UNODC, WCO and other appropriate channels, such as Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs);
- c) Gather information and intelligence to identify the most wanted criminals implicated in illegal rhinoceros horn trade at the national level, and to target them through intelligence-led enforcement action;
- d) Identify the most prominent national ports of entry and exit used by criminal groups associated with rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade, and engage with port authorities to increase enforcement efforts at such ports;
- e) Engage with airport security companies, airlines, shipping companies and other relevant bodies operating at national ports of entry and exit to identify activities conducted by such companies that could support enforcement efforts, for example baggage screening;
- f) Continuously analyse all available data to identify changes in the *modus operandi* of organized crime groups involved in rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade, or changes in the illegal trade routes used for such trade, and adjust national law enforcement responses as required. Identified changes in *modus operandi* and illegal trade routes should also be brought to the attention of the CITES Secretariat,

to enable it to prepare CITES Alert Messages for distribution to the law enforcement community, to alert them with regard to new modus operandi and illegal trade routes in a timely manner;

- g) Implement legislation and enforcement controls to prevent horns that are part of legally acquired trophies from being used for purposes other than hunting trophies, and to ensure that these trophies remain in possession of their owners for the purpose indicated in the CITES export permit; and
 - h) Consider conducting study visits between countries when significant volumes or trends of illegal trade in rhinoceros horns between such countries are identified. The secondment of law enforcement officers to identified countries or regions should also be considered.
- 3. The Czech Republic, South Africa and Viet Nam should** take immediate action to increase their bilateral and trilateral cooperation, taking into consideration ongoing initiatives such as the MoU between South Africa and Viet Nam. Such efforts should ensure that exports of rhinoceros horns from South Africa to the Czech Republic are legal, and prevent the illegal re-export of horns from the Czech Republic to Viet Nam.

4. The CITES Secretariat should:

- a) Maintain close contact with UNODC as it works towards the creation of Transnational Organized Crime Units, in order to promote the inclusion of activities aimed at combatting wildlife crime within the framework of activities to be conducted by these units;
- b) Explore possibilities for the wider distribution of WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) Alerts on rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade amongst all authorities responsible for the investigation of these crimes;
- c) Work with WCO to explore the development of a CITES seizure notification system; and
- d) Prepare and distribute a directory of WEN focal points, to facilitate increased collaboration at the subregional, regional and international levels.

Implementation of strategies and actions

All Parties and the Secretariat are requested to report on progress in the implementation of the above strategies and proposed actions at the 65th and 66th meetings of the CITES Standing Committee (scheduled for July 2014 and September 2015, respectively).