

REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP 15) CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN TIGERS AND OTHER
APPENDIX-I ASIAN BIG CAT SPECIES

Background:

1. The Government of India is seized up with the challenges facing tiger conservation, and has taken many initiatives in an ongoing manner to save the tiger. However, the status of tiger continues to be endangered, and the Government of India is providing assistance to the 17 tiger States under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger for tiger conservation in designated tiger reserves. Besides, several milestone initiatives have also been taken to strengthen tiger conservation based on the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force, which was constituted by the National Board for Wildlife, in the wake of tigers getting locally extinct in Sariska.

2. As per the findings of the first All India Tiger Estimation in 2008, using the refined scientific methodology of double sampling, the total country level population of tiger was 1411 (mid-value) the lower and the upper limits being 1165 and 1657 respectively. These new findings were based on determining spatial occupancy of tigers and sampling such forests using camera traps in a statistical framework. This assessment is not comparable to the earlier total count using pug marks.

3. As per the findings of the 2nd All India Tiger Estimation in 2010, using the refined scientific methodology of double sampling, the total country level population of tiger is 1706 (mid-value) the lower and the upper limits being 1571 and 1875 respectively. The positive trends in tiger population estimates in source sites are encouraging. However, the area occupied by tigers outside protected areas has reduced marginally. This highlights the need for securing buffer and corridors for tiger to ensure gene flow across source sites. The tiger population, by and large, in tiger reserves and in some protected areas of the 17 tiger States are viable, while requiring ongoing conservation efforts.

4. The challenges facing tiger conservation, inter alia, include poaching, degradation of forest status outside tiger reserves and protected areas due to human pressure, livestock pressure, revenge killing and ecologically unsustainable land-uses.

5. The findings of the recent All India Tiger Estimation in the geographical information system domain have provided knowledge of the

status of existing source population of tiger and its habitat. This has enabled notification of core/critical tiger habitats apart from identifying sensitive corridors, State-wise.

8. Tiger mortality during the year 2010:

- (i) Total number of deaths : 53
- (ii) Inside tiger reserve : 29 (9 deaths due to poaching)
- (iii) Outside tiger reserve : 24 (16 deaths due to poaching)

Milestone initiatives taken for tiger conservation:

Legal steps

1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for providing enabling provisions for constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau.
2. Enhancement of punishment in cases of offence relating to a tiger reserve or its core area.

Administrative steps

3. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel / home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication / wireless facilities.
4. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with effect from 4.09.2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, inter alia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.
5. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from 6.6.2007 to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.
6. The revised Project Tiger guidelines have been issued to States for strengthening tiger conservation, which apart from ongoing activities, inter alia, include funding support to States for enhanced village relocation/rehabilitation package for people living in core or critical tiger habitats (from Rs. 1 lakh/family to Rs. 10 lakhs/family), rehabilitation/resettlement of communities involved in traditional hunting, mainstreaming livelihood and wildlife concerns in forests outside

tiger reserves and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.

7. A scientific methodology for estimating tiger (including co-predators, prey animals and assessment of habitat status) has been evolved and mainstreamed. The findings of this estimation/assessment are bench marks for future tiger conservation strategy.

8. India has 40 tiger reserves, spread over approximately 45000 sq.km. area. An area of 32578.78 sq. km. has been notified by 16 Tiger States (out of 17) as core or critical tiger habitat under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006 (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). The State of Bihar has taken a decision for notifying the core or critical tiger habitat (840 sq.km.).

9. The “in-principle” approval has been accorded by the National Tiger Conservation Authority for creation of five new tiger reserves, and the sites are: Kudremukh (Karnataka), Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh), Ratapani (Madhya Pradesh), Sunabeda (Orissa) and Mukundara Hills (including Darrah, Jawahar Sagar and Chambal Wildlife Sanctuaries) (Rajasthan). Besides, the States have been advised to send proposals for declaring the following areas as Tiger Reserves: (i) Bor (Maharashtra), (ii) Suhelwa (Uttar Pradesh), (iii) Nagzira-Navegaon (Maharashtra) and (iv) Satyamangalam (Tamil Nadu).

Financial steps

10. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger and Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

11. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China. The process is on for similar protocols with neighbouring Tiger Range Countries like Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

12. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

13. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big

cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Reintroduction of Tigers

14. As a part of active management to rebuild Sariska and Panna Tiger Reserves where tigers have become locally extinct, reintroduction of tigers / tigresses have been done.
15. Special advisories issued for in-situ build up of prey base and tiger population through active management in tiger reserves having low population status of tiger and its prey.

Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF)

16. The policy initiatives announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 29.2.2008, interalia, contains action points relating to tiger protection. Based on the one time grant of Rs. 50.00 crore provided to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for raising, arming and deploying a Special Tiger Protection Force, the proposal for the said force has been approved by the competent authority for 13 tiger reserves. Since then, the guidelines of the STPF have been revised for deploying forest personnel in place of Police as an option-II, with scope for involving local people.
17. In collaboration with TRAFFIC-INDIA, an online tiger mortality/ crime data base (www.tigernet.nic.in) has been launched, and Generic Guidelines for preparation of reserve specific Security Plan has been evolved.

Recent initiatives

1. Implementing a tripartite MOU with tiger States, linked to fund flows for effective implementation of tiger conservation initiatives.
2. Rapid assessment of tiger reserves done.
3. Special crack teams sent to tiger reserves affected by left wing extremism and low population status of tiger and its prey.
4. Chief Ministers of tiger States addressed at the level of the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests on urgent issues, viz. implementation of the tripartite MOU, creation of the Tiger Conservation Foundation, stepping up protection etc.
5. Chief Ministers of States having tiger reserves affected by left wing extremism and low population status of tiger and its prey addressed for taking special initiatives.
6. Steps taken for modernizing the infrastructure and field protection, besides launching 'M-STripes' for effective field patrolling and monitoring.
7. Steps taken for involvement of Non-Governmental Experts in the ongoing all India tiger estimation.

8. Initiatives taken for improving the field delivery through capacity building of field officials, apart from providing incentives.
9. Steps taken for the independent Monitoring and Evaluation of tiger reserves.
10. Action initiated for using Information Technology to strengthen surveillance in tiger reserves.
11. Providing special assistance for mitigation of human-tiger conflicts in problematic areas.
12. As an outcome of the fourth Trans-border Consultative Group Meeting held in New Delhi, a joint resolution has been signed with Nepal for biodiversity / tiger conservation.
13. An Indian Delegation visited China (April, 2011) to strengthen bilateral cooperation on tiger conservation.
14. A 'Sub-Group' for cooperation on tiger and leopard conservation has been constituted with Russia.
15. India strongly supported creation of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN).
