

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

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TIGER UPDATE BY GLOBAL TIGER FORUM (GTF) – MAY 2007

The attached information document has been prepared by the Global Tiger Forum and is submitted by the CITES Secretariat.

**TIGER UPDATE BY GLOBAL TIGER FORUM (GTF) – MAY 2007**  
**(including the outcome of International Tiger Symposium, organized by**  
**GTF at Kathmandu, Nepal, between 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007).**

An International Tiger Symposium was organized by Global Tiger Forum with the support of the host country Nepal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April 2007, to make an assessment of the tiger conservation scenario in the wild world over. The meeting was attended by 40 national delegates coming from 12 tiger range countries, 30 International NGOs and 30 National NGOs.

The Symposium took stock of the global tiger conservation on seven major issues and observed that:

- There is an overall declining trend in the wild tiger population, with only 4 countries reporting stable tiger population and one with peripheral increase. North Korea may still have some visiting tigers, but there is no confirmed evidence of the presence of South-China tiger in the wild.
- Shrinkage and quality degradation of habitat still remain as major threats to tiger with vanishing corridors and declining preybase in many countries, along with continuing threat of poaching and illegal trade.
- Effective documentation of poaching and illegal trade is still inadequate. Intra-country coordination on enforcement and inter-country understanding for regional cooperation are required to be improved.
- Tiger-human conflict is increasing in many States, especially where tiger population is stable, causing lack of public support for tiger conservation. Effective and quick mitigation measures are required to address the same.
- Updated (post 2000) prioritized and costed Tiger Action Plan is still not in position in many countries, which is an urgent need.
- There is a need for some transboundary tiger conservation protocols/programmes and follow up action for existing protocols to enhance the conservation of shared tiger population along national borders.
- The Global Tiger Forum can play the unique role in addressing the multiple issues linked to wild tiger conservation including livelihood aspects of local population, to ensure the future of wild tiger world over.

It may be mentioned here that in the 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of GTF held at Dhaka, Bangladesh, in January 2000, the Forum identified four key issues effecting the future of tigers:

- a. the loss and degradation of habitat,
- b. the reduction of the prey base,
- c. poaching and illegal trade,
- d. reconciling human development needs and tiger conservation.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of GTF held at New Delhi, India, in November 2001, the Forum adopted a Resolution GA.2.01.1-CONF: "Restrictions on captive breeding of tigers for commercial purposes", opposing any move to legitimize trade in captive bred specimens, parts and derivatives of tigers except those involving exchange, gifts or making available live specimens between institutions that are recognized by the World Zoo Organization. It also urged the CITES Standing Committee to fulfill decision 11.81, review and assess the quantum of illegal trade and position of stockpiles in all Range States and major consumer countries.

In the Hanoi Declaration adopted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of GTF held in November 2004 at Vietnam, it was observed that wild tigers all over the world are highly endangered. In spite of efforts by National Governments both individually and through multilateral agreements such as CITES and through organizations such as IUCN over the last 30 years, the tiger still remains highly threatened. Habitat degradation, declining preybase, ongoing international illegal trade in tiger, its parts and derivatives and lack of public support for conservation still remains as major issues threatening the future of tiger.

It will thus appear that all threats to tiger as identified in the earlier General Assemblies of GTF still remain valid.

While the CITES Secretariat has carried out significant review regarding tiger trade, but the exact quantum of illegal trade in tiger and position of stockpiles currently, is not forthcoming from all the Range States. It is expected that the 14<sup>th</sup> CoP of CITES will take stock of the implementation of the resolution of Conference 12.5 covering all the tiger Range States including the key consumer countries and would come out with suggestions regarding general and/or country specific measures to improve the conservation of Asian big cats including tiger, to reduce illicit trade of this species.

The recommendations of the International Tiger Symposium including gist of assessment on various topics under seven sessions are attached for information.

## International Tiger Symposium: Recommendations

**Introduction:** All of these are matters arising from the International Tiger Symposium, 16-18 April 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal, under the auspices of the Global Tiger Forum, and hosted by the government of Nepal. These recommendations are prepared by the Chair of the Symposium, Dr Susan Lieberman (WWF International). Several recommendations are general, directed at tiger range states, non-range states, international NGOs, and other partners and stakeholders. Those recommendations that are specific to the Global Tiger Forum for action are in **bold typeface**. A summary of each session follows these recommendations. All presenters and participants were thanked and acknowledged for their excellent presentations, discussions, and contributions. The recommendations were submitted to the Symposium participants in a final session; no objections were raised to these recommendations, and it was agreed to forward them to the Global Tiger Forum.

### Session I: Distribution and population of tigers in various countries, and trends

- **The GTF should recommend that methods of tiger estimation and presentation of results should be standardized—by the end of 2008 if possible.**
- It is important to standardize methods, but they must be adapted to different habitats, ecological conditions, and prerequisites of each range country.
- Stratified monitoring with indicators sampled over an entire area and calibration areas with quantitative methods (e.g. camera trapping) are recommended.

### Session II: Threats to tiger habitats, corridors, and prey base

- More stress is required to be given on protection and development of the habitat, and improvement of tigers' prey base
- In all tiger conservation work, there must be a balance between sustainable development, conservation, and protection, and due consideration of human livelihood issues.
- There must be good consideration of habitat fragmentation, and the management of habitat outside of protected areas.

### Session III: Threats from poaching and illegal trade in tigers, and their parts and derivatives

- **GTF should establish an effective information sharing system for range countries and others concerned with tiger conservation to share up-to-date information on poaching and seizure cases, legal measures taken and on innovative approaches to tackle illegal trade.**
- **GTF should encourage tiger range states outside the ASEAN region to consider developing similar approaches to regional cooperation to those employed through ASEAN-WEN.**
- **GTF should seek funds, working with the CITES Secretariat, to convene a workshop of tiger range countries (particularly enforcement officers), and others with appropriate expertise, to share knowledge, resources, materials and skills related to enforcement of tiger trade controls.**
- **GTF should provide a formal response to China's request for input to its review of its current domestic trade policy.**

#### **Session IV: Human/Tiger Conflict**

- Human/tiger conflict is increasing, and mitigation plans are necessary to address the root causes
- Governments should implement integrated conflict mitigation strategies.
- If countries wish to use capture and translocation of problem tigers, that must be done with careful monitoring, planning, and tracking
- Voluntary relocation of human communities from core tiger habitat areas has been effective in some countries, and is encouraged when appropriate
- Compensation schemes should be simplified, and payments expedited
- **GTF should be asked to help countries explore alternative compensation and insurance schemes.**
- **GTF should be asked to assemble available reviews of various compensation and insurance schemes, to assist range states in their planning and implementation efforts.**

#### **Session V: Updated and costed tiger action plans**

- **Countries who have not updated and prioritized their costed tiger action plans are urged to do so, by the end of 2008 (GTF should work to assist them to do so).**
- Countries are asked to reconsider their action planning—and in particular to reconsider and update any plans that are more than 5 years old

#### **Session VI: Trans-boundary Tiger Conservation Protocols and Programs**

- It is very important that range states with trans-boundary tiger populations increase collaboration to jointly design and implement trans-boundary conservation plans.
- Range countries should share information about the nature of their signed bilateral or trilateral protocols and agreements.
- Trans-boundary conservation activities should be included in country action plans
- Any other potential areas for trans-boundary cooperation in the future should be explored.
- It is recommended that governments to harmonize the census period between range countries sharing a common border, in order to avoid duplication.

#### **Session VII: Towards a global coalition between tiger range states, non-range states, NGOs, and donors**

- Local, national, regional and global cooperation is essential if tigers are to be conserved.
- **GTF should work in partnership with other leading players (treaties, etc.) to promote tiger conservation via its unique role as champion of the tiger.**
- Long-term commitment is needed – sustained funding and expertise are needed to deliver benefits to local populations, tigers and their habitats; and local communities and livelihoods should always be fully considered
- Delivery of tiger conservation requires a proper scientific base upon which to build, and a stepped up, staged approach to achieve common goals;
- **GTF should work with the IUCN (SSC and Cat Specialist Group) to convene an international workshop to develop a global tiger conservation strategy in a participatory process, involving range countries and other stakeholders—non-range states, international and national NGOs, and local communities as appropriate and feasible.**

## **Session I: Distribution and population of tiger in various countries and trend thereof**

**Lead presentation:** Dr Sybille Klenzendorf, WWF US: *Current tiger status and importance of regional cooperation.*

Session Chair: Dr Urs Breitenmoser, Chair, IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group

### **Reports and comments by the range countries**

*Bangladesh:* 1 population (Sundarbans), 440 tigers estimated in 2005 at a density of 14–17 km<sup>2</sup>/individual. Increasing trend.

*Bhutan:* No figures presented as no comprehensive assessment since 1998. Tiger observations at higher altitudes. Management interventions for the improvement of the carrying capacity for tiger populations are considered.

*China:* North China (*altaica*), 18–22; south-central China (*amoyensis*), no confirmed presence; Tibet Autonomous Region (*tigris*), 8–12; southern China (*corbettii*), 11–15; total 37–50. Improvement of habitat for tiger is very important, but difficult and expensive. Population decreasing.

*India:* 28 tiger reserves. Census 2001 revealed about 3750 tigers. Newest census (2006) included various methods, results will be published by end of 2007. Recent evaluation included tiger habitat assessment for all reserves. Tiger populations in some increasing, in some stable and in some decreasing. Study indicates declining trend.

*Indonesia:* PHVA in 1992 revealed 400 tigers in total, of which 100 are outside protected areas. A newer assessment by WCS included camera trapping and habitat assessment in pockets, but does not provide a comprehensive picture for the whole country.

*Lao People's Democratic Republic:* Working closely with NGOs (WCS). New assessments have so far confirmed the presence of tigers in 7 out of 17 earlier identified biodiversity landscapes.

*Malaysia:* 1993 estimation 500 tigers in area of 27,000 km<sup>2</sup>. 20 years ago, the estimation was 1000 tigers in the whole country. Action plan has been implemented aiming to increase population to 1000 specimens within 10 years.

*Myanmar:* 2001/02 estimation: 140 tigers (*tigris* and *corbettii*). 2006/07 assessment: 350 tigers. Increase may however be due to underestimation in earlier assessment.

*Nepal:* Repeated assessments: 1999/2000, 340–350 tigers; 2005, 350–370; 2006, 350–370. Estimation methods included camera trapping over past 3 years. 35 tigers discovered killed in past 7 years. Population stable.

*Russian Federation:* 2005 assessment: 428–502 tigers (*altaica*). Density estimation 1.5 tigers/100 km<sup>2</sup>. Population split in two. Prey base stable in DCL1, but decreasing in DCL2 in period 1990–2005. Population stable.

*Thailand:* Camera trapping over past 3 years revealed 120 tigers in western forest complex, with a density of 1.5–2.6 ind/100 km<sup>2</sup>. Population may be on decline.

*Viet Nam:* Tiger estimation 2004/05 not more than 100 along border with the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia. Recent action plan on threatened species 2005–2010 implemented. Population declining.

*Discussion and conclusions:* Standardised methods of tiger estimation and presentation of results by 2008 would be welcome. Standardisation of methods is important, but must be adapted to habitats and prerequisites of each range country. Stratified monitoring with indicators sampled over entire area and calibration areas with quantitative methods (e.g. camera trapping) recommended.

## **Session II: Threats to tiger habitats, corridors, and prey base**

**Lead presentation:** Dr YV Jhala and Q. Quereshi, Wildlife Institute of India/India: Monitoring and Evaluating Tiger Population and Habitat.

Session Chair: Dr RB Lal, India

One key issue in the presentation was that Indian tiger habitat has been reduced by 30% in 100 years, at the district level. The field survey of tigers, its habitat and major preybase in selected areas of India, have been completed. The paper outlined the analytical methodology; the entire report with tiger populations for India, is expected by December 2007.

Bangladesh inquired if the approach adopted by India is applicable for the Sundarbans. The presenter clarified that in the broad scientific aspect it is, but India is developing a separate protocol for the Sundarbans.

Nepal noted that threats to tiger habitats include: 1) shrinkage outside protected areas; 2) invasion by *Mikania* spp; 3) grazing in corridor and buffer areas. There has been a 40% reduction of habitat in the last 10 years.

The main threats to tigers and their habitats in the Russian Federation are: 1) illegal trade; 2) illegal logging; 3) forest fires; and 4) hunting of prey base in buffer zones.

### **Recommendations:**

- More stress is required to be given on protection and development of the habitat, and improvement of tigers' prey base
- In all tiger conservation work, there must be a balance between sustainable development, conservation, and protection, and due consideration of human livelihood issues.
- There must be good consideration of habitat fragmentation, and the management of habitat outside of protected areas.

## **Session III: Threats from poaching and illegal trade in tigers, and their parts and derivatives**

**Lead presentation:** Kristen Nowell, TRAFFIC International: *Conservation of and trade in Asian big cats: Implementation of CITES Resolution 12.5 and Recommendations of the CITES Tiger Missions—an analysis of progress*".

### **Other presentations:**

- Andrea Heyldauff, Wildlife Conservation Society (delivered in session I): *Mitigating poaching related threats to tiger populations through a new model of in-situ conservation*
- Belinda Wright, Wildlife Protection Society of India: *The threat from poaching and the illegal trade in tiger parts, and action taken/required to combat the problem.*
- Debbie Banks, Environmental Investigation Agency: *The Role of Transnational Organised Crime*
- Jia Qian, Research Group on Endangered Species Conservation for Public Health, China Scientific and Technological Information Institute: *New Policy Needed for Tiger Conservation.*
- Grace Gabriel, IFAW: *Farming tigers to Extinction*
- Judy Mills, Save the Tiger Fund/CATT: *It takes a village to stop tiger trade*
- Dr Susan Lieberman, WWF International: *CITES and Tiger Trade: Past, Present, and Future*

Session Chair: Steven Broad, TRAFFIC International

There was a lively discussion, with numerous interventions. A summary of the discussion follows:

Along with habitat loss and lack of prey, poaching remains a significant concern in most range states. The main driving forces of poaching are conflict between people and tigers at a local level and the trade in tiger parts. The international policy response has been to ban international and domestic trade in tigers and tiger products through CITES and national laws. However the effectiveness of this approach depends on the extent to which countries are willing and able to employ effective law enforcement measures.

Noting its historical role as a major consumer of tiger products, participants commended China for its enactment of a domestic trade ban in 1993 and its dedicated enforcement efforts since that time. Overall this was seen to have been a significant contribution to conservation of wild tigers.

The meeting heard that China is reviewing a possible change in domestic trade policy to allow trade in tiger products from captive production. Proponents of such a change within China have suggested that such supply might reduce pressure on wild tiger populations. However, many participants expressed serious concerns that such a policy change might have the effect of increasing, rather than decreasing the incentives for poaching of wild tigers and the opportunities for illegal trade. Nevertheless, participants expressed appreciation to China for raising this policy question in open debate in an international forum recognising that its implications stretch beyond the boundaries of any single country.

On enforcement, participants encouraged greater effort, better cooperation between countries and greater emphasis on intelligence-led enforcement action. They noted encouraging examples of effective enforcement approaches in a number of range states and models for international enforcement cooperation such as the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN).

#### **Recommendations:**

- **GTF should establish an effective information sharing system for range countries and others concerned with tiger conservation to share up-to-date information on poaching and seizure cases, legal measures taken and on innovative approaches to tackle illegal trade.**
- **GTF should encourage tiger range states outside the ASEAN region to consider developing similar approaches to regional cooperation to those employed through ASEAN-WEN.**
- **GTF should seek funds, working with the CITES Secretariat, to convene a workshop of tiger range countries (particularly enforcement officers), and others with appropriate expertise, to share knowledge, resources, materials and skills related to enforcement of tiger trade controls.**
- **GTF should provide a formal response to China's request for input to its review of its current domestic trade policy.**

#### **Session IV: Human/Tiger Conflict**

**Lead presentation:** Dr Bivash Pandav, WWF International: *Tiger-human conflict*

**Other presentations:**

- Shiv Raj Bhatia, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal: *Tiger-human conflict*
- Sunarto Sunarto, WWF Indonesia: *Mitigation of tiger-human conflict in Sumatra*

Session Chair: Mr M.M. Sultan Mahmud, Bangladesh

The lead paper indicated that human-tiger conflict is not new; that Bangladesh, India, and Nepal have protected their habitat better than other neighboring countries, and effective mitigation strategies are necessary. The causes of human/tiger conflicts are: encroachment and fragmentation of habitat; declining prey base, intrusion by humans, and pressure from grazing, logging, and resource exploitation.

The second paper highlighted that for Nepal, there have been cases of humans being killed, and tigers being killed, and Nepal is making great efforts to expand the buffer zone.

The paper on Indonesia indicted that: there has been significant habitat loss in the last 10 years; humans are being killed; and there have been 5 captured problem tigers returned back to the wild. Integrated human/wildlife conflict mitigation strategies are critical.

China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam noted that human/tiger conflict is a problem in their countries.

Several suggestions were offered in terms of mitigation. It was discussed by several participants that data on conflict (and mortalities) are important as indicators, and much more work is needed to mitigate conflict, and assess compensation schemes.

### **Recommendations:**

- Human/tiger conflict is increasing, and mitigation plans are necessary to address the root causes
- Governments should implement integrated conflict mitigation strategies.
- If countries wish to use capture and translocation of problem tigers, that must be done with careful monitoring, planning, and tracking
- Voluntary relocation of human communities from core tiger habitat areas has been effective in some countries, and is encouraged when appropriate
- Compensation schemes should be simplified, and payments expedited
- **GTF should be asked to help countries explore alternative compensation and insurance schemes.**
- **GTF should be asked to assemble available reviews of various compensation and insurance schemes, to assist range states in their planning and implementation efforts.**

### **Session V: Updated and costed tiger action plans**

**Lead presentation:** Vivek Manon, International Fund for Animal Welfare/Wildlife Trust of India: *Costed Tiger Action Plans*.

**Other paper:** Mr Jhamak Karki, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal: *Costed Tiger Action Plan of Nepal*.

Session Chair: Mr K.C. Poudel, Nepal

The lead paper summarized all the 10 out of 14 National Tiger Action Plans whose copy was deposited to the GTF Secretariat. Except India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, all the remaining tiger range states have prepared/ implemented the plans in some or other forms. China has incorporated its tiger

action plans into its broader national forestry plan. India reported it will provide details of its action plan at later dates. Myanmar prepared its plan in 2003. Malaysia has been implementing their plan. Phoenix (an NGO working on tiger conservation in the Russian Far East ) reported that no action plan has yet prepared by the Russian government. Most countries have indicated costs required to implement their plan for the period of 5-6 years whereas others have committed to put the cost in them later.

In overall the approach to the preparation and implementation of national tiger action plans was a welcoming one and encouraging towards taking initiatives for the tiger conservation.

Nepal presented its draft National Tiger Action Plan in details with a tentative cost of \$US 1.15 million for five years. The overall goal of the draft action plan is “to preserve, recognize, restore, and increase the effective land base that supports the Royal Bengal tiger in Nepal, in order to maintain a viable tiger population.” Five specific objectives are in the plan: Tiger and prey Information, habitat management, conflict resolution, anti-poaching and anti- trafficking operations and transboundary cooperation are proposed. The plan is now under government’s consideration for approval.

All the 12 country delegates took part in the discussion / interventions in a very constructive and responsible manner. The Chair informed all the participants that the copies of all the 10+1 tiger action plans are available from the GTF Secretariat.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Countries who have not updated and prioritized their costed tiger action plans are urged to do so, by the end of 2008 (GTF should work to assist them to do so).**
- Countries are asked to reconsider their action planning—and in particular to reconsider and update any plans that are more than 5 years old

#### **Session VI: Trans-boundary Tiger Conservation Protocols and Programs**

**Lead presentation:** S.C. Dey, GTF Secretary General: *Transboundary cooperation*

**Other presentation:**

- Dr Yury Darman, WWF Russia: *The Amur tiger on the Russia-China-North Korea border*
- Li Bing, WCS-China: *China-Russia border issues regarding tiger.*

Session Chair: Grace Gabriel, International Fund for Animal Welfare

There was excellent discussion on the benefits of trans-boundary bilateral and trilateral protocols and agreements, to enhance the conservation of shared tiger populations. The first presentation highlighted elements of these protocols and agreements, noting the signed bilateral resolutions/protocols between: India and China; China and Nepal; India and Nepal; and the Russian Federation and China. The second paper highlighted the distribution of the Amur tiger (*P.tigris altaica*) in the Russian Federation and China, with about 450 tigers in the Russian Federation, and very small populations in China. The paper highlighted that the number of tigers and their range in China has been increasing recently, due to a number of factors, including the long-term hunting ban, new protected areas, and enforcement efforts; with continued trans-boundary cooperation, these populations will continue to increase, in particular in China. The third paper highlighted the conservation of Amur tiger in North-East China along the Russian border and various steps taken to conserve it, with the observation that success will require persistence

commitment from the government, cooperation between Russian and Chinese government and support from local people and NGOs.

#### **Recommendations:**

- It is very important that range states with trans-boundary tiger populations increase collaboration to jointly design and implement trans-boundary conservation plans.
- Range countries should share information about the nature of their signed bilateral or trilateral protocols and agreements.
- Trans-boundary conservation activities should be included in country action plans
- Any other potential areas for trans-boundary cooperation in the future should be explored.
- It is recommended that governments to harmonize the census period between range countries sharing a common border, in order to avoid duplication.

#### **Session VII: Towards a global coalition between tiger range states, non-range states, NGOs, and donors**

**Lead presentation:** Hilary Thompson, UK Government (DEFRA)

#### **Other presentations:**

- Sarah Christie, Zoological Society of London: *Investments in tiger conservation 1998-2005, with particular reference to tackling the tiger trade.*
- Dr Urs Breitenmoser and Dr Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten, co-Chairs, IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group; Kristin Nowell, Red List Authority, IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group; DR Holly Dublin, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission: *Strategic Planning in Species Conservation*

Session Chair: Hilary Thomsson, UK Government (DEFRA)

This session focused on how tiger range states, non range states, NGOs and donors can work together to deliver a cohesive programme of tiger conservation. The presentations outlined the role of the Global Tiger Forum and how it could deliver more for tigers; the focus on funding for different aspects of tiger conservation and the importance of scientific information, appropriate planning and a long term common goal.

The second paper provided useful information on funding provided by NGOs, and where that funding is directed (by country, and by type of project). The third paper highlighted the process of species conservation planning, the need for careful strategic planning, and the necessary process. A good discussion ensued, and participants agreed that such a participatory planning process to develop a range-wide action plan (see last recommendation, below).

In discussion, concern was raised at the need to ensure that local livelihoods and poorer peoples' needs are taken into account. Funding should be targeted to programmes that integrate benefits to local populations with benefits to tigers and their habitats (as is already happening in many countries, and for many international donors). Donors need to consider how best their funds should be focused to deliver tiger conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Local, national, regional and global cooperation is essential if tigers are to be conserved.
- **GTF should work in partnership with other leading players (treaties, etc.) to promote tiger conservation via its unique role as champion of the tiger.**

- Long-term commitment is needed – sustained funding and expertise are needed to deliver benefits to local populations, tigers and their habitats; and local communities and sustainable livelihoods should always be fully considered
- Delivery of tiger conservation requires proper a scientific base upon which to build, and a stepped up, staged approach to achieve common goals;
- **GTF should work with the IUCN (SSC and Cat Specialist Group) to convene an international workshop to develop a global tiger conservation strategy in a participatory process, involving range countries and other stakeholders—non-range states, international and national NGOs, and local communities as appropriate and feasible.**