

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

Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

Illegal trade and enforcement

RHINOCEROSSES (RHINOCEROTIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties retained Decision 18.116 and adopted Decisions 19.115 to 19.122 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, as follows:

***Directed to Parties where illegal markets for rhinoceros horn exist***

**18.116** *Parties in which illegal markets for rhinoceros horn exist are encouraged to develop demand reduction programmes targeted at key identified audiences, taking into consideration the provisions in Resolution Conf. 17.4 (Rev. CoP19) on Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species and taking advantage of the experience and expertise developed in other jurisdictions and by other organizations. Parties are urged to close those markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade.*

***Directed to Parties***

**19.115** *Parties are encouraged to:*

- a) *scale up efforts to collect samples from rhinoceros horn seized within their territories for forensic analysis, as anticipated by paragraph 1 g) of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses;*
- b) *use the simplified procedures provided for under the Regarding the use of simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Permits and certificates for law enforcement purposes, to facilitate the exchange of rhinoceros horn samples for DNA analyses; and*
- c) *use the [Form for collection and sharing of data on rhinoceros horn seizures and on samples for forensic analysis](#) available in the Annex to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19), as appropriate, to facilitate exchange of information and samples for analyses.*

**19.116** *Parties are encouraged to:*

- a) *draw upon the [Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points](#) maintained by the CITES Secretariat, as may be needed, to facilitate contact between relevant agencies in different countries on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros specimen trade; and*
- b) *if included in the directory, immediately inform the Secretariat if the details of their national focal point should be updated.*

**Directed to Botswana and South Africa**

**19.117** Botswana and South Africa are encouraged to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.

**Directed to China, Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam**

**19.118** China (including Hong Kong SAR of China), Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam are encouraged to further strengthen their engagement, undertaking joint operations and further strengthening information and intelligence exchange, to build upon collaborative efforts, progress made and successes achieved, and further expand their collaboration to address illegal rhinoceros horn trade.

**Directed to Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates**

**19.119** Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are encouraged to scale up their collaboration with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting their territories, and to review their risk management practices, developing rhinoceros specific risk profiles targeting cargo, luggage and passengers from and destined to these Parties.

**Directed to the Secretariat**

**19.120** Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall:

- a) convene a follow up CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting consisting of representatives of national enforcement agencies, including those involved in combating organised crime from Parties affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens and, as appropriate, other Parties and experts to develop strategies to further strengthen responses to address rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros specimen trafficking, taking into consideration the key poaching and trafficking challenges and responses outlined in Annex 4 to document CoP19 Doc. 75, and the outcomes of the October 2013 CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting presented in the Annex to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/006 of 23 January 2014, and any other relevant matters; and
- b) report to the Standing Committee on the results of the Task Force meeting, together with any recommendations it may have.

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

**19.121** The Standing Committee shall consider the reports of the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 19.120 and 19.122 and make recommendations to the Parties and the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.

**Directed to the Secretariat**

**19.122** The Secretariat shall:

- a) examine the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 regarding measures to address the illegal killing of rhinoceros and trafficking of rhinoceros horn, and;
- b) report to the 77th and 78th meetings of the Standing Committee.

3. In Decision 19.122, the Conference of the Parties directs the Secretariat to examine the implementation of [Resolution Conf. 9.14 \(Rev. CoP19\) on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses](#) and Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 regarding measures to address the illegal killing of rhinoceros and trafficking of rhinoceros horn. The Secretariat is further directed to report on these matters to the present meeting and the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. To facilitate its reporting to the present meeting, in July 2023, the Secretariat wrote to Botswana, China [including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China], Malaysia, Mozambique, Qatar, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam.
5. In response, the Secretariat received reports from Botswana, China (including Hong Kong SAR of China), Qatar, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to thank these Parties for the reports submitted, which are compiled in the Annex to the present document, in the language and format they were received. The Secretariat notes that no replies to its letters were received from Malaysia, Mozambique and Viet Nam; however, Mozambique provided relevant information in its report on the implementation of the National Ivory and Rhinoceros Action Plan (NIRAP), see below.
6. The Parties' responses are summarized in paragraphs 7 to 39 below. Matters related to Malaysia, Mozambique and Viet Nam are addressed in paragraphs 40 to 46. The Secretariat provides its observations and conclusions in paragraphs 47 to 59. The Secretariat also addresses emerging issues of concern related to Angola and Namibia in paragraphs 60 to 62.

#### Botswana

7. Botswana reports on several matters, including measures implemented and activities undertaken since CoP19 to specifically strengthen its responses to address rhinoceros poaching.
8. The Party reports that addressing wildlife crime, including rhinoceros poaching, is primarily pursued through the implementation of a National Anti-Poaching Strategy (NAPS). The NAPS serves as a basis for inter-agency collaboration and facilitates joint work and efforts between wildlife authorities, military, police and intelligence agencies. After conclusion of the 2014-2019 NAPS, Botswana is drafting a new NAPS for 2023-2028. Government approval is currently pending and the NAPS 2023-2028 will be launched before the end of 2023. In accordance with the NAPS, work is in an advanced stage to incorporate customs and financial intelligence units in inter-agency activities to ensure that a "follow-the-money" principle is introduced to address illicit financial flows related to wildlife crimes. In the interim, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks is leading sectoral reviews regarding wildlife crime as part of a National Risk Assessment that seeks to address money laundering risks in Botswana. The Party also reports on expanded inter-agency committees established at national and district levels that meet weekly to share information and intelligence and plan and implement joint law enforcement operations.
9. Further, the Department of Public Prosecution of Botswana created and is currently strengthening a division dedicated to prosecuting wildlife crime related cases in order to increase the successful prosecution of wildlife crime cases.
10. To reinforce its anti-poaching efforts, Botswana increased the number of military troops deployed in regions where rhinoceros populations occur, including in private reserves and game farms. The number of troops doubled in at least three areas since CoP19. Police and the national intelligence agency engaged with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks to strengthen its efforts in fighting wildlife crime. The Party highlights that the significant increase in the number of personnel deployed daily to combat rhinoceros poaching contributed to improved security and facilitated the protection of areas where rhinoceroses occur.
11. The report also elaborates on work done to strengthen bilateral and regional collaborative relationships. Botswana is working with its neighbouring countries through a Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS) structure. In July 2023, a JPCDS meeting was held between Botswana and Zambia, during which measures were developed to better coordinate their anti-poaching activities. Botswana expects to convene similar meetings with Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe before the end of 2023.
12. Botswana reports that, since CoP19, several programmes have been supported to enhance the role of communities in the protection of rhinoceroses. A Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programme is being implemented across the country to ensure that communities benefit from wildlife resources and become the first line of defence for protecting these resources.
13. Botswana is also finalizing a National Rhino Management Strategy for the period 2023 to 2028 to serve as a guide on managing rhinoceroses in the country. This strategy will be finalized and approved before the end of 2023.
14. The report includes information on Botswana's rhinoceros populations, poaching incidents, management interventions, dehorning and safe keeping of horns. As of 14 August 2023, it is home to an estimated 282 southern white rhinoceroses and 21 south-eastern black rhinoceroses, with the majority residing on private land. Regarding poaching incidents, as of 14 August, five rhinoceroses were poached in 2023. In response

to previous poaching incidents since 2018, Botswana has integrated dehorning into its anti-poaching measures in high-risk areas. Additionally, the country has undertaken rhino translocations for management purposes, with 17 rhinos relocated from one range to another in April 2023. Botswana places strong emphasis on the safekeeping of rhinoceros horns, with all horns from government and private rhinoceros ranges stored securely at the National Ivory Store managed by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

15. Botswana states that it is actively monitoring rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade trends, noting that it made significant progress in curbing rhinoceros poaching. The Party reports an over 90% reduction in poaching incidents for 2022 and 2023 compared to the highest level of poaching reported in 2020, when 62 rhinoceroses were illegally killed.

#### China (including Hong Kong SAR of China)

16. China submitted two reports, one on activities undertaken in mainland China and another on activities undertaken in Hong Kong SAR of China.
17. The report from mainland China states that legislation and regulations are in place that provide for strict action to be taken and strict deterrent penalties to be imposed regarding illegal trade in wildlife, including illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens. China highlights that its Wildlife Protection Law was revised in December 2022 to further enhance collaboration among its national law enforcement departments and to increase penalties. China adopted stricter domestic measures for rhinoceroses. Since 2018, control measures completely ban the sale, purchase, delivery, carrying, transportation, import and export of rhinoceros specimens. The use of rhinoceros horn for medicinal purposes has been banned since 1993.
18. China also elaborates on national level inter-departmental coordination mechanisms put in place and joint law enforcement actions and operations undertaken at the national level. The report also includes information on annual public awareness campaigns, relevant in the context of Decision 18.116.
19. The report from Hong Kong SAR of China highlights legislation in place, noting that the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (PESAPO) of Hong Kong SAR of China prohibits the import, export, re-export and possession of specimens of Appendix I species, including Rhinocerotidae spp. for commercial purposes, and that PESAPO makes provision for strict penalties. Stricter domestic measures are applied regarding rhinoceros specimens. In addition, the Organized and Serious Crime Ordinance (OSCO) of Hong Kong SAR of China was amended in 2021 to include certain offences under PESAPO in the schedule of OSCO, enabling stricter sentencing for wildlife crime offences where appropriate.
20. In the context of Decision 18.116, the report states that there is no demand for rhinoceros specimens in Hong Kong SAR of China and that strict enforcement action is taken if irregularities are detected. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of Hong Kong SAR of China conducts market inspections, monitors online trading platforms and collects intelligence to monitor suspected illegal trade. Over the past five years, no cases of illegal possession of rhinoceros specimens have been identified.
21. The report further highlights international collaboration activities undertaken, noting that Hong Kong SAR of China collaborated with South Africa, making available specimens from rhinoceros horns seized in Hong Kong SAR of China to authorities in South Africa for forensic analyses. Hong Kong SAR of China also recently reached out to South Africa to explore the possibility of providing further samples to South Africa for analyses.

#### Qatar

22. Qatar highlights its national legislation in place to regulate trade in wildlife and address wildlife crime. Coordination between customs, law enforcement and judicial authorities has been intensified to strengthen responses to wildlife crime. Security measures specific to detecting the smuggling of rhinoceros horns and ivory have been put in place.
23. Qatar further provides detailed information on the measures implemented and activities undertaken to strengthen capacity of personnel working at Hamad International Airport (HIA) to better respond to and address wildlife crime, including the trafficking of rhinoceros horns. The measures and activities reported upon were mostly implemented within the framework of Qatar's National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP), further reported upon in document SC77 Doc. 34 on the *National ivory action plan process*. These measures and activities included the establishment of a formal collaboration mechanism for different departments operating at HIA and the organization of training workshops conducted in 2018, 2019 and 2021 on CITES implementation and enforcement, species identification and inspections using screening equipment. Further,

Qatar Airways implemented an awareness-raising programme for staff and passengers and developed an operational handbook and identification manual which includes rhinoceros horn as a focus species. More stringent inspections are being done regarding luggage and passengers arriving from or departing to key countries identified as source or destination countries for illegal ivory and rhinoceros specimens transiting Qatar.

24. Random inspections are carried out by staff of the Wildlife Protection Department to ensure the performance of teams at HIA. Qatar includes a table showing that, from 2014 to 2018, a total of 166,34 kg rhinoceros horns were confiscated by authorities in Qatar and that, from January 2020 to June 2023, a total of 123,40kg rhinoceros horns and 9,40 kg of ivory were confiscated.

### South Africa

25. South Africa reports on a variety of measures and activities it is implementing. Regarding Decision 19.115, paragraph a), South Africa collects samples from all rhinoceros horns seized within the country for forensic analysis. When importing DNA samples from countries where illegal consignments of rhinoceros horns have been seized, it uses the simplified procedures provided for in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*. In line with Decision 19.116, South Africa often uses the *Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points* (reported upon in more detail in paragraphs 65 to 68 of the present document) to facilitate contact with relevant agencies in other countries. Regarding Decision 18.116, South Africa reports that it does not have any illegal domestic markets for rhinoceros horn.
26. On its implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) and Decision 19.117, South Africa reports that it is planning a meeting with Botswana's enforcement authorities in the coming months. The Environmental Management Inspectorate of its Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) works closely with the South African Police Service's Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the Asset Forfeiture Unit, the South African Revenue Service and the Financial Intelligence Centre in combatting wildlife trafficking, including rhinoceros related crimes. A Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking has been established at the national level to enhance coordination. In addition, there is a National Biodiversity Investigators Forum where wildlife and police investigators meet to discuss specific investigations and targets.
27. South Africa's National Integrated Strategy to Combatting Wildlife Crime (NISCWT) was approved by the Cabinet in May 2023. The NISCWT aims to reduce the threat posed to its national security by wildlife crime and establishes an integrated strategic framework to facilitate the mobilization of resources and to enable an intelligence-led, multidisciplinary, and consolidated law enforcement approach supported by the whole of government and society.
28. South Africa further reports on a recent initiative which involves a private-public partnership under the auspices of the South African Financial Intelligence Centre to facilitate enhanced focus on addressing money-laundering linked to wildlife crime. Through the South African Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force Wildlife Crime Working Group, effective coordination between financial institutions and law enforcement occurs in identifying, detecting and disrupting illicit financial flows from wildlife crime, with seven investigations currently underway.
29. South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority is focusing on prosecuting rhinoceros related crimes. This focus has resulted in a significant increase in convictions and cases being finalized. A total of 509 offenders were convicted for rhinoceros poaching and related matters during the last three years. To address criminals managing and organizing the illegal operations at the top level of the trafficking chain, three Prevention of Organised Crime Act (POCA) prosecutions are currently underway against 24 defendants by the South African High Courts. These POCA prosecutions relate to *inter alia* rhinoceros poaching, dealing in rhinoceros horns, corruption and money laundering.
30. Over the last year, anti-poaching efforts were intensified countrywide and more targeted deployment of resources is being implemented through the [CMORE](#) situational awareness platform. Through this platform, role players can collaborate, making use of real-time information and analytical capability, linking for example camera traps and ranger patrols, while integrating a range of other systems.
31. Regarding Decision 19.118, South Africa reports that engagement with China, Mozambique and Viet Nam takes place when illegal shipments are detected in these countries or when South Africa suspects that an illegal shipment might be on its way to one of these countries. Formal agreements are in place between the South African Police Service and its counterparts in China and Viet Nam. South Africa also has regular meetings and operations in collaboration with Mozambique in the Greater Limpopo Trans-Frontier

Conservation Area between South Africa and Mozambique to protect the natural resources in these parks, including rhinoceroses.

### United Arab Emirates

32. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) reports on various matters including its 2023-2030 National Plan of Action, their legal framework, border controls, risk management practices, international collaboration efforts, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities and others.
33. The report highlights the laws in place in the UAE to address wildlife crime, including trafficking of rhinoceros specimens. These laws criminalize the trafficking of endangered species and their derivatives and make provision for penalties ranging from fines of up to 50,000 Dirham (approximately USD 13,500) and imprisonment of up to six months.
34. Regarding border controls, dedicated law enforcement units and agencies have been established at the national level to address illegal wildlife trade. These units and agencies received specialized training and are using cutting-edge technologies at major border points to scrutinize shipments and apprehend offenders.<sup>1</sup>
35. In the context of Decision 19.119, the UAE actively engages with global partners, including international organizations, conservation groups and law enforcement agencies, to share intelligence, best practices and resources. The report highlights the launch of the [United for Wildlife – Middle East and North Africa \(MENA\) Regional Chapter](#) at the Dubai Expo2020, noting that this Chapter aims to enhance information-sharing, resource allocation, and collaboration among stakeholders from transportation, finance, law enforcement and non-governmental sectors. Risk management practices are in place, utilizing Dubai Customs' smart risk engine system which comprise 128 criteria and facilitate the proactive detection of suspicious shipments warranting closer scrutiny.
36. The UAE's 2023-2030 National Plan of Action aims to protect endangered species through a comprehensive approach, comprising of four distinct national goals accompanied by a multitude of associated tasks and activities. Goal 1 focuses on strengthening the legislative framework governing international and domestic trade in species listed under CITES. Goal 2 concerns implementing and enforcing national legislation to combat illicit trade in wildlife and includes activities related to strengthening controls at borders and ports. Goal 3 places an emphasis on capacity-building and raising public awareness to combat illegal wildlife trade. Goal 4 focuses on regional and international collaboration to develop regulatory frameworks that effectively combat illegal wildlife trade.
37. On the regulation of the transport sector, the UAE is working closely with the private sector to implement CITES regulations and conserve endangered species. This is done through different initiatives focused on raising awareness and developing innovative methods to combat illegal wildlife trade through partnerships with Emirates Airlines, Etihad Airlines, Dubai Ports World and Dubai Customs World, among others. Etihad airlines and Emirates airlines prohibited the carriage of species, and its products, listed in Appendix I of CITES or listed as 'Critically Endangered' or 'Endangered' by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The UAE national airline, Etihad Airways, issued an Animal Welfare and Conservation Policy that outlines strict cargo criteria for the carriage of endangered and threatened species, hunting trophies, shark fins and live animals intended for use in scientific research. Emirates airline is also an active participant in the United for Wildlife initiative, a global collaboration that unites the efforts of the world's leading wildlife charities in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade.
38. On awareness-raising and capacity-building, the UAE's Ministry of Climate Change and Environment takes a proactive stance by organizing specialized training courses for enforcement officers from various entities such as the Ministry of Interior, airports security, customs, and others with a role in the implementation and enforcement of CITES. Training courses have been consistently conducted from 2007 to 2023. Dubai Ports World, Etihad Airways and Emirates Airlines have developed e-learning courses on illegal wildlife trade detection and prevention, noting that these courses reached more than 10,000 employees globally. Further, the global education programme of Dubai Ports World engages the youth in detecting and combatting illegal wildlife trade. Public awareness campaigns were strategically executed at the national level in shopping malls, local markets, schools, universities and airports, using a diverse range of tools such as leaflets, posters, brochures and social media.

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<sup>1</sup> The report highlights that Dubai customs has established an Advanced Container Scanning System harmonizing a multitude of inspection technologies into a singular cohesive framework facilitating truck and container X-ray screening. This system can screen 150 trucks per hour, moving at speeds ranging from 8 to 15 km/hour, equating to one truck every 24 seconds.

39. In the context of Decision 18.116, the UAE issued in 1988 an order implementing a ban regarding ivory and rhinoceros horns, prohibiting buying, selling and any manufacturing activities involving these specimens. The UAE also elaborates on its engagement in activities to support conservation, including the conservation of rhinoceroses, both at the national and international level.

#### Malaysia, Mozambique and Viet Nam

40. As noted in paragraph 5 of the present document, no replies to the letters of the Secretariat were received from Malaysia, Mozambique and Viet Nam.
41. Document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) and its Annex 4 show that Malaysia is an important transit country for illegal rhinoceros specimen trade between Africa and Asia. Malaysia was the fourth most affected by illegal rhinoceros specimen trade in the period 2018 to 2020, in terms of the weight and number of specimens detected in illegal trade. In document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1), the Secretariat noted that, since late 2021, authorities in Malaysia have increasingly seized illegal rhinoceros horn consignments transiting its territory, which suggested that enforcement efforts may be increasingly effective. However, in the absence of reporting from Malaysia, it is not clear if this positive work has continued more recently. The Party may wish to provide an oral update on the work of its authorities at the present meeting.
42. Regarding Mozambique, as noted in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) and its Annex 4, Mozambique is an important transit country in the illegal rhinoceros specimen trade chain, with rhinoceroses poached in neighbouring South Africa as the primary source of illegal rhinoceros specimen consignments from Mozambique. Mozambique is the fifth most affected by illegal rhinoceros specimen trade in the period 2018 to 2020, in terms of the weight and number of specimens detected in illegal trade. Of the seizures made in Mozambique for which information on the country of destination was available, 75% were destined for Viet Nam. Similarly, of the seizures made elsewhere that identified Mozambique as country of origin, 64% indicated Viet Nam as country of destination. Mozambique is included in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process, under which it is implementing a National Ivory and Rhinoceros Action Plan (NIRAP). This is further reported upon in document SC77 Doc. 34 on the *National ivory action plan process*. Mozambique's NIRAP progress report contains information relevant to Decision 19.118 and Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19). Mozambique notes five rhinoceroses were illegally killed in Mozambique in 2018, four in 2019, one in 2020 and that, from 2021 to 2023 no rhinoceroses were illegally killed in the country. The Party further reports on dehorning activities conducted, noting that all rhinoceroses in the Greater Lebombo Conservancy (GLC) have been dehorned. Mozambique highlights that none of the 10 rhinoceroses illegally killed in the period 2018 to 2020 were dehorned and that dehorning greatly assisted in curbing illegal killings. It is further reported that seven rhinoceroses in the GLC are fitted with GPS location devices.
43. In the period from 2020 to July 2023, a total 831 court cases were registered in the country for crimes involving wildlife (all wildlife, not specific to rhinoceroses only): 59,4% of these cases were finalized resulting in convictions and sentences; 38,4 % are still ongoing in court; and in 2,2 % of the cases finalized, the accused were acquitted. Mozambique's national legislation makes provision for strict penalties of up to 30 years imprisonment. In the period from 2020 to date, several convictions of multiple years of imprisonment were secured for crimes involving wildlife. In the period from September 2021 to July 2023, approximately 1,052 officials from Customs, the Environmental Protection Police (PPRNMA), Criminal Investigation Services (SERVIC), the National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC) and several other authorities received training on CITES-related legislation and the identification of CITES-listed species. Mozambique provides further detailed information in its NIRAP implementation report on other capacity-building activities undertaken at national level. Joint Special Units are operational at Maputo International Airport since May 2021 and at Maputo Port since November 2022. These Joint Special Units are composed of officers from Customs, ANAC, PPRNMA and SERVIC, complimented by a K9 dog unit. Mozambique also reports on collaborative work that resulted in confiscation of 72kg of rhinoceros horn that were hidden in packages of marine products, although the report does not specify the date when this seizure occurred. Four fake rhinoceros horns were also detected.
44. Mozambique reports that the establishment of five Community Conservation Areas has been fundamental in empowering local communities, in order to promote conservation and livelihoods through sustainable schemes. Standard Operating Procedures are in place for the management of its rhinoceros horn and ivory stockpiles. These stocks are securely kept by ANAC and the relevant database regularly updated. A tender was launched for the building of three new regional warehouses in the Northern, Central and Southern regions of Mozambique.
45. With regard to Decision 19.118, Mozambique reports on its cooperation with South Africa, Zimbabwe, the United Republic of Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. Mozambique notes that joint operations with South Africa are taking place in accordance with standard operating procedures. Monthly security meetings and other

meetings are held to coordinate activities, as well as share information and intelligence. Collaboration and information exchange on illegal activities and wildlife trafficking are taking place with Viet Nam, through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two Parties. As a result of the work undertaken within the scope of the MoU, three traffickers were detained, two in Viet Nam and one in Mozambique.

46. Regarding Viet Nam, as noted in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) and its Annex 4, Viet Nam is the third most affected by illegal rhinoceros specimen trade in the period 2018 to 2020, in terms of weight and number of specimens detected in illegal trade. South Africa and Mozambique were the Parties of origin for most illegal rhinoceros horn shipments to Viet Nam during this period. As highlighted in paragraph 31 of the present document, South Africa states that it collaborates closely with Viet Nam when illegal shipments are detected and that a formal agreement with Viet Nam is in place to facilitate collaboration. Similarly, as highlighted in paragraph 45 of the present document, Mozambique reports on its collaboration with Viet Nam in accordance with the MoU in place between these two Parties. In document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1), the Secretariat welcomed the efforts made by Viet Nam to respond to and address illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens and the number of seizures made by Viet Nam within its territory. In this regard, the Secretariat notes that information suggests that similar good work continued since CoP19. Media reports suggest that in [April 2023, Vietnamese customs authorities seized](#) 11.8 kg of rhinoceros horns and 4.7 kg of ivory at Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi. This illegal shipment was found in possession of a passenger that allegedly departed from Angola and transited through Doha, Qatar, before arriving in Viet Nam. Further, in September 2023, the CITES Management Authority of Viet Nam wrote to the Secretariat providing information on successes achieved by Vietnamese customs authorities. These successes related to the seizure of 490kg of ivory on 2 February 2023; 130kg of ivory on 6 February 2023; and the seizure of 7 tons of ivory on 20 March 2023. Although the seizures drawn to the attention of the Secretariat by the CITES Management Authority of Viet Nam did not include rhinoceros horns, it does show that customs authorities in Viet Nam remain vigilant in combatting wildlife crime. The Secretariat commends these authorities for their efforts. Also worth noting is that the 7 tons of ivory seized originated from Angola, which seems to be emerging as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments from Africa to Asia. The Secretariat notes that Viet Nam is included in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process, under which it is implementing a National Ivory and Rhinoceros Action Plan (NIRAP). No report on progress with implementation of its NIRAP was submitted by Viet Nam for the present meeting.

#### Observations and conclusions of the Secretariat

47. Regarding Botswana, the Secretariat welcomes the significant reduction in poaching incidents observed in Botswana in 2022 and 2023 compared to previous years and the measures implemented and activities undertaken by Botswana since CoP19 to further strengthen its response and address rhinoceros poaching. Considering that Botswana's responses to wildlife crime, including rhinoceros poaching, is primarily driven through the implementation of the NAPS, it is imperative that its NAPS 2023 to 2028 be approved and that implementation commence as soon as possible to ensure that the positive trends observed are maintained.
48. The Secretariat welcomes the work and activities reported upon by mainland China but notes that the reporting does not include any information relevant to Decision 19.118. South Africa reports on its collaboration with China as highlighted in paragraph 31 of the present document. However, in the absence of any information on such collaboration in the report from mainland China, it is likely that the reporting from South Africa refers to its collaboration with authorities in Hong Kong SAR of China as highlighted in paragraph 21 of the present document. China may wish to provide an oral update at the present meeting on any activities that may have been conducted in this regard by authorities in mainland China. Authorities from mainland China are encouraged to revisit the information relevant to China as contained in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* and its Annex 4 and to further strengthen its engagement with Parties associated with illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking affecting mainland China, undertaking joint operations, strengthening information and intelligence exchange and further expanding collaboration with these Parties as anticipated in Decision 19.118. In this regard, mainland China is also encouraged to explore opportunities to initiate activities as anticipated by Decision 19.115.
49. The work and activities undertaken by authorities in Hong Kong SAR of China are also welcomed by the Secretariat. Although details provided in the report are limited, it does show that activities as anticipated by Decisions 19.115, paragraph a) and 19.118 are undertaken. Hong Kong SAR of China is encouraged to build upon this work by actively seeking opportunities to further expand collaboration with Parties associated with illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking affecting Hong Kong SAR of China.
50. The reporting provided by Qatar indicates that security measures specific to detecting the smuggling of rhinoceros horns and ivory are in place and that more stringent inspections are being done regarding luggage and passengers arriving from or departing to key countries identified as source or destination country for smuggled ivory and rhinoceros specimens transiting through Qatar. This suggest that risk



management practices as anticipated by Decision 19.119 are in place. The Secretariat welcomes these risk management practices, and the random inspections put in place that seem to be delivering positive results. The table included in the report received from Qatar shows that most detections of illegal rhinoceros horn consignments made in a single year in Qatar, occurred in 2022. This might be an indication that measures and activities deployed are increasingly effective and Qatar is encouraged to build upon these results.

51. Although the Secretariat welcomes the work and activities reported upon by Qatar, it notes that the reporting provided does not include any information on collaboration with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting Qatar, as anticipated by Decision 19.119. The Secretariat recalls that, in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) and its Annex 4, Qatar was identified as an important transit country for illegal rhinoceros specimen trade between Africa and Asia and as the seventh most affected by the illegal rhinoceros specimen trade in the period 2018 to 2020 in terms of the weight and number of specimens detected in illegal trade. Authorities from Qatar are encouraged to revisit the information relevant to Qatar as contained in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) and its Annex 4 and to scale up its collaboration with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting its territory, most notably South Africa, Mozambique, and Viet Nam based on available data. In this regard, Qatar is also encouraged to explore opportunities to initiate activities as anticipated by Decision 19.115.
52. It is evident from the reporting that a broad range of measures and a variety of activities are being implemented in of South Africa to respond to and address rhinoceros poaching and the associated trafficking in rhinoceros horns. These measures and activities respond well to and aligns with the Decisions adopted at CoP19. The Secretariat reported in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1) that rhinoceros poaching numbers in South Africa peaked in 2014, with 1,215 rhinoceroses poached in the country that year. From 2014 onward, poaching numbers declined and this decline continued in the period 2018 to 2020, with 769 rhinoceroses poached in South Africa in 2018, 594 in 2019 and 394 in 2020. The Secretariat highlighted that the number of rhinoceroses poached in South Africa increased for the first time again in 2021, with 451 rhinoceroses poached that year. [Official statistics released by the DFFE in February 2023](#) shows that in 2022 there was a slight decline, with 448 rhinoceroses being poached in South Africa. According to [figures released by the DFFE in August 2023](#), a total of 231 rhinoceroses were poached in South Africa in the period from 1 January to 31 June 2023. This represents a decrease of 11% compared to the same period in 2022.
53. The Secretariat welcomes the broad range of measures, activities and collaborative initiatives mobilized by South Africa to combat rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking. It seems that efforts made in South Africa are having the desired effect with rhinoceros poaching numbers again declining after the spike observed in 2021. South Africa is encouraged to remain vigilant in its implementation of Decision 19.117, reviewing trends associated with crimes involving rhinoceroses affecting South Africa and the measures and activities it is implementing to respond to these crimes. South Africa should ensure that these measures and activities remain effective and are adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.
54. The Secretariat also welcomes the measures and activities reported upon by the United Arab Emirates, noting that these could be further continued and enhanced through implementation of the 2023-2030 National Plan of Action as reported upon in paragraph 36 of the present document. The 2023-2030 National Plan of Action aligns well with Decision 19.119. Although the report from the UAE demonstrates that activities as envisaged by Decision 19.119 are taking place, specific information regarding work undertaken to collaborate with Parties known to be associated with illegal rhinoceros specimens transiting the UAE, most notably South Africa, Mozambique and Viet Nam are not included in the reporting of the UAE. In the implementation of its 2023-2030 National Plan of Action, the UAE is encouraged to actively pursue scaling up its collaboration South Africa, Mozambique and Viet Nam. In this regard, the UAE is also encouraged to explore opportunities to initiate activities as anticipated by Decision 19.115. Further, in terms of Goal 1 of its 2023-2030 National Plan of Action, the Party is encouraged to strengthen its legislative framework, take into consideration paragraph 6. c) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*.
55. The Secretariat notes that no reporting was received from Malaysia. As an important transit point for illegal rhinoceros specimen trade, in particular for illegal consignments originating from Mozambique and South Africa associated with Hong Kong SAR of China and Viet Nam as possible destinations. The Secretariat reiterates the importance that Malaysia continues its collaboration with South Africa as noted in document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1), and also further strengthens its engagement with Hong Kong SAR of China, Mozambique and Viet Nam.
56. The Secretariat welcomes the information provided by Mozambique in its report on progress with implementation of its NIRAP, which shows that activities as anticipated by Decision 19.118 are taking place. The Secretariat encourages Mozambique to build upon this work and to also expand its engagement with other Parties affected by illegal rhinoceros horn trade from Mozambique, such as Qatar and the UAE.

57. The Secretariat notes that no reporting was received from Viet Nam, but welcomes that reporting provided by Mozambique and South Africa which shows that activities as anticipated by Decision 19.118 are taking place. The Secretariat encourages Viet Nam to build upon this work and to also expand its collaboration with other Parties to address illegal rhinoceros horn trade. In this regard, the Secretariat draws the attention of Viet Nam to paragraph 46 of the present document, noting that Angola is emerging as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments from Africa to Asia, in particular Viet Nam.
58. The Secretariat concludes that room for improvement regarding the implementation of Decision 19.115 continues to exist. Although the reporting received shows that work regarding the collection and exchange of samples from seized rhinoceros horns for DNA analysis as anticipated by the Decision occurs in some cases, these in general seem to remain limited.
59. Lastly, Decision 19.55 on *Demand reduction to combat illegal trade* directs the Secretariat, subject to external funding, to organize regional training seminars on the use of the *CITES guidance on demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species*. As communicated to Parties through [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/084](#) of 17 July 2023, a *CITES Asian regional training seminar on demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species* is scheduled to be held in Singapore from 10 to 11 October 2023. This training seminar for the Asian region is anticipated to be the first of a series of regional training seminars. This work is directly relevant to the provisions of Decision 18.116 and Parties in which illegal markets for rhinoceros horn exist are encouraged to engage in these regional seminars. When considering priority species in their respective countries for pilot projects using the Guidance as envisaged in Decision 19.55, Parties are encouraged to take Decision 18.116 into consideration. Further, Parties are reminded that Resolution Conf. 17.4 (Rev. CoP19) on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species* "URGES Parties to make full use of the [CITES guidance on demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species](#) in their efforts to reduce demand for illegally acquired wildlife and their products through the 5-step approach in order to achieve behavior change of the consumers", and to take this into consideration in their implementation of Decision 18.116.

#### Emerging issues of concern

60. As noted in paragraph 46 of the present document, Angola seems to be emerging as an exit point for illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory consignments from Africa to Asia. Apart from the 2023 consignments originating from Angola as mentioned in paragraph 46, seizures of rhinoceros horn shipments that originated from Angola were also made in 2022.
61. In addition, official information shows that [Namibia experienced a significant increase](#) in rhinoceros poaching in 2022, with 87 rhinoceroses poached compared to 45 in 2021.
62. Angola and Namibia should thus be encouraged to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.

#### 3rd Asian Rhinoceros Range Countries Meeting

63. From 3 to 5 February 2023, Nepal, in association with the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Group, hosted the 3rd Asian Rhino Range Countries Meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to facilitate information-sharing on the status of the three species of Asian rhinoceroses; agree on specific priorities and measures to conserve rhinoceroses in Asia; promote collaboration between range Parties; and raise the level of commitment for securing the future of all three species of Asian rhinoceroses.
64. The meeting concluded with the launch of the [Chitwan Declaration for Asian Rhinos Conservation 2023](#), in which the five Asian rhinoceros range countries, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal, recognize the diverse challenges faced by Asian rhinoceroses and agreed on a number of priorities and measures regarding protection; population management; habitat management; research, monitoring and information sharing; and coordination and cooperation. The range countries also agreed that time bound recovery measures are needed for the critically endangered Sumatran rhinoceros and appealed to the global community to support related efforts technically and financially. In addition, range countries agreed to review the status of the three species of Asian rhinoceroses every four years to reassess the need for joint actions to secure their future. They further committed to manage populations with the intention of achieving at least a 3% annual growth rate through the implementation of the strategic actions outlined in the Declaration.

#### Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points

65. Decision 19.116 encourages Parties to draw upon the [Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points](#) available on the [Enforcement focal points](#) webpage. This directory was developed to facilitate contact between relevant agencies in different countries on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros specimen trade. Decision 19.116 further encourages Parties included in the directory to immediately inform the Secretariat if the details of their national focal points should be updated.
66. The Secretariat thanks Qatar for submitting in July 2023 the details of its national focal points for inclusion in the directory.
67. As noted in paragraph 25 of the present document, South Africa states that it often uses the directory to facilitate contact with relevant agencies in other countries. South Africa confirms that the details of its national focal points in the directory are correct and up-to-date, but notes that some of the information included in the directory for other Parties is outdated.
68. In this regard, the Secretariat notes that it updated the directory in September 2023 using the most recent national focal point information available to the Secretariat. Parties included in the directory<sup>2</sup> are kindly requested to review the directory and to immediately inform the Secretariat if the details of their national focal point should be updated.

#### Implementation of Decision 19.120

69. Decision 19.120 directs the Secretariat to, subject to external funding, convene a follow up CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting. As indicated in Annex 5 to document CoP19 Doc. 75 (Rev. 1), approximately USD 120 000 is required for this purpose. At the time of writing, approximately half of this funding has been secured and the Secretariat hopes that donors will provide co-funding as soon as possible to implement Decision 19.120.

#### Recommendations

70. The Standing Committee is invited to:
- a) welcome the [Chitwan Declaration for Asian Rhinos Conservation 2023](#) agreed by the five Asian rhinoceros range States;
  - b) welcome the reduction in poaching incidents observed in Botswana in 2022 and 2023 compared to previous years and encourage the Party to rapidly progress implementation of its 2023 to 2028 National Anti-Poaching Strategy;
  - c) request the Parties to which Decisions 19.117, 19.118 and 19.119 are directed to take the comments and observations of the Secretariat in paragraphs 47 to 59 of document SC77 Doc.45, as relevant to them, into consideration in their implementation of these respective Decisions;
  - d) note that Malaysia and Viet Nam did not provide any reporting on the implementation of Decision 19.118 and 19.119 and, considering any oral information that may be provided at SC77, decide if further measures to address rhinoceros specimen trafficking are required regarding any of these Parties;
  - e) encourage Angola and Namibia to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends;
  - f) request the Secretariat to seek information from the Parties concerned by recommendations c) to e), on activities conducted and measures implemented in accordance with these recommendations, and to include this information in its report to the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee, together with any recommendations the Secretariat may have; and
  - g) request Parties included in the [Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points](#) to immediately inform the Secretariat if the details of their national focal points in the Directory should be updated.

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<sup>2</sup> Botswana, China, Czech Republic, Eswatini, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam and Zambia.

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DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE,  
AND NATIONAL PARKS  
P. O. BOX

GABORONE  
BOTSWANA

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO  
THE DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE AND NATIONAL PARKS

REFERENCE: WPC/GEN 37/3 I (11)

14<sup>th</sup> August 2023

The CITES Secretariat  
Palais des Nations  
Avenue de la Paix 8-14  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

Attention: Chief, Enforcement Unit

**RE: Botswana's report on Implementation of the Decisions on Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae spp.*) adopted at the 19th meeting the Conference of the Parties (CoP19, Panama, 2022)**

1. At the CITES CoP19, Decision 19.117 directed to Botswana and South Africa was adopted as thus: *Botswana and South Africa are encouraged to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting them, and the measures and activities they are implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends.*
2. This letter responds to CITES letter ref.: EA.01.07.2023.BvR and also serves to update on what Botswana has done as a direct implementation of the aforementioned Decision.
3. Faced with the sudden spike in rhinoceroses poaching around 2018, the Government of Botswana, working with non-state actors, neighbouring States and supporting partners, introduced a numbers of measures to combat rhino poaching, which measures continue to be revised and improved after CoP19. These measures include the following:

**a. Development of 2023 to 2028 National Anti-Poaching Strategy**

This is the main response to Rhino poaching by Botswana, as the National Anti-Poaching Strategy (NAPS), is the basis for effective Inter-agency collaboration. A NAPS was formerly developed in 2014 for the period until 2019. As at 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023, a 2023 to 2028 NAPS has been drafted and

awaits formal approval by the country's leadership. As a result of processes put in place by the NAPS, all law enforcement agencies specifically Dept of Wildlife and National Parks, the Army, Police, and State Intelligence work together in all spheres of wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade. In addition, joint planning and operations based on enhanced intelligence sharing is practised. Most importantly, this has allowed the pooling of resources and synergizing efforts especially air support and foot soldiers. Botswana expects to launch the 2023 to 2028 NAPS before end of 2023.

#### **b. Enhanced Inter-agency collaboration**

Government has continuously enhanced inter-agency collaboration such that all law enforcement agencies (that is Army, Police, State Intelligence, Dept of Wildlife and National Parks) are working together collaboratively to deal with poaching challenges. Inter-agency committees have been established at National and district levels (and more continue to be formed in new areas e.g. post CoP19, a new committee was operationalised in Bobirwa District). These committees meet every week in order to share intelligence and information but most importantly to plan and implement intelligence-led joint law enforcement operations.

#### **c. Deployment of Army to reinforce Dept of Wildlife and National Parks**

The Government has deployed an increasing contingent from the Army into rhino-occurring areas including Private Reserves and game farms, including doubling of troops deployed within at least three rhino ranches since CoP19. This was meant to support the Department of Wildlife and National Parks as well as non-state stakeholders' especially private game ranches. In addition, since CoP19 National Police and Intelligence have become even more involved in order to augment the Department of Wildlife and National Parks efforts to combat wildlife crime. Ultimately, the number of law enforcement personnel deployed every day of the month, and every month of the year to counter Rhino poaching have reached unprecedented levels resulting in reasonable area domination.

#### **d. 'Following the money' and countering money laundering with links to wildlife crimes**

Efforts are at an advanced stage to rope in other agencies such Customs, Prosecutions, Finance Intelligence Agency (FIA), Money Laundering Agency to become part of the inter-agency family in line with the NAPS. This will allow the country to fully implement the "follow the money" principle which will enhance efforts to curb IWT. In the interim, as at August 2023, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks is leading

sectoral reviews of wildlife crimes for a National Risk Assessment that among others seeks to address money laundering risks in Botswana.

**e. Strengthening Bilateral and Regional collaborative relationships**

Poaching and illegal wildlife trade are transnational by nature from source through various nations to the consumer. It is therefore critical for Botswana and other regional countries to collaborate so as to close all gaps manipulated by poachers and dealers. In that regard, Botswana has been working with her neighbours through the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCD&S) structure, chaired by Cabinet Ministers of the respective countries. For example, in July 2023, Botswana and Zambia held a JPCDS in Livingstone (Zambia) where among others wildlife crime was discussed so that the wildlife authorities, Police and other law enforcement agencies of the two countries discussed issues of mutual interest and developed measures to better coordinate their anti-poaching measures. Similar meetings, including Botswana/Namibia, Botswana/Zimbabwe and Botswana/South Africa are expected before the end of 2023, with some of the meetings chaired by Heads of State. Wildlife crime, most of which is transnational, is one of the major thematic areas covered by these Commissions. Resolutions on commitments during these meetings are implemented at regional/district level especially joint border patrol, joint investigation, sharing of intelligence, and conduct joint law enforcement operations. This is aimed to close all gaps used by organized transnational poaching syndicates.

**f. Community beneficiation and Communities as First Line of Defence**

A community program, Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) is running across the country with the intent of making communities benefit from sustainable use of wildlife resources that co-exist with them including Rhinos. The purpose of CBNRM is to ensure that communities benefit from wildlife resources so that they become our First Line of Defense (FLoD) in protecting the resource they benefit from. Since CoP19, several Community Based Organisations have been supported financially (e.g. through Conservation Trust Fund, CTF, grants) and through other logistics (e.g. training of rangers), which has helped enhance their role as FLoD towards the protection of rhinos in Botswana.

**g. Improvement to prosecution and the judiciary in respect of wildlife crime**

Government, through the Department of Public Prosecution, has created a Division dedicated to prosecuting wildlife crime related cases in order to

increase successful prosecutions of wildlife crime cases. Since CoP19, the capacity of this Division continues to be improved.

#### **h. Rhino Management Strategy 2023 to 2028**

The country is finalizing a National Rhino Management Strategy for the period 2023 to 2028 to serve as a guide on managing rhino in the country. The Strategy will also clarify roles of different stakeholders to ensure effective engagement between Government and non-governmental partners. It is anticipated that this Strategy will be finalised and approved by appropriate authorities within Government during the course of 2023.

4. In terms of Botswana Rhino Population's, as at 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023, there are an estimated two hundred and eighty two (282) Southern White Rhinoceros and twenty one (21) South-eastern Black Rhinoceros as per reports by managers of rhino ranches. Most of the rhino populations are in private land. There are on only two populations of Black rhinos in two different rhino ranges. Most of the rhino populations are in a semi-wild environment.

5. In terms of Poaching Incidences, in the year 2023 up to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023, there are five rhinos poached. Poaching is centered in one rhino range. In response to poaching that has happened in the previous years from 2018, the country has adopted dehorning as part of integrated anti-poaching mitigation measures in high poaching risk areas.

6. As a management interventions, there have been some translocations of rhinos within the country for management purposes. Seventeen rhinos (17) have been translocated from one rhino range to another in April 2023, as part of management for growth. Other rhino translocations are expected to happen for various reasons before end of 2023.

7. In relation to veterinary treatments, four rhinos were treated for various reasons in the year 2023 up to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Two (2) rhinos were treated for bullet wounds while one (1) rhino was treated for injuries after fighting with an elephant and one (1) young bull was treated for concussion trauma after being injured by a dominant male.

8. In terms of dehorning, twenty five (25) white rhinos have been dehorned in the year 2023 up to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

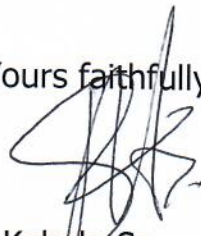
9. In terms of safe keeping of rhino horn, the competent authority, being the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, keeps safely all rhino horns acquired from natural death, dehorning operations and/or seizures. All the rhino horns from Government and private rhino ranges are kept at the

National Ivory Store, which is a government premise. This is a secured strong room with maximum security. All the rhino horns that enter the National Ivory Store are coded and micro-chipped for traceability purposes. The country has never experienced breakage and/or disappearing of rhino horn in this National Ivory Store. The storage facility has passed all audits subjected to it.

10. In conclusion, Botswana continues to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting the country, and the measures and activities being implementing to address these crimes, to ensure that these measures and activities are effective and adapted as may be needed to respond to any newly identified trends. It is on the basis of the aforementioned that Botswana has curtailed the worst poaching events of 2020, when 62 rhinos were poached in a single year (as reported at CoP19) to reporting only an over 90% reduction in this number respectively for 2022 and for 2023.

11. Botswana considers this letter as sufficient evidence of its commitment to assuring the long-term conservation of rhino in Botswana and in addressing the requirements of Decision 19.117, and looks forward to work with the CITES Secretariat and other partners to ensure the continued protection of rhino in Botswana.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Kabelo Senyatso

**Director, Department of Wildlife and National Parks**





**Report on the Implementation of Resolution Conf.9.14 (Rev. CoP19)  
on Conservation of and Trade in Rhinoceroses**

The Wildlife Protection Law and other laws and regulations of the P.R.China strictly control wild animals and their products, including rhinoceroses, and impose harsh penalties for related illegal activities. On December 30, 2022, China revised its Wildlife Protection Law to further strengthen cooperation among various law enforcement departments and increase penalties for illegal activities. In particular, China has adopted stricter measures than the CITES to control rhinoceroses and their products. As early as 1993, China banned the use of rhino horn for medicinal purposes. Since 2018, it has further tightened its control measures and completely banned the sale, purchase, delivery, carrying, transportation, import and export of rhinoceroses and their products.

The Chinese government has established the Joint Inter-Ministerial Conference on Combating Illegal Trade in Wildlife attended by 27 ministries and the inter-departmental Coordination Group on CITES Law enforcement attended by 9 ministries, and these participants have jointly carried out a series of enforcement operations including "Operation Breeze", "Operation Net Shield" and special operations of "Import Control at the Border", to address the entire chain of wildlife resources destruction and illegal trade in wildlife and their products such as rhino horns at the national level. Key measures include revising laws and regulations, carrying out special law enforcement operations, developing public awareness campaigns, promoting international cooperation, etc., covering all aspects, including field patrols and guarding, artificial breeding, trade, transportation, import and export, use of wild animals and their products. A hotline for reporting violations of relevant laws and regulations has been set up to handle reports in a timely manner.

China organizes a large number of public awareness campaigns every year, and holds theme-based publicity campaigns during special environmental awareness programs such as World Wildlife Day and Wildlife Protection Month, to raise public awareness of wildlife protection and rejection of illegal trade.

**Report from Hong Kong SAR on the implementation of the  
Decisions on Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.) adopted at CoP19**

Background

At the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting (CoP19), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) renewed Decision 18.116 and adopted Decisions on 19.115 to 19.122 on Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.). Amongst the adopted Decisions, Decisions 19.115 and 19.116 are directed to Parties with regard to the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14, use of simplified procedures for law enforcement purposes and focal points for illegal trade in rhino horns; and Decision 19.118 directed to China Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam with regard to the collaboration between these countries in combatting illegal rhino horn trade.

2. This document serves to report on actions taken by Hong Kong SAR in response to the above-mentioned decisions for inclusion in the national report to be submitted by China.

Local regulation on specimens of rhinoceros

3. Except for the subspecies of certain specified populations, which can be traded as an Appendix II species only when traded in the form of live animals or hunting trophies, all rhinos are listed in Appendix I of CITES under the family listing of Rhinocerotidae spp. Given the specificity of the permitted specimen types, the trade in rhinos as specimens of Appendix II species is of little relevance, if not none, to the trade in Hong Kong SAR.

4. Locally, specimens of rhinos are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (PESAPO), Cap. 586, which is the local legislation that gives effect to CITES in Hong Kong. The import, export, re-export and possession of specimens of Appendix I species, including Rhinocerotidae spp., is for commercial purposes is prohibited. To strengthen the control on the trade in specimens of rhinos, the exemptions to the trade in and possession of personal or household effects is expressly disapplied to all Appendix I rhino specimens.

5. To further deter illegal wildlife trade, PESAPO was amended in May 2018 to increase the penalties. The maximum penalties for illegal import, export, re-export or possession of specimens of Appendix I species are a fine of HK\$ 5,000,000 and two years of imprisonment on summary conviction, and a fine of

HK\$10,000,000 and 10 years of imprisonment on indictment.

6. Further to the aforementioned amendment, recognizing that the deterrent to wildlife crime was still insufficient, the Organized and Serious Crime Ordinance (OSCO), Cap. 455, was amended in August 2021 to include certain offences under PESAPO in the schedule of OSCO, thereby allowing the court to pass an enhanced sentence as appropriate.

#### Absence of demand for rhinos in Hong Kong SAR

7. A Licence to Possess is required for the possession of specimens of rhinos in Hong Kong under PESAPO. Currently, there is only one trader that holds a Licence to Possess for some rhino hides imported in 1977.

8. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of Hong Kong SAR conducts market inspections, monitors online trading platforms and collects intelligence, so as to monitor suspected illegal trade in species scheduled under the Ordinance. Stringent enforcement action will be taken if irregularities are detected. Over the past five years, there has not been any cases of illegal possession of specimens identified to be of rhinos.

9. The above data support the observation that there is no demand for specimens of rhinos in Hong Kong SAR.

#### International collaboration

10. Hong Kong SAR has collaborated with South Africa by donating specimens of seized rhino horns for DNA analysis for tracing the country of origin of the specimens.

11. Following the resumption of global travel, Hong Kong SAR has recently reached out to the Management Authority of South Africa again to explore the possibility of donating further rhino horn samples for scientific analysis.

12. While we have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of cases involving rhino specimens following the legislative amendment in 2018, with which we have seen a significant increase in the sentencing from a maximum of 2 months' imprisonment to 26 months' imprisonment for cases involving rhino horns, and under the impact on global travel of the COVID pandemic, Hong Kong SAR will continue to stay vigilant for smuggling of rhino specimens and reach out to relevant parties for intelligence exchange and collaboration as appropriate.



Qatar National report on combat Trade in  
rhinoceroses

August 2023

By the Wildlife Development Department of the  
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

## **1- Introduction:**

Qatar issued five laws that directly address wildlife and some aspects of wildlife trade. the CITES implementing law regulating the import, export, and permit system used for legal trade in designated species. The primary law is the Dangerous Animal Law, which utilizes a permit system to regulate the legal trade in wildlife, supporting legislation includes the Hunting Law, Endangered Species Trade Law, Wildlife and Natural Habitats Protection law (Wildlife Protection Law), and the Environmental Law. The Hunting Law regulates what and when species can be hunted while the Wildlife Protection Law and Environmental Protection Law prohibit acts that harm endangered or threatened species. These laws provide rigorous tools to protect wildlife and prevent smuggling.

The organized participation of the various relevant authorities in law enforcement and customs has been intensified, and specific security measures have been put in place to detect smuggling of rhino horns and ivory. Cooperation and participation with the judicial authorities in the country has also been intensified and has contributed more to the full implementation of international conventions and laws

The State of Qatar, within the framework of its implementation of the plan to combat ivory, which included several strict measures, has limited a large degree of smuggling through Hamad International Airport, and this plan had a positive impact in preventing the smuggling of rhino horns.

## 2- Status:

### 2.1 Activities and outputs

The State of Qatar has sought to raise the efficiency of the relevant personnel at Hamad International Airport, so that most law enforcement officers receive appropriate training on a regular basis.

**Table (1):** The activities and achievements that have been achieved since the year 2018.

Action	achievements
Establish a formal collaboration mechanism to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between different departments operating at Hamad International Airport(HIA) , with a role in combating wildlife crime , in particular ivory and rhinoceros horn trafficking transiting through Qatar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qatar’s CITES Management Authority together with the stakeholders operating at HIA has established permanent committee and designated focal point from each party to facilitate actions to be performed in combat of all types of wildlife crimes, including trafficking of illegal elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns transiting through Qatar.</li></ul>
Organize training sessions / workshops for enforcement authorities working at Hamad International Airport (HIA) to raise awareness about wildlife crime and strengthen capacity to combat it . in particular on topics such as international policies governing wildlife trade , the detection and identification of illegal wildlife consignments , ivory and rhinoceros horn recognition and identification , applicable legislation and protocol to follow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two training workshops were held by CITES management authority to strengthen the capacity and raise awareness among employees of the different stakeholders involved in combat of wildlife trafficking in State of Qatar. The first workshop was held for three days in July 2018 , and was attended by 30 employees from the Customs General Authority , Airport Security Department , Animal Resources Department and new employees recruited for CITES Enforcement Authority .While the second workshop was held in March 2019 and was attended by 26 employees from the aforementioned department , including 11 employees from Qatar Museums Authority. The workshops was organized on combat of illegal wildlife trade focusing on understanding of CITES as legal mechanism for combat of illegal international wildlife trade . Sessions dealt with CITES introduction , CITES appendices , species,</li></ul>

	<p>identification of wildlife specimens in trade , CITES permits and certificates implementation of CITES procedures with emphasis on implementation of Qatar's NIAP requirements and legal procedure according to our national law on regulation of trade in endangered wildlife species and their products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The efficiency of the staff at Hamad International Airport was raised periodically, and the CITES management authority was able to test the extent of benefiting from these programs through its monthly follow-up of the extent of carrying out daily tasks.</li> <li>• The interest in combating wildlife crime was in the highest state authorities in the State of Qatar, so we find that the training program for the year 2021 included training on the CITES Convention and combating wildlife crime, and this was in the context of the state program that covered other topics such as judicial control, unified electronic inspection, ... etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Strengthen capacity among officers working at HIA , through the provision of operational handbooks and identification manuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A identification manual and operational handbook on NIAP implementation and Rhino horns process at HIA has been prepared ,</li> <li>• Handbook of Common Traded Species listed in CITES - Middle East and North Africa region version has been prepared by IFAW and it was used in training</li> </ul>
<p>5 Increase the number of inspections targeting high risk flights, including random inspections and operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CITES Management Authority has arranged with the Aviation Security Department and the Airport Security Department , to carry double inspection of luggage coming from key countries identified as source country for ivory and destined to countries identified as final destination for smuggled ivory.</li> <li>• - In cooperation with the staff of the Wildlife Protection Department, there are visits to the airport and random inspections carried out by the staff of the Wildlife Protection Department to ensure the performance of the crews that were</li> </ul>



	<p>trained inside the airport. This had a positive effect, as ivory and Rhino horns confiscations amounted to (769.984 kg).</p>
<p>Work with Qatar Airways to support the development of videos to raise awareness about and discourage crimes involving wildlife , to be made available as part of Qatar Airways in –flight entertainment program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . Qatar Airways has completed awareness program and training for its staff covering CITES requirements , illegal wildlife trafficking . Also, Qatar airways has completed development of videos , in-flight magazine , in-flight entertainment system , and posters on screens across Hamad International Airport (HIA) , as actions for raising passengers awareness on illegal wildlife trafficking .</li> </ul>
<p>Publicize seizures and subsequent prosecutions in main stream media and on governmental social media platforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually , in all seizure cases of illegal wildlife trade , the Ministry of Environment and Climate change , represented by the Department of Protection and Wildlife , as designated CITES Management Authority for Qatar, call for press conference to be attended by all representatives of local newspapers , and special interviews are hosted by the national television channels.</li> <li>• The training program for the year 2021 targeted the judicial control authorities, and there is media participation in all activities and training events inside Hamad International Airport. Therefore, all cases of confiscation are published on social media, and they follow up on cases referred to legal authorities for adjudication.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 confiscations:

Table (1): confiscations (2014-2018)

period	Species	No. of pieces	Weight(kg)	source	Date
2014-2018	Rhino horns	80	166.340	unknown	2014-2018

**Table 2.** (rhino horn confiscated (January 2020 – June 2023 )

No.	Species	No. of pieces	Weight (kg)	Source	Date
1-	Rhino horns	4 pieces	11 kg20g	South Africa	05/01/2020
2-	Rhino horns	12 pieces	22kg1g	South Africa	31/01/2022
3-	Rhino horns	25 pieces	46kg 12g	Zimbabwe	28/04/2022
4-	Rhino horns	-	44kg7g	South africa	15/06/2022
5-	Ivory rings	-	9kg400g	Oghanda	31/01/2023

**Attachments:**

**1. Pictures of recent confiscations (January 2023)**



**2. Pictures of recent confiscations (June 2022)**



3. Some pictures of the workshops and training that took place at Hamad International Airport 2021 and 2022



4. Awareness materials: a guide to measures to combat illegal trade in wildlife





## forestry, fisheries & the environment

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Dear Mr Abi-Chahine

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONFERENCE 9.14 AND THE DECISIONS ON RHINOCEROSSES ADOPTED AT THE COP19, PANAMA, 2022**

I refer to the letter from Ben Janse van Rensburg letter dated 14 July 2023 regarding the above.

#### **Decision 18.116**

South Africa does not have illegal markets for rhinoceros horn but rather individuals and organised crime groups which are involved in the illegal trade in horn which are trafficked from South Africa to markets in Asia. We have various ongoing investigations against many of these individuals/groups.

#### **Decision 19.115 :**

a) South Africa collects samples from all rhinoceros horn seized within the country for forensic analysis, as anticipated by paragraph 1 g) of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*.

b) When importing DNA samples from countries where illegal consignments of rhino horns have been seized, South Africa uses the simplified procedures provided for under the *Regarding the use of simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates* in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates* for law enforcement purposes, to facilitate the exchange of rhinoceros horn samples for DNA analyses.



**Batho pele-** putting people first

The processing of personal information by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is done lawfully and not excessive to the purpose of processing in compliance with the POPI Act, any codes of conduct issued by the Information Regulator in terms of the POPI Act and / or relevant legislation providing appropriate security safeguards for the processing of personal information of others.

**Decision 19.116**

a) South Africa often uses the *Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points* to facilitate contact with relevant agencies in different countries on matters related to rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros specimen trade; however, some of the information included in the Directory is old/outdated.

b) Our details in the Directory of illegal trade in rhinoceros horn focal points are up to date.

**Decision 19.117**

Officials from South Africa and Botswana have not had an opportunity to meet to review trends associated with the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros' specimens affecting us; however, South Africa plans is planning to engage with the Botswana Enforcement Authorities for a meeting to discuss the issues addressed in this Decision in the next few months. It is hoped that we will be able to report on progress at SC 77 in November 2023.

**Decision 19.118**

South Africa often engages with China, Mozambique and Viet Nam on illegal trade in rhinoceros products and always makes contact when illegal shipments are detected in these countries or when we suspect that an illegal shipment might be on its way to one of these countries. The South African Police Service has formal agreements with China and Viet Nam. We have regular meetings and operations with Mozambique in the Greater Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area between South Africa and Mozambique to protect the natural resources in these parks, including rhinoceros.

**With regard to general implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 the following:**

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment (DFFE)'s Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI) works closely with the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), the South African Police Service (SAPS), National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU), South Africa Revenue Service (SARS) and the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) in combatting wildlife trafficking which includes rhino poaching. There are various forums and committees that enable this coordination, including at a national level, the Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking (falling under the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure [NATJOINTS]), the provincial joints structures within the nine provinces as well as the National Biodiversity Investigators Forum (NBIF) where wildlife and police investigators meet to discuss specific investigations and targets.

The National Integrated Strategy to Combatting Wildlife Crime (NISCWT) has been approved by Cabinet for implementation in May 2023. The NISCWT is aimed at reducing the threat that wildlife trafficking poses to national security, by establishing an integrated strategic framework for an intelligence-led, well-resourced, multidisciplinary, and consolidated law enforcement approach to focus and direct law enforcement's ability, supported by the whole of government and society. The strategy also takes account of South Africa's national and international obligations to address wildlife trafficking.

A more recent initiative that is also aligned to the actions in the NISCWT's implementation plan, is the enhanced focus to address money-laundering linked to illegal wildlife trafficking under the auspices of the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC). This involves a private-public partnership (in particular the banking sector) to assist in the effective and efficient combatting of financial crime and the enhancing of a collective understanding of financial crime trends. Through the SAMLIT (SA Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force) Wildlife Crime Working Group, we are seeing effective coordination between

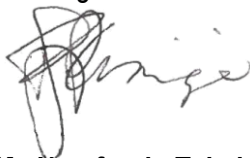
**IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONFERENCE 9.14 AND THE DECISIONS ON RHINOCEROSSES ADOPTED AT THE COP19, PANAMA, 2022**

financial institutions and law enforcement in identifying, detecting and disrupting financial flows from IWT, with 7 focussed investigations currently underway.

A special focus is placed by the NPA on the prosecution of rhino and related matters in order to curb this growing transnational phenomenon. The enhanced focus resulted in a significant increase in the number of convictions and verdict cases finalised indicating the dedication and commitment of the prosecutors to curbing this crime area. During the last three financial years, a total of 509 accused were convicted of rhino poaching and related matters. As an example, an individual from Mozambique was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment on charges of trespassing, contravention of Immigration Act, possession of a firearm with intent to commit a crime, possession of unlicensed firearm, possession of a dangerous weapon and possession of 6 rhinoceros' horns in the Kruger National Park. The NPA's focus on dealing with the prevalence of rhino poaching and the masterminds as an organised crime phenomenon resulted in 3 (three) Prevention of Organised Crime Act (POCA) prosecutions currently enrolled in the High Courts of RSA against 24 accused. These matters relate to, *inter alia*, the killing of rhinoceroses, dealing in rhino horns, corruption, and money laundering.

Over the last year anti-poaching efforts have intensified countrywide as a joint effort is made by all the role players. More targeted deployment of resources is being implemented aided by the CMORE situational awareness platform operating within the integrated wildlife zones (this includes access to the platform by the private sector within these zones). Through this single technology platform role players are able to collaborate, making use of real-time insights and analytical capability, linking, for example, camera traps and ranger patrols while integrating a range of other systems.

Kind regards



**Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala**  
**Director-General**  
**Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment**  
**Letter signed by: Frances Craigie**  
**Designation: Chief Director: Sector Enforcement**  
**Date: 2023/08/14**

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE  
& ENVIRONMENT



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
وزارة التغير المناخي  
والبيئة

# UAE Report on Rhinoceros Conservation

August 2023





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## Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as a global leader against illegal trade of wildlife. With its strategic geographic location and unwavering commitment to environmental conservation, the UAE has taken significant strides to combat the illicit trafficking of endangered species and their products. Recognizing the grave ecological, economic, and ethical consequences of this trade, the UAE government, in collaboration with international organizations and local stakeholders, has implemented a multifaceted approach to address this pressing issue. By enacting stringent regulations, enhancing law enforcement efforts, promoting public awareness, and fostering international partnerships, the UAE has positioned itself at the forefront of global efforts to safeguard the biodiversity and preserve the balance of ecosystems.

In recognition of the paramount significance of combatting illicit wildlife trade, the UAE has proactively taken steps to align itself with commitments to environmental conservation. These commitments led the UAE to become one of the earliest countries in the Middle East to formally ratify the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1990.

## Legal framework

Central to the UAE's efforts is a robust legislative framework that provides a formidable deterrent against those involved in the illicit trade of wildlife, including rhinos. The country has enacted stringent laws and regulations that align with various international conventions, such as CITES. These laws not only criminalize the trafficking of endangered species and their derivatives but also impose severe penalties on those found guilty. The UAE has enacted a number of legislations which include, Federal Law No. 11 for the year 2002 Concerning the Regulation and Control of International Trade in Endangered Fauna and Flora. This law includes 40 articles governing the scope of implementation, the functions of the authorities, administrative and scientific authorities, international trade and documentation, exceptions, identifying the ports of entry, how to deal with non-member states, registration of establishments and companies, transit, cooperation with the concerned authorities, and sanctions. It also includes penal



articles and sanctions for offenders, which varies from fines up to 50 thousand dirhams and imprisonment up to six months. These penalties vary depending on the Appendices to the Convention.

Additionally, the Resolution of the Cabinet No. 22 of the year 2003 to issue the Executive By-Law of the Federal Law No. 11 of the year 2002 on Regulating and Controlling the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora. Furthermore, in 1988 Dubai Government issued an order for the ban of ivory and rhino horns, preventing businesses of buying and selling and manufacturing ivory and rhino horns. CITES authorities within the UAE, in collaboration with security agencies and NGOs, are evaluating the effectiveness of CITES enforcement in the country and are improving the efforts of CITES implementation regularly. The UAE's legal mechanisms serve as a strong foundation for its commitment to upholding global wildlife protection standards.

## Border Control

Beyond legislation, the UAE has fostered a collaborative approach that involves various stakeholders, both domestic and international, to combat the illegal trade of wildlife and rhinos specifically. The government has established dedicated law enforcement units and agencies, equipped with specialized training and resources, to detect and thwart illegal wildlife trade activities. These units work tirelessly to monitor entry points, scrutinize shipments, and apprehend offenders.

The UAE's border control apparatus assumes a multifaceted regulatory role spanning both international and domestic legal domains across land, air, and sea. This vital function encompasses diverse responsibilities, including the facilitation of cross-border trade, management of international trade dynamics, conducting security screenings, and combating transnational organized crime, including the monitoring and regulation of import and export of endangered wildlife.

Working in harmony with various competent authorities, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA) employs cutting-edge technologies to vigilantly surveil all major border points. These technologies serve as a formidable tool in the identification and containment of unlawful shipments. Collaborative partnerships with



international governmental and non-governmental entities are also nurtured, leveraging their specialized knowledge to align with the UAE's strategic imperatives.

A significant stride in combatting illicit wildlife trade has been undertaken by Dubai Customs through the establishment of innovative container inspection facilities. The groundbreaking Advanced Container Scanning System represents a pioneering solution on the global stage, harmonizing a multitude of inspection technologies into a singular cohesive framework. At the forefront of container and truck X-ray screening, this system boasts unmatched capabilities. It proficiently screens the contents of 150 trucks per hour, moving at speeds ranging from 8 to 15 km/hour, equating to one truck every 24 seconds. This innovation serves as a robust bulwark fortifying UAE's borders, bolstering security measures, optimizing resource utilization, and augmenting risk mitigation, all while facilitating the seamless flow of trade.

## Regulation of Transport Sector

Transport authorities also have a role in limiting illegal activity. The UAE is working hand in hand with the private sector to implement CITES regulation and conserve endangered species through different initiatives focusing on building awareness and developing different innovative methods to combat illegal wildlife trade, through partnerships with Emirates Airlines, Etihad Airlines, Dubai Ports World and Dubai Customs World, among others. For example, Etihad airways and Emirates airlines prohibited the carriage of species, and its products, listed under CITES Appendix I or listed as 'Critically Endangered' or 'Endangered' by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

The UAE national airline , Etihad Airways, are also active partners in addressing biodiversity conservation. For example, Etihad issued an Animal Welfare and Conservation Policy. The policy outlines new strict cargo policies and criteria for the carriage of endangered and threatened species, hunting trophies containing any animal parts, shark fins and live animals intended for use in scientific research. These items are not permitted on Etihad aircrafts.

Emirates airline supports wildlife via wearing special livery in support of United for Wildlife, a global collaboration that unites the efforts of the world's leading wildlife charities in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade.

The livery, which features some of the planet's wildlife that are threatened by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, is aimed at raising awareness of the illegal wildlife trade and communicates the need for urgent action.



## The National Plan of Action

The National Plan of Action to enhance the regulation of international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora 2023 -2030 was developed within the framework of the UAE strategy to conserve the biodiversity and protect endangered species. At its core, this plan aims to protect endangered species through a comprehensive approach, comprising of four distinct national goals accompanied by a multitude of associated tasks and activities.

Central to this plan's mission is the overarching vision to ensure that, by 2030, the trade in wild fauna and flora is managed in an efficient and sustainable manner, contributing to the conservation of endangered species. This ambitious aspiration underscores the UAE's resolute commitment to conservation and responsible trade practices on a global scale.

The plan's four well-defined national goals constitute a roadmap to achieve this vision. Goal 1 focuses on strengthening the legislative framework governing international and domestic trade in species listed under CITES. This goal underlines the critical role of robust regulations in promoting ethical and legal trade practices. Goal 2 highlights



the significance of implementing and enforcing national legislation as a means to combat the illicit trade in wildlife. As one of the main tasks in this goal is to reduce the demand and supply of illegal wildlife species and products, which are being worked on with local authorities in the country such as customs and police by strengthening the control of border and ports, adopting new innovative technologies to detect wildlife specimens and identify priority pathways for illegal wildlife trade. In addition, relevant authorities such as airlines, shipping companies, and airport and port operators are involved in combating illegal wildlife trade. This objective seeks to create a strong deterrent against illegal activities and emphasizes the UAE's commitment to adhering to international agreements.

Recognizing the power of education and awareness, Goal 3 emphasizes capacity building and public awareness efforts in combatting the illegal wildlife trade. By educating citizens and stakeholders, the UAE aims to instill a sense of responsibility and encourage collective action. Lastly, Goal 4 underscores the importance of regional and international collaboration to develop regulatory frameworks that effectively combat illegal wildlife trade. This objective aligns with the UAE's commitment to being an active participant in the global fight against wildlife trafficking, emphasizing the interconnected nature of this challenge.

The National Plan of Action stands as a symbol of unwavering commitment and forward thinking, presenting a holistic strategy that perfectly resonates with the UAE's steadfast dedication to protect biodiversity and fostering a sustainable future for our precious wildlife.

## **Awareness and Building Capacity**

The UAE places a significant emphasis on the pivotal role that capacity building and public awareness play in reducing the demand for illegal wildlife products. This commitment is demonstrated through a multifaceted approach involving training initiatives and innovative awareness campaigns. The MOCCA takes a proactive stance by organizing specialized training courses for enforcement officers from various entities such as the Ministry of Interior, Airports Security, Customs, and those responsible for implementing Federal Law no. 11 of 2002. These training courses have



been consistently conducted by MOCCAЕ from 2007 to 2023, keeping participants informed about the latest developments and international best practices.

Efforts in capacity building and awareness extend beyond government bodies. Collaborative efforts involving Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (UAE CITES Scientific Authority), Emirates Nature in partnership with WWF, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) are instrumental in enhancing the knowledge and awareness of inspection officers and the wider community. These initiatives align with the UAE CITES Management Authority to ensure comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the issues at hand. A notable contribution comes from DP World, Etihad Airways, and Emirates Airlines, who have developed e-learning courses on illegal wildlife trade detection and prevention. These courses have reached more than 10,000 employees globally, and DP World's global education program engages the youth in detecting and combatting this illicit trade, thereby protecting nature for the future.

Public awareness is enhanced through a range of strategies, including nationwide awareness campaigns. These campaigns employ diverse tools such as leaflets, posters, and brochures, all geared towards CITES and the species listed under its appendices. Over the past decade, these campaigns have been strategically executed in various settings, from shopping malls and local markets to schools, universities, and airports. By spotlighting the risks and consequences of trafficking endangered species, these efforts seek to elevate the consciousness of UAE residents and visitors alike about the importance of conserving biodiversity on both local and global scales.

MOCCAЕ's dedication to education extends particularly to the younger generation. A series of awareness campaigns targeting different segments of society, with a focus on the implementation of CITES and combating illegal wildlife trade, reflects this commitment. Practical resources, including printed and electronic guidelines, have also been provided to the public, amplifying awareness on CITES and the trade in listed species. Further reinforcing these endeavors, MOCCAЕ has orchestrated social media campaigns aimed at highlighting the significance of regulated international trade in CITES-listed species and their imperative conservation. Through these collective measures, the

UAE strives to build a society that comprehends, values, and actively participates in the protection of our planet's precious wildlife and ecosystems.

## Conservation of Rhinoceros

The UAE has consistently demonstrated dedicated commitment to the conservation of endangered species such as rhinoceros, both within its own borders and on the global stage. Domestically, the UAE has demonstrated remarkable commitment to the protection of rhinoceros populations, exemplified by significant milestones such as the birth of a baby southern white rhino at the Sharjah Safari in 2021, which was part of a breeding program to protect endangered species at threat from extinction. This accomplishment



highlights the UAE's proactive efforts in nurturing and sustaining endangered rhinoceros species.

Internationally, the UAE's conservation efforts extend beyond its borders. The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund has played a pivotal role in supporting rhinoceros conservation projects in Africa and Asia. The



Fund's substantial contributions underscore the UAE's commitment to save rhinoceros populations, as well as their habitats, by adopting conservation initiatives in regions where these majestic creatures face severe threats.

## International Collaboration

In the realm of international collaboration, the UAE actively engages with global partners, including international organizations, conservation groups, and law enforcement agencies, to share intelligence, best practices,





and resources. By enhancing strong alliances, the UAE strengthens its impact on a global scale and contributes to the collective effort to protect rhinos and other endangered wildlife from the brink of extinction.

The UAE's commitment to rhinoceros conservation extends beyond its borders through international collaborations, notably exemplified by its participation in United for Wildlife (UfW). Partnerships with prominent UAE entities like Emirates airline, Etihad Airways, Dubai Ports World, Dubai Airports, and Dubai Customs have been



integral to UfW's initiative. The launching of the United for Wildlife - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Chapter in Dubai Expo2020 under UfW's umbrella signifies the UAE's dedication to combating the illegal wildlife trade on a global scale. This Chapter enhances information sharing, resource allocation, and collaboration among stakeholders from transportation, finance, law enforcement, and NGOs, bolstering efforts to address conservation priorities.

During his visit to the UAE, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, founder of United for Wildlife, toured Jebel Ali Port, experiencing the role of Dubai Customs and their efforts in combating illegal trade in wildlife and the department's keenness to cooperate closely with other entities such as DP World against wildlife trafficking. The UAE's commitment to conserve wildlife is further demonstrated by the Dubai Airports' decision to join The Buckingham Palace Declaration, aligning with the Transport Taskforce, becoming the latest member of United for Wildlife's Transport Taskforce, to enhance regional awareness and action against the illegal wildlife trade.



## Risk Management Practices

In recognition of the pressing concern posed by the illicit trade in wild species, the UAE has undertaken substantial measures to tackle this issue head-on. By strengthening the collaboration between pivotal entities such as customs, police, Interpol, and National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority, a concerted effort has been made to not only identify associated risks but also to devise effective solutions. Central to the implementation of these proficient risk management practices is the judicious integration of cutting-edge technology and strategic acumen at the ports. The utilization of Dubai Customs' ingenious smart risk engine system, boasting a comprehensive array of 128 criteria, facilitates the proactive detection of suspicious shipments warranting closer scrutiny. Teams tasked with inspections diligently examine these flagged shipments. By harnessing state-of-the-art applications in information



technology and artificial intelligence, coupled with the skill elevation of customs inspection personnel at the Jebel Ali Customs Centre, Dubai Customs triumphantly curtailed the illegal wildlife trade.

## Conclusion

The UAE's firm dedication to combatting illegal trade of wildlife and protecting rhinos remains unwavering, its multifaceted approach—characterized by stringent legislation, vigilant law enforcement, public awareness, building capacity and international cooperation—serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration in the ongoing struggle to preserve our planet's irreplaceable biodiversity.