

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



Fifty-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-6 October 2006

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

RHINOCEROSSES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 13.23 to 13.25 concerning African and Asian rhinoceros species as follows:

Directed to Parties

- 13.23 *Range States of African and Asian rhinoceros species are encouraged to support the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups in collecting and collating the information referred to in Decision 13.25.*
- 13.24 *Understanding that the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups operate on a voluntary basis and may be constrained by a lack of resources, Parties and other donors are urged to provide support to these groups for undertaking these activities.*

Directed to the Secretariat

- 13.25 *The Secretariat shall:*
- a) *invite the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups to share information on the national and continental conservation status of African and Asian rhinoceros species, the legal and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens, incidents of illegal killing of rhinoceros, and conservation and management strategies and actions; and*
 - b) *submit a written summary of the information for consideration at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties that will include recommendations for further reporting on the conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses.*

and Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) (Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses) which directed the Standing Committee as follows:

to continue to pursue actions aimed at reducing illegal trade, ensuring that:

- a) *all such actions are accompanied by evaluations of their effectiveness;*

- b) *appropriate, cost-effective, standardized indicators of success are developed and/or refined to measure changes in levels of illegal hunting and of the status of rhinoceros populations in the range States; and*
 - c) *the policies that guide interventions are responsive and adaptive to the outcome of evaluations.*
3. African and Asian rhinoceroses were discussed by the Standing Committee at its 53rd meeting (SC53, Geneva, June – July 2005) in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) (see document SC53 Doc. 19). The Committee agreed to request the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups to review the question of indicators brought up in document Doc. SC.42.10.5 and to request TRAFFIC to analyse the data on rhinoceros horn stockpile volumes, seizures, poaching and other information. The Committee called on Parties to support IUCN and TRAFFIC financially in undertaking these tasks, and agreed to re-discuss the matter at its the present meeting on the basis of the results of this work.
 4. In compliance with Decision 13.25, paragraph a), and in the context of the Standing Committee's request formulated at SC53, the Secretariat conveyed invitations to the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC to provide information on certain aspects of the conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses. They kindly accepted.
 5. The provisional results of the research that IUCN and TRAFFIC have undertaken are summarized in the Annex to this document.

Recommendations

6. The Standing Committee is invited to consider what actions, if any, it should pursue in relation to the research undertaken by IUCN and TRAFFIC on standardized indicators of success for evaluating rhinoceros conservation initiatives, rhinoceros horn stockpiles, seizures, poaching and other aspects of the conservation of and trade in rhinoceroses.



CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN AFRICAN AND ASIAN RHINOCEROSSES

A report from the
IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC
to the CITES Secretariat
pursuant to Decisions 13.23-25 taken at the thirteenth Conference of the Parties and
further deliberations at the fifty-third meeting of the Standing Committee

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Introduction

1. This document has been prepared by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC.
2. At the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13, Bangkok, 2004), Decisions 13.23 to 13.25 pertaining to rhinoceroses were adopted. They were aimed as a means to achieve more effective reporting under CITES by utilizing existing mechanisms within the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups. Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) (Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses), which continues to guide specific trade-related conservation measures under CITES, was accordingly revised at CoP13 to remove the previous direct reporting mechanism from Parties, which had met with limited success over the period of two successive Conferences of the Parties.
3. Subsequently, at the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, June – July 2005), discussion focused on Document SC53 Doc. 19, introduced by the Secretariat, to determine what actions should be taken pursuant to obligations in Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) that are directed at the Standing Committee. The Committee agreed to request the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Groups to review the question of indicators in document Doc. SC.42.10.5 and to request TRAFFIC to analyze the data on rhinoceros horn stockpile volumes, seizures, poaching and other information.
4. Pursuant to Decision 13.24, the Committee also called on Parties to support these organizations financially in undertaking these tasks, and agreed to re-discuss the matter at its 54th meeting on the basis of their results.
5. The purpose of this report is thus two-fold: firstly to provide feedback on tasks requested at the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee; and secondly, to outline progress to date in the implementation of Decisions 13.23-25.

6. A significant amount of preparation for this report was realized at the 8th meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group in Swaziland (27 June to 2 July 2006). As such, sincere gratitude is extended to the UK's Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, whose funding assured the attendance of many key official representatives from major range States and other rhinoceros experts.

CITES Rhinoceros Indicators Process

Background

7. Through the adoption of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13), the Standing Committee is directed to pursue actions aimed at reducing illegal trade ensuring that:
- a) *all such actions are accompanied by evaluations of their effectiveness;*
 - b) *appropriate, cost-effective, standardized indicators of success are developed and/or refined to measure changes in levels of illegal hunting and of the status of rhinoceros populations in the range States; and*
 - c) *the policies that guide interventions are responsive and adaptive to the outcome of the evaluations.*
8. Since the original adoption of this text in 1994, the Standing Committee has discussed the topic of indicators on four main occasions:
- At the 37th meeting of the Standing Committee in 1996, a report on the development of indicators was presented by the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, discussed within a working group at the request of the CITES Secretariat, and subsequently endorsed by the Standing Committee.
 - In 1998, on the request of the CITES Secretariat, the Standing Committee approved at its 40th meeting the use of CHF 42,000 from the CITES Trust Fund for the further development of standardized success indicators for rhinoceros conservation interventions. A workshop was subsequently organized by TRAFFIC.
 - At the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee in 1999, the results of the workshop were presented by the CITES Secretariat (Doc. SC42.10.5). A fixed site-based monitoring system was recommended as the preferred way to not only measure changes in levels of illegal hunting and population status over time, but also to understand the cause of these changes. This preferred choice was also the most expensive type of indicator system discussed. Following deliberations, the Standing Committee did not authorize the release of funds from the CITES Trust Fund to fully develop a proposal for monitoring the illegal killing of rhinoceroses.
 - The outcome of the discussions on this matter at the 53rd meeting of the Standing Committee is given in paragraphs 3 and 4 above.

Views on the future of the CITES indicators process

9. The CITES Indicators Process was discussed at a Working Group of the recent IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group meeting, and again in plenary. It was recognized that no funding for further development of the indicators process under the direction of the Standing Committee had transpired since 1999. At the same time, despite recommending the preferred (most complex and expensive) indicators model at the 1998 workshop, doubts were expressed regarding the complexity and expense of the earlier submission, especially given the limited availability of funds to the range States for such monitoring.
10. The IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups believe that a simplified reporting approach is both necessary and a sufficient replacement for a more complex, site-based indicators system. The most cost-effective and sustainable solution would be for the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups to continue to collate and report on rhino issues and trends as requested in

Decision 13.25, drawing on ongoing monitoring information rather than trying to develop a new, highly complex and expensive rhinos indicators process.

11. It is further felt important to make linkages, where possible and to avoid possible replication, with MIKE, the site-based system for monitoring illegal killing of elephants. It makes eminent sense to seek synergies between the MIKE programme – already a functional CITES-mandated monitoring tool operational in some of the same countries – and the proposed, simplified monitoring system for rhinos (see also paragraph 23).

Stockpiles, Poaching and Seizures

12. Information on rhino horn stockpiles, poaching and seizures has been collected from all major rhino range States in Africa for the period 2000-2005. Additional variables continue to be collected by TRAFFIC in advance of CoP14 to enable a meaningful analysis of this data (see paragraph 14). Information has also been gathered for several Asian rhino range States as well as seizure information from many transit and consumer countries. The financial assistance of WWF to facilitate this work is greatly appreciated.
13. Currently, important gaps in data collection include updated stockpile data for Asian range States and former consumer nations, rhino product seizures worldwide since 2002, various law enforcement variables, and stockpile data for *ex situ* establishments.
14. It was agreed at the recent meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group that analysis of the stockpile, poaching and seizure data would be presented within a single report submitted to the Conference of the Parties at CoP14, as called for under Decision 13.25. The format for this report is presented below (see paragraph 23). In this way, a more meaningful and accurate presentation of the stockpile and trade-related information will be achieved, such as taking into account relevant data on the status and performance of different rhino species and populations. TRAFFIC is already working closely with the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups to achieve this goal. Range States will be provided ample opportunity to review the consolidated report before final submission at CoP14.

Progress on Decision 13.23 – support by Rhino Range States

15. The IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups are committed to sharing a summary of the information they receive and compile on a biennial basis relating to all species of African and Asian rhinos. The IUCN/SSC will submit a summary report on African and Asian rhinos, including trade-related information from TRAFFIC, to the CITES Secretariat for consideration at CoP14.
16. At the recent meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, the range State representatives and other rhino experts reported back on the status, trends and developments in rhino conservation in Botswana, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The country reports, which covered national plans, rhino committees, rhino numbers, translocations, mortalities, horn stocks, horn seizures and criminal cases, provided the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group with the bulk of the data needed to report at CoP14.
17. The IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group is planning a South Asia meeting from 4 to 16 October 2006 in Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India. It will be represented by range State representatives and other specialists to exchange information on the translocation, status, trends and developments in rhino conservation in South Asia. The Government of Nepal has just endorsed the Rhino Action Plan for Nepal and there is a plan to discuss the preparation of a regional rhino action plan.

Progress on Decision 13.24 – Financial support to IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups

18. As the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups operate on a voluntary basis and are constrained by lack of resources, Parties and other donors were urged in Decision 13.24 to provide support to these groups for undertaking the required reporting to CITES.

19. The two major funding requirements of these two IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups are for holding the (normally) biennial meetings and support to their relevant Secretariats for compiling summary reports for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. These costs total approximately USD 75,000 for Africa and USD 75,000 for Asia every two to three years.
20. The IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group is extremely grateful to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the United Kingdom for the funding it provided for the organization and holding of the recently-held meeting in July 2006. This meeting was attended by 41 members and observers, including a co-chair of the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group. Funding from DEFRA will also cover the cost of collating information from Africa; indeed, most of the data needed from African rhino range States for the report for CoP14 were collected at that meeting. The meeting further provided range State representatives with an opportunity to discuss rhino trade and CITES issues, including the collaborative development of a draft format and process for delivering on Decision 13.25.
21. The Asian Rhino and Elephant Strategy Program (AREA) of WWF and WWF Nepal are providing funding to run the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group South Asia Office, which is established in the WWF Nepal program premises. They are also providing funding for the forthcoming meeting in Assam.
22. With the exception of the above-mentioned funds, no other CITES Parties or donors have provided further support to assist the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups with the work requested in Decision 13.25. It should be noted that financial support is still required to ensure full delivery of the report requested under Decision 13.25, and to this effect a proposal outlining total required costs (USD 39,075) has been forwarded to the CITES Secretariat for consideration by the Parties and other interested donors.

Progress on Decision 13.25 – Reporting for CoP14

23. The content and process for delivery of the CITES rhino reporting requirements was discussed at the 8th meeting of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group. All African Rhino Range States representatives participated. The agreed content for the report to be presented at CoP14, thus providing a template for ongoing, standardized collection and analysis of the most important range States and trade indicators, is as follows:

Section 1: Management strategies

- Existence of rhino conservation strategies at national and regional levels, and a brief overview of key components and strategies, highlighting new initiatives, major problems and solutions.

Section 2: Status of populations

- Continental and national total numbers of each species.
- Number and average size of populations for each species and subspecies by management model and country with trends, numbers of IUCN/SSC-rated *Key* and *Important* populations and trends, and the total area occupied by each subspecies.
- Population growth, with a summary of key lessons learned from more detailed analysis of routine monitoring data.
- IUCN Red List status by species, CITES listing and accompanying descriptive information.

Section 3: Legislation

- Existing deterrents: penalties for rhino-related crimes (e.g. poaching, trafficking and possession) according to legislation for rhino range States and major transit and consumer countries.

- Application of deterrents: discussion of cases [cases pending, conviction rates (for finalized cases) and sentences handed down].

Section 4: CITES decisions

- Description of the status of implementation of CITES CoP13 decisions and consumptive and non-consumptive use of rhinos (e.g. Swaziland white rhino downlisting and black rhino surplus male hunting) on population performance and economic incentives for rhino conservation.
- Description of the status of southern white rhinos since their downlisting for live export to acceptable destinations and sport hunting.

Section 5: Illegal killing

- A series of indicators will be developed in consultation with MIKE to report on illegal killing.

Section 6: Stockpiles

- Continental (Africa and Asia range States) total quantity of horns, by number and weight.
- Breakdown by species, origin (legal/illegal) and ownership.
- Trends since 2004, including accumulation patterns, thefts and other disposals.
- Stockpiles elsewhere in world – governments (consumer countries, seizures) and *ex situ* establishments.

Section 7: Trade routes

- Description of main markets, sources, routes and conduits, following an analysis of rhino horn seizures, poaching incidents and qualitative information regarding factors stimulating trade.
- Description of main trends since 2004.
- Ratio of number of seized horns to known poached animals.

Section 8: Recommendations

- Recommendations will outline a range of options to reduce the threat of illegal trade to all five species of rhinoceros within the context of CITES.

24. In terms of process, the following five main steps are proposed for production of this report:

Step 1: Review of existing information and development of a template for collecting outstanding gaps following further discussions between IUCN/SSC and TRAFFIC.

Step 2: Requests for additional data sent out by IUCN/SSC and TRAFFIC to CITES Parties.

Step 3: Preparation of single draft report by IUCN/SSC and TRAFFIC.

Step 4: Review of draft report by African and Asian rhino range States and other relevant non range States.

Step 5: Submission of final report by IUCN/SSC to CITES Secretariat in time for translation into three working languages prior to CoP14.

Conclusions

25. IUCN/SSC, in collaboration with TRAFFIC, is on track for delivery of a full report for consideration at CoP14, as requested by the CITES Secretariat pursuant to Decision 13.25. Gratitude is shown to

DEFRA and WWF for their financial assistance to date, although further funds (USD 39,075) are required for full delivery of this initial baseline report.

26. Appreciation is extended to the Parties to CITES for their collaboration in the collection of necessary information, and urges ongoing support to complete the task.
27. It is recommended that ongoing monitoring of rhino status and trade-related issues beyond CoP14 continue to take the form of reports provided by the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups (as a more cost-effective and appropriate mechanism compared to previously proposed fixed site-based monitoring). Financial support is required to enable meetings of the Specialist Groups to take place every two to three years and ensure reporting (approximately USD 150,000 in total for both Specialist Group meetings).
28. Further revisions to Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP13) will be required and/or new resolution(s) or decision(s) pending agreement amongst Parties for this revised reporting mechanism and associated funding implications.