

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



Sixty-second meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 23-27 July 2012

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Rhinoceroses

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses*.

Background

2. At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions on the Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses:

Directed to the Secretariat

15.71 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *examine the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) in those range States where illegal killing of rhinoceros poses a significant threat to populations of rhinoceros, particularly Zimbabwe and South Africa;*
- b) *examine progress with regards to curtailing illegal trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives by implicated States, particularly Viet Nam; and*
- c) *report on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev CoP15) at the 61st, 62nd and 63rd meetings of the Standing Committee.*

15.72 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *facilitate, as a matter of urgency, and with others partners as appropriate, bilateral exchanges between key rhinoceros range States and rhinoceros horn consumer States, to improve wildlife enforcement cooperation efforts;*
- b) *report at the 61st and 62nd meetings of the Standing Committee (SC61 and SC62) on these efforts;*
- c) *seek funds to convene a joint CITES Ivory and Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force. Besides the Secretariat, members should include the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network Programme Coordination Unit, INTERPOL, the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Customs Organization and*

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

those Parties in Africa and Asia that are currently most affected by the smuggling of ivory and rhinoceros specimens. Priority should be given to including the following Parties: Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. The Task Force should undertake an exchange of intelligence regarding smuggling of ivory and rhinoceros specimens and develop strategies for combating illegal trade; and

d) *report on the work of the Task Force at SC61.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

15.73 *At its 61st and 62nd meetings, the Standing Committee shall consider the reports of the Secretariat requested under Decision 15.72 and determine what further actions, if any, are necessary.*

3. The Standing Committee, at its 61st meeting (SC61, Geneva, August 2011), concerned at the increasing level of poaching of rhinoceroses, and thefts of rhinoceros parts and derivatives from public and private properties in non-range States, established an intersessional Working Group, to be chaired by the United Kingdom, to identify measures that could be taken by CITES Parties to reduce the impact of illegal trade on the conservation of rhinoceroses and to enhance existing controls on trade in rhinoceros horn products. The Committee also:

a) *Instructed the working group to:*

i) *taking account of documents SC61 Doc. 45.1 and SC61 Doc. 45.2, the responses to Decisions 15.71 and 15.72, and on the basis of other currently available information, work with the Secretariat to assess how trade patterns have developed since CoP15, and, taking account of illegal activities, consider the drivers for trade and measures that could be taken to prevent rhinoceros horn entering the illegal market;*

ii) *collect and assess available scientific evidence and documented evidence of traditional cultural practices and beliefs that exist relating to the medicinal properties of rhinoceros horn, and in particular any which relates to the curative properties for cancers and strokes;*

iii) *work intersessionally, and by electronic means as necessary, to identify urgent, short-term measures and longer-term measures that can be taken by CITES Parties to reduce the illegal trade in rhinoceroses and their parts and derivatives, and to enhance existing controls on trade in rhinoceros horn products and live rhinoceroses to ensure the long-term conservation of the species;*

iv) *allocate tasks to its members to assess specific measures that may reduce the impact of illegal trade and enhance existing controls; and*

v) *report at SC62 with a view to developing recommendations for consideration at CoP16;*

b) *Urged Parties to, urgently, introduce precautionary measures to control the trade in rhinoceros horn and live rhinoceroses;*

c) *Urged Parties to provide information on trade in rhinoceroses and their parts or derivatives to IUCN and TRAFFIC, as detailed in Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15); and*

d) *Encouraged Parties to engage in public awareness campaigns highlighting the current serious levels of criminality associated with the illicit trade in rhinoceroses and rhinoceros horn.*

4. Since SC61, the Secretariat has undertaken several actions in accordance with the instructions contained within Decisions 15.71 and 15.72. Details of these are set out in document SC62 Doc. 47.2, for consideration by the Standing Committee in accordance with Decision 15.73. Several aspects of the Secretariat's work and findings are also of relevance to the work of the working group established at SC61 but, at the time of writing this document, had not been considered by them.

5. To assist the working group, with financial support provided by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Secretariat contracted TRAFFIC in March 2012 to undertake a study to identify available scientific evidence and documented evidence of traditional cultural practices and beliefs that exist relating to the medicinal properties of rhinoceros horn, and in particular any that relate to the curative properties for cancers and strokes. That report was received on 20 April (see the Annex to document SC62 Doc. 47.2).
6. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2012/014, dated 20 February 2012, on the *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*, inviting all Parties to submit information by 15 April, on:
 - a) the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) (recognizing that the Resolution contains a wide range of actions that Parties should undertake);
 - b) measures taken to reduce the illegal trade in rhinoceroses and their parts and derivatives;
 - c) measures taken to enhance existing controls on trade in rhinoceros horn products and live rhinoceroses to ensure the long-term conservation of the species; and
 - d) any other information which Parties believe could assist the Rhinoceros Working Group in fulfilling its mandate.

Eight Parties, plus the 27 Member States of the European Union, responded to the Notification. In addition the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group provided significant information and data.

7. The UNEP-WCMC and Secretariat reports, and 35 Party's responses to Notification No. 2012/014, and the IUCN AfRSG information, were received too late to be considered in time for any conclusions to be included within this report. However, the working group will continue to consider these and will make recommendations as soon as it is able.

Recommendations

8. In light of the increasingly, high levels of poaching of rhinoceroses, and the continuing need to identify urgent short-term measures to reduce the illegal trade in rhinoceroses and their parts and derivatives, the Standing Committee may wish to consider extending the mandate of the Working Group to analyse reports of Parties, NGOs and others, relevant to the tasks allocated to it at SC61, with a view to making rapid progress towards making recommendations.
9. To support the Working Group, the Standing Committee is invited to agree that the investigations, and work undertaken, detailed by the Secretariat to date be continued. Furthermore, that work and other information that may become available should be augmented by the Secretariat enabling a study to assess how trade patterns have developed since CoP15. The study should enable the working group to take account of illegal activities; and consider the drivers of trade and measures that could be taken to prevent rhinoceros horn entering the illegal market. The Standing Committee should urge Parties and NGOs to support, and as necessary contribute financially, towards the enabling of such a study.
10. The Standing Committee is invited to review the recommendations of the Working Group, when they are made available and to provide comments by electronic or other means. If the Standing Committee agrees, the Chair of the Working Group and the Secretariat will then make any revisions that might be necessary and submit the recommendations, on behalf of the Standing Committee, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 16th meeting.