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30 December 2013

Mr. John E. Scanlon  
Secretary General  
CITES Secretariat

**Re: Report on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5  
(Rev. CoP16)**

Dear Mr. John E. Scanlon,

In response to the Notification to the Parties No. 2013/037 concerning Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix I Asian big cat species, China would like to report its implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP16) and relevant Decisions as following,

**1. LEGISLATION**

The Wildlife Conservation Law of People's Republic of China was promulgated in 1988 which listed tiger, leopard, snow leopard, and clouded leopard as first class national protection wildlife species.

The policy on banning of domestic trade in tiger bone had been implemented since 1993. The stockpile of tiger bones obtained before 1993 had been kept sealed and the tiger parts coming from captive bred tigers are strictly regulated.

A law was issued in 1997 on more strictly control of possession and use of hunting rifles which made uncontrolled shooting at wildlife almost impossible.

The death sentence to the smuggling of endangered animals and their products in the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China* was abolished at the year of 2011, but the life sentence was kept.

In 2012, *A Notification on valuation of products made from terrestrial wild animals listed in CITES Appendix I and II while they are involved in wildlife resource destruction criminal cases* was issued jointly by Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate, State Forestry Administration, Ministry of Public Security, and General Administration of Customs solving the issue of evaluating value of the products of terrestrial wild animals listed in CITES Appendix I and II.

## 2、 NATIONAL ENFORCEMENT

The Forestry, Industry and Commerce, Public Security and Customs sectors of China are involving in the law enforcement of big cat conservation. The Forestry sector is mainly responsible for investigating and treating administrative cases of damaging big cat species and their habitats, the Industry and Commerce sector is in charge of investigating and treating administrative cases of illegal process and trade in big cat species within the market, the Public Security sector (mainly Forestry Police) is engaging in investigating and dealing with forest wildlife criminal cases while the Anti-smuggling department of Customs sector is primarily responsible for criminal enforcement about wildlife smuggling. All above mentioned sectors are carrying out annual law enforcement actions and operations based on their responsibilities accordingly in order to strengthen the protection of wild populations of big cat species and their habitats, and crack down illegal criminal activities.

In December 2011, a National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group (NICECG) was established forming a cooperative law enforcement platform for relevant agencies. It is expected to coordinate the domestic CITES enforcement and promote and conduct international wildlife enforcement operations. Moreover, a provincial level Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group has been set up for each province so far which formed a coordinate mechanism of CITES law enforcement issue covering whole country.

An inter-agency CITES enforcement coordination annual meeting is held at national and provincial level for introducing the international and national wildlife enforcement trend, exchanging the wildlife law enforcement experience, assessing the existing problems and difficulties faced by the enforcement agencies and made the operational enforcement recommendations to the priority areas or species.

The Customs system implemented operations namely *National Gate Shield*, *Predatory* and *Hope* to combat endangered species and big cat smuggling activities. Forest police authority organized and conducted special operations curbing cybercrime of illegal trade in wildlife and products, illegal trade of ivory and products, as well as hunting migratory birds etc. Public security authority carried out actions taking over illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, strictly combated and prevented illegal hunting and other criminal activity. Border control forces actively cooperate with the relevant authorities carrying out special actions to crack down smuggling and trafficking wildlife and its products.

A meeting about controlling network trade in endangered species was held to facilitate 15 websites of shopping, collection and information services jointly issued a proposal of

"zero tolerance to illegal internet wildlife trade", which effectively prevent illegal trade in wildlife and the products through internet.

Extensively use of large container scanning equipment, X-ray machines and other inspection technical equipments, carrying out intelligence management and risk assessment, promoting the use of professional investigation skills such as secret investigation and controlled delivery based on the information available and the needs of each case, having dual punishment measures by sentencing and property confiscation for criminals. Meanwhile, signing law enforcement agreement with neighboring countries and taking joint measures to strengthen the supervision on illegal trade activities in border areas.

Collecting, compiling, and analyzing the information and data of all wildlife seizures annually intercepted by the Customs and provided results to relevant domestic authorities in order to improve law enforcement by developing or adjusting conservation strategy on combating the illegal trade in wildlife.

According to an incomplete statistics, from the beginning of 2012 to the end of October 2013, China has investigated and dealt with 11,836 cases of destruction of wildlife resources and 14,279 criminals.

### 3 INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

China is keeping maintaining relationship with ASEAN-WEN by means of attending annual working meeting, taking part into training courses hosted by the Network, holding *Sino-ASEAN Dialogue on Wildlife Law Enforcement*, hosting *Special Meeting for Illegal Trade Investigation*, and displaying tens of thousands CITES posters at the ports along Sino-Vietnam, Sino-Laos and Sino-Myanmar borders.

China has been keeping strengthening the international cooperation and communication of big cat conservation, signing cooperation protocols on tiger conservation with India and Russia respectively, and reaching conservation matters at national and provincial level with Russia by means of regular meeting. Heilongjiang Provincial Forestry and Industry Bureau and Jilin Provincial Forestry Department respectively signed MOUs on tiger conservation cooperation with the Hunting Management Bureau of Russian Coastal Border Province. Meanwhile, China also carried out series of conservation actions of joint research, information exchange and personnel training on endangered big cat population with other countries and organizations.

*An Cooperative Agreement on Strengthening the Implementation of CITES* was signed between SFA and EU Environment Commission, which listed combating illegal trade in wildlife as one of the key cooperation areas for both sides. The bilateral negotiation with Management Authorities of Indonesia and Vietnam respectively on agreements of CITES implementation reached consensus on text level which will be signed and implemented in near future.

China has tried its best to enhance the relationship with ASEAN and African countries and to improve the level of bilateral cooperation by sending personnel working at ASEAN-WEN Secretariat and LATF.

Together with relevant countries, China organized and implemented an one-month transcontinental multinational joint enforcement operation namely *Operation Cobra* participated by 22 countries from Asia, Africa and America, which involved more than 100,000 law enforcement forces, cracked more than 200 cases of smuggling endangered species, arrested more than 100 suspects, and seized 6.5 tons of ivory and its products, 1.55 tons of Tibetan antelope cashmere, 0.8 ton of pangolin tablets, 324 helmet hornbill, 22 rhino horns and 4 rhino horn products, 10 tiger skins, 7 leopard skins and 42 tons of red sandalwood.

China hosted a Conference on Trans-boundary Conservation of Wild Tigers and Other Endangered Species in Kunming, Yunnan province southwest China from 29th July to 2nd August 2013 attended by the invited representatives from 13 tiger range countries, international and non-government organizations with a purpose of discussing solutions combating illegal wildlife trade. All attendance agreed to further enhance effective management of trans-boundary area for endangered species conservation, curb illegal trade and eliminate the illegal demand for wildlife products. A "Kunming Initiative" on combating illegal trade in wildlife was announced as a outcome of the conference.

#### 4 RECORDING OF INFORMATION

A database is under development which will input illegal wildlife trade information including case code, species involved, quantities, date, location, crime methods and result. The database and the analysis could be shared with other related law enforcement departments such as Customs and Forest police.

#### 5 CAPTIVE BREEDING

For the purpose of reintroduction, genetic resource conservation, public education, exhibition, and performance, captive breeding big cat animals such as tiger and leopard had been conducted in China for some time according to Chinese laws. Currently, the total captive tiger population is over 5,000 individuals that are mainly in two facilities. Captive population of leopard is solely in zoos and wild animal parks.

China has implemented permit system to captive breeding tiger by posing strict requirements of techniques, conditions, and origins of tiger, taking measures of labeling most of the captive bred tigers with individual records, microchips and DNA sample preservation, and establishing database for those labeled individuals, which enable the captive tiger to be fully under monitoring and prevent the captive bred tiger parts from entering the illegal trade from or through such facilities.

#### 6 STOCKPILES

In order to supervise the dead body of captive bred tigers, two tiger farms in Guangxi and Heilongjiang respectively are requested, under the supervision of local forestry departments, to dismember the frozen carcass in standardized methods, to seal the tiger bones, to label the tiger skins and destroy other tiger parts. During the period, actions of destroying stockpile of Asian big cat parts and their products have been carried out several times.

There is no information of losing big cat individuals and their parts as well as derivatives of captive breeding population since 1st January 2010.

Although bearing huge economic loss, the Chinese government has been implementing the regulation of banning tiger bone into traditional medicine since 1993 so as to support the global tiger conservation work.

## 7 CONSERVATION MEASURES

### 7.1 Information of big cat resources

Tiger (*Panthera tigris*): China is regarded as the origin of global tiger species, the total population of the remaining four tiger subspecies is around 40-50. Among them, Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) has showed promising achievements on population recovery, increasing from 12-16 in late 20th century to 18-22 in current. They mainly occur in Changbaishan Mountain and Wandashan Mountain, and their activity patterns indicate an increasing demand for a larger habitat in the past 10 years. There are more than 600 confirmed records of tiger's existence in an area of nearly 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The total population size is increasing and the work for population recovery has achieved initial success. The area of potential ideal habitat in northeast China for Amur tigers is 44000km<sup>2</sup>, including 38500km<sup>2</sup> in Changbaishan mountain and 5500 km<sup>2</sup> in Wandashan mountain. There were five subspecies existed in the history of China, however, Caspian tiger (*Panthera tigris virgat*) has already extinct and there is no evidence of wild South China tiger individuals in the past 20 years; the population size of Bengal tiger and Indochinese tiger is small. There are around 8-12 Bengal tiger individuals distributed in Motuo, Chayu in Tibet and 11-16 individuals of Indochinese tiger in south and southwest Yunnan province, China.

Snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*): The global potential habitat for snow leopard is around 3.02 million km<sup>2</sup> of which 60% locate in China, occupying 18.7% of the national territory. It is estimated that the habitat of snow leopard in China is about 1.1 million km<sup>2</sup>, up to 11.5% of national territory. According to the estimation of some international organizations, there are only 4500-7200 snow leopard individuals all over the world and nearly half of them (2000-2500) distribute in China, mainly in Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjiang and other areas.

Clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*): According to historical information, the population number of clouded leopard in China is about 2500. It is showed that relatively more Clouded leopard occur in Jiangxi, Fujian, Hunan, Hubei, and Guizhou provinces, while fewer animals distribute in Sichuan, Zhejiang, and Guangdong provinces. However, it is believed that Clouded leopard in Hainan province is facing the situation of extinction (Thomback and Jenkins, 1982). There was a sharp decline in the population number of clouded leopard during the period of late 1970s and 1980s and even extinct in some places due to habitat fragmentation. Although there was a slight recovery in population size recent years, the latest estimation is no more than one thousand all over China (Sheng, 1998).

Leopard (*Panthera pardus*): The First National Survey of Terrestrial Wildlife showed the population number of leopard was about 3500 and there are 3 geographic subspecies in China: South China leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) distribute in Yunnan, Guizhou, Tibet, Jiangxi, Hubei, Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Qinghai provinces and southern part of Shaanxi province; North China leopard (*Panthera pardus fontanierii*) distribute in Hebei, Henan, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia provinces and northern part of Shaanxi province; Amour leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) distribute in Daxinganling Mountain and Xiaoxinganling Mountain of Heilongjiang province and eastern mountain area of Jilin province.

(1) Amour leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) was once recorded in southern Daxinganling Mountain in 1930s (Loukashkin, 1936), but no traces for the recent 50 years in the whole area of Heilongjiang province (Ma, 1998), and is almost extinct in Jilin province recently (Li et al, 1993; Feng et al, 1993). Wild Amour leopard was nearly extinct in China in the 1980s (Ma, 1998) except fewer Amour leopards in Jilin and Heilongjiang province which separated into several isolated populations. It was reported in the year 2000 that the population number of Amour leopard was 7 to 12 individuals.

An survey of Amour leopard was carried out during the winter of 2011 and 2012 in Hunchun nature reserve, Hunchun and Wangqing forestry bureaus in southern Laoyeling Mountain of Jilin province. The footprints and camera capture images indicate that there are about 8 to 11 Amour leopards living in this area. Meanwhile, Amour leopard activities were reported in Suiyang and Muling of Heilongjiang province and Wangqing and Tianqiao Mountain of Jilin province recently. Although Amour leopard is still the most endangered big cat all over the world, its population and habitat in China has been recovered to some extent. More surveys and monitoring in larger area are needed to further understand the population and habitat dynamics.

(2) North China leopards mainly occur in Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Henan, Hebei, Ningxia, and Gansu provinces with the biggest population in Shanxi province while fewer individuals in other provinces. Reports show that leopard in Gansu province has already extinct. As a result of habitat loss, the North China leopard in many places is hardly seen.

(3) South China leopard is the only widespread subspecies in China. It had a quite big population in southern China at the beginning of 1950s.

## 7.2 Conservation Measures

Since 1950s, China started to have some regional surveys and bio-ecological research of big cat animals, and made a preliminarily comprehensive investigation and assessment on the status of tiger and leopard by regarding them as priority species during the first national survey of terrestrial wildlife resource starting from 1995. Based on the results of the survey, China has been keeping monitoring and evaluating tigers, snow leopards and other big cats in order to understand their population and habitat conditions as well as the threats which provide a reliable scientific basis for conservation measures.

Chinese wildlife authorities have initiated a pilot program to ensure reasonable compensation for loss caused by key national protected wildlife especially by tiger and

its prey since 2007 and now, an insurance policy for local community in part of tiger range areas is in trial.

In 2011, Chinese government released *China Wild Tiger Recovery Plan*. This flagship-species-based government-led Plan covered 9 provinces of Jilin, Heilongjiang, Yunnan, Tibet, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, and Guangdong which indicated the launching and implementation of China's wild tiger protection and recovery. Taking consideration of the existing protection results and socio-economic context as well as on the basis of fully analyzing Chinese wild tiger population and habitat conservation management, the Plan proposed 5 priority areas of improving wild tiger habitats, strengthening the monitoring system of the wild tiger population, coordinating the wild tiger conservation with local community economic development, intensifying the combating to illegal poaching and smuggling and expanding the international cooperation and communication, and accordingly set up 13 priority actions such as optimizing the wild Amour tiger, Bengal tiger and Indochinese Tiger habitats and their conservation, promoting the reintroduction of the South China Tiger, improving and enhancing the monitoring system of the wild tigers and their habitats;

Chinese government has incorporated tiger conservation into the *National Plan of the 12th Five-year Forestry Development*, and listed tiger as priority species for *China National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation* and the *National Program for Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Development*.

The habitat and conservation of wildlife including tiger have been improved greatly by implementing costly national programs for *Natural Forest Protection, Recovery Farmlands for Forests* and *Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserves Development*;

China has set up 33 nature reserves and more than 70 frontline management stations for tiger conservation forming a basic tiger conservation network by means of habitat patrolling, monitoring, and curbing illegal poaching of wild tiger and its prey.

26 nature reserves has been established in China for protecting snow leopard with a total area up to 625,600 KM<sup>2</sup> and covering 34.4 percent of snow leopard's habitat while more than 200 nature reserves where clouded leopard occur having a total area exceeding 40,000 KM<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, there are more than 140 nature reserves providing habitat and prey for leopard conservation.

China has suspended the approval of hunting in tiger range areas and enhanced patrolling and monitoring of wild tiger habitats with the improved governmental funding in the past 10 years.

A pilot project has been implemented in Wangqing and Hunchun nature reserves of Jilin province as well as Suiyang, Dongning, and Dongfanghong nature reserve of Heilongjiang province since 2009 in order to restore prey population for Amour tiger and leopard by carrying out SMART anti-poaching monitoring and providing food for prey such as Sika Deer and Red Deer in winter time which have showed promising effect on the protection of Asian big cats;

Firstly running the compensation system for the loss of the local people caused by wildlife such as tiger, leopard and snow leopard in Jilin, Qinghai, Tibet, Yunnan, Gansu and some other provinces, not only protecting the legal right of people living inside range area of tiger, leopard, snow leopard and other big cats, but also in turn obtaining understand and support of local people for conservation of endangered big cat species;

*A Feline Research Center of State Forestry Administration* was approved and established in 2011 which formed a national platform and an expert team for endangered cat species research. In the meantime, a *Tiger and Leopard Network* (<http://www.tl2.org.cn/>) was set up for endangered cat species monitoring, database developing and the publicity of conservation network.

*A National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation* was developed and completed in 2013 which made full arrangement for snow leopard habitat conservation, field patrol, scientific research and monitoring, international cooperation as well as law enforcement.

A four-year GEF project for field conservation of Amour tiger is planning to be launched next year by which actions of habitat restoration, population monitoring, and prey recovery will be conducted in Suiyang and Dongnign nature reserves of Heilongjiang province as well as Hunchun and Wangqing nature reserves of Jilin province where Amur tiger and leopard distribute intensively.

China has been supporting relevant international conservation organizations carrying out activities based on their constitution by taking part into the implementation of the *Global Tiger Recovery Plan* and *Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program*, negotiating the possibility of being member of GTF, and endorsing and participating *The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards*.

## 8 EDUCATION, AWARENESS, OUTREACH, CAPACITY BUILDING

China has vigorously promoted the publicity and education on protection of endangered cat species and other wildlife by means of CCTV, provincial TV stations, China Daily and other national mainstream medias reporting the news of first photo of Amour leopard in China, the first photos of wild Amour tiger in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces respectively, and Amur tiger habitat survey as well as other conservation information. Public conservation awareness of tiger, leopard and other endangered feline has been effectively improved.

Many sets of CITES posters have been displayed at the entry and exit ports of China. *CITES convention knowledge quiz* was compiled and distributed, and publicities were carried out for workers and travelers going abroad on the knowledge of CITES across China.

Thousands copies of *Endangered Species Enforcement Techniques* were compiled and printed. The Chinese versions of *Controlled Delivery*, *Questioning Wildlife Smugglers*, *Concealment Methods of smuggled Wildlife*, *Guide for Cooperation between Interpol NCB and CITES Management Authority*, *Guide for Cooperation between Customs and CITES Management Authority*, *ID Manual of Species Commonly in Trade in Southeast Asia* and *Internet Search Toolkit* were translated and compiled respectively which could



be download from inner network besides distributing to the frontline wildlife enforcement officers.

Since July 2013, three wireless communication companies, China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom, started to send a piece of short message saying *The State Forestry Administration Tips: Please do not illegally hunt, collect, and use wildlife and flora, or purchase, carry, post, deliver endangered species and their products, especially ivory, rhino horn and Chinese medicine containing endangered species entering or leaving a country* to every person holding a Chinese mobile phone while they are on the arrival to abroad. It will play a critical role in warning and preventing individual from illegally carrying, posting and shipping endangered species and their products.

A activity named *National Biosafety into Campus* was launched to improve awareness of students on loving nature and protecting wildlife by printing and distributing thematic publicity materials, carrying out interest-led special lectures, and performing of quarantine dogs.

From time to time, training activities on identification of endangered species including Asian big cat were carried out annually to customs inspectors and anti-smuggling policemen, forest policemen, and border control soldiers in order to improve the law enforcement effectiveness of front-line officers. The training contents include identification of Asian big cat specimens, information and intelligence gathering and management, risk-profiling and targeting of offenders, crime-scene management, evidence collection, and the use of wildlife forensics.

A national program on forensic detection for wildlife conservation and CITES implementation was developed by CITES MA. The effectiveness of law enforcement has been improved greatly by granting judicial qualification to several competent wildlife forensic institutions.

## 9 DEMAND REDUCTION

The Chinese government has been implementing *zero tolerance policy* to illegal demand for tiger, leopard and other wildlife and severely cracking down illegal trade in endangered species by using a combination of existing laws and regulations for investigation and prosecution of suspected wildlife criminals.

Poaching and illegal trade in Saker, Tibetan antelope, tiger, and leopard have been completely curbed by keeping strengthening law enforcement in the regions Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Tibet and other provinces.

The Chinese government has tried its best to establish a good social custom, promote thrift consciousness, and keep reducing the consumption of natural resources by extensive publicity and education activities jointly conducted by government agencies together with international organizations and NGOs.

## 10. Comments on the Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP16)

To assess the survival conditions of CITES Appendix I Asian big cat species by an overall systematic approach, explicitly understand the major threats to a long-term survival, especially evaluate the status of illegal trade, scientifically and objectively determine the extent of the impact of illegal trade to the big cats' survival in the wild such as tiger and leopard, and try to avoid artificially expansion. Encouraging range countries have further determination on their big cat species' wild populations, habitats, conservation management, and the major threats to them.

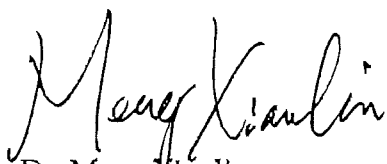
Based on the poverty condition, level of demand and supply as well as the intensity of governance, exploring the driving force of illegal trade about Asian big cat species by a comprehensive and systematic study, properly handle the relationship among demand, supply and governance.

Have further improvement on the pertinence and feasibility of the existing measures, to reduce the solutions based on prediction or doubt, and to avoid excessive restrictions on range countries' rights.

Take comprehensive measures to promote the long-term solution of tiger and other Asian big cats, their habitat conservation and management, ensure range countries' responsibility for providing adequate habitat and financial resources and establishing a well functional filed conservation and law enforcement system.

Strengthen responsibilities of the Parties to support the range countries, recommend the Secretariat to urges the Parties to submit reports on supporting range countries.

Best wishes and happy new year,



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