

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



Sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-15 January 2016

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted [Decisions 16.84 to 16.92](#) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*. Further to this, the Standing Committee, at its 65th meeting (SC65, Geneva, July 2014), agreed Recommendations a) to n) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document [SC65 Com. 3](#). The Secretariat consolidated these Decisions and Recommendations, and they are shown in Annex 1 to this document.
3. Despite considerable efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking, the number of rhinoceroses killed illegally remains at alarmingly high levels year after year, and gives cause for great concern. The complexity of the challenges being faced by Parties in their fight against rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking are perhaps best illustrated by the multiple activities that were, and continue to be conducted as part of Operation Crash, an ongoing joint nationwide investigation in the United States of America to combat rhinoceros horn trafficking. Operation Crash has to date necessitated close cooperation and coordination among multiple investigative agencies, as well as between investigators, prosecutors and their counterparts in other countries. As described in a contribution to the September 2015 publication of the United States Attorneys Bulletin entitled *Operation Crash: Shutting Down the Illicit Trade in Rhino Horns and Elephant Ivory*,¹ Operation Crash has involved different types of cases and criminal conduct, including cases of illegal trafficking in raw rhinoceros horns, carved art objects made from rhinoceros horn and illegal hunting of rhinoceroses. These cases required investigators and prosecutors to implement innovative and diverse strategies to apprehend those involved and bring them to justice. Activities conducted during Operation Crash included, among others, the execution of search warrants, the deployment of undercover agents, extradition requests, and money laundering and tax fraud investigations.
4. The issues confronting investigators and prosecutors involved in Operation Crash are however not restricted to the United States of America, and similar issues and complex investigations confront law enforcement authorities responsible for the investigation of cases of rhinoceros poaching and trafficking in rhinoceros horn in numerous countries across the globe on a daily basis.
5. This document and its annexes outline a wide range of activities that have been conducted by Parties, the Secretariat and the Standing Committee Working Group on Rhinoceroses, in support of the implementation of the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Parties at CoP16 and the Standing Committee at SC65.

¹ <http://www.justice.gov/usao/file/770921/download>

Decision 16.84 paragraphs a) to g) and SC65 Recommendation n) iii)

6. In accordance with the provisions of Recommendation n) iii) agreed at SC65, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/033](#) of 5 June 2015, inviting Parties that have made seizures of rhinoceros specimens to report to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decision 16.84 paragraphs a) and b). In response to the Notification, the Secretariat received reports from Australia, China, Finland, Greece, Japan, Malaysia, Namibia, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America and Zimbabwe. The Secretariat would like to thank these Parties for the reports submitted.
7. Australia informed the Secretariat about the seizure of 12 Chinese medicine balls that were suspected to contain rhinoceros horn. It was reported that these medicine balls weighed seven grams each with its shell, and 1-2 grams each without it. The information provided did not indicate if Australia engaged with countries of origin or transit about the seizure. However, given the scale of this seizure, the Secretariat believes that such engagement would not have been justified. China reported that some of the seizures made in its territory since SC65 are still under investigation, and that information about these seizures was shared with countries of origin and transit. Malaysia informed the Secretariat about the seizure of rhinoceros horns for which some countries of transit were known, but not the exact country of origin. In response to this information, the Secretariat provided guidance to the Party on suggested ways to proceed with follow-up investigations. Namibia provided a summary report on the seizure of illegal rhinoceros specimens made in the country from 2013 to 2015. No information about engagement with countries of origin, transit or destination was however included in its report. Singapore reported that it submitted an Ecomessage² about the seizure of rhinoceros horns and ivory³ made in its territory to the INTERPOL General Secretariat via its INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB), and that countries of origin and destination implicated in the case can access the Ecomessage for more information via their respective NCBs.⁴ Slovakia reported on the seizure and confiscation of eight rhinoceros horns, and confirmed that the country of origin and destination was informed accordingly. Switzerland reported the seizure of two rhinoceros horns and indicated that the initiation of a controlled delivery was considered. The United States of America provided information on seizures of rhinoceros parts and derivatives made in the country for the period 2011-2013. It indicated that the US Fish and Wildlife Service is continuing its activities under Operation Crash and that, because this investigation is ongoing, it was unable to provide information on more recent seizures and the arrests related to it. Finland, Greece, Japan, Sweden and Zimbabwe reported that no seizure of rhinoceros specimens occurred in their territories in the period since SC65.
8. In light of the continued high levels of rhinoceros poaching and trafficking in rhinoceros horn, it remains crucial for Parties to continue to enhance their implementation of Decision 16.84 paragraphs a) to g), and of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force. It is encouraging to note that a number of Parties have initiated activities that are in line with the provisions of Decision 16.84, and the strategies and proposed actions. This includes for example the exchange of information between countries as mentioned in paragraph 7 above; the covert investigations, money laundering and tax fraud investigations that were conducted during Operation Crash described in paragraph 3 above; the submission of DNA samples from the Czech Republic to South Africa for forensic analyses, as outlined in the report submitted to the Secretariat by the Czech Republic (Annex 6 to this document); the arrest of the ringleader of a rhino poaching network in Nepal by authorities in Malaysia;⁵ and the extradition of an Irish national from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United States of America.⁶ In February 2015, the CITES Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation was also awarded to authorities in South Africa for collective activities conducted during Operation Whisper, an undercover operation in South Africa that led to the arrest and successful prosecution of members of two organized crime groups involved in rhinoceros poaching and the illegal international trade in rhinoceros horn, as well as the initiation of asset forfeiture proceedings.⁷ These are excellent examples of the kind of responses and collaboration needed to address rhinoceros poaching

² <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2009/E028.pdf>

³ <http://www.ava.gov.sg/docs/default-source/press-releases/2015/ava-sc-joint-release-illegal-ivory-rhino-horns-big-cats-teeth-seized.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/World>

⁵ <http://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-media/News/2015/N2015-014/>

⁶ <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/irish-national-extradited-united-states-united-kingdom-trafficking-rhinoceros-horns>

⁷ The Secretariat reports in more detail on this in document SC66 Doc. 32.1 on Enforcement matters.

and rhinoceros horn trafficking. Although these examples show that positive progress is being made, there remains significant room for improvement in the implementation of Decision 16.84 paragraphs a) to g), and the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force. Activities as described in Decision 16.84 and the strategies and proposed actions are currently only being implemented by a limited number of Parties. Parties are encouraged to further review their implementation of Decision 16.84 paragraphs a) to g) and the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force. Subject to good overall implementation, it could contribute significantly to the fight against rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking.

Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting

9. At the request of South Africa, the Secretariat hosted a Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting in February 2015, in Geneva, Switzerland,⁸ which brought together representatives from key States identified by Decisions taken under CITES as being affected by poaching and illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as range, transit or destination countries, namely the Czech Republic, Mozambique, South Africa and Viet Nam. Officials from China joined the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting as observers. The aim of these events was to further enhance international cooperation between these key States in their fight against rhinoceros poaching and the associated trafficking in rhinoceros horn. A Senior Officials meeting was convened from 11-12 February 2015, during which national customs, police and wildlife authorities worked with experts from the [International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime \(ICWC\)](#) to prepare recommendations on well-targeted interventions and specific areas of cooperation.⁹ During the Ministerial dialogue that followed on 14 February 2015, Ministers and high-level delegates discussed the actions recommended by the Senior Officials meeting; shared their national experiences with combating rhinoceros-related crimes; and reflected on the remaining challenges and highest priorities for enhanced cooperation. The Ministerial dialogue was moderated by the CITES Secretary-General and concluded with the adoption of the *Geneva Statement on Combating Rhinoceros-related Crimes*.¹⁰ To follow up on the short- and medium-term actions that originated from the Senior Officials meeting, a number of activities have been conducted or are ongoing. These include, among others, the establishment of a Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform (CENcomm)¹¹ rhinoceros closed user group in April 2015, for national rhinoceros focal points and relevant national competent authorities of these key States. At the time of writing, South Africa was in the process of finalizing Standard Operating Procedures for the collection of rhinoceros horn DNA samples to be analysed in South Africa. The Secretariat appreciates the funding provided by the European Union under a CITES project to support the implementation of CoP16 Decisions, as well as by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which supported the convening of the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting.

Decisions 16.85 paragraph c), 16.90 paragraph b), and SC65 Recommendations k) and l)

10. As requested by the Standing Committee in Recommendation k) agreed at SC 65, the Working Group on Rhinoceroses developed guidance to facilitate the provision of information requested in accordance with Decision 16.85 paragraph c), on the effectiveness of strategies or programmes referred to in Decision 16.85 paragraphs a) and b). The Secretariat made this guidance available to Parties as an Annex to Notification to the Parties [No. 2014/058](#) of 2 December 2014. In response to the Notification, the Secretariat received reports from China, Greece, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Secretariat would like to thank these Parties for the reports submitted, which were subsequently submitted to the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses.
11. In Recommendation l) agreed at SC65 the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to, subject to external funding, convene an expert workshop to consider the reports provided in accordance with Decision 16.85 c). In the absence of funding to convene such an expert workshop, the Secretariat and the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses have discussed how this work might be taken forward and considered combining it with other planned events related to demand reduction, but this unfortunately was not possible. The Secretariat and the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses also came to the conclusion that a specific workshop to discuss the limited number of reports provided in accordance with Decision 16.85 paragraph c) might be of little value, and that a further request to Parties to provide

⁸ https://cites.org/eng/2015_rhino_ministerial

⁹ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/pr/2015/CITES-RhinoDialogue-Recommendations.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/pr/2015/CITES-RhinoDialogue-Statement.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/cen-suite/cencomm.aspx>

information in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.85 paragraph c), is also likely to be of limited value.

12. The Secretariat believes that the work to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.85 paragraph c) will not only be of benefit in the context of rhinoceroses, but that such work could benefit Parties in undertaking activities to reduce demand for illegal wildlife specimens, or to enhance community awareness about trafficking in wildlife more generally. The results of the work anticipated by Decision 16.85 paragraph c) could help Parties undertake demand reduction and community awareness activities in a better informed manner. The Secretariat suggests that the Standing Committee recommends to the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), that Decision 16.85, paragraph c) be replaced by a decision directing the Secretariat to contract a consultant to engage with Parties that reported against Decision 16.85 paragraph c) to conduct a review of demand reduction studies and material, and to conduct a review of the outcomes of relevant workshops and other initiatives that have taken place in recent years, including of existing strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness, and to prepare a report including recommendations to further enhance the effectiveness of strategies or programmes to reduce demand for illegal wildlife specimens and to enhance community awareness, as follows:

17.xx The Secretariat shall:

- a) subject to external funding, contract a consultant to:
- i) engage with Parties that reported against Decision 16.85 paragraph c) and any other Parties as may be appropriate to identify best practices and challenges experienced by these Parties in their development and implementation of long-term demand reduction strategies or programmes to combat trafficking in wildlife;
 - ii) engage with Parties that reported against Decision 16.85 paragraph c) and any other Parties as may be appropriate to identify best practices and challenges experienced by these Parties in their implementation of strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness about the economic, social and environmental impacts of trafficking in wildlife, and to encourage the general public to report wildlife trafficking to appropriate authorities for further investigation;
 - iii) conduct a review of existing demand reduction studies and material, and the outcomes of demand reduction workshops and other initiatives that have taken place in recent years;
 - iv) conduct a review existing strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness; and
 - v) prepare a report on the basis of the findings made through the activities outlined in paragraphs i) to iv) in this decision, together with recommendations, on how to further enhance the effectiveness of such strategies or programmes to reduce demand for illegal wildlife specimens and to enhance community awareness.
- b) report on progress on the implementation of the present Decision at the 69th and 70th meetings of the Standing Committee.

Decision 16.89 paragraphs a) to g), and SC65 Recommendations a), n) i), n) ii) and n) iv)

13. The Secretariat at SC65 reported on a number of activities that were conducted with regard to the implementation of the provisions of Decision 16.89 paragraphs a) to g) (see document [SC65 Doc. 43.2](#)), and will in the present document limit its reporting to those issues that are relevant to the present meeting.

Decision 16.89 paragraphs a) and g), and SC65 Recommendations a), n) i), n) iii) and n) iv)

14. At SC65, the Secretariat reported the poor response rate to paragraph 2 b) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force, encouraging Parties implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as a range, transit or destination States to appoint and provide the Secretariat with the details of a national focal point for matters related to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn to facilitate increased collaboration and timely communication. Only two Parties provided the

Secretariat with the contact details of their national focal points. The Secretariat at the time also reported that it was engaging with Parties through email correspondence to encourage them to provide the contact details of their national focal points, and that the Secretariat will prepare and distribute a directory of focal points as soon as it receives an adequate number of responses from Parties. In Recommendation n) i) agreed at SC65, the Standing Committee urged all Parties that have not provided the Secretariat with the contact details of their national focal points to do so by 15 August 2014. The Secretariat subsequently received an adequate number of responses from Parties to prepare a directory of focal points. This directory of focal points is currently available to Parties through a specific webpage¹² created by the Secretariat. The Secretariat communicated information about the specific directory of enforcement focal points webpage to Parties through Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/040](#) of 3 July 2015.

15. In Recommendation n)ii) agreed at SC65, the Standing Committee encourages all Parties to, as requested in the Annex to Notification to the Parties [No. 2014/006](#) of 23 January 2014, provide information on their implementation of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force. The Secretariat also issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/042](#) of 30 July 2015, requesting Parties to report on progress in the implementation of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force. In response to the Notification, the Secretariat received reports from Australia, China, Greece and the United States of America. The Secretariat would like to thank these Parties for the reports submitted.
16. Australia reported that, in 2014, it introduced stricter domestic measures to minimize opportunities for illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, and that it no longer issues permits for the import of Appendix II rhinoceros hunting trophies. Rhinoceros hunting trophies may no longer be imported to the country as personal and household effects. Radiocarbon dating is used to conclusively prove the age of vintage rhinoceros horn before a pre-Convention certificate is issued by its Management Authority, and that it consults with Management Authorities of other Parties prior to issuing any pre-Convention certificate to ensure that trade is authorized and can be monitored by the importing Party. China reported that, in 1993, its State Council prohibited the commercial trade, transport, carrying and mailing of rhinoceros horn, including for medicinal purposes. According to its report, China also initiated a number of law enforcement operations to combat wildlife crime, and has made significant efforts to combat illegal online trade in wildlife. Chinese courier companies adopted a “zero tolerance” policy with regard to illegal wildlife and its products, and all Chinese nationals travelling abroad receive a message warning them not to buy or carry any illegal wildlife specimens, including ivory and rhinoceros horn. Greece reported that it is a possible transit State for illegal trade of rhinoceros horn, and that it appointed two persons as national focal points for matters related to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, as included in the directory of focal points described in paragraph 14 of this document. The United States of America reported on activities conducted as part of Operation Crash described in paragraph 3 of this document, including that under this operation, to date, defendants have been sentenced to a total of 21 years in prison, 12 years’ probation and fines totalling USD 424,000. The United States of America further reported that it has undertaken a number of actions to improve international cooperation and combat the growing trends in rhinoceros poaching and the associated illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, and that the U.S. Department of Justice has provided a significant number of training modules to foreign judges and prosecutors on wildlife trafficking, including rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade. The reports from South Africa (Annex 3 to this document) and Viet Nam (Annex 2 to this document) also provide a wealth of information on their implementation of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force.
17. In Recommendation n) iv) agreed at SC 65, the Standing Committee requests the Secretariat to report to the present meeting on actions taken to facilitate the implementation of paragraphs 4 a) to c) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force.
18. Paragraph 4 a) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force directs the Secretariat to maintain close contact with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as it works towards the creation of Transnational Organized Crime Units, in order to promote the inclusion of activities aimed at combating wildlife crime within the framework of activities to be conducted by these units. The Secretariat continues to maintain a close working relationship with UNODC as one of its partners in ICCWC, and reports in more detail on this in documents SC66 Doc. 16.5 on the *International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime*, SC66 Doc. 32.1 on *Enforcement matters* and SC66 Doc. 47.1 on *Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade*. Further to this, the European Commission in October 2015 approved a joint CITES-UNODC project on law enforcement and demand

¹² https://cites.org/eng/resources/enforcement_focal_points

management of wildlife in Asia, an initiative undertaken collectively by UNODC and the Secretariat through its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme.

19. Paragraphs 4 b) and c) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force direct the Secretariat to explore possibilities for the wider distribution of World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) Alerts on rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade among all authorities responsible for the investigation of these crimes, and to work with the WCO to explore the development of a CITES seizure notification system. To encourage increased information sharing, communication and cooperation amongst authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement, the Secretariat worked closely with the WCO, one of its ICCWC partners, to integrate the CITES Enforcement Authorities Forum with the WCO's ENVIRONET.¹³ The Secretariat reports in more detail on this in document SC66 Doc. 32.1 on *Enforcement matters*. As reported in paragraph 9 of the present document, a CENcomm rhinoceros closed user group was also established in April 2015. The Secretariat believes that these new tools made available to Parties could adequately satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 4 b) and c) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force, and welcomes feedback about their practicality from Parties using these tools.

Decision 16.89 paragraphs b) and g)

20. The Secretariat believes that the Standard Operating Procedures for the collection of rhinoceros horn DNA samples to be analysed in South Africa as described in paragraph 9 will greatly assist Parties with the collection of rhinoceros horn DNA samples in line with forensic requirements. Further to this, the Secretariat believes that the global review of laboratory capacity commissioned by the Secretariat in cooperation with the UNODC, as described in document SC66 Doc. 47.1 on *Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade*, will also significantly contribute to the implementation of Decision 16.89 paragraph b).

Decisions 16.86, 16.87, 16.88 and 16.89 paragraphs c), d) and g), and SC65 Recommendations b) to j) and m)

21. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendations b), c), e), g) and h), directed to the Czech Republic, Mozambique, India, South Africa and Viet Nam, requesting these Parties to report to SC66 on a variety of matters outlined in the mentioned Recommendations. Reports were received from all the mentioned Parties and the Secretariat would like to thank these Parties for the reports submitted. It is clear from the reports that much has been done and that a wide range of activities have been implemented by these Parties to combat rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking. Further to this, a number of activities are currently underway or planned.
22. At its 61st meeting (Geneva, August 2011), the Standing Committee established a Working Group on Rhinoceroses. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.90 directed to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, and at its 64th meeting (Bangkok, March 2013), the Standing Committee extended the mandate of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses in accordance with Decision 16.91. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendations j) and k) directed to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses. For the Working Group to implement its mandate in accordance with Recommendation j), the Secretariat submitted the reports from the Parties mentioned in paragraph 21 above to the Chair of the Working Group. The Working Group on Rhinoceroses prepared a document for the present meeting, and will report on its work.
23. In Recommendation m) agreed at SC65, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to, in consultation with the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, draw the attention of the Committee to significant issues of non-compliance with the Recommendations on rhinoceroses agreed at SC65. No issue of non-compliance was drawn to the attention of the Standing Committee in accordance with this Recommendation during the reporting period.
24. With regard to the reporting requested from the Czech Republic, Mozambique, India, South Africa, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*, the Secretariat has limited its reporting in the present

¹³ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-039.pdf>

document to the provisions of paragraphs c), d) and g) of Decision 16.89, and SC65 Recommendations f), i) and j), as it relates to these Parties.

Viet Nam: Decision 16.86 and SC65 Recommendation h) iv) to v)

25. The report received from Viet Nam is attached to the present document (in the language received), as Annex 2. It is clear from Viet Nam's report that the Party is making continued efforts to tackle trafficking in rhinoceros horn, and a wide range of activities have been implemented, are ongoing and are being planned. The report can be summarized as follows. Customs and police authorities in the country have conducted a number of operations to combat illegal trafficking in rhinoceros horn since SC65, in particular targeting key flights from Africa transiting through countries known to be targeted as transit countries for trafficking of rhinoceros horn. This resulted in a number of seizures and arrests. One incident occurred within Viet Nam, on 9 May 2015, when two men illegally trafficking 37kg of rhinoceros horn were arrested in the Nghe An province (central Viet Nam), on a train from Ho Chi Minh city to Nghe An. The two men alleged that they were trafficking the horns on behalf of someone else. This seizure, as well as the information provided by Viet Nam in its report indicating that illegal consignments of rhinoceros horns are increasingly entering the country via land ports, suggests that significant quantities of rhinoceros horn might be moved within the Viet Nam, by car, train or otherwise. For this reason, it is very important for authorities in Viet Nam to complement increased activities at ports of entry and exit, with an increase of enforcement activities within the country. It is crucial for incidents such as the one involving the two men who trafficked the 37kg of rhinoceros horns within Viet Nam be thoroughly investigated and for follow-up investigations to be conducted, as such individuals might be able to provide valuable information about those individuals that are managing and organizing the illegal trafficking within the country. This should include the deployment of tools deployed to fight other serious organized crimes, such as covert investigations, anti-money laundering investigations, controlled deliveries and others as outlined in Decision 16.84 and the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force. Such tools and techniques have been key in the successes achieved during for example Operation Crash in the United States of America, and Operation Whisper in South Africa, as described in paragraph 8.
26. Viet Nam provided limited information about the prosecution and conviction of arrested offenders, as was invited in SC65 Recommendation h) iv). The Secretariat noted that Viet Nam in response to a request for additional information from the Working Group on Rhinoceroses indicated that "Even though the arrests were made, the rate of prosecution of the violators is low due to the fact that the current Penal Codes of Vietnam do not specify the crime of transporting prohibited items across the borders. Therefore, in the abovementioned arrests, only one case was prosecuted". The successful prosecution and conviction of offenders involved in rhinoceros horn trafficking to and within Viet Nam remain crucial, as the country continues to be one of the primary destination countries for trafficked rhinoceros horn. The successful identification, arrest, prosecution and conviction of individuals managing and organizing the illegal trafficking within the country is particularly crucial. Equally important, seizures should be reported to authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.84, paragraphs a) and b). The process of amending the Penal Code in Viet Nam is ongoing, and it is expected that the amended Penal Code will be submitted to parliament for approval in 2016. This reform provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate specific legal provisions that apply to CITES-related offences. Notably, the provisions should include the possession of CITES specimens acquired in violation of the Convention. The Secretariat stands ready to, upon request, provide technical assistance to Viet Nam to ensure that adequate provisions are in place to prosecute arrested offenders.
27. On measures implemented to ensure that all confiscated rhinoceros horn stocks in Viet Nam are well secured, marked and registered in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), the Party reported that all illegally trafficked rhinoceros horn seized and confiscated are treated as CITES Appendix-I specimens and stored in adequately secure facilities by investigation agencies for investigation purposes. Seized and confiscated rhinoceros horns are properly marked and their characteristics are recorded in detail. The horns are handed over to educational and scientific facilities for scientific research, education and training, when cases are finalized.
28. The report from Viet Nam provides information about multiple demand reduction activities that were undertaken within the country, including working with a women's union, the Vietnamese education and training department, a businessmen association and various universities. Further to this, billboards, posters, brochures, hats and T-shirts, among others, were used to distribute messages and slogans to raise awareness in the country about rhinoceros protection and conservation. According to a survey conducted in 2015, the demand for rhinoceros horn decreased significantly in Viet Nam. Although the significant efforts made by Viet Nam at national level to reduce demand and increase awareness are

commendable, seizures and arrests made at global level continues to suggest that Viet Nam is still the primary destination country for trafficked rhinoceros horn. For this reason, it remains crucial for the Party to further enhance its enforcement activities, and to continue with demand reduction initiatives.

Mozambique: Decision 16.87 and SC65 Recommendations e), f) and i)

29. With regard to Mozambique, it should be noted that it is one of the Parties that was requested by the Standing Committee to develop a National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP),¹⁴ and the only Party that was requested by the Standing Committee to also prepare a National Rhinoceros Action Plan. As a result, in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Committee Recommendation e)i) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document [SC65 Com. 3](#), and Recommendation a) in relation to document SC65 Doc. 42.1 on *Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade* as contained in document [SC65 Com 7](#) and in consultation with Secretariat, Mozambique prepared a combined National Ivory and Rhinoceros Action Plan (NIRAP). The Secretariat secured the services of a part-time consultant in Africa, to support Parties with the development and implementation of their NIAPs. This consultant extensively engaged with Mozambique following SC65, to support the Party in the preparation and submission of its NIRAP, and also conducted a mission to Mozambique from 8-12 December 2014, to provide hands-on support to the Party in the development of its NIRAP. The Secretariat would like to thank the European Union for the generous funds it provided, that enabled the Secretariat to secure the services of the consultant, and for the funding which enabled the consultant to conduct a mission to Mozambique to provide in-country support to national authorities for the development of its NIRAP. The NIRAP of Mozambique was received by the Secretariat on 22 January 2015, and made publically available on the NIAP webpage developed by the Secretariat.¹⁵ The Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses was, in the context of SC65 Recommendation i) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, informed accordingly.
30. At SC65, the Standing Committee in document SC65 Com. 3 Recommendation d) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*:

d) note[d] that Mozambique provided a limited response to Decision 16.87 two months after the date set down in the Decision, and failed to provide any response to Decision 16.88. Further note[d] that this impeded the ability of the Working Group to fulfil its mandate;

On two occasions during the current reporting period, Mozambique failed to provide a report to the Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, as invited by the Standing Committee in document SC65 Com. 3 Recommendations e) iv) and v) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*.

With regard to the 31 January progress report as invited in Recommendation e) iv), the NIRAP of Mozambique had at that time only just been finalized, and it was unlikely that the Party would have had much progress to report. The Secretariat also communicated this to the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses. With regard to the 31 July progress report¹⁶ requested in accordance with Recommendation e) v), the Secretariat notes that it sent multiple reminder emails to Mozambique regarding this progress report and advised the Party that support from the Secretariat's consultant was available to assist with report preparation, if required. No such report was however received. In August 2015, the Secretariat was informed by its NIAP consultant in Africa, that Mozambique has indicated that it prepared one combined draft NIRAP progress report (covering ivory and rhinoceros-related actions), and that the Party intended to submit this report by the 15 September NIAP reporting deadline¹⁷. The Secretariat at the time communicated with the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, indicating that, while the lack of reporting by Mozambique is of concern, a progress report was under preparation.

31. SC65 Com. 3 recommendation f) states that:

f) the Secretariat shall, upon request, advise Mozambique on the development and implementation of its national rhinoceros action plan, and may undertake a mission to the country in the light of

¹⁴ <https://cites.org/eng/niaps>

¹⁵ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/prog/niaps/Mozambique-NIRAP-Jan2015.pdf>

¹⁶ See Notification to the Parties No. 2015/004 of 16 January 2015 on Changes to deadlines established by the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-004.pdf>

¹⁷ *Idem.*

progress with implementation, pending an invitation from Mozambique and the availability of external funding.

From 26-29 August 2015, the Secretariat conducted a mission to Mozambique to discuss NIRAP implementation and related reporting with relevant national authorities. The Secretariat would like to thank the Mozambique National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC) for its excellent facilitation this mission, and the European Union for the generous funds, which enabled the Secretariat to undertake the mission. Findings made during this mission were overall positive, and the different authorities in Mozambique are clearly aware of the issue of illegal trade in wildlife and increasingly engaged in combating it. It was also observed that the CITES Management Authority of Mozambique engages well with the different national authorities responsible for law enforcement. During the mission, a number of challenging resource and capacity issues confronting authorities in Mozambique was drawn to the attention of the Secretariat. However, from the report provided as discussed below, it is clear that these issues are being addressed. Different authorities raised the following issue on a number of occasions during the mission: significant room continues to exist to increase awareness amongst prosecutors and judges in the country about the new conservation law and to enhance the capacity of prosecutors in dealing with illegal trade in wildlife cases. A number of activities outlined in the NIRAP of Mozambique should contribute to addressing this issue.

32. The September 2015 progress report received from Mozambique was, upon receipt, shared with the Chair of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to enable the working group to implement its mandate in SC65 Com. 3 Recommendation j). This report is also made available to Parties (in the language received), as [Annex 18](#) to document SC66 Doc. 29 on the *National ivory action plans process*. A summary of the progress made by Mozambique in implementing its NIRAP was prepared by the Secretariat, and is provided in Annex 2 to document [SC66 Doc. 29](#) on the *National ivory action plans process*.
33. In its report, Mozambique indicated that limited capacity, financial resources, and a change in government, together with associated internal structural changes, have caused some delays in implementing the NIRAP. However, with the new Ministries and Government services now in place, and with funding for some activities now secured, it is expected that the implementation of a number of NIRAP activities, including some that have been challenging to date, will be progressed in the coming months.
34. Activities outlined in the report from Mozambique shows that there is currently good momentum in the country. Regulations for the new conservation law, as well as the draft regulation on international trade of endangered species of wild fauna and flora, are expected to be finalized and approved in early 2016. The inter-ministerial task force established to formulate and coordinate actions for protection of natural resources was re-launched; a specific division within Customs was created to improve methodologies for detecting wildlife contraband at ports and transit points; a formal intelligence structure was established in the Limpopo National Park; and information was provided on the implementation plan for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with South Africa and on the signing of an MoU with Tanzania and ongoing negotiations to finalize an MoU with Viet Nam (as also reported on by Viet Nam in its report). Mozambique also reported on the deployment of 1,500 new environmental police in the country.
35. The Secretariat believes that the current momentum within Mozambique will assist it to step up its efforts to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife. Mozambique however continues to be a key country affected by poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn and ivory trade. For this reason, it remains crucial for the Party to build upon the current momentum and to ensure that urgent measures continue to be taken to progress NIRAP implementation. It should also be noted that the report from Mozambique provided limited information on arrests, seizures, prosecutions and penalties for offenders involved in rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn possession and trade, as invited in SC65 Com. 3 Recommendation e) v), and the Party might wish to provide further information about this to the Standing Committee at the present meeting.

Mozambique and South Africa: Decision 16.88 and SC65 Recommendation g)

36. The comprehensive joint report prepared by Mozambique and South Africa in accordance with the provisions of Recommendation g) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, was received by the Secretariat as Annexure B to a letter from South Africa, and is attached to this document in Annex 3.

37. In document [SC65 Doc. 43.2](#) on *Rhinoceroses* prepared for the SC65, the Secretariat reported about the conclusion of a MoU between Mozambique and South Africa on 17 April 2014.¹⁸ According to the joint report submitted by Mozambique and South Africa for the present meeting, several consultations took place between the two Parties since the MoU was signed, and an MoU Implementation Plan was developed. This Implementation Plan has been signed at Director General level by Mozambique in May 2015 and will soon be signed at the same level by South Africa. A 2015/2016 Action Plan outlining specific projects, as well as Terms of Reference as required in the MoU, have been developed and are in the final consultation phase before being signed off by relevant focal points. Mozambique and South Africa are encouraged to conclude these processes as a matter of urgency, and both Parties might wish to provide further information about progress to the Standing Committee at its present meeting.
38. The Secretariat, in document SC65 Doc. 43.2, also reported that the South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs had a bilateral meeting with her counterpart in Maputo, Mozambique, in June 2013. The two Ministers discussed the rhinoceros poaching crisis and agreed on several deliverables, including, among others, the establishment of joint law enforcement operations in the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP); the mobilization of resources to conduct these operations; and interventions aimed at creating sustainable jobs and improving livelihoods for local communities within the GLTP area. According to the joint report, good progress has been made with the implementation of the deliverables agreed by the Ministers, including the establishment of joint law enforcement operations in the GLTP; the development of dedicated anti-poaching operations in and around Limpopo National Park (LNP) in Mozambique; the upgrading of field communications technology used by rangers, as well as shared radio communications systems across the border between Mozambique and South Africa. Both countries have established a team that is undertaking an investigation into the socio-economic conditions of the communities around the GLTP, and a Livelihoods Diversification Strategy will be drafted upon completion of the investigation. Resettling of communities out of the Mozambican component of the GLTP also remains a priority. An essential component of one of the projects that will be undertaken entails supporting the judicial system in Mozambique to effectively implement the new conservation law. In light of the findings made during the mission of the Secretariat to Mozambique as described in paragraph 31, the Secretariat believes that this activity will be of particular importance, and that it could greatly contribute to the effective implementation of the new conservation law in the country.
39. With regard to progress made in the implementation of the activities agreed in September 2013 at the 4th Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS) meeting, as described in document SC65 Doc. 43.2, the joint report submitted by Mozambique and South Africa also confirms that progress has been made with the implementation of these activities. For example reported, regular joint operations to combat poaching take place between authorities from the Kruger National Park in South Africa and the LNP in Mozambique. An Anti-poaching Working Group was created in Mozambique. The recruitment, training and deployment of the 1,500 environmental police officers in Mozambique, as mentioned in paragraph 34, have occurred in the context of the 4th JPCDS agreed activities. The agreement to formalize the training of Mozambican judiciary and State law advisors by concluding an MoU on legal cooperation progressed under the Rhino Protection Programme described in the joint report. With regard to the draft treaties on extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters submitted to Mozambique by South Africa, this matter is in progress, and the new Penal Code approved by the Mozambican Parliament will facilitate the process.
40. The joint report submitted by Mozambique and South Africa also outlines some other activities, such as the collection of DNA samples for forensic analyses by South African authorities, from seizures that occurred in Mozambique. It is clear from the joint report that cooperation between Mozambique and South Africa has been enhanced, and that positive action is underway. To further enhance and strengthen this cooperation, it however remains vital that matters such as the signature of the MoU Implementation Plan, and consultations and sign-off of the 2015/2016 Action Plan and the Terms of Reference as required in the MoU, be concluded as soon as possible. It is equally important that the draft treaties on extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters submitted to Mozambique by South Africa be progressed as soon as possible.

Implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) on *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*

41. In support of the implementation of Decision 16.89 paragraph c) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, and Recommendation c) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com 3, the

¹⁸ https://www.environment.gov.za/speech/molewa_signingmou_mozambique

Secretariat sent letters to India, South Africa and Zimbabwe, inviting these Parties to submit information on their implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) to the Secretariat. In response to these letters, reports were received from all three Parties, and the Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank India, South Africa and Zimbabwe for the reports submitted.

India: SC65 Recommendation c)

42. India reported that rhinoceroses' populations in the country are being targeted by transnational criminal groups. According to the report, rhinoceros parts and derivatives are not consumed in the country, and poaching of rhinoceroses in India is driven by demand elsewhere. Based on the information available to India, rhinoceros horns are trafficked from India through Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal, to primarily China and Viet Nam.
43. India also reported that all rhinoceros horns seized within its territory from 1 January 2013 to date originated from Indian rhinoceroses. Details provided in the report from India about rhinoceros poaching incidents for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 July 2015 was summarized by the Secretariat and is presented in the table below:

| Year | Total number of poaching incidents | Poaching incidents: Kazaringa National Park | Poaching incidents: Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary | Poaching incidents: Manas National Park | Poaching incidents: Orang National Park | Poaching incidents: Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary | Poaching incidents: Gorumara National Park |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| 2013 | 40 | 30 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 2014 | 34 | 27 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 2015 | 15 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 89 | 68 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 |

44. India reported that 21 seizures of rhinoceros horn or suspected rhinoceros horn was made in the country since 1 January 2013. Further to this, a number of arrests were also reported, but information about prosecutions and convictions were not included in the report.
45. As reported in document SC65 Doc. 43.2 on *Rhinoceroses*, the Secretariat in the light of a number of media reports that came to the its attention suggesting increased poaching of rhinoceroses in India, sent a letter to the Party in early January 2014, inviting it to submit information on its implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15). The information provided by India for the present meeting indicates a decline in rhinoceros poaching incidents since 2013. The Party is encouraged to remain vigilant in its efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking and to further suppress current poaching levels, in particular in Kazaringa National Park.

South Africa: Decision 16.89 paragraph c)

46. South Africa submitted comprehensive reports to the Secretariat as requested in recommendations agreed by the Standing Committee at SC65, as attached to this document in Annex 3. The Secretariat considered these reports to contain adequate information for the Secretariat to conduct its work in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.89 paragraph c), and as a result informed South Africa that a further report on the specific requirements contained in Res Conf. 9.14 (Rev CoP15) should only be submitted if there are additional matters that the Party would like to draw to the attention of the Secretariat. South Africa however submitted a further detailed report on measures implemented in accordance with the specific requirements of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev CoP15). The Secretariat would like to thank South Africa for the further report it submitted. In light of the comprehensive and informative nature of this report, it has been annexed to the present document in the language received, as Annex 4.
47. Detailed information about the provisions of South Africa's National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEMBA) is provided in the report. Illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn were declared as a priority crimes and have been elevated to the National Joins Security Committee (NATJOINTS) in South Africa. A NATJOINTS Priority Committee on

Wildlife Crimes, which includes all other relevant co-opted stakeholders, was established in the country. The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa is working closely with officers investigating rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking cases, and dedicated prosecutors have been assigned to cases in some provinces.

48. According to South Africa's report, all information about stocks of rhinoceros horn is captured on databases maintained by governmental agencies, and this information is audited annually. A national database has been developed and information about all private and government owned stocks is in the process of being captured on the national database. South Africa highlighted that in accordance with NEMBA, a permit is required to possess rhinoceros horn in South Africa, whether it is an individual horn or a number of horns, or any part, product or derivative of a rhino horn.
49. On 29 May 2015, South Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the fields of Biodiversity Conservation and Protection with Cambodia to promote cooperation between the Parties in the field of biodiversity conservation and protection, compliance with the CITES, and other relevant legislation. The report from South Africa contains a wealth of further information, which was too elaborate to include in this document.

Zimbabwe: Decision 16.89 paragraph c)

50. Zimbabwe reported that its national rhinoceros population has been increasing steadily over the past five years, from 689 in 2010 to 811 in 2015, and that it continues to protect its rhinoceros populations in intensive protection zones situated in State protected areas, as well as in private conservancies where they are being conserved on a custodianship basis. The Party however also reported that the total rhino population in Zimbabwe had decreased by 14 rhinos from 825 on 31 December 2014, to the total of 811 recorded on 30 July 2015. Poaching primarily accounted for the death of 21 rhinoceroses between January and July 2015, compared to only 10 rhinoceroses poached in 2014. Zimbabwe's Parks and Wildlife Management Authority makes use of specialized reaction units to enhance the effectiveness of its patrols; joint operations, intelligence gathering and intelligence exchange with other law enforcement agencies were carried out in high risk areas; and law enforcement personnel in rhinoceros range areas received training on in anti-poaching, rhinoceros monitoring and fire management techniques. According to Zimbabwe, State and private land holders continued to work with communities surrounding all rhinoceros range areas to enhance rhinoceros conservation. The sharp increase of poaching incidents in Zimbabwe however gives reason for concern, and the Party is encouraged to remain vigilant in its efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade, and to enhance its efforts to suppress the escalating poaching levels.
51. The report from Zimbabwe is informative and contains further information not highlighted in this document, and has been annexed to the present document in the language received, as Annex 5. The report from Zimbabwe seems to contain an error, stating that as per table 1 of the report the total rhinoceros population of Zimbabwe was 825 on 31 December 2014, comprising of 498 black and 327 white rhinoceroses. Table 1 of the report however shows 327 black and 498 white rhinoceroses. The Party might wish to address this at the present meeting by confirming the correct total number of black and white rhinoceros.

The Czech Republic, South Africa and Viet Nam: Decision 16.92 and SC65 Recommendation b)

52. The report submitted by the Czech Republic in accordance with the provisions of Recommendation b) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3 is attached to this document in Annex 6. The report provides detailed information about the import of rhinoceros horns to the Czech Republic as hunting trophies from South Africa, and then laundered into illegal trade. This matter has been discussed at previous meetings of the Standing Committee¹⁹ and at CoP16,²⁰ as well as by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force,²¹ and forms the basis for the reporting requirement established by the Standing Committee in Recommendation b). The report from the Czech Republic also provides detailed information about Operation Osseus, an operation initiated by the Party to combat rhinoceros horn trafficking. This operation identified that the individuals involved in rhinoceros horn trafficking in the Czech Republic are also involved in other crimes such as illegal trafficking in tiger bones, ivory, and drugs. The operation also detected powdered rhinoceros horn. It is not known to what extent powdered rhinoceros horn might be

¹⁹ See https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/65/E-SC65-43-02_0.pdf

²⁰ See <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-54-02.pdf>

²¹ See <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2014-006A.pdf>

trafficked by criminal syndicates, presumably to avoid detection, but the Secretariat encourages Parties to alert their authorities of this identified *modus operandi*. The Secretariat would appreciate receiving information from any Parties that might detect powdered rhinoceros horn. This will enable the Secretariat to alert Parties in a timely manner, should this *modus operandi* be detected more widely.

53. The report from the Czech Republic states that during its investigations into illegal rhinoceros horn trade “international cooperation was not and is not very satisfactory especially in the area of enforcement and investigations”, and the report elaborates on a number of challenges experienced. This was also a matter of discussion at the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting in October 2013, and raised in document SC65 Doc. 43.2. International cooperation between key Parties was further addressed at the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 2015. To follow up on action 10 recommended by the Senior Officials meeting, a CENcomm rhinoceros closed user group was established in April 2015, as described in paragraph 9. Action 10 recommended by the Senior Officials meeting relates to the development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on seizure reporting. The Secretariat believes that the development of this SOP, together with the active use of the CENcomm rhinoceros closed user group, could significantly enhance effective cooperation and communication between key States affected by poaching and illegal trade of rhinoceros horn. In its report, South Africa states that a draft SOP was sent to the Czech Republic in support of action 10 recommended by the Senior Officials meeting, and the Czech Republic is encouraged to finalize the development of the SOP as soon as possible.
54. The Czech Republic is commended for its efforts to collect and submit samples from seized rhinoceros horns for forensic analyses. In addition to samples submitted for analyses to the Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) Wildlife Forensic DNA Unit in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Czech Republic reported that it submitted samples from all seized rhinoceros horns to South Africa for comparison with the Rhino DNA Index System (RhoDIS).²² However, according to the Czech Republic, samples more recently submitted to RhoDIS were only compared with DNA from poached rhinoceroses recorded in RhoDIS, and not with the entire RhoDIS, which also includes DNA from legally hunted rhinoceroses. A significant number of rhinoceros horns found in illegal trade in the Czech Republic to date originated from rhinoceros hunting trophies. For this reason comparison with all DNA profiles in RhoDIS is understandably considered as vital by the Czech Republic. It is noted that the Czech Republic was reportedly informed by South Africa that analyses was restricted to comparison with DNA from poached rhinoceroses due to financial constraints. It is therefore encouraging to note that this issue seems to have been resolved, and that the Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CEI) is reported to have secured funding for a further complete comparison with all DNA profiles in RhoDIS. For the reasons stated above, the comparison of samples submitted to RhoDIS, with all DNA profiles in RhoDIS seems crucial, and South Africa is encouraged to explore opportunities to secure adequate funding for this purpose. The Rhino Protection Programme described in the joint report submitted by Mozambique and South Africa, and the Global Environment Facility of the United Nations Environment Programme (GEF-UNEP) rhinoceros project mentioned in action 6 recommended by the Senior Officials meeting²³ during the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 2015, could be potential sources for such funding.
55. A proposal made by the Czech Republic in its report that DNA from seized rhinoceros horn be extracted in a forensic laboratory in the country where the seizure occurred, and that only a DNA profile be sent to RhoDIS for comparison, rather than the actual samples collected from seized rhinoceros horns, seems worth further consideration. This approach could significantly simplify the current process used, but might in practice be challenging due to different industry standards and methods used by laboratories, which might not be compatible. The Czech Republic and other interested Parties are however encouraged to further explore this proposal.
56. In its report the Czech Republic alludes to thefts of rhinoceros horns from museums and châteaux, and reports that seven cases of theft from museums and châteaux have been documented in the Czech Republic between 2010 and 2012. The CEI at the time took action and alerted the Ministry of Culture and the Association of museums and galleries in the Czech Republic about the fact that they could be targeted by criminal syndicates. As a result, all rhinoceros horns were withdrawn from collections and placed in safe storage. This course of action successfully addressed the threat, and thefts from museums and châteaux are reported to no longer be an issue of concern in the country.

²² <http://rhodis.co.za/>

²³ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/pr/2015/CITES-RhinoDialogue-Recommendations.pdf>

57. In light of the enforcement challenges faced by the Czech Republic, its report ended by expressing strong views against any form of legal trade in rhinoceros horn, including against rhinoceros trophy hunting. The Secretariat notes that this a matter to be dealt with by the Conference of the Parties through the comprehensive and well-established process established by the Convention.
58. The report submitted by South Africa in accordance with the provisions of Recommendation b) was received by the Secretariat as Annexure A to a letter from South Africa and is attached to this document in Annex 3. South Africa in its report states that it has implemented a national system of approving rhinoceros hunts and that its Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) only recommend hunts if the hunter fulfils the requirements as a *bona fide* hunter and if the CITES authority of the country of usual residence of the hunter confirms that the information provided by the hunter in the hunting application is correct. However, the Czech Republic reported that its authorities could not implement this measure, while South Africa reported that a decision was made by it to refuse all applications for white rhinoceros hunts by foreign hunters whose State of usual residence is the Czech Republic, pending the finalization of the investigation being conducted by the Czech Republic, as well as investigations being conducted by national and provincial conservation authorities in South Africa. South Africa further reported that its DEA informed the CITES Management Authority of the Czech Republic about this decision on 3 June 2014, and that no rhinoceros hunting permits have been issued to foreign hunters whose State of usual residence is the Czech Republic since June 2014. This decision by South Africa seems to have provided a practical solution to address this matter, until such time that an alternative manner to address it is identified. South Africa reported that it continues to collaborate with the Czech Republic on matters relating to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn. The Secretariat encourage the two Parties to make every effort to further enhance this collaboration.
59. The report from South Africa further outlines the matter of rhinoceros hunting trophies exported from South Africa to Viet Nam that are no longer in legal possession of hunters as hunting trophies. This matter has also been discussed at previous meetings of the Standing Committee and at CoP16. The report from South Africa noted the efforts made by Viet Nam since CoP16 to improve legislative provisions. It further states that, although a number of initiatives including actions agreed to between South Africa and Viet Nam in the MoU signed between the two countries in late 2012²⁴ has been implemented, further cooperation and collaboration is needed to find appropriate mechanisms to address the issue of the low percentage of trophies that remained in possession of hunters as hunting trophies, and the alteration of trophies, subsequent to the import thereof. National legislation in Viet Nam determines that the owner of a trophy has the right to decide how to use it, and, in the light of this, South Africa requested Viet Nam to consider the development of legislative provisions for the control or regulation of rhinoceros horns that are donated or disposed of as gifts to other persons. South Africa further stated that a lack of regulations and sanctions in Viet Nam for individuals who are no longer in possession of their hunting trophies remains a cause of concern, since it is possible that once hunting trophies entered Viet Nam, horns from these legally imported trophies can be laundered into illegal trade. As reported in document CoP16 Doc. 54.2 (Rev. 1), South Africa's DEA in February 2012 advised its Provinces to stop issuing hunting permits to Vietnamese citizens. According to its latest report, South Africa informed in February 2014 the CITES Management Authority of Viet Nam that existing legislative gaps should be addressed, before a positive recommendation can be made by the CITES Management Authority of South Africa to its provincial issuing authorities relating to the hunting of white rhinoceroses by foreign hunters whose State of usual residence is Viet Nam. Since 2012, South Africa has not issued any rhinoceros hunting permits or export permits for rhinoceros hunting trophies, to foreign hunters whose State of usual residence is Viet Nam. It continues to collaborate and cooperate with Viet Nam to address the concerns relating to rhinoceros hunting trophies, as well as other matters relating to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn.
60. South Africa also reported on the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 2015, as discussed in paragraph 9. Its report further contains comprehensive information about its implementation of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force. This information is too elaborate to include in this document, and it extensively complements the information provided in paragraphs 15 and 16. It is evident that significant efforts have been made in South Africa to implement the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force, for which the Party is commended. The Secretariat would also like to take this opportunity to thank South Africa for its generous funding, which enabled the Secretariat to participate in the Judicial Colloquium for South African Judicial Officers held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2015.

²⁴ https://www.environment.gov.za/content/southafrica_vietnam_sign_mou

61. Viet Nam in its report (Annex 2 to this document), indicates that its Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working closely with its Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to facilitate cooperation between Viet Nam and countries in Africa, as well as with China and the Czech Republic. Reference is made to the MoU signed with South Africa, as mentioned in paragraph 59 above, indicating that rhinoceros horn samples were provided to South Africa for forensic analyses in the context of the MoU. The report from South Africa (Annex 3 to this document) however indicates that some challenges were experienced with regard to the manner in which samples have been collected in Viet Nam. Information about these challenges, which primarily related to a lack of maintaining the chain of custody with regard to collected rhinoceros horn samples, came to the attention of the Secretariat. The Secretariat discussed this matter with representatives from South Africa and Viet Nam in the margins of the First Pangolin Range States workshop that was held in Da Nang, Viet Nam, in June 2015. These discussions suggested that room for further improvement of collaboration between South Africa and Viet Nam still exists. According to its report, South Africa requested permission for a DEA official to be allowed to take samples from rhinoceros horn seized in Viet Nam during the last partnership meeting held between the two Parties in June 2015. However, this request which would have provided an opportunity to provide additional training to Vietnamese officials on sample collection was not favorably received. Taking into consideration the outcomes of the Ministerial-level dialogue and Senior Officials meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 2015, in particular actions 1 and 2 recommended by the Senior Officials meeting²⁵ and committed to in the Ministerial Statement,²⁶ South Africa and Viet Nam are encouraged to make every effort to further enhance their bilateral collaboration, to ensure that rhinoceros horn samples from specimens subject to criminal investigation are collected and submitted for DNA analysis, in accordance with relevant legislation regulating the exchange of such specimens.
62. Viet Nam also reported on its ongoing preparations for the signature of MoUs with China, the Czech Republic, Kenya and Mozambique, to strengthen collaboration with these Parties to combat rhinoceros horn trafficking, among others. These are very positive developments. Viet Nam and the Parties concerned are encouraged to operationalize these MoUs as soon as possible after signature.
63. Viet Nam reported that activities were conducted to raise awareness amongst Vietnamese citizens in foreign countries about the issue of rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking, and about the measures that are in place to combat it. Viet Nam reported that one of the key issues identified with regard to the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic, was that there is a lack of knowledge and awareness within this community about applicable legislation in the Czech Republic, as well as in Viet Nam. Viet Nam provided Vietnamese versions of relevant Vietnamese regulations to authorities in the Czech Republic, to be used to raise awareness amongst the Vietnamese community in Czech Republic.
64. The Czech Republic, South Africa and Viet Nam are encouraged to further enhance bilateral and trilateral cooperation between them. South Africa is encouraged to review the measures it implemented in relation to rhinoceros hunting regularly to limit the possible abuse of the permit system and to ensure that these measures remains current and are adapted in a timely manner as may be needed to address any new identified trends. South Africa is further encouraged to continue to coordinate with destination countries to check whether they have measures in place to monitor and regulate the movement and possession of rhinoceros horn.
65. All Parties are encouraged to ensure that national level measures are in place for the management of imported rhinoceros horn trophies. These measures should ensure that rhinoceros horns acquired as legal hunting trophies remain in lawful possession, and should include addressing the issue of alteration and transfer of such trophies. The Secretariat believes that the provisions of South Africa's NEMBA as described in paragraph 48, might provide a model that could be drawn upon by Parties to develop national level measures for the management of imported rhinoceros horn.
66. Decision 16.92 directs the Standing Committee to review the definition of 'hunting trophy' provided in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP16) on *Permits and certificates*, in relation to rhinoceros horn hunting trophies, and consider whether any revision is needed in order to eliminate the possible abuse of the definition to facilitate illegal trade in rhinoceros horn. The Committee might wish to consider whether any revision is needed, taking into consideration the information in this document and its annexes.

Final remarks

²⁵ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/pr/2015/CITES-RhinoDialogue-Recommendations.pdf>

²⁶ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/pr/2015/CITES-RhinoDialogue-Statement.pdf>

67. A lot has been done and a wide range of commendable activities have been implemented, are ongoing and are being planned to combat rhinoceros poaching and trafficking in rhinoceros horn. Despite this, rhinoceros poaching and trafficking in rhinoceros horn continues to be a matter of great concern. The high value of rhinoceros horn makes it a lucrative and attractive commodity for transnational organized crime groups. The complexity of the challenges brought about by this are evident, and it is becoming increasingly important for authorities to deploy the same tools and techniques used against other domestic and transnational organized crimes, such as the trafficking of narcotics, humans or arms, against the criminal groups involved in the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the trafficking of rhinoceros horns, and in particular against those individuals managing and organizing these illegal activities. ICCWC is seeking to provide support to countries to take these measures.

Recommendations

68. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:

All Parties

- a) encourage all Parties to:
 - i) ensure that national level measures are in place for the management of imported rhinoceros horn trophies, including addressing the issue of alteration and transfer of such trophies, to ensure that rhinoceros horns acquired as legal hunting trophies remain in lawful possession; and
 - ii) consider South Africa's National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), under which a permit is required to possess rhinoceros horn in South Africa, whether it is an individual horn or a number of horns, or any part, product or derivative of a rhino horn, as a possible model that could be drawn upon by Parties to develop national level measures for the management of imported rhinoceros horn.

India

- b) encourage India to remain vigilant in its efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade to further suppress current poaching levels, in particular in Kazaringa National Park.

Mozambique

- c) request Mozambique to:
 - i) enhance its efforts to progress the implementation of its NIRAP, and to continue the implementation of its NIRAP between SC66 and SC67;
 - ii) report on the further measures taken to implement its NIRAP to the Secretariat, by 30 June 2016;
- d) consider at SC67 whether Mozambique substantially progressed the activities outlined in its NIRAP, or have made insufficient progress and require compliance measures.

South Africa

- e) encourage South Africa to regularly review the measures it has implemented in relation to rhinoceros hunting in order to limit the possible abuse of the permit system and to ensure that these measures remain current and are adapted in a timely manner as may be needed to address any new identified trends.

Viet Nam

- f) request Viet Nam to:
 - i) consider the increased use of specialized investigation techniques and initiate investigations and follow up on information gathered from the smugglers recruited by those managing and organizing the illegal trafficking within the country;

- ii) incorporate specific provisions that apply to CITES-related offences in the new Penal Code, including the possession of CITES specimens acquired in violation of the Convention, and to engage with the Secretariat as may be needed, for legal assistance in the development of legislative measures aimed at tackling illegal trade in wildlife and to ensure effective domestic enforcement and prosecution of arrested offenders;
- iii) report on progress made with the incorporation of CITES-related offences in the new Penal Code and other relevant laws, and report any arrests, seizures, prosecutions and convictions for offences involving the illegal trade in and possession of rhinoceros horn detected at border points or domestic markets in Viet Nam during the reporting period following SC66, to the Secretariat by 30 June 2016, so that the Secretariat can make the report available to the Standing Committee at SC67.

Zimbabwe

- g) encourage Zimbabwe to remain vigilant in its efforts to combat rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn trade, and to enhance its efforts to suppress escalating poaching levels.

Mozambique and South Africa

- h) encourage Mozambique and South Africa to:
 - i) conclude the signature of the MoU Implementation Plan, and consultations and sign-off of the 2015/2016 Action Plan and the Terms of Reference as required in the MoU signed by them, described in paragraph 37 of this document (SC66 Doc. 51.1), as a matter of urgency;
 - ii) progress the draft treaties on extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters submitted to Mozambique by South Africa, as described in paragraph 39 of this document (SC66 Doc. 51.1), as a matter of urgency; and
- i) invite Mozambique and South Africa to jointly submit a report to the Secretariat on progress made with the matters outlined in recommendations h) i) and ii), by 30 June 2016, so that the Secretariat can make the report available to the Standing Committee at SC67.

South Africa and Viet Nam

- j) encourage South Africa and Viet Nam to make every effort to further enhance their bilateral collaboration, to ensure that rhinoceros horn samples from specimens subject to criminal investigation are collected and submitted for DNA analysis, in accordance with relevant legislation regulating the exchange of such specimens.

Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses

- k) request the Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to evaluate the reports submitted in accordance with recommendations c) ii), f) iii) and i) above, and report their findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 67th meeting;
- l) consider the suggestion made by the Secretariat in paragraph 12 of the present document.

RHINOCEROSSES

1. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.84 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to all Parties, as follows:

Directed to all Parties

16.84 All Parties should:

- a) *immediately bring every seizure of illegal rhinoceros specimens made within their territories to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination, as applicable, and to the attention of the Secretariat. Information on the seizure should be accompanied by available associated information, to enable follow-up investigations to take place;*
 - b) *notify the CITES Secretariat of seizures of rhinoceros horn for which the origin cannot be determined. Such a notification should include information describing the circumstances of the seizure;*
 - c) *enact legislation or use existing legislation to:*
 - i) *facilitate the use of specialized investigation techniques such as controlled deliveries and covert investigations in the investigation of wildlife-crime-related offences, as appropriate, in support of conventional investigation techniques;*
 - ii) *maximize the impact of enforcement actions by using other tools and regulations, such as anti-money laundering and asset forfeiture legislation, in support of wildlife legislation; and*
 - iii) *prosecute members of organized crime groups implicated in rhinoceros related crimes under a combination of relevant legislation which carry appropriate penalties that will act as effective deterrents, whenever possible;*
 - d) *submit rhinoceros horn samples from specimens subject to criminal investigation, to designated accredited forensic laboratories as described in document CoP16 Doc. 54.2 (Rev. 1), for DNA analysis, in accordance with relevant legislation regulating the exchange of such specimens;*
 - e) *prior to issuing permits or certificates, including pre-Convention certificates, authorizing the movement of specimens of rhinoceroses, consult with the country of destination, so that the true nature of the trade may be confirmed and monitored;*
 - f) *introduce national measures, as appropriate, in support of CITES implementation, to regulate internal trade in specimens of rhinoceros, including any specimen that appears from an accompanying document, the packaging, a mark or label, or from any other circumstances, to be a rhinoceros part or derivative; and*
 - g) *consider introducing stricter domestic measures to regulate the re-export of rhinoceros horn products from any source.*
2. Further to the above, the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting (SC65, Geneva, July 2014), agreed Recommendation n) iii) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, as follows:
- n) *in relation to the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force and Decision 16.84 a) and b):*

...

 - iii) *request the Secretariat to issue a notification and invite those Parties that have made seizures of rhinoceroses specimens to report to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decision 16.84 a) and b) by 31 July 2015;²⁷*

²⁷ See Notification to the Parties No. 2015/004 of 16 January 2015 on Changes to deadlines established by the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-004.pdf>

...

3. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.85 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to all Parties, as follows:

16.85 *All Parties implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as a range or consumer State, where applicable, should:*

- a) *develop and implement long-term demand reduction strategies or programmes and immediate actions aimed at reducing the illegal movement and consumption of rhino horn products, taking into consideration the draft demand-reduction principles included in the Annex to document CoP16 Doc. 54.1 (Rev. 1), to achieve measurable change in consumer behaviour;*
- b) *develop and implement strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness with regard to the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife crime, and to encourage the general public to report illegal activities related to wildlife trade to appropriate authorities for further investigation. Such strategies or programmes and immediate actions could include the involvement of local communities that live in the immediate vicinity of conservation areas, community policing projects or other strategies as may be appropriate; and*
- c) *provide information on the effectiveness of strategies or programmes referred to in paragraph a) and b) of this Decision, to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, by 31 January 2015, to assist the Working Group in identifying best practices and challenges experienced, with the aim of developing ideas to further enhance the effectiveness of demand-reduction strategies, and to report on its findings at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.*

4. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendations k) and l) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, presented in document SC65 Com. 3, as follows:

- k) *request the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to assist the provision of information requested in accordance with Decision 16.85 c) on the effectiveness of demand reduction programmes referred to in Decision 16.85 a) and the strategies and programmes to enhance community awareness referred to in Decision 16.85 b) through the development of reporting guidance by 30 September 2014, to aid Parties to prepare their reports, based on relevant previous Decisions and reports, in particular the Annex to CoP16 Doc. 54.1 (Rev. 1);*
- l) *subject to external funding, request the Secretariat to convene an expert workshop to consider the reports provided in accordance with Decision 16.85 c) to enhance the effectiveness, through identification of best practices and challenges experienced, of demand reduction programmes referred to in Decision 16.85 a) and the strategies and programmes to enhance community awareness referred to in Decision 16.85 b). Parties that submit reports in accordance with Decision 16.85 c) should be invited to this workshop;*

5. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.86 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to Viet Nam, as follows:

Directed to Viet Nam

16.86 *Viet Nam should:*

- a) *make progress with the development and implementation of the South Africa – Viet Nam 2012-to-2017 Joint Action Plan, including strengthening management of imported rhino horn trophies, and to improve investigations and prosecutions of Vietnamese nationals suspected of illegally possessing or trading in rhino horn, as referenced in document CoP16 Inf. 24; and specifically to include:*
 - i) *development of legislation on the domestic management of imported rhino horn trophies addressing the issue of alteration and transfer of rhino horn trophies pursuant to the national laws and CITES Resolutions; and*
 - ii) *establishment of a secure registration database to track legal rhino horn trophies;*
- b) *conduct consumer behaviour research to develop and implement demand reduction strategies or programmes aimed at reducing the consumption of rhino horn products; and*

c) *provide a comprehensive report on progress made to the Secretariat by 31 January 2014, with regard to steps taken to effectively implement the requirements of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), and include:*

- i) *an update on arrests, seizures, prosecutions and penalties for offences related to illegal rhinoceros horn possession and trade in Viet Nam since CoP16;*
- ii) *the effectiveness of Decision 11²⁸, reported in document CoP16 Inf. 24, to prevent illegal rhino horn trade; and*
- iii) *any other on-going activities and measures implemented to combat illegal killing of rhinoceros and illegal rhinoceros horn trade.*

6. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendation h) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, directed to Viet Nam, as follows:

h) *invite Viet Nam to provide a further progress report, following on from their report ahead of SC65, to the Secretariat by 31 July 2015,²⁹ for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting, on:*

- i) *the outcome of investigations and the application of appropriate penalties in relation to the seizures reported in the report submitted by Viet Nam and presented in Annex 1 to the report of the Secretariat (SC65 Doc. 43.2), and on arrests, seizures, prosecutions and penalties for illegal rhinoceros horn possession and trade offences imposed in the period since SC65, including at border points and in domestic markets;*
- ii) *any measures implemented to ensure that all confiscated rhinoceros horn stocks are secured, marked and registered in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15);*
- iii) *any activities conducted to bring seizures to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.84, paragraphs a) and b), and any collection of samples from confiscated rhinoceros horns for forensic analysis, in accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.84, paragraph d);*
- iv) *measures to reduce the demand for rhinoceros horns in domestic markets and reduce the engagement of Vietnamese people in the illegal trade in rhino horn, both in Viet Nam and in other countries; and*
- v) *progress on implementation of the Prime Minister's Directive on strengthening the direction and implementation of measures for controlling and protecting endangered, rare and precious wild animals.*

7. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.87 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to Mozambique, as follows:

Directed to Mozambique

16.87 *Mozambique should:*

- a) *take steps to effectively implement the requirements of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15);*
- b) *give priority attention to the enactment and implementation of legislation with deterrent penalties to effectively combat wildlife crime, prevent illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal possession of and trade in rhinoceros horn, taking into consideration the content of Decision 16.84, paragraphs a)-g); and*

²⁸ *Note from the Secretariat: In January 2013, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam issued Decision 11 on the "Prohibition of the export, import, selling and buying of specimens of some wild animals listed in the CITES Appendices". See document CoP16 Inf. 24 for further information.*

²⁹ *See Notification to the Parties No. 2015/004 of 16 January 2015 on Changes to deadlines established by the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-004.pdf>*

- c) *assist the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to implement its mandate by providing a comprehensive report on measures implemented, as specified in paragraph a) and b) of this Decision, and on any other activities conducted. This report should be submitted to the Secretariat by 31 January 2014.*
8. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendations d) to f) and i) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, on Mozambique, as follows:
- d) *note that Mozambique provided a limited response to Decision 16.87 two months after the date set down in the Decision, and failed to provide any response to Decision 16.88. Further note that this impeded the ability of the Working Group to fulfil its mandate;*
- e) *invite Mozambique to:*
- i) *prepare a detailed national rhinoceros action plan with time frames and milestones, capturing the measures that are still being, or are expected to be implemented, as contained in the report submitted by Mozambique and described in the report of the Secretariat (SC65 Doc. 43.2), the provisions of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), and any other activities and measures that might be implemented to combat illegal killing of rhinoceros and illegal rhinoceros horn trade;*
- ii) *submit its national rhinoceros action plan to the Secretariat by 31 October 2014;*
- iii) *take urgent measures to implement the national rhinoceros action plan between SC65 and SC66, seeking advice from the Secretariat as necessary;*
- iv) *provide a report to the Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, about progress made against timeframes and milestones on the implementation of the actions contained in the national rhinoceros action plan, by 31 January 2015; and*
- v) *provide a comprehensive report on progress made with the implementation of the national rhinoceros action plan, to the Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, by 31 July 2015,³⁰ including information on arrests, seizures, prosecutions and penalties for offenders involved in rhinoceros poaching and illegal rhinoceros horn possession and trade, for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting.*
- f) *the Secretariat shall, upon request, advise Mozambique on the development and implementation of its national rhinoceros action plan, and may undertake a mission to the country in the light of progress with implementation, pending an invitation from Mozambique and the availability of external funding.*
- i) *request the Secretariat to share the national rhinoceroses action plan of Mozambique described in recommendation e) ii) above with the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, to assist the Working Group to implement its mandate.*
9. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.88 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to Mozambique and South Africa, as follows:

Directed to Mozambique and South Africa

16.88 *Mozambique and South Africa should further enhance bilateral cooperation with each other and with their neighbouring States, to enhance current efforts to combat illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, and should provide a comprehensive report to the Secretariat, by 31 January 2014, with regard to activities conducted in this regard.*

10. At SC65, the Standing Committee agreed Recommendation g) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, directed to Mozambique and South Africa, as follows:

g) *invite South Africa and Mozambique to jointly submit a comprehensive report to the Secretariat, by 31 July 2015,³¹ on progress in the implementation of the deliverables agreed between their*

³⁰ *Idem.*

³¹ *Idem.*

Ministers at their June 2013 meeting, and on any progress made in the implementation of the activities agreed at the 4th JPCDS meeting, as it relates to rhinoceros poaching and the illegal rhinoceros horn trade, as described in paragraphs 37 to 38 of the report of the Secretariat (SC65 Doc. 43.2) , for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting;

11. At SC65, the Standing Committee also agreed Recommendation b) directed to the Czech Republic, South Africa and Viet Nam, and Recommendation c) directed to India, on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, as follows:

- b) *invite the Czech Republic, South Africa and Viet Nam each to submit a comprehensive report to the Secretariat, by 31 July 2015,³² on measures taken, including measures to improve bilateral and trilateral co-operation, to ensure that rhinoceros trophy hunting is not exploited by criminal groups and is not used to launder rhinoceros horns into illegal trade, and to prevent the illegal re-export of rhinoceros horns from the Czech Republic to Viet Nam. In the case of Viet Nam this reporting should be included in the report it provides in accordance with recommendation h;*
- c) *invite India to submit a comprehensive report on its implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) to the Secretariat, by 31 July 2015,³³ for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting;*

12. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.89 paragraphs a) to g) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to the Secretariat, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

16.89 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external funding, convene a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force consisting of representatives from Parties affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime partner organizations, EUROPOL and, as appropriate, other Parties and experts. The Task Force should develop strategies to improve international cooperation, taking into consideration ongoing initiatives [such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between South Africa and Viet Nam], and promote similar MoUs as appropriate;*
- b) *subject to external funding, develop, in conjunction with relevant institutions and experts, a manual containing guidelines on best practices, protocols and operational procedures, that will promote the use of wildlife forensic technology;*
- c) *examine the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) in those range States where the illegal killing of rhinoceros poses a significant threat to the populations of these species, particularly South Africa and Zimbabwe, and share its findings with the Working Group on Rhinoceroses;*
- d) *examine progress with curtailing illegal trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives by citizens of implicated States, particularly Viet Nam;*
- e) *seek external funding to undertake a technical mission to the Lao People's Democratic Republic to assess current enforcement activities relevant to illegal trade in wildlife, in particular in rhinoceros parts and derivatives, and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15);*
- f) *revise Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), taking into consideration the contents of Decisions 16.84 and 16.85 and submit this revised version for consideration at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and*
- g) *report at the 65th and 66th meetings of the Standing Committee on progress with regard to the implementation of paragraph a) to e) of this Decision.*

³² *Idem.*

³³ *Idem.*

13. At SC65, the Standing Committee further agreed Recommendations a), n) i), n) ii) and n) iv) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, as follows:

- a) *encourage all Parties to make every effort to effectively implement Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) and the Decisions on Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.) adopted at CoP16, and the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhino Enforcement Task Force, made available to Parties as an Annex to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/006 of 23 January 2014. In particular Parties are encouraged to take note of Decision 16.84 a) to immediately bring every seizure of illegal rhinoceroses specimens made within their territories to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination;*

- n) *in relation to the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force and Decision 16.84 a) and b):*
 - i) *urge all Parties that have not provided the Secretariat with the contact details of their national focal points on matters related to the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, as described in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report of the Secretariat (SC65 Doc. 43.2), to do so by 15 August 2014;*

 - ii) *encourage all Parties to provide information on their implementation of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force at SC66, as requested in the Annex to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/006 of 23 January 2014;:*

 - ...

 - iv) *request the Secretariat to report to the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting on actions taken to facilitate the implementation of paragraphs 4 a) to c) of the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force.*

14. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.90 paragraphs a) and b) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, as follows:

Directed to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses

16.90 *The Working Group on Rhinoceroses shall:*

- a) *evaluate the reports submitted in compliance with Decisions 16.86, paragraph c), 16.87, paragraph c), 16.88, and the findings of the Secretariat as per Decision 16.89, paragraph c); and report its findings and recommendations at the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee; and*

- b) *evaluate the report submitted in compliance with Decision 16.85, paragraph c), and report its findings and recommendations at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.*

15. At SC65, the Standing Committee also agreed Recommendations j) and m) on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)* in document SC65 Com. 3, as follows:

- j) *request the Secretariat and the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to evaluate the reports submitted in compliance with recommendations b), c), e) iv), e) v), g) and h) above and report their findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting;*

- m) *during the intersessional period the Secretariat will, in consultation with the Working Group, draw to the attention of the Standing Committee significant issues of non-compliance with the recommendations made on rhinoceros by the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting. Such issues raised will be considered by postal procedure, and in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3;*

16. At CoP16, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 16.91 and Decision 16.92 on *Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.)*, directed to the Standing Committee, as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

16.91 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *at its 64th meeting, extend the mandate of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses established at its 61st meeting, to continue to work, primarily through electronic means; and*
 - b) *at its 65th and 66th meetings, consider the reports and recommendations of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses as required in Decision 16.90, and of the Secretariat, and determine further actions to be implemented by Parties to reduce illegal supply and demand, including any necessary measures pursuant to Resolution Conf. 14.3.*
- 16.92 *The Standing Committee shall review the definition of 'hunting trophy' provided in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP16), in relation to rhinoceros horn hunting trophies, and consider whether any revision is needed in order to eliminate the possible abuse of the definition to facilitate illegal trade in rhinoceros horn.*