



Implementation of CITES provisions concerning ivory

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



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Introduction

In 1979, there were an estimated 1.3 million African elephants. By 1989, only 600,000 remained. The loss of more than half a million elephants in a decade was primarily due to poaching for ivory. Natural habitat loss was a second important factor; human population had doubled in elephant range states since 1970. Major public awareness campaigns were launched worldwide to save the elephant and stop the illegal trade in ivory. In October 1989, at the seventh meeting of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Convention of the Parties (CoP7), governments banned international trade in ivory, with effect from January 1990 (wildlifedirect.org).

The c Arab Emirates (UAE) recognized the importance of tackling illegal wildlife trade early on and in line with its keenness on conserving the environment, it became one of the first nations in the Middle East to ratify CITES in 1990. The UAE regularly assesses the effectiveness of its ability to implement the Convention successfully and has positioned itself as a leading nation within the region for these efforts. The nation's legislation on CITES were issued and came into force in 2002, entitled Federal Law 11, which later qualified the UAE for a category (A) status in the national legislation project. This meant that the UAE's legislation pertaining to illegal wildlife trade completely fulfilled all requirements to implement CITES.

Prior to CIETS CoP17, the UAE was categorized as Parties of 'importance to watch' by ETIS in their analysis report. The Standing Committee was directed by the CoP to review response reports presented by several parties including the UAE to determine, on the basis of the reports, whether to request these Parties to prepare a NIAP in accordance with the Guidelines to the NIAP Process. In 2017, the UAE received a letter from the CITES Secretariat stating that the UAE should not participate in the NIAP process at this time based on agreement from standing committee.

In December 2018, CITES secretariat shared the new ETIS report that TRAFFIC is submitting for consideration at CoP18 indicating that the UAE could potentially require attention under the NIAP process. As such, the Secretariat is sharing this report



with you before its publication on the CITES website. This report showcases UAE efforts in combating illegal trade in Ivory and how the country is one of leading nations in the region when it comes to it.

UAE's legislations prohibit Ivory and its products

The geographical location of the UAE makes it a critical hub as many shipments pass through via air, sea and land ports, thus the UAE has recognized the issue and has enacted a number of legislations which include the Federal Law No. (11) for the year 2002 concerning the regulation and control of International Trade in Endangered Fauna and Flora. This law includes 40 articles governing the scope of implementation, the functions of the authorities, administrative and scientific authorities, international trade and documentation, exceptions, identifying the ports of entry, how to deal with non-member states, registration of establishments and companies, transit, cooperation with the concerned authorities, and sanctions. It also includes penal articles and sanctions for offenders which varies from fines up to 50 thousand dirhams and imprisonment up to six months. The penalties vary depending on the Appendices to the Convention.

Furthermore, the Resolution of the Cabinet No. 22 of the year 2003 to issue the executive By-law of the Federal Law No. 11 of the year 2002 on regulating and controlling the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora. Furthermore, in 1988 Dubai Government issued an order for the ban of ivory, preventing businesses of buying and selling and manufacturing ivory and rhino horns. As a result of that order, in 1992 Dubai burnt 12 tons of confiscated ivory to demonstrate its support for the United Nations ban on trading in elephant tusks. CITES authorities in the UAE in collaboration with security agencies and NGOs are evaluating the effectiveness of CITES enforcement in the UAE and improving the efforts of CITES implementation regularly.

Recently the UAE has issued a new Federal Law No.22 of the year 2016 to regulate the ownership of dangerous wild animals. This Federal law aims to regulate the ownership, possession and handling of dangerous wild animals. The ownership of dangerous wild animals is now limited to zoos, wildlife parks and a few other designated entities only. The law ensures to protect people and animals from dangerous encounters with such wild animals and their health related issues, and also prevents wild animal suffering.



Innovative inspection facilities to detect ivory shipments

Ivory is transited through the UAE mostly in raw or carved trinkets form. Most of the confiscated ivory is either carried by a passenger or coming through transit without disclosure of the type of shipment. These confiscations were conducted by cooperation and coordination between the Ministry and the competent authorities of law enforcement.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCaE) in collaboration and coordination with the competent authorities, monitor all main borders with the latest technologies that would help to detect and control illegal shipments. It also cooperates with international governmental and non-governmental organizations to take advantage of their expertise and develop them in line with the UAE strategy.

In an effort to curb the illegal wildlife trade in the UAE, Dubai customs developed an innovative containers inspection facilities in the UAE. The Advanced Container Scanning System is the first innovative and comprehensive solution in the world that combines and integrates multiple components of inspection technologies. It is the latest world-class integrated system for containers and trucks X-ray screening. The device is capable of screening the contents of 150 trucks per hour moving at 8 to 15 km/hour, that is one truck per every 24 seconds. The system has been developed in order to help effectively protect the borders of UAE. The Advanced Container Scanning System is aimed at enhancing border security, reducing waste of resources, and reinforcing risk mitigation while maintaining a smooth flow of trade.

MoCCaE continuously develop an ivory stockpile inventory on annual basis since 2014 as part of its commitment to the highest international standards.

60% of online advertisements on illegal wildlife products has been shut

MoCCaE drastically reduced the electronic illegal trade of endangered animal and plant species listed in the Convention. This was done in coordination with the authorities responsible for Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), through tracking advertisements for the sale of endangered animals online. Most of these ads were posted by fake communication channels outside the state, and as a result, 60% of such sites were removed, i.e. 800 sites. The External Audit Department in the



Ministry in coordination with the local environmental authorities conduct many inspection programs on pet shops and the related businesses, and take appropriate action against the violator of CITES legalizations.

Furthermore, the authorities in the UAE have formalized procedures in place to track down online adverts in social media and other platforms. The procedure allows members of society to report posts and adverts in violation of UAE CITES and animal welfare regulations, and through the cooperation of different competent authorities a task force works on following up such reports and ensure the removal and prosecution of the violators as per the UAE regulations.

No demand nor a market for ivory in the UAE

There is no domestic ivory market in the UAE, therefore, illegal ivory confiscated in the UAE is meant for transit and doesn't target the local market as there is no demand. It passes to other countries with demand for ivory. Therefore, most of the ivory confiscated in the UAE or in country of destination passing through the UAE can be detected with the passengers as personal belonging or air to air. Giving the internationally adopted procedures, the rule of customs and airlines in air to air passing shipments is limited to tasks that is agreed upon internationally to ease the flow of air traffic. Hence detecting these illegal shipments is more successful in countries of destinations or countries of source, as customs plays a much bigger rule.

National airlines prohibit the carriage of ivory

The UAE has incorporated innovation to its national agenda thereby integrating innovation into the daily government work, which pushed us to seek for effective tools to combat illegal wildlife and work hand in hand with innovators to further push the limits of creativity and enhance the implementation of UAE's strategies. The UAE is also working hand in hand with the private sector to implement CITES regulation and conserve endangered species through different initiatives focusing on building awareness and developing different innovative methods to combat illegal wildlife trade, through partnerships with Emirates Airlines, Etihad Airlines, Dubai Ports World and Dubai Customs World, among others. For example, Etihad airways and Emirates airlines prohibited the carriage of species listed under CITES Appendix I or listed as 'Critically Endangered' or 'Endangered' by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and its products.



Innovative containers to support elephant conservation worldwide

DP world have built innovative containers that will be shipped out of DP World's Dubai port, Jebel Ali to their new homes and purpose, to ensure that endangered animals can be made safer in their natural habitats. These containers which were donated from its innovation sandbox to a number of charities in Kenya, South Africa and Thailand These charities will use the containers as ranger accommodation, training units, a laboratory for work with tigers, conservation units to trial new technology (including tracking, and surveillance systems), and vet units. In these containers rangers will be able to sleep alongside orphan elephants to aid their recovery. In addition, confidential whistleblowing service have been developed by DP world and Emirates airlines for people who want to report suspicious activity. Which reflect the true nature of this trade and how it affects us all.

The UAE cooperate with international partners to track ivory shipments

Furthermore, the UAE continue to cooperate with other leading agencies in the world to track down and follow up the source of confiscated ivory shipments, in 2014, the DNA of confiscated shipments were analyzed by Conservation Biology University of Washington in the USA to determine the geographic origin of large ivory seizures which was critical to understand where elephant poaching. The analysis was carried out in cooperation with INTERPOL and Dubai Customs. Other analyses are expected to be carried out soon.

In addition, the UAE has put a mechanism on place to communicate ivory confiscations to the INTERPOL in order to notify destination countries, as well as report to ETIS program on the details of such confiscations.

Raising awareness on illegal trade on ivory

Continuous capacity building for enforcement authorities and airline employees:

MoCCaE provides special training courses on a regular basis for enforcement officials who are working in Enforcement Authorities such as: Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, Ministry of Interior, Airports Security and Customs, and those who are assigned to implement Federal Law no. (11) for the year 2002 on the organization and control of international trade on endangered fauna and flora. Around 50 training courses were conducted for the different concerned authorities from the year

2007 to 2018. Moreover, Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (UAE CITES Scientific Authority), Emirates Nature in association with WWF (EN-WWF) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) are playing an important role in cooperating with the UAE CITES Management Authority in increasing the capacity building and awareness for the inspection officers and the community in general. These training sessions keep such individuals up to date with the latest updates and ensuring alignment with the best practices worldwide.

Furthermore, MoCCaE in collaboration with International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) participated as a trainer in a training workshop for Omani and Moroccan authorities on combating illegal trade and implementation of CITES, in an effort to share expertise and building the capacity of other countries in the region.

In 2016, the UAE conducted a workshop on combating illegal wildlife trade and implementation of CITES for the aviation sector, the first of its kind in the region. The workshop was conducted in cooperation with the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Etihad Airways, TRAFFIC, EWS-WWF and IFAW.

Training is not just limited to government officials in the UAE. DP world, Etihad airways, and Emirates airlines has developed online e-learning courses on illegal wildlife trade and how to spot the signs of smuggling wildlife, for their employees which collectively targeted more than 10,000 employees worldwide. Such courses have been shared with international partners like IATA to promote knowledge sharing internationally. As well as engaging young people through DP world global education program. To date, it has reached over 5,500 students across 14 countries. By ensuring that tomorrow's leaders know how to detect and destroy this trade, we are empowering them to protect their own natural legacy.



Picture (2): Showing two different sessions of different training workshop conducted in 2016

Reaching more than 1 million airport passengers with “ivory smuggling leads to prosecution”:

The UAE has also put great efforts in increasing public awareness through national awareness campaigns, distribution of leaflets, posters and guiding brochures regarding CITES and the species listed in the appendices of the convention which have been carried out for the last decade in different locations in the UAE such as shopping malls, local markets, airports, schools and universities, to demonstrate the risks and impacts of trafficking of endangered species.

In 2014, IFAW in cooperation with the MoCCaE in the UAE, Dubai Police, and Dubai International Airport conducted the “Ivory smuggling leads to prosecution” campaign – for the second year in a row- aiming to reduce the demand on ivory worldwide. The campaign message was delivered to almost 1 million passengers. The significance of such campaigns comes from the fact that it reached an international audience which gives an impression of the international status of ivory trade awareness. In 2015, a similar campaign was conducted in Abu Dhabi Airport in cooperation with IFAW, Abu Dhabi Police, Abu Dhabi Customs and Abu Dhabi Airport.



Picture (3): Part of the “Ivory smuggling leads to prosecution” campaign held in Dubai Airport in 2014 in association with IFAW, Dubai Police, and Dubai International Airport.

In 2016, the MoCCaE held a continuous campaign titled 'Beautiful in the Wild' running in partnership with Abu Dhabi International Airport, Dubai International Airport, Etihad Airlines, Emirates Airlines, Dubai Ports World, Customs World, IFAW, and EN-WWF.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness among UAE visitors and residents about the importance of protecting endangered species to ensure the sustainability of biodiversity at local and international levels. The stand allowed passengers to travel to a

virtual wildlife habitat of a selected species, and experience a simulated interaction with wild animals and learn important facts about the species and why is it important to protect the species from illicit wildlife trade.

Furthermore, Al Ain Zoo in corporation with the Ministry carries an annual Nature Conservation Festival, it aims to raise awareness among members of society on the different endangered species and roles and responsibilities for the community in combating illegal wildlife trade.



Picture (4): Part of the 'Beautiful in the Wild' campaign carried out in Abu Dhabi International Airport

In 2017, the MoCCaE exhibited samples of CITES confiscations including ivory in its headquarters in a permanent exhibition which aims to increasing the public awareness on the importance of these species & the impact of illegal trade on endangered species.

MoCCaE has also engaged youth in raising public awareness. The Ministry carried out awareness campaigns with main focus on implementation of CITES and raising the awareness of the public on issues related to the conservation of endangered species. The campaigns targeted over 4000 from the general public including youth and students. These campaigns were organized by members of MoCCaE youth council.

Moreover, MoCCaE issued a number of printed and electronic guidelines for the use of public to raise awareness on CITES and trade in its listed species. Furthermore, several social media campaigns have been carried out to raise awareness on the importance of regulated international trade in species listed under CITES and their conservation.

<https://www.moccae.gov.ae/assets/download/805017ca/CITES.pdf.aspx?view=true>

First ivory destruction event in the region:

In April 2015, approximately 10 tons of elephant ivory worth US\$20 million was destroyed to demonstrate the UAE's commitment to fighting the illegal trade. The stockpile of raw and crafted ivory seized from smugglers at the UAE's airports, borders and sea ports, was crushed by staff from the MoCCaE, in collaboration with Environment Agency- Abu Dhabi (Scientific Authority of CITES), Dubai Municipality, Dubai Customs, Dubai Police and IFAW. The destruction of the ivory stocks was carried out in an environmentally friendly process, according to the best industry practices. A machine was used to crush the ivory into very small pieces. The pieces were subsequently mixed with treated waste then buried and disposed of in designated areas to prevent its reuse.

Former CITES Secretary General acknowledged the event, he addressed the occasion by releasing a statement on the CITES website. He said: "When coupled with the seizure of ivory and prosecution of offenders, it sends a powerful message that the UAE, does not accept and will not tolerate this illegal trade or the devastating impact it is having on the African elephant, on the livelihoods of rural communities, and sometimes on national and regional security. It also provides a very public opportunity to send a message to those who trade illegally in elephant ivory that the age and origin of their contraband can today be readily identified through the use of modern forensics. Therefore, whatever may happen in the future, illegally traded elephant ivory will never have any commercial value and the return on the 'investment' will most likely be imprisonment, heavy fines, and seized assets."



Picture (5): Ivory destruction event held in Dubai, April 2015, in cooperation with Dubai Municipality, Dubai Customs, Dubai Police and IFAW



UAE comments on ETIS report Cop18

- The UAE is devoted to combat the illegal trade of ivory even though it doesn't have a domestic market or demand for ivory, the shipments confiscated in the country are transit shipments passing through the UAE in different forms either raw or worked either carried out by passengers or in shipment containers.
- Most of seizures have variety of shapes, sizes and colors and this is a challenge in determining whether the shipment is raw ivory or worked. There are no standards and manuals that help countries identify and classify ivory bearing in mind that we have confiscated raw ivory were the sizes varied from 5cm to 4 m.
- The current report doesn't reflect the actual number of seizures for the year 2017, as indicated in the first para on page 2. We are concerned that actions arising from the report will not be appropriate as it's based on data that doesn't represent the full status of illegal global ivory trade.
- In the cluster analysis, the score of the explanatory variables to describe the 13 cluster analysis groups doesn't represent the actual situation of countries in different groups. Specifically "Measures of Law Enforcement Effort Efficiency and Measure of Domestic Ivory Trade", both of which doesn't reflect the actual situation for the UAE as mentioned before the shipments are only transited through UAE .
- The process of selecting the countries from different groups to be categorized in the three category is not clear, in the case of the UAE, it's not clear why the UAE along with 2 other countries from group 7 have been selected to be in category C. Besides, the definition of Category C is not clear and not applicable in the case of the UAE. The country is not affecting the illegal ivory trade in any way.
- It mentioned in the report that the United Arab Emirates made or was implicated in 44 seizures, representing 1,749 kg of ivory presented in table 4 but when reviewing the report, it was not clear which seizures reflect the UAE data as the country is not mentioned in the table.