

SPEECH BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE,
MS MOLLIE BEATTIE

In March of 1973, delegates from 80 nations met in Washington, D.C., to negotiate a new and unprecedented international agreement for the conservation of our world's flora and fauna.

That agreement, which we know as CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – was designed to foster two important goals:

- first, to protect threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna from the harmful effects of commercial trade; and
- second, to establish a worldwide system for ensuring that trade in other species is conducted on a sustainable basis for the future.

These twin goals – the protection of threatened and endangered species, and the fostering of sustainable utilization of other species – are even more relevant to the world of the 1990s than they were to the world of the 1970s.

Today CITES is the world's largest environmental treaty, with 123 party countries. We are especially pleased to welcome the newest members of the CITES family to this meeting, including Romania, which will become a Party on 16 November, as well as Sierra Leone and Eritrea, whose memberships will become effective in January.

A word on this particular meeting of the Conference of the Parties. I am certain that, even though many of you have just arrived, you have noticed the beauty of Fort Lauderdale and the warm hospitality of its people. This meeting would not have been possible without the dedication of the Greater Broward County community – from its business leaders to its school children. What you are experiencing is what we call "southern hospitality".

The US Government was responsible for the nuts and bolts of this meeting but we could not have done our job without our many corporate and private sector sponsors. The generosity of the American business community as well as the support of the American public are a clear indication of their appreciation of the principles of CITES. Most, if not all of the office equipment you will be using during the course of these two weeks has been donated by American businesses.

Also contributing to local appreciation and understanding of CITES is the student mock conference held last week in Fort Lauderdale. Some 550 students representing Broward County's 250 public and private schools made and discussed resolutions similar to those we will consider over the next two weeks and they will present us with those which they passed by a two-thirds vote. It will be interesting and instructive to see what the students think of these issues.

CITES must continue to build on its successes. One of the most important of these was the action taken by CITES parties in 1989 to end the ivory trade and its devastating effects on African elephant populations. The ban on the ivory trade must be continued if elephant populations are to have a chance to recover.

At the same time, we recognize that some African countries have had to give up a significant source of revenue because of the ivory ban. In fulfilment of a pledge for increased assistance made during the 1989 CITES meeting, the US now has a dedicated fund of one million dollars per year for anti-poaching and other elephant conservation projects in African elephant range States. It is clear that the conservation needs of the elephant range States are much greater than what those States and the US fund can provide.

Additional financial assistance must come from other Parties to CITES and should be used for both direct assistance and the development of sustainable uses of elephant populations unrelated to the trade in ivory, such as ecotourism and, where herds must be limited in size, sport hunting.

While the elephant has captured much attention at past CITES meetings, we must not let it overshadow other more pressing conservation challenges. Among the new issues which we must address during this meeting, none is more critical than the imminent loss of the tiger and most of the world's species of rhinoceros, caused by illegal trade in their parts and products. In support of decisions taken by the CITES Standing Committee in reaction to the devastating illegal trade in rhinoceros and tiger products, President Clinton for the first time imposed trade sanctions under the US Pelly Amendment earlier this year. The Pelly amendment is a US domestic law designed to authorize trade sanctions against countries whose trading practices undermine the effectiveness of CITES.

In addition, I am pleased to announce that within the past month the US Congress passed and President Clinton signed a new law, the Rhino and Tiger Conservation Act, setting up a new fund dedicated to providing financial assistance for conservation in rhinoceros and tiger range States.

The problems faced by rhinoceros and tigers highlights the general need which we all have for increased attention to enforcement of the Convention. We must find ways of fostering communication and co-operation among CITES party countries on enforcement mechanisms, and of providing training to those Parties with the will, but not the means, to improve their CITES implementation. In this regard, I am especially pleased to announce another new US initiative. With the generous cooperation of the US Agency for International Development's Asia Environmental Program, the Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of implementing a new wildlife inspector training programme for several Parties throughout the Asian region. This training partnership will last through 1995 and we will start meeting with some of those countries this week to initiate the arrangements.

Enforcement is indeed a major theme of this meeting, which we wholeheartedly endorse. Wildlife crime is ever-increasing. When you go into the exhibit hall next door, I urge you to visit the US Government exhibit where you will see firsthand evidence of the illegal trade in wildlife products. As we look forward to the next 20 years of CITES, we must dedicate ourselves to working harder on co-operative enforcement efforts. One extremely encouraging development is the recently signed Lusaka Agreement, which involves very positive co-operative enforcement efforts among African countries. Hopefully this will be the model for other regional enforcement agreements.

The United States sees Appendix II as the critical pillar of the treaty, the mechanism whereby range States and consumer countries can join in a partnership to foster sustainable utilization of vulnerable species before it is too late. We have a perfect example right here in the United States. We have recently become aware of declines in North American box turtles owing to a number of factors, including habitat deterioration and unregulated and increasing international trade. As the major box turtle range State, we have submitted a proposal for listing the species in Appendix II, as a means of seeking the international assistance and co-operation that is the strength of CITES. The listing of the box

turtles in Appendix II will help regulate the trade to ensure that it is sustainable, and we shall work with our states to buttress their enforcement efforts.

In making listing decisions, CITES must continue to use the best available scientific information in order to maintain our scientific credibility and objectivity. We must never forget that the strength of CITES rests on good and rigorous science. CITES' efforts to revise the listing criteria are one of the most important issues we will be discussing at this meeting. We will work co-operatively to ensure that whatever is adopted is scientifically valid, is truly objective, and provides

us, the Parties, with the necessary means to fulfil the conservation goals inherent to our mission.

On behalf of President Bill Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore, and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt, let me tell you how honoured is the entire United States delegation to join with you in making the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES a productive and memorable meeting in which we will be drawn closer together by our common commitment to the conservation of the natural systems that sustain us all.

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BROWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
MS SYLVIA POITIER

It is an honour for me to be here today to personally welcome you to the United States, and in particular to Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida for this meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

As Chairman of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, and on behalf of the 1.3 million residents and schoolchildren of our community, we are especially privileged and justifiably proud to be the host location for this important environmental conference.

We in Greater Fort Lauderdale recognize that the public and private sectors must work together to prove that environment and tourism are not incompatible. We recognize that we can have both, we must have both, and in fact, we can not have one without the other.

Many months ago, I had the pleasure of meeting your distinguished Secretary General from Geneva, Izgrev Topkov and the United States Fish and Wildlife Director, Mollie Beattie at the official signing ceremony for the CITES meeting right here in the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Country Convention Center.

Much dedication, organization and hard work have gone into planning this meeting with the goal of making it the best meeting in the history of CITES.

We in Greater Fort Lauderdale recognize the importance of your plenary sessions and the results affecting policy on international trade in endangered species. We understand the serious nature of your business. But we can not recommend all work and no play while you are visiting our community.

We do hope that you will have a chance to sample some of our sightseeing treasures while you are in town. And we invite each of you to return with friends and families to our sunny shores to discover our many pleasures, from the

beaches to the everglades, all under our friendly south Florida skies.

The warmth of our community's hospitality will be reflected in the "Stars and Stripes" welcome reception planned for you all tonight beginning at 6pm. We know you will enjoy yourselves at tonight's all-American gala.

We have a special proclamation to read to you this morning.

Whereas the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (more simply known as CITES) is meeting in the United States of America for the first time in 20 years...

Whereas the ninth CITES meeting is taking place at the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Country Convention Center...

Whereas Broward County residents and schoolchildren are proud to welcome the 2000 CITES delegates from 124 countries around the globe...

Whereas Broward County recognizes the importance of a community where people are working together to solve sensitive natural-resource issues...

Whereas the CITES meeting will bring more than USD 7 million into Broward County's economy...

Whereas Broward County recognizes the value of the CITES treaty protecting endangered species of plant and animal life from the harmful effects of commercial trade...

Therefore we, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim November 6-18 1994 Endangered Species weeks in Greater Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida and urge citizens to join in thanks and appreciation for the CITES meeting.

It is my very great pleasure to address this ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

Mr Chairman, when CITES was opened for signature more than twenty years ago, it was an innovative solution to a problem that concerned us all. And it was an instrument much ahead of its time.

The Parties to this Convention had realized not only that some aspects of the international trading system were a major causal factor in global environmental destruction, but also that uncontrolled international trade was perhaps the second most important factor responsible for the decline of our wildlife species – after destruction of habitat.

Though there was no reservoir of experience to build upon in practical implementation of controls on illegal wildlife trade, there did exist an all pervading realization that if action was not taken quickly enough, there was an impending risk of a part of our global ecological heritage being lost forever. The result was an international treaty that for the first time used the levers of trade in the interests of conservation.

Today, as we look at the increasing membership of the Convention, I have no hesitation in saying that the enhanced membership of the Convention has become synonymous with the progress of the conservation movement itself.

The CITES family is today 126 strong. Several States have just acceded to the Convention – Mali, Romania, Eritrea and Sierra Leone. I welcome them to this Convention as equal partners in our endeavour to conserve our ecological heritage.

May I mention one significant development that has a direct bearing on the implementation of this Convention.

On 9 September 1994, six eastern and southern African countries adopted and signed the Lusaka Agreement on Co-operative Enforcement Operations directed at illegal trade in Wild Fauna and Flora. This is a significant achievement.

Africa has seen an unprecedented destruction of its wild fauna and flora as a result of poaching, fuelled to a large degree by the profits gained by wildlife traffickers.

I recall the CITES Secretary General commenting on the occasion of the First Expert Group Meeting of the Lusaka Agreement. He said that it was no secret that traditional enforcement methods had largely failed to protect some African species.

Illegal wildlife trade, as with other causes of environmental impoverishment has no respect for national borders. I congratulate those African nations and I hope that the Lusaka Agreement will provide a precedent for similar initiatives in the future aimed at enforcing environmental law. Internationally organized co-operation in wildlife and other environmental crimes can only be met by internationally organized co-operative law-enforcement measures.

This meeting must grasp the opportunity to embrace the future – not simply continue with "business as Usual".

1. As you are aware, the Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force on 29 December 1993, less than 18 months from the time it was opened for signature, a record as yet unsurpassed in these kinds of international agreements.

As we approach its first Conference of the Parties in the Bahamas next month, it is worth stressing that this Convention is much more than just a set of rights and obligations to be implemented by the Contracting

Parties. It is a means by which nations can support one another equitably in their quest for sustainable development. It is a treaty with a mission and a vision of equity. It is a treaty with a built-in enabling mechanism to drive forward the implementation process.

Effective and successful implementation of the Convention will have important national, regional and global implications, offering both challenges and opportunities. For example, baseline research on and application of traditional or indigenous knowledge, practices and technologies is important for viable biodiversity conservation and sustainable programmes.

While framing this Convention we realized that decisions on conservation or sustainable use of biodiversity must be based on objective criteria. We all realize that blanket conservation or blind exploitation of biodiversity is not economically feasible, technically possible or socially desirable. What this implies is the need for preparation of national bio-diversity profiles drawing together a host of information on which priorities and appropriate effective actions can be based. This I think will have implications for the implementation of other conservation conventions such as CITES.

It is only when a holistic approach is chosen and pursued that the wide diversity of benefits and opportunities presented by the Convention can be realized and sustained.

A question being increasingly asked is whether it is still necessary to continue with specialized conventions such as CITES especially since we have a more general and comprehensive approach now in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It must be remembered that both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Funding mechanism to finance international activities to tackle global environmental threats are strictly country related. When the Convention on Biodiversity was developed and negotiated, it was generally understood that the existing conservation conventions should retain their particular field of activities. Thus, you will not find any provisions for international trade in endangered species in the Convention on Biodiversity. Similarly, although migratory species are covered by the Convention on Biodiversity, you will not find in any instruments for international co-operation in the conservation of that group of species.

In order to enhance co-ordination between various conventions, UNEP organized the first meeting on Co-ordination of Secretariats of Environmental Conventions in Geneva from 28 to 30 March 1994.

The meeting expressed a positive attitude to enhance co-ordination between the various Conventions. I would like to list some of the salient features here:

- to establish an information exchange network between the Conventions; to undertake a study, jointly with the CMS Secretariat, on the legal aspects of complementarity of biodiversity-related Conventions;
- to undertake, on the basis of information provided by Secretariats, a comparative study of existing practices in implementation of the Conventions with

a view to identifying the most effective means of and mechanisms for implementation which can be replicated for other instruments.

The relationship between CITES and other Conventions is an important issue for your consideration.

2. The enhanced membership of this Convention has brought with it new expectations and also the hope that the global community will embrace the principle of living resource conservation for sustainable development – that conservation of the natural environment and economic development are inseparable.

This issue is not new for CITES – but it remains on the agenda.

If CITES is to be successful, the gap in our common understanding of sustainability and conservation must be bridged. This is because many in our societies have been led to believe that conservation is diametrically opposed to sustainable use. Simply stated, sustainability is underpinned by a philosophy of prudent management of natural resources with the objective of achieving their conservation. In our interdependent world, conservation is also simply a matter of enlightened self-interest, if we are to meet not only the demands of the present generation but also those of future generations.

For any wildlife conservation policy to succeed, it must be based on a scientific assessment of the situation and recognize the objectives, needs and priorities of the people. It must be so designed that it empowers people to gain control over their lives through active participation in conservation measures.

Local communities need to be more involved in the management of biological resources and to benefit from their sustenance. Because groups of indigenous people in many parts of the world regard natural resources as essential to their cultural continuity and economic well-being, they should be given particular attention in all conservation programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if this point is missed or weakened during the course of the discussions in this meeting, I am afraid we are going to lose the support of those who inhabit the poor and developing countries, which are also the home of the majority of the CITES-listed species.

I know the voice of these impoverished people is often not heard. We have a responsibility to listen to them, not only to the voice of the rich and powerful groups from the North.

I think that the discussions on the vicuna, for example, provide a good opportunity to demonstrate how conservation could be best promoted through enhancing the motivation of the local people economically.

We must look beyond regulatory measures. We need new and innovative economic instruments, otherwise the dynamics of population growth, poverty and habitat loss, along with sophisticated criminal networks will take their devastating toll.

Allow me to comment on some of the main issues.

First, if the different proposals for listing species in the CITES appendices are adopted, more than 100 new species will be included in these appendices. While listing, especially in Appendix I, is a justified stop-gap measure, it is a sad achievement. The act of listing a species is itself a sign of failure, proving that all other management measures to

conserve the species have failed. This meeting may like to consider this view.

Secondly, out of the 136 proposals for amendment of the appendices, several are highly controversial.

I hope that the Parties will find the best way to handle these in an objective, unbiased manner and that the final decisions, based on the best available information, will guard the letter and spirit of the Convention and will at the same time pay due attention to the legitimate interest of the range States.

The issue of conservation of elephants and rhinoceroses continues to cause concern. The continuous decline in their viable populations in many countries has brought about a situation that has apparently defied the conservation measures undertaken by CITES for many years now. You will recall that international commercial trade in rhinoceros parts, derivatives and products has been prohibited since 1977 when all five extant species of rhinoceros were listed in CITES Appendix I. In 1989 at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Lausanne, a similar resolution was adopted to place African elephant populations in CITES Appendix I, thereby effectively banning international trade in elephant products and derivatives.

Unfortunately, the global situation has not changed for the better especially as far as the rhinoceros and the tiger is concerned. In fact, the conservation crisis for these two animals seems only to have intensified in many countries.

Concerned about the conservation of elephants, rhinoceroses and the tiger, UNEP has decided to make their conservation a priority issue.

UNEP has hosted three conferences between 1992 and 1993 between elephant and rhinoceros range States, consumer States and donors on financing the conservation of the elephant and the rhinoceros. There were expectations that elephant and rhinoceros conservation projects would receive a major infusion of funds by the donors. Project proposals totalling over USD 55 million over several years were tabled during these meetings. In fact, the total commitment by donors was less than USD 10 million. Much of this was already earmarked for projects in progress.

UNEP also co-sponsored with the Government of India the first meeting of Tiger Range States on the Conservation of the Tiger, held in New Delhi in March 1994. This meeting launched the Global Tiger Forum of tiger range States.

The meetings also issued a number of resolutions. Most importantly, they endorsed the establishment of a UNEP Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility, charged with the responsibilities of providing technical co-ordination, securing financial resources and ensuring governmental commitment for the implementation of elephant and rhinoceros conservation strategies and action plans, as well as with assisting to solve conservation problems.

In order to further facilitate the implementation of this programme, a call was made to the administrators of the Global Environment Facility to give priority to funding projects that included the conservation of elephants, rhinoceroses and the tiger. The UNEP Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility became operational on 1 April 1994.

The conservation of elephants, rhinoceroses, tiger and many other species of plants and animals in the CITES context requires critical review by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. I would request the delegates to be very objective in their deliberations on the conservation of these species. I hope that contributions to the debate will be based on genuinely scientific and ecological considerations.

Allow me now to turn to the new criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.

This complicated matter is at the heart of the Convention. I urge you, in these discussions to base criteria around sound scientific analyses, to maintain the precautionary principle as a cornerstone and to strike the right balance between scientific rigour and practicality.

I can not conclude without referring to the Parties' commitment to make the Convention function in an optimal fashion. National legislation on the subject is still sadly inadequate in many countries. Here the importance of the Secretariat's project to analyze these national laws can not be over emphasized. All efforts should now be aimed at their improvement, since it is here that implementation really starts.

This is also an opportunity for me to compliment the Secretariat for their highly professional work over the years, for their loyalty to the noble cause of conservation, for their contribution to our common fight to save the planet.

It must be pointed out however, that their resources can not be stretched endlessly. Even the best ideas and projects approved by the Conference of the Parties itself can not be realized if the old pattern is repeated again and again. I regret to say that after a few years of comparatively regular payment of the annual contributions, this year the trend of payments is very negative. By late October barely more than one-third of the total annual contributions due had been paid

to the Trust Fund. In these circumstances UNEP's support – which exceeds the overhead charges of administration – becomes vital. We too, however, are facing financial challenges.

Everybody seems to be in agreement that CITES is under-budgeted. And its ever-growing mandate necessitates increased financial support. The Secretariat has prepared its budget very frugally. It does not provide for any contingency or reserve fund. With the possible adoption of new draft resolutions, the representation of developing countries in the three main permanent Committees and increased expenditures on many other budget lines, the budget of CITES may exceed its allocations substantially.

I earnestly request Parties to meet their financial commitments and to help to avoid the painful cuts that are now being envisaged in several projects being undertaken by the Secretariat.

Twenty years after the adoption of CITES, the world has moved beyond the world of the 1970s and is looking to the world of the 1990s and beyond. The issues that you will be discussing in this meeting are indeed challenging. I know discussions here will be emotionally charged as you try to define the fundamentals of sustainability itself. The judgement of the Parties will be subjected to a scrutiny of the most intense kind. But, with the objective of the Convention ever before you I am confident that commendable progress will be made.

Our profound thanks to the host country, not only for its continued strong leadership in the effort to preserve and protect endangered species, but for the invaluable efforts in the superb organization of this ninth meeting of the Conference of the CITES Parties.

I wish all of you a most productive and intellectually stimulating conference.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE,
MR MURRAY HOSKING

Distinguished Delegates and Observers, welcome to this the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

It is with pleasure that I report to you that, since we last assembled together at the Conference of the Parties, the CITES family of sovereign nations has grown significantly in size, to 124 Parties to the Convention. I can tell you that in 1992 Equatorial Guinea and Estonia joined the Convention. In 1993 both Slovakia and the Czech Republic separately acceded to CITES, along with Barbados and, late in that year, the Republic of Korea. Our most recent arrivals during 1994 have been Viet Nam, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Mali and Romania. Even better news to report is that both Eritrea and Sierra Leone have acceded to the Convention, bringing the number of Parties to 126, although their full membership will not be effective until early next year. I am sure that all Parties would join me in giving a warm welcome to all these new arrivals to the CITES family. While the procedures of this meeting of the Conference of the Parties may be new and unfamiliar to you as new Parties, please do not hesitate to call on the other Parties and the Secretariat itself for assistance in understanding the procedures and processes of the Convention.

Since the Kyoto meeting we have passed the twentieth birthday of CITES, and the Standing Committee was privileged to join in the birthday celebration in March 1993, in Washington, D.C. We were grateful that our host the United States, was able to facilitate our joining in with those festivities. If I were given the task of selecting a theme for this the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, I believe it would be "Laying the Foundation for the next 20 years".

We have so much on our agenda that goes to the very heart of the Convention:

- we are looking to consolidate the Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties from the last 20 years to provide for more straightforward and comprehensible administration of this, the "soft law" of the Convention;
- we will be considering a revised set of criteria for amending the appendices: surely no more fundamental task for CITES;

- we will be looking at some of the enduring themes of CITES yet again – African elephants, rhinoceroses, tiger, marine species, timbers – themes which we know need more attention yet to get right;
- finally, there are proposals for the review of the Convention itself – to see whether the structure and operation of the Convention is appropriate for the next 20 years. That is an exercise which, if it is done, must be done correctly, so as to be sure that the best of CITES is strengthened and the Convention is supported in its foundations.

So, let us keep in the forefront of our minds in the next two weeks that we are literally laying the foundations for the next 20 years of CITES.

I am sure that our debate will be constructive and forward-thinking. As a family of nations we know how to address debate in this fashion. While all families do have disagreements from time to time, we do know that we are all motivated by a common concern for the conservation of the world's biodiversity, that these threatened species are in our care, and that we are accountable to all the people of the sovereign nations we represent for the protection and, where appropriate, sustainable utilisation of wildlife.

Whether we come from the intrinsic values school of wildlife conservation, or whether we come from the school which says that wildlife must be used in order for it to be conserved, I believe that we all accept that too much of the world's biodiversity has been lost needlessly, and through unregulated exploitation.

CITES is said to be "the pragmatic Convention". Perhaps we can make sure that this reputation is enhanced in our work of the next two weeks, with practical and workable solutions for the issues now before us – to the real benefit of wildlife, and for those people who work in conservation, species management and regulation in the field.

Once again, welcome to us all.

On behalf of President Clinton and his Administration, I am pleased to welcome the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties back once again to the United States of America.

It was just a little more than 20 years ago – Saturday, 3 March 1973 – that the New York Times ran a small story on page eight announcing that delegates from 80 nations meeting in Washington had drafted a treaty to protect wildlife endangered by international trade practices.

At the time, there were many sceptics who doubted that such an ambitious, multilateral treaty would ever be ratified, much less prove to be effective. History has proven otherwise. History has shown that the creation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was an extraordinary event, matched only by the extraordinary accomplishments which followed.

A Record of Success

Of the many dramatic successes of this Convention in protecting the biodiversity of this planet, I would cite just a few well-known examples:

- In 1973, CITES listed the leopard as an Appendix-I species in imminent danger of extinction from world demand for leopard-skin coats. Before that decision, the United States alone imported 7,000 commercial leopard skins each year. With the CITES listing decision, the market for leopard-skin coats has virtually disappeared.
- In the 1980s, CITES moved to protect tropical bird species being driven to extinction by increasing worldwide demand for exotic and ornamental pets. That market was perfectly legal; it was also a perfect prescription for extinction. Before the CITES action, the United States alone legally imported 1,000 scarlet macaws per year; after the listing, our legal imports were reduced to ten specimens. In the three years prior to its listing by CITES, the United States legally imported more than 5,000 Moluccan cockatoos; after the listing, those import numbers are down to six.

Perhaps the single most important CITES achievement is saving the African elephant from a bloody slaughter at the hands of international ivory poachers. When the poaching frenzy began in 1970, ivory sold for less than USD 3.00 per pound. By the 1980s, the price of ivory had escalated 10,000 per cent to USD 300 per pound. Poachers shot 700,000 elephants in one decade: 70,000 elephants a year, 200 elephants each day, one elephant every eight minutes.

In 1989 the Conference of the Parties listed the African elephant in Appendix I, banning the ivory trade effective from January 1990. The effect was immediate. In Kenya, elephant kills dropped tenfold each year: in 1989 poachers shot 2,000; in 1990, 200; in 1991, less than 20. In East Africa, ivory prices plummeted from USD 663 per pound to USD 22 per pound. By June 1990 the commercial market in the United States collapsed, principally because public opinion had effectively stigmatized the decorative use of ivory.

For all of these reasons, the United States is committed to maintaining the ivory ban. The ban is effective; it is overwhelmingly supported by the force of world opinion; it has saved the African elephant from uncontrollable carnage at the hands of poachers.

One elephant range State has come to this meeting proposing to open a limited trade in hides, arguing that

elephants can and should be culled on a sustainable basis. That State does not propose that the ban on ivory be lifted or modified in any way.

The United States recognizes that this proposal draws a distinction between the trade in ivory and in hide. We also recognize that South Africa, which has achieved success in the sustainable management of elephant herds, is entitled to a full discussion and debate of the proposal in the best tradition of the CITES process.

The real question in the mind of the United States is whether it is in fact possible to open a trade in hides without compromising the ivory ban – whether it is realistic to build an unbreakable wall between ivory and hides. As we encourage these discussions, we also encourage that they unfold in a context that recognizes how successful and important the ivory ban has been.

As a regulatory body governing the export and import of endangered species, CITES has indeed been effective. But there are two areas where success has been elusive, and it is those issues that I wish to address this morning.

The first acknowledges that the primary goal of this organization is to ensure that trade of any kind is not the cause of species extinction; the black market today makes a mockery of governmental efforts at enforcement. The second acknowledges that all of our efforts to preserve biodiversity depend in large measure on our efforts to protect habitat.

The Increasing Necessity of Enforcement Actions

The frustrating irony facing CITES today is that even as the Convention has increased its effectiveness, the threat from poaching today is even greater than ever before.

Distances have been shortened. Borders once closed by ideology are now open for commerce. Communication is faster and easier. And we now have more trade of all kinds – legal and illegal.

In this new climate, the black market for wildlife has flourished. During the course of this two-week meeting, in the south-eastern United States, a poacher will find an overseas buyer willing to pay USD 5,000 for a black-bear gall-bladder. Today, in a New York City penthouse, a respected business tycoon feeds a USD 30,000 hyacinth macaw. Tonight in an Asian cafe, a party of fifteen can pay USD 20,000 to dine on tiger-penis soup.

The existence of these black markets calls into question the effectiveness of the CITES system. And two species in particular can illustrate the weaknesses in our system.

The Asian tiger and the black rhinoceros have been listed in Appendix I for several years. Yet their plunge toward extinction continues unabated.

The CITES system that worked so successfully for other species is not working for the rhinoceroses and the tiger. The use of rhinoceros horn and tiger bone is embedded in cultural and medicinal practices. It may therefore be more difficult for an Asian government to effectively ban the use of tiger bone wine that it was for the American Government to eliminate the market for leopard-skin coats: fashions change more readily than cultures.

Nonetheless, however difficult it may be to modify or change time-sanctioned, culturally based demand, we have no choice. The alternative is unthinkable: the eradication of tigers and rhinoceroses from the wilds of this planet – in our lifetime.

In September 1993, I travelled to Brussels to consult with the Standing Committee of CITES on how best to strengthen enforcement efforts against poaching and illegal sales of tiger bone and rhinoceros horn. The evidence presented at that meeting showed that in several areas of the world, wide-open markets for these products still existed. In light of that evidence, the Standing Committee unanimously called on Parties to consider trade prohibitions against those continuing to trade in these products.

Two months later, following up the Standing Committee resolution and acting under the authority of the domestic Pelly Amendment, the United States notified the Parties involved in rhinoceros and tiger trade of its intentions to impose sanctions if progress was not made in a timely fashion.

Six months after notification, and absent significant progress by one of the countries, the United States in fact imposed sanctions. In the history of CITES, this was the first time sanctions had been imposed – cutting USD 23 million in annual trade.

With the notification, there came significant progress, and with the sanctions, there has been some evidence of improvement. The responsible officials in Taipei have passed a new law intended to strengthen enforcement. Still, these measures have had no measurable impact on the tiger and rhinoceros trade and the Clinton Administration will continue to consult and work with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to reduce and eliminate the illicit trade that threatens to destroy these magnificent creatures.

These sanctions – unilateral but in the CITES context – are the kinds of enforcement actions necessary for the long-term success of our efforts. And while unilateral trade sanctions to protect wildlife are indeed unique, the United States is far from alone in acting to supplement CITES with respect to enforcement issues.

In September, Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia signed the Lusaka Agreement to clamp down on the illegal trade in endangered species. For decades, these six nations witnessed the eradication of 97 per cent of their rhinoceroses, of 90 per cent of their elephants. For decades, they watched the lucrative source of tourism and local revenues slipping away. And this year, they chose to stop it.

Building on a relationship defined by CITES, they formed the world's first International Wildlife Task Force. United, they will carry out cross-border operations and investigations, share experience across borders, and use a centralized database to gather and analyze information.

These nations picked up the burden because they recognized the challenge facing each of us. They recognized that CITES would only succeed if individual Parties were willing to take enforcement actions on its behalf. But there are countless additional steps that individual Parties and NGOs can – and must – take in the same spirit:

- Several United States agencies have announced a pilot programme, beginning this January, through which representatives from five Asian countries will be trained in CITES implementation and enforcement.
- The United States Elephant Conservation Act directs USD 1 million a year to help range States increase their conservation capacity.
- The new Rhino and Tiger Conservation Act, signed into law only last month, authorizes funding for enforcement efforts in Asia and Africa. To get a fast start, the Department of the Interior has reprogrammed USD 100,000 in this year's budget to this new programme.

- We are not alone in our commitment to this new programme. The World Wildlife Fund has committed to match our entire commitment for this year – dollar-for-dollar.
- The United States is offering assistance and training to countries trying to improve CITES compliance. In July, the Fish and Wildlife Service conducted a course in undercover wildlife enforcement techniques, designed especially for CITES officials. That practice should continue, and we should make our wildlife forensics laboratory available to more foreign entities.

This short list of actions must be the beginning of a much longer list of specific enforcement commitments by the Parties to CITES. Those commitments are essential, for CITES will fail if we fail to enforce it.

A Focus on Habitat

The second issue I wish to address this morning is that we must do much more than simply regulate or prohibit trade in listed species.

Minute by minute, acre by acre, from the tropical rain forests to the grasslands, to the desert landscapes of my own American south-west, the loss of critical wildlife habitat continues unabated. As we contemplate CITES successes, we acknowledge this fact: all of our successes will be diminished or imperilled if the worldwide destruction of wildlife habitat continues.

Many member States believe, as I do, that the sustainable use of wildlife is an important incentive to habitat and wildlife conservation, and that all member States have an obligation to assist one another within the framework of CITES in programmes of sustainable management and commercial take of wildlife.

Of the many successful cases of CITES-supported sustainable management, the crocodile is perhaps the most illustrative of the possibilities. Just a few years ago, the North American alligator, along with related crocodile species in other parts of the world, had been poached to the edge of extinction. Skins sold for USD 36.00 per square foot. At that point, CITES listed the crocodile and put in place a quota system which authorized a sustainable level of take, including the introduction of commercial alligator farming.

The concept of management for sustainable use will in all likelihood come before this meeting in the form of trophy-hunting resolutions from several African range States. The taking of game trophies by sport hunting is a form of sustainable wildlife conservation with support in range States and in importing countries, which in turn is reflected in the quota system utilized by this Convention.

Notwithstanding this general agreement on objectives, range States make the case that trophy quotas established by CITES are sometimes undermined by the restrictive import criteria imposed by importing nations, including my own. On the other hand, importing nations are concerned that the quotas should be based on legitimate conservation plans and must be subject to review on questions of enforcement, new scientific information, and other intervening factors such as drought or civil unrest.

If these are indeed the issues, it should be possible to accommodate the needs of the Parties. Range States have a right to expect consultation and negotiation rather than unilateral actions. And import concerns should, to the extent possible, be raised through a formal process of fact finding and consultation; indeed it was just such a CITES consultation process that has enabled the United States to impose effective Pelly Amendment sanctions in connection with the rhinoceros and tiger trade. Working together, we should be able to establish a similar process to deal with most issues pertaining to trophy-hunting quotas and conservation plans.

Strong Partnerships

There is a final point I would like to make this morning.

CITES is the most successful treaty ever for the protection of global natural resources. That statement of fact is more a challenge than a compliment.

To meet that challenge, we must recognize that our collective success ultimately depends on public

understanding and public support. Strong partnerships are required – with NGOs, with private corporations, with each other – to continuously explain these issues. It is only with an expanding base of public support that we can expand our efforts to protect global biodiversity.

These partnerships have brought us successes in the past. I am certain they will do so again.

CLOSING REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF CITES,
MR IZGREV TOPKOV

Our ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES comes to an end. The hectic two weeks will be replaced by a serene weekend in the wilderness of the Everglades.

It is probably too early to try to make a deep analysis and to draw far reaching conclusions.

It might even be dangerous to try to do this. Emotions might make some of us erroneously too optimistic, or mislead some others – by far fewer – into uncalled-for pessimism.

But I think we can already now draw the bottom line of the balance. At least from our perspective in the Secretariat, it is very, very positive.

After all, any family gathering in which the storm outside is stronger than the storm in the hall is a good one.

- a) 2,000 pages of seriously prepared documents have been equally seriously pursued and thoroughly discussed. These discussions resulted in decisions that were exceptionally important for the Convention.
- b) Most of these decisions were adopted by consensus. Among them let me note the most important, the achievement of this meeting – the adoption of the new criteria.

Let us be honest with ourselves. How many of us present here were thinking this issue would go the way it went? The wisdom of the House made the unthinkable a reality.

- c) True enough, we adopted another 26 resolutions, but at the same time our great exercise in streamlining the Conference decisions ended successfully two years of very difficult work.
- d) Contrary to standards of thinking used previously to try to convince not only the general public, but even us, this Conference definitely overcame, I hope for ever, the one-species image, the megafauna complex.
- e) Contrary to all patterns in the United Nations and other fora, a high level of self-discipline and dedication allowed us to finish our extremely heavy load of work - more than 200 agenda items - on time.
- f) A well balanced budget - in times very difficult times for us all - has been worked out as a fair compromise. Admittedly times are more difficult for some of us than for others, but let me thank the latter for their responsible and generous acceptance of the bigger share of the financial burden to keep the Convention alive and strong. Thanks to France, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Switzerland for their very generous additional contribution to new projects, pledged at this meeting.
- g) The general atmosphere, although the elephant was again an issue, was quite unlike the high temperature of a notorious previous meeting. Somebody may say: "big deal - this should be the norm". Yes, it should, and let it be from now on and forever. Let us keep the spirit that we started to build in Kyoto and confirmed definitely here. It is our very big victory.
- h) The media did its job in an extremely responsible manner unbiased by any CITES standards. They found out that CITES provides something more to write about than is required just to fill the gaps in baseball strikes.

But let us keep in mind too, that yes, there could be disappointment. There could be a bitter taste. It would

be too good to be true if everybody could get everything he would like to get.

While we struck some of the necessary balances I mentioned on the first day, such as spectacular species versus the rest of them, or regarding the financial provisions, we still have a long way to go before we establish the others. The main ones among them are:

- a) The abundance of good decisions is up - the abundance of infractions in the field is down.
- b) Much is to be desired as far as the full use of the high-level and often high-cost input from IUCN, WWF, TRAFFIC, WCMC, the Panel of Experts and others is concerned.
- c) Regarding the relationship between conservation conventions such as CITES and agreements on liberalization of trade, here more than anywhere else we are in the hands of the Parties. It would be nice for the right hand to know in time what the left one is up to. CITES will have in January 126 member States. These 126 States have the absolutely sovereign right to block effectively trade in any endangered species. Then, let the other - "totally different", one would presume – 110 member States of GATT use their sovereign right to table strong protest against the former. Such a war is unnecessary. We hope we shall find a solution as far as the "greening" of the trade agreements is concerned, because as a US Senator put it in relation to NAFTA "it is a pretty fundamental confrontation".
- d) As for the balance in the process of the listings, we do not want an absurd development of our appendices because of biologically or economically unjustified considerations. We do not want to come to a point when the blackbird will go on the same appendix as the black rhino. We do not want the planet to be turned into a museum. At the same time we will, as we confirmed again yesterday, keep the precautionary principle as a cornerstone of CITES. Ages ago, religious taboos were imposed to protect some species. Today we also demand that no abuse should be left unpunished.
- e) Then there is the double standard. Every seized tusk is dutifully written down in a report as an infraction against, for example, the name of Zambia or Malawi. But how many fewer infractions of CITES in the least developed regions would we have were it not for the patterns of consumption in the highly developed ones.

When the infractions in a specific country are excessively numerous, the Secretariat proposes, with the approval of the Standing Committee, a recommendation to implement a ban or other sanctions. The two examples during the recent years demonstrated the extreme efficiency of such a system. First of all we want a result and, in this sense, we must say that the results were much better than expected. However, the reverse of the coin is sad and leads us to conclude that positive results can only be reached through prohibitions.

We are 126 members. Obviously we can not implement a ban 126 times, by alphabetical order every three months. Our only wish is that an event as significant and popular as this one does not become a mere entertainment. CITES is a real success because it is entertaining. It is without any doubt one of the most important international legal instruments in this field of activity. The governments are

aware that they are observed by the public and, therefore, they are very attentive to the wishes of their citizens.

Notwithstanding that, we have an awful lot to do to make our Convention, and in far broader terms the fight to save the Earth, a success story. We still have a chance. It is still possible to win the battle. But we have to act now. Because in twenty years there will be twice as many of us, and we, the human beings, are already consuming, or mainly wasting for that matter, 40% of what photosynthesis produces globally.

Maybe we would be better off if we refreshed our memories and reminded ourselves that the world economy, which is now in a difficult situation - to put it mildly - always passes into a real boom after a war. The planet now is after a war. Aral, desertification, Chernobyl, the plight of the tiger, the moonscapes in Northern Bohemia, the Silicon Valley, the oil spills. These are war scars. Why not direct the economy sectors through adequate incentives to repair those scars. Everybody knows that business is the sublime adapter.

Only such long-term visionary measures unifying all sectors of life would help us avoid remaining a small team of a dedicated fire brigade that today runs on the slippery ice of Amur to save the last tiger and tomorrow is in the Selva to guard the last Spix macaw.

Only in such a manner shall we be able to break the mean short-term interest of mean people who do not care for the coming generations. It is the real plague of the environmental field as a whole. It is also the main plague in our smaller but definitely not marginal field too. Only sustainable use, bringing benefits to local communities while caring for the generations to come, together with merciless repression of every violator of the treaty can help us to eradicate this plague.

The Secretariat is happy that this meeting approved unanimously the last phase of its long-term strategic plan. Fulfilling it, we are doing our part of the job in this post-Rio era.

Now, together with the Standing Committee, we have been given new important tasks. No complaints! On the contrary, we take this as a sign of your confidence that we can cope with them so far as the available resources allow.

Speaking about resources, I mean not only finances, I mean equipment, I mean people, I mean legislation allowing the full use of the potential of these people.

Here allow me a digression. Many-a-time these days we use the refrain about the 20th anniversary of CITES, about its entry into maturity. Fair enough, but for God's sake, tell me what kind of maturity we enter if our teeth are still milk teeth. A being is not mature without strong canines!

The Parties must grow them as soon as possible.

Returning to the future tasks, I am not yet sure how to do it but we shall have to think too about a possible decrease in the number of items to be put on the agenda of COP10. It is absolutely clear that more thorough discussion and free from the pressure of time is needed to allow all of us - Parties and observers - to present fully any arguments and supporting data at the tenth meeting.

But this is the future. Near as it is.

Today we proudly conclude our successful ninth meeting.

Allow me to thank everybody personally for making it successful. It is a long list and I can only hope I shall not miss anybody. If by chance this happens, believe me it will be because of the overwhelming emotions.

I thank most cordially our distinguished Chairman. Frank Loy for an admirable masterpiece of conducting the business here in Plenary and up in the Bureau. Dear Frank, thank you.

My very, very warm thanks to Victoria and Exequiel for their very able and gentle but firm leadership of the two main Committees.

Thank you also Chairmen of the Budget and Credential Committees, as well as of the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature Committees. Robin, Susan, Hank, Jim and Steve, thanks. Thanks, Peter. Who says there is no ID Manual Committee? Thanks to all the chairmen of the many working and drafting groups.

On behalf of the Secretariat may I express our deep appreciation for the great work and constant help we received from IUCN, WWF, TRAFFIC and WCMC.

Well, most of us would be in trouble and some maybe would not have reached Florida without the highly professional assistance from the representatives of our travel agency MKI and their local partners the Fort Lauderdale Visitors Bureau. Thank you.

The hosts of this beautiful Convention Center - our home for the last two weeks under the leadership of the General Manager, Mark Gatley - really deserve our gratitude. Thanks.

The same refers to the dedicated work of all the local support staff, the discreet girls and boys, giving us always a helpful hand from the information desks to the printing machines.

Needless to explain why, our deepest thanks from the bottom of our hearts to the other half of the Secretariat's family - the rapporteurs, the translators and the interpreters. Get off the microphones for a moment and smile. Let our thanks help you to overcome the tension.

Fellow Delegates, let me, on your behalf too, thank cordially all the observers, the representatives of international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations for their really constructive co-operative, active participation - one of the main factors in our success.

Let me also thank very sincerely the media representatives, but dear observers and pressmen, let me now on your behalf too, thank the main body, the core of our meeting - the delegations of the member States.

118 Parties, and eight other States. Divergent opinions but one aim. Responsibility and responsiveness, self-restraint, deep interest and respect for each other. Thank you very, very much.

Thank you and the members of the Standing Committee elected by you. Dear Murray, we shall remember you and your colleagues. We wish to those of you who now leave the Standing Committee every success in your daily work.

Dear Umezu-san, you take now the helm, best success and best of luck. We are looking forward to working together with the newly elected Standing Committee stronger in numbers.

At this juncture I should like to thank also and once again our dear guests at the Special Plenary Sessions - the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt and the Executive Director of UNEP, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, for their most valuable contributions and guidance.

Friends, it was a long list, but allow me a personal digression. As the Secretary General, let me thank personally, and let me do it without many words, my Secretariat staff, To all of you, colleagues, thanks. Thanks for not knowing day and night. Thanks for the fact that comes the morrow and the documents are on the tables.

Dear delegates, you will never find even in Com. 9.17 biological criteria that tell you that an hour's sleep is a sustainable use of human resources. But do not worry, our dedication and your satisfaction will make up for it. You can rely on us.

As usual, as it was in Kyoto too, maybe the most difficult part is to find the words for the host country. Everything has been said many a time – at the opening session, at the receptions – and yet, one thing is clear. Half a word from you proposing us another day's stay and here we are for a fortnight.

In the meantime, before you invite us to stay longer, let me thank the Department of the interior, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Management Authority, the Scientific Authority, the staff of Ken, Laurie and Garry, the State Department, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the government and people of the United States of America, the local authorities, the people of Broward County and of Fort Lauderdale, for the magnificent conditions provided for our work and for the disarmingly admirable hospitality. Thank you all.

Speaking of the host country, let me finish by congratulating most cordially our next host country Zimbabwe. We are looking forward to 1997 and the exciting meeting in your beautiful country.

Well, you all may say whatever you want, but I have still another group to whom my most heartfelt and sincere thanks go, more important than all of you. The small children

– those who were bringing every morning the mood on the wings of their lively songs, those who adorned the walls in the exhibition area with their paintings, dedicated to CITES, those who participated in the CITES 1997 Essay contest. One of the winners, the small Rachel, wrote in her essay the following:

"I am a northern spotted owl, I am the oldest member of my family whoooo lives in this Douglas fir tree. Now I must go away and hopefully, when I return to my house – the tree, in a couple of hours, it might still be standing. Humans think that we are wise. It is just a pity that they can not be as wise as we are in the way that they treat the world that we all share. Whoooo gave them control?"

What are we going to say, answering Rachel's questions in 1997? Shall we be still split and trying to hide from the ecological catastrophe in exclusive EGOsystems, or we are going to do our best to make the whole planet a cosy-for-all, humming-with-life ECOsystem?

At Conference 10 the kids will be waiting for our answer.

Thank you.