

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Strategic matters

Demand reduction

DEMAND REDUCTION STRATEGIES TO COMBAT ILLEGAL
TRADE IN CITES-LISTED SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by the United States of America.*

Background

2. Poaching and illegal trade are decimating some wildlife populations and driving numerous CITES-listed species toward extinction. Although enforcement interventions are a key element to counter wildlife trafficking, holistic and effective strategies are much needed to address the entire trade chain, including protecting wildlife populations in their habitat, curbing poaching, interdicting illegally traded wildlife at points of export and import, and reducing demand for illegally traded wildlife in consumer markets.
3. Although anti-poaching and illegal trade interdiction have been the primary focus of efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, demand reduction is now widely recognized as an important pillar in efforts to combat wildlife trafficking.
4. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16), Trade in elephant specimens, urges relevant Parties to “engage in public awareness campaigns, including: supply and demand reduction; drawing attention to existing or new regulations concerning the sale and purchase of ivory.”
5. Decision 16.85 on rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.) recommends that “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;”
6. Decision 16.86 on rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.) urges Viet Nam to “conduct consumer behaviour research to develop and implement demand reduction strategies or programmes aimed at reducing the consumption of rhino horn products;”
7. Growing recognition of the need for demand-reduction interventions to address the pressure on various species is demonstrated in recent meetings of the Standing Committee where several documents called for targeted demand-side strategies to reduce demand for illegal specimens of various CITES-listed species, including cheetahs, elephants, rhinoceroses, and Asian big cats;
8. Several countries have included demand-reduction activities in their National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs) under category 4: “Outreach, public awareness and education;”

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

9. An Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Capacity Building Workshop on Reduction of Demand for Illegally Traded Wildlife was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, from 21 to 23 October 2014. This workshop, co-organized by the governments of the United States and Viet Nam, brought together APEC government experts with demand reduction and marketing experts to help improve their capacity to conduct demand-reduction campaigns.
10. A workshop on demand-side strategies for curbing illegal ivory trade, jointly organized by the CITES Management Authority of China and the CITES Secretariat, was held from 28 to 29 January 2015 in Hangzhou, China to specifically address the speculative nature of the demand for illegal ivory in China. Over 80 representatives from national wildlife and other relevant authorities from China, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Commission, and international organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank, as well as private sector and non-governmental organizations, and representatives from collection and art investment circles, gathered together to discuss demand-side strategies for curbing illegal ivory trade in China. There has been follow-up research on the scale and dynamics of speculation in driving the demand for ivory by both non-governmental and UN organizations.
11. The historic resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 30 July 2015 on tackling illicit trade in wildlife specifically “urges Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about and address the problems and risks associated with the supply and transit of and demand for illegal wildlife products and to reduce the demand using targeted strategies in order to influence consumer behaviour.”
12. The United States Embassy in Viet Nam, in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam, the Government of South Africa, and civil society, launched Operation Game Change, a demand reduction campaign that included a series of public outreach events focused especially on reducing consumption of rhino horn.
13. UNDP, UNEP, UNODC, and the CITES Secretariat will launch a global campaign on 5 June 2016, World Environment Day, to increase public awareness and influence consumer and business purchasing decisions. Selection of target audiences and development of campaign messaging was based on social survey research and methodology that is commonly used in campaigns and marketing efforts. The campaign aims to reach 10 million people on social media platforms by leveraging the networks of high-profile public figures.

Discussion

14. Most past and ongoing demand-reduction campaigns have been or are being led by non-governmental conservation organizations. Government-led campaigns have also had success. International partners could provide support in the form of technical expertise and facilitation in government-led campaigns.
15. Evidence shows that government policies and law-enforcement efforts, including anti-corruption campaigns, stricter domestic measures on trade regulation, increased enforcement, and legislative and prosecution measures can all contribute to combating wildlife trafficking.
16. Demand reduction strategies are most effective when they take an objective, evidence-based approach, based upon the latest available research. Research should be conducted to provide an objective and scientific basis for identifying and prioritizing target consumer groups, products and drivers of demand and to provide data for designing and developing interventions.
17. As called for in the UNGA resolution, demand-reduction campaigns should be well-targeted, species-specific and country-specific, as demand for the same species even in countries with similar cultural backgrounds can be different. Demand for elephant ivory and rhino horn is a good example; speculation can be a key driver in one country, but not necessarily in a neighboring country. Campaigns should prioritize and target those consumer groups that have the most significant influence on illegal trade.
18. Although both plant and animal species are under pressure from illegal trade, most campaigns so far have focused only on animal species, and particularly on iconic species such as rhinos and elephants. Noting that there is substantial illegal trade in certain plants as well as lesser known animal species, such as the totoaba (a CITES Appendix-I fish species sought for its swim bladder), it is imperative to conduct well-targeted demand-reduction interventions for the specimens of species that are most threatened by wildlife trafficking.

19. Demand-reduction initiatives should involve a wide and comprehensive group of stakeholders. There are diverse interests and social groups that need to be represented in any effort to reduce demand for illegal wildlife and plant products. These may include, for example, government agencies involved with CITES management, enforcement, health, and public awareness and education; traditional medicine practitioners and their associations; consumer groups; and key 'influencers' who can reach out to consumers, such as those from the corporate sector and from youth groups. The entire range of stakeholders should be involved to confirm that approaches taken are most appropriate and effective to accomplish demand reduction objectives.
20. Demand reduction initiatives should take full advantage of the internet and social media. Governments should pursue partnerships with online retailers and social media platforms to counter wildlife trafficking, educate potential consumers about the threats that wildlife trafficking pose to wildlife, communities, and governance, and reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife.
21. Recent studies show that speculation has been a key driver in certain markets for high-profit and non-consumable specimens of CITES-listed species, such as elephant ivory, helmeted hornbill, rhino horn and rosewood. We are not aware of any demand reduction campaigns that have specifically targeted the speculative nature of the demand.

Recommendation

22. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft resolution in the Annex to the present document.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat suggests that this document and documents CoP17 Doc. 18.2 and CoP17 Doc. 25 be dealt with under agenda item 18 at the present meeting.
- B. The draft resolution builds on the calls of the Conference of the Parties in various resolutions and decisions on reducing demand for illegally traded specimens of CITES-listed species and responds to the UN General Assembly resolution on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife which calls for targeted demand reduction strategies. The Secretariat encourages Parties to adopt the proposed resolution, which forms one important component of the three-pronged approach taken under CITES to address illegal trade in wildlife, namely law enforcement, including tackling corruption, demand reduction and enhancement of livelihoods of rural communities.
- C. Since some species are traded illegally for medical use, the Secretariat suggests that a new preambular paragraph be added before "WELCOMING" that reads as follows:

RECALLING also Resolution Conf. 10.19 (Rev. CoP14) on *Traditional medicines*, which recommends that the Parties "work closely with groups of traditional-medicine practitioners and consumers in developing public education and awareness programmes towards the elimination of illegal use of endangered species, and developing awareness of the need to avoid over-exploitation of other wild species."

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Demand-reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species

RECOGNIZING that poaching and illegal trade are decimating some wildlife populations and driving numerous CITES-listed species toward extinction;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that wildlife trafficking contributes to damage to ecosystems and rural livelihoods, including those based on ecotourism, undermines good governance and the rule of law and, in some cases, threatens national stability and security and requires enhanced regional cooperation and coordination in response;

CONSCIOUS that enforcement interventions play a critical role in stemming illegal trade in specimens of species included in CITES Appendices but bearing in mind that, without a complementary effort to address the persistent market demand that drives this trade, enforcement action alone may not be sufficient to eliminate this threat;

RECALLING that Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP16), *Trade in elephant specimens*, urges relevant Parties to “engage in public awareness campaigns, including: supply and demand reduction; drawing attention to existing or new regulations concerning the sale and purchase of ivory;”

RECALLING also that Decision 16.85 on rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae* spp.) recommends that “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;”

WELCOMING the historic resolution on tackling wildlife trafficking adopted by the United National General Assembly in July 2015 that “urges Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about and address the problems and risks associated with the supply and transit of and demand for illegal wildlife products and to reduce the demand using targeted strategies in order to influence consumer behaviour;”

ACKNOWLEDGING that demand-reduction interventions can effectively complement and support law enforcement efforts;

RECOGNIZING that wildlife trafficking via e-commerce is a growing and significant threat that calls for new approaches to reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife;

NOTING the need for well-targeted, evidence-based, species-specific, country-specific demand-reduction campaigns to more effectively bring about behaviour changes;

RECOGNIZING the demand reduction initiatives by many countries, organizations and inter-governmental bodies, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) demand reduction workshop organized by the governments of the United States and Viet Nam and the workshop on demand-side strategies for curbing illegal trade in ivory in Hangzhou, China, organized by the government of China and the CITES Secretariat;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES Parties where there is a significant market for illegally traded wildlife products to:

- a) develop strategies to reduce the demand for illegal products of wild animals and plants through demand reduction campaigns and to enhance, as appropriate, policy, legislation and law enforcement in this regard;
- b) conduct in-depth and regular research on the demand for specimens of illegally traded CITES-listed species, where possible, using standard methodologies to understand the drivers and dynamics of the demand and to provide solid information for use in demand-reduction campaigns;

- c) actively develop and implement well-targeted, species-specific, evidence-based campaigns by engaging key consumer groups and targeting the motivations for the demand, including the speculative nature of the demand, and develop specific messaging approaches and methods for target audiences;
- d) create greater awareness of the negative consequences and impacts of illegal harvest and illegal trade of wildlife and plants, particularly on wild populations and the ecosystems in which they exist;
- e) strengthen legal and enforcement deterrents by creating greater awareness of laws prohibiting trade in illegal wildlife products and any associated penalties;

ENCOURAGES Parties to involve all stakeholders when conducting demand reduction campaigns, including, for example, relevant government agencies; health, public awareness and education sectors; the business sector; online retailers; social media platforms; traditional medicine practitioners and their associations; consumer groups; key influencers and opinion leaders who can most effectively reach out to consumers;

ENCOURAGES Parties, when appropriate, to collaborate with and provide full support to relevant demand-reduction campaigns undertaken by the United Nations agencies and partners as well as non-governmental organizations;

RECOMMENDS that Parties convene workshops to design and develop targeted solutions for particular species or types of trade, including the development of communications and marketing strategies and campaigns aimed at eliminating demand for illegal wildlife and illegal wildlife products of CITES-listed species among key consumer groups;

INVITES Parties, and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations interested in furthering these efforts to share best practices and provide technical support and assistance, if requested.