



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2008/069

Geneva, 16 December 2008

CONCERNING:

Illegal trade in rhinoceros horn

1. At its 57th meeting (Geneva, July 2008), the Standing Committee agreed that a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force should be convened to address illegal trade in specimens of this species. A Task Force, consisting of mainland China, Hong Kong S.A.R., Kenya, India, Mozambique, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe, together with the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-Interpol and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, met in Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 and 19 November 2008. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime also participated as an observer.
2. The Task Force agreed that poaching of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens has reached serious levels in some countries. These activities appear to involve organized and sophisticated criminality. It was noted that a number of individuals appear to have repeatedly engaged in poaching of rhinoceroses, dealing in their horns and the smuggling of specimens from one continent to another. However, it was also noted that information regarding such individuals has not been widely shared, collated centrally or effectively analysed. The Task Force is of the firm opinion that opportunities to bring such people, and their associates, to justice have been missed.
3. In order to address this, the Secretariat requests that, in future, all seizures of rhinoceros specimens (whether horns or other rhinoceros products), should be reported using the Ecomessage format that was designed by Interpol (see Notification to the Parties No. 2008/068, of 16 December 2008 for further details). Any incidents of illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens should also be reported, as should any rhinoceros poaching incidents where persons are detained or suspected. Completed Ecomessages, providing as much detail as possible about the individuals involved, their associates, travel history, intended final use of the specimens, etc. should be submitted to the CITES Secretariat or to the Interpol General Secretariat, via the relevant Interpol National Central Bureau.