



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2012/020

Geneva, 6 March 2012

CONCERNING:

Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation

1. In 2002, the Secretariat advised the Parties of the introduction of certificates of commendation that would be issued, at the Secretary-General's discretion, to recognize exemplary actions related to enforcement.
2. The latest such certificates are to be awarded to the Ports and Maritime Command of Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, and to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the CITES Management Authority of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China), for their exemplary work in uncovering and intercepting an attempt at wildlife smuggling.
3. The certificates are being awarded in recognition of a seizure made at Hong Kong Port on 14 November 2011, when Customs officers, acting on risk assessment, discovered 33 rhinoceros horns, 758 ivory chopsticks and 127 ivory bracelets during X-ray screening. These items had been concealed inside a package of plastic scrap placed at the rear end of a container declared to contain 63 packages of "scrap plastic".
4. All the rhinoceros horns and ivory products were seized with the prompt assistance of the CITES Management Authority.
5. The Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department and the CITES Management Authority have been investigating the case and took prompt actions to exchange intelligence with overseas law enforcement agencies.
6. The Secretariat believes the inter-agency cooperation, collaboration and exchange of intelligence that were demonstrated during this incident, together with the follow-up investigations that are underway, often neglected by enforcement authorities worldwide, are particularly commendable.
7. The certificates were presented in Hong Kong on 22 February 2012.