



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2014/034

Geneva, 4 August 2014

CONCERNING:

Secretary-General's Certificates of Commendation

1. In 2002, the Secretariat advised 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 Secretary-General of CITES has awarded the latest certificates to China, Kenya, Nepal and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force.
3. The National Inter-agencies CITES Enforcement Coordination Group of China, the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force were awarded Secretary-General's Certificates of Commendation for their exemplary collaboration that led to the dismantling of an international criminal syndicate smuggling ivory from Kenya to China. This collaborative work took place in January 2014, during Operation COBRA II, an international wildlife law enforcement operation involving 28 countries. It resulted in the extradition of a Chinese national from Kenya to China (the first-ever extradition of a Chinese national for involvement in wildlife crime) and in the arrest of more than 20 smugglers and domestic ivory traders in China who were implicated in the criminal activities of the syndicate. The certificates acknowledge the strong cooperation that underpinned the operation, including the daily exchange of real-time intelligence.
4. China's National Inter-agencies CITES Enforcement Coordination Group received the Certificate of Commendation on behalf of the Chinese authorities that investigated the activities of the organized crime syndicate. And the Kenya Wildlife Service received the Certificate of Commendation on behalf of the Kenyan authorities that investigated these activities.
5. Nepal received the Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation in recognition of its exemplary efforts to combat wildlife crime. In 2011 no rhinoceroses, tigers, or elephants were illegally killed in Nepal, and in 2012 the country lost just one rhinoceros to poaching. On the first UN World Wildlife Day, on 3 March 2014, Nepal announced that it had celebrated 365 days with zero poaching for the second consecutive year. The Certificate of Commendation, received by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of Nepal on behalf of all national agencies involved in wildlife law enforcement, acknowledges the many innovative measures implemented by Nepal to combat wildlife crime, including strong interagency collaboration, the deployment of combined patrols of rangers and the Nepalese army in protected areas supported by community-based anti-poaching units outside of parks, and intelligence-led enforcement actions leading to the arrest of key players in criminal groups. The successes achieved in Nepal to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade are particularly notable in the face of increased poaching elsewhere.
6. The certificates were presented in Geneva on 8 July 2014, during the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee. At this presentation, the certificate awarded to Lusaka Agreement Task Force was accepted by a representative of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.