



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2017/076

Geneva, 19 December 2017

CONCERNING:

Secretary-General's Certificate 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. In 2008, the Secretariat posted on the CITES website [information](#) on the factors taken into account in awarding a certificate of commendation.
3. The latest such certificate was awarded to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India, in recognition of exemplary work conducted to initiate and coordinate a national intelligence-driven law enforcement operation focused on the major Indian states affected by poaching of and illegal trade in live tortoises and turtles. The operation, code-named "Operation Save Kurma", was conducted from 15 December 2016 to 30 January 2017, and resulted in the seizure of 15,912 live tortoises and turtles and the arrest of 55 suspects.
4. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of India worked in close collaboration with regional law enforcement agencies, including the West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department, State Police and Forest Department, the Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police, the Karnataka Forest and Police Departments, and the Maharashtra and Rajasthan Forest Departments. The non-governmental organization "Turtle Survival Alliance" played a significant role in the rehabilitation of the seized specimens.
5. During the operation, the WCCB actively supported the development and dissemination of actionable intelligence to the regional law enforcement agencies, and facilitated coordination between them. Where required, WCCB officials provided assistance with interrogation, species identification, and preparation of case files. The regional law enforcement agencies also generated their own intelligence, identified areas prone to the poaching, transportation and illegal trade in tortoises and turtles, and carried out arrests, seizures, and follow-up investigations.
6. The Secretariat believes that "Operation Save Kurma" exemplifies the inter-agency coordination and collaboration that is required at national and sub-national levels to disrupt criminal networks and combat wildlife crime successfully.
7. The certificate was presented during the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2017.