Illegal trade in wildlife has attracted significant national and international attention in recent years.

Today there is a global collective effort underway involving multiple entities, including national authorities, international organizations, the private sector, and others, all working to mobilize multiple and diverse measures and activities to combat wildlife crime.

Just as a few examples of developments and activities since the last Standing Committee meeting held in Geneva, in November 2017, include:

- the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC),¹ a Consortium between the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization, continued delivering an increasing number of well-targeted activities to strengthen responses to wildlife crime. This included supporting a month-long law enforcement operation code-named Operation Thunderstorm,² in May 2018, that resulted in more than 1900 seizures, as well as arrests, prosecutions, and convictions;

- in March 2018, a Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online was launched, to bring together companies from across the world to work in partnership with non-governmental organization experts to reduce wildlife trafficking online;

- in April 2018 the Travel and Tourism industry adopted a Declaration on Illegal Trade in Wildlife, recognizing the devastating impact of this illegal trade on people and wildlife, and the positive role the industry can play in addressing it; and

- and in October 2018, just a week after SC70, the 2018 London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference will bring together global leaders to further strengthen political support and mobilize resources to combat wildlife crime.

These are just a few examples, but demonstrate the diverse and comprehensive nature of activities currently being undertaken, which reflect the continued global determination to address illegal trade in wildlife.

¹ https://cites.org/eng/prog/iccwc.php
• This momentum is critical, considering that high levels of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife continues to persist.

• The multiple and diverse nature of measures and activities being pursued, are also reflected by the variety of enforcement related matters that will be discussed at SC70.³

• These include addressing corruption and the ongoing development of an Integrity Guide for Wildlife Management Agencies; the implementation of the ICCWC anti-money-laundering training programme; the ongoing development of an electronic directory of laboratories that conduct wildlife forensic testing; an ongoing threat assessment on illegal wildlife trade in West and Central Africa; activities undertaken to further strengthen cooperation and collaboration between CITES, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; as well as the measures implemented and activities conducted to address illegal trade in wildlife as it affects a number of iconic and lesser known species.

• Time will not allow to address and go into detail on all matters, and representatives are invited to consult the different documents prepared for the meeting for more information.

• I would however like to highlight a few.

  **Annual illegal trade reports**

  • At its 17th meeting in 2016, the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) decided to introduce a new CITES annual illegal trade report, and urged all Parties to submit their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat, by 31 October each year.

  • Annual illegal trade data provides a valuable source of information, to inform decision making, and support the development of appropriate law enforcement responses to wildlife crime.

  • At SC70, the Committee will consider a detailed proposal, prepared by UNODC, for the development of a database to store and manage illegal trade data collected through the CITES annual illegal trade reports. The Committee will on the basis of this, formulate proposals for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Sri Lanka, May 2019) on this matter.

  **Combating wildlife cybercrime**

³ [https://cites.org/eng/com/sc/70/index.php](https://cites.org/eng/com/sc/70/index.php)
• Efforts of Parties, the Secretariat, ICCWC and other partners to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet, and how these crimes can be addressed more effectively, will also be discussed.

• The Committee will consider a proposal made by the intersessional Working Group on Combatting Wildlife Cybercrime, established at SC69, to amend the text of the relevant CITES Resolution, to further strengthen the guidance provided to CITES Parties to address this issue, and will formulate proposals for consideration at CoP18.

Illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives

• The Secretariat will, at the meeting, draw attention to the fact that an increasing number of recent media and other reports about illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives, suggests that this illegal trade might be escalating and gives reason for concern.

• Recent examples include the seizure of, among other wildlife specimens, 468 bear paws in December 2017, and a further 870 in January 2018, in Russia. The seizure of bear gall bladders and teeth, among other wildlife specimens, in China in April 2018, and the dismantling of a black bear gallbladder-trafficking network reportedly responsible for killing more than 100 black bears over a period of three years, in Canada, in July 2018. A report from the non-governmental organization, TRAFFIC, released in November 2017, suggest that bear specimens are among the four most widely illegally traded species in the border area between Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand.

Asian big cats

• The Secretariat will report on the activities it conducted regarding Asian big cats in captivity, through which it identified facilities that may be of concern regarding Asian big cat specimens entering illegal trade from or through such facilities, or because of their intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, which might be failing to implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. 66 facilities in seven countries, which may be of concern, were identified (China, Czech Republic, Lao PDR, Thailand, South Africa, USA, Viet Nam).

• A comprehensive review on the implementation of the Resolution on Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species, were also conducted. The 153 page review is available as an Annex to the document prepared for SC70, and Parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens are invited to consult the full report.
National Ivory Action Plans

- There are currently 22 Parties participating in the NIAP process. Including Hong Kong SAR of China, that developed and implemented its NIAP separate to that of mainland China, these consist of 9 Category A Parties, 7 Category B Parties and 7 Category C Parties.

- Handouts containing information on the Parties included in the NIAP process, together with an explanation of NIAP Party categories were made available for representatives.

- NIAPs are developed in compliance with recommendations made by the CITES Standing Committee, and each plan outlines the urgent measures that a CITES Party commits to deliver in response to the urgent need to address high levels of elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade.

- The Committee will at SC70 decide whether a number of Parties that successfully completed the implementation of their NIAPs, will exit the process, or if there is a need for any Party to revise and update its NIAP, or if any other measures needs to be taken.

- The Committee will also consider recommendations on a number of Parties that did not submit reports on progress with NIAP implementation, for consideration at SC70, as required, or that submitted their reports too late to be evaluated by the Secretariat, as required. These are Congo, Gabon, Nigeria and Togo.

- In addition, the Committee will consider proposed revisions to the Guidelines to the NIAP process contained in Annex 3 to the Resolution on Trade in elephant specimens.

Others

- Rhinoceroses, cheetahs, tortoises and freshwater turtles, and many other species will also be discussed, but unfortunately time will not allow to go into these.

ICCWC

- Lastly, ICCWC as mentioned earlier continues to deliver a growing number of activities through the implementation of the ICCWC Strategic Programme. These activities actively respond and contribute to the implementation of the Decisions and Resolutions adopted by the CoP and the Standing Committee, to address poaching and illegal trade in wildlife, and are highlighted in numerous documents prepared for SC70. The Consortium is grateful to the European Union, France,
Germany, Monaco, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for their strong support to ICCWC.