

CITES CoP16

Briefing to the Permanent Missions and NGO's in Geneva

15 February 2013

1. During 2012, the Secretariat received various reports of significant incidents of elephant poaching and related illegal trade in ivory.
2. Poaching levels increased in all African sub-regions, with central Africa continuing to display the highest levels of illegal killing in any sub-region in Africa or Asia. Some of Africa's most notorious armed groups are targeting and poaching elephants. Ivory originating from such incidents is, in the vast majority of cases, destined for the international illegal ivory markets.
3. Seaports in eastern Africa continue to be the main exit point for illegal consignments of ivory. Recent seizures have highlighted that large-scale shipments of ivory are illegally exported to Asia through Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Secretariat remains concerned with the significant volumes of illegal ivory that leaves Africa, in particular, through ports in these two countries.
4. The amount of seized ivory has continued to escalate since CoP15 (Doha, 2010) and is currently at its highest level in the 16-year period examined by the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), a global monitoring and reporting system for elephants and trade in elephant specimens, recognized under CITES.
5. While these seizures reflect good enforcement efforts, the large quantities of ivory destined for illegal ivory markets, and the significant role played by China and Thailand as destination countries, is of concern.
6. Illegal trade in rhinoceros horn continues to be one of the most structured criminal activities currently faced by CITES and there are clear indications that organized criminal groups are involved.
7. Last year 668 rhino's were poached in South Africa, and close to 100 rhino's have been poached in the country since the beginning of this year.
8. Some populations of rhinoceroses could be seriously affected by continued high levels of poaching and go into decline if the illegal killing continues to escalate at the current rate, especially in southern Africa.
9. Mozambique seems to be playing an increasingly significant role in the illegal rhino horn trade chain. Poachers originating from Mozambique have been involved in numerous poaching incidents in South Africa's Kruger National Park and a number of seizures of rhino horn originating from Mozambique have been made in recent months.
10. Developments such as the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding between South Africa and Viet Nam in December 2012, particularly aimed at curbing the scourge in rhino poaching is encouraging.

11. Due to the transnational nature of wildlife crime, organized crime syndicate leaders are often located in consumer countries and beyond the reach of enforcement authorities in range countries. For this reason, increased international cooperation and coordination are vital.
12. Illegal trade affecting Asian big cats continues to be of major concern, in particular for tigers. Actions to combat the illegal trade in Asian big cats, and reduce demand for these species and parts and derivatives thereof, require increased efforts from Parties, especially from range and consumer States.
13. Through funds provided by the European Commission, the Secretariat conducted, in conjunction with GRASP, Interpol, WCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), technical missions to assess current enforcement activities and initiatives in gorilla range States (Uganda, Cameroon and Gabon) in late 2012, and it will report on its findings at CoP16.
14. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, has recognized in its outcome document, *The Future We Want*, the important role of CITES. Paragraph 203 of this document in particular, makes specific reference to the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife.
15. Despite considerably enhanced efforts to combat wildlife crime it continues to be a growing problem worldwide and there is strong evidence of increased involvement of organized crime syndicates.
16. In response to the current threat posed by illegal trade in wildlife, the Secretariat will propose a number of draft decisions to the Conference of the Parties at its 16th meeting, which amongst others include draft decisions on anti-money laundering and asset recovery, the use specialized techniques such as controlled deliveries in the investigation of wildlife crime offences, the use of wildlife forensics and the establishment of Wildlife Incident Support Teams consisting of enforcement staff or relevant experts, to be dispatched at the request of a country that has been affected by significant poaching of CITES specimens, or that has made a large-scale seizure of such specimens, to assist it, and guide and facilitate appropriate follow-up actions in the immediate aftermath of such an incident.
17. The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), a collaborative effort by the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to bring coordinated support to national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to the subregional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act in defence of natural resources, will also host a number of enforcement related events within the margins of CoP16.
18. These will include a roundtable on combating transnational organized wildlife and forest crime for ministers and high-level representatives on 4 March, through funds generously made available by the Government of Sweden and the First Global Meeting of the Wildlife Enforcement Networks on 5 March, through funds generously made available by the Department of State of the United States of America.
19. The roundtable will provide ministers and high-level representatives with the opportunity to share experiences across States and regions on efforts to

combat transnational wildlife crime and to reaffirm a commitment at the highest political levels to combat wildlife crime

20. The First Global Meeting of the Wildlife Enforcement Networks will provide existing and planned WEN's with the opportunity to discuss the need for a global system that will improve coordination amongst the WENs and to consider the role that ICCWC, together with different global networks and partners could play in such a system.
21. Parties need to enhance their collective efforts across range, transit and consumer States to reverse the current disturbing wildlife crime trends. To be effective, enforcement efforts to stop wildlife crime must not just result in seizures; they must result in prosecutions, convictions and strong penalties to stop the flow of contraband. The whole 'enforcement chain' must work together and CoP16 will provide parties with the opportunity to discuss a number of enforcement related matters, with the aim to achieve this.