



**China Council for International Cooperation on  
Environment and Development**

# **Council Member Paper**

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**China Council for International Cooperation on  
Environment and Development**

## **The Protection of Wildlife by Combating its Illegal Trade**

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CCICED Council member

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The Protection of Wildlife by Combatting its Illegal Trade  
China Council Paper

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International Executive Vice Chair  
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## ABSTRACT

The illegal wildlife trade – the taking, trading, importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna, in contravention of national or international law – has experienced significant global growth since 2007, threatening endangered wildlife populations of iconic species such as rhinoceros, elephant, and tiger, as well as smaller exotic species including reptiles, birds, marine species, primates, civets, and pangolins. Recognizing the complex, interwoven environmental, economic, and security threats posed by this trade, the international community came together in February 2014 at the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade to help eradicate this trade and better protect the world's most iconic species from the threat of extinction. In the Declaration of the London Conference, heads of state, foreign ministers and other global leaders committed to address the key drivers of the illegal wildlife trade by: i) eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products; ii) ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents; iii) strengthening law enforcement; and, iv) supporting sustainable livelihoods and economic development.

Within this context, China is uniquely positioned to make a substantial and positive impact in the global effort to combat wildlife crime. While China currently ranks as the world's largest market for the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, in recent years it has taken important steps, on its own, in partnership with other countries, and alongside the international community, to tackle both the demand for and supply of illegally obtained wildlife products. With a view to supporting China in its efforts to combat the illicit wildlife trade, this submission to the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development reviews actions taken by national governments and the international community to address the three key drivers of the illegal wildlife trade; reviews the state of the illicit wildlife trade in China; and, highlights opportunities for further study by the China Council and, as appropriate, action by the Government of China.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The illicit wildlife trade has experienced significant global growth since 2007, threatening endangered wildlife populations of iconic species such as rhinoceros, elephant, and tiger, as well as smaller exotic species including reptiles, birds, marine species, primates, civets, and pangolins. For example, autopsy data for African elephant herds within national parks revealed an estimated poaching rate of 7.4% in 2012, exceeding the natural population growth rate of approximately 5%.<sup>1</sup> Compounded by the long-term threat of habitat loss from human encroachment and destruction, trafficking has emerged as the most significant threat to many endangered species.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and INTERPOL value the illegal trade and poaching of plants and wildlife between \$US7-23 billion annually.<sup>2</sup> Capitalizing on a seemingly endless demand for both legal and illicit wildlife products, transnational criminal organizations have become major players in this black market, using the legal trade of wildlife goods to cloak the illicit trade and exploiting jurisdictional divisions between national and international enforcement agencies. Within developing countries, wildlife crime has serious consequences, depriving governments of critical revenue, while deterring conservation, threatening biodiversity, and undermining security. In resource dependent economies such as Canada's, conservation and security threats in other countries translate into increased discussion of imposing trade limits, including for sustainably managed species within the country.

Recognizing the complex, interwoven environmental, economic, and security threats posed by the illicit wildlife trade, the international community came together in February 2014 at the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade.<sup>3</sup> In the Declaration of the London Conference (see **Annex A**), heads of state, foreign ministers and other global leaders committed to address the key drivers of the illegal wildlife trade by: i) eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products; ii) ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents; iii) strengthening law enforcement; and, iv) supporting sustainable livelihoods and economic development. This Declaration built on the sustained efforts under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and INTERPOL, among others, to counter wildlife crime and set an important one-year action plan that will culminate at the Botswana Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in early 2015.

Within this broader context, China is uniquely positioned to have a substantial and positive impact in the global effort to combat wildlife crime. China ranks as the world's largest market

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<sup>1</sup> Blanc, Julian, et al. (December 2013) *Status of African elephant populations and levels of illegal killing and the illegal trade in ivory: A report to the African Elephant Summit*. Gabarone, Botswana: CITES Secretariat, IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group, TRAFFIC International.

<sup>2</sup> Nellemann, C., et al. (Eds.) (2014). "The Environmental Crime Crisis – Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources." *A UNEP Rapid Response Assessment*. Nairobi and Arendal, Norway: United Nations Environment Programme and GRID-Arendal. Available at: [www.grida.no](http://www.grida.no)

<sup>3</sup> Other recent high-level political initiatives have also addressed the issue in recent years, including wildlife crime being the focus of a ministerial dialogue at UNEP's first UN Environmental Assembly in June 2014: <http://www.unep.org/unea/en/>. Also, on the margins of the 2013 United Nations General Assembly, illegal wildlife trade was the subject of a high-level panel discussion:

[http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sg/2013/20130926\\_unga\\_side-event.php](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sg/2013/20130926_unga_side-event.php).

for the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, followed by the United States.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, China has taken important steps, on its own, in partnership with other countries, and alongside the international community, to tackle both the demand for and supply of illegally obtained wildlife products. With a view to supporting China in its efforts to combat the illicit wildlife trade, this submission to the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (China Council) reviews actions taken by national governments and the international community to address the three key drivers of the illegal wildlife trade; reviews the state of the illicit wildlife trade in China; and, highlights opportunities for further study by the China Council and, as appropriate, action by the Government of China.

## 2. WILDLIFE CRIME/SCOPE

In the 1960s, countries came together on the margins of the World Conservation Union to discuss the need for an international agreement to regulate the trade in wildlife to support conservation. Since the entry into force of CITES in 1975, a growing number of parties have worked together to ensure that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.<sup>5</sup> With a strong record of achievement and an ongoing commitment to scientific expertise, 180 governments, including China, are now committed to working together in this important forum to manage the global wildlife trade. The CITES Secretariat has defined “wildlife crime” in the following manner:

*Acts committed contrary to national laws and regulations intended to protect natural resources and to administer their management and use. This may start with the illegal exploitation of natural resources, such as the poaching of an elephant, uprooting of a rare orchid, unauthorized logging of trees, or unlicensed netting of sturgeons. It may also include subsequent acts, such as the processing of fauna and flora into products, their transportation, offer for sale, sale, possession, etc. It also includes the concealment and laundering of the financial benefits made out of these crimes. Some of these crimes will take place solely in the country of origin, whilst others will also occur in the country of destination, where live fauna or flora specimens, or their parts and derivatives, are finally consumed.*

*Violations of CITES, which regulates exports, imports and re-exports of wildlife. Countries of transit may also be affected. Wildlife crime is, therefore, no different from many other forms of illegal activities. Indeed, it shares many of the characteristics of other transnational crime types, such as illegal trade in narcotics. However, to a significant degree, wildlife crime has yet to be viewed, and accordingly responded to, as ‘mainstream’ crime.<sup>6</sup>*

Given the breadth of issues captured under the banner of wildlife crime, the scope of this paper has been narrowed to focus on terrestrial fauna. As such, the illicit trade in aquatic fauna (e.g., unreported and unregulated fishing) as well as the illegal trade in flora (e.g., logging and other forest products) have been eliminated from the scope of this paper. This is consistent with the

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<sup>4</sup> Felbab-Brown, Vanda. (June 2011) *The disappearing act: The illicit trade in wildlife in Asia*. Working Paper #6. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, p. iv.

<sup>5</sup> CITES “What is CITES?” Available at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

<sup>6</sup> CITES “What is wildlife crime?” Available at: <http://www.cites.org/prog/iccwc.php/Wildlife-Crime>



majority of the literature on wildlife crime, which, for the most part, treats these matters separately.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, for the purposes of this paper:

- i) “wildlife” refers to terrestrial fauna (animals);
- ii) “wildlife crime” refers to both poaching and trafficking of wildlife;
- iii) “illegal wildlife trade” and “illegal wildlife trafficking” are synonymous, referring to the taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna, in contravention of national or international law.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. TACKLING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

#### 3.1 Eradicating the Market for Illegal Wildlife Products

##### 3.1.1 KEY DRIVER AND CHALLENGE: *High Consumer Demand and Inadequate Legal Protection*

**The primary driver of the illegal wildlife trade is high consumer demand.** In recent years, China and other Asian countries have enjoyed enormous economic growth. As a result, millions of people have entered the market for goods and services, including wildlife products, which are valued as food, medicine, pets, furs, luxury items, and status symbols. Much of the wildlife trade that supports this demand is legally and sustainably managed.

However, a number of the most coveted wildlife products that enter Asian markets are harvested unsustainably or illegally and this places acute pressure on wildlife populations around the world. Driven by growing demand, in particular from Southeast Asia and China, some species are currently threatened with extinction, including the rhino, tiger, and elephant,<sup>9</sup> as well as Asiatic Black Bears,<sup>10</sup> pangolins,<sup>11</sup> and certain species of tortoises, sharks and snakes.<sup>12</sup>

It is also common for the religious faithful around the world to purchase talismans of a Buddha, Hindu god, patron saint, or other religious figures as a source of good fortune and object of prayer, often carved from illegally obtained ivory. This is a substantial driver of demand for ivory products, and supplies are known to come from dubious sources.<sup>13</sup> The complex trade also includes artisanship, with China’s skilled ivory carvers producing high quality art and sculpture

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<sup>7</sup> United National Environment Programme (UNEP) (January 2012) “Transnational Environmental Crime - a common crime in need of better enforcement.” *UNEP Bulletin*. Available at: [http://na.unep.net/geas/getUNEPPageWithArticleIDScript.php?article\\_id=95](http://na.unep.net/geas/getUNEPPageWithArticleIDScript.php?article_id=95)

<sup>8</sup> Derived from definitions of “wildlife and forest” and “wildlife and forest crime”, found in United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2012) *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit*. Vienna: UNODC.

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2012) “Illegal Trade in Environmentally Sensitive Goods.” *OECD Trade Policy Studies*. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264174238-en>

<sup>10</sup> IUCN (2014) IUCN Red List of Threatened Species – Asiatic Black Bear. Available at: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22824/0>

<sup>11</sup> Vaughan, Adam. (July 29, 2014) “Pangolins being eaten to extinction, conservationists warn.” *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jul/29/pangolins-being-eaten-to-extinction-conservationists-warn-anteaters>

<sup>12</sup> Garric, Audrey. (March 12, 2013) “Pangolins under threat as black market trade grows.” *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/mar/12/endangered-pangolins-illegal-wildlife-trade>

<sup>13</sup> Christy, Bryan. (October 2012) “Ivory worship.” *National Geographic*. Available at: [http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/10/ivory/christy-text?source=religious\\_ivory\\_news](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/10/ivory/christy-text?source=religious_ivory_news)

for sale to customers in the United States and Europe.<sup>14</sup> This has resulted in a surge in both legal trade demand and illegal trade demand.

### 3.1.2 EFFORTS TO REDUCE DEMAND

**The demand reduction approach to wildlife trafficking reflects the perspective that, like any other market, the ultimate driver of supply for illegal wildlife goods (and therefore poaching) is the consumer.** It is widely believed that reducing consumer demand or eliminating demand altogether is the most effective long-term solution to the wildlife trafficking problem.<sup>15</sup> Reducing demand for illegal wildlife products not only addresses the immediate threat, but gives wild populations an opportunity to recover, which is often a long and gradual process, sometimes taking decades.

#### 3.1.2.1 National Awareness and Education Campaigns

**Governments and charitable organizations have deployed awareness-raising campaigns and education programs** to bring attention to the severity of illegal wildlife trafficking and its often overlooked consequences. For example, many consumers of illegal wildlife products are not aware of their status as illegal goods, believing them to be legitimately sourced or bred in captivity.<sup>16</sup> Advertising campaigns can promote compliance with laws against smuggling. For example, advertising in airports helps to educate and alert travellers to the laws and consequences of smuggling illegal goods, and identify for tourists the types of souvenirs or curios that are prohibited from international trade. In addition, recognizing that change is incremental and generational, embedding awareness campaigns within schools systems to educate youth about illegal wildlife trafficking is also beneficial.

Other programs have focused on demonstrating to the public the link between illegal wildlife trafficking and traditional organized crime, such as the drug trade. Consumers generally do not fully appreciate this connection, and do not associate the consumption of illegal wildlife products with military conflicts, terrorism, and other sources of international violence and instability.

#### 3.1.2.2 Champions

**Political leaders, cultural ambassadors and celebrities have lent their status to help raise awareness about the illegal wildlife trade.** High profile public figures and celebrities can help to bring attention to and promote the cultural changes required to help reduce demand. For example, the British monarchy has championed wildlife conservation for many years, and the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cambridge played an active role at the London Conference in February 2014. Likewise, actor Jackie Chan attended the London Conference pre-meeting reception. UNEP has a roster of Goodwill Ambassadors, such as the football player Yaya Touré of the Ivory Coast, whose high profile in Africa serves to raise attention to the issue of elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade. Chinese celebrities are also active as wildlife and environmental champions, as will be shown in Section 4.

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<sup>14</sup> Zhang, Yan. (May 12, 2014) “Profits, demand give rise to animal smuggling.” *China Daily*: p.1.

<sup>15</sup> Felbab-Brown (June 2011).

<sup>16</sup> TRAFFIC (2012) *Captive Bred, or Wild Taken?* Cambridge, UK: TRAFFIC International.

## 3.2 Ensuring Effective legal Frameworks and Deterrents and Strengthening Law Enforcement

### 3.2.1 KEY DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES: *High Profits and Low Risk Combined with Enforcement Gaps and Threats to International Security*

**A second driver of the illegal wildlife trade is perceived and/or actual low risk of detection and prosecution combined with high profits.** Developing countries which serve as range states for many “desirable” wildlife species face challenges on multiple fronts.<sup>17</sup> In many cases, frontline enforcement officers in range states tend to be conservation officers who are not sufficiently trained or equipped to contend with poachers who readily use their armed weapons for threats and intimidation. Further, low wages make rangers susceptible to bribery. Corruption among wildlife rangers is becoming a serious impediment in the fight against poaching, fuelled by soaring levels of cash offered by criminal poacher syndicates for ivory and rhino horn, in particular.<sup>18</sup> The ranger profession is also risky – the International Ranger Federation reported in 2013 that at least 1,000 rangers were killed by poachers in the last decade.<sup>19</sup>

Enforcing CITES regulations to protect wildlife against trafficking presents numerous difficulties. Corruption may support criminal activities along the wildlife trade route, from poaching (e.g. illegal payments to issue hunting licenses, bribery of patrol or enforcement officers), to trafficking (e.g. bribery of customs officials, illegal payments to issue export or import certificates.), to law enforcement (e.g. bribery of police officers and prosecutors to avoid investigations; illegal payments to manipulate court decisions). Corruption and weak regulatory frameworks may also facilitate money-laundering of the proceeds of crime.<sup>20</sup> Investigation of trafficking cases often reveals that documentation is false and the claims of captive-breeding (often far more expensive than harvesting from the wild) are fraudulent. Transportation companies that ship goods all over the world can unwittingly transport illegal wildlife products that are mixed with regular cargo.

Additionally, penalties for those convicted of illegal wildlife trafficking are generally not severe enough to have an adequate deterrent effect. For example, in a recent case cited in a Guardian (London) newspaper article, suspects involved in a trafficking case of ivory worth over \$US1.7 million, might only be charged with illegal possession of a government trophy, which carries a minimum fine of KES 1 million, or just over \$US11,000.<sup>21</sup>

**The illegal wildlife trade is financing organized crime and terrorist groups.** Illegal wildlife trade is now considered a significant threat to international security that is linked to political destabilization, other forms of illegal trade (e.g. narcotics), corruption, and the financing of non-state armed groups.<sup>22</sup> The deadly combination of high profits, a low probability of detection, and low penalties have emboldened not only small scale poachers but international organized crime syndicates to participate in the illegal wildlife trade. Further, leaders of these criminal organizations may be well-connected to the ruling elite – such as politicians, businessmen and

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<sup>17</sup> Countries with populations (or ranges) of specific animal species are known as range states.

<sup>18</sup> Milman, Oliver. (March 27, 2013) “Ranger corruption ‘impeding global fight against poaching.’” *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/mar/27/ranger-corruption-impeding-fight-poaching>

<sup>19</sup> Ratchford, Marina, Beth Allgood, Paul Todd. (June 2013) *Criminal nature: The global security implications of the illegal wildlife trade*. Washington, D.C.: International Fund for Animal Welfare.

<sup>20</sup> Martini, Maira. (February 15, 2013) “Wildlife Crime and Corruption.” Berlin: Transparency International.

<sup>21</sup> Kahumbu, Paula. (June 6, 2014) “Kenya at the crossroads: it’s time to root out the elites who control wildlife crime.” *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/africa-wild/2014/jun/06/kenya-at-crossroads-time-to-root-out-wildlife-crime-elites>

<sup>22</sup> Wyler, Liana Sun and Sheikh, Pervaze A. (July 23, 213) *International illegal trade in wildlife: Threats and U.S. policy*. Congressional Research Services Report for Congress. Washington, D.C.: United States Congress.

senior government and police officials – providing preferential treatment and effective immunity from investigation, prosecution and punishment.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2.2 INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT

#### 3.2.2.1 National Responses

**Countries are reviewing and galvanizing their approaches to combatting illegal wildlife trafficking.** In many range countries, law enforcement efforts are increasing. For example, Kenya recently strengthened its national legislation on wildlife law enforcement to better empower officers and courts to convict traffickers and to increase significantly the penalties imposed.<sup>24</sup> Like Kenya, Nepal has increased the strength of its wildlife protection laws by empowering district forest officers and wildlife wardens to arrest poachers and be more involved in the criminal justice process. Offenders now face up to 15 years in prison for poaching and trafficking.<sup>25</sup>

Other countries are also increasing efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. In January 2014, the United States published its “National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking.”<sup>26</sup> The Strategy focuses on four approaches: law enforcement; technical and financial assistance to build in-country capacity; ensuring sustainable legal trade through CITES; and reducing demand for illegal products in consumer countries, including the United States. The United Kingdom, in addition to hosting the London Conference to Combat Trafficking in Wildlife, also published the “UK Commitment to Action on the Illegal Wildlife Trade” in February 2014 and pledged \$US16.35 million to fight wildlife trafficking and help stop corruption.<sup>27</sup> The European Union (EU) has adopted strict trade rules on endangered species and is working to strengthen the enforcement of those rules. The EU is undertaking stakeholder consultation to review its existing policies and measures, to be able to react more effectively to evolving issues.<sup>28</sup> In Canada, commercial trade in wildlife must be conducted in compliance with the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPIITA), the law by which Canada enforces and administers its responsibilities under CITES. This law stipulates the federal permit requirements for the international trade of wildlife, their parts, and products made from them.<sup>29</sup>

Japan undertook major reforms in the 1990s aimed at stemming the illegal ivory trade, and they have been shown to be considerably effective toward that end. A 2010 study showed that the ivory market in Japan has declined from an average of 13 tonnes per year (reported in 2008) to 7 tonnes per year (reported in 2009), which was associated with a corresponding decline in consumer demand.<sup>30</sup> The study’s authors credited the decline to several factors. First, stricter regulations on ivory carvers, including registration requirements, CITES certification, and sales

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<sup>23</sup> Kahumbu, Paula. (June 6, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Kahumbu, Paula. (February 11, 2014) “Kenya shows African countries can be part of the solution to the wildlife trade.” *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/africa-wild/2014/feb/11/kenya-african-countries-wildlife-trade-rhino-elephants>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> President of the United States of America. (February 2014) “National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking.” Washington: The Whitehouse.

<sup>27</sup> Her Majesty’s Government (February 2014) “UK Commitment to Action on the Illegal Wildlife Trade.” Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/illegal-wildlife-trade-2014>

<sup>28</sup> European Commission (June 2014) *The EU Approach to Combat Wildlife Trafficking*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/trafficking\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/trafficking_en.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Environment Canada (2014) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Available at: <https://ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=1BC82E16-1>.

<sup>30</sup> Vigne, Lucy and Esmond Martin. (2010) “Consumer Demand for Ivory in Japan Declines.” *Pachyderm* No 47: 45-54.

records, were to be kept for all imported ivory products. Second, the CITES ivory trade ban led to the elimination of legal exports, which eradicated the previously large market to foreigners.<sup>31</sup> Third, surveys indicated that the use of ivory has simply gone out of fashion among many consumers, especially young people who object to the slaughter of elephants and do not use traditional Japanese signature stamps (called *hankos*), which make up eighty percent of Japanese ivory retail sales.<sup>32</sup> The study's authors also note that a significant contributing factor for the decline in demand for ivory has been Japan's enduring economic recession, again highlighting the interconnection between illegal wildlife trade and broader global economic forces.

#### *3.2.2.2 Emerging Technologies to Fight Illegal Wildlife Trafficking.*

The link between e-commerce and illegal wildlife trafficking is a significant challenge, which will require innovative laws and regulations and the sustained commitment of online retailers against this emerging market. The internet has also lowered the costs of entering into the market and facilitated communications and transactions between suppliers, middlemen and buyers.

Poachers and illegal traders also use highly sophisticated and rapidly changing techniques to avoid detection. However, conservation and law enforcement communities have recently started to advance their efforts by adopting emerging high-tech tools and equipment. These tools include drones, acoustic traps, mobile technology, 'mikrokopters', radio frequency identification tags, encrypted data digital networks, camera traps, DNA testing, radio collars, metal scanners, and satellite imagery. The CITES Secretariat is working with the private sector to develop new and emerging technologies, supported by an investment fund called the Endangered Species Technology and Innovation Fund.<sup>33</sup>

#### *3.2.2.3 International Cooperation in Enforcement Operations*

**International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).** Under the banner of the ICCWC, five international organizations – the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), CITES, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Bank and INTERPOL – are working together on a multi-faceted approach to dismantle the transnational criminal networks behind the illegal international trade in wild flora and fauna to combat the illegal wildlife trade. The ICCWC works with national law enforcement agencies to develop law enforcement that builds on socially and environmentally sustainable natural resource policies, taking into consideration the need to provide livelihood support to poor and marginalized rural communities.<sup>34</sup> It also seeks to deploy modern techniques and technologies in order to tackle wildlife crime, such as controlled deliveries and the use of wildlife forensics.

**Wildlife Enforcement Networks.** Wildlife enforcement networks are responding to the challenges of the increasingly-organized nature of wildlife crime, by operating across borders and organizational boundaries, coordinating the efforts of wildlife law enforcement agencies and other relevant authorities at a national, sub-regional or regional level. In March 2013, the first global meeting of wildlife enforcement networks took place alongside the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, to scale up regional enforcement capacity and coordination to respond to the serious threat posed by wildlife criminal networks. An example

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<sup>31</sup> The authors note, however, that law enforcement is much easier in Japan as a relatively small country surrounded by sea.

<sup>32</sup> Vigne and Martin. (January-June 2010).

<sup>33</sup> UNEP Global Environmental Alert System (GEAS) (June 2014) "Emerging Technologies: Smarter ways to fight wildlife crime." Available at:

[http://na.unep.net/api/geas/articles/getArticleHtmlWithArticleIDScript.php?article\\_id=113](http://na.unep.net/api/geas/articles/getArticleHtmlWithArticleIDScript.php?article_id=113)

<sup>34</sup> ICCWC web site: <http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/iccwc.php>



of successful international cooperation involving countries and wildlife enforcement networks is the recent campaign against international wildlife crimes, code-named Cobra II. The campaign coordinated the efforts of 28 countries, including China, the United States, South Africa and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network.<sup>35</sup>

**INTERPOL efforts to enhance development and exchange of actionable intelligence across enforcement agencies.** The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme leads global and regional operations to dismantle the criminal networks behind environmental crime using intelligence-driven policing; and coordinates and develops international law enforcement best practice manuals, guides and other resources. Under its Environmental Crime Programme, INTERPOL has conducted many global and regional law enforcement operations in recent years; and is involved in several major wildlife projects, including Project Predator which targets the illegal poaching and trade in Asian “big cats,” such as the tiger; and, Project Wisdom which focuses on the illegal ivory trade as the biggest threat to elephants in the wild.

INTERPOL is encouraging countries to establish National Environmental Security Task Forces (NESTs) as an effective way to fight environmental crime. A NEST is a national multi-agency cooperative formed from police, customs, environmental agencies, other specialized agencies, prosecutors, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental partners. As a first step towards creating a NEST, countries hold a National Environmental Security Seminar (NESS). This brings together national experts and decision makers responsible for environmental compliance and enforcement. China was one of the first countries to host a National Environmental Security Seminar, held in October 2012.<sup>36</sup>

**The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime (WLFC) aims to link existing regional efforts in a global system, enhancing capacity-building and wildlife law enforcement networks at regional and sub-regional levels.** The Global Programme works for and with the wildlife law enforcement community to ensure that wildlife crime, illegal logging, and other environmental crimes are treated as serious transnational organized crimes. The Global Programme is the focal point for work to strengthen national capacities to prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate crimes against protected species of wild flora and fauna. The Programme is currently delivering activities in South East Asia, South Asia, East Africa and Latin America and coordinates the implementation of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.3 Securing Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Development

#### 3.3.1 KEY DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES: *Lack of Alternative Livelihoods*

**A third driver of the illegal wildlife trade is the lack of access to more sustainable livelihoods and economic development.** At the local level in range countries, poverty drives some people in rural communities to participate in illegal trade more out of desperation than profit. Many poachers do so to supplement their income, when their jobs provide them with

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<sup>35</sup> China Daily News. (February 10, 2014) “China leads international crime bust.” Available at: [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-02/10/content\\_17273790.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-02/10/content_17273790.htm)

<sup>36</sup> INTERPOL Website: <http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Environmental-crime>

<sup>37</sup> UNODC (2014) *Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime*. Available at: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/wildlife-and-forest-crime/global-programme.html>.

easy access to the trade – for example as safari guides, or as agents in the fields of human trafficking, narcotics, and arms smuggling.<sup>38</sup>

**Some rural communities are dependent on CITES-listed species for their livelihoods, including food, materials, and medicines.** Imposition of trade controls may impact livelihoods of rural communities by restricting access to income, employment and natural resources. Rather than conform to the trade controls, communities may continue with trade that was formerly legal (for example, before a species was listed or uplisted on CITES). This is especially the case when there is economic, social, cultural and ceremonial importance to the species being traded.

For charismatic species for which there is great global attention, the trade controls imposed (e.g., through a CITES listing decision) are not necessarily proportional to the risk of extinction for a specific local population of a species. It is challenging to have successful compliance in these situations, particularly where the species is problematic (i.e., destructive, dangerous) or seen as a pest in a particular local community. There is also often a lack of incentive to follow the rules or to protect the species.

Many individuals also participate in the trade without awareness of its illegality, especially where the trade in wildlife is a central component of the local economy. Other participants are fully aware of the illegal nature of the market, but continue to condone and support illegal trade because it is such an integral part of the cultural landscape. In this way, the wildlife trade, even if it is illegal, is not only a source of economic gain but also a part of the social fabric of a community.

**Support for sustainable livelihoods and local engagement is important to provide incentives for conservation.** The need to develop alternative sources of income and livelihood for individuals involved in the illegal wildlife trade is a profound and often overlooked challenge.<sup>39</sup> Communities that have traded in wildlife products for centuries have the most to gain by working with authorities to make the trade safe and sustainable. CITES has recognized that implementation of CITES listings may negatively impact livelihoods and now encourages mitigation measures which support the participation of rural communities. Crucially, programs that have focused on community-based management and market development have encouraged local stakeholders to come forward as part of the solution and helped to drive conservation incentives. This is clearly a more desirable situation than driving would-be poachers underground into the black market. Of course, certain economic and governance conditions (including sufficient enforcement capacity) must be in place for such programs to be successful.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Kvinta, Paul. (March 16, 2014) “The madness of modern-day poaching.” *Outside Magazine*. Available at: <http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/nature/Hornswoggled.html>

<sup>39</sup> World Wildlife Fund/Dalberg. (2012) *Fighting illicit wildlife trafficking: A consultation with governments*. Gland, Switzerland: WWF International.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

## 4. CHINA'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

### 4.1 Key Domestic Challenges and Responses

#### 4.1.1 Challenge: High Demand for Wildlife Products

China is the largest consumer market for wildlife and wildlife products. Most wildlife is consumed as food or as ingredients in traditional medicines. A recent survey on Chinese attitudes found that respondents were motivated to consume wildlife for several reasons, from perceived health benefits to displaying social status and respect for guests.<sup>41</sup>

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an important source of cultural heritage that remains widely practiced. In China, traditional medicine is tied very closely to cultural values and traditions that have been practiced for thousands of years. Unfortunately, the market for foods and traditional medicine are also linked to the illegal wildlife trade when they involve the consumption of products from endangered animals and their parts and derivatives.<sup>42</sup> An important challenge is to encourage and ensure sustainable use of products from rare and endangered species.

A 2008 survey in China showed that the majority of consumers purchasing illegal wildlife products are young, affluent, and highly educated males.<sup>43</sup> For this group, the main demand driver appears to be the value of illegal wildlife products as a demonstration of status, much like purchasing a luxury automobile. Additionally, a person who purchases illegal wildlife products may do so as a gesture of power, conveying to friends and colleagues their ability to flout law enforcement.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, a recent CITES meeting recognized that 'wealth' is replacing 'health' as a driver of wildlife consumption. According to John Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES:

*We are seeing a disturbing shift in demand for some species from health to wealth – driven by the motivation of displaying new wealth rather than by use in traditional medicine. This is most evident with the use of rhino horn and tiger parts. This is part of a shift from traditional culture-related consumption to conspicuous consumption, which is also affecting many other species pressured by illegal trade. Illegal trade in ivory, however, appears to be largely profit-motivated, as a means of investment for the purpose of generating wealth.*<sup>45</sup>

As illustrated in Box 4-1, China is a significant market place for illegal wildlife products such as ivory. Further, a recent study found that illegal killing of elephants at a heavily monitored

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<sup>41</sup> TRAFFIC (2010) "Understanding the Motivations: The First Step Toward Influencing China's Unsustainable Wildlife Consumption." TRAFFIC East Asia.

<sup>42</sup> UNODC (April 2013) Chapter 7: "The Illegal Wildlife Trade in East Asia and the Pacific" in "Transnational Organized Crime in East Asia and the Pacific – A Threat Assessment." Vienna: UNODC.

<sup>43</sup> Li, Zhang, Ning Hua, and Shan Sun. (2008) "Wildlife trade, consumption and conservation awareness in southwest China." *Biodiversity Conservation* 17: 1493-1516.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. See also Felbab-Brown (June 2011).

<sup>45</sup> CITES (July 4, 2014) Press Release: "CITES meets as 'wealth' is replacing 'health' as a driver of wildlife consumption." Available at:

[http://www.cites.org/eng/CITES\\_SC65\\_wealth\\_replacing\\_health\\_as\\_driver\\_of\\_wildlife\\_consumption](http://www.cites.org/eng/CITES_SC65_wealth_replacing_health_as_driver_of_wildlife_consumption).



site in Kenya increased significantly after 2008 and was correlated strongly with the local black market ivory price and increased seizures of ivory destined for China.<sup>46</sup>

**Box 4-1: Illegal trade of elephant ivory involves a chain of source, transit and consumers across different countries, particularly between Africa and Asia.**

*Poaching is spreading primarily as a result of a rising demand for illegal ivory in the rapidly growing economies of Asia, particularly China and Thailand, which are the two major end use markets globally. The high levels of poaching are, in some cases, facilitated by conflicts that, through lawlessness and ensuing abundance of small arms, provide optimal conditions for illegal killing of elephants. Further along the trade chain, highly-organized criminal networks operate with relative impunity to move large shipments of ivory off the continent and to markets in Asia. The prevalence of unregulated domestic ivory markets in many African cities, coupled with the large number of potential Asian buyers residing in Africa associated with infrastructure projects and resource extraction operations, also fuel the demand for ivory. This situation is further exacerbated in many countries due to weak governance and collusive corruption, at all levels. Poverty facilitates the ability of organized criminals to recruit, bribe or threaten locals and underpaid police, military personnel and wildlife rangers.*

**UNEP 2013 report: Elephants in the Dust – The African Elephant Crisis**<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Response: China's Actions to Reduce Demand for Wildlife Products**

**Champions.** The role of national anti-wildlife trafficking champions is attempting to lead Chinese consumers to rethink their role in this market. Major celebrities such as actress Li BingBing, actor Jackie Chan, and professional athlete Yao Ming, are actively engaged in campaigns to reduce demand for major illegal wildlife products, including elephant ivory and rhino horn.<sup>48</sup> Their messages link the consumption of these products to the violence and insecurity the trade engenders, along with the real threat of extinction. Celebrities can also reach large audiences. For example, serving as a UN Goodwill Ambassador, Li BingBing managed to mobilize 1.5 million people to join her campaign against the illegal wildlife trade.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, a coalition of business leaders and scholars – including the country's top CEOs – have committed to combatting the illegal ivory trade by pledging they “will never purchase, possess, or give ivory as a gift.”<sup>50</sup> Such a declaration builds on the efforts of other public champions to make illegal wildlife products inappropriate as gifts thereby reducing their apparent prestige and ultimately the demand for such goods.

<sup>46</sup> Wittemyer, George, J. et al. published ahead of print August 18, 2014. “Illegal killing for ivory drives global decline in African elephants.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. Available at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/36/13117.abstract>

<sup>47</sup> UNEP, CITES, IUCN, TRAFFIC (2013) *Elephants in the Dust – The African Elephant Crisis. A Rapid Response Assessment*. United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal. Available at: [www.grida.no](http://www.grida.no)

<sup>48</sup> Denyer, Simon. (September 4 2014) “Yao Ming aims to save Africa's elephant by persuading China to give up ivory.” Available at: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ex-rocket-yao-ming-aims-to-save-africas-elephants--with-china-campaign/2014/09/03/87ebbe2a-d3e1-4283-964e-8d87dea397d6\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ex-rocket-yao-ming-aims-to-save-africas-elephants--with-china-campaign/2014/09/03/87ebbe2a-d3e1-4283-964e-8d87dea397d6_story.html)

<sup>49</sup> UNEP (July 1, 2013) “Powerful Posters Bring Wildlife Protection Message to Millions on Shanghai Metro.” Nairobi: UNEP News Centre. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2723&ArticleID=9558&l=en>

<sup>50</sup> Mei, Jia. (February 28, 2014) “Business leaders, scholars pledge to boycott ivory.” *China Daily USA*.

**Awareness campaigns** in major transportation hubs have been a highly visible tool employed by China to raise the profile of illegal wildlife trafficking as a regional issue. Large posters and information kiosks have been set up in targeted airports in cities and regions with popular wildlife markets, including Hong Kong and Nanning.<sup>51</sup> In 2013, China and UNEP also launched a poster campaign in the Shanghai metro system to sensitize the public to the cost of illegal wildlife products, such as ivory and rhino horn.<sup>52</sup>

**Public Demonstrations.** Chinese authorities have recently used high-profile seizures as an opportunity to educate the public about illegal wildlife trafficking and its associated harms. Following a major sting in Yunnan province in January 2014, officials displayed confiscated items in the provincial capital as a way to demonstrate the extent of the illegal wildlife trade to the public, and to dispel myths about the legal status of illegally-traded species.<sup>53</sup>

**Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)** practitioners and Chinese citizens alike are advancing discussions toward sustainable use.<sup>54</sup> The World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS), based in Beijing, with 195 member organizations spanning 57 nations where traditional Chinese medicine is used, has urged its members not to use tiger bone or any other parts from endangered wildlife.<sup>55</sup> In March 2014, stakeholders met for the TCM Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Forum to discuss how the industry can become more sustainable and improve supply chain transparency for medicinal plants.<sup>56</sup>

At a follow-up meeting in April 2014, representatives from several leading TCM companies formally renounced the use of endangered plants and animals protected by national and international legislation in medicinal products.<sup>57</sup> In advance of the London Conference in February, representatives from the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine presented ways in which the TCM industry can work with conservation organizations to promote sustainable health and environmental harmony.<sup>58</sup>

**Laws against Consuming Illegal Wildlife as Food.** In April 2014, China's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), adopted an interpretation of the Criminal Law which will jail consumers of rare wild animals for food. Anyone who ingests wild animals from a list of 420 officially protected endangered species, or buys them for other purposes, will be considered to be breaking the Criminal Law and could face a jail term from less than five years to more than 10 years. The new legal interpretation also clarifies that knowingly buying products of any illegally hunted wild animals is considered a form of trafficking.

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<sup>51</sup> Jia, Qi. (October 23, 2012) "Campaign in Chinese airports seeks to reduce illegal wildlife trade." *Conservation International*. Available at: <http://blog.conservation.org/2012/10/campaign-in-chinese-airports-seeks-to-reduce-illegal-wildlife-trade/>

<sup>52</sup> UNEP (July 1, 2013)

<sup>53</sup> China Daily (January 23, 2014) "Yunnan busts wildlife trafficking case." *China Daily USA*.

<sup>54</sup> IUCN SULi Newsletter (May 14, 2014) "Interview with IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng". Available at: [https://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/sustainable\\_use\\_and\\_livelihoods\\_specialist\\_group/sulinews/issue\\_8/sn8\\_zhangxinsheng/](https://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/sustainable_use_and_livelihoods_specialist_group/sulinews/issue_8/sn8_zhangxinsheng/)

<sup>55</sup> WWF (March 12, 2010) "Chinese medicine societies reject tiger bones ahead of CITES." Available at: <http://www.panda.org/?190643/Chinese-medicine-societies-reject-tiger-bones-ahead-of-CITES-conference>

<sup>56</sup> TRAFFIC (March 2014) "TCM sector holds inaugural corporate social responsibility and sustainability forum in China." Beijing, China: TRAFFIC.

<sup>57</sup> TRAFFIC (May 2014) "Top traditional medicine companies and doctors renounce use of endangered wildlife products." TRAFFIC: Beijing, China.

<sup>58</sup> Baillie, Jonathan and Ellen Butcher. (2012) *Priceless or Worthless? The world's most threatened species*. London: Zoological Society of London.

The list of species includes giant pandas, South China tigers, Chinese alligators, golden monkeys, Asian black bears and pangolins. In elaborating on the bill to lawmakers, Lang Sheng, deputy head of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, said that “Eating rare wild animals is not only bad social conduct but also a main reason why illegal hunting has not been stopped despite repeated crackdowns;” and, that “Buyers are a major motivator of large-scale illegal hunting.”<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.1.3 Challenge: Border Enforcement

With fourteen neighbouring countries, China has the longest land border in the world. China’s position in the chain of illegal wildlife trade is also complex. For different wildlife species it may serve as a country of origin, and/or transit, and/or consumer market. To intercept illegal wildlife trafficking along China’s borders, well-trained personnel, adequate infrastructure, and sophisticated detection strategies are all essential. Exposing trafficked goods and their agents at borders also supports law enforcement in the future by providing insight on the routes smugglers take and the broader international supply chain.

#### 4.1.4 Response: China is increasing its Enforcement Capabilities

China is implementing a zero tolerance policy to the illegal wildlife trade, including efforts to prevent the trade through the internet. In 2013, China also initiated “Skynet Action” to stop internet wildlife crime, with the support of e-commerce websites and companies.<sup>60</sup>

In 2011, China established the National Inter-Agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group (NICECG), the largest organization of its kind in the world dedicated to combatting wildlife trafficking. China has also achieved significant gains in combatting wildlife trafficking, especially for iconic products such as elephant ivory which have come to symbolize this illegal market. In 2012, the NICECG received a Certificate of Commendation China from the Executive Secretary of CITES in recognition of two nationwide wildlife law enforcement operations earlier that year.<sup>61</sup> In July 2014, China submitted its National Elephant Ivory Action Plan to CITES for review.<sup>62</sup> From the widely praised success of two major crackdown operations in 2013 to its public crush of 6.1 tonnes of ivory in January 2014, the Government of China has sent a message to poachers, traffickers, and organized criminals that it does not tolerate the illegal trade of wildlife in any degree.

China is well positioned to make a substantial impact on detection and deterrence by augmenting its presence against wildlife trafficking at key borders and ports. A targeted approach can yield significant returns and make it more difficult for traffickers to get their illegal products to market. For example, the port of Hong Kong and the border with Myanmar are well known conduits for wildlife trafficking.<sup>63</sup> Expanding the capacity of agencies in and around Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and authorities at targeted land border crossings presents a twofold opportunity for making illegal wildlife trafficking more costly and

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<sup>59</sup> Xinhua News Agency. (April 24, 2014) “China to jail eaters of rare wild animals.” Available at: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-04/24/c\\_133287821.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-04/24/c_133287821.htm)

<sup>60</sup> UNEP Global Environmental Alert System (GEAS) (June 2014).

<sup>61</sup> CITES (May 9, 2012) “CITES Secretariat praises China for major nationwide wildlife law enforcement operations.” Available at: [http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2012/20120509\\_certificate\\_cn.php](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2012/20120509_certificate_cn.php)

<sup>62</sup> Not yet publicly available.

<sup>63</sup> Hongfua, Xu and Compton, James (eds.). (2008) *The state of wildlife trade in China*. TRAFFIC East Asia – China Programme. Beijing, China: TRAFFIC International / WWF Netherlands; Felbab-Brown and Vanda (June 2011); World Bank (July 2005) *Going, going, gone: The illegal trade in wildlife in East and Southeast Asia*. Discussion Paper – Environment and Social Development, East Asia and Pacific Region. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

difficult for smugglers as well as signaling to neighbouring countries that preventing illegal wildlife trafficking is a regional priority.

## 4.2 International Partnerships

### 4.2.1 Joint Enforcement Operations

The illegal wildlife trade is gaining political profile in China. In May 2014, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Africa where he pledged to focus on collaborating with African countries on wildlife protection. During his visit with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, Premier Li reiterated that the Chinese government is firmly resolved to protect wildlife and resources and will continue to share Kenya's commitment to fight the illegal ivory trade.<sup>64</sup>

China is increasingly taking a leading role in combatting the illegal wildlife trade, working with other countries and international agencies to carry out several law enforcement operations. For example, in 2013 Chinese customs and law enforcement officials worked with partners in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the United States in the month-long Operation Cobra, widely praised for its success.<sup>65</sup> The operation targeted several elements of the illegal wildlife supply chain, leading to arrests and seizures of contraband in range, transit, and destination countries.

For Operation Cobra II in 2014, China assumed a lead coordinating role and leveraged international wildlife enforcement networks to arrest more than 400 suspects addressing 350 different cases of wildlife crime. That operation resulted in the seizure of over 1,000 illegally traded hides and thirty-six rhino horns.<sup>66</sup>

Wildlife trafficking observers have highlighted that increasing business activity of Chinese companies in Africa in recent years has also created new smuggling networks, whereby Chinese citizens who regularly travel back home traffic ivory and other illegal wildlife goods to supplement their income.<sup>67</sup> The Government of China has taken responsible action by working with law enforcement authorities in African countries such as Kenya to apprehend smugglers and illegal goods that would have gone to China.<sup>68</sup> Another positive sign is China's increasing collaboration with partners in African countries to convict cross-border ivory smugglers, including Chinese nationals seeking to avoid prosecution by living abroad.<sup>69</sup> As part of Operation Cobra II, Chinese and Kenyan authorities arrested an ivory smuggler in Nairobi who was headed to China. This led to further arrests in China, which exposed an ivory smuggling ring between Kenya and China.<sup>70</sup>

### 4.2.2 China's Regional Presence

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Wildlife Enforcement Network has been a key agent for combatting wildlife trafficking in the region. Importantly, every member of ASEAN is now a signatory to CITES, which on its own has brought about improved

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<sup>64</sup> Li, Lianxing and Zhao Yinan. (May 12, 2014) "Li's visit inspires pioneer Chinese wildlife protector." *China Daily*: p.4.

<sup>65</sup> CITES (February 18, 2013) "CITES Secretary-General praises Operation Cobra." *CITES Secretariat*. Geneva, Switzerland. Available at: [http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2013/20130218\\_operation-cobra.php](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2013/20130218_operation-cobra.php).

<sup>66</sup> China Internet Information Center (February 10, 2014) "China leads international wildlife crime bust." *China International Publishing Group*. Available at: [http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2014-02/10/content\\_31415589.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2014-02/10/content_31415589.htm).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Environmental News Service (February 17, 2014) "Global wildlife sting arrested 400+ suspects." *Environmental News Service*; Xinhua News Agency (February 10, 2014) "China, Africa arrest cross-border ivory smuggler." Available at: [http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2014-02/10/content\\_31415456.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2014-02/10/content_31415456.htm).

<sup>69</sup> Xinhua News Service (February 10, 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

coordinated action among law enforcement authorities in ASEAN member states.<sup>71</sup> While not a member of ASEAN, China has worked in partnership with the network on several investigations and operations, and their capacity for collaboration continues to grow. In 2012, wildlife law enforcement officials from China and ASEAN member countries, along with other international representatives met in Nanning, China to discuss intergovernmental approaches to combatting illegal wildlife trafficking.<sup>72</sup>

China's engagement with the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network has already had a reinforcing effect on anti-trafficking efforts in the region. In January 2013, authorities intercepted a substantial illegal wildlife shipment on the China-Vietnam border as result of regional coordination that identified major smuggling routes between Vietnam and Guangxi province. Dr. Jianbin Shi of TRAFFIC's China program credited China-ASEAN collaboration as a significant condition of the operation's success. "Last year's meeting between China and the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network has established a national platform under which Guangxi's PICE-CG [Provincial Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group] is playing a key role in protecting China's biodiversity as well as combating transboundary trade with South-East Asia."<sup>73</sup> Indeed, wildlife trafficking analysts have highlighted that greater cooperation between ASEAN and China on this issue is essential to curbing the regional illegal wildlife trade.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, the Government of China has engaged with other wildlife enforcement networks (such as the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network) and held trilateral discussions with India and Nepal.<sup>75</sup> These meetings are an important first step in strengthening capacity to combat wildlife trafficking at the regional level. As noted in the previous subsection, this coordination leads to tangible gains on the ground. Law enforcement operations are aided by personnel equipped with superior tools and guided by enhanced intelligence as a direct result of the regional pooling of resources.

## **5. SUGGESTIONS FOR CHINA TO BETTER PROTECT WILDLIFE BY COMBATTING ITS ILLEGAL TRADE**

As indicated in this paper, China faces many challenges but has also made significant progress in recent years in its efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade. It is hoped that China will continue placing a high priority on this work and will expand its contributions, in cooperation with regional partners and the international community. The suggestions presented below identify opportunities to further advancing China's involvement and impact on international wildlife crime, building on existing programmes and institutions.

### **5.1 Eradicating the Market for Illegal Wildlife Products**

**Take actions supported by improved understanding of the drivers of demand and supply.**

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<sup>71</sup> Lin, Jolene. (2005) "Tackling Southeast Asia's illegal wildlife trade." *Singapore Year Book of International Law* 9: 191-208. Available at: <http://law.nus.edu.sg/sybil/downloads/articles/SYBIL-2005/SYBIL-2005-191.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> TRAFFIC (July 2, 2012) "China and ASEAN states join hands to curb illegal wildlife trade." Nanning, China: TRAFFIC.

<sup>73</sup> TRAFFIC (June 3, 2013) "Anti-smuggling focus on wildlife crime enhanced in China's Guangxi province." Guangxi, China: TRAFFIC.

<sup>74</sup> Lin (2005).

<sup>75</sup> TRAFFIC (July 2, 2012).



Conduct scientific research and monitoring on consumer values and behaviour with respect to supply and demand of illegal wildlife products, and on markets for specific species. Continue to develop and invest in targeted public awareness and education campaigns in schools and in other public institutions. Support high profile champions, such as celebrities, politicians, and business and academic leaders to help draw the link between illegal wildlife trafficking and its global harm as well as diminish the status value that is associated with many illegal wildlife products.

## **5.2 Ensuring Effective Legal Frameworks and Deterrents and Strengthening Law Enforcement**

**Conduct an assessment of intelligence and enforcement procedures; reporting mechanisms; and tools, including emerging technologies.**

The complex nature of the illegal wildlife trade and ongoing adaptations by criminal networks to avoid detection, seizures and prosecution require intelligence and enforcement capabilities to detect illegal and smuggled wildlife products and to coordinate work with international efforts. New and emerging technologies could prove useful in combatting poaching (e.g., cyber trackers), tracking shipments of illegal goods and securing evidence (e.g., DNA analysis) for prosecution of wildlife crimes. Conduct a review of the current practices on how illegal activities and convictions are reported, both internally and internationally, with a view to strengthening reporting mechanisms, as appropriate. With the growing recognition of the seriousness of environmental crime, consideration might be given to establishing specialized investigation and prosecuting units.

**Continue international cooperation efforts.**

Build on recent international political momentum and commitments under the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade and UNEP Environmental Assembly, with national and international efforts to support work under existing institutions and programmes, such as CITES, INTERPOL and ICCWC. Spearhead international and regional multi-disciplinary cooperation among border services, customs agencies, and wildlife law enforcement organizations. This should include data collection and intelligence sharing. Continue to engage at the highest level with key international partners such as source and transit countries to maintain momentum and public visibility of the government's resolve to combat the illegal wildlife trade. Build formal operational law enforcement protocols that train personnel, investigate and prosecute wildlife crime, particularly along common trade routes.

## **5.3 Securing Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Development**

**Engage local communities.**

Local engagement and on-the-ground activities will be key elements to successfully combatting the illegal wildlife trade. Conduct research to better understand the relationship of local communities with species of high significance in China that are illegally and unsustainably harvested and traded, including cultural significance, incentives for protection, sources of income, sources of employment, sources of food, medicine or materials, local attitudes towards the species, and specialized local knowledge of the species.

LONDON  
CONFERENCE ON  
**THE ILLEGAL  
WILDLIFE TRADE**

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12-13 FEBRUARY 2014

**DECLARATION**

## **LONDON CONFERENCE ON THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE**

### **Declaration**

1. We, the representatives of Governments and Regional Economic Integration Organisations\*, gathered in London on 13th February 2014, recognising the significant scale and detrimental economic, social and environmental consequences of the illegal trade in wildlife, make the following political commitment and call upon the international community to act together to bring this to an end.

### **The scale and consequences of the illegal trade in wildlife**

2. There is a serious threat to the survival of many species if action is not taken to tackle the illegal wildlife trade. Poaching and trafficking undermines the rule of law and good governance, and encourages corruption. It is an organised and widespread criminal activity, involving transnational networks. The proceeds are in some cases used to support other criminal activities, and have been linked to armed groups engaged in internal and cross border conflicts. Rangers and others dedicated to protecting wildlife are being killed or injured in significant numbers.
3. The illegal wildlife trade, and the poaching which feeds it, has in some places reached unprecedented levels. Serious poaching incidents are more frequent, are occurring in areas previously safe from such activity, and are more devastating in scale. Individual poachers or ad hoc gangs are being increasingly replaced by well-resourced and organised groups including transnational criminal networks.
4. The illegal wildlife trade robs States and communities of their natural capital and cultural heritage, with serious economic and social consequences. It undermines the livelihoods of natural resource dependent communities. It damages the health of the ecosystems they depend on, undermining sustainable economic development. The criminal activity and corruption associated with trafficking restricts the potential for sustainable investment and development which is needed in new economic activities and enterprises.
5. Decisive and urgent action is now needed to tackle the illegal wildlife trade in endangered fauna and flora. For many species, the illegal trade, and the poaching which fuels it, is an ongoing and growing problem. There has been a particularly dramatic escalation in the rate of poaching of elephants and rhinoceroses in some places in recent years. The severe threat posed to these iconic species is increasingly also a threat to regional security and sustainable development. Action to tackle the illegal trade in elephants and rhinoceroses will strengthen our effectiveness in



tackling the illegal trade in other endangered species. Such action will also support the sustainable utilisation of resources.

### **Building on the existing international framework for action**

6. “The Future We Want”, adopted at Rio+20 and endorsed by consensus of the UN General Assembly, *“recognised the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides”* and also recognised the *“important role of CITES, an intergovernmental agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development”*.
7. We welcome the attention being given to this issue through the United Nations system, including in the Security Council and the General Assembly, which demonstrates the wider security, economic, social and development implications of the illegal wildlife trade; and further welcome the UN General Assembly decision to proclaim 3 March as World Wildlife Day reaffirming the intrinsic value of wildlife and its various contributions - including ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic - to sustainable development and human well-being.
8. We welcome the actions taken under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and in particular the Decisions relating to elephants, rhinoceroses and big cats adopted at previous meetings of the Conferences of the Parties. We recommit ourselves to the full and effective implementation of relevant CITES Resolutions and Decisions and to making further efforts to eradicate the illegal wildlife trade within the CITES framework.
9. We welcome the important action already being taken by Governments and others at local, national, regional and global level. Commitments to combat the illegal wildlife trade in particular species have been made in a number of other meetings, and we stress the urgent need for their full implementation. We note the particular importance of: The African Elephant Action Plan and the urgent measures endorsed at the African Elephant Summit in Gaborone; The St Petersburg Tiger Declaration on Tiger Conservation; the Global Tiger Recovery Programme and the Thimpu Nine Point Action Agenda; The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard and, those listed in Annex A.
10. The illegal wildlife trade has many inter-related dimensions, and can only be effectively tackled with the involvement of Ministries and agencies beyond the wildlife conservation sector. Action needs to be taken at all points in the illegal

supply chain in source, transit and destination countries. International co-operation is essential, with full engagement by Governments in relevant bilateral, regional and international mechanisms.

11. Effective international co-operation demands the active participation of partners that support Governments in different sectors, in particular: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; INTERPOL; the World Customs Organization; the World Bank; and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (which together comprise the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime); the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Development Programme; the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks. We recognise the efforts made and urge all these entities, and all States who participate in them, to make the eradication of the illegal wildlife trade a priority.
12. We recognise the importance of engaging communities living with wildlife as active partners in conservation, by reducing human-wildlife conflict and supporting community efforts to advance their rights and capacity to manage and benefit from wildlife and their habitats.
13. We recognise the important role that non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and the private sector can play in actions against the illegal wildlife trade.
14. To this end we, the Governments and Regional Economic Integration Organisations represented in London, commit ourselves and call upon the international community to providing the political leadership and practical support needed to take the following essential actions.

## ACTIONS

### A. **Eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products**

15. The economic, social, and environmental impacts of the illegal wildlife trade can only be effectively tackled if we eradicate both the demand and supply sides for illegal products wherever in the world this occurs. To this end, we commit ourselves and call upon the international community to take the following action, to:

- I. **Support, and where appropriate undertake, effectively targeted actions to eradicate demand and supply for illegal wildlife products**, including but not limited to, raising awareness and changing behaviour. Government support is important to ensure demand and supply side reduction efforts are implemented on the scale and in the time-frame needed to have a meaningful impact. Governments should work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including civil society, sectoral experts and key influencers, including business. Actions should be scientific and clearly evidence based, building on research into users' values and behaviour, and form part of coherent demand and supply side reduction strategies.
- II. **Endorse the action of Governments which have destroyed seized wildlife products being traded illegally**; and encourage those Governments that have stockpiles of illegal products, particularly of high value items such as rhino horn or elephant ivory, to destroy them and to carry out policy research on measures which will benefit conservation. Independent audits, or other means of ensuring transparent management, should be carried out prior to destruction.
- III. **Renounce, as part of any Government procurement or related activity, the use of products from species threatened with extinction**, except for the purposes of bona fide scientific research, law enforcement, public education and other non-commercial purposes in line with national approaches and legislation.
- IV. **Take measures to ensure that the private sector acts responsibly, to source legally any wildlife products used within their sectors; and urge the private sector to adopt zero tolerance policies on corporate gifting or accepting of species threatened with extinction or products made from them.**
- V. **Recognising the authority of the CITES Conference of the Parties, support the existing provisions of CITES prohibiting commercial international trade in elephant ivory until the CITES Conference of the Parties determines, informed by scientific analysis, that the survival of elephants in the wild is no longer threatened by poaching.**

- VI. **Welcome the action already underway and urge those Governments that allow trade in legally acquired endangered wildlife products to implement measures, including labelling and wider traceability measures, to ensure that this trade does not allow any illegal wildlife products to enter these markets.**
- VII. **Minimise speculation in endangered wildlife products by opposing the use of misleading, exaggerated or inaccurate information, where this could stimulate poaching, trafficking or demand.**

**B. Ensuring Effective Legal Frameworks and Deterrents.**

- 16. To curb the illegal wildlife trade it is important to ensure that the criminals involved, in particular those ‘kingpins’ who control the trade, are prosecuted and penalised to provide an effective deterrent. To this end, we commit ourselves, and call upon the international community, to take the following action, to:
- VIII. **Address the problem of the illegal wildlife trade by adopting or amending legislation, as necessary, to criminalise poaching and wildlife trafficking, and related crimes including by ensuring such criminal offences are “serious crimes” within the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as called for in Resolution 2013/40 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and by making maximum use of the UNTOC to facilitate international cooperation in appropriate cases. For criminal offences relating to poaching and illicit trafficking, the UNTOC is a valuable tool that can serve as the basis of international cooperation, including extradition and mutual legal assistance, where the offense is transnational in nature, involves an organised criminal group, and is punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years . We urge all States to become parties to, and implement, the UN Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime, and ensure that their domestic offences involving wildlife trafficking fall within the definition of “serious crime” in Article 2 of the Convention.**
- IX. **Address the serious problem of corruption and money-laundering facilitating wildlife trafficking and related offences by adopting or amending legislation, as necessary, criminalising corruption and bribery facilitating poaching, wildlife trafficking, and related offences, and to institute measures to establish and promote effective practices aimed at the prevention of corruption and detection of money- laundering, particularly in cases involving wildlife trafficking. We urge all governments to become parties to, and implement, the UN Convention against Corruption, which can be a valuable tool to prevent corruption and foster international cooperation in corruption cases, including extradition, mutual legal assistance and asset recovery.**

- X. **Strengthen the legal framework and facilitate law enforcement** to combat the illegal wildlife trade and assist prosecution and the imposition of penalties that are an effective deterrent. As part of this, support the use of the full range of existing legislation and law enforcement deployed against other forms of organised crime. This should include, but not be limited to, the enforcement of legislation on money laundering, tax offences and asset recovery, corruption and illicit trafficking in other commodities such as narcotic drugs and firearms. Effective multidisciplinary enforcement should be used to ensure effective investigations and prosecutions, and to secure sentences that act as an effective deterrent.
- XI. **Strengthen the ability to achieve successful prosecutions and deterrent sanctions** by raising awareness in the judicial sector about the seriousness, impact and potential profits of wildlife crime. Dedicated training and increased capacity building are essential tools to achieve this goal.
- XII. **Adopt a zero tolerance policy on corruption associated with the illegal wildlife trade**, recognising with great concern that corruption is an important factor facilitating the criminal activities associated with the illegal wildlife trade.

C. **Strengthening law enforcement**

- 17. Successfully tackling the illegal wildlife trade demands a strong and co-ordinated enforcement response, at the site, national and international levels, and in source, transit and destination countries, using the fullest capacity of institutions and available tools and techniques. To this end, we commit ourselves and call upon the international community to take the following action to:
- XIII. **Invest in capacity building to strengthen law enforcement to protect key populations of species threatened by poaching.** Effective law enforcement requires an increase in the number of well-equipped and well-trained law enforcement officers at key sites, using appropriate tools and techniques.
- XIV. **Establish and maintain national cross-agency mechanisms** to develop, resource and implement co-ordinated national and local action plans and strategies, and oversee the implementation of actions against wildlife crime; to strengthen enforcement systems for a stronger preventive and reactive response to wildlife crime by, inter alia, using the ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit.
- XV. **Provide the necessary conditions for, and further support, including through international co-operation to share expertise, the use of the full range of investigative techniques and tools already deployed against other forms of**

**domestic and transnational organised crime.** This should include, but is not limited to: criminal intelligence; controlled deliveries; traceability systems; risk profiling detector dog's; ballistic analysis and the use of existing forensic technology, including the further development of such technologies.

- XVI. Strengthen cross-border and regional co-operation, through better co-ordination, and through full support for regional wildlife law enforcement networks.** This should include the sharing of operational intelligence and information, sharing information on forensic research and collaborating with relevant forensic research institutions, collaboration on enforcement activity (such as joint operations) and joint capacity building initiatives (such as training activities, trans-border communication equipment and sharing of enforcement expertise and resources).

**D. Sustainable livelihoods and economic development**

18. The illegal wildlife trade is a major barrier to sustainable, inclusive and balanced economic development. It contributes to damage to ecosystems, undermines good governance and the rule of law, threatens security, and reduces the revenue earned from economic activities such as wildlife-based tourism and the sustainable utilisation and legal trade of wildlife, which can make a significant contribution to local livelihoods and national economic development. Recognising that sustainable livelihoods will be best achieved with the engagement of those communities surrounding protected areas, we commit ourselves and call upon the international community to take action, to:

- XVII. Recognise the negative impact of illegal wildlife trade on sustainable livelihoods and economic development.** This impact needs to be better understood and quantified and should form part of the assessment set out in Action XXIV.

- XVIII. Increase capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities and eradicate poverty.** This includes promoting innovative partnerships for conserving wildlife through shared management responsibilities such as community conservancies, public-private partnerships, sustainable tourism, revenue-sharing agreements and other income sources such as sustainable agriculture. Governments should integrate measures to address illegal wildlife trade into development policy and planning, and the programming of development cooperation activities.

- XIX. Initiate or strengthen collaborative partnerships among local, regional, national and international development and conservation agencies to enhance support for community led wildlife conservation** and to promote retention of benefits by local

communities for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife, including actions to reduce illegal use of fauna and flora.

- XX. Work with, and include local communities in, establishing monitoring and law enforcement networks in areas surrounding wildlife.**

**E. The Way Forward**

19. Successfully tackling the illegal wildlife trade and its impacts will need concerted political leadership, community engagement and international cooperation over a sustained period. To support these efforts further research is needed into the scale of the environmental, political, social and economic implications of the trade, as well as an improved understanding of the illegal trade itself and the impact of measures taken to prevent and combat it. To this end, we:
- XXI. Welcome the resources provided to date to support action to prevent and combat the illegal wildlife trade, including implementation of existing action plans and declarations. Urge all donors to provide resources, support and technical assistance, as appropriate, for the implementation of the political commitments contained in this Declaration.**
- XXII. Recognise and appreciate the ongoing support provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to address the poaching crisis in Africa and the associated illegal wildlife trade and would welcome the prioritisation of the issue in the GEF-6 (2014-2018) biodiversity strategy.**
- XXIII. Welcome the establishment within the UN of the ‘Group of Friends’ against illegal wildlife trafficking and take note of the suggestion made at the High Level Event on Illicit Wildlife Trafficking hosted by Germany and Gabon in New York in September 2013, to establish a Special Representative to the Secretary General to further the fight against illicit wildlife trafficking, and for this to be requested by the UN General Assembly in a formal resolution (ref doc A/68/553).**
- XXIV. Will undertake further assessment, initially over the next twelve months, building on existing assessments and collaborative work, of the markets and dynamics of the illegal wildlife trade, and the progress made in combatting it.** This should address the links between wildlife crime and other organised crime and corruption, explore links to terrorism, and investigate the underlying causes and implications of trade, including on regional stability and security, the environment, socio-economic development, and on international relations. It should report on progress on actions and political commitments to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, building on existing

assessments and working collaboratively with other organisations already engaged on this issue.

**XXV. Welcome the offer of Botswana to host another high-level conference to review progress in early 2015.**



## **Annex A**

- The Paris round table and declaration against poaching and illegal trade of threatened species, December 2013
- The African Elephant Summit, Gaborone, December 2013
- The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard, October 2013
- APEC Bali Declaration, October 2013
- 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Rhino Range States Meeting, and the Bandar Lampung Declaration, October 2013
- UN General Assembly high level side event hosted by Gabon and Germany on Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking, September 2013
- Kunming Consensus on Transboundary Conservation and Combatting Illegal Wildlife Trade, July 2013
- G8 Leaders Communiqué, June 2013
- The African Development Bank's Marrakech Declaration, May 2013
- Sumatran Rhino Crisis Summit, April 2013
- Crime Commission 2013
- Yaoundé Declaration on the Fight against Poaching in Central African States, March 2013
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Ministerial Meeting on Tiger Conservation, and the Thimpu Nine Point Action Agenda October 2012
- APEC Vladivostok Declaration, October 2012
- The St Petersburg Tiger Declaration on Tiger Conservation, November 2010
- The African Elephant Action Plan, March 2010

**\* Annex B to the London Declaration**

**The following countries and regional economic integration organisations participated in the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade.**

Angola  
Australia  
Bangladesh  
Botswana  
Brazil  
Cameroon  
Canada  
Chad  
China  
Colombia  
Congo  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Ethiopia  
France  
Gabon  
Germany  
Indonesia  
Italy  
Japan  
Kenya  
Laos  
Malawi  
Malaysia  
Mexico  
Mozambique  
Myanmar  
Namibia  
Nepal  
Netherlands  
Philippines  
Russia  
Rwanda  
Sri Lanka  
Tanzania  
Togo  
UAE  
Uganda  
United States

Vietnam  
Zambia  
The European Union