



## SSN Rhino Newsletter

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Species Survival Network

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### Arrests, seizures and court cases

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#### **Vietnamese rhino horn smuggler arrested in Bangkok**

A Vietnamese man was arrested in January with rhino horn worth more than half a million dollars in his luggage at Bangkok's main airport. The six pieces of horn, weighing about 10.6 kilos, are believed to have been smuggled from Mozambique, wildlife protection authorities said.

The suspect was detained after arriving in Thailand on a flight from Ethiopia, while waiting to board a connecting flight to Hanoi.

The man is accused of bringing protected wild animal parts and prohibited goods into the country without permission. If convicted he could face four years in prison and a fine of at least 40,000 baht (USD1,300).

*Sowetan Live, 7 January 2013. <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/world/2013/01/07/rhino-horns-seized-at-bangkok-airport>*

#### **Tip-off leads to rhino horn arrest, South Africa**

In February, three Chinese nationals were arrested for alleged possession of a rhino horn in Johannesburg.

Acting on a tip-off, the Hawks (South Africa's Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation) arrested two Chinese men and a woman in a hotel room with a horn valued at R120,000 (USD 13,000). The three were visitors to the country. It had not yet been established if they were linked to any rhino horn smuggling syndicate.

They were to appear in the Germiston Magistrate's Court on charges of possession of a rhino horn and drugs.

*Tip-off leads to rhino horn arrest. Sowetanlive, 7 February 2013. . <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2013/02/07/tip-off-leads-to-rhino-horn-arrest>*

## **Rhino horn smuggling cases involving Vietnam and Vietnamese smugglers**

On January 6, 2013, a Vietnamese man entered Vietnam at the Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City. He did not produce any customs declarations and confirmed that he had nothing to declare, but customs officers found that he was carrying 9 rhino horns, wrapped in foil, and weighing 16.26 kg. (SSN note: this appears to be the same incident as that reported above but the weight and number of rhino horn items differ in the two accounts)

On January 7, 2013, a Vietnamese man was found carrying 27 kg of rhino horns at Bangkok airport. The man had flown from Ethiopia to Thailand and was waiting for a flight to Hanoi. The value of the horns was put at USD1.5 million. The man confessed that he was transporting the horns from Mozambique to Vietnam. In early November 2012, the Customs Department of Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi and Quang Ninh police detected two cases of rhino horn smuggling.

On the night of November 4, at Noi Bai International Airport, customs officials found Nguyen Van Chien and Nguyen Van Than transporting 7 rhino horns weighing 23 kg. The seven horns were reported to have come from rhinos killed in the Kruger National Park and nature reserves along the South African border. According to the Ministry of Agriculture of Mozambique, these horns are worth up to USD2 million on the black market.

Two days later, on November 6, while checking a car with a Hanoi number plate, Quang Ninh provincial police found a backpack containing pieces of rhino horn weighing 3 kg and worth about VND2 billion (USD100,000).

In June 2012, a Vietnamese citizen named Doan Minh was arrested in the waiting room at Bangkok Airport while attempting to smuggle seven rhino horns and 3 ivory bracelets on a flight from Kenya to Hanoi.

*VietNamNet Bridge, 13 February, 2013. <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/56937/the-biggest-ivory--rhino-horn-smuggling-cases-in-vietnam.html>*

## **Three more arrested in Operation Crash, USA**

Three Chinese people were charged in February with wildlife smuggling and related charges in connection with "Operation Crash," a nationwide effort to investigate and prosecute those involved in the trade of rhino horns.

Federal grand juries indicted Zhifei Li, Shusen Wei and Qing Wang on charges relating to wildlife smuggling, attempted bribery and related criminal activities.

Zhifei Li is charged with conspiring to smuggle more than 20 raw rhinoceros horns from the United States to Hong Kong in 2011 and 2012. His co-conspirator smuggled the rhino horns in porcelain vases and mailed them to Hong Kong and China. Many of the horns were bought in New Jersey from other members of the conspiracy.

Shusen Wei, a Chinese oil company executive who was attending a Miami antique show with Li, was interviewed by agents after Li's arrest and admitted to purchasing rhino carvings from Li that had apparently been purchased in and smuggled from the United States to China. He later tried to bribe a Special Agent. After a series of recorded phone calls and text messages, Wei was arrested as he attempted to board a flight bound for China.

Qing Wang was scheduled to appear in court to face charges relating to his role in smuggling libation cups carved from rhinoceros horns from New York to Hong Kong.

*[http://us.vocuspr.com/Newsroom/Query.aspx?SiteName=fws&Entity=PRAsset&SF\\_PRAsset\\_PRAssetID\\_EQ=131829&XSL=PressRelease&Cache=True](http://us.vocuspr.com/Newsroom/Query.aspx?SiteName=fws&Entity=PRAsset&SF_PRAsset_PRAssetID_EQ=131829&XSL=PressRelease&Cache=True)*

## **US antiques dealer sentenced for crimes relating to illegal rhino horn trade**

David Hausman, an antiques dealer in New York, was sentenced in February to six months in jail for obstruction of justice and creating false records in connection with illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking.

In December 2010, Hausman, depicting himself as an antiques expert who wanted to assist the authorities with law enforcement, informed the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that the taxidermied head of a black rhinoceros carrying two horns had been illegally sold at auction. Later, after learning that the sale had not been finalized, Hausman covertly purchased the head himself. He instructed an intermediary not to communicate with him by email, to avoid creating a paper trail that could be followed by law enforcement.

After the purchase was completed, Hausman directed the intermediary to remove the horns and mail them to him. He then made a realistic set of fake horns in case an investigation was conducted.

In a second incident, in September 2011, Hausman offered to buy the taxidermied head of a black rhinoceros carrying two horns, but the online seller was an undercover federal agent. Before purchasing the horns, Hausman directed the seller to send him an email falsely stating that the mounted rhinoceros head was over 100 years old.

*US Dept of Justice, 15 February, 2013.*  
[http://7thspace.com/headlines/432417/usdoj\\_antiques\\_dealer\\_sentenced\\_in\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_for\\_crimes\\_relating\\_to\\_illegal\\_trafficking\\_of\\_endangered\\_rhinoceros\\_horns.html](http://7thspace.com/headlines/432417/usdoj_antiques_dealer_sentenced_in_new_york_city_for_crimes_relating_to_illegal_trafficking_of_endangered_rhinoceros_horns.html)

## **Two men caught attempting to smuggle rhino horn and ivory products into China**

In March, Chinese Customs officials reported that two airline passengers were arrested at Pudong International airport for attempting to smuggle rhinoceros horn and ivory items worth over 5 million yuan (USD 805,000) into Shanghai.

Shanghai Customs said that the two passengers were carrying 11 rhinoceros horn products and over 30 items made of ivory,

The men, who said they had bought the rhino horn and ivory at "auction houses, antique shops and fairs in Paris", were arrested by local officials and charged with illegally taking endangered animal products into China.

In 2012, Shanghai Customs seized 5,055 smuggled items made of endangered animal and plant parts, double the amount found in 2011.

*Two men caught attempting to smuggle 5 million yuan worth of ivory and rhino horn products into China . Shanghaiist, 21 March 2013.*  
[http://shanghaiist.com/2013/03/21/two\\_men\\_caught\\_attempting\\_to\\_smuggle\\_800000\\_dollars\\_worth\\_of\\_ivory\\_into\\_china.php](http://shanghaiist.com/2013/03/21/two_men_caught_attempting_to_smuggle_800000_dollars_worth_of_ivory_into_china.php)

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## **Rhino poaching**

### **Hundreds of Mozambicans involved in rhino poaching**

*The Zimbabwean* has reported that, over the past five years, the South African authorities have killed 279 Mozambicans involved in the illegal hunting of rhinos. A further 300 Mozambicans were detained for rhino poaching between 2008 and the end of 2012.

The article states that, for the Mozambican government, the most worrying aspect is the involvement of members of the defence and security forces in the slaughter of rhinos. One of the Mozambicans shot dead, Gerson Chauque, was a member of the Frontier Guard. Another Frontier Guard turned poacher survived being shot in November 2011, and is currently being detained in South Africa.

In January, a poacher who was killed by South African forces was found to be carrying a gun that had already been seized from poachers and deposited at the Massingir District Police Command. According to the newspaper *O País*, it was the head of operations in the district command who gave the gun to the poacher.

*O País* also states that one of the Frontier Guard commanders who fought against the poaching gangs has recently been relieved of his duties, along with his entire investigating team, on suspicion of poaching.

The most recent shoot-out was on 11 February 2013, when South African forces clashed with a group of eight Mozambican poachers in the Kruger Park and shot seven of them dead.

*Hundreds of Mozambicans involved in rhino poaching, The Zimbabwean, 19 February 2013.*  
[http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/africa/63757/hundreds-of-mozambicans-involved-in.html?utm\\_source=thezim&utm\\_medium=homepage&utm\\_campaign=latestarticles](http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/africa/63757/hundreds-of-mozambicans-involved-in.html?utm_source=thezim&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=latestarticles)

### **Nepal's rhino hunters become the hunted**

The BBC reports that efforts by the Nepalese army have been successful in turning the tide against poaching in the last few years.

A decade ago, the country was deeply mired in a civil war between government forces and Maoist rebels, resulting in a lack of focus on wildlife protection in one of Nepal's most famous parks.

In 2002, about 37 rhinos were killed by poachers, triggering grave concern over the future of one-horned rhinos. Their numbers dropped from an estimated 612 in 2000 to fewer than 375 in 2005.

The crackdown has included tough action against poachers, enhanced intelligence, deployment of more than 1000 soldiers inside the Park and involving neighbouring villages in conservation efforts.

In 2012, only one rhino was shot dead by poachers, while in 2011 no rhinos were killed.

Villagers report receiving between 30-40% of tourism revenue from the park for development projects in their villages.

Around 150 poachers and their collaborators have been convicted and jailed in the last few years. Sentences ranged from five to 15 years. The chief warden of the parks has quasi-judicial powers.

*Nepal's rhino hunters become the hunted. BBC News, 8 April, 2013.* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22030392>

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## **Illegal trade**

### **Thai airport officials linked to rhino trade**

Thai authorities are quoted as saying that they will seek arrest warrants for three police officers allegedly involved in trafficking rhino horn through Bangkok's main airport, following an incident in which Vietnamese migrant workers brought rhino horn into Suvarnabhumi Airport (see related article, above).

The workers were paid USD500 per trip, according to the Commander of the Natural Resources Environmental Crime Division, who added "After arriving in Bangkok they were asked to put the rhino horn on a trolley and leave it somewhere nobody could see and then police would come and collect it. We have evidence, especially closed circuit television footage".

*Thai airport officials linked to rhino trade. ThaiVisa.com, 5 March, 2013. <http://www.thaivisa.com/forum/topic/623600-thai-airport-officials-linked-to-rhino-trade-police>*

### **Laotian rhino trade kingpin**

The wildlife smuggling activities of Mr Vixay, a notorious Laos-based animal dealer, were reported in the *New York Times* In March, after interviews with government officials in five countries.

South African authorities are reported as saying that one of Mr. Vixay's companies, Xaysavang Trading, perpetrated "one of the biggest swindles in environmental crime history," circumventing the law by hiring people to pose as rhino hunters. In a separate case, Kenyan officials linked the company to the smuggling of elephant tusks for the ivory trade.

According to the *New York Times*, Mr. Vixay appears untouchable as long as he remains in his home country, where officials have refused to investigate him, despite ample evidence of his activities.

Mr. Vixay has responded to a growing demand for animals like snakes, lizards and turtles by trading them in large volumes from his base in the countryside of Laos.

Evidence exists of tens of thousands of animals being sold by Mr Vixay, including snakes, turtles and monitor lizards, leading investigators to believe that they have been wild-caught rather than bred in captivity. In recent years, Thai authorities have intercepted a number of trucks carrying turtles, tiger cubs, tiger carcasses, pangolins and snakes headed for Mr. Vixay's businesses on the other side of the Mekong River.

For years, the inner workings of Vixay's business remained obscure, but in 2011, for the first time, a part of Mr. Vixay's operations was exposed by the arrest and trial in South Africa of a Thai man, Chumlong Lemtongthai, who claims to be Vixay's deputy.

Questioned by Laotian officials after a query from South African authorities, Mr. Vixay said he "had no idea about suspects arrested in South Africa." But Thai investigators discovered a photo on Mr. Chumlong's computer that showed him posing with Mr. Vixay, and a certificate at Mr. Chumlong's office that said he had been appointed a representative of Mr. Vixay's company.

Evidence at the trial, which included airway bills showing that some rhino horns from the hunts were shipped to one of Mr. Vixay's addresses in Laos, raised hopes among investigators that his business would be severely disrupted, if not dismantled.

But more than a year and a half after the arrest of Mr. Chumlong, who has since received a 40-year sentence in South Africa, Mr. Vixay remains a free man.

*Cn.nytimes.com. In Trafficking of Wildlife, Out of Reach of the Law, 25 March 2013. <http://cn.nytimes.com/article/world/2013/03/25/c25laos/en/?pagemode=print>*

### **66 rhino horns stolen, South Africa**

Thieves have stolen 66 rhino horns worth R25m (USD 2.75 million) in one of the biggest horn thefts ever seen in South Africa. The thieves broke into a safe belonging to a game farmer.

The horns had been derived from a de-horning programme carried out at the Leshoka Thabang Game Reserve in northern Limpopo in an attempt to protect the animals from poachers.

The owner, Johan van Zyl, said that about 42 kg of horn had been stolen, which would sell for about USD2.75m on the streets of Hanoi.

Van Zyl said he had permits for horn removal and storage. The government allows for private storage of horns, which must be registered.

*News24.com, 6 April 2013. <http://www.news24.com/Green/News/66-rhino-horns-worth-R25m-stolen-20130406>*

## **International co-operation**

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### **South Africa and China sign MoU**

In March 2013, South Africa and the People's Republic of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the fields of Wetland and Desert Ecosystems and Wildlife Conservation.

The MoU was signed by South Africa's Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Minister Edna Molewa and Chinese Minister, Mr Wang Yi. It follows the signing of a similar agreement with Vietnam.

These agreements are designed to promote cooperation between South Africa, China and Vietnam on broader issues of conservation, but both are aimed particularly at curbing the current scourge of rhino poaching through cooperation in law enforcement, compliance with international conventions and other relevant legislation.

The government of South Africa states that it sees this MOU as one of the enabling tools that will assist the two countries in the implementation of the recently adopted decision at the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to CITES in Thailand on rhino compliance and enforcement. The decision was based on a CITES Secretariat report which identified a number of gaps in rhino conversation and the combating of rhino poaching. This included the development and implementation of demand reduction strategies by range, transit and consumer countries.

*DEA South Africa, 27 March 2013*

*[https://www.environment.gov.za/?q=content/updaterhinopoaching\\_signingmoubetween\\_sa\\_china](https://www.environment.gov.za/?q=content/updaterhinopoaching_signingmoubetween_sa_china)*

### **Indonesia and Malaysia strike a deal to protect Sumatran rhinos**

Malaysia and Indonesia have struck a landmark deal at a summit in Singapore to try to save the Critically Endangered Sumatran rhino, whose population stands at fewer than 100.

The head of the Rhino Foundation of Indonesia said that "Serious steps must be taken to roll back the tide of extinction of the Sumatran rhino".

The Sabah Wildlife Department in Malaysia stated that the plan could involve steps such as exchanging reproductive cells and individual rhinos between the two countries.

The two governments now need to formalize their collaboration and agree on steps to tackle the Sumatran rhino crisis, with experts at the summit proposing a two-year emergency plan to drive the process.

*Indonesia Strikes Landmark Deal to Protect Sumatran Rhino, The Jakarta Globe, 5 April 2013.*

*<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesia-strikes-landmark-deal-to-protect-sumatran-rhino/583852>*

## Legislation and Law Enforcement

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### Vietnam bans rhino specimen imports

In January, Vietnam announced that it would ban the import, export and domestic trade of rhino horns.

Specimens of white and black rhinos and products made from their horns are included in the ban, along with any other animals included in the CITES Appendices.

Exemptions are made in the following circumstances:

The specimens serve diplomatic or scientific research purposes or will be used for biodiversity conservation, zoo exhibits, or exchanges between CITES authorities "and its national members".

The specimens are non-commercial products that meet the import requirements set by CITES Vietnam and the CITES authority from the exporting country.

The specimens acquired CITES import permits prior to the release of the new directive.

*Vietnam bans rhino specimen imports. TuoitreNews, 29 January, 2013.*

<http://www.tuoitrenews.vn/cmlink/tuoitrenews/society/vietnam-bans-rhino-specimen-imports-1.97560>

### Political pressure hampers law enforcement, India

The threat of poaching to Kaziranga rhinos has escalated sharply in recent times, but senior police officials involved in an anti-poaching drive on the North bank of the Brahmaputra have alleged that political interference and pressure from senior police officials is preventing them from dealing with poachers effectively.

"We know where the poachers are holed up.....but we can't go all out against them because of too much of interference from politicians as well as higher-ups from our department," a police official alleged.

The *Times of India* reports that poachers have been striking frequently, and virtually with impunity, at Kaziranga and that the park has lost 10 rhinos so far this year, the latest being killed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

A wildlife crime expert is quoted as saying "unless enforcement agencies are given a free hand, it will be very difficult to curb poaching. This is not only negating rhino conservation efforts, but also affects the society because in many cases, poachers are involved in other criminal activities too".

*Political pressure preventing poachers from being punished. The Times of India, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013.*

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-26/guwahati/38039610\\_1\\_kaziranga-rhinos-kaziranga-national-park-poachers](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-26/guwahati/38039610_1_kaziranga-rhinos-kaziranga-national-park-poachers)

## Miscellany

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### South African rhinos to be released into the wild in China

In March it was reported that seven rhinos originally from South Africa would be moved into a national park in Pu'er, in Southwest China's Yunnan province. The authorities expect the rhinos to reproduce in three to five years.

The rhinos have spent almost three years in captivity, at Yunnan Wild Animal Park, and are now considered ready for release into the wild.

Jiang Xuelong, a researcher at the Kunming Institute of Zoology of Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the establishment of rhino groups in China will raise awareness of the harmonious interaction of animals, nature and humans.

Yunnan provinces's last indigenous rhinos were killed in 1933.

*China Daily*, 29 March 2013. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2013-03/29/content\\_16355408.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2013-03/29/content_16355408.htm)

### **Translocated rhinos give birth in Manas National Park, Assam, India**

Two rhinos in the Manas National Park, translocated from Kaziranga National Park over the last two years, are reported to have given birth.

Rhino 17, translocated to the Park in 2012 and Rhino 8, translocated to the Park in 2011, were sighted on 23rd March and 25th March respectively with their new born calves.

These births indicate that the translocated rhinos are breeding successfully and have adapted well to the new environment. In total, three calves have been born to translocated rhinos in Manas National Park to date.

The high demand for rhino horn in the illegal wildlife trade continues to be the biggest threat to this newly established rhino population, with three translocated rhinos having fallen prey to poachers in the past two years.

*Wildlife Extra*, 2 April 2013. <http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/manas-rhino-births.html#cr>

### **Kaziranga's vital Indian rhino population increases despite poaching**

Despite an increased level of poaching in India's Kaziranga National Park, the latest rhino census has recorded a 37% increase since 1999.

Kaziranga's rhino population has increased from 1672 in 1999, to 2048 in 2009 and 2290 in 2013.

Kaziranga is a vital habitat for the Asian one horned rhino, containing more than 60% of the world's entire population. Last year, more than 20 rhinos were poached in Kaziranga, and 14 have been poached so far this year.

(In an article published eight days later, the poaching toll was reported as 21 for this year.)

*Wildlife Extra*, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013. <http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/kaziranga-rhino-census013.html#cr>

*Assam: Another Rhino Slaughtered in Kaziranga, Toll Reaches 21. Ibtimes.com*, 12 April 2013. <http://www.ibtimes.co.in/articles/456469/20130412/rhino-killed-kaziranga-toll-reaches-21-assam.htm>

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## **CITES Issues**

### **South Africa pushes for legal trade in rhino horn**

South African Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa is reported to have thrown her weight behind controversial calls for the legalisation of trade in rhino horn.

Ms Molewa said for the first time in an interview that she believes it "is the right direction" to take and could be the key to saving South Africa's increasingly threatened rhino population from extinction.

The stage now seems set for South Africa to push ahead with a trade proposal at CoP17.

"We believe it is the right direction as one of the measures [to curb rhino poaching]," Molewa said in an interview with the *Mail & Guardian* in Bangkok during Cop16. "The model that we have is based on pure law of supply and demand".

*SA pushes for legal trade in rhino horn. Mail and Guardian, South Africa 22 March 2013 <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-03-22-00-sa-pushes-for-legal-trade-in-rhino-horn>*

## Results of CITES CoP16

At CoP16, Kenya withdrew its proposal to amend the annotation to the Appendix II listing of the southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) populations of South Africa and Swaziland.

Parties adopted a series of Decisions on rhinos, reproduced in full below.

CoP16 Com. II.24

### DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

*This document has been prepared by a working group, on the basis of documents CoP16 Doc. 54.1 (Rev. 1) and CoP16 Doc. 54.2 (Rev. 1).*

#### RHINOCEROSES

##### ***Directed to all Parties***

All Parties should:

- a) immediately bring every seizure of illegal rhinoceros horn made within their territories to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination, as applicable, and to the attention of the Secretariat. Information on the seizure should be accompanied by available associated information, to enable follow-up investigations to take place;
- b) notify the CITES Secretariat of seizures of rhinoceros horn for which the origin cannot be determined. Such a notification should include information describing the circumstances of the seizure;
- c) enact legislation or use existing legislation to:
  - i) facilitate the use of specialized investigation techniques such as controlled deliveries and covert investigations in the investigation of wildlife crime related offences, as appropriate, in support of conventional investigation techniques;
  - ii) maximize the impact of enforcement actions by using other tools and regulations such as anti-money laundering and asset forfeiture legislation in support of wildlife legislation;
  - iii) prosecute members of organized crime groups implicated in rhinoceros related crimes under a combination of relevant legislation which carry appropriate penalties that will act as effective deterrents, whenever possible;
- d) submit rhinoceros horn samples from specimens subject to criminal investigation, to designated accredited forensic laboratories as described in Document CoP16 Doc. 54.2 (Rev.1), for DNA analysis, in accordance with relevant legislation regulating the exchange of such specimens;
- e) prior to issuing permits or certificates, including pre-Convention certificates, authorizing the movement of specimens of rhinoceroses, consult with the country of destination, so that the true nature of the trade may be confirmed and monitored;

- f) introduce national measures, as appropriate, in support of CITES implementation, to regulate internal trade in specimens of rhinoceros, including any specimen that appears from an accompanying document, the packaging, a mark or label, or from any other circumstances, to be a rhinoceros part or derivative;
- g) consider introducing stricter domestic measures to regulate the re-export of rhinoceros horn products from any source.

***Directed to all Parties implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as range or consumer States***

All Parties implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as a range or consumer state, where applicable, should:

- a) develop and implement long term demand reduction strategies or programmes and immediate actions aimed at reducing the illegal movement and consumption of rhino horn products, taking into consideration the draft demand reduction principles included in the Annex to document CoP16 Doc. 54.1 (Rev. 1), to achieve measurable change in consumer behaviour;
- b) develop and implement strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness with regard to the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife crime, and to encourage the general public to report illegal activities related to wildlife trade to appropriate authorities for further investigation. Such strategies or programmes and immediate actions could include the involvement of local communities that live in the immediate vicinity of conservation areas, community policing projects or other strategies as may be appropriate; and
- c) provide information on the effectiveness of strategies or programmes referred to in paragraph a) and b) of this Decision, to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, by 31 January 2015, to assist the Working Group to identify best practices and challenges experienced, with the aim of developing ideas to further enhance the effectiveness of demand reduction strategies, and to report on its findings to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee;

***Directed to Viet Nam***

Viet Nam should:

- a) make progress with the development and implementation of the South Africa - Vietnam 2012 to 2017 Joint Action Plan including strengthening management of imported rhino horn trophies and to improve investigations and prosecutions of Vietnamese nationals suspected of illegally trading in rhino horn, as referenced in document CoP16 Inf.24; and specifically to include:
  - i) development of legislation on the domestic management of imported hunting trophies addressing the issue of alteration and transfer of hunting trophies;
  - ii) establish a secure registration database to track legal rhino horn trophies;
- b) conduct consumer behaviour research to develop and implement demand reduction strategies or programmes aimed at reducing the consumption of rhino horn products;
- c) provide a comprehensive report on progress made to the Secretariat by 31 January 2014, with regard to steps taken to effectively implement the requirements of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15); and include:
  - i) an update on arrests, seizures, prosecutions, and penalties for offences related to illegal rhinoceros horn trade in Viet Nam since CoP16;
  - ii) the effectiveness of Decision 11, reported in document CoP16 Inf.24, to prevent illegal rhino horn trade; and
  - iii) any other on-going activities and measures implemented to combat illegal killing of rhinoceros and illegal rhinoceros horn trade.

### ***Directed to Mozambique***

Mozambique should:

- a) take steps to effectively implement the requirements of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15);
- b) give priority attention to the enactment and implementation of legislation with deterrent penalties to effectively combat wildlife crime, prevent illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal possession of and trade in rhinoceros horn, taking into consideration the content of Decision 16.AA paragraph (a) to (g); and
- c) assist the Working Group on Rhinoceroses to implement its mandate by providing a comprehensive report on measures implemented, as specified in paragraph a) and b) of this Decision, and on any other activities conducted. This report should be submitted to the Secretariat by 31 January 2014.

### ***Directed to Mozambique and South Africa***

Mozambique and South Africa should further enhance bilateral co-operation with each other and with their neighbouring States, to enhance current efforts to combat illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, and should provide a comprehensive report to the Secretariat, by 31 January 2014, with regard to activities conducted in this regard.

### ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall:

- a) subject to external funding, convene a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force consisting of representatives from Parties affected by rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime partner organizations, EUROPOL and, as appropriate, other Parties and experts. The Task Force should develop strategies to improve international cooperation, taking into consideration ongoing initiatives (such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between South Africa and Viet Nam), and promote similar MoUs as appropriate;
- b) subject to external funding, develop, in conjunction with relevant institutions and experts, a manual containing guidelines on best practices, protocols and operational procedures, that will promote the use of wildlife forensic technology;
- c) examine the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15) in those range States where the illegal killing of rhinoceros poses a significant threat to the populations of these species, particularly, South Africa and Zimbabwe, and share its findings with the Working Group on Rhinoceroses;
- d) examine progress with curtailing illegal trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives by citizens of implicated States, particularly Viet Nam;
- e) seek external funding to undertake a technical mission to Lao People's Democratic Republic to assess current enforcement activities relevant to illegal trade in wildlife, in particular in rhinoceros parts and derivatives, and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15);
- f) revise Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), taking into consideration the contents of Decision 16.AA and 16.BB and submit this revised version for consideration at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
- g) report at the 65th and 66th meetings of the Standing Committee on progress with regard to the implementation of paragraph a) to e) of this Decision.

### ***Directed to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses***

The Working Group on Rhinoceroses shall:

- a) evaluate the reports submitted in compliance with Decisions 16CC paragraph c), 16DD paragraph c), 16EE and the findings of the Secretariat as per Decision 16FF paragraph c) and report its findings and recommendations to the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee;

- b) evaluate the report submitted in compliance with Decisions 16BB paragraph c) and report its findings and recommendations to the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) at the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee extend the mandate of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses established at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee, to continue to work, primarily through electronic means;
- b) at its 65th and 66th meetings consider the reports and recommendations of the Working Group on Rhinoceroses as required by Decision 16GG, and of the Secretariat, and determine further actions to be implemented by parties to reduce illegal supply and demand, including any necessary measures pursuant to Res Conf. 14.3.

<http://www.cites.org/common/cop/16/com/E-CoP16-Com-II-24.pdf>



*The SSN Rhino Newsletter is produced by the SSN Rhino Working Group as a service to CITES Parties. If you have news that you would like included in a future issue, please do not hesitate to contact us, Mark Jones and Susie Watts, Co-chairs, SSN Rhino Working Group. [mjones@hsi.org](mailto:mjones@hsi.org)*