

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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Species trade and Conservation: Rhinoceros

ILLEGAL TRADE OF RHINOCEROS HORN IN VIET NAM

1. This document has been submitted by Viet Nam^{*}, in relation to agenda item 54 on Rhinoceros.
2. Viet Nam welcomes the report of the Rhino Working Group (Cop16 Doc. 54.1) and Secretariat (CoP16 Doc. 54.2) and are saddened to hear that the crisis facing wild rhino's continues to worsen. Viet Nam is aware that in order to address this crisis, our country must strengthen enforcement and raise awareness of it's people, both domestically and also of those living overseas. Viet Nam is ready to cooperate with other Parties on this issue and welcomes the opportunity to share experiences. In that spirit, we would like to update all Parties following our report to the Secretariat in September 2012.
3. In December 2012, Viet Nam and South Africa signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 'Cooperation on Biodiversity Conservation and Protection'. At present both Parties are developing a 2012-2017 Action Plan that will include specific activities to strengthen management of imported rhino horn trophies and improve investigations/prosecutions of Vietnamese nationals arrested suspected of trading rhino horn in both South Africa and Viet Nam through increased cooperation and coordination. Viet Nam is ready to work with other key source and transits countries (e.g. Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Thailand, etc.) to develop similar cooperation agreements to facilitate investigations and prosecutions.
4. Since our report to the Secretariat in September 2012, Vietnamese authorities have seized more than eight horns and 16.26kg of horns (totalling 42.76kg) and arrested four people in three separate cases on suspicion of illegally trading rhino horns of African origin.
5. In January 2013, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam issued Decision 11 on the Prohibition of the export, import, selling and buying of specimens of some wild animals listed under Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. This Decision prohibits all domestic sales of these species and their products and bans the import of *Ceratotherium simum*, *Diceros bicornis* and *Loxodonta Africana* and their products into Viet Nam. Imports for the purpose of diplomacy, scientific-research, biodiversity conservation, display at zoos, exhibitions, non-profit circus performances, law enforcement, and exchange of specimens amongst CITES Management Authorities of the Member Countries are still allowed. Under this decision, non-commercial import of hunting trophies has effectively been temporarily banned from all countries and can only be permitted following Cooperation Agreements signed between the Viet Nam CITES MA and exporting country CITES MA. At present this only applies to South Africa and we intend to work with the South African authorities over coming months to strengthen existing regulations and procedures for export / import of hunting trophies.
6. Viet Nam received no offer of support from the Secretariat and limited support from other organisations in combatting illegal rhino horn trade and managing hunting trophies following our request made in

^{*} *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

September 2012, and we would like to extend this request to other Parties to assist us in improving our management system.

7. The CITES MA of Viet Nam will develop a specific legal regulation on the domestic management of imported hunting trophies in cooperation with our Partners in South Africa, addressing the issue of alteration and transfer of hunting trophies.
8. In 2013, the Viet Nam CITES MA will train prosecutors and judges in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City on the situation facing rhinos and urge them to prioritise cases involving rhino horns and continue its program of training for police, customs, border army and forest rangers in CITES regulations and identification of wildlife products, including rhino horn.
9. In 2013-2014, we intend to collaborate with the TRACE network to develop a wildlife forensics laboratory in Viet Nam that will support our wildlife crime investigations, management of hunting trophies and captive-breeding facilities. This will include procedures for the provision of DNA samples to the Rhodis database from rhino horn seizures and imports.