



17

The History of Rhinoceros Listing on CITES

As early as 1977, in other words, only 4 years after CITES came into existence, all species and populations of rhinos were listed in CITES Appendix I, and since then controls over the exploitation of these animals have been gradually strengthened. Until 1994, when South Africa's population of white rhinos was downlisted to Appendix II. This meant there could be international trade in the live animals, provided they went to appropriate and acceptable destinations, and in hunting trophies, an exemption that has caused, and continues to cause, so many problems for the animals.^{1,2}

A series of Resolutions have been passed at the CoPs to provide protection for the animals.

Resolution Conf. 3. 11: In 1981, a moratorium was requested on the sale of all government and parastatal stocks of rhino products under the control of both CITES Parties and non-Parties. At CoP3, it was included in Resolution Conf. 3. 11, so was the recommendation that all non-Parties prevent the commercial import and export of rhino products across their international borders, even though non-Parties could not be bound by CITES.

¹ Annotation to the downlisting.

² CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FLORA AND FAUNA < 61st meeting of the Standing Committee, Geneva (Switzerland), 15–19 August 2011, *Interpretation and implementation of the Convention, Species trade and conservation, Rhinoceroses, CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN AFRICAN AND ASIAN RHINOCEROSES*, SC61 Doc. 45.2 – this document was submitted by Hungary on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, p.2.

Resolution Conf. 6. 10: Adopted in 1987, this urged all Parties not only to prohibit international and domestic trade in rhino products, but also improve the awareness of their law enforcement agencies, increase penalties for trading in rhino products and take effective action against both poachers and middlemen. And because the 1981 moratorium had failed to stop the trade, Resolution Conf. 6. 10 again urged all Parties to destroy all government and parastatal stocks of rhino horn and recommended action be taken against any countries still allowing trade in rhino horn, by applying pressure to them.

Resolution Conf. 9. 14: Passed at CoP9, it directed the Standing Committee to pursue actions aimed at reducing illegal trade in rhino horn, and down-listed the South African population of White rhinos to Appendix II (with an annotation). Now Resolution 9.14 (Rev. CoP15), it has been amended at a number of CoPs and continues to be the current Resolution regarding the '*Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses*'.³

Resolution Conf. 9. 14 (Rev. CoP15)—Conservation of and Trade in African and Asian Rhinoceroses: A key piece of legislation, this Resolution is also concerned with conservation of the species.

This was because of the developing situation '*that some rhinoceros populations have continued to decline drastically and that four of the five species are threatened with extinction*'. And although some African and Asian range states were successfully managing and protecting their rhinos, '*often under difficult circumstances*', and were taking measures to control and reduce the use of rhino horn by consumer countries, particularly those where the cultural use went back centuries, it concluded that '*the above measures have not arrested the decline of all rhinoceros populations*'. This was '*a global law enforcement problem*' extending beyond the rhino range states and the traditional consumer countries, and unfortunately '*emphasis solely on law enforcement has failed to remove the threat to rhinoceroses*'.

There is an appeal to range states and implicated states for cooperation and funding, and all governments and intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies and NGOs are '*called upon*' to provide funds. These are not just to be used for conservation and measures to prevent the rhinos being poached and their horns trafficked but also to enable the IUCN and TRAFFIC to effectively report their findings to the Secretariat before a CoP.

³ It was amended at the 11th, 13th, 14th and 15th meetings of the Conference of the Parties and further amended by the Secretariat in compliance with Decision 14.19 and with the Decisions adopted at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee.

In other words, without more money, it would be very difficult for both TRAFFIC and the IUCN to carry out their monitoring/reporting activities, and without those, it would be very difficult to determine whether or not the range States were in fact actively trying to conserve rhinos, as well as taking measures to stop both poaching and the illegal trade in their horns. Lack of funds continues to be a major problem.

The Resolution also *'calls for constructive engagement among all Parties to the Convention'* and for *'synergy between the Convention and the IUCN/SSC Rhino Specialist Groups to achieve the aims of this Resolution'*. An appeal for everyone involved to work together.

The CITES Rhinoceros Indicators Process: This is a 'MIKE equivalent' for rhinos.

In 1999, the Standing Committee discussed a report produced by the SSN (Species Survival Network), the result of a workshop whose participants included people from TRAFFIC, the IUCN African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and the CITES Secretariat. Four systems were assessed, and the most thorough system recommended, but as it was the most expensive, the Standing Committee, did not approve the expenditure. Not enough money.

At CoP13, in 2004, three Decisions, 13.23–13.25, were adopted. It was hoped these would lead to more effective reporting by the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups.

Decision 13.23: This was concerned with data collection for the next CoP. Every 2 years, the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups were to compile and produce a summary of the information they had received on the status, trends and developments in rhino conservation in both African and Asian range States. The report from each country should contain the following information in time for CoP14:

- National plans;
- Rhino committees;
- Rhino numbers;
- Translocations;
- Mortalities;
- Horn stocks;
- Horn seizures; and
- Criminal cases.

Decision 13.24: This was another call for funds to enable the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups to carry out the work required under Decision 13.23. Unfortunately, only two sources delivered. Thankfully, the funding they provided was generous.

Decision 13.25: This was also concerned with data collection, data that was essential to the effective conservation of such incredibly rare species. The data should be arranged in eight sections:

- Section 1: Management strategies;
- Section 2: Status of populations;
- Section 3: Legislation;
- Section 4: CITES' Decisions;
- Section 5: Illegal killing;
- Section 6: Stockpiles;
- Section 7: Trade routes; and
- Section 8: Recommendations.

It was to be compiled by the IUCN/SSC, with the final report, which was to be translated into three working languages, submitted to the CITES



Fig. 17.1 Black rhinos in Kenya. Copyright Chester Zoo

Secretariat prior to CoP14 in 2007. But funding was still a problem so a simpler reporting system was adopted. The data was essential, and this system would have to do.⁴

The ultimate irony was that although rhino horn is worth more than gold, and there was no shortage of people finding the money to buy it, the Parties to CITES and other possible donors were either unable or unwilling to fund the operations essential to their survival. Without this sort of information, how do we know how to help rhinos. Without enough money, how can we help them?

⁴SC54 Doc.27 Annex. *Conservation of and trade in African and Asian Rhinoceroses*. A report from the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Africa and Asia Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC, to the CITES Secretariat.