

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



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CONTROL OF TRADE IN IVORY IN CHINA

This document has been submitted by CITES Management Authority of China in relation to agenda item 46 on *Elephants**

China deeply concerns about the current situation of elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory and would like to work with the international community to protect this important flagship species.

Taking this opportunity, please allow us to report you what we have met and done in control of the trade in ivory.

In recent years, the collection of arts and crafts, jewellery and antiques, including the ivory carvings, has become fashionable in China and the price of those items has increased significantly. This has stimulated the demand for ivory and brings huge challenge to the Chinese enforcement authorities.

In recognition of above challenge, China has taken comprehensive measures to address it,

- A) China has introduced a system to regulate our domestic trade in ivory since 2005. All raw ivory materials and worked ivory should be labelled. The raw ivory can only be allowed for carved at the designated manufacturers and all carved ivory can only be sold at the designated retailers with certificate. All information on raw and worked ivory should be stored at a centralized database and could be traced and monitored by the wildlife authority. In recent three years, only 5 tons raw ivory are allowed for put into use in China annually.
- B) China has set up the Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group at the national and provincial levels to coordinate the domestic wildlife enforcement and international enforcement cooperation. The control of illegal trade in ivory is always on the priority of the Chinese enforcement authorities;
- C) China's border control agencies have strengthened the anti-smuggling of ivory not only at the key Chinese airports and seaports, but also in the China-Vietnam, China-Laos and China-Myanmar borders. At the beginning of 2011, the border control police in Guangxi intercepted an illegal shipment of 707 elephant tusks at the Sino-Vietnam border. This year, the Chinese Customs made another two significant ivory seizures in Tianjin and Guangzhou where more than 1,370kgs ivory were confiscated. In general, the Chinese Customs and border control police made at least 600 ivory seizures every year, accounting for half of the global ivory seizure number. Those seized ivory carvings not only come from African countries, but also from the US, Europe and Japan. It is said that the price of ivory carvings auctioned in the western countries are also increasing significantly;
- D) China's forest police and wildlife authorities have gradually strengthened their controls on the domestic trade in ivory. In the past years, the Chinese wildlife authority has shutdown at least 10 officially designated ivory manufacturers and retailers who are found involving in illegal trade in ivory. At the end of 2011, the Chinese forest police carried out a national enforcement operation targeting on illegal trade in ivory, where 19 cases were detected, 8 suspects were arrested and 28.82kgs ivory items were confiscated. In 2012, the Chinese forest policemen have seized thousands of ivory items in our domestic markets. It is said that the

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price of ivory in the Chinese market has decreased 40% this year.

- E) China has jailed hundreds of illegal ivory dealers in the past decade and around 30 ivory smugglers have been sentenced to life imprisonment.
- F) China has monitored the online trade in ivory since 2005. Many websites and e-shops involving in illegal trade in ivory were investigated and shut down by the enforcement authorities. 15 websites have issued a joint statement to persist in a zero tolerance policy to the online trade in wildlife. All auction houses have been asked by the China Auction Association not to sell the products made from rhino horn and tiger bone or the ivory carvings without certificate.
- G) China displayed the CITES posters at all Chinese entry and exit ports in 2011, set up many permanent CITES advertising boards at the major international airports and border passes and provided hundreds and thousands of CITES brochures to the targeted people who are going to Africa as labours, tourists and businessmen by the travel agencies, foreign aid companies, import and export companies, construction companies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce the State Forestry Administration and the State Tourism Administration. Our main purpose is to ask the Chinese nationals not to illegally buy and take home the CITES specimens, particular the ivory;
- H) China organizes hundreds of training seminars for the CITES and wildlife enforcement officers at various levels each year. The information on identification of ivory and control of trade in ivory is always provided at the seminars;
- I) China has paid high attention to the international cooperation. We reports our ivory seizures every year to the ETIS, CITES Secretariat, the relevant international and regional enforcement organizations as well as the specific export and transit countries. Many export or transit countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya follow such information to conduct their inspections and have made a lot of ivory seizures. We hosted the technical meeting on control of illegal international trade in ivory in 2010, the Sino-ASEAN consultation meeting on wildlife enforcement and the Special Investigation Meeting in 2012, and attended the Central Africa Wildlife Enforcement Meeting and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network Meeting in 2012. We have taken part in several operations initiated by Interpol or WCO. We established the International Elephant Conservation Fund and had sponsored some international and national elephant conservation projects. We have raised 200,000 USD from China's Chimlong Group and will transfer it to Africa Elephant Fund. We will organize a training seminar on wildlife conservation and CITES implementation for officials from African elephant range states in October 2012. We may work with ASEAN-WEN and SAWEN to undertake a regional enforcement operation next year, targeting on the illegal trade in ivory, rhino horn, pangolin and Asian big cats.

As everyone knows, the ivory is a high-valued product. It was not only demand in Africa and Asia, but also in North America, Europe and Australia. The illegal trade in ivory is very similar to the illegal trade in drugs. It is a international problem. No country can ensure that they can eliminate the illegal trade in ivory or drug when there exist the suppliers or consumers. What we need is to bring all range, transit and consumer states to take coordinated and comprehensive measures to compress it.

We know China is one of the destinations for illegal ivory, but we don't think that the ivory illegally entered into the Chinese market is huge. Since the control of illegal trade in ivory in export, transit and consumer countries has strengthened greatly in recent years and many of the illegal ivory have been intercepted by the export or transit countries or seized by the Chinese Customs before entering into the Chinese market. In addition to that, many countries claimed that the destination of their seized ivory is China, but they are unable to provide us any evidence when we request for. We are not sure whether ETIS has verified such information or not.

We know China needs to further strengthen the control of our domestic ivory market. We welcome the NGOs to monitor our domestic ivory market and provide us the reliable information related to the illegal ivory trade. Once we verify the information, we will handle the illegal ivory dealer at once. At the same time, we feel very regret that some NGOs always disseminate the inaccurate information to the international community about their market survey in China. We are not sure whether they are able to distinguish the elephant ivory carving from the mammoth ivory carving or the colophony carving. There are a lot of mammoth ivory carvings and colophony carvings in our markets. In many circumstances, the NGOs treat those carvings as elephant ivory carvings.

China has tried her best to control the illegal trade in ivory. We have taken all measures we can take in the past. We don't know if there is any other country that does more than China. Therefore, we strongly oppose the Recommendation d) and o) of Doc. 46.1 because the required report is almost a duplication of this report. However, China would like to voluntarily submit a more comprehensive information document to CoP16 to report the implementation of our internal ivory trade control system.

We are sad to see the poaching and smuggling is on increase and the wild population is on decrease. It seems the current policy to ban the international trade in ivory is failed. We call on all Parties to assess the CITES policy and consider the use of legally obtained as well as the confiscated ivory. Tens of tons ivory can be legally obtained from the conservation programs annually and hundreds of tons confiscated ivory has been kept by the enforcement authorities in many countries. Those ivory are precious nature resources and those countries spend huge resources to preserve the ivory. We think it is very necessary for the international community to consider allowing the international trade in ivory in an effort to mitigate the governments' preservation pressure, raise conservation fund, meet the market demand and deter the illegal trade.

Finally, we call on all range, re-export and transit states to enhance their anti-poaching, regulation of domestic ivory trade and supervision of the exported goods. We don't like to see very few poachers are arrested, many foreign tourists are very easy to access to the tusks and ivory carvings openly displayed for sale at the domestic markets without any control and very few illegal ivory are intercepted by the range, re-export and transit countries. We also call on all consumer states to tighten their control on domestic ivory trade.