

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
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POSITION STATEMENT ON CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN TIGERS – CHINA

The attached document has been submitted by China. \*

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\* *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.*

## **Positions of China on Conservation of and Trade in Tigers**

### **Factors threatened the survival of wild tigers**

1. Many factors contribute to the decline of wild tiger population, including the loss, degradation and fragmentation of the habitat, human-tiger conflict as well as poaching.
2. The decline of wild tiger population is closely linked with the loss of tiger habitat, which is proved by the facts that the wild tiger population have decreased to present 3,500 from 100,000 in 1900s, and at the same period, the tiger habitat has decreased by 96%.
3. The human-tiger conflict is more serious than ever. Following the loss of tiger habitat, the rapid growth of Asian population and the expansion of human activities, dozens of people are eaten or injured by the wild tigers and many tigers are killed by the local people during human-tiger conflicts annually.
4. Poaching of tiger is not the primary cause of the death. In India, from January to September 2009, 56 dead tigers were found in the wild. 14 deaths were due to poaching, only accounting for 25% of the total deaths.

### **The responses of CITES to the tiger issues**

5. Several recommendations regarding the conservation of and trade in tigers were made in the Resolutions 9.13, 11.5 and 12.5 adopted by the meetings of the Conference of the Parties of CITES.
6. Decision 14.69 adopted at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CITES asked the Parties to restrict the farming of tiger and not to breed the tiger for trade in its parts and derivatives.
7. Without a consensus by a working group established by the 57<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee for this issue, the CITES Secretariat interpreted the terms used in Decision 14.69 and made further requirements on implementation and reporting of that Decision at its Notification to the Parties No. 2008/059.
8. Sweden, on behalf of the member states of European Union, submitted document No. CoP15 Doc.43.2 to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CITES and asked the Parties to incorporate Decision 14.69 and Notification to the Parties No. 2008/059 to the existing Resolution 12.5.

### **China's efforts in tiger conservation**

9. China puts tiger in category I of List for the Wildlife of State Priority Conservation in 1988. Hunting and killing of tigers has been strictly forbidden by the law. Illegal hunting of tigers and activities of selling and smuggling tiger products should be handled as a criminal case.
10. Over 20 nature reserves of various levels have been established in the confirmed and suspected tiger habitats, including 7 at the national level. The management authorities are set up for routine patrol in all of those reserves. In order to protect tigers outside of the reserves, a number of tiger conservation stations have been established. Investment has also been increased to intensify capacity building, law enforcement and public education.
11. The implementation of the Conversion of Farmland to Forest Program and the Natural Forest Protection Program in the tiger habitats in recent years has made the wild tiger habitat expanded, recovered and optimized in China.
12. In order to support the global wild tiger conservation efforts, the State Council of China promulgated a special regulation to prohibit the use of and domestic trade in tiger bones in 1993. The traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) industry has suffered huge loss accordingly.
13. The majority of the captive tigers have been labeled by the microchip and a centralized database is

14. In an effort to promote the combating of illegal management and use of tiger skins and products, the Workshop on Control of Illegal Trade in Endangered Species in West China has been held annually since 2005. It has proved to be every effective and the activities of smuggling of and illegal trade in tiger skins and products have declined significantly.
15. The enforcement and prosecution of such criminal activities as illegal hunting of tigers and smuggling and sales of tiger products have been intensified. In the periodic joint law enforcement inspection and special enforcement actions conducted by wildlife conservation authorities in collaboration with such government agencies as public security bureaus, industry and commerce authorities and Customs, illegal trade in tiger products have been listed as the priority and a number of major and serious cases have been tracked down.
16. Public education on tiger conservation has been widely conducted, with an aim to raise the public awareness, impel them resist illegal sales and smuggling of tiger products consciously and actively participate in the actions on tiger conservation.
17. China has signed bilateral MOU on tiger conservation with India and Russia respectively, and implemented many cooperative tiger conservation projects with international organizations. The enforcement officials from India, Nepal and ASEAN-WEN have been invited to China for enforcement and field survey, promoting the exchange of forfeit intelligence and the joint investigation and prosecution. Three sub-regional CITES enforcement workshops had been organized by China for Mekong, Himalayas and Northeast Asia respectively since 2005 and the officials from Cambodia, India, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam have been invited to participate in these events, discussing issues on joint fight against smuggling and illegal use of tiger skins in order to promote relevant enforcement cooperation.
18. Combined with the implementation of wildlife conservation and nature reserve development program, the releasing of captive bred tigers into the wild is being considered. Some captive bred tigers are being trained in an imitated nature environment and some releasing sites are being selected.
19. Researches on tiger bone substitutes are encouraged and several substitute materials have been approved.

#### **China's statement on tiger issues**

20. We deeply regret the fact that world's wild tiger populations continue to decline in spite of the sixteen-year implementation of a global trade ban on tiger parts and its derivatives.
21. The fundamental way to save the wild tigers is to protect their habitat, increase their prey abundance, alleviate the human-tiger conflict and enhance the wildlife law enforcement. The range countries bear the primary responsibility to protect tigers and their habitat and the international community should provide assistances to them in the conservation, management and enforcement of tigers.
22. China supports the effort made by the international community in conserving the wild tigers when the national sovereignty and the provision of the text of CITES Convention is respected.
23. China has not approved any use of tiger bone for medical purpose since 1993 and has not any plan to use the captive-bred tiger bones as clinical medicine at this moment. We will continue to strictly combat the activities in relation to poaching of tigers and illegal import, export, sale, purchase and transportation of tiger parts and derivatives.
24. China strongly opposes to incorporate Decision 14.69 and Notification to the Parties No. 2008/059 into the existing Conf. Res. 12.5.
25. In relation to the proposals "those Parties with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale shall implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers, taking account of the interpretations in Annex 4" and "tigers are not be bred for

its proposed amendment to Conf. Res. 12.5, we believe they are contrary to the principles established in Paragraph 4 and 5 of CITES Article VII and Article I and Paragraph 2 of Article XIV of CITES, go beyond the mandate of CITES in regulating the international trade in CITES specimens, interfere the Parties' sovereignty to control domestic trade in CITES-listed species and inviolate relevant laws and regulations of China.

26. In relation to the proposal "instruct range States and, where appropriate, non-range States to provide detailed reports to each meeting of the Standing Committee and Conference of Parties on measures taken to comply with this Resolution" made by EU at the CoP15 Doc.43.2 as its proposed amendment to Conf. Res. 12.5, we believe that this will duplicate the information already included in the Annual and Biennial Report and case additional reporting burden on Parties. The implementation of the current reporting mechanism shall combine with existing Resolutions and Decisions, rather than increase reporting burden for one specific species.
27. In relation to the proposal "instruct the Secretariat to initiate compliance proceedings in accordance with Resolution Conf 14.3 on CITES compliance procedures where range States fail to comply with this Resolution, included but not limited to where regular reports to Standing Committees or Conferences of the Parties on measures taken to comply with this Resolution are not provided" made by EU at the CoP15 Doc.43.2 as its proposed amendment to Conf. Res. 12.5, we believe that, since the compliance mechanism and standard are already provided by Resolution Conf. 14.3 (*CITES compliance procedures*), the existing resolutions and decisions shall be implemented accordingly. We oppose to introduce special compliance measures for a specific species.
28. Law of the People's Republic of China on Wild Animal Protection stipulates, the state implements the guideline of enhancing the conservation of wildlife resources, encouraging active domestication and breeding of and rational exploitation and utilization of the wildlife.
29. At present, there is no evidence indicating that the captive breeding of tigers directly links with the decline of wild tiger population. On the contrary, the global practices of farming and use of deer, primates, pheasants, falcons, parrots, Crocodiles, frogs and other wild animals have shown that the farming and use of these species has played a very good role in rationally using the natural resources, alleviating the hunting pressures on individual tigers and protecting the wild populations.
30. The licensing system for authorizing domestication and breeding of tigers, the labeling system for marking captive tigers as well as the strict supervision from the governments on tiger farming can prevent the specimens of captive bred tigers from entering into the illegal market. If the tigers are kept as pet by small operations or household, they may be easily entered into the illegal market due to the difficulties in supervision.
31. Both protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the tiger farmers and conserving the wild tigers conform to relevant law of China. Currently, there are 5,000-6,000 captive tigers in China. If the tiger farms are operated legally, the government has no right to ask the existing tiger farmers to restrict their tiger farming. If the tiger farmers are requested to restrict their tiger farming, the international community, including the CITES, World Bank and European Union, should establish an appropriate mechanism to resolve the concerns of China's tiger farmers, including but not limited to financial compensation, legal responsibility and animal welfare.
32. Maintaining an accountable attitude to the tiger, we reiterate that we will voluntarily take measures conducive to the conservation of wild tigers and oppose any practices that go beyond the provisions of the Convention and interferes the domestic trade policy of China.