



## NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2011/032

Geneva, 1 September 2011

CONCERNING:

### Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation

1. In 2002, the Secretariat advised the Parties of the introduction of certificates of commendation that would be issued, at the Secretary-General's discretion, to recognize exemplary actions related to enforcement.
2. The latest such Certificates are to be awarded to the Blagoveshchensk Customs Office of the Federal Customs Service and the Amur Region Department of the Border Guard Service, Federal Security Service, Russian Federation, for their exemplary work in uncovering and intercepting an attempt at wildlife smuggling.
3. On 8 August 2011, on the Amur River between China and the Russian Federation, officers of the Border Guard Service became suspicious, through risk-assessment and profiling techniques, of a Chinese-registered vessel heading towards China. They advised, and were joined by, officers of the Federal Customs Service, who had detector dogs with them.
4. A joint team of Guards and Customs officers boarded the vessel and began a meticulous search. This lasted for over two and a half hours and led to the discovery of items concealed in a tank within the engine room of the vessel. A short time later, one of the detector dogs alerted to another area in the engine room and more items were found concealed under wooden flooring there. The carefully concealed items, all of which were frozen and individually wrapped, were found to be a total of 71 bear paws.
5. The Federal Customs Service has launched an administrative case against the master of the vessel. The police authorities of the Russian Federation are also investigating the incident.
6. The Secretariat believes the inter-agency cooperation, collaboration and exchange of intelligence that were demonstrated during this incident, together with the very determined nature of the search, in difficult conditions, is particularly commendable.
7. The date and venue for the presentation of the certificates have yet to be decided.