

Input to the outcome document (report) from the senior officers meeting on Law Enforcement

Having been briefed of deliberations in the “thematic session on international law enforcement”, senior officials of the Tiger Range Countries noted that in order to translate the commitments to strengthen wildlife enforcement as stipulated in the Pattaya Pledges and as recommended by the Kathmandu workshop, there is an urgent need for countries to prioritize on two levels of interventions:

(1) To strengthen wildlife crime enforcement operations by linking up various national agencies mandated with enforcement of wildlife-related crime with the broader law enforcement community dealing with various forms of serious crime. This is necessary as dealing with wildlife crime in isolation from other forms of serious transnational crime limits the ability to effectively stem the structures that perpetuate this crime. An environment should be created where arrests of wildlife crime do not end in themselves but are linked to the wider fight against serious criminality which requires close collaboration of wildlife crime experts with wider law enforcement community dealing with criminal intelligence and criminal justice system as a whole. The time has come to obtain greater engagement from ‘mainstream’ national enforcement agencies, such as Customs and the Police, as, without their buy-in, actions to tackle trafficking in tigers will continue to lack priority among the wider law enforcement community. In addition to national efforts to be made in this direction, one concrete proposal to be considered was to make use of various upcoming international policy-level meetings (such as the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to CITES, 12th session of the UN Crime Congress) to mainstream the issue of wildlife crime. In particular, the CITES-COP can be encouraged to adopt a decision calling for the convening of a seminar, involving senior-level customs and police managers of Tiger Range States, where they can be briefed and trained on crimes against wildlife (with a special focus on tigers) as well as on the ongoing and planned efforts at strengthening capacity to combat this particular form of crime.

(2) To devise mechanism to enhance operational collaboration of frontline agencies in each country to work jointly across borders. While most Tiger Range States reported positive developments in follow up to Kathmandu within their national context, many highlighted the need for strengthening of cross-border cooperation at the daily, operational level. Urgent support should be given to front-line wildlife law enforcement staff under strategic coordination across central government authorities in improving these capacities. Expertise of relevant international agencies with expertise in various aspects of law enforcement (including readily available best-practice models and mechanisms from the global experience in fighting crime, such as UNODC’s Border Liaison Office (BLO) mechanism, INTERPOL’s Operations Baba and Costa and the WCO’s Control Day Operation) should be utilized to facilitate and operationalize such processes, and the senior officials called for support of the international community in this regard.

On the part of the international organizations with mandate and expertise to support the Tiger range States in strengthening their capacity to fight wildlife crime (CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, UNODC, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization), a joint position was expressed on the willingness to support the strengthening of wildlife law enforcement capacities. CITES Secretariat, speaking on behalf of these five organizations, explained that the formation of an International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) was being considered, and explained that the Consortium will provide a much needed platform for coherent action of support from the international organizations with technical expertise and give an opportunity to bring coordination that has previously been absent. This coordination at the international level will translate into strategic, institutional and operational support at national levels, with focus on strengthening frontline work of wildlife enforcement. The senior officers of the Tiger Range States welcomed this initiative and recommended expression of support for ICWC by the 1st AMC.

Another area recognized as needing urgent prioritization is for Tiger range States to cooperate in obtaining an accurate overview of the poaching of and illegal trade in tigers across the region. Lack of credible data,

and/or effective sharing of such data available only at national level, where available, is a serious impediment to arriving at a region-wide operational strategy to improve cross-border operations that will yield results. As a first step in this direction, senior officials of the Tiger range States considered positively to engage in the CITES/INTERPOL Project Jakarta..