

Tiger Summit First Anniversary Round Table

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Transcript of Remarks

Robert B. Zoellick – President of the World Bank Group

Well, thank you Keshav and thanks to all of you for joining us. It's a great pleasure to have an opportunity to welcome you to the World Bank today to recognize the first anniversary of the St. Petersburg Summit on Tiger Conservation, to have a chance to review some of what we've done, and also to consider the path ahead.

I'd like to thank Rachel Kyte for chairing this important gathering – fighting fire with fire it appears is the theme – as well as Keshav and his tireless Global Tiger Initiative team for their organization.

I'd like to give a special thanks to all the distinguished guests, in particular the participants on our expert panel who will share some of their experience and expertise and help us brainstorm for solutions to the illegal wildlife crisis. And our representation from the tiger range countries, who are joining us by videoconference from India, Nepal, and Vietnam. I know it's very late in the evening for all of you – so I am especially grateful that you would take the time to be with us here in Washington.

Last year's Summit was an extraordinary event: It was the first-ever meeting of world leaders to address the fate of a non-human species.

Hosted by Prime Minister Putin, the meeting brought together prime ministers from five tiger range countries; ministers from all 13 tiger range countries; leaders of international organizations and celebrities from around the world.

We came to St. Petersburg because we shared a common belief: and that is that saving wild tigers matters. It matters not only because these are magnificent and beautiful animals, but also because tigers are a barometer of ecosystem health and a cornerstone of the natural capital of the countries in which they live. Tigers are guides in assessing the biodiversity of the planet.

The Summit was able to mobilize political, financial, and celebrity support behind the goal of doubling the numbers of wild tigers to at least 7,000 by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger.

All tiger range countries adopted the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation, committing them to, among other things: protecting remaining tiger habitats – some of the last great expanses of forest in Asia; and eradicating poaching and the illegal trade in tiger parts and products. The World Bank Group and other international organizations are committed to support these efforts.

All too often, promises and pledges don't necessarily lead to concrete action. What matters are results. So – one year on from the St. Petersburg Summit, what's changed for the future of tigers?

A first important step is that the Global Tiger Recovery Program has been endorsed by the national cabinets in all 13 tiger range countries, with commitments of full support. This means that the political will that was generated in Russia is influencing public policy in countries' capitals.

It's also effecting change on the ground. Over the past year, all the tiger range countries have strengthened their wildlife protection laws; increased patrolling teams; conducted intensive training of

their front line staff; and in some cases created and strengthened institutions to address wildlife crimes. Russia, for example, has now banned the logging of Korean pine, which is a key food source for tiger prey. Russia has also increased resources for rangers, and empowered rangers with full enforcement rights.

Some tiger range countries have created more reserves or expanded the size of existing ones, and defined critical corridors between reserves that need to be protected. India has enlarged the area of its tiger reserves by 5 percent, to a total of 55,000 square kilometers. After a nationwide census, India has reported a modest increase in tiger numbers, from 1,411 to 1,706. This is good news. But it's tempered by the fact that tigers are using less area outside the tiger reserves than they were five years ago.

Bhutan, Nepal, India, and others have developed and strengthened mechanisms to increase community support for tiger conservation. Some of the actions have included sharing the benefits from tourism or forestry with communities, and strengthening the response to conflict between tigers and local communities.

12 tiger range countries have either renewed existing bilateral and regional alliances or formed new ones, so as to cooperate both on wildlife law enforcement and managing trans-boundary tiger landscapes.

Malaysia, Indonesia, Bhutan, and the People's Democratic Republic of Laos are exploring options for smart green infrastructure, so that development activities can proceed without sacrificing biodiversity.

The international partners are fulfilling their part of the bargain, too. Support from GTI partners to the tiger range countries is now better focused and better organized. We've created the International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime to support the efforts of, among other nations, tiger range countries to fight illegal trade and trafficking in all wildlife. This group is made up of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); INTERPOL; the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; World Customs Organization; and the World Bank Group.

In addition, the strategic partnership between GTI and the Smithsonian is focusing on training front-line staff in smart patrolling, tracking, and surveillance.

Project PREDATOR is a significant new wildlife crime-fighting effort, led by INTERPOL, and supported by USAID; the World Bank Group; as well as the U.K.'s Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs; the Smithsonian; and others. Launched earlier this month, at the 80th Interpol General Assembly in Vietnam, PREDATOR's goal is to support and enhance governance and law enforcement capacity in tiger range countries, so that authorities can put the heat on traffickers in tigers and other wildlife and break up criminal syndicates.

We're also making progress on increasing resources to help countries reach their tiger conservation goals. The tiger range countries are seeking \$350 million in external funding to implement the Recovery Program over the next year. So far, close to half that amount – about \$160 million – is approved or in the pipeline, with the World Bank's International Development Association and the Global Environment Facility as major contributors.

Another potential source of new funding for tiger conservation could be the Wildlife Premium Market Initiative, which we've been pioneering with the World Wildlife Fund. Two pilot projects to test that concept—one in Nepal and another in Thailand—are under development and we're planning to create a "readiness fund" to help finance other pilots.

I'm also finding interest from bilateral donors, and meetings like this certainly assist by demonstrating the seriousness – and results – of this effort.

But there's still a long way to go to bring back the wild tigers.

First, infrastructure development continues to impinge on tiger habitats. At the World Bank, we've pledged not to finance any infrastructure projects or development that harms critical natural habitats, including key tiger habitats.

Models for smart green infrastructure are providing us ways to be able to operationalize this pledge and ensure that development and protection can co-exist. But to be effective, these models need to become part of the public policy of all tiger range countries and international financial institutions, both public and private.

Second, demand for tiger parts and products remains unacceptably high – and as a result, poaching and illegal trade and trafficking remains a large and growing problem. We're going to have to tackle this problem from both ends: innovative ideas to try to reduce demand for wildlife parts; stronger support on the supply side from national law enforcement authorities to enforce wildlife laws and catch wildlife criminals who act outside of protected areas; as well as effective cross-border, regional, and global cooperation to stop the illegal wildlife trade.

Third, human and financial resources still remain far insufficient to address the size of threats to biodiversity. While the World Bank has managed more than \$6.5 billion worth of conservation investments since 1992, wildlife and wilderness remain under-valued and over-exploited. As a result, we have begun to think about ways to transform how natural capital can be valued.

For example, we are currently piloting the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services, or WAVES program. WAVES is developing the tools that countries need to integrate the economic benefits of ecosystems into their own national accounting systems. Using this system, decision makers will be able to see the value of green economic growth. Our new Ocean Initiative will improve governance of the oceans to support food security, overcome poverty, and boost economic growth.

We have also created a new community of practice on wildlife law enforcement and environmental crime. This complements the work we do on safeguarding natural habitats. These initiatives will help create the enabling conditions for effective tiger conservation.

So we're at a critical point in this campaign. We won some important early battles – but to turn the tide, we truly have to transform the dynamics of tiger conservation. At the policy level, we're going to have to sustain the political will and momentum created in St. Petersburg. To this end, I will reach out to Prime Minister Putin and others to find ways to keep tigers and biodiversity high on the national and international agendas.

We are also going to have to continue to give the highest level of support to those who do the real work of conserving tigers and their habitats – the men and women on the ground, on the front line in protected areas. These people need our cooperation, encouragement, and recognition.

So I'd like now to turn to our participants from the three tiger range countries. I am particularly interested in hearing your views about what is happening on the ground – where you've seen progress over the past year, and where there are setbacks. Most importantly: what do you consider to be the major challenges looking ahead over the next year, and what can we do to continue to support you? Thank you.

Part II – President Zoellick responds to Nepal, Vietnam, and India by Video Conference

I want to thank each of you for participating. I think everyone in this room recognizes the critical role that your and other tiger range countries have, and indeed I think your involvement and leadership will be key to success. When people ask me what distinguishes this initiative from some of the others in wildlife, or tiger efforts in the past, the key points that stand out are the active engagement, leadership, and practical on the ground work of the tiger range countries. We've got some great people from the scientific community, NGO community, development partners; we've got bilateral support. As we've seen in other areas of development, none of this works unless you get local ownership.

So I think what distinguishes this effort is the fact that each of the tiger range countries have developed their own plan; it's an integrated approach, and we're now at the key point of trying to support it.

Nepal has been one of our best partners from the start – across different governments – and I'm really delighted that you've been able to maintain the momentum. It's great news about the rhino population. But I also think your report suggests the ongoing challenge we have on habitats, communities, the critical role of law enforcement, and something that this project also engages with was the key role of regional cooperation. You've seen some references to our ability to deploy some of our IDA funds, which are funds for the poorest countries.

We've been able to do this because we have some funds set aside for regional efforts. And in South Asia, countries have led the way by demonstrating an overall cooperation that I hope we can build on in Southeast Asia as well.

You mentioned the Wildlife Premium. This is an idea which I think the World Wildlife Fund was one of the first if not the first promoters of this. In the past few weeks I had a chance to meet with some people from the World Wildlife Fund, and I think we very much share a view – which is we have to take this concept – and now put it into practical action.

All of you are aware that the conference in Durban on climate change is beginning this week. The Wildlife Premium was the idea of trying to build this on top of the work that was done on REDD in avoiding deforestation.

Now, there are so many other demands – what we believe will be critical is to show that this works. So we've been working with the World Wildlife Fund on a project in Thailand with the support of the GEF, which will help develop some of the capacity and the incentives in the Western Forest Complex. And, at least my understanding is that it would be wonderful to have a similar pilot in the case of Nepal. I think the Nepal WWF is an interested partner, and I think USAID has also been looking to see how it might support this.

What we've seen in this area and in many others is good ideas are not going to get us there by themselves. We have to be able to put the idea into practice – we have to test it – we have to learn from it and then we have to share the experience. It's rare that anybody gets this totally right the first time, so we're trying to build in the notion of pilots to move this forward.

Vietnam has really done a superb job, and I want to thank you not only for efforts within your own country but this INTERPOL conference highlighting the trafficking issue is vital. I think everybody here knows when you're down to such small numbers of tigers, probably our greatest danger right now is the trafficking and law enforcement issue. So to raise this in profile in the law enforcement community is very, very important, and early in this project we were able to work with some of the ASEAN countries led by Thailand to build a law enforcement network. Not surprisingly, this was an issue that didn't necessarily have the full priority in this community, but what is now a powerful element is people can see this linkage to broader organized crime networks, they can see the need to link it to intelligence systems, they can see the need to link it to their customs systems. So we're really starting to get some momentum on this.

I think some of the experience in Vietnam is also suggesting you can't just treat this as a law enforcement issue either on the supply or demand side. To really embed this in a society, you need to connect this to public health and safety issues, the types of community support that was also talked about in Nepal, and education and broader communication strategies. So it has to have the multiple dimensions.

So we hope to work with Vietnam and others in Southeast Asia on some of the lessons learned. You also highlighted in the process the critical issue that all countries and others are thinking about, which is, "What are the resources?"

Well, I've mentioned some of the IDA regional funds. We've been able to also get some very good support from the GEF on some of the particular programs on wildlife. And recall, we did put together a multi-donor trust fund. That's one reason why this meeting is a very important one. I've had some very high-level contacts with South Korea, Britain, Australia – countries that have an interest in this. But understandably, at a time that their taxpayers are under pressure, they're trying to say, "What's for real? Where will this money go? How will it be specific?" And so this type of activity will allow us to go back to them and say these are the particular things where you may be able to contribute.

In particular, to build on our experience in South Asia, we're now looking at an \$18 million regional IDA project for Southeast Asia focusing on the illegal trade.

You also asked about the future of the Global Tiger Initiative. Well, we have a goal. I think it's always important to set a goal, so the goal set in St. Petersburg is to double the population of wild tigers. That's still a pretty small number, but would still give people a great sense of accomplishment if we're able to achieve that.

What we've seen with the Tiger Initiative is – in a way – we want to keep performing the role that we've been able to perform as a catalyst in the network. We have the good fortune of working with all the tiger range countries on a broader set of development issues. So we have those ties. We are in a position to try to figure out how to support them as it connects to other areas like green infrastructure, where we're doing, for example, some interesting projects in India right now. We have the good fortune to be able to work with NGOs, CSOs, the scientific research community, the bilateral donors.

So we really want to continue to play this role of mobilizing support. But also what we have found is critical in everything we do in biodiversity, but more broadly, in development, is that we have to track it.

We have to understand what's working – we have to be able to find out what isn't working and be able to check the data.

So I think some of the lessons we're learning from India about connecting the science and the data, and the understanding of your populations is very key. India is obviously the country that is at the heart of this when you look at the overall numbers. India is the big player.

We have been very appreciative of some of the support we that have seen more generally. We know this is a topic of great debate within India because there have been various efforts over time. We want to learn from the Indian experience and share that with others. Again, I think that one of the things that we can try to do is build on some of India's experience in terms of the scientific monitoring and management effectiveness. I would love to be able to come to see some of your parks – whether in March or another month. Not sure my wife will ever forgive me though – so that's why I have to try to work this out from the family aspect.

So I think I'll just close with this point. There are so many people in this room or are part of this who have far greater expertise than we do at the World Bank. Where we've tried to hone our skills is trying to take the process of building knowledge, building experience in the field, feeding it back, developing a platform for others to draw on. And that's what we'd like to do in this area.

So what we hope not only comes out of this conference and this work, is the idea of building this knowledge platform and frankly – always keep in mind as we do as a development institution – that the heart of this are the tiger range countries themselves. So we have to listen for their perspectives about where the needs are and with your help, we'll also try to help fill some of the financing gaps.

So, thank you to Keshav, thank you to Rachel, thanks to all of you. And I know we have some other participants here ready to speak, so I'll turn it over to them.