

WCC-2012-Rec-138-EN

Conservation of rhinoceros species in Africa and Asia

ACKNOWLEDGING that the world's five species of rhinoceros are charismatic emblems of conservation;

APPRECIATING that effective conservation measures and significant political will and conservation expenditure in some range States in recent years have led to population increases in three species – the Black, Southern White and Greater One-horned Rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*, *Ceratotherium simum simum*, *Rhinoceros unicornis*);

RECOGNIZING the important role that commercial wildlife enterprises, including trophy hunting, have played in generating incentives for conservation and stimulating population increases of rhinos on state, private and communal land in Africa;

ALARMED that the populations of the two rarest species, the Javan and Sumatran Rhinos, (*Rhinoceros sondaicus* and *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) continue to decline, and are now at perilously low levels;

DISTRESSED that two rhino subspecies, the Western Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) in Cameroon and the Indochinese Javan Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus annamiticus*) in Viet Nam have gone extinct in the last decade;

AWARE that the Northern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) and the mainland populations of the Sumatran Rhino are now extremely close to extinction;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that pressure from illegal hunting on all species of rhinos has grown seriously in recent years, linked to a significant increase in non-traditional use of rhino horn and a significant rise in the price of rhino horn in Asian markets, especially in Viet Nam and China, as well as a reduction in the capacity and efficiency of some range State conservation authorities to protect their rhinos;

ALARMED that a continued increase in illegal hunting of rhinos and in rhino horn demand could rapidly jeopardize the improvements that have been achieved in the status of Black, Southern White and Greater One-horned Rhinos over the last two decades, and together with inadequate biological management could easily cause the extinction of the Javan and Sumatran Rhinos in the foreseeable future;

NOTING that the measures taken by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to bring the illegal trade in rhino products under control still require commitment from key rhino range States and rhino horn consuming countries;

AWARE that for many rhino range States the cost of securing their rhino populations requires significant assistance from both internal and external sources, and that this has increased opportunity costs to general conservation; and

CONCERNED that the increased risks and costs associated with securing rhinos will possibly provide a disincentive for private owners and custodians of rhino in eastern and southern Africa from investing in rhinos and conservation, especially in the major range State South Africa and also in Zimbabwe (where recent allocations of hunting concessions linked to land reform could pose additional economic threats to private conservancies);

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. COMMENDS those rhino range States in Africa and Asia that have taken strong measures to conserve their remaining rhinos and actions against the incentives to kill them illegally for their horns, and which thus consequently have increasing populations;
2. CALLS ON all range States to give priority to securing their rhino populations, bringing illegal hunting and trade under control, and ensuring that effective deterrents are in place and enforced in order to minimize the levels of illegal hunting and trade, whilst at the same time seeking to create an enabling environment to encourage the continued expansion of the rhino range and rapid growth in rhino numbers;
3. ENCOURAGES all rhino range States to manage their rhino populations to achieve rapid growth, with long-term genetic and demographic viability;
4. FURTHER ENCOURAGES range States to evaluate the pros and cons of alternative strategies to determine how best to reduce the illegal trade, black market prices and illegal demand for rhino horn and hence ultimately reduce poaching;
5. APPLAUDS the initiative of the President of Indonesia for proposing the International Year of the Rhino starting June 2012 and supports his government's emergency actions to save the Javan and Sumatran Rhinos from extinction, that include: establishing a high-level task force of national and international experts on rhino population and habitat management; identifying the most suitable areas for establishing free-ranging rhinoceros populations; allocating sufficient resources to enforce their protection, to maximize the breeding potential of the remaining animals, and to have regular, frequent and intensive monitoring of all rhino populations;
6. ENCOURAGES the government of Malaysia to take urgent actions to save the Sumatran Rhinoceros population in Sabah from extinction, including through close management of rhinos in fenced, managed conditions, and exploring all possible techniques that may boost birth rate above natural death rate, including super-ovulation, artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization and other advanced reproductive techniques;
7. COMMENDS the governments of India and Nepal for the measures they have taken to secure the status of the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros in their wild habitats, but urges them to establish new, viable, strictly-protected populations of the species in previously occupied habitats, as well as enhancing the protection of existing populations, noting that in the case of India this will require concerted action from the Union Government as well as from the State governments of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh;
8. URGES all Asian rhino range countries to adopt robust scientific techniques to estimate their rhino populations, and to repeat these censuses at least once every two years, ensuring independent peer review of the methods and results;
9. CALLS ON African range States to:
 - a. increase collaborative law enforcement actions between range States, transit and consuming countries;
 - b. improve detection of rhino horn at ports of entry/exit with, *inter alia* the aid of sniffer dogs, specialized equipment and resourced staff;
 - c. increase the allocation of national resources towards improving rhino security and conservation authorities' skills base;

- d. increase the focus on intelligence gathering and analysis to stop poachers before killing rhinos;
 - e. increase the rate of successful prosecutions with deterrent sentences for illegal rhino-related activities;
 - f. maintain enabling land-use and investment policies together with support for appropriate and well-managed, sustainable, income-generating options that encourage investment in rhinos, sustainable populations and which help fund effective conservation by the private wildlife industry and communities;
 - g. enhance socio-economic stability through increased local community involvement;
 - h. encourage private rhino owners to willingly cooperate with the authorities in the provision of rhino information;
 - i. encourage all range States, transit and consuming countries to improve and regularly supply rhino-related information to the African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and to TRAFFIC to facilitate data management, information sharing and their mandated reporting to CITES' Conference of the Parties;
 - j. further expand the use of DNA profiling of rhino horns (using the RhoDIS database in Africa) as an innovative means of combating the illegal killing of rhinos and the trafficking of horn;
 - k. encourage the involvement of civil society in facilitating awareness and generating resources in line with priority needs, as well as assisting with population monitoring, and with implementing rhino conservation; and
 - l. improve rhino population monitoring to inform management for population growth;
10. RECOGNIZES that the successful conservation of rhinos across the entire range will be best achieved via a diversity of management and economic mechanisms;
11. REQUESTS the Director General and SSC (especially its African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups) to provide ongoing support and guidance to all rhino range States, and in particular to assist in raising the profile of rhinoceros conservation during the International Year of the Rhino;
12. CALLS ON donors to make the necessary financial resources available to enable the range States to secure their remaining rhinoceros populations; and
13. CALLS UPON those States implicated in the increase in demand for rhino horn and the surge in the black market prices for horn to fully cooperate at all levels with the rhino range States in positively addressing the rhino crisis and seeking lasting solutions.