

STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S STAND IN THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CITES

The 58th meeting of the Standing Committee of the CITES was convened in Geneva on 6-10 July, 2009. India participated in the meeting and on the agenda item of the Asian big cats strong interventions were made.

The Indian delegation reiterated the significance and importance of wild tiger conservation. Tiger is our national animal and is significant from ecological and cultural perspective. The experience over the last 35 years in saving the tiger has adequately demonstrated the fact that the entire ecological and the life support systems are conserved.

Tiger has responded very well to managerial practices and the Government of India has taken a number of milestone initiatives in the recent past to strengthen tiger conservation in the country. Several legal, administrative, financial and bilateral initiatives have been taken. The National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau have been operationalised. The Project Tiger Scheme has been revamped and funding support to States has been stepped up to 600 crores of Rupees during the Plan period. An additional allocation of Rs. 50 crores has been provided for raising, arming and deploying the Special Tiger Protection Force. An area of around 30,000 sq.km. has been notified as core/critical tiger habitat to keep the area inviolate for tigers, which amounts to almost 1% of our geographical area.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority has issued a number of advisories for mainstreaming good practices to conserve tiger across the tiger States in India. A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding has been operationalised to ensure reciprocal commitments between the Centre, States and Field Directors of Tiger Reserves to secure reciprocal commitments for tiger. The efforts have been done to step up intelligence based enforcement, creation of buffer zone, addressing man-tiger conflicts and providing livelihood options to local people for support. These positive changes in governance are proving effective. The States have been requested to involve civil society institutions and NGOs for tiger conservation.

The Indian delegation appealed to all Parties to appreciate efforts being done by India and to complement the same by restricting the threats which endangered the wild tiger like poaching and trafficking of tiger

body parts. The trade in farmed body parts of tiger is a threat to wild tigers and hence it should be stopped by all Parties on a priority basis.

On the Notification to the Parties (2008/059) it was stated that the Notification has been ignored by most of the relevant Parties. This was important to know the progress relating to implementation of Decision 14.69.

The situation on a tiger front continues to be grim because of poaching and illegal trade in their body parts. Tiger farming is a serious threat to wild tigers and, therefore, India as a country having the maximum wild tigers urged the Standing Committee for recommending the Parties to refrain from accepting shipments of CITES listed species from Parties which have not provided a satisfactory progress to the Standing Committee in this regard.

India also urged the Standing Committee to prescribe a revised deadline to Parties, to report back on implementation of Decision 14.69.

Considering India's strong intervention, which was widely supported by many countries like U.K., U.S.A., E.U. and many international NGOs like WWF, TRAFFIC, Tiger Coalition, IUCN etc., **the CITES Secretariat has come out with a notification to the Parties, dated 22-07-2009, calling upon relevant Parties to submit reports complying the Decision 14.69 & 14.65 within 90 days i.e. by 20th October, 2009,** so that the matter may be reviewed in the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee of CITES.

This is a significant achievement of India at the international level
