

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments are on behalf of and reflect a consensus of the following NGOs: WWF, TRAFFIC, Save The Tiger Fund, Wildlife Trust of India, EIA, IFAW, Defenders of Wildlife, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Born Free Foundation, Born Free USA, the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Humane Society International and the Species Survival Network.

We draw your attention to written comments that we have already provided to the members of the Standing Committee and other Parties here at this meeting, and will not repeat them here.

We MUST all take BOLD AND INNOVATIVE action now, if we are to save tigers in the wild. Most of us have field programmes in tiger range countries, and we continue to be committed to assisting range countries in their conservation efforts.

We draw your attention to a pivotal new study that increases the urgency of CITES-related activities with respect to the trade in tigers and tiger parts. ***Setting Priorities for the Conservation and Recover of Wild Tigers: 2005-2015*** is the most comprehensive scientific study of the status of tigers, and the habitat and landscape level requirements of the species ever conducted. It finds that tigers now occupy up to 40 percent less habitat than was estimated a decade ago and they are now restricted to only 7 percent of their historic range. This landmark study by the world's foremost experts documents a new low for wild tigers and charts a way forward to reverse the trend and save this magnificent species.

We commended the decision at the Standing Committee meeting last year to require all range States of Asian big cats to report their progress in combating illicit trade in specimens of Asian Big Cat species and their implementation of recommendations made by the CITES Tiger Missions Technical Team. We are pleased that some countries have submitted reports. However, in order to make such reporting a useful process, we encourage these reports be made publicly available, so that we may work together to improve implementation of the relevant recommendations.

Further, based on recommendations from two CITES tiger missions and Res. Conf. 12.5, we support the following points of action related to SC54 Docs. 25.1 and 25.2:

1. We support a high-level summit as proposed by the Secretariat, if the participation of law enforcement decision makers can be ensured. We support the recommendation that this meeting be held as a matter of urgency and appeal to all CITES Parties to provide the necessary political and financial support to ensure the participation of senior law enforcement decision-makers.
2. We believe that evidence of effective law enforcement should be provided prior to the 55th meeting of the SC, demonstrating clear progress towards eliminating the illegal trade in tiger and leopard skins between India and China. We recommend that parameters suggested in the US document include indicators already in use by law enforcement agencies, to evidence the application of intelligence-led enforcement. In order to assist the Parties, we also recommend verification missions on this issue, and that they be comprised of law enforcement professionals.
3. We recommend that evidence of quantifiable awareness-raising initiatives for law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, general public and key consumer groups such as the traditional Chinese medicine community also be provided.

4. We applaud the efforts of governments who are implementing concerted efforts to stop the tiger parts trade—both in terms of enforcement and consumer awareness. However, we support the US recommendations—we support the consideration of strict measures, consistent with prior Standing Committee actions, against States which do not demonstrate verified actions to stop tiger trade.

All of our organizations stand ready to assist Parties in all of these efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.