

## **BRIEF ON SOUTH AFRICAN POACHING CRISIS**

### **Current situation**

Rhino poaching hit a 15 year high in 2009. Since start of 2010, poaching increased dramatically, fuelled by demand for horn in Asia for use in traditional medicines. Involvement of sophisticated criminal syndicates implicated in South Africa has lead to mounting losses of over 150 rhinos this year and a continental loss of over 600 in the last four years. South Africa holds 90 percent of Africa's rhino population (over 20,000 White and over 1,500 black rhino) but is losing rhino at a rate of 20 rhino per month since the start of 2010. In comparison Kenya has lost 10 over the last year while Zimbabwe recorded about 6 cases of poaching since the start of the calendar year 2010.

### **South African Government Response to poaching crisis**

In March 2010, the South African government (amongst other rhino range states) adopted a resolution at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Conference of Parties CoP15 that resolved to focus increased efforts on law enforcement, better border trade controls, prevention of illegal hunting, early detection of illegal offenders, enhancement of existing international, regional and national law enforcement mechanisms, and, where necessary, through creation of new mechanisms in order to curtail illegal trade in rhinoceros horn.

Establishment of an interim National Wildlife Reaction Unit to complement the work of the Green Scorpions who deal with environmental crime and wildlife smuggling as a direct response to the alarming poaching crisis affecting South Africa and the region as a whole. The National Wildlife

Reaction Unit will focus on combating poaching and the illegal trade operated by organized crime syndicates within South Africa.

The Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) regulation under the South Africa National Environmental and Biodiversity Management Act of 2008 is now in place.

The government has also promised to strengthen regulatory mechanisms in internal rhino trade and management some of which set a moratorium prohibiting internal sales of rhino horns and derivatives in South Africa from private ranchers to criminal elements. Others include mandatory micro-chipping of all horn trophies and prohibition of export of trophies in hand luggage.

Increased law enforcement efforts will also be put in place.

### **WWF's position on rhino poaching**

WWF strongly condemns the current senseless onslaught of the African rhino by criminal syndicates involved in the illegal rhino horn trade. WWF stands united with governments, other conservation organizations, partners and the global community in their fight to stop the poaching and save the rhino. WWF seeks to identify long term adaptive strategies that prevent re-occurrence of the poaching crisis in future.

### **What is WWF doing in response to the crisis? Our strategic objectives:**

- To Sensitize and promote awareness in the Public, Private and Community sectors of society on current poaching crisis, implications

and consequences.

- To educate the Asian public (both living within and outside of Africa) about refraining from consuming or using endangered species and seeking sustainable alternatives.
- Galvanize national and international action against illegal rhino horn trade with stronger penalties for rhino crimes.
- Coordinate a national strategic framework to control in South Africa, regulate and monitor rhino management across all rhino sectors.
- Build up viable partnerships and coalitions against illegal rhino trade.
- Working with partners at International and regional in coordinating sustainable rhino conservation efforts
- Fundraising for anti-poaching efforts.
- Supporting anti-poaching efforts.

### **Other NGO's and Partners**

On the local scene a number of conservation partners, NGO's and business sectors have taken strides to voice their support for action against the rhino poaching. Lead-SA is a symbol of the united position in South Africa.

Internationally, conservation organizations, governmental aid agencies and international bodies are relentlessly supporting rhino conservation efforts across Africa. Recognition goes to IUCN-TRAFFIC and IUCN/SSC-AfRSG, International Rhino Foundation, US-Fish and Wildlife Services, Flora and Fauna International, Zoological Society of London, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Peace Parks and Lowveld Rhino Trust amongst others to whom credit is due.

