



W P S I

Press Release

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For immediate release

EU, China and India thrash out deal on tigers

An agreement reached at a UN meeting on wildlife trade in Doha could see countries treating illegal trade in tiger parts as seriously as arms and drug trafficking, but campaigners have cautioned that words must be turned into action.

The UK-brokered deal, which was the result of lengthy negotiations between the EU and the tiger range countries, should see increased intelligence sharing against the criminal networks behind the trade, and will build on recent training provided by INTERPOL.

Parties to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), agreed to develop a database to monitor the illegal trade in tiger, leopard and snow leopard parts.

Securing the involvement of the professional enforcement community is essential to protecting Asia's big cats, which are poached for their skins, bones and body parts. CITES called for an urgent meeting of senior police and customs officers before a Head of State tiger summit to be held in Russia later this year.

The news came as welcome relief for conservationists in a week that has so far seen attempts to protect bluefin tuna, polar bears and coral defeated.

Alongside enforcement measures, countries supported an existing decision to ensure that tiger farms did not supply the illegal market for big cat products.

"There have been many promises this week, but getting countries to actually use these new enforcement tactics will be the real test of the commitment to ending tiger trade, and saving the species", said Debbie Banks, Senior Campaigner at the Environmental Investigation Agency, and Chair of the Species Survival Network's Big Cat Working Group.

"Time is running out for tigers and other big cats. Tiger range countries and consumer nations need to work together to reduce demand for their parts and stamp out the illegal tiger trade", said Avinash Basker, Legal Consultant to the Wildlife Protection Society of India.

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Editors' Notes:

- Currently there are around 3200 tigers left in the wild, with nearly half of these found in India. China remains the largest market for tiger products where they are used for luxury items, clothing and medicine.
- The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is a UK-based non-governmental organisation dedicated to investigating and campaigning against environmental crime. Using undercover techniques and hidden cameras, it works to gain first and evidence of environmental problems. EIA currently campaigns on illegal wildlife trade, illegal logging, whaling, climate change and ozone depleting substances.
- The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) is dedicated to protecting India's wildlife with intelligence gathering on wildlife crime and capacity building with enforcement agencies. Apart from compiling and managing a vast database of wildlife crime in India, WPSI works on man-animal conflict issues and provides legal support to prosecution agencies across the country.
- The Species Survival Network (SSN) is an international coalition of organizations committed to the promotion, enhancement and strict enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Through scientific and legal research, education and advocacy, the SSN is working to prevent over-exploitation of animals and plants due to international trade.