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NEW CEC IN SAWEN

Government of Nepal has appointed Mr. Tika Ram Adhikari as Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Nepal. By the current provision of SAWEN, he has taken over the position of CEC in SAWEN from September, 2014. Mr. Adhikari has long experience in wildlife conservation and protected area management in Nepal. His knowledge and experience in wildlife law enforcement would be crucial in strengthening SAWEN and enhancing law enforcement in South Asia.

NOTE : This bulletin needs your support. Please contribute by sharing wildlife crime/seizure reports or any other significant news report pertaining to wildlife trade from your country.

UP COMING EVENT

Symposium: Towards Zero Poaching in Asia

2-6 February, 2015
Kathmandu, Nepal



FROM THE DESK OF CEC

I am delighted to share that we have successfully completed the Second annual meeting of SAWEN held on 26-29 August, 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal. This meeting has given SAWEN a long awaited statute providing a foundation and guideline for a substantial existence and operation as a regional institution dedicated to curbing wildlife crime. Besides, the meeting was successful in stocktaking of progress made by member countries in wildlife crime control and discussion on the draft action plan with wider perspectives of experts in wildlife crime enforcement. The meeting brought together regional wildlife enforcement officials and international experts in one table to discuss on key issues and challenges such as the growing lucrative market for wildlife products, increasingly complex nature of crime, and its extended linkages to other crime areas. Various wildlife crime control approaches including the use of cutting edge technologies and wildlife forensics to support wildlife crime investigation were also discussed during the meeting.

SAWEN is gaining its height in South Asia and in global wildlife enforcement communities through various initiatives to curb the wildlife crime. However, the growing crime demands more determined and collective endeavor from all likeminded organizations and funding agencies to create a synergized impact. Hence, we call for a concerted effort in achieving SAWEN's objectives.

The SAWEN Secretariat coordinates among member countries through principal focal persons for sharing significant undertakings, important information, and intelligence for more effective planning and law enforcement. This bulletin has been a part of such sharing and communication. The SAWEN secretariat requests all law enforcement agencies across South Asia to share with us any relevant news, plans, events (happened and planned), and success stories to make this bulletin a reflection of wildlife law enforcement activities in the region.

Tika Ram Adhikari



SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF SAWEN IN KATHMANDU



Second annual meeting of SAWEN was concluded on 29th August 2014 with the delegates of the member countries unanimously approving the SAWEN statute and discussing on the actions to be undertaken to combat the burgeoning wildlife crime in South Asia. The four days meeting which began on 26th August was fruitful in sharing experiences, discussing common issues, reviewing performances, enhancing regional collaboration, and promoting partnership with various organizations in fighting against the crime.

Hon'ble Minister Mahesh Acharya, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Nepal inaugurated the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, he pointed out "the problems of wildlife trade, loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystem are not restricted to one single country as wild animal parts and plants are often smuggled across the borders". "This clearly warrants us to show regional as well as global collaboration to combat illegal trade of wild animals and plants" he added.

Major progress achieved by the SAWEN

Continued from page 1 Second Meeting...

Secretariat was briefed during the meeting. The highlight of the progress included capacity building for law enforcement agencies, coordination in different operations, publication of first meeting report, training report and bulletins, and submission of project proposals.

All the member countries presented a country report focusing on the status of wildlife crime, enforcement actions and achievements, and major constraints in wildlife enforcement in each of the member countries, as well as potential role of SAWEN in regional and national response to combat wildlife crime.

The country reports highlighted that the South Asia region is facing a growing illegal poaching and trans-boundary illegal trade with emergence of new transit hubs, new trade routes and complicated

and facilitate timely and effective communication among the member countries to promote intelligence led enforcement;

- develop and share regional database of wildlife crime and common protocols for trans-border information sharing and retribution of confiscated wildlife contraband;
- conduct regional operations and facilitation of cross-border surveillance and coordination with bordering SAWEN+ countries;
- promote cutting edge technologies in crime control, conduct research and study on wider linkages of wildlife crime; and
- secure and mobilize fund

The delegates and participating experts provided input to the draft action plan of SAWEN prepared by SAWEN Secretariat.

by the respective Governments.

The meeting was attended by 27 delegates from the member countries, and more than 20 wildlife crime experts and officials from ASEAN-WEN, CITES Secretariat, FREELAND, INTERPOL, NTNC, The World Bank, TRAFFIC, UNODC, USAID, US Embassy, US Fish and wildlife Service, WWF, and representatives from CITES Management Authority of China and INTERPOL-National Central Bureau of China.

The meeting was organized by the SAWEN Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of Nepal and with financial support from INTERPOL, TRAFFIC, The World Bank, NTNC, and WWF Nepal. The meeting ended up with 10 points resolution to implement the decisions of the meeting. Bangladesh proposed to organize next meeting of SAWEN in 2015.



modus operandi driven by the burgeoning lucrative market and involvement of organized criminal networks. The member countries are mostly the source for wildlife products which are illegally transported to China, South East Asian countries, Gulf, Europe and North America using land, air, and sea routes.

Majority of the member countries shared that existing laws, policies are not enough to combat the current scale and nature of wildlife crime and there is a need of stronger and harmonized policies and laws in the region. Similarly, ad-hoc enforcement practices as opposed to intelligence led enforcement, highly trans-border nature of crime, lack of access due to geography for field operations in remote areas, rapid changes in administrative setups resulting in loss of institutional memory, and less priority given by governments to wildlife crime were among the other highlighted challenges that South Asian countries are facing in their fight against the crime.

The participants of the meeting underlined the following roles of SAWEN for effective regional response:

- assist in capacity building of law enforcement agencies;
- promote multi-agency partnership;
- coordinate with member countries and other regional and international partners and donors;
- gather information, develop intelligence

The action plan primarily focuses on enhancing enforcement response, addressing gaps, and building partnership. The Secretariat will finalize the action plan by incorporating the inputs and getting approval from the member countries.

Alongside the meeting, two side events were organized focusing on tiger conservation issues among tiger range countries of South Asia and wildlife forensics in South Asia. The side event related to tiger conservation was facilitated by National Trust for Nature Conservation and the wildlife forensic meeting was coordinated by INTERPOL. The wildlife forensics side event was aimed to enhance wildlife forensics and crime scene investigation capabilities in South Asia to support law enforcement efforts to address the wildlife crime while the other event focused on issues regarding bi-lateral efforts towards cross-country connectivity in tiger conservation.

At the closing ceremony on 29th August, Mr. Megh Bahadur Pandey, CEC of SAWEN, extended sincere thanks to all member countries and international partners for their engagement and support in successfully organize the meeting. He added that the endorsement of SAWEN statute by the representatives of member countries is milestone in strengthening and institutionalizing SAWEN and requested all member countries to endorse the statute

CITES AWARDS NEPAL

Recognizing Nepal's remarkable success in combating wildlife crime, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has awarded Nepal 'The Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation'. Nepal observed no illegal killing of rhinoceroses, tigers, and elephants in 2011 and 2013. There was only one rhinoceros illegally killed in 2012. This is the result of Nepal's exemplary and innovative crime control initiatives including strong inter-



agency collaboration, combined patrols by rangers and the Nepal army in protected areas supported by community based anti-poaching units outside the protected areas. The intelligence led operations conducted by wildlife enforcement agencies have resulted in arrest of key wildlife criminals in Nepal.

On behalf of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and other agencies involved in wildlife crime control, Dr. Maheshwar Dhakal, Under-Secretary of DNPWC and principal focal person of SAWEN Nepal received the award at the 65th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland on 7-11 July 2014. The award was presented by CITES Secretary- General Mr. John R Scanlon. "While poaching has been rampant in many parts of the world, we feel very proud of the successful efforts and the results obtained in wildlife crime control in Nepal. It is a great honour that CITES has recognized our efforts. This has given us further motivation to continue our efforts" said Dr Dhakal.

RESOLUTION OF SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF SAWEN

The following resolutions were made on the Second Annual Meeting of South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) in Kathmandu, Nepal, 26–29 August 2014:

1. The approval by all eight member country delegations at this meeting of the Statute of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), the SAWEN Secretariat will formally circulate the document and then the following steps should be taken by each member country:
 - a) transmit the document to the appropriate ministry in each member country for formal approval at government level;
 - b) once the Statute approved, the Principal Focal Person from each member country will transmit to the SAWEN Secretariat;
 - c) following receipt of at least four countries, the Statute will be deemed to be operational as per Article 9.1 of the Statutes.
2. The development of a regional Action Plan in prioritizing and implementing actions among member countries and the SAWEN Secretariat, including the co-ordination role of the SAWEN Secretariat. The Secretariat takes notes of all comments provided by member countries and observers to the Second Annual Meeting and will revise a detailed Action Plan for circulation to member countries.
3. For each of the above items, the SAWEN Secretariat will expect a response from the

Principal Focal Person of each member country within 90 days of transmission. If responses are not received by the Secretariat within the given deadline, it will be assumed that approval has been given.

4. Member countries confirmed ongoing commitment to expedite coordination, communication and cooperation among the law enforcement agencies for sharing wildlife trade-related information and promoting intelligence-led law enforcement actions. It was recognized that, in order to control wildlife trafficking amongst SAWEN member countries and with other non-member countries, additional capacity building is needed.
5. The SAWEN Secretariat, working with member countries, will actively participate in international fora (e.g. CITES, CBD, etc) and will coordinate with the international community to help prioritize engagement with South Asia.
6. In addition to identifying the need for SAWEN specific procedures, member countries took note of existing mechanisms for intelligence exchange under INTERPOL and WCO, and tools developed by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC).
7. Support was greatly appreciated from relevant global, regional, bilateral, national and international partner organizations, including

CITES, UNODC, INTERPOL, The World Bank, USAID, US Department of State, TRAFFIC, WWF, NTNC, and others in providing technical and financial assistance to SAWEN member countries and the Secretariat.

8. The SAWEN member countries agreed on creating a Wildlife Forensic Network in South Asia with three key recommendations:
 - a. Development of species identification and physical evidences in the scene of crime guides;
 - b. Capacity building for law enforcement agencies and forensic labs/institutes working on wildlife crime; and
 - c. Use of forensic DNA tools for developing preventive strategies for wildlife crime.
9. Bangladesh has proposed to host the next meeting in 2015. The SAWEN Secretariat will finalize the meeting date in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh.
10. The SAWEN Secretariat extends sincere thanks to the host country, the Government of Nepal, and delegates from all the SAWEN member countries, international partner organizations, and observers for their contribution in the Second Annual Meeting held in Kathmandu from 26-29 August, 2014.

TIBETAN FAKING DEATH CAUGHT



The 70 year old Mr. Tanjing Nima Lama, who faked his death when he was first arrested in 2003 for allegedly killing a rhino, was slapped with a 13-year jail term and fined with about USD 1000 in Nepal.

Tanjing was arrested on April, 2014 (and made public in May, 2014) on the basis of a clue by Khim Bahadur KC. Khim was arrested for allegedly killing a rhino in Chitwan National Park (CNP), one of the world heritage sites of Nepal.

"Yes, I did it for money. I was dying. I needed money to replace my damaged kidneys. I knew of no other way to make money. So, I did it" said Tanjing.

According to Mr. Kamal Jung Kunwar, Chief Warden of CNP, Tanjing, soon after his first arrest in 2003, fell sick. He received a permission to go to India for treatment. Later, Tanjing's family produced his death certificate, which claimed that he died while undergoing treatment in India. The case was then dismissed. He was almost forgotten.

But, after Khim Bahadur's arrest, the CNP

authorities learnt that Tanjing was still alive and was involved in killing more rhinos. This time, he has been convicted of selling the horn of a rhino killed inside Balmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar, India.

Conservation authorities say arrests and convictions of dreaded wildlife poachers like Tanjing are the reasons behind Nepal's success in celebrating two Zero Poaching Years in 2011 and 2013.

(For More: <http://www.myrepublica.com/portal>)

SMUGGLED TURTLES BACK

WWF Pakistan with support from Sindh Wildlife Department has successfully retrieved 200 black pond turtles which were illegally poached and smuggled to China.

Countless species including turtles are illegally poached and exported to other countries especially China and East Asian countries. However, it is for the first time the animals have been recovered alive from the poachers and repatriation of the turtles has taken place.

There are eight different species of freshwater turtles found in Pakistan, five of which are globally threatened species in the IUCN red List. All eight freshwater turtle species are listed in CITES Appendices I and II and their import and export without a legal permit is prohibited.

The turtles were handed over to Pakistan in a friendly ceremony conducted at the Pak-China Border at Khunjerab Pass. The rescued turtles would be released into their natural habitat after being rehabilitated.

Mr. Uzma Noreen, Coordinator Indus River Dolphin Conservation Project also a member

of the IUCN Tortoises and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group said, "Illegal trade of body parts of soft shell turtle species has been reported since year 2000. A number of consignments have been confiscated in the past by the wildlife and Customs authorities in Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad and at Pak-China border in Sust".

All of these consignments comprised withered frozen meat of turtles or body parts of soft shell species. These are used as food and in traditional medicines. This is however very alarming to see now the hard shell species are also being targeted in illegal trade for sale as pets.

Javed Ahmed Mehar, Chief Conservator Wildlife Sindh Wildlife Department who led the team to China appreciating the role of WWF-Pakistan for turtle conservation said, "It was not possible without the support of WWF-Pakistan and I believe everyone should join hands for conservation of the unique biodiversity of Pakistan."

(For More: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/national/23-Aug-2014/smuggled-turtles-back-to-sindh-from-china>)

SRI LANKA RECEIVES SUPPORT

The INTERPOL Investigative Support Team (IST) provided the technical assistance and required equipment to Sri Lankan authorities for checking the tusks which were seized in the Port of Colombo last year on a shipment from Uganda bound for Dubai via Kenya.

The DNA samples from 359 elephant tusks seized in Sri Lanka have been sent to the Center for Conservation Biology at

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Continued from page 3 Sri Lanka.....

the University of Washington in the United States for DNA analysis – to identify the original herd and country - and to the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation for chemical isotope analysis, to determine their age.

"This successful cooperative forensic effort between INTERPOL Colombo, Sri Lanka Customs, the Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Port Authorities is a great example of the power of international enforcement collaboration in tackling environmental criminal enterprise," said Cees van Duijn, INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme Project Leader.

Poaching and organized wildlife trafficking is a growing transnational crime and the primary threat to the survival of elephants. INTERPOL has created a strong initiative to protect elephants through Project WISDOM, designed to support and enhance governance and law enforcement capacities for elephant conservation.

In December 2012, the European Commission agreed to support INTERPOL in its efforts to combat wildlife crime, under the umbrella of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) which also includes CITES Secretariat, UNODC, the World Bank, and WCO. The INTERPOL Investigative Support Team was deployed under this initiative.

(For More : <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2013/N20130719>)

INDIAN RHINO POPULATIONS UP

After a surge in rhino poaching this year at Kaziranga National Park, the forestry department has released a paper to allay fears for the species. The paper shows that despite an increase in poaching of the one-horned rhino, the population in Assam is up by 27% since 2006 and the state is on a target to meet the Indian rhino vision target of 3000.

The 'White Paper on Wildlife Conservation in Assam' was released on 1st June, 2014 by the Hon'ble Minister Rockybul Hussain, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Assam State. It shows that the current population of one-horned rhinos is 2,544. The population has grown at the rate of 4.6% a year from the last census of 2006 when the state of Assam had 2066 rhinos. This is above the target of the Indian Rhino Vision of 3.25% growth per year. The Kaziranga National Park, the stronghold of the species, now has 2329 with the remaining 215 rhino living in other parts of the state.

"Rhino poaching is an international phenomenon and we are working wholeheartedly to stop it. It is because of this that we have sought help from experts from Nepal and even South Africa to help us meet the challenges," the Minister Hussain said. "When I took charge of the department, the one-horned rhino was tagged as an endangered species. But with its population increase, in spite of incidents of poaching, the endangered tag has been lifted by the IUCN."

(For More : <http://wildlifeneews.co.uk/2014/indianrhinopopulations-up-over-25-in-last-7-years/>)

Please visit us at "www.sawen.org" For more Wildlife Crime News and SAWEN Updates.



South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network



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