



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2013/014

Geneva, 7 May 2013

CONCERNING:

Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation

1. In 2002, the Secretariat advised the Parties of the introduction of certificates of commendation that would be issued, at the Secretary-General's discretion, to recognize exemplary actions related to enforcement.
2. The latest such certificates have been awarded to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), China's National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group (NICE-CG) and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), in recognition of the exemplary work conducted during Operation Cobra.
3. Operation Cobra, a joint operation to combat illegal wildlife trade, involving the police, Customs and wildlife officers from Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, India, Indonesia, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nepal, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Viet Nam and Zambia, was carried out between 6 January 2013 and 5 February 2013.
4. The operation was coordinated by law enforcement officers and representatives of African and Asian national and regional wildlife law enforcement networks, working from a coordination centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The operation resulted in a large number of arrests and the seizure of specimens of hornbill, ivory, leopards, pangolins, rhino horn, shahtoosh, snakes, tigers and other CITES-listed species.
5. Operation Cobra was an excellent initiative that exposed authorities to the specialized enforcement techniques that can be deployed to fight wildlife crime. Important follow-up investigations were also initiated as appropriate, when crimes were detected or when seizures were made. The operation also created an excellent opportunity for the authorities involved to establish new professional relationships with their counterparts from different agencies, countries and regions of the world, and demonstrated the importance of coordinated action amongst international, regional, sub-regional and national institutions and authorities.
6. ASEAN-WEN received the Secretary-General's Certificate of Commendation on behalf of all ASEAN-WEN and South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SA-WEN) member States that participated in the operation. China's National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group (NICE-CG) received it on behalf of all authorities that performed duties in the coordination centre in Bangkok. Finally, the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) received it on behalf of all African countries that participated in the operation.
7. The certificates were presented in Bangkok on 5 March 2013.