

**IUCN/SSC
ASIAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP
(AsRSG)
MEETING**

BRIEFING BOOK

**JALDAPARA SANCTUARY
WEST BENGAL, INDIA
6-10 DECEMBER 1993**

**SECTION 12
UNEP RHINO CONFERENCE**



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT
PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE



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Our Reference FP/6105-92-03

1 October 1993

On behalf of Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Under-Secretary-General, UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat), I have the honour to refer to the UNEP Conference Between the Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States and Donors on Financing the Conservation of the Rhinoceros held at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, 28 June-1 July 1993, and to draw your attention to the attached Resolutions adopted and two Recommendations noted by the meeting. The Report of the Conference is being finalized and will be sent to you in due course.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks for your organization's participation in the above meeting. The contribution by your delegation to the meeting was invaluable in reaching a decisive phase of a coordinated international action for financing the conservation of the African and Asian rhinoceros. For our part, we have gained a much deeper insight into the problems and needs of the range and consumer States, and many of the inputs that we received from the participants in the meeting will be most useful in our future activities in this subject area. Furthermore, meeting your delegation personally was not only a pleasure, but a further step towards a closer cooperation to which we all strive.

As stated in Ms. Dowdeswell's letter of invitation to the above Conference dated 20 May 1993, the purpose of the meeting was to review specific rhinoceros conservation strategies and costed country action plans and priority projects for rhinoceros conservation presented by African and Asian States with a view to securing financial resources to implement them. The Conference, which brought together for the first time rhinoceros range States, consumer States and donors to exchange views on the current status of rhinoceros conservation in Africa and Asia and the financial requirements for rhinoceros conservation, clearly demonstrated that there was a political will to save the rhinoceros from extinction. The meeting set in motion a process of collaboration between African and Asian States and donors for negotiations leading in due course to a global rhinoceros conservation strategy and increased stable funding for rhinoceros conservation.

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I would, therefore, greatly appreciate an indication from your organization of any progress in the financing of projects for rhinoceros conservation of national, regional, continental, and global importance initiated by your country in follow-up to the above UNEP Conference.

I would be grateful for a response by 31 October 1993 regarding the above in order to be able to proceed promptly with follow-up activities to the above UNEP Conference.

We look forward to continued fruitful collaboration with you in the important task of conserving the African and Asian rhinoceros.

Yours sincerely,



Reuben Olembo
Assistant Executive Director
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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME CONFERENCE BETWEEN
THE RHINOCEROS RANGE STATES, CONSUMER STATES AND
DONORS ON FINANCING THE CONSERVATION OF THE
RHINOCEROS, HELD AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAMME, NAIROBI,
28 JUNE - 1 JULY 1993

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AND RECOMMENDATIONS NOTED BY THE CONFERENCE

PART I. RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION I. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

The United Nations Environment Programme Conference Between the Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States and Donors on Financing the Conservation of the Rhinoceros,

Concerned that the decline of the world's rhinoceros populations is still continuing,

Realizing that the five species of rhinoceros (which comprise an important gene pool in their own right) live in a wide variety of habitats, from arid areas to rain forests, and that their conservation as flagship species in the wild will involve the safeguarding of the earth's biological diversity,

Recognizing that a considerable amount of money is needed to arrest this decline and bring about population recovery,

Further recognizing that funds immediately available are not sufficient to meet these needs,

Aware that the Global Environment Facility will be replenished with significant resources for the conservation of biological diversity,

Also Aware that the Global Environment Facility has already committed funds to rhinoceros conservation in Indonesia and Malaysia,

1. Urges all the Global Environment Facility Participants to promote the use of the biological diversity component of the Facility to fund the protection of rhinoceros populations within the context of broadly based projects for the conservation of biological diversity;

2. Emphasizes to the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank) the extreme urgency of the situation and the need to process grant applications for rhinoceros conservation with maximum speed.

1 July 1993

RESOLUTION II. LEGISLATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The United Nations Environment Programme Conference Between the Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States and Donors on Financing the Conservation of the Rhinoceros,

Recognizing that legislation and effective law enforcement are the basis for sound and effective rhinoceros conservation,

Believing that it is in the national interest of all Parties and non-Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora that the requirements governing international trade in wildlife and its products be met,

Recalling that there have been grave failures in the implementation of the requirements of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora with respect to controlling illegal international trade in rhinoceros horn and other rhinoceros products,

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Conscious of the need for consumer States and range States to review and amend their national legislation and to ensure its effective implementation so as to meet the requirements of global rhinoceros consideration: in particular, penalties must be strengthened to act as an effective deterrent to illegal activities,

Acknowledging that law enforcement in many range States and consumer States is far from adequate and that national agencies are insufficiently equipped to counter trans-border poaching and illegal trading, and are often without effective means of inter-agency cooperation to combat the activities of international criminal networks,

Recommends that:

- (a) National legislation be reviewed and amended as necessary to ensure the full global conservation of rhinoceros populations;
- (b) Regional initiatives to combat illegal international trade in rhinoceros horn and other wildlife products be supported;
- (c) Donors and the United Nations Environment Programme provide resources for the earliest possible negotiation of these regional initiatives by their proponents and other interested range States, provided these resources are additional to those provided for rhinoceros field projects;
- (d) The United Nations Environment Programme undertake a coordinating role in finalizing the negotiating text of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at International Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

1 July 1993

RESOLUTION III. UTILIZATION OF THE RHINOCEROS

The United Nations Environment Programme Conference Between the Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States and Donors on Financing the Conservation of the Rhinoceros,

Having considered the reports on the status of the world's five species of rhinoceros and expressed the gravest concern about the precarious conservation status resulting from the illegal and unsustainable trade in rhinoceros horn,

Recognizing that poaching and illegal trade, in addition to habitat destruction, are the greatest threats to the survival of all the five species and must be eliminated,

Upholding the important principle that local human communities should benefit, where possible, from conservation activities involving rhinoceros,

Aware that studies are being planned on the probable impacts of a resumption of legal trade in African rhinoceros products, studies which are not supported by the majority of the meeting, but whose execution is supported by Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, the custodians of 90 per cent of Africa's rhinoceros populations,

Also aware that a number of alternative strategies have been proposed or are currently being implemented for conserving the African species, namely, darting safaris, trophy hunting, the sale of live animals and trade in rhinoceros products,

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1. Commends certain consumer States on recent actions that they have undertaken to prevent consumption of rhinoceros products, identify acceptable substitutes and encourage further action to bring illegal trade successfully under control;

2. Encourages all range States to explore options for the non-consumptive use of rhinoceros species that both benefit their conservation and enhance the well-being of local communities;

3. Agrees that studies be carried out on the control of the existing illegal trade in rhinoceros horn and on the efforts to control poaching in range States as a matter of urgency, to provide objective guidance to Governments, donors and other conservation organizations.

1 July 1993

RESOLUTION IV: ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ELEPHANT AND RHINOCEROS CONSERVATION FACILITY

The United Nations Environment Programme Conference between the Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States and Donors on financing and Conservation of the Rhinoceros,

Aware that, as the crisis over rhinoceros and elephant conservation intensifies, there is an urgent need for more resources to be mobilized and their application coordinated,

Further aware that there is a need for improved technical coordination to formulate, refine and implement the conservation strategies and action plans for rhinoceros and elephant conservation and to disseminate information about conservation activities and problems,

Recalling decision 17/23, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment programme on 21 May 1993, in particular its paragraphs 4 (b) and 5 (b) on the establishment of elephant and rhinoceros facilities,

Recalling also that this proposal was endorsed by recommendations of the United Nations Environment Programme Informal Preliminary Meeting Between the Rhinoceros Range States and Donors on Financing the Conservation of the Rhinoceros, held at United Nations Environment Programme Headquarters, Nairobi, from 16-18 December 1992, by the Western and Central African Regional Meetings on African Elephant Conservation, and by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of the World Fauna and Flora,

1. Endorses the concept of the Facility and submits the following recommendations about its structure and function:

(a) The United Nations Environment Programme African Elephant Conservation Facility, established by its Governing Council decision 17/23 of 21 May 1993, should be extended to include the Asian elephant and the African and Asian rhinoceros;

(b) The extensive scientific coordination of elephant and rhinoceros conservation strategies and action plans by the World Conservation Union (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission Specialist Groups should be recognized, utilized, and not duplicated;

(c) The main function of the United Nations Environment Programme Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility will lie in providing technical coordination, securing financial resources and ensuring

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governmental commitment for the implementation of elephant and rhinoceros conservation strategies and action plans, as well as assisting with conservation problems;

2. Further recommends that:

(a) The Facility should include the facilitator, based at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme who, should work in close cooperation with the representatives of each of the four World Conservation Union (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission Specialist Groups, and with a representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of the Wild Fauna and Flora;

(b) The primary functions of the facilitator should be to:

- (i) Follow-up, in consultation with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the implementation of recommendations adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme-convened meetings of the elephant and rhinoceros range States, consumer States and donors, and coordinate arrangements for future meetings;
- (ii) Maintain a database of programmes, projects, costs and resources;
- (iii) Prepare reports and recommendations for submission to the BIENNIAL sessions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (iv) Explore ways to expand the range and variety of potential donors and funding possibilities.

1 July 1993

PART II. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I. THE AFRICAN RHINOCEROS RANGE STATES

1. The African rhinoceros range States agree that the highest priority should be given to funding projects that ensure the survival of the last viable populations of the recognized species of rhinoceros.

2. In Africa, the most urgent support should be given to projects directed towards the survival of each of the four recognized sub-species of the black rhinoceros and the sub-species *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* of the white rhinoceros.

3. The selection of projects must be based upon the criteria developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission African Rhino Specialist Group.

4. The African range States recommend that the other projects of international, national and generic value which require support should meet at least two or more of the following criteria:

(a) The project should be of the generic nature, such as security measures providing guidance on protection strategies and techniques, which may be applicable to all species of rhinoceros and possibly other endangered species;

(b) The project should prevent the total extinction of the last indigenous rhinoceros populations in a range State;

(c) The project should improve the protection of the most viable populations of the rhinoceros from which it has already proved, or in the future will prove, possible to remove specimens to create founder populations in new safe areas;

- (d) The project should result in the re-establishment in a range State of a rhinoceros population driven into extinction in recent times;
- (e) The project should contribute significantly to rhinoceros conservation and should, in addition, provide significant benefits to local communities through integration with the protected area involved;
- (f) The project should, if involving a cross-national-boundary population of rhinoceros, support activities in both or all concerned range States.

RECOMMENDATION II. THE ASIAN RHINOCEROS RANGE STATES

1. Asia has the highest diversities of rhinoceros species (three species in two genera, and five sub-species), but the lowest number of individuals. Asia is also the home of the two most endangered species of rhinoceros. The Asian range States have noted that these points have not been realized fully and recognized by the present Conference.
2. The world issue of the conservation of Asian rhinoceroses cannot be separated from the issue of conservation of tropical rain forest and its biodiversity. In the range States, the rhinoceros is used as a flagship species to promote the conservation of the world's richest ecosystems.
3. Trade in rhinoceros horn has been banned in all range States for a considerable period, but illegal trade is continuing. The range States have taken measures to control the illegal trade and have urged the consumer States to ban the use of rhinoceros horn products. Asian rhinoceroses live nearest to the consumer centres, and Asian rhinoceros horns are much higher valued and consequently fetch much higher prices than African rhinoceros horn. Dehorning is not possible in most rhinoceros populations and many populations cannot be commercially utilized for tourism. Lifting the ban on the trade in rhinoceros horn would give a form of legitimacy to all trade and would encourage poachers and traders and harm the Asian rhinoceroses.
4. It is recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme, through the proposed United Nations Environment Programme Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility, should produce a directory of potential donors for rhinoceros and elephant conservation, including details on procedures and criteria.
5. It is recommended that funds for the executive office of the World Asian Rhino Specialist Group be included in the budget of the proposed United Nations Environment Programme Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility.
6. The United National Environment Programme, through the United Nations Environment Programme Elephant and Rhinoceros Conservation Facility, should not only concentrate on involving Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in rhinoceros conservation, but should actively seek financial support from corporations that have an interest in the rhinoceros or are operating in the range States.
