CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

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Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

INFORMATION DOCUMENT ON TIGERNET

The attached document has been submitted by India.[*]

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[*] *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

Information document on Tigernet

The Government of India is committed to fulfilling its international commitments to tiger conservation, in particular its implementation of Resolution Conf 12.5 (Rev, Cop14) 'Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species'. ResConf 12.5 recommends that range States of the tiger and other Asian big cat species ensure that anti-poaching teams and enforcement units are established and effectively resourced to counter the illegal killing of and trade in Asian big cat species, and that intelligence is shared between relevant enforcement agencies to counter illegal killing and trade. India believes the use of computerized databases and monitoring systems is essential for effective sharing of information and intelligence to counter illegal killing and trade.

In this regard, India is pleased to share its progress with the establishment of Tigernet – a directory of tigers and other wildlife mortality and the Official Database of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a Statutory Body under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India. The database, located at www.tigernet.nic.in, is the first consolidated database in India on mortality and poaching related to Tigers and other protected species within Tiger reserves.

This database is a collaborative effort of the NTCA and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network. It is an online compilation of authentic records of mortality of tigers and other key wildlife species across India. Compilation and analysis of such data will be extremely valuable as a management tool for tiger conservation in India and it will give Tiger Reserve Directors and Chief Wildlife Wardens in India the ability to contribute crucial information about Tiger deaths, poaching and seizures through a secure web-based portal.

Field Directors, Chief Wildlife Wardens and senior enforcement officers in India can register with the online system, after which they will be provided with a user name password to log in. Only these authorized personnel can contribute information records on Tiger mortalities, monitor patterns of where poaching incidents are occurring, and use this information to strengthen anti-poaching efforts.

It is anticipated that the system will simplify the whole reporting system for Tiger deaths and allow a more accurate and transparent picture to be generated regarding the poaching and illegal trade threats facing the nation's Tiger population. Automatic reminders will be sent to official staff to upload details surrounding any Tiger mortalities, including the findings of post-mortem examinations. The NTCA recently made funding available for the purchase of cold storage facilities so Tiger carcasses can be preserved until a thorough post mortem can be carried out.

While directly entering information into the system will remain restricted to registered users, the vetted information aggregated within the system will be publicly available. For example, the website already has information available on tiger mortalities for 2010, with 13 recorded cases this year, the latest being on 15th March 2010 at Tarai Wst Forest Division, adjoining Corbett Tiger Reserve .

The NTCA is encouraging concerned citizens to provide any information on tiger or other wildlife mortality or crime through an online submission form on the website.

The NTCA is also encouraging field directors of Tiger reserves and Chief Wildlife Wardens of other tiger range states to register with the system, so that they too can provide information to this database.

The Government of India welcomes the call of the CITES Enforcement Working Group for the establishment of a database that could provide a global overview of illegal trade in wildlife. In particular, India supports the proposed amendment to Resolution Conf 12.5 recommending that all range States implement systems for the recording of information relating to illegal trade in Asian big cats, and that this information is shared with other entities as appropriate to ensure co-ordinated investigations and enforcement. The establishment of Tigernet is very much in line with this proposal and India hopes that other tiger range States will enact similar initiatives. India looks forward to working with other governments and international institutions working on similar databases and monitoring systems, so we can share and exchange information that will assist in eliminating illegal poaching and trade, as well as benefit the conservation of tigers in the wild.

We seek the help of all parties concerned – government departments, tiger range States, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and members of the public – to help provide accurate and timely information for this database.