

Demand for Rhino Horns in Viet Nam Decreases as a Result of Humane Society International and Viet Nam CITES Management Authority Partnership Campaign, Poll Says

(16 Oct. 2014)—Demand for rhinoceros horn in Viet Nam has decreased by 38 percent since the launch of a public education and awareness campaign jointly implemented under a partnership between Humane Society International and the Viet Nam Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Management Authority since August 2013. A poll disclosing the significant results was released today at an international press conference organized by Humane Society International and the Viet Nam CITES Management Authority, Administration of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with the participation of the CITES Secretary General.

Viet Nam was requested by CITES Parties to implement a communication campaign to reduce demand for rhino horn which is believed by some to have medicinal properties. The year-long campaign focused on Viet Nam's capital city, Ha Noi, and engaged stakeholder groups to help spread messages against the use of rhino horns. The stakeholder groups included the 800,000-member Ha Noi Women's Association, the business community, university students, school children, the scientific community as well as many leading health experts. The young pupils received copies of HSI's book *I'm A Little Rhino* as part of their curriculum. Advertisements also appeared on billboards within the city and at the airport, and on the sides of city busses. Campaign messages were further spread throughout Viet Nam through hundreds of press articles.

Pre-campaign and post-campaign polls conducted by the Viet Nam office of the international public polling firm Nielsen revealed a dramatic reduction in public demand since the campaign's inception in August 2013:

- Only 2.6 percent of people in Viet Nam continue to buy and use rhino horn, a decrease of 38 percent since the campaign started in August 2013
- 77 percent decline in people in Ha Noi buying and using rhino horn, down from 4.5 percent to 1 percent
- 25 percent decrease in the number of people in Viet Nam who think using rhino horn has medical value
- Only 38 percent of the national population and 21 percent of people in Ha Noi city continue to think that rhino horn has medical value, a 51 percent and 53 percent decrease respectively from last year
- Of those who think rhino horn can treat diseases, most believe it can treat cancer (60 percent) and rheumatism (40 percent)

Teresa M. Telecky, Ph.D., director of the wildlife department for HSI, said, "Insatiable demand for rhino horn is driving rhinos to the brink of extinction, so reducing that demand is absolutely crucial. These poll results demonstrate that, even in a relatively short period of time, our demand reduction campaign has succeeded in significantly and dramatically altering public perception and influenced behavior. The results offer a vital ray of hope for the survival of rhinos."

Do Quang Tung, director of the Viet Nam CITES Management Authority said, “We highly value the effective support and partnership with Humane Society International in implementing the communication program for demand reduction in Viet Nam, which have brought in evidence-based achievements. The demand for rhino horns by just a small proportion of people in Viet Nam has not only damaged the position of Viet Nam in international forums but also leveraged the poaching of rhinos in the range countries. We are very happy to know that the demand has been sharply reduced as the results of our campaign for the last time. We do believe that this will positively contribute to global efforts in protecting the species in the world.”

John E. Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES commenting on the post-campaign polls said, “We warmly welcome the well-targeted efforts being made within Viet Nam to reduce the illegal movement and consumption of rhino horn products and the public polling shows they are having a positive effect on reducing demand.”

“We must persist with the concerted efforts being made across source, transit and destination countries to stop the highly destructive illegal trade in rhino horn until the levels of illegal killing are driven back to 2007 levels” added Scanlon.

The surveys of 1,000 people interviewed in six major municipalities in Viet Nam (Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hai Phong, Nha Trang, Can Tho) were conducted by Nielsen (Vietnam) Ltd. in August 2013 and 2014.

Facts:

- Three of the five living species of rhinos are critically endangered (the Sumatran, Javan and black) and one is vulnerable (the Indian). The southern white rhino is by far the most abundant rhino species, having increased from only 100 in 1895 to about 20,000 today, as a result of decades of intensive protection efforts in South Africa.
- All rhino species are threatened by poaching for their horns, which are highly valuable in some Asian countries, particularly Viet Nam. South Africa has more rhinos than all other countries combined, but poaching has been on the rise since about 2007. Some 821 rhinos have been poached there thus far in 2014. During 2013, 1,004 rhinos were poached, exceeding the previous record of 668 rhinos poached in 2012. In comparison, only 13 rhinos were poached in South Africa in 2007. Unfortunately, law enforcement efforts have not been able to eliminate rhino poaching.
- In March 2013, at the 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora, Viet Nam was identified as the primary consumer market for rhino horns and was directed to conduct a campaign to reduce demand.

CITES decision on reducing demand for rhino horn:

At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES the following decision was adopted by consensus (CITES today has 180 Parties):

16.85 All Parties implicated in the illegal trade of rhinoceros horn as a range or consumer State, where applicable, should:

a) develop and implement long-term demand reduction strategies or programmes and immediate actions aimed at reducing the illegal movement and consumption of rhino horn products, taking into consideration the draft demand-reduction principles included in the Annex to document CoP16 Doc. 54.1 (Rev. 1), to achieve measurable change in consumer behaviour;

b) develop and implement strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness with regard to the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife crime, and to encourage the general public to report illegal activities related to wildlife trade to appropriate authorities for further investigation. Such strategies or programmes and immediate actions could include the involvement of local communities that live in the immediate vicinity of conservation areas, community policing projects or other strategies as may be appropriate; and

c) provide information on the effectiveness of strategies or programmes referred to in paragraph a) and b) of this Decision, to the Working Group on Rhinoceroses, by 31 January 2015, to assist the Working Group in identifying best practices and challenges experienced, with the aim of developing ideas to further enhance the effectiveness of demand-reduction strategies, and to report on its findings at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Rhino horn burn in the Czech Republic

CITES Secretary-General's remarks at the destruction of confiscated rhino horn in the Czech Republic:
http://cites.org/eng/burn_rhinos_czech.php.

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Humane Society International and its affiliates together constitute one of the world's largest animal protection organizations. For more than 20 years, HSI has been working for the protection of all animals through the use of science, advocacy, education and hands on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide—on the Web at www.hsi.org.

The **Viet Nam CITES Management Authority** is under Viet Nam Administration of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, representing the Government of Viet Nam in fulfilling the rights and obligations of a Member State to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild

Fauna and Flora (CITES). Viet Nam CITES Management Authority is the focal point of Viet Nam for the Viet Nam-Wildlife Enforcement Network (VIETNAM-WEN).

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) regulates international trade in over 35,000 species of plants and animals, including their products and derivatives, ensuring their survival in the wild with benefits for the livelihoods of local people and the global environment. The CITES Permit System seeks to ensure that international trade in listed species is sustainable, legal and traceable. CITES was adopted in Washington D.C. on 3 March 1973 and now counts 180 Member States.