Press Release: Asia unites against poaching

Kathmandu, Nepal – Representatives from 13 Asian countries committed to immediate action to stamp out poaching at the conclusion of a four-day symposium hosted by the Nepal government in Kathmandu from February 2-6, 2015.

The Symposium: Towards Zero Poaching in Asia adopted five recommendations:

- **Swift and decisive action** to elevate the importance and effectiveness of antipoaching initiatives and cooperation among all relevant ministries, departments and agencies within their borders, while at the same time strengthening international cooperation in the face of this serious criminal activity.
- **Adoption of the Zero Poaching Tool Kit** and assessment of current antipoaching responses to determine improvements and close serious gaps.
- **Increase and improve collaboration** as a successful antipoaching response is critically dependant on effectively engaging a diverse number of shareholders.
- **Improve standards, training and support** for rangers, other frontline staff and prosecutors.
- **Commit to identifying a Zero Poaching national contact point** to effectively coordinate transboundary efforts to stop poaching.

“Nepal was proud to host this vital conversation in Asia because we recognize that poaching is robbing us of our wildlife wealth, which includes tigers, rhinos and elephants,” said Tika Ram Adhikari, Director General of Nepal’s Department of Wildlife Conservation and Soil Conservation. “We cannot allow wildlife crime to continue to wrap its tentacles deeper into the region. Our individual efforts may win us a few battles, but we can only win the war only if Asia presents a united front to stop the poaching, end the trafficking and wipe out demand.”

Nepal was the natural host for the symposium having achieved zero poaching twice in the past four years. Representatives from local communities, protected areas as well as enforcement agencies shared their lessons learned at the symposium.

“Zero poaching is achievable when enforcement is relentless—24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Colonel Babu Krishna Karki, Director of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves, Nepal Army. “Going forward, the Nepal Army will continue to adapt and develop new technologies to support our constant efforts to stop poaching of Nepal’s natural treasures and we stand ready to share our expertise in the mission to get the rest of Asia to zero poaching.”

At the closing ceremony, Nepal’s legendary Chitwan National Park also became the first global site to be accredited as Conservation Assured Tiger Standard (CA|TS). Despite the threats that CNP faces, the protected area has seen an increasingly effective management and protection regime. This further demonstrates the commitment of Nepal towards zero poaching.

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“This is the beginning of the end for poaching across Asia,” said Mike Baltzer, Leader, WWF Tigers Alive Initiative. “WWF is proud to have supported this landmark meeting and is committed to be part of the new determined movement for Zero Poaching in Asia, launched this week in Kathmandu.”

Thirteen Asian countries participated in the symposium: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Russia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Lao PDR. Partner NGOs and other organizations included IUCN, TRAFFIC, CITES, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, US Department of Justice, SMART Partnership and Southern African Wildlife College.

WWF co-hosted the symposium with Global Tiger Forum, National Trust for Nature Conservation and the South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network.

NOTES TO EDITOR:

**CA|TS Conservation Assured Tigers Standards** – excellence in tiger site conservation & protection. Developed by the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), WWF Tigers Alive Initiative, IUCN and WCPA, CA|TS consists of 17 standards by which all tiger sites can be managed and measured. Sites taking part will initially be ‘registered’ (standards not yet attained) then, when all required standards are met, ‘approved’ (standards achieved). Sites are evaluated through an assessment and independent review process.