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## Media Release

For immediate release

# India and Nepal join hands to strengthen Transboundary conservation

**PATNAL BIHAR: 20 January 2015:** WWF-India's vision towards securing trans-boundary cooperation for conservation got a further boost with delegates from India and Nepal coming together for a joint Trans-Boundary Coordination Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in Patna. The meeting was organized by the Government of Bihar in collaboration with WWF-India; and was attended by several subject experts, senior officials from the Bihar Forest Department, Chitwan National Park in Nepal, and representatives from WWF India and WWF Nepal.

The nearly 800 km. long region along the India- Nepal border hosts rich and unique wildlife habitats. Located in this landscape is the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar, which shares its boundary with the Chitwan National Park and Parsa Wildlife Reserve in Nepal, and Sohagibarwa Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh, and plays a critical role in maintaining demographically stable and genetically robust populations of tigers. The forest corridors between India and Nepal are extensively used by tiger and other large mammals. With increasing development and land-use change, poaching and wildlife trade such connectivity and exchange however is at risk. To protect and re-establish the connectivity beyond national boundaries is therefore of utmost importance.

Organised for the fifth time, the high level Coordination meeting focused on developing action points to strengthen wildlife conservation along the international border. Shri Vivek Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary (Forest & Environment), Govt. of Bihar said, "The trans-boundary meetings between officials from the Valmiki Tiger Reserve and those from the bordering protected areas of Nepal have resulted in positive outcomes for wildlife conservation. Our efforts to strengthen trans-boundary ties need to continue for protecting tigers and enabling their free movement between India and Nepal."

During the meeting, the two countries have agreed to work together on the following action points:

- Strengthen efforts to curb poaching and illegal trade of wildlife and forest products through joint patrolling and information sharing
- Joint monitoring of tigers in Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa complex
- Pursue proactive measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict
- Inclusion of Sohagibarwa WLS as a buffer of Valmiki Tiger Reserve
- Extension of Kosi Tappu WR into Bihar
- Promote exchange visits to learn best practices in community participation in conservation.
- Shri U.S. Jha, Chief Wildlife Warden (Wildlife), Government of Bihar said, “Despite pressing challenges, we can strengthen our tiger habitats by cooperating in conservation measures. We can also ensure that we leave behind an ecologically rich region for our future generations.”

Sharing his view, Mr. Ram ChanderKande, Chief Conservation officer, Chiwtan National Park expressed that this shared conservation landscape gives the respective governments a common ground to work together to save wild tigers and other important wildlife. He also emphasized on extension of Kosi Tappu WR into Bihar for water buffalo conservation.

Dr. Anil K. Singh, WWF India said, “The Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and KfW Development Bank) and being jointly implemented by WWF India and WWF Nepal will help increase wildlife connectivity, community to community engagement and strengthen protection measures in Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa complex”.

The shared action plan will help address some of the most urgent tasks for conservation of this trans-boundary landscape. WWF India in the coming years will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders to protect wildlife corridors and re-establish connectivity between wildlife habitats in India and Nepal.

**For further information:**

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**About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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