

RHINOS NEED HELP

– LET COMMON SENSE PREVAIL



Swaziland's proposal to CITES is for a limited and regulated legal trade in its own white rhino horn, which could generate an estimated **sustainable** annual income of \$1.2 million **without killing a single rhino**.



WHY IS SWAZILAND DOING THIS?

Rhino poaching is rampant and rhinos are vanishing with no effective strategy in place for their survival. All conservation agencies in Africa are cash-strapped but donor money is not the answer because it increases dependence on foreign aid and often comes with conditions which compromise policy and management integrity. Spiritual values are very precious but cannot sustainably finance rhino conservation. Surely Swaziland should be permitted to use its own sovereign resources to fund its own sovereign needs with the sale of rhino horn which is said to be **the most valuable natural resource on earth**.

SWAZILAND'S CONSERVATION CREDENTIALS

In Swaziland wildlife falls under the portfolio of the highest Authority in the land. The country's wildlife estate has been restored under the guidance of His Majesty King Mswati III and his father before him, King Sobhuza II. 22 species of larger wild animals, which had become locally extinct during Colonial rule, have been re-established with protected areas to support them. **Only three rhinos have been poached in Swaziland in the last 24 years** – an exemplary record of rhino protection. Swaziland's national nature conservation agency is disciplined and successful, aided by strong political will at top level, a very supportive police force and a highly dedicated and effective ranger force which performs legally without fear or favour.

WHY LIFT THE BAN ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

The **39 year old ban is not working** with thousands of rhinos poached. Demand reduction and education have failed. Trade in horn was driven underground into a lucrative black market, with **rhino custodians paying all of the costs of rhino protection and criminals taking all the profits. The illegal trade kills rhinos and the ban on trade makes dead rhinos more valuable than live rhinos.** Legal trade would break the monopoly of illegal trade and **make live rhinos sustainably more valuable than dead rhinos.**





COULD A LEGAL TRADE WORK? – WE WILL NEVER KNOW UNTIL IT IS TRIED

If CoP17 approves the rhino horn trade proposal, Swaziland will thoroughly research markets and will choose from the safest legal options. CITES rules do not require Swaziland to establish trading partners before lodging a proposal. Some countries have laws preventing trade which would have to be changed to accommodate legal horn sales.

The CITES Management Authority of Swaziland will be the sole seller of horn to a small number of licensed retailers, likely to include Traditional Chinese Medicine hospitals. All horn will be properly recorded on a DNA data base and on a national register. The retailers will be licensed and required to undertake not to buy horn from illegal sources. Limited trade will be through a single legal channel designed to prevent laundering. Markets are astute and the rhino horn market will understand that the Swaziland trade is a small amount of legal horn in a much larger market that is currently all illegal.

IT'S TIME TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

Swaziland requests member states to support its proposal to test legal trade, thereby **prioritising the principles of conservation and sustainable utilization over preservation, as espoused by the IUCN and the World Conservation Strategy**, for the greater good of wildlife and neighbouring communities. To carry on with the failed precautionary approach is futile. It will be an indictment on all of us if rhinos go extinct in the wild without having tried the legal trade option as a solution to the plight of Africa's rhinos.



For further information, please visit

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/InfDocs/E-CoP17-Inf-17.pdf>

www.biggameparks.org