1. This document has been submitted by xxxxxx.
2. The attention of the 70th Meeting of the Standing Committee is hereby drawn to the illegal trade in cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) with regards to document SC70-43, requesting that available information from non-Parties be considered.

Background

1. The cheetah continues to experience major reductions in its geographic range over the last century and the most recent population estimates in the areas most affected by illegal trade in East Africa, i.e., Ethiopia, Ethiopia/Kenya/South Sudan, Kenya/South Sudan/Uganda and Kenya amount to just over 300 (Durant et al, 2015).
2. An inter-sessional working group on illegal cheetah trade established at SC70 compiled an analysis of responses received from Parties responding to a questionnaire annexed to Notification E-Notif-2018-058 (CITES, 2018a), which is appended to document SC70-43 (CITES, 2018b). On this document, the Secretariat indicates that, “Although there is some illegal international trade in cheetahs, the available information suggests that this remains limited”.
3. As document SC70-43 notes, this conclusion is based on numbers provided by national CITES authorities or approved by them. The Secretariat also included data from a compilation of the 2016 annual illegal trade data on cheetahs submitted by Parties to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). When combining the data from both sources, the report indicates that, “between 2015 and mid-2018, 13 live cheetahs, 15 cheetah skins, two cheetah skulls, one small piece of a cheetah specimen and two kilograms of unspecified cheetah specimens were seized by authorities.”
4. Considering that most of the illegal trade in cheetahs is not intercepted by authorities (Tricorache et al, 2018), and that the rate of response to the questionnaire in E-Notif-2018-058 appears to be insufficient (only four countries reporting confiscations and the rest indicating that they were not affected by illegal cheetah trade in recent years, or ever), the authors believe that it is important to review data available from additional sources.
5. In support of item 6 above, the authors wish to cite data compiled by the non-governmental organization, the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). CCF has been researching illegal cheetah trade since 2005. Its data served as the basis for inclusion of illegal cheetah trade at the CoP16 agenda (CAWT, 2012). While it is unlikely that most incidents of illegal trade in cheetahs have been captured due to the illicit nature of the trade, the data presented in this document is the most comprehensive currently available.
   1. CCF’s data (Jan 2015-Jun 2018) includes 132 recorded cases involving 644 cheetahs sourced as follows:
      1. Direct CCF’s observations: 34.1%;
      2. Official channels (governments officials, CITES): 17.4%;
      3. Partner NGOs and field reports: 41.7%; and
      4. Media articles: 6.8%.
   2. CCF makes every effort to verify every report. Reports considered vague or from unknown sources are not recorded. Reports supported by evidence (video, images), or from sources deemed trustworthy, are classified as verified (99 cases; 390 cheetahs) and unverified (33 cases; 254 cheetahs). For the purposes of this submissions, only verified reports are included.
6. The data submitted with this document covers the period considered for document SC70-43: January 1, 2015 and June 30, 2018:
   1. Twenty-seven countries reported incidents of illegal wildlife trade. Eight of these responded to the questionnaire, with four reporting confiscations of cheetah or cheetah products. Of the remaining 13 Parties responding to the questionnaire, 12 have no recorded illegal cheetah trade cases during this period and one reported to have never been affected by the trade.
   2. Of the 99 verified cases involving 390 cheetahs, the East Africa and Middle East regions account for 72.7% of all 72 cases: 49 cases involving 137 cheetahs, and 23 cases involving 131 cheetahs, respectively. However, of the countries affected in these regions (EA = 6, ME = 7), only one EA Party responded to the questionnaire, and four in the ME.
7. East Africa is the region with the most evidence of illegal trade in live cheetahs and where the trade can potentially have the greatest impact on wild populations (Nowell, 2014). Within this region, Somaliland is the preferred route for cheetah smuggling due to its geographic proximity to the Arabian Peninsula. Somaliland, which is a semi- autonomous region of Somalia functioning as an independent entity but not recognized internationally, is not a Party to CITES. However, local environmental authorities attempted to submit cheetah trade information to CITES through CCF but failed to obtain authorization from the federal Somali authorities. As such, the authors submit the following information not made available for document SC70-43.

Somaliland accounts for:

* 1. 34.3% of all 49 verified cases in the HoA region with 70 cheetahs (69 live, 1 skin).
  2. 50.0% of all confiscations in the region.
  3. 73.7% of all live cheetah confiscations (14 out of 19).

1. The Middle East region is the main destination for live cheetahs trafficked out of East Africa (Nowell, 2014), representing 23.2% of all verified cases (23) of illegal cheetah trade with 131 live animals. Thirteen live cheetah confiscations were recorded by CCF during this period, including nine reported to CITES by Saudi Arabia. Yemen, a country facing war and a humanitarian crisis, is the main entry point for cheetahs smuggled out of East Africa for the illegal pet trade, representing 45.0% of the regional total with 59 cheetahs, all live.
2. In terms of cheetah products, the Southern Africa region accounts for 75.8% of all 120 units. Most of these (75 = 62.5%) were skins found at traditional markets in Johannesburg (South Africa). A South African NGO submitting approved information through the CITES questionnaire expressed a need for improved systems for tracking live cheetahs after confiscation, to prevent their return to illegal trade or unauthorized captive breeding. Currently, there does not seem to be a standard mechanism available to track confiscated cheetahs.
3. Following is a comparison summary of data included in document SC70-43 and verified data compiled by CCF. Numbers in parenthesis denote confiscations reported in the CITES document from data supplied by four Parties through the questionnaires and illegal trade report data compiled by the UNODC for 2016. When comparing 83 confiscations against 390 cheetahs or cheetah products in the trade, the detection rate is 21.3%, while the remaining 78.7% are undetected cases.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Live | | Products | | Total in Trade | Total Confiscated |
| Region | **Total** | **Confiscated** | **Total** | **Confiscated** |  |  |
| Middle East | 131 | 13(9) | - | - | 131 | 13(9) |
| East Africa | 127 | 19 | 10 | 9 | 137 | 28 |
| Southern Africa | 4 | 4(4) | 91 | 15(13) | 95 | 19(17) |
| So Asia | 4 | 4 |  |  | 4 | 2 |
| Americas | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2(2) | 7 | 6(2) |
| Asia (other) | - | - | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Europe | - | - | 5 | 4(4) | 5 | 4(4) |
| Oceania | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grand Total | **270** | **42(13)** | **120** | **41(19)** | **390** | **83(32)** |

1. In addition to recording illegal cheetah trade reports, CCF investigates cheetahs offered for sale online. However, to avoid potential duplications, the above figures do not include 776 cheetahs offered for sale by 183 accounts on social media and marketplaces during the same period. Ninety-seven of these accounts (97.8%) indicate Middle East countries as their location, and most deal in a variety of CITES-listed species in addition to cheetahs. To prevent the inclusion of scam advertisements, CCF resources to image, telephone numbers and name searches.
2. Considering the above, it is evident that detection levels need improvement. As such, the authors encourage the Standing Committee to take notice of the data on illegal cheetah trade presented herein, and to include additional recommendations in Standing Committee document SC70-43 Annex, paragraph 26, as follows:

**Recommendations**

***Directed to the Secretariat***

x. Subject to funding, commission the analysis of data presented in this document as well as any other data available through other official and non-official sources.

x. Establish a platform within the Cheetah Forum currently under development, where all Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations can share non-classified, non-official information, non-sensitive information and best practices to improve detection rates of illegal cheetah trade and provide a comprehensive overview of illegal cheetah trade.

x. Encourage all Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, wherever possible, to support the development of capacity building tools and resources in range states of cheetahs and countries affected by the illegal trade chain.

x. Encourage all Parties to share best practices concerning the tracking of seized live animals post-confiscation to prevent confiscated cheetahs from being returned to the trade chain, and to support countries where effective methods have not been developed.

x. Seek completion of a list of facilities with capacity and expertise to house confiscated live cheetahs, as well as a list of experts in cheetah health and care, including contact details, for inclusion in the Cheetah Trade Resource Kit.

x. The Secretariat to report to the Standing Committee on progress on all of the recommendations, and progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs adopted at (SC70).

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