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International Tiger Coalition

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World Governments Reject Tiger Farming and Trade; A Victory for Wild Tigers, Coalition Says

The Hague, The Netherlands – Tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts, governments gathered here said today, approving a decision to strengthen conservation of wild tigers.

“This was a major victory for wild tigers, which could be quickly wiped out by poaching if there is a legal market anywhere,” said Uttara Mendiratta of Wildlife Protection Society of India, on behalf of the 35 member organizations of the International Tiger Coalition. “The international community has sent a clear message that the world cannot sacrifice the last wild tigers for the sake of a handful of wealthy tiger farm investors.”

The International Tiger Coalition commends delegates from four countries with wild tigers – India, Nepal, Bhutan and Russia – and the United States in standing firm on behalf of wild tiger conservation during a lengthy debate here today. The decision was adopted by consensus, but not before China tried to soften the language.

Privately run “tiger farms” across China have bred nearly 5,000 captive tigers and are putting enormous pressure on the Chinese government to allow legal trade in tiger parts within China. They argue that their captive tigers will meet the demand of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) users for tiger-bone tonic wines and medicines. But TCM practitioners worldwide have stopped using tiger bone and reject the argument that it is needed in legitimate medicines.

“The request for reopening trade does not come from TCM,” Lixin Huang, president of the American College of TCM, told the forum before the decision was made. “TCM does not wish to be responsible for the extinction of wild tigers.”

All international trade in tiger parts is banned by CITES, and China has banned domestic trade since 1993. The ban has proven successful in reducing demand for tiger bone and raising public awareness about tiger conservation, studies have found.

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