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International Tiger Coalition

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China Must Back Statements on Tiger Trade Ban With Concrete Steps to Phase Out Tiger Farms

The Hague – On the eve of a major international wildlife trade meeting here, China said publicly that it will maintain its 14-year tiger trade ban and crack down on illegal tiger trade. But to make this announcement meaningful, the Chinese government must reject a pending petition by private tiger farms that want to reopen trade so they can profit from tiger parts, a coalition of 35 organisations working to save wild tigers said.

The *China Daily* on Thursday quotes China’s State Forestry Administration spokesman Liu Xiongying as saying the government remains committed to the ban, in spite of intense pressure from tiger farm investors to lift the ban. “China will strengthen the crackdown on illegal trade of tiger parts and forge cooperation with other countries to protect tiger habitats,” Liu told the official English-language newspaper of China.

This contradicts China’s submission to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which makes a case for lifting China’s highly successful 14-year ban on domestic trade in tiger parts. Delegates from 171 delegates will meet in The Hague 3-15 June to discuss international wildlife trade issues.

“China is sending mixed messages to the world community,” said Dr. Susan Lieberman, director of the Global Species Programme for WWF. “It’s important that China act consistently, by publicly clarifying for CITES delegates its plans to make the ban permanent and destroy stockpiles of tiger products to demonstrate its commitment to saving wild tigers.”

The 35 organisations of the International Tiger Coalition stand ready to assist China in shutting down its tiger farms and increase law enforcement efforts to crack down on illegal trade of tiger parts.

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