



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 17 February 2010

6595/10

**ENV 87
WTO 42
ONU 21**

NOTE

from : Dutch delegation
to : Council

Subject : Illegal trade in ivory

Delegations will find attached a note submitted by the Dutch delegation to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 22 February 2010.

The Netherlands would like to draw the attention of the Council on the increase of the illegal trade in ivory.

An increase of interceptions of illegal ivory transports has taken place over the past two years. Scientific data indicate that both the transports of illegal ivory and the poaching preceding the transports is most notable in countries in West and Central Africa. An additional problem is the transport via the large ports in East Africa. It is very important to analyse the causes of the increased poaching carefully. Particularly in the light of a one-off sale of ivory from four countries in Southern Africa that has taken place last year. Monitoring data of the CITES Secretariat and the NGO TRAFFIC show that after a steady fall of the quantity of ivory confiscated in 2007, and 2008, 2009 shows a marked increase in seizures. In 2009, 15000kg of ivory has been confiscated and that is two times the amount confiscated in 2008. Poaching peaked a year earlier and seems to decrease somewhat in 2009. The data also indicate an increase in total weight of the ivory per seizure. This could be because of a more prominent role of organised crime syndicates. The effective functioning of the government is by far the most determining factor for the level of poaching in a given area. Therefore, it needn't surprise us that the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria feature prominently in the list of countries of origin of seized ivory. Thailand is an important country of transit but seems to have recognised this fact and seems to have taken appropriate measures to counter this. The same can be said of Viet Nam.

The provisional figures show that a direct relationship between the one off sale and the level of poaching cannot be proven. However, a link cannot be definitively excluded either. The available data do point to other factors that relate significantly to the level of poaching. Most prominent is the political stability in a country and the level of corruption. The economic crisis seems to have had a negative influence in areas where international consortia have left their timber concessions. The former employees now resort to illegal activities.