



The Kingdom of Eswatini's
BIG GAME PARKS
National Wildlife Authority

KINGDOM OF ESWATINI
SYNOPSIS FOR IWMG GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM
TO BE HELD AT GENEVA 25-27 FEBRUARY 2020

We are asked to answer the question: "How have CITES decisions, influenced by the Animal rights, impacted the farming rhino industry?"

The CITES Management Authority of the Kingdom of Eswatini feels a sharply declining value in its continued membership of CITES following the outcomes of the CITES CoP17 in 2016 in Johannesburg and again of the CoP18 held in Geneva last year.

We believe the Kingdom of Eswatini presented totally valid proposals to utilize her own sovereign resources of rhino horn at both CITES CoP17 and CoP18 and that the rejection of these proposals was without merit and was totally unreasonable.

We have also come to believe that any future proposal to CITES on commercialization and sustainable consumptive utilization of natural resources will be futile. The reason is that CITES Member States are strategically targeted and lobbied by anti-commercialization activist NGOs long before debating the issues at a CITES forum, which is where they are meant to be debated. These strategically targeted Member States therefore come to CITES CoPs with their positions already entrenched, so whether or not there is merit in a proposal it is bound to fail. And it's all about money. These NGOs are rich and powerful, made so on animals in crisis, against which fund raising from well-intentioned sponsors is made easy.

CITES has succumbed to the influence of these animal rights (AR) activist NGOs and this has severely harmed the ability of pro-SU sovereign States to protect their animals. For instance, CITES is rapidly putting beyond reach the security affordability required to protect rhinos and the very promising option of farming of rhinos is already a dead duck, to the detriment of Africa's rhinos and the national economies of Range States. CITES therefore has a very negative influence on successful rhino conservation. Indeed, in general, instead of supporting States with successful conservation records, CITES is effectively alienating them and taking sides with States which have failed, or are failing in their conservation efforts.

In Southern Africa there is a lot of prime rhino habitat available for rhino conservation. The tragedy is that it is not being used for rhinos for the single reason that they cannot be fully commercialized. In fact in the last few years more than 400,000ha of rhino habitat have been withdrawn from rhino conservation because the risk and cost of keeping them alive is no longer affordable. Ironically, this also makes dead rhinos more valuable than live rhinos, with criminal syndicates the only beneficiaries from a monopoly given to them on a plate by CITES.

This is a disgraceful reason for the current plight of rhinos and the root cause of it is the strong lobby of certain NGOs with anti-commercial use policies. These activists have strategically targeted and influenced iconic personalities in Hollywood and around the world, including British Royalty, who in turn influence the world at large. The problem is that their doctrines fly against the realities of the economic imperative, which we (and they) all have to live by. **The economic imperative is the bottom line.**

Richard Leakey, the champion of Kenyan preservation philosophies and of the public burning of valuable natural resources, has at last come out to publicly state that his country's wild animals, once the icon of African wildlife, will be lucky to survive beyond the middle of this century. This can only be because Kenyan wildlife has been devalued and may not be commercially utilized and, instead, has been reduced to donor dependence.

If you devalue African wildlife its pattern of disappearance will be all-pervasive, all over Africa. Politicians and preservationists ignore this reality at their peril – and at the undoubted cost of Africa's wild fauna. It is so obvious that the anti-commercial AR activists, who benefit commercially by keeping animals in crisis, **are** the influence behind this catastrophe. And, as he is said to have stated, even Richard Leakey needs more money. Money, money, money! Money is the bottom line and we must discard the stigma of embracing it because none of us can eat without it and certainly conservation would die without it.

This is how anti-commercialization activists are negatively affecting the sustainable use philosophies and practices of the Kingdom of Eswatini and a host of other successful range states of Southern Africa.

There is no sense in preparing for CoP19 in two years' time only to predictably receive the same outcome as we did in CoP18. Something needs to happen to change the current trend. One way forward for proponents of sustainable utilization may be to band together and boycott future CITES meetings and in a letter to the CITES Secretariat give notice that we reserve the right to enter reservations on all CITES decisions which affect our sovereign rights to utilize and benefit from our own natural resources. But this cannot succeed if done in isolation – it must be done as a coalition of pro-sustainable use States.

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