

South Africa and Vietnam sign anti-rhino poaching MoU

The Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa , has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Minister of Agricultural and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Dr Cao Duc Phat, regarding co-operation in the field of biodiversity conservation and protection, in Hanoi, Vietnam.



The objective of the MoU is to promote co-operation between the two countries in the field of biodiversity management, conservation and protection. Particularly aimed at curbing the scourge in rhino poaching, the MoU seeks to promote co-operation in law enforcement, compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other relevant legislation and conventions on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

A significant step

Speaking at the signing of the MoU, Minister Molewa described the signing as a significant step in addressing the scourge of rhino poaching. "The continued slaughter of South Africa's national treasure, the rhino, is a cause for immense concern. South Africa continues to vigorously implement various interventions in a bid to curb rhino poaching and we believe that this latest development at an international level is crucial for South Africa to effectively deal with the current scourge of poaching, and with illegal hunting largely driven by the international demand for the rhino horn."

The Minister added: "The latest rhino poaching statistics indicate that a total of 618 rhino have been poached in South Africa. As the poaching toll mounts, it is clear that everyone has a critical role to play in this war that we are waging against poaching. The signing of this international MoU adds to our arsenal against rhino poaching and increases the number of role players working towards curbing rhino poaching."

The signing is the culmination of discussions between the two governments and, in September 2011, the governments of Vietnam and South Africa agreed on a process towards the finalisation of the MoU. South Africa also recognises the supporting role played by TRAFFIC (the wildlife trade monitoring network) in orchestrating the development of the MoU. TRAFFIC brought the South African delegation to Vietnam in October 2010 and then the Vietnamese delegation to South Africa in September 2012.

The MoU identifies seven areas as priority areas of co-operation. The areas are:

- Biodiversity management, conservation and protection.
- Compliance with CITES and other relevant internationally binding conventions.
- Forestry and biodiversity law enforcement and compliance with domestic frameworks and applicable conventions.
- Strengthen the co-operation on the above through the exchange of information, best practice and research.
- Technology use, transfer and development.
- Natural resource management, wildlife trade. Protected areas management, community development, sustainable livelihoods.
- Other areas related to the objective of the MoU.

Co-operation between Vietnam and South Africa will range from the exchange of visits of experts and delegations to undertaking collaborative projects. Each country will appoint a co-ordinator to implement the MoU. The MoU will remain in force for a period of five years after which it may be extended with the consent of both countries.

The Minister went on to say that the continued efforts by the South African law enforcement agencies had seen an increase in arrests in relation to rhino poaching being made this year. Minister Molewa said that the swift action of the numerous law enforcement agencies was commendable as was the strict sentences imposed on those involved in rhino poaching and related crimes.

It is envisaged that the co-operation with Vietnam will not only aid in curbing rhino poaching, but will also further the country's biodiversity conservation efforts and aid in its fight against other environmental crimes.

[Access the latest rhino poaching and arrests statistics.](#)

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