



Illegal wildlife trade in times of crises

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Secretary-General, CITES**

CITES

- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**
- Signed on 3 March 1973, entered into force in 1975
- Over 38,000 species listed in 3 Appendices
- CITES has 184 signatory Parties: 183 States and the EU



Legality



Sustainability



Traceability

Illegal Wildlife Trade

- UNODC & WEF have listed Illegal Wildlife Trade 4th most lucrative in world, after drugs, human trafficking and guns
- Value uncertain but probably more than \$20bn/year
- Organized criminal groups are sophisticated, corrupting, profit-focused and obstruct justice
- Crisis situations breed confusion and can help facilitate crime



Illegal wildlife trade

Illegal trade can involve:

Specimens that cannot be commercially traded

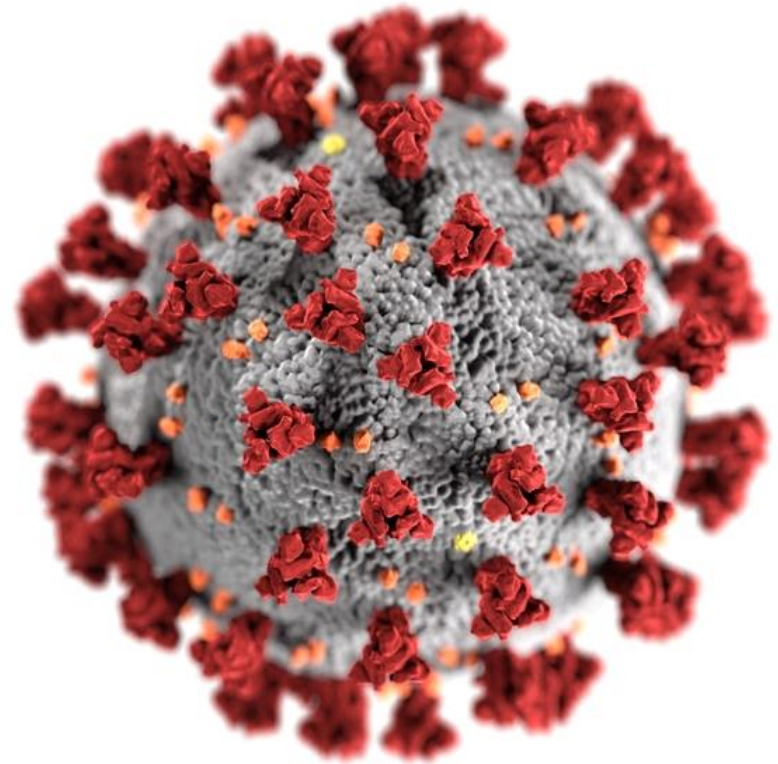
Specimens that can be lawfully traded, but not in accordance with CITES

Transnational organized criminal groups and corruption

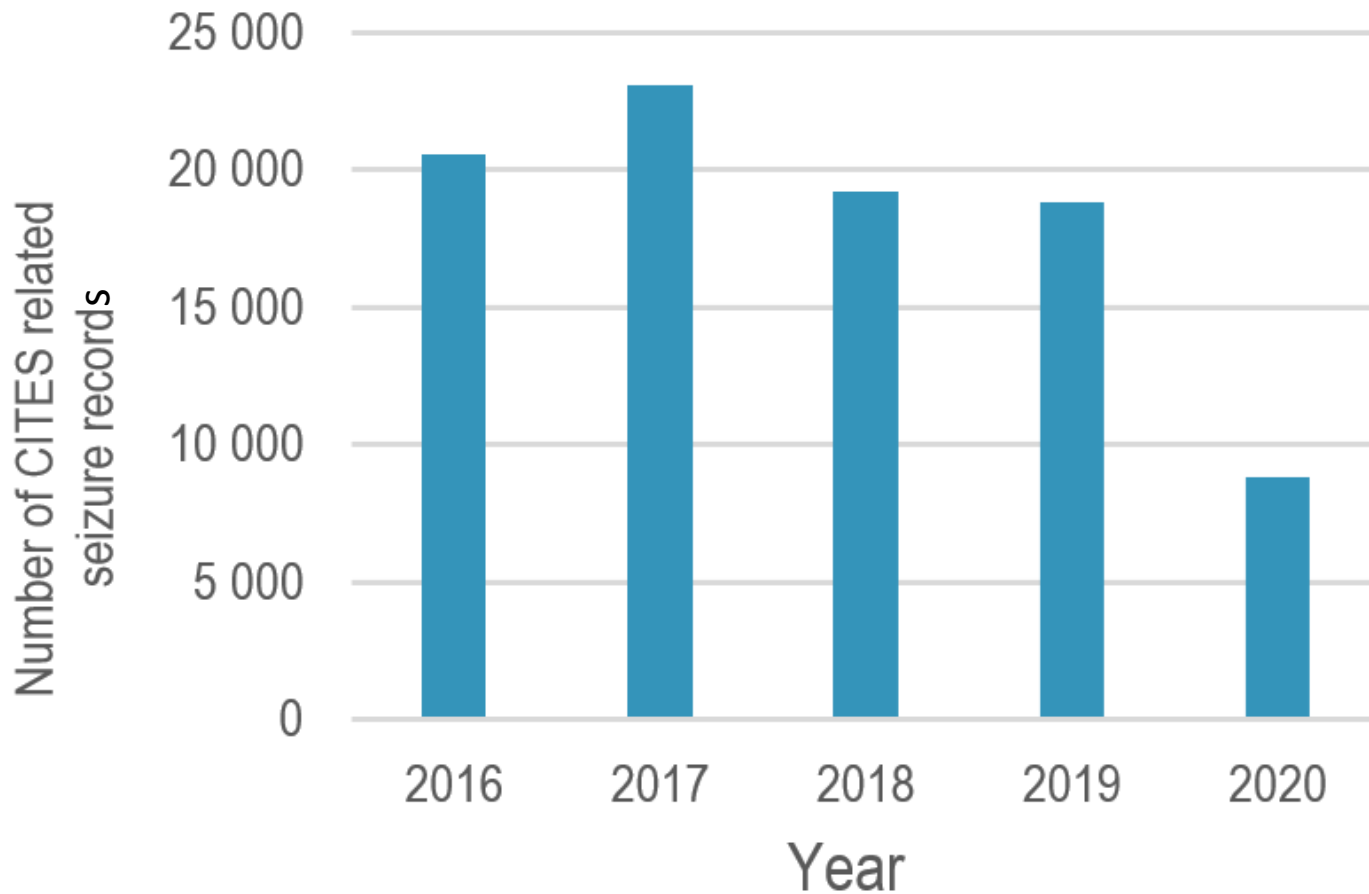


COVID-19 pandemic

- During 2020, border closures limited transport options
- CITES trade data showed seizures dropped
- Not clear if this meant illegal trade was down
- Annual Illegal Trade Reports from CITES Parties would provide a better picture
- Future analysis of trade data will provide a clearer picture of COVID impact
- CITES role in prevention of spread of zoonotic diseases



CITES Illegal Trade Database – seizure records (2016-2020)



ETIS & MIKE

- ETIS – illegal ivory trade
- MIKE – illegal killing of elephants
- Fewer sites visits possible during COVID
- Fewer records provided
- BUT more partnerships with local groups
- Providing training
- Providing resources



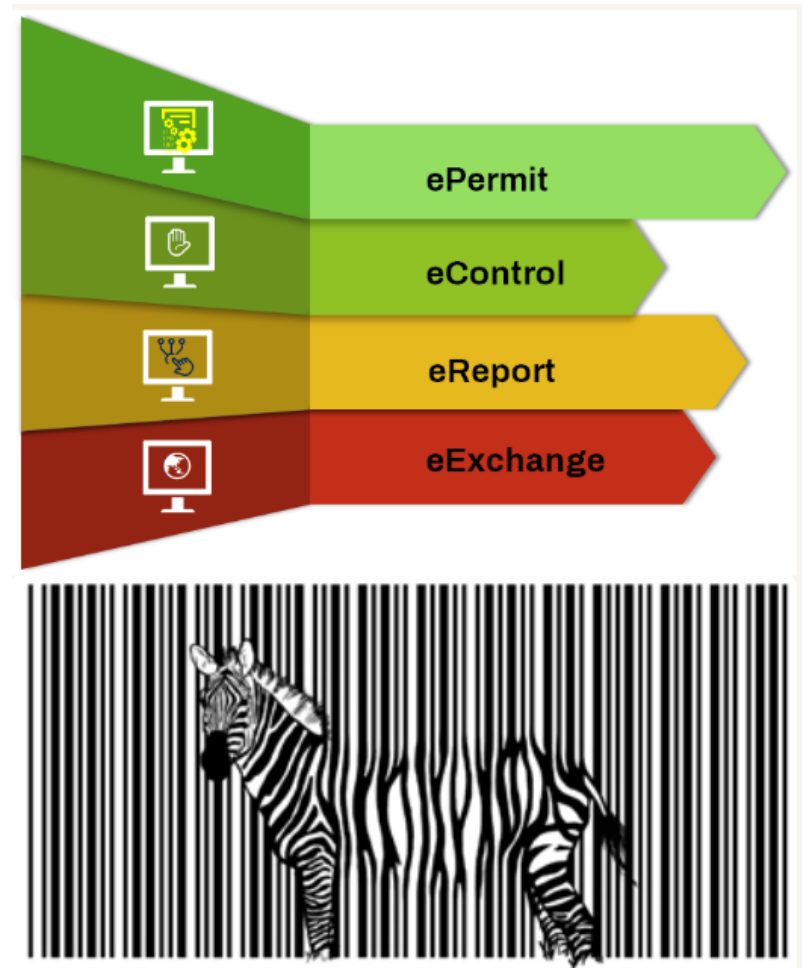
Steps to Combat Illegal and Illicit Trade

- E-permits
- Training/Work with Parties
- Article XIII
- Anti-corruption
- Anti-money laundering
- Partnerships e.g. ICCWC
- Proactive Policies



e-CITES

- Currently more than a million permits a year (paper)
- Electronic permitting promises
 - Better security
 - Better traceability
 - Much less open to abuse
 - Easier and faster reporting
 - Less work
- Now working with UNCTAD and other partners and e-CITES is being tested by a number of Parties



Work with Parties

- CITES Secretariat works constantly with Parties to provide guidance and training on implementation of the Convention
- The Convention requires due diligence from Parties which means fully satisfying themselves that the trade conforms to regulations
- Secretariat provides guidance on the impact of crises and suggests mitigations



Partnerships

- Partnerships are at the heart of our operations
- ICCWC
- Other MEAs
- CITES operates at the center of a network that takes in business, industry and conservation



International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime



**Coordinated action to
combat wildlife crime**



ICCWC response to COVID-19

- Many ICCWC activities highly impacted by COVID-19
- Alternative implementation options where possible; focus on progressing work virtually; postponing in-person meetings
- ICCWC:
 - Front line response: Operation Thunder 2020 & 2021 supported virtually
 - Online capacity building/trainings/webinars/mentorships, etc:
- CITES-led activities:
 - Update training/materials on safe handling of CITES-listed species
 - Online support
 - Virtual sessions/webinars (e.g. combating wildlife crime linked to Internet)
 - Online training on CITES & enforcement matters (WCO series & upcoming West/Central Africa support)

Proactive policies to stop vulnerable people being drawn into illegal wildlife trade during times of crises

- Important to build political will and inclusion of all affected groups
- Demand-side has to be addressed as well as supply-side
- Imaginative and bold funding decisions needed. Individual countries shouldn't bear the brunt of actions that benefit us all



Thank you for your attention !



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