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## INFORMATION FOR PRESS

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### **Vietnam to contribute to mainland Southeast Asia's recovery of tigers by reducing tiger consumption, stopping illegal tiger trade and tiger farms**

Hanoi, 29 July 2021 - The numbers of wild tigers are declining in all tiger range countries in mainland Southeast Asia, and it is now a near certainty that these countries will have fewer tigers than they did in 2010 - the year the global goal was set to double the world's wild tigers by 2022. One of the leading causes of this decline is the poaching of tigers driven by illegal tiger trade and consumption. Viet Nam can contribute to the region's efforts to reverse the decline of wild tigers by enhancing measures to reduce illegal trade and consumption of tigers and their parts.

"Tiger populations in Southeast Asia have declined at an alarming rate despite global pledges to increase numbers a decade ago. It's not too late if urgent action is taken to resource and manage the last strongholds of Asia's iconic big cat," said Stuart Chapman, lead of WWF's Tigers Alive Initiative.

"Countries such as India, Nepal and Russia have shown that with the right interventions, tiger populations can recover, and in some cases, double over a relatively short period of time. With enough connected habitat, prey, and protection from poaching, tigers can make a comeback" he added.

Snaring poses the greatest threat to tigers in Southeast Asia. There are an estimated over dozen million snares on the ground throughout protected areas in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam - countries where no sign of wild tiger offspring to be seen for a while and a sign of what the rest of the region faces without strong action to stop this crisis.

Despite the overall decline of tiger numbers in the region, there are positive signs from significant success stories to build on. For instance, anti-poaching patrols led by Indigenous community members in Malaysia's Belum-Temengor Forest Complex have contributed to a 94% reduction in active snares since 2017. WWF-Viet Nam and partners, under CarBi project, have removed 134,000 snares since 2011 in Viet Nam forests. And in Thailand, tigers are dispersing from Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary into other protected areas thanks to strong protected area management and connectivity.



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Other major threats include habitat loss due to infrastructure development, illegal logging and agriculture expansion, and the illegal trade in tigers and their parts. The equivalent of 1004 whole tigers were seized between 2000-2018 in Southeast Asia, while the 8,000 tigers estimated to be in captivity in China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam, which continues to undermine law enforcement and stimulate demand for tiger products.

“As a fast developing country in the region, Viet Nam has the capacity and resources to help the recovery of tigers in Southeast Asia by ending illegal trade and consumption of tigers in Viet Nam; phasing out the existing tiger farms that jeopardise demand reduction efforts for tigers and their parts; increase resources for protected areas to stop snaring and recover wildlife in order to keep alive the potential for future reintroduction of tigers to Viet Nam”, said Benjamin Rawson, WWF-Viet Nam's Conservation and Program Development Director

Governments in mainland Southeast Asia have a chance to reverse declining tiger numbers by endorsing a Southeast Asia Tiger Recovery Action Plan that will be tabled at the fourth Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation. This is being hosted by the government of Malaysia in November. Possible elements of the plan include an increase to protected area budgets including rangers on the ground, and high-level political oversight for tiger conservation through the establishment of National Tiger Committees chaired by the head of government. Other elements of the plan should also include identifying opportunities for tiger translocations and reintroduction, and addressing the illegal trade of tigers and tiger parts.

“Although there is almost no tiger trace in Viet Nam in the wild, there is opportunity for Vietnam to contribute to the restoration of tigers in Southeast Asia through ongoing efforts such as protecting and restoring tiger habitats and their prey, ending the illegal tiger farming for non-conservation purposes and reducing demand in tigers and their products. Viet Nam highly appreciates support from conservation organizations and looks forward to more support to help Viet Nam realize its short-term commitment to give a safe space for tigers to return and head reintroduction of tigers to increase their population in Indochina.” said Hoang Thi Thanh Nhan, Deputy Director of Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Vietnam Environment Administration, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Some of these measures have been adopted with success in other countries. India for instance is applying best practices in the management of tiger conservation areas, with the announcement today of 14 sites approved under the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS) - a conservation tool that sets standards to manage target species and benchmark progress. There are currently 100+ CA|TS sites globally, covering more than 70% of the global tiger population, with sites registered in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Malaysia, Nepal and Russia. The



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world and conservation community are looking to Viet Nam and its neighbouring countries to give tigers the space and safe conditions they need in order to return to where they once roamed.

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**Photo and video** can be accessed [here](#).

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**WWF**

WWF is an independent conservation organization, with over 30 million followers and a global network active in nearly 100 countries. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

**The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA)**

The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA) under the Vietnam Environment Administration, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam is the focal agency in conducting state management of biodiversity in Vietnam. BCA is responsible for consulting the development of relevant document in the management and conservation of biodiversity and other state management mandates in biodiversity conservation, including the conservation of endangered, precious, rare species prioritized for protection; protection of natural ecosystems; management of genetic resources and control of invasive species...with an aim to preserve and develop biodiversity resources