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For the first time in 20 years Nepal has burnt its stockpile of wildlife parts, demonstrating the nation's commitment towards zero tolerance of wildlife crime.

Based on an audit completed in July 2016, more than 4,000 wildlife parts of 48 different species, including 67 tiger skins and 357 rhino horns, were burnt in Chitwan National Park. The event was attended by Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, government representatives, security chiefs, local communities, media, conservation agencies and NGOs. The audit covered wildlife parts confiscated from seizure operations and recovered from animals that had died from natural causes.

Man Bahadur Khadka, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation said:

"Nepal has achieved a significant milestone in conservation. The government of Nepal expresses its commitment to zero poaching and a non-tolerance towards wildlife crime."

Anil Manandhar, Country Representative of WWF Nepal added:

"With each year, Nepal goes from strength to strength in conservation. Through coordinated efforts from the central to the grassroots level, it is a conservation imperative to break the myth of the illegal wildlife trade as iconic species such as tigers and rhinos are poached to satisfy human greed."

The destruction of the stockpile was also a management intervention to dispose of aged and decaying wildlife parts. Some wildlife parts were omitted from the burn and retained by the government, including items under investigation, those required for future scientific studies, and elephant tusks (due to the lack of technology required for crushing the ivory before burning).

Heather Sohl, Chief Advisor on Wildlife at WWF-UK said: *"The sight of such a huge volume of bones, skins, and horns up in flames may be somewhat distressing, but it sends a clear message to the world that Nepal will not tolerate wildlife poaching and trafficking. The illegal wildlife trade threatens many of the world's most iconic species including tigers and rhinos. It is the fourth largest illegal trade, worth over an estimated £15 billion annually. Combatting this trade requires strong political will, enhanced law enforcement, approaches to tackle corruption effectively and behaviour change campaigns that will reduce the demand for such illegal goods."*