



## **3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Rhino Range Countries Meeting**

**Chitwan National Park, Nepal  
3-5 February, 2023**

### **Press Release**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Rhino Range Countries Meeting has concluded today after launching the “Chitwan Declaration for Asian Rhinos Conservation, 2023”. The authorities of Asian Rhino Range Countries and rhino experts attended the in-person meeting in Chitwan National Park, Nepal between 3 and 5 February 2023. In the last three days, the delegates from Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal shared country-wise experiences and best practices, initiatives, common issues and visions, explored the joint actions, and set future priorities for the conservation of the Rhinos in Asia. Specifically, the participants discussed on threats such as poaching and illegal wildlife trade, preventing habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, biological population management, human-rhino conflict mitigation, wildlife health, strengthening trans-boundary cooperation and climate adversities.

The inaugural session of the meeting was chaired by Dr. Maheshwar Dhakal, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Hon'ble Vice Chairperson of the National Planning Commission Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha was the Chief Guest of the session. Deputy Director General of DNPWC Mr. Ajay Karki welcomed the delegates and participants of the meeting.

The Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Puspa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' delivered a video message expressing Nepal Government's commitment for rhino conservation and urged all range countries to coordinate with development agencies to promote nature positive infrastructures. The session was addressed by Dr. Jon Paul Rodriguez, Chair, IUCN/Species Survival Commission (SSC); Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Chair, Asian Rhino Specialist Group; Dr. Krishna Prasad Oli, Chairperson, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal; Shiva Kumar Wagle, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forests and

Environment, Nepal. The Chief Guest highlighted the importance of collaborative effort of range countries for rhino conservation. The inaugural session concluded with vote of thanks by the Chair.

The meeting is hosted by the Government of Nepal, facilitated by the Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission (SSC) and supported by National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) Nepal, WWF Nepal, ZSL Nepal, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rhino Recovery Fund, Aaranyak, and International Rhino Foundation. This is the third meeting of the Asian Rhino Range Countries; first and second meetings were held in Indonesia in 2013 and in India in 2019 respectively.

The agenda of the meeting were divided in six sessions, covering topics related to: Country reports on update on the status and conservation of Asian rhino; tools and techniques for rhino conservation and future collaboration prospects; protection and anti-poaching approach; climate change and rhino conservation; complementing Asian rhino range countries' effort by international agencies.

The deliberations over the last three days have reviewed the "New Delhi Declaration for Asian Rhinos Conservation, 2019" and concluded with a launching of "Chitwan Declaration for Asian Rhinos Conservation, 2023". The Asian Rhino Range Countries agreed on collaborating for rhino conservation focusing in six themes: Protection; population management; habitat management; Research monitoring and information sharing; Coordination and Cooperation.

Thank you.



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Ajay Karki  
Deputy Director General  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation  
and  
Coordinator, Meeting Organizing Committee  
February 5, 2023