



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

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PRESS RELEASE Three generations of the royal family speak out against wild animal trafficking

In February 2013 HRH The Duke of Edinburgh held a meeting on the subject of the trafficking in endangered animal species at which representatives of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and religious partner organisations presented statements from 34 religious traditions from Africa, India, Indonesia and China and including Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Now ARC has been honoured to be invited to hear two further generations of the British royal family adding their voices to the growing campaign against the illegal trade in wildlife.

On May 21, 2013, HRH Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, and his son HRH Prince William, the Duke of Cornwall hosted a major conference in St James' Palace, London, attended by representatives of Interpol and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as those from ARC, WWF, Wild Aid, CITES and the UK Environment Secretary Owen Paterson. The event focused on the plights of three species - elephant, tiger and rhino - whose future is seriously endangered by poachers providing body parts to the international market.

The gruesome reality of trafficking in animal parts was brought home to the St James' Palace meeting by a display, set up by UK customs officials, of elephant tusks, rhino horns and products made from body parts of illegally poached endangered animals.

Prince Charles told the conference that it was 'unthinkable' that animals should become extinct saying that "the destruction of animal species will diminish us all." He urged the need for swift and effective action to combat this issue.

As royal patron of the African wildlife charity Tusk Trust Prince William was equally strong in his condemnation, saying: "I sincerely hope that my generation is not the first on this planet to consider elephants, rhinos or tigers as historical creatures - in the same category as the Dodo. These creatures are still with us, their magnificence more wonderful than anything we could ever create in our imaginations, and they enrich our world immeasurably... Their majesty contrasts to the

ugliness of the illegal trade that destroys them through greed or ignorance."

What was made very clear is the fact that until the demand for these animal parts has been addressed nothing of significance will change in those countries where the killing of the animals goes on. Wild Aid is one of the few groups along with ARC to target the consumer and the culture of consumerism of endangered animals whether for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) or for status symbol artefacts.

Past experience has shown that the involvement of the Princes is likely to be very influential: in the early 1990's Japan was the largest single importer of ivory until the intervention of ARC's founder HRH The Duke of Edinburgh who launched a campaign with the elite sectors of Japanese society to make it socially unacceptable to have ivory artefacts. The campaign was so successful that Japan is no longer a factor in the illegal ivory trade.

ARC presented HRH The Prince of Wales with the new faith commitments against the illegal wildlife trade and discussed with him our programme of partnership with the Daoists of China to cut demand by changing the cultural acceptability of the use of animal parts in any TCM. The Daoists have come out powerfully against the use of any animal parts in TCM on the grounds that this is neither traditional nor is it spiritually acceptable.

In discussions following the meeting, ARC and Wild Aid are exploring how through tv and social media the Daoist message can be brought home to millions in China as part of the wider programme of using stars and sports personalities to make the medicinal use of endangered animals in China socially unacceptable.

Martin Palmer, ARC's Secretary General said, "Until this meeting I was not aware how few groups are working with the culture, norms and values of the consuming countries rather than trying to fight the poachers. I am heartened by the example our Founder set in the 1990's and feel even more confident that the role of the faiths in changing values and practices could be one of the most important ways forward in saving the wonderful creatures of creation."

You can see a video clip of Prince William addressing the conference at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74_IC_MmMO8

You can see a short video from Martin Palmer about the links between this trade and religions at

<http://ubraintv.com/watchnews.php?id=100247>

More information:

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Visit the website: www.arcworld.org

Notes to editors:

1. ARC is a UK based secular charity set up by HRH Prince Philip in 1986 to help the world's major faiths develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices.
See <http://www.arcworld.org/about.asp?pageID=2>
2. In September 2012 at a conference in Nairobi, Kenya, ARC and WWF launched a major international campaign with 50 African religious leaders uniting against the killing of endangered species caused by the illegal wildlife trade.
See <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=565>