

Environmental Investigation Agency response to “Interim Measures for the Administration of Medicine under Basic Medical Insurance”

EIA is an international non-governmental organization committed to investigating environmental crime and abuse and advocating for effective laws, enforcement and criminal justice responses to combat it. Since its establishment in 1984, EIA has played a key role in contributing to international and national decision-making in relation to combating environmental crimes such as illegal wildlife trade, including through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). EIA’s work on wildlife trade focuses on trade in elephant ivory, tigers and other Asian big cats, rhinoceroses, pangolins and totoaba, although our investigation findings and policy recommendations are of relevance to many other wildlife species.

EIA has contributed comments and recommendations during multiple revisions of the Wildlife Protection Law of the People’s Republic of China and to consultation drafts of implementing regulations. In 2020, EIA has submitted comments on consultation drafts of “Guidance for Reviewing Patent Applications from the Field of Traditional Medicine” and the “National Catalogue of Livestock and Poultry Genetic Resources”.

EIA commends the provision in Article 8 of the “Interim Measures for the Administration of Medicine under Basic Medical Insurance” that any products containing parts of rare or endangered wildlife species shall be excluded from the basic insurance. We urge the National Healthcare Security Administration to maintain this provision in the final published guidance.

In accordance with our recommendations for the 2020 revision of the Wildlife Protection Law ([enclosed](#)), EIA also urges relevant agencies to issue further notifications and revise relevant laws and regulations accordingly to prohibit commercial trade in the parts and derivatives of, at a minimum, all wild animal species which are threatened by trade, including all CITES Appendix I and II big cats, elephants, rhinoceroses, pangolins and bears, including captive-bred specimens and including for use in traditional medicine, and restrict the keeping and breeding of these species to programmes and scientific institutions that are part of internationally recognised scientific conservation breeding initiatives, managed via studbooks. Such a move would better reflect the precautionary approach to wildlife trade enshrined in the “Decisions relating to a total prohibition on illegal wildlife trade, eliminating the bad habit of excessive eating of wildlife, and effectively safeguarding the lives and health of the public” issued by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress in February 2020 and help to lessen the risk of breeding and trade of wild animals in China posing a threat to biodiversity and human health.

In addition, given substantial negative coverage of TCM in Western media due to ongoing use of threatened wild animal parts, and considering that most TCM does not contain wildlife parts, ending the use of threatened wildlife would prevent the actions

of a minority negatively impacting on the image of the whole TCM industry and would benefit the international image of TCM.