

P74-M seized rhino horns turned over to DENR

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The Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Monday turned over its stockpile of seized rhinoceros horns worth P74 million to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Theresa Mundita Lim received the confiscated horns from the BOC, represented by its Environmental Protection Unit head Lt. Angelito Cruz.

Lim said the turnover of rhinoceros horns shows the country's strong resolve to end illegal wildlife trafficking and trade all over the world.

The Philippines is a member to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES) since November 16, 1981.

CITES is an international treaty to regulate commercial trade in certain wildlife species, including the critically endangered rhinoceros.

"We may not have rhinoceros in our country, but this does not mean we will allow others to use them and other such wildlife for unscrupulous gains and contribute to their extinction as a species," Lim said.

She disclosed that the BMB would coordinate with the country of origin, Mozambique, for the possible return of the specimens.

However, should the African state refuse to accept them, Lim said the rhinoceros horns would be disposed of properly or possibly destroyed.

The horns have been seized by the BOC in September 2012 at the Manila International Container Port. They had been declared as cashew nuts and shipped by Chistevas Import and Export from Maputo City, Mozambique.

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