



# 1<sup>st</sup> National Rhino Conservation Dialogue:

National / local utilisation of rhino

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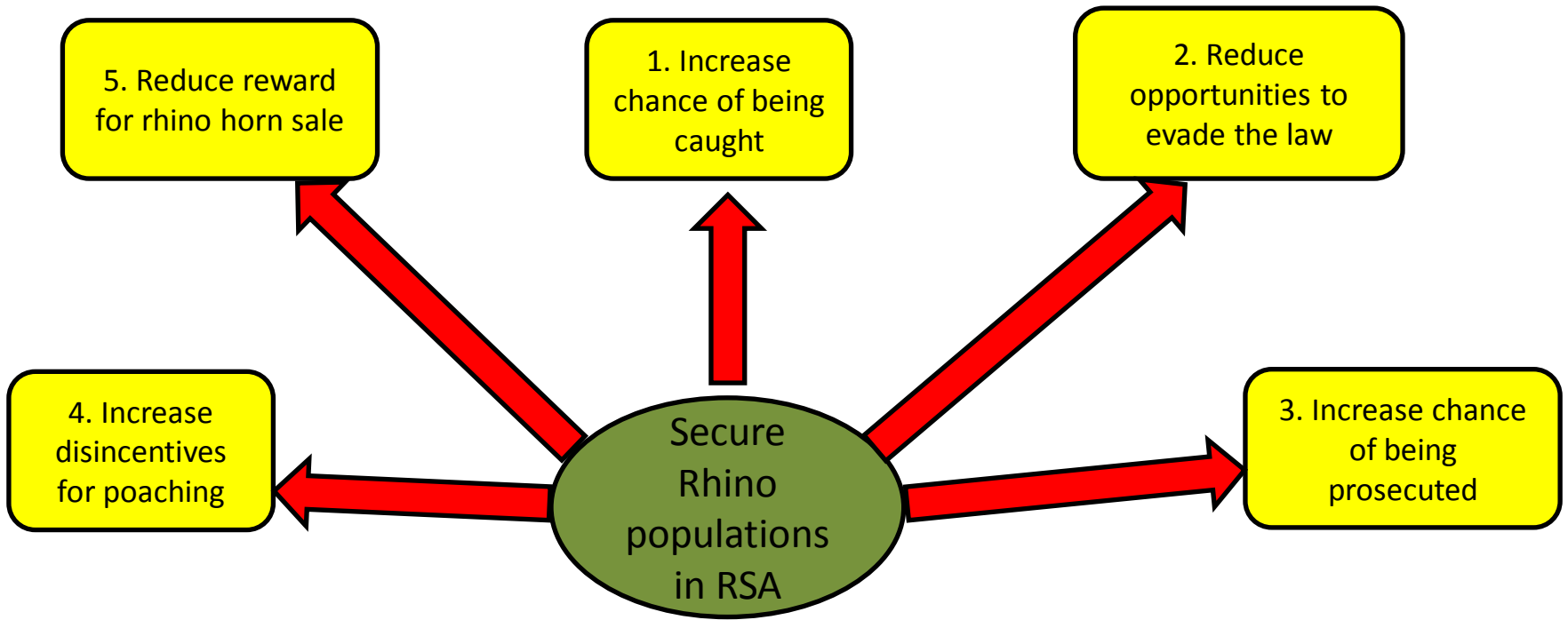
# ON THE FACE OF IT: A BLEAK PICTURE!

- In the past year, the western black rhino and the northern white rhino went extinct in the wild in Africa
- In the past year the Javan rhino went extinct in the wild in Vietnam
- In the past two years close to 1000 rhino were poached in RSA



# BUT...

- Short term decision making is the wrong response, we need to be more strategic
- Advocating short and longer term (20 to 30 years) approaches to the matter



Thoughts on  
longer term responses

# WHITE RHINO



From:

< 100

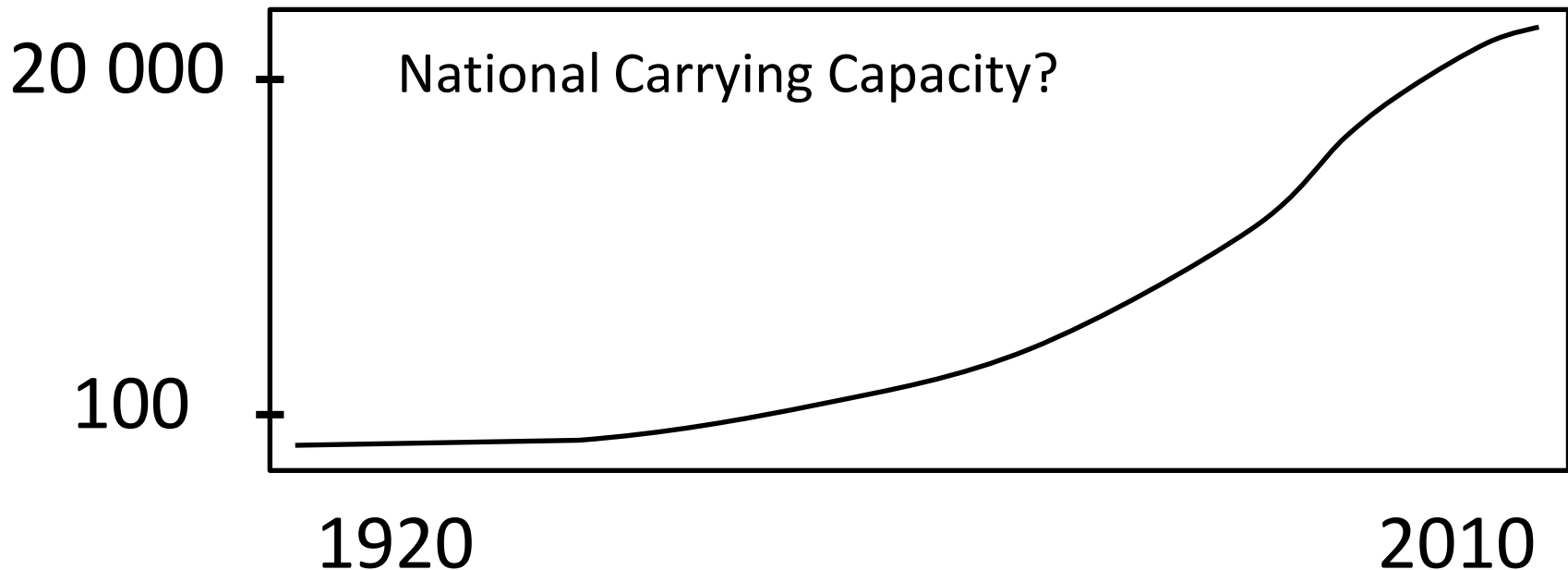
(1920)



To:



> 21 000

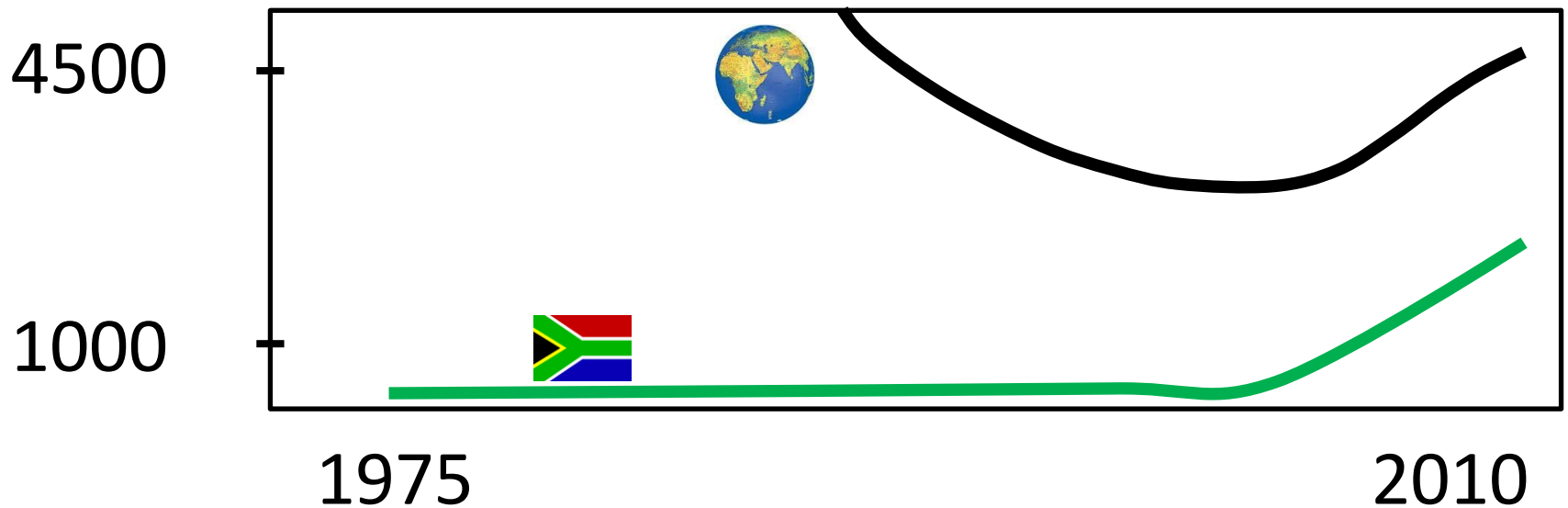
(2010)



# BLACK RHINO



	<u>1975</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2010</u>
	60 000	2 500	4 500
	≈700	800	1 800



# WHAT DO WE KNOW? (1)

- We have reached ~ 90% of the national carrying capacity for free ranging white rhino – we can't continue to grow this herd – need to find alternative management approaches
- There is still room for growth of black rhino but opportunities are limited and Kruger National Park provides most hope

## WHAT DO WE KNOW? (2)

- 900 to 1300 rhino growth each year that need to be managed (response for black and white rhino likely to differ)
  - (400 to 500 currently poached)
- Although State is the anchor, the private sector has been and remains key to long term conservation of rhino for two reasons
  - They have 25% of the national herd on their land
  - They underpin the rhino economy which is critical to long term survival of both species



# WHAT DO WE KNOW? (3)

- The management of genetic heterozygosity is essential for the conservation of both species:
  - Both species have been through one genetic bottle neck – a second one to be avoided
  - Both species are vulnerable to inbreeding in small populations – mainly due to fenced properties,
  - Breeding selection is bad for conservation – e.g. if farming resulted in selection for large horn size
- Thus free ranging rhino populations must underpin rhino conservation

# WHAT DO WE KNOW? (4)

- The demand for horn is currently driven by a niche market in eastern countries and is unlikely to vanish in next 20 to 30 years although it may shift geographically
- Supply (RSA and SADC) is unlikely to meet demand in next 20 to 30 years

# FARMING?

- Large risks associated with farming of rhino in South Africa. From a conservation perspective, this is in part associated with the genetics of the species, but it also includes other factors such as loss of natural landscapes (unintended consequences)
- Actions driven by short term profiteering

# WHAT CAN WE DO? (1)

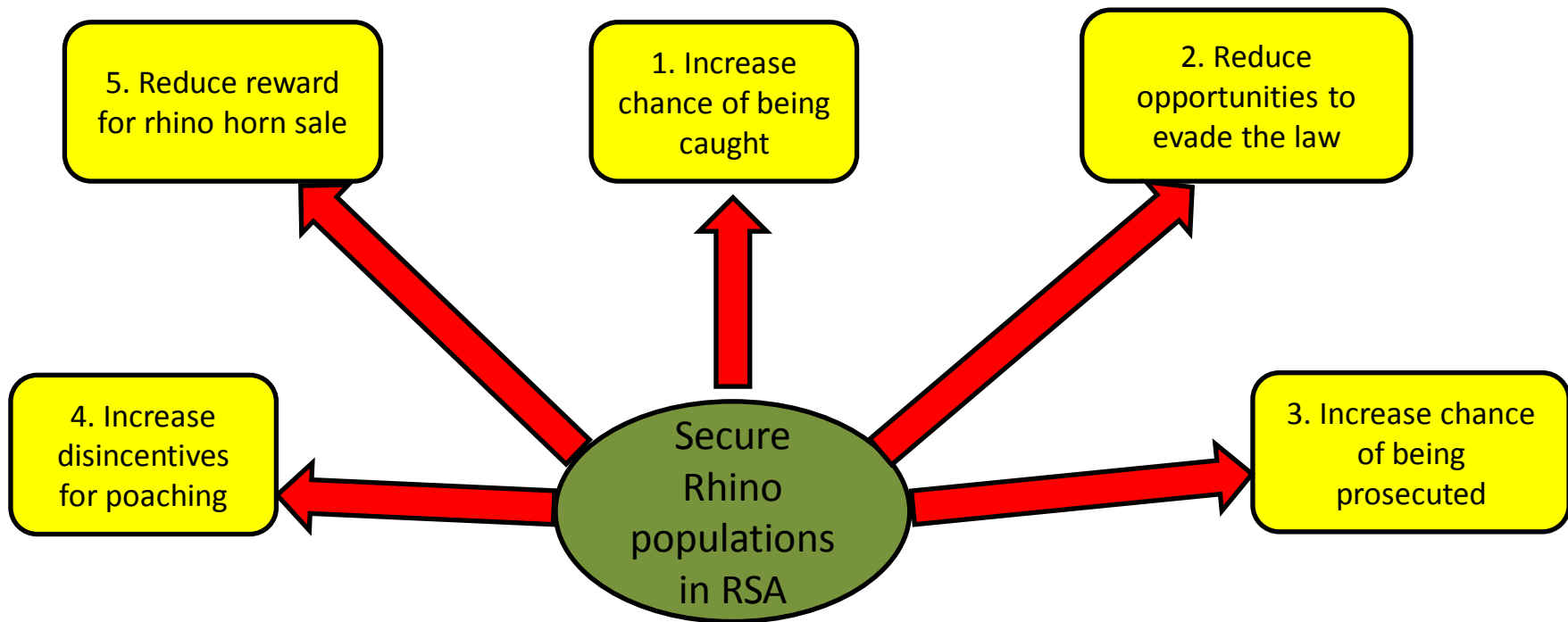
- We should immediately initiate, through DIRCo, engage with user countries to negotiate the sale of live white rhino to these countries – in a manner that will be acceptable to CITES,
- Initiate processes to be able to use the “national surplus” of white rhino each year to start establishing rhino farms that can, in time, meet market demands
- By doing this we can retain private sector involvement but avoid the pitfalls of local farming

## WHAT CAN WE DO? (2)

- Promote eco-tourism and hunting of rhino – in a well managed way, low poaching environment – these are our sustainable options.
- Promote the sale of horn from natural mortality (needs to be properly managed and there are a number of things to do to achieve that (database, law reform, etc.)
- Effective registration of rhino and properties (SARS, E-Natis)

## WHAT CAN WE DO? (3)

- In our thinking clearly distinguish between black and white rhino and respond appropriately – e.g. the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest population of black rhino in the country received absolutely no additional consideration last year – this needs to be rethought.
- But avoid temptation to focus only on larger populations many smaller herds are valuable



- a) Constitution allows for utilisation – lets use this – cover costs of conservation
- b) Protect South African wild type
- c) Do not alienate private rhino owners (permit hunting but not farming)
- d) Consider limited trade in horn (natural mortality)
- e) Promote farming in user countries (long term benefits and sustainability)
- f) Establish a market for live rhino in the far east where they can be farmed and in which private land owners can be engaged



Thank you

