

## **CBCGDF launches Clean Internet for Conophytum Initiative to protect tiny succulent plants in South Africa**

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Clean Internet for Conophytum is a conservation initiative launched by the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF). It aims to combat illegal wildlife trade, particularly cross-border poaching and illegal succulent plant trade, by purifying the online trading platform of illegal wild plant transactions. The goal is to protect biodiversity and build a global community of life. The campaign was launched on March 9, 2023, and has received support and participation from general public, numerous conservationists, horticulturists, and businesses.

The loss of biodiversity is a severe environmental challenge faced by the world, with organized wildlife crimes being one of the significant contributing factors driven by huge profits. Conophytum is a genus of succulent plants that belong to the family Aizoaceae and are native to South Africa and Namibia. These plants are popular due to their unique shape and vibrant colors. However, due to their rarity in the wild and the existence of illegal collection and trade, these plants are under severe threat of survival. Some of these species have already become extinct in their original habitats.

In order to assist in the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and to help law enforcement agencies in China and Africa combat illegal wildlife trade on the internet, CBCGDF calls for attention to the issue of illegal trades of Conophytum plants and encourages the general public to say “no” to any trade of wild Conophytum.

The Beijing-based organization urges e-commerce and social media platforms to strictly investigate and remove all illegal listings to promote global ecological civilization. For example, at the end of March 2023, CBCGDF sent an official legal letter to Xianyu (PoshmarkInc), the largest secondhand goods trading website in China launched by Alibaba, requesting that the e-biz platform remove all listings of



wild Conophytum and prevent such illegal trade as a rule, otherwise the CBCGDF will take legal action against the company.

In addition, as the “Clean Internet for Conophytum” campaign began in March 2023, it opened a door to widely collect clues on the illegal trade of Conophytum plants, including sales evidence and leads of wild Conophytum sellers on social media platforms both in China and abroad. According to CBCGDF, China's leading scientific organization safeguarding environmental public interest, the illegal trading by these sellers has caused environmental damage, violated environmental protection laws in China, South Africa and other countries, and negatively impacted human survival and sustainable development goals. Furthermore, due to the illegal poaching activities of poachers, all Conophytum plant species have been included in CITES Appendix III.

In order to build a community with a shared future for all life on Earth, the CBCGDF declares it is preparing to file public interest environmental lawsuits against violators. The CBCGDF welcomes volunteers and informants to contact its Biological and Scientific Ethics Working Committee (CBCGDF-BASE) by phone at +86-10-88431370, or by email at [v10@cbcgdf.org](mailto:v10@cbcgdf.org). CBCGDF-BASE promises to strictly protect the information of whistleblowers.



