

### Cruel trade in rhino horns

1 Sir, The article "Rhino poaching: inside the brutal trade" refers to solutions to rhino poaching (*FT Weekend*, October 3). It was suggested that demand could be removed but only about 1 million Chinese use rhino horn at present and there are some 1 billion traditional Chinese medicine users who may well want to buy horn at lower prices. Removing enough demand seems unlikely.



2 South Africa spends about \$80m a year on rhino anti-poaching (\$4,000 per rhino). If we spend more, the chances are that the horn price to poachers will rise so as to compensate the poachers for the increased risk.

3 "Flooding the market" makes no sense. But if you can restrict supplies to sustainable levels and also limit demand by controlling the price, you have most of the answer to the problem. A monopoly of supply selling to a cartel of retailers in the Far East would do that.

4 If East Asian governments are invested in the legal trade, they will close down (most of) the illegal trade. That is the rest of the answer.

5 South Africa can easily and sustainably satisfy current levels of demand (from stocks, natural deaths and farmed horn) without the need to kill one rhino.

6 At the wholesale price of \$30,000 per kg, African conservation would benefit from a legal trade by \$180m a year — money that is needed but is currently going to criminals.

#### **Michael Eustace**

*Director of Bangweulu Wetlands, Zambia, and Majete Wildlife Reserve, Malawi Johannesburg, South Africa*

adapted from an article from *Financial Times*, 2015