

Letter of Understanding

Establishing the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime

We, the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Secretary General of ICPO-INTERPOL, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the President of the World Bank, and the Secretary General of the Customs Cooperation Council (known as the World Customs Organization (WCO)),

RECOGNIZING that illegal harvesting and trade of protected fauna and flora may lead to their overexploitation and possible extinction, affect the livelihoods of rural communities, impact upon food security, and risk damaging ecosystems; that cross-border smuggling of live animals and plants carries with it possible risks to human health through the spread of disease, some of which are life-threatening; that the introduction of potentially invasive alien species into habitats could reduce the natural biodiversity of countries or regions; and that the ease with which some wildlife contraband, often in significant quantities, is smuggled across borders may demonstrate very real threats to the national security and the bio-security of States;

NOTING the involvement of organized crime, and sophisticated techniques and structures, in the illegal harvesting, smuggling and subsequent unlawful sale of wildlife and wildlife products, and that the association of general crimes such as conspiracy, fraud, counterfeiting, money-laundering, racketeering, violence and corruption are regularly encountered by wildlife law enforcement officers;

AWARE that environment and natural resource laws can and must be enforced in ways that support poverty reduction, enhance popular support for conservation, while affording due process;

CONVINCED that further international cooperation is essential if such crimes and related administrative or civil violations are to be responded to effectively;

NOTING that the member States and Parties of CITES, ICPO-INTERPOL, UNODC, World Bank and WCO have expressed a desire that the agencies liaise together more closely;

HEREBY agree, within the context of their respective responsibilities, capabilities, and priorities to:

- highlight within their institutions the importance of the fight against wildlife crimes and other related violations and promote ICCWC among governments of States, through *inter alia*, relevant international fora;
- work collaboratively to support national law enforcement agencies, and regional wildlife law enforcement agreements, bodies and networks in responding to transnational wildlife crimes through, *inter alia*, the provision of our available expertise and resources, and to raise awareness of wildlife crimes and other related violations in the wider law enforcement community;
- assist countries in reviewing their current responses to wildlife crimes and related violations, facilitate national multi-agency interaction and cooperation, and encourage effective responses throughout the justice system;
- develop a joint work program that will include joint activities in the fields of capacity building, operational support and coordination of transnational interdiction efforts;
- disseminate existing, and jointly develop new, capacity building materials and tools to enhance the knowledge and skills of national agencies in combating wildlife crime and related violations;
- undertake research into the causes, nature, scale and value of wildlife crime and related violations and propose innovative ways to prevent and discourage such crime and related violations, for example, through the provision of socio-economic incentives which encourage local communities to use natural resources in a lawful and sustainable manner and to participate in related monitoring and control efforts;
- assist in promoting best practice in the fields of natural resource conservation and management; and
- where appropriate, seek donor support to enable the provision of such services in the form of joint projects and programmes.

We further agree that our agencies, when collaborating together, will work under the title, the 'International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime'.


Secretary General
CITES


Secretary General
ICPO-INTERPOL


Executive Director
UNODC


President
World Bank


Secretary General
WCO

Witnessed by:

NOTE: Nothing in this letter shall be construed as a binding legal agreement. Formal legal instruments and memoranda of understanding may subsequently be developed, as and when required.

