

MINISTRY OF FOREST ECONOMY
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT OF FOREST ECONOMY

FAUNA AND PROTECTED AREAS DIVISION



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Unity * Work * Progress

NATIONAL IVORY ACTION PLAN, CONGO (2015-2016)

Forest Economy Department (DGEF)

and

Congo Agency for Fauna and Protected Areas (ACFAP)

Acronyms and abbreviations:

ACFAP: Congo Agency for Fauna and Protected Areas

APN: African Parks Network

BNAL: Lusaka Agreement National Bureau

CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

COMIFAC: Central African Forest Commission

DFAP: Fauna and Protected Areas Division

DGEF: Department of Forest Economy

ICCWC: International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime

LAB: fight against poaching

MACC: Congolese Arms and Cartridge Production

MDPRDN: Minister Attached to the Office of the President of the Republic, Responsible for National Defence

MEFDD: Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development

MEFPPPI: Ministry of the Economy, Finance, the Public Portfolio, Planning and Integration

MID: Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization

MJDH: Ministry of Justice and Human Rights

NIAP: National Ivory Action Plan

NGO: non-governmental organization

OSFAC: Central African Forest Observatory

PALF: Wildlife Law Enforcement Project

PNNP: Ntokou-Pikouda National Park

PNNN: Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park

PNOK: Odzala-Kokoua National Park

PNCD: Conkouati-Douli National Park

PROGEPP: Project for Managing Ecosystems Bordering Parks

RAPAC: Central African Protected Areas Network

SGG: General Secretariat of Government

USLAB: Monitoring and Anti-poaching Unit

WCS: Wildlife Conservation Society

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

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Overview of the Congo

The Republic of the Congo has considerable forest coverage, extending over 22.5 million hectares, which accounts for more than 65% of the national territory and represents more than 12% of Central Africa's dense, humid forests and more than 10% of Congo Basin forests. The rest of the national territory is comprised of savannah (35%).

The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is USD 2,970. Economic activity is dominated by the petroleum industry which contributed 53% to GDP in 2004. Sylviculture and logging account for only 1% of GDP, agriculture, livestock farming, hunting and fishing 5%, the manufacturing industry 6% and the tertiary sector 30%.

Population density in the Congo is low (4,139,748 inhabitants in 342,000 km²), and for the most part is urban (1,029,980 inhabitants in Brazzaville and more than 600,000 inhabitants in Pointe-Noire); this population is concentrated in the southern part of the country (80%). According to the 2005 United Nations Report on human development in the Congo, the level of access to basic education is average (84%) (ECOM, 2006; Trefon et De Maret, 1999).

On the other hand, the level of access to medical coverage (urban 14%), to electricity (rural 5%, urban 50%), to drinking water (rural 10%, urban 73 %) and the accessibility of rural paths remain low.

The Congo has ratified a series of regional and international conventions and agreements in the sphere of biodiversity conservation (COMIFAC, 2012).

Since 1998, forestry companies have the contractual obligation, in addition to obligations imposed by the FSC (for companies that apply voluntarily for forestry certification. Principles 6 and 9), to take responsibility for wildlife management through the Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Units (USLAB).

Furthermore, the migrating Congolese population, with its not inconsiderable financial means, increases the demand for game. At the same time, poaching of large mammals (elephants, gorillas, bongos, etc.) has become easier with the opening up of forest paths, despite the various prohibitions (Mbété, 2012; Kouakoua Kédjouani, 2008).

For this reason, it is indispensable to promote rational management of hunting and anti-poaching efforts, by partnering with the lumber companies and the NGOs responsible for biodiversity conservation.

Background and justification

The Congo was cited as one of the eleven countries identified as countries of “secondary concern” by the 63rd, 64th and 65th meetings of the CITES Standing Committee and a potential hotbed of forest elephant poaching and illegal ivory trafficking.

The aforementioned countries are therefore bound, within the framework of the effective implementation of the Convention, to work in close collaboration with the CITES Secretariat to implement urgent provisions that are effective in controlling activities related to forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade. One of these provisions is the drafting of a National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP).

It is in this context that, during the 16th Conference of the Parties, held in Bangkok from 3 March to 14 March 2013, the CITES Standing Committee had instructed the Secretariat to provide substantial technical and financial support to these countries for the drafting and implementation of their respective NIAPs. The purpose of this was to reduce the impact of the illegal ivory trade and to report on it at the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee where new guidelines would be reviewed and possibly adopted.

Although the Congo has a considerable forest elephant population, it is obvious that the high demand for ivory and its high market price make this emblematic species a prime target for supplying wildlife products to a complex, world-wide organized crime network (Wittemyer et al. 2014; UNEP et al. 2013).

The national authorities regard forest elephant poaching on Congolese territory, for purposes of ivory trafficking, as a major concern. In fact, there has been an alarming increase in forest elephant poaching which threatens, in the long term, the sustainability of this flagship species, in Central Africa in general and in the Congo in particular (Maisels et al. 2013; Black et al. 2008; Black et al. 2007).

It is as if a combination of circumstances has led to this explosion in the illegal ivory market, with the opening of numerous basic infrastructure construction sites (the Liouesso hydro-electric dam, the Makoua-Mambili-Ouesso road, the Ketta-Djoum trans-border road between the Congo and Cameroon, mining operations in the Monts Avima, etc.) (Laurance et al. 2006; Wilkie al. 2000).

It is in this context that, in the Congo, prices for ivory on the illicit market have soared exponentially in the field (from 50,000 to 150,000 CFA francs per kg, i.e. from 100 to 300 euros). The situation is more than preoccupying and consequently requires measures and actions to be taken on a large scale; otherwise, there is a risk that all efforts made so far in terms of investment both by partners and by the public authorities tasked with wildlife species conservation and protected area management will have been in vain.

In addition, criminal organizations use complex, multi-faceted methods that constantly change in order to escape government agency monitoring and thereby engage in a lucrative trade boosted primarily by the demand in Asia and the Middle East. This points even more clearly to the pressing need to implement a strategic action plan that takes into

account the full complexity of the problem, as well as all of the stakeholders involved in ivory management.

Therefore, it is important to further involve all of the potential players by establishing broad inter-institutional cooperation at the national and international levels, in order to effectively combat illegal ivory trafficking.

The present National Ivory Action Plan was thus drawn up for good reason. It includes a vision, a global objective, specific objectives, priority actions and also an implementation methodology.

Vision

By the year 2025, to significantly reduce forest elephant poaching and its corollary, illegal ivory trafficking, throughout the national territory.

Overall objective

To professionalize the fight against poaching and control the illegal ivory trade by promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation.

Specific objectives

- to reinforce efforts to combat poaching and illegal ivory trafficking at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- to develop an effective prevention and control system, with stronger dissuasive legal provisions;
- to reinforce and increase the presence of law enforcement agents in the forest elephant ranges, with a synergy of joint actions by all partners;
- to implement a strategy for awareness-raising, communication and advocacy with permanent follow-up of actions, including through the use of free phone numbers.

Institutional framework

This entails all institutions evolving synergistically to establish rules that guarantee appropriate and sustainable management of the national heritage, in particular:

- the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development; the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights;
- the National Committee for Combating Poaching and the Illegal Trade in Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
- the Department of Forest Economy (DGEF) whose management of wildlife resources is the responsibility of the Fauna and Protected Areas Division (DFAP), a central division of DGEF;
- the Congo Agency for Fauna and Protected Areas (ACFAP);
- the Lusaka Agreement National Bureau (BNAL);
- the Wildlife Law Enforcement Project (PALF);
- the Protected Areas;
- the Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Units (USLAB).

Priority actions to be undertaken

A. Legislative and regulatory framework

The legislation defines the legal framework for natural resource management. It brings together the tools that are the foundation for enforcement. We should note that Congolese legislation should be reinforced in order to adapt it to the current context, arising in particular out of the upsurge in poaching and the evident scale of ivory trafficking. Therefore specific instruments need to be revised in the direction of greater criminalization of wildlife offences.

An examination of national strategies for cracking down on illegal trafficking clearly reveals significant disparities between member States in the COMIFAC zone. Therefore it is desirable to proceed with the harmonization of current penal provisions for ivory trafficking by organized gangs.

B. Legal proceedings

At this time, considerable weakness can be observed in proceedings against wildlife offences, particularly with regard to species that are fully protected, including the forest elephant and its by-products.

Consequently, it would be wise to raise awareness as soon as possible, and even more so, to provide adequate training to prosecutors, for the purpose of combating trafficking of ivory and its by-products. In particular, the objective of this stimulating mission will be to

professionalize processing of cases related to the illegal trafficking of wildlife products, through recourse to specialized tribunals.

C. Information-gathering and investigation

The scale and nature of the trafficking have completely evolved and constitute a major source of financing of organized crime or terrorism. To combat this more effectively, the powers of criminal investigation police officers should be considerably strengthened.

In the process, in the context of legislation on wildlife and protected area management, special provisions should be made to combat tax evasion and serious economic and financial crime. It would be useful to hone certain special techniques for investigating organized gang crime, such as monitoring, infiltration, police custody for four days, interception of telecommunication exchanges, audio and video recording in certain locations or vehicles, computer data capture, etc.

This will involve implementing a network of informants providing a link between the officers tasked with investigations and those tasked with the crackdown on crime. The implementation of such a system will only be effective if all of the partners are really involved, namely government departments, the justice system, NGOs, associations, and local communities.

D. Inter-institutional cooperation on a national and international scale

As the problem of wildlife crime is quite widespread and takes on complex and varied forms, the effective involvement of both national and international actors is indispensable.

At the national level, the focus will be on bringing together the government sectors that have the tools and the various necessary means to combat effectively the elimination of wildlife resources, in particular, ivory and other by-products.

The plan should establish a national and regional mechanism for coordinating and exchanging information among the principal government departments, agencies and institutions tasked with combating the illegal trafficking of endangered species.

E. Enforcement

All actions should be reflected in the field in the form of effective enforcement operations. For ivory trafficking, these actions should be undertaken at every level in the chain, including the **protection** of specific protected areas and flagship species, considered as an integral part of our universal heritage, as a "national priority". This also applies to the **dissemination and publication** of facts and statistics on the forest elephant poaching that can be observed throughout the Congo Basin, the **dismantling of illegal networks** at the local level and beyond the borders, and the **coercive actions** aimed at eliminating corrupt personnel with links to criminal organizations, who may be complicit and accommodating with regard to the insidious networks involved in forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade.

F. Awareness-raising, communication and advocacy

Communication is also an effective means that should help to change habits. In the context of the fight against forest elephant poaching and illegal ivory trafficking, communication and awareness-raising could play a decisive role. In particular, younger generations should be targeted by incorporating environmental education into school programmes.

Process of Drafting the National Ivory Action Plan

The NIAP was drafted through a process that took into account the contributions of several stakeholders, including government actors, conservation NGOs and civil society. This cooperation properly confirms that the NIAP reflects the opinion of all participants in the wildlife conservation and sustainable management sector. In order to formalize this cooperation, an inter-ministerial commission will be set up to ensure the effective implementation of the NIAP.

Summary of actions to be undertaken

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
A. Legislation and regulations	A1. Expediting publication of regulations pertaining to the new fauna and protected areas law sent to the General Secretariat of Government	MEFDD/SGG/ Office of the President	Review of regulations in the Council of Ministers	Legislative and regulatory instruments updated and available Documents signed by the Head of State	Legislative and regulatory texts are operational	
	A2. Proposing to the Council of Ministers of COMIFAC a review of the potential for harmonization of penal provisions relating to trafficking of protected species and ivory by organized gangs	MEFDD/COMIFAC	Establishment of a working commission to draft and approve the documents relating to harmonization of these penal provisions	Review of proposals in the Council of Ministers	Application	
B. Legal proceedings	B1. Raising awareness and providing training for judges and prosecutors in order to handle wildlife crimes in a responsible and rigorous manner	MEFDD/MJDH/ BNAL/PALF	Talks initiated with the Ministry of Justice Consultation meetings with the magistrates concerned on how to handle environmental crime	Reinforcing capability and professionalism of judges and prosecutors Court records (including those of the authorities involved) relating to environmental crime are sent systematically to the prosecutor's office	The mechanism for sending, managing and follow-up on court records relating to crimes against nature is operational	Legal proceedings undertaken and sentences handed down. Imprisonment of the perpetrators of environmental crimes
	B2. Establishment of a network of prosecutors specialized in crimes involving poaching of large wildlife	MEFDD/MJDH/ PALF/WCS	Recruitment of magistrates interested in environmental crime	Magistrates trained and provided with materials	Implementation and application	

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
	B3. Implementing a mechanism for managing and handling wildlife disputes and a database with information on action taken on cases	MEFDD/MJDH/BNAL/PALF/WCS/ICCWC	Collection of available information	Implementation of tools		
C. Information-gathering and investigation	C1. Operationalizing the unit specialized in dismantling ivory trafficking networks	MEFDD/BNAL/PALF/ICCWC	Increase in the number of agents in the field Reinforcement of information-gathering and investigatory capacities of the agents	Logistic and financial support (purchase of monitoring equipment, hidden cameras, recording devices, etc. acquisition of 4x4 all-terrain vehicles) Mapping of ivory trafficking networks	Unit operational	
	C2. Dismantling networks engaged in illegal trafficking of rifles and specialized munitions (bullets, improvised munitions, poisoned iron spears)	MEFDD/MID/MDPRDN	Identification of the main illegal sales locations	Implementation of an informer system/free phone number to report on the ivory trade	Targeted missions conducted in the field	
	C3. Working in synergy with the intelligence services to dismantle networks trafficking in ivory and other forest elephant products	MEFDD/BNAL/INTERPOL/PALF	Reinforced cooperation among ACFAP, BNAL and airline companies operating in the Congo	Cooperation with intelligence authorities beyond the Congo to arrest traffickers at the international level	Missions in the field operational	
	C4. Strengthening the capabilities of agents in the field concerned with combating environmental crimes and legal proceedings	MEFDD/MJDH/MID/BNAL/PALF/WCS/ICCWC	Recruitment of staff qualified in these areas	Training of agents as criminal investigation officers	Application	

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
	throughout the national territory					
	C5. Inventory of warehouses with ivory stockpiles throughout the country	MEFDD/MJDH/ Stop Ivory/ PALF/WCS/CITES	Inventory of ivory warehouses throughout the country based on CITES standards Report on ivory stockpile inventory sent to CITES	Review of current legislative framework, regulations and procedures for ivory management	Operationalization of procedures for managing and tracking ivory stockpiles at the departmental and national levels	Procedures adopted and publicized
	C6. Implementing an ivory management and control system	MEFDD/Stop Ivory/WCS	Establishment of a centralized digital ivory stockpile database	Working mission to Kenya and Tanzania in order to learn from those with experience and expertise pertaining to the best practices for managing elephant ivory. Implementation of the recommendations for the ivory traceability chain. Possible incineration of ivory stockpile.	Ivory stockpile warehouse fitted out and made secure	
	C7. Reinforcing the powers and the technical and operational resources of criminal investigation police officers.	MEFDD/MJDH/MID /MDPRDN/ MEFPPPI and Parliament	Adoption and application of new legislation granting more extensive powers and the use of powerful technical resources	Enactment of new legislation and allocation of powerful technical resources	Application	

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
D. Inter-institutional cooperation on a national and international scale to combat wildlife crime	D1. Operationalizing the national anti-poaching committee	MEFDD	Discussions with all of the government entities involved	Implementation		
	D2. Reinforcing ties with Interpol and the international institutions involved in fight against illegal ivory trade	MEFDD/BNAL/ Interpol	Discussions with all of the government and inter-governmental entities involved	Implementation		
	D3. Promoting subregional cooperation in the fight against poaching and the illegal ivory trade	MEFDD/COMIFAC/ RAPAC/OSFAC	Discussion with the government and inter-governmental entities involved	Implementation		
	D4. Implementation of ICCWC's Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Tool Kit to provide an institutional framework	MEFDD/ICCWC/ MJDH	Letter of invitation from the Congo to the ICCWC	Coordination workshop organized among the actors concerned, moderated by ICCWC Agent training plan Priority measures identified	Protocols for institutional cooperation signed	Implementation
	D5. Reinforcing cooperation and implementation of an information exchange system, between intelligence services and services coordinating with specialized agencies (INTERPOL and BNAL)	MEFDD/BNAL/ INTERPOL	Discussions initiated with the specialized agencies	Agent training plans identified and implemented through the ICCWC tool compilation process	Mission in the field operational	
	D6. Setting up of a joint, standing working committee on follow-up and implementation of the NIAP	MEFDD/MJDH/ MID/WCS	Creation of a framework for concerted action and establishment of a protocol	Implementation of the working protocol		

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
E. Enforcement operations	E1. Reinforcing the operational capacities and control systems of the authorities involved in combating the illegal trafficking of ivory and other species, in ports, airports, marketplaces, jewellers' shops, at land borders and in major urban centres	MEFDD/BNAL/ INTERPOL/PALF/ WCS	Increase in sniffer dog missions at the airport and of trafficker arrests at the international level.		Ivory circuit eradicated	
			Agent training plans available through the ICCWC process			
			MEFDD/BNAL agents trained and provided with materials			
	E2. Drafting memorandums of understanding with air and maritime transport companies, including the definitive seizure of machines and vehicles that were used for transporting ivory	MEFDD/Carrier trade unions, MJDH and MACC	Creation of a framework for concerted action for the purpose of eradicating ivory transportation in the long term	Protocols prepared and approved	Implementation	
			Preparation of draft protocols			
E3. Reinforcing the capacity of anti-poaching agents in protected areas and in USLABs, in forest concessions with a high forest elephant population	MEFDD/WCS/APN/ Mining and agro-industrial companies	Increase in number of anti-poaching agents and enhancement of their training				
E4. Improving crime scene investigations and information-gathering as an anti-poaching thrust in addition to patrols in and around protected areas	MEFDD/BNAL/MID/ MJDH/MDPRDN/ WCS/WWF/ APN/PALF	Informant network set up around protected areas	Intelligence delivered	Arrest made by anti-poaching agents following investigation		
E5. Operationalizing SMART as a system for monitoring anti-poaching	MEFDD/WCS/ WWF	Implementation and operationalization in and around PNNN,	Specialists trained in SMART system	SMART system operational at the national level		

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Priority measures	Responsibilities/ Actors	Milestones			
			October 2014 – June 2015	June 2015 – Sept 2015	October 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – Sept 2016
	activities in all protected areas, USLABs and at the central level		PNOK, PNCD, PNNP and PROGEPP			
F. Awareness-raising, communication and public education	F1. Implementation of a work plan with audio-visual media and written materials	MEFDD/Specialized newspapers and communication outlets/ Awareness-raising NGOs	Regular advertising spots on national and international radio and television stations. Ongoing organization of public awareness-raising campaigns			The general public, including airline passengers, are informed in airports and learn about the legal and regulatory setup, and about wildlife. Exchanges between citizens are organized in order to make the public aware of legal provisions relating to ivory management.
	F2. Production of audio-visual media (films and documentaries, posters and other displays)					
	F3. Launching of the campaign to raise public awareness of elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade					
	F2. Production of audio-visual media (films and documentaries, posters and other displays)					
	F3. Launching of the campaign to raise public awareness of elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade					

Follow-up indicators and sources of verification

Law enforcement pillars / Axes	Indicators	Basic data and sources of verification
1. Legislation and regulations	Number of new laws applied in court	Database of convictions and sentences for wildlife crimes/legal proceedings
2. Legal proceedings	Number and percentage of ivory traffickers arrested and sentenced per year	Database of convictions and sentences for wildlife crimes
3. Information-gathering and investigation	Number of information-gathering and investigational missions	Reports on information-gathering and investigational missions
4. Inter-institutional cooperation	Number of joint missions undertaken Number of consultation meetings	Reports on missions Report on meetings
5. Enforcement operations	Number of missions undertaken Number of crime cases identified	Reports on missions Reports on offences
6. Awareness-raising, communication and public education	Number of people made aware Number of programmes on environmental crime Number of transportation companies involved in campaigns to raise awareness of environmental crime Number of citizen exchanges organized	Awareness-raising reports List of participants Reports on opinion polls

Implementation of the NIAP

Consensual implementation of an integrated platform by all of the stakeholders involved in combating environmental crime, in particular ivory trafficking, will make it possible to successfully undertake targeted crime control and suppression actions in the field, relating to the illegal ivory trade and to ensure the ivory traceability chain.

The prerequisites for effective implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan are joint work by dynamic teams, multi-faceted knowledge of local, national and international sensitivities, as well as preparation of national strategic axes for combating forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade.

Tasks of the principal stakeholders:

Within the institutional framework, the Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD) has a Department of Forest Economy (DGEF), which is the CITES Management Authority in the Congo, in compliance with the provisions of the Convention, which the Congo joined in 1982. The mission assigned to DGEF is to draw up government policy on wildlife resource conservation and sustainable management.

Implementation of this policy is entrusted to the Congo Agency for Fauna and Protected Areas, in compliance with the provisions of Article 3 of Law 34-2012 of 31 October 2012, that gave rise to this institution.

DGEF and ACFAP, entities that are directly involved in implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan, will jointly execute the following tasks:

- Creation of a synergy of expertise among the different departments tasked with enforcing the law against wildlife crime, in particular, the urban police, the rural police, customs, the justice system, the conservation NGOs, etc.;
- Drafting and finalization of regulations relating to the new fauna and protected areas law and securing their approval in the Council of Ministers by the end of 2015 (accelerating the approval process for these regulations);
- Publication and dissemination of the new regulations that take into account wildlife resource conservation and sustainable management in the large forest tracts;
- Organizing and carrying out actions in the field, particularly the fight against poaching, corruption and the illegal ivory trade;
- Creating and/or improving clear cooperation with the other institutions involved in the implementation of the NIAP at the local, national, subregional and international levels, in order to dismantle the nerve centres of forest elephant poaching and the criminal networks trafficking in ivory;

- Performing follow-up evaluation of implementation of the panel of NIAP procedures.

Follow-up evaluation of implementation of the plan:

The Department of Forest Economy, in its capacity as the CITES Management Authority for Congo-Brazzaville, together with the other agencies involved in combating forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade, should report regularly to the CITES Secretariat on the evolution and progress of the effective implementation of the above action plan, following completion of joint technical evaluations and the preparation of an evaluating report for each quarter of the current year.

Other government institutions:

In the context of the implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan and in order to obtain the expected results throughout the national territory, the ministries responsible for tourism and the environment, justice, transportation, trade, customs, the interior and decentralization, agriculture and livestock farming, national defence, as well as the civil society organizations that are indirectly involved in combating forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade, must provide, on a regular basis, adequate technical assistance to the MEFDD institutions that are directly tasked with enforcing the applicable conservation laws and regulations.

Civil society organizations:

In the legislative and regulatory framework, the Congo law on fauna and protected areas defines the provisions that authorize the associations, conservation NGOs and local communities to participate in management of activities related to protected area conservation and sustainable wildlife management in partnership with MEFDD.

Civil society participates actively in joint actions, which by focusing on environmental education, raise awareness among local populations of the fight against poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

In implementing the National Ivory Action Plan, civil society must be more active in the following spheres:

- Raising awareness in populations of the activities relating to forest elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade;
- Publicizing the law in effect and its regulations;
- Providing technical and financial support to the actors;
- Executing the memorandums of agreement duly signed by all stakeholders.

Conclusion

At present, the exponential increase in the sales price for ivory on some markets is the main cause of the upsurge in forest elephant poaching. This alarming situation highlights the danger facing the survival of this emblematic species, as it continues to pay a heavy toll for its ivory, despite its status of fully protected wildlife, under both national and international legislation.

This plan is an administrative and technical tool that will make it possible to provide precise guidance to the various institutions tasked with enforcing the law against the illegal exploitation of forest elephants and the illegal ivory trade.

In conclusion, it will also make it possible to create and/or implement a powerful synergy in the joint actions to be undertaken, in particular among the partners involved in the untiring fight against the illegal ivory trade and the process for implementing this plan, whose aim is to significantly reduce this scourge.

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