

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS COORDINATION FORUM HOSTED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME (ICCWC)

This document has been prepared by the Chair of the Global Partnerships Coordination Forum and is submitted by the Secretariat on behalf of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and in relation to agenda item 14.2 on the *International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime*.

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## International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC)

### SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO CITES

#### Global Partnership Coordination Forum hosted by ICCWC

#### Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa

25 September 2016

### CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The First Global Partnership Coordination Forum was held in the margins of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Forum was hosted by ICCWC, a partnership between the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Customs Organisation (WCO), and the World Bank to strengthen criminal justice systems and provide coordinated support at national, regional and international level to combat wildlife crime. Financial support for the event was provided by the Department of State of the United States of America.

Over 80 representatives from Parties, intergovernmental organisations and civil society attended the Forum. The objective of the Forum was to discuss coordination mechanisms and inter-disciplinary approaches that organizations and initiatives can take into consideration while developing, updating or strengthening ongoing and future programmes and activities. The Forum began with a high level panel discussion exploring different perspectives on how law enforcement, development, environmental and social approaches together can contribute to combating illegal wildlife trade. The high level panel discussion was followed by an open dialogue for Parties and participants to identify gaps that exist in current approaches or issues that are not yet adequately addressed.

The Forum was chaired on behalf of ICCWC by Dr. Valerie Hickey, Practice Manager of the Environmental and Natural Resources Global Practice of the World Bank.

This informal Chair's summary of the Global Partnerships Coordination Forum hosted by ICCWC has been produced by the Chair in cooperation with representatives from ICCWC partner organizations that attended the Forum. Remarks and interventions during the dialogue with Parties and participants reflect overall discussions and key issues that were highlighted during the event.

#### **High level panellist contributions and discussion**

Representatives from the CITES Secretariat, the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Union Commission were invited to contribute to the high level panel chaired by the World Bank.

**Dr. Valerie Hickey**, Practice Manager of the Environmental and Natural Resources Global Practice of the World Bank, chaired the event, welcomed the panel members, Parties and representatives, urging honest and frank discussions on how we can better work together to combat wildlife crime.

The work of ICCWC was commended by **Mr. John E. Scanlon**, CITES Secretary-General who suggested that its success is down to the coordination and complementarity between various areas of expertise – customs, police, criminal justice system, international finance and development. Mr. Scanlon drew attention to some of

the many initiatives in which ICCWC is involved, working with national agencies to have real impact on the ground. Mr. Scanlon sincerely thanked the ICCWC donors, namely the European Union, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the World Bank. Mr. Scanlon recognised that there is still a lot to be done and made reference to the ICCWC Offer Paper, which outlines the need for additional resources from donors to support and scale the work of this important Consortium over the next four years.

**Mr. Leigh Winchell**, Deputy Director of the WCO Enforcement Sub-Directorate, described the prioritization of environmental crime within WCO. Solving a problem like wildlife trafficking is not a simple enforcement issue; it is also an educational process and a social matter. WCO recognizes that for some countries, seizures are the end process and too late to save the individuals of the species in question. Customs often do not have investigative authority and so must work actively with police, as is the case under the Container Control Programme, where WCO and UNODC place Customs and Police officers side by side in Joint Port Control Units. WCO has developed many tools to facilitate Customs to target and interdict illegal wildlife consignments and to work with police to effectively respond to seizures and manage subsequent investigations. These tools include a Customs Police Handbook and Customs Operating Procedures for Enforcement and Seizures (COPES).

Stressing the importance of cooperation to combat wildlife crime, Mr. Winchell made reference to work being undertaken by WCO in collaboration with INTERPOL, EUROPOL and other agencies. Mr. Winchell spoke about the need for updating Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements, an area to be addressed at a political level between countries. Additionally, the need to fully engage with the transport industry, freight handlers, port owners and others in the supply chain community, was emphasized. Mr. Winchell reiterated that communication is a critical component and the need to work together to be more effective.

**Mr. Jorge Rios**, Chief, UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, stated that the nexus between wildlife and forest crime and organized crime and corruption is clear. Underlining the relationship and complementarity between economic development, law enforcement and environmental protection he went on to say corruption plays a prominent role in the overall illegal wildlife trade. To tackle organised crime and corruption it is important to utilize the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

While commitments have been made to tackle wildlife crime, these commitments need to be converted into actual work on the ground and a number of observations were made in this regard: the need to link the people tasked with combating wildlife and forest crime with those responsible for implementing UNTOC and UNCAC at the national level; the need to reduce the risk of corruption in institutions tasked with managing wildlife and forest resources and enforce laws to protect these resources; the need to recover the proceeds of crime; and, the need to prosecute associated crimes.

Strengthening the integrity and building the capacity of staff tasked with protecting wildlife and forests, controlling the movement of products, as well as investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating wildlife crimes must become a priority. Prosecuting corrupt officials is essential. Without the influence of organized crime and corruption, we will be closer to stopping criminals from stealing our natural heritage and we will thus have made our world a much richer place to live.

**Mr. Nik Sekhran**, Chief of Profession for Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) described how UNDP has helped put wildlife crime on the development agenda and noted that sustainable use and regulated trade plays a critical part in conservation and development. UNDP is addressing the sustainable development agenda with 90 countries under the biodiversity umbrella, and such discussions must be linked to eliminating poverty. The biggest threat to biodiversity comes from habitat loss; wilderness is being lost at alarming rate and this has a serious effect on communities. An ever growing world population will mean even more encroachment and combined with broader land use issues, these matters will be a major challenge to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The work being done to tackle wildlife crime and to protect biodiversity under SDG 14 and 15 has important linkages with other development issues, particularly food security, gender, livelihoods and poverty.

UNDP is closely working with the World Bank under the GEF Global Wildlife Programme (GWP), a US\$ 131 million programme investing in 19 countries. With World Bank coordination, UNDP is designing initiatives for many of these countries based upon their specific needs.

The work of the African Union Commission (AU) was explained by **Ms Leah Wanambwa Naess**, Senior Policy Officer, speaking on behalf of Dr Janet Edeme Agriculture Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission. Ms Wanambwa Naess highlighted the development of an African

strategy to coordinate efforts to reduce and eliminate illegal exploitation and trade in wildlife. This continent-wide strategic framework builds on actions already being undertaken by countries. High level political support and leadership is now required and a coordination mechanism will be established to monitor implementation of the strategy.

### **Dialogue with CITES Parties, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations**

Following the panel discussion, the Forum was opened to comments from the floor and interventions were made by Parties, international organisations and civil society.

Speakers acknowledged that wildlife crime is not simply an African problem nor an Asian problem, nor even a problem of poverty – it is truly a global issue, affecting every country in the world. To tackle this problem, a comprehensive approach is required, addressing the pillars of law enforcement, legal frameworks, community engagement and demand reduction.

It was broadly recognized that in order to maximize impact, coordination of inputs is essential, and this was reiterated by multiple speakers. Partnerships must be forged to support the front line officers, the people on the ground working towards conservation and wildlife protection on a daily basis.

Initiatives must involve local communities, who have invaluable local knowledge that can be applied to conservation and to the fight against wildlife crime. It was suggested that the community be placed at the centre of all interventions to combat the illegal wildlife trade, and that natural resource management be leveraged as a pathway out of poverty.

The dialogue reminded participants that biodiversity is often undervalued; government commitment and investment is not comparable with potential dividends and the contribution from wildlife tourism, for example, to national economies. Economic valuations of biodiversity and protected areas are important for decision-makers to value their nation's natural resources and mobilize domestic resources for their effective management.

The importance of recovering the proceeds of wildlife crime, identifying beneficial ownership and making wildlife crime a predicate offence to asset seizure were highlighted and mutual legal assistance between countries was encouraged.

Speakers called for additional and longer term resources to finance national efforts and coordination platforms to combat wildlife crime. It was agreed that longer term funding windows are required to avoid the inevitable capacity and results erosion following project closure. For example, a shift to intelligence-led policing does not happen overnight - it requires a culture change, a change in mindset, which cannot be achieved in the short term.

Dr. Hickey closed the Forum by highlighting the collective challenge we are facing to protect our natural resources and tackle wildlife crime and if we are to make significant and sustainable progress, the need to work in partnership from prevention to prosecution is paramount.

### **Acknowledgements**

ICCWC partner organizations, high level panellists and participating Parties and organizations are thanked for their active contribution to the Forum.

The Department of State of the United States of America is acknowledged for its generous support that allowed the event to take place.

