

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

Strategic matters

UNITED NATIONS WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), unanimously adopted Resolution Conf. 16.1 which declared 3 March, the day of signature of CITES in 1973, as World Wildlife Day. In Resolution Conf. 16.1, the Conference also invites the United Nations General Assembly to consider declaring 3 March as World Wildlife Day.
3. The United Nations General Assembly, at its 68th session, adopted resolution A/RES/68/205 on 20 December 2013, proclaiming 3 March as United Nations [World Wildlife Day](#).
4. The United Nations General Assembly resolution requested the CITES Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to facilitate the implementation of World Wildlife Day, which it has done for each of the three observances of the day held to date, without any additional financial resources.

Inaugural World Wildlife Day

5. In preparation for the launch of the inaugural World Wildlife Day in 2014, the Secretariat commissioned a graphic designer to create a logo for World Wildlife Day. It was later translated into the six official languages of the United Nations. The logo is used to brand the initiatives undertaken to celebrate World Wildlife Day and to help inspire world-wide celebrations. The logo is attached in Annex 3 of this document.
6. A website dedicated to World Wildlife Day was developed by the CITES Secretariat to raise awareness of the day and to provide all relevant background information, outreach materials, official statements and relevant links and information from partners. The Secretariat also created social media channels for World Wildlife Day on the main social media platforms, to maximize the reach of the celebrations, namely on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#). The Secretariat also produced a brochure for the celebration of the inaugural World Wildlife Day.
7. The first World Wildlife Day was launched by United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, at the United Nations Office in Geneva on 3 March 2014. The event was attended by: H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation; H.E. Hugo Swire, Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; H.E. Thani Thongphakdi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations Office at Geneva; Mr John E. Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES; and Mr Yann Arthus-Bertrand, President of the Goodplanet Foundation. An exhibition of photos by celebrated wildlife photographers was held at the same venue to coincide with the launch of World Wildlife Day.
8. In his [message](#) for the first World Wildlife Day, UN Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, highlighted the environmental, economic and social consequences of wildlife crime and urged all sectors of society to end

illegal wildlife trafficking and commit to trading and using wild plants and animals sustainably and equitably. The CITES Secretary-General and many others also released a short video [statement](#) on the day.

9. The Secretariat received more than 50 messages of support from United Nations organizations, other intergovernmental organizations, multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations and celebrities, all of which were posted on the World Wildlife Day website.
10. The Permanent Missions of Germany and Thailand to the United Nations Office in New York organized a side event on the occasion of World Wildlife Day at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to which the CITES Secretary-General sent a video message.
11. Countries and people around the world embraced this new day on the United Nations calendar in various forms, which truly exceeded expectations, particularly considering that there were only two months to prepare from the date of the adoption of the UN resolution declaring the day. These celebrations took on many forms, including wildlife art exhibitions, a symposium on wildlife conservation, a TV talk show, a street parade, issuance of stamps, an open-door concert, painting competitions, a wildlife awareness contest, release of captive animals to the wild, appointment of wildlife ambassadors, the launch of a new campaign against wildlife trafficking, etc.
12. More details on the celebration of World Wildlife Day 2015 can be found in document [SC65 Doc. 15](#), prepared by the Secretariat for the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65, Geneva, July 2014) and on the CITES website.

World Wildlife Day 2015

13. At the request of the Secretariat, and in order to involve Parties and observers in the process, during SC65, a World Wildlife Day Working Group was established in order to "identify, compile and formulate ideas on how best to celebrate future editions" of the day.
14. The members of the Working Group are: Bahrain, Botswana (Chair), Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Italy, Kuwait, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, United States of America, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Species Survival Network (SSN), TRAFFIC and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) joined the working group later. The Secretariat thanks the Chair and all Working Group members for their support.
15. For the second observance of World Wildlife Day, a theme was first introduced in consultation with the Standing Committee Working Group on World Wildlife Day. The agreed theme was: "It's time to get serious about wildlife crime".
16. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted, in his [statement](#) for the day, that: "Illegal wildlife trade undermines the rule of law and threatens national security; it degrades ecosystems and is a major obstacle to the efforts of rural communities and indigenous peoples striving to sustainably manage their natural resources. Combating this crime is not only essential for conservation efforts and sustainable development, it will contribute to achieving peace and security in troubled regions where conflicts are fuelled by these illegal activities." The CITES Secretary-General and many others also released a short [video statement](#) on the day. The President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr Sam Kahamba Kutesa, hosted a special World Wildlife Day Commemorative session at the United Nations Headquarters on 4 March 2015, where Member States and the global community examined the challenges to and opportunities for stepping up international efforts to combat wildlife crime at a global scale. President Kutesa, UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Ms Chelsea Clinton, Ms Nadya Hutagalung, and CITES Secretary-General Mr John Scanlon were on the panel.
18. More than 100 representatives from UN Member States, development organizations, civil society, the private sector, and media attended an event at the WCS Central Park Zoo, New York. The event included high-level speaker remarks and a moderated dialogue. Welcoming remarks were provided by Mr Nik Sekhran, Director of the Sustainable Development Cluster at UNDP, and Mr Cristián Samper, President and CEO of WCS. Joint remarks were offered by Ambassador Marianne Bibalou, Chargée d'affaires of Gabon, Ambassador Harald Braun, Permanent Representative of Germany, and Ambassador Chayapan Bamrunghong, Chargé d'affaires of Thailand. Opening remarks were also given by Mr John Scanlon, CITES Secretary-General, and Oyun Sanjaasuren, President of the UN Environment Assembly. The panel

discussion explored the “Links between Illegal Wildlife Trade, Crime, and Sustainable Development”. Mr Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, offered a video statement to recognize the importance of addressing wildlife crime. Several public service announcements demonstrated the power of celebrity voices and highlighted the plights of elephants, great apes and other species. The Secretariat thanks WCS for hosting the event and thanks all UN Member States and organizations for their participation.

19. The CITES Secretariat, in association with the Geneva Environment Network (GEN), International Geneva, Geneva Airport, the Geneva Natural History Museum and the newspaper Le Temps, and with the generous support of the Swiss Confederation and the Embassy of the United States, organized a symposium on the occasion of World Wildlife Day 2015 under the theme: “Wild and precious : conservation in the 21st century”.
20. On 3 March 2015, the CITES Secretariat and relevant organizations in the United Nations system issued a [joint press release](#) on World Wildlife Day to observe the day.
21. UNODC generously developed a full social media campaign package to raise awareness of the scope and severity of wildlife crime in close cooperation with the CITES Secretariat and the CITES Standing Committee Working Group, which was also picked up by other UN and non-UN organizations. The hashtags used on social media were #SeriousAboutWildlifeCrime, #WorldWildlifeDay and #WildlifeCrime. The campaign was a great success with a combined reach of close to 190 million people on Twitter and Facebook.
22. The Secretariat noticed the celebrations in Austria, Bhutan, Botswana, China, Egypt, Guyana, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Montenegro, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru and South Africa. This however is not a comprehensive list of all the countries where celebrations took place.
23. The celebration of World Wildlife Day 2015 around the world under the theme “It’s time to get serious about wildlife crime” helped to pave the way for the adoption of UN General Assembly [resolution 69/314](#) on ‘Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife’, which welcomed the international observance of the day.
24. More details on the celebration of World Wildlife Day 2015 can be found in document [SC66 Doc. 15.1 \(Rev. 1\)](#) prepared by the Secretariat for the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee.

World Wildlife Day 2016

25. The third World Wildlife Day was celebrated under the theme “The future of wildlife is in our hands”, with a sub-theme “The future of elephants is in our hands”. The themes were once again chosen in consultation with the Working Group of the Standing Committee, and they reinforced the inextricable link between wildlife, people and sustainable development, and conveyed the message that we, human beings, hold the future of all wildlife in our hands. A failure to take action now will have immediate, sometimes devastating, consequences for species of animals and plants. The sub-theme gives recognition to the serious challenges facing African and Asian elephants.
26. A brand new [World Wildlife Day website](#) with a powerful and appealing interface and rich content was created by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with a designer recruited through UN Volunteers (UNV). The website offers suggestions to the general public on ways to get involved and to support the celebration of the day, and it provides a user-friendly way for countries, organizations and private individuals to register events online. It also provides various materials including posters, logos, shout-out cards, powerful short videos (PSAs) and social media kits for use in their celebrations.
27. While continuing to organize high-level events, in 2016, the Secretariat started to give a greater focus to further mobilizing countries and people around the world to embrace and celebrate World Wildlife Day by reaching out to specific countries and organizing colourful and participatory activities which to reach a wider and greater audience.
28. Events in 80 countries were registered on the World Wildlife Day website, from a lecture on wildlife conservation in the primary school Ecole primaire de l’Amitie, close to the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda, to a high level event at the State Department in Washington, D.C., United States. This represents a considerable increase from the previous year and reflects how rapidly the international community has embraced the day.

29. Over 160 films were entered into the International Elephant Film Festival, which was jointly organized by the CITES Secretariat and Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival as part of the World Wildlife Day celebrations. The [winners](#) in seven categories were announced on 3 March 2016 at UN Headquarters in New York. The film festival greatly amplified the global calls to stop the poaching of elephants and the illicit trafficking of elephant ivory.
30. More than 320 inspirational posters were submitted to World Wildlife Day poster design competition, jointly organized by the CITES Secretariat and the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa which sponsored the competition. The [three winners](#) will be awarded with flight tickets for travel to Johannesburg, South Africa, to attend the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.
31. The social media campaign was once again a great success. The hashtags #worldwildlifeday #WWD2016 and #InOurHands on Twitter in the English language alone achieved a social media reach of 667 million impressions in just 4 days. This represented an increase of close to 300% from the previous year. The social media team of UNEP led the social media campaign in 2016 and provided generous support, as did other UN and non-UN organizations in promoting the celebration of the day on their own social media platforms.
32. Governments, the UN system organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, community-based groups, and others, gathered in The Hague, the Netherlands to address the global challenge of wildlife crime at an international conference hosted by the Government of the Netherlands under the title 'Save Wildlife – Act now or game over'. The CITES Secretary-General gave a [keynote address](#) at this event.
33. World Wildlife Day 2016 also saw the European Union launching its new action plan to combat illegal wildlife trade, and major companies such as Google, JetBlue and eBay pledging to crack down on wildlife trafficking.
34. On 3 March, the CITES Secretariat provided the latest update, via a [press release](#), on trends in illegal killing of elephants in 2015 according to data from Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE), which warned that poaching levels continued to pose an immediate risk to the survival of African elephants with the overall poaching trends in 2015 showing the Africa-wide elephant populations still in decline. As with 2015 and 2016, the MIKE update of trends will continue to be released on World Wildlife Day.
35. The day's celebration reached its climax at UN Headquarters in New York, where over 400 participants representing governments, the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, wildlife film makers, and celebrities gathered to celebrate the day and to address the various challenges confronting both wildlife and people in the wider context of sustainable development. During the event, Ms Cristina Gallach, UN Under-Secretary-General announced the imminent launch of the One UN Campaign on illegal wildlife trade. The CITES Secretary-General facilitated a high-level Panel session, which included representatives from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, UNDP, WCS and WWF, and an interaction with people from the audience, including UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Gisele Bündchen, and well known actress and conservationist Ms Kristen Davis. UNDP played a lead role in organizing the event at the UN Headquarters.
36. In the message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for World Wildlife Day 2016, he warned that "Time is running out to save some of the world's most iconic species. Much more needs to be done by key actors on all continents and across sectors to combat poaching and address both the demand and supply of illegal wildlife products." The CITES Secretary-General and many others also released a short [video statement](#) for the day.

Discussions

37. At the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat noted that it was mostly developing countries that had taken action to celebrate the World Wildlife Day in the first two observances. It was encouraging to see this changed in the celebration of World Wildlife Day 2016. The Secretariat wishes to encourage even more countries around the world to join the celebration in future.
38. As noted in General Assembly resolution A/RES/68/205, which proclaims World Wildlife Day, "the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met from voluntary contributions, and ... such activities would be subject to the availability and provision of voluntary contributions." Although the organization of World Wildlife Day has been very successful in the past few

years, the Secretariat has facilitated the celebrations of the day with no additional financial resources and has relied upon existing in-house capacity and the support of many partners. The Secretariat and the celebrations will benefit from any additional financial or in-kind support to ensure the ongoing success of future celebrations of World Wildlife Day.

Recommendations

39. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft resolution in Annex 1 on World Wildlife Day to replace Resolution Conf. 16.1.
40. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decision in Annex 2 on World Wildlife Day.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

World Wildlife Day

RECALLING that Resolution Conf. 16.1 adopted at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2013) declares 3 March, the day of signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as World Wildlife Day;

WELCOMING resolution A/RES/68/205, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 68th session on 20 December 2013, proclaiming 3 March as the United Nations World Wildlife Day;

NOTING that the United Nations General Assembly invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other global, regional and subregional organizations, as well as other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, non-governmental organizations and individuals, to observe and raise awareness of World Wildlife Day in an appropriate manner, in accordance with national priorities;

NOTING also that the United Nations General Assembly requests the CITES Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to facilitate the implementation of World Wildlife Day;

RECOGNIZING that for the purpose of World Wildlife Day, “wildlife” means wild animals and plants;

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts of the CITES Secretariat in facilitating the implementation of World Wildlife Day, in collaboration with relevant organizations of the United Nations system and others, with no additional financial resources;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the Standing Committee, at its 65th meeting (Geneva, July 2014), established a World Wildlife Day Working Group which, *inter alia*, is mandated to recommend the theme of each year’s World Wildlife Day;

RECOGNIZING that World Wildlife Day provides an unique opportunity to, *inter alia*, mobilize people around the world to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora, demonstrate the multitude of benefits that wildlife provides to people, and raise awareness of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime which has wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts;

WELCOMING the tremendous support generated by World Wildlife Day for the conservation of wildlife, and the ever growing level of participation across the world in the observance of the day;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

CALLS upon all Parties to use World Wildlife Day as an opportunity: to celebrate and raise the awareness of the general public regarding the world’s wild animals and plants; to enhance efforts to enforce wildlife protection laws and to reduce demand for illegally traded wild animals and plants; and to recognize the contribution of wildlife to the livelihoods of poor rural communities in various ways;

INVITES all Parties and non-party States, national and international organizations with an interest in wildlife conservation, to associate celebrations of World Wildlife Day to national, regional and international conservation events, where appropriate, and to communicate the planned activities to the Secretariat in advance;

ENCOURAGES all Parties to follow the theme adopted for each observance of World Wildlife Day and, where appropriate, to adapt it to the focus of species or issues of national priority, and to use the World Wildlife Day logo and other promotional materials as widely as possible, including on websites and social media;

URGES all Parties, through their national ministries of education or other relevant authorities responsible for education, to consider making the observance of World Wildlife Day a regular event on the calendars of kindergartens, schools and universities, and to invite zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, nature reserves, national parks, and all other wildlife-related facilities to observe the day on a regular basis;

REQUESTS the Secretariat to continue to facilitate the global celebration of World Wildlife Day, to maintain the website and social media platforms of World Wildlife Day, to produce promotional materials and to work with partner organizations on social media campaigns for World Wildlife Day each year;

REQUESTS the Standing Committee to continue to work with the Secretariat to, *inter alia*, recommend the theme for each year's observance of World Wildlife Day;

APPEALS to all Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations and to the private sector interested in wildlife conservation and in promoting World Wildlife Day, to make voluntary financial and in-kind contributions, to the Secretariat in order to allow it to better facilitate the global observance of the Day; and

REPEALS Resolution Conf. 16.1 (Bangkok, 2013) – *World Wildlife Day*.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

United Nations World Wildlife Day

Directed to the Secretariat

17.CC The Secretariat shall:

- a) liaise with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and other relevant organizations and associations, to seek their support in making the observance of World Wildlife Day a regular event for kindergartens, educational institutions, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, nature reserves, national parks and all wildlife-related facilities around the world.
- b) report at each meeting of the Standing Committee on the celebrations of each World Wildlife Day.
- c) inform the United Nations General Assembly about the celebration of World Wildlife Day, *inter alia*, elaborating on the evaluation of the day, as requested.

LOGO OF WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Arabic



French



Chinese



Russian



English



Spanish

