



JIM LEAPE UN EVENT ON ILLICIT WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

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- ▶ What we thought was a problem of wildlife actually has much **deeper implications**. It is an industry estimated at 10 billion per year. It is a crime of high profit and low risk. This is a war that is being waged by gangs with AK47s, roaming over the borders of Africa and many other regions, slaughtering wildlife.
- ▶ Examples: The slaughter of hundreds of elephants in Cameroon by a large group of foreign poachers that required an elite military response to combat; 25-30,000 elephants killed in Africa per year, over a 60% reduction in elephants of the Congo Basin; More rhinos killed this year already than any year in recent times, and there is still allot of 2013 to come.
- ▶ Illicit Wildlife Trafficking is cover for **drug trade, arms trade, money laundering**. It may be fuelling insurgencies. It can undermine economic development, particularly countries dependent on tourism. It fosters the broader threat of **corruption** which comes along with this trade.
- ▶ Illicit wildlife trafficking also poses a potential health risk. It is estimated that as much as 75% of emerging diseases can be transferred by wildlife, including SARS.
- ▶ Over the last year we've seen governments all over the world at the highest level standing up and outlining the importance of combating illegal wildlife trade. President Bongo is one of these people.
- ▶ But it is time for the UN to stand up in a way it hasn't done before:
 - ❖ The **UN General Assembly needs to address this issue through a resolution** where courts & customs are all pulled together across the chain of commerce. Governments need to invest in reducing demand, and take on **corruption**, as corruption is key part of this crime.
 - ❖ The **UN should appoint a Special Representative**, who can identify links between illicit wildlife trafficking and sustainable development, rule of law and peace and security, and work with governments to make action happen.
 - ❖ A **Friends of Group** of UN missions should be established to propel this issue forward, and sustain it within the UN system.