

UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov
Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking – a Multidimensional Crime and Growing
Challenge to the International Community

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Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we have heard today, poaching and wildlife trafficking have a devastating impact on communities, on the environment and on security.

Poachers and other criminals are driving elephants, rhinos, tigers and many other species to the verge of extinction, around the globe.

Criminals are destroying local livelihoods, upsetting fragile ecosystems and hindering social and economic development.

They are fuelling violence and corruption, and undermining the rule of law.

The billions of dollars generated by this illegal trade are being used to further nefarious ends. In some cases this money goes to financing terrorism and contributing to instability.

There is no doubt that wildlife crime is a transnational organized crime, on a massive scale.

What is needed first and foremost is an effective criminal justice response on the national, regional and international levels.

We need to strengthen legislation, support law enforcement and prosecutors, and impose the sanctions these crimes deserve. They must be treated as serious criminal offences.

Communities impacted by poaching and wildlife trafficking must also be provided with alternative livelihood opportunities.

Another urgent priority is tackling the demand that is driving this illegal trade. We need to raise awareness of the devastation caused by the markets for ivory, rhino horn, bushmeat, exotic parrots and shark fins. We must make consumers aware that this crime is far from victimless.

The CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora protects more than 34,000 species, and helps to ensure that international trade does not threaten their survival.

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime provides a strong foundation for international cooperation to combat wildlife crime.

As the guardian of the Convention, UNODC has long and extensive experience in helping States fight all forms of transnational organized crime.

The CITES Secretariat, the World Bank, the World Customs Organization, INTERPOL and UNODC came together in 2010 to form the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime. ICCWC [*pronounced EYE-QUICK*] seeks to deliver a coordinated and comprehensive approach to wildlife crime.

Through ICCWC, UNODC has developed the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit with a view to assist Member States to strengthen national criminal justice systems through evidence-based capacity building and technical assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need leadership and a strong commitment to combat poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking.

I welcome the ample evidence of this commitment that we see here today.

I would like to thank President Bongo and Minister Westerwelle for hosting this important and timely discussion.

Thank you.