

## UNEP-UNEA Ministerial Dialogue on Illegal Trade in Wildlife

26 June 2014

*"Successful conservation and sustainable development policies need to be guided by ecological and biological sustainability, the ethical treatment of animals and the [precautionary principle](#)."*

Peter Pueschel, Director International Environmental Agreements  
IFAW – International Fund for Animal Welfare

### **Illegal Wildlife Trade Statement, focus enforcement**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,  
Excellences, honorable Ministers,  
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen.

We applaud the decision to have today's Ministerial Dialogue focused on Illegal Trade in Wildlife, particularly at a time it seems most needed that future *successful conservation and sustainable development policies need to be guided by ecological and biological sustainability, the ethical treatment of wildlife and the [precautionary principle](#)*.

Amongst the uncountable number of species today under threat are some of the most magnificent and most important keystone species, like Great Apes, tigers, sharks and elephants.

Just imagine that on average every 15 minutes one elephant gets brutally killed, only to steal his tusks for the illicit ivory market – that makes about 12 poached elephants just during our session here tonight.

Distinguished delegates, just like the intervention from the previous speaker from the NGOs, this following intervention is based on our joint statement of all 9 Major Groups present here at UNEA.

Unsustainable and illegal extraction and trade in wildlife, has major economic, social and environmental impacts. It leads to violations of human and environmental rights, the precautionary principle, contributes to damage of ecosystems and rural livelihoods, undermines good governance, accountability and the rule of law, threatens national security and devastates local communities and wildlife based business.

**To combat and eradicate wildlife crime effectively, good compliance and enforcement measures must be top priority worldwide.**

Therefore, we commend and support some great progress over the last years, achieved by international enforcement cooperation and partnerships, which we encourage you to expand on.

These including some already mentioned here, like

- ICCWC the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime.
- partnerships like LEAF and NEST, the National Environmental Security Task Forces, for which Interpol is in the lead,
- LATF, the Lusaka Task Force Agreement,
- Regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks, like ASEAN or HAWEN, here at the Horn of Africa,
- and decisions, implementation and enforcement action from CITES, but also others, like the Convention on Migratory Species.

Just to mention a few.

**Additionally we strongly recommend**

- To further increase national, regional and international cooperation between relevant bodies, including local authorities, agencies, police, customs, environmental and other wildlife specialized agencies, prosecutors, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental partners.
- To identify where legislation is contradictory, insufficient or unnecessarily complex, and to undertake legal reform to overcome any such shortfalls.
- To harmonize legislation for the benefit of enforceability, in a way where trade and use of poached or illegally harvested materials shall by law be made illegal across the supply chain, not only in the country of origin, but as well in the transit and end-market countries.
- Last not least, we recommend stepping up international cooperation to investigate and uncover financial flows in relation to illicit wildlife trafficking, including illegal timber trade.

Distinguished delegates, many of you have rightly referred to the birth of UNEA as being a historic breakthrough reflecting the commitment of the global community to ecological sustainability in harmony with nature.

To make this real, we call on all governments here at UNEA to unite behind clear, far-reaching commitments, followed by effective compliance and enforcement action to eradicate illicit wildlife trade.

That would indeed make the 1st meeting of the United Nations Environmental Assembly a truly historic moment.

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