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UN World Wildlife Crime Report makes the case for a new wildlife crime agreement says Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime

Hong Kong, July 13 2020 –The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) second World Wildlife Crime Report released on July 10 provides a stark reminder of how wildlife crime threatens to undermine national economies, local livelihoods, security, our climate, as well as public health, while unscrupulous transnational organized criminals make billions, according to The [End Wildlife Crime Initiative \(EWC\)](#).

The assessment of wildlife trafficking trends analyzed in the Report shows an emerging pattern of large illegal shipments of different wildlife products. These, combined with multiple networks of smaller traffickers, move vast quantities of elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin products, European eels, timber, reptiles and big cats, including live animals, across the globe.

According to the UNODC report, ivory and rhino horn trafficking alone generated an estimated US\$400 (310 – 570) million and US\$230 (170 – 280) million respectively from 2016-2018. UNODC estimates that the volume of cross-border transactions for these two products alone could be almost twice these amounts.

While the poaching of both elephants and rhinoceroses has been in decline since 2011, as have the prices paid for tusks and horns, the amount of pangolin scales seized has increased 10-fold in just five years. New markets, such as the trafficking of European glass eels, have also emerged.

“We warmly welcome this Report, which reminds us of the highly destructive scale and nature of these serious organized crimes, and once again reinforces the need to treat them as serious crimes”, said EWC Chair John Scanlon.

“It also shows us that we are lacking an agreed definition of wildlife crime, of the need for enhanced international cooperation, that countries are not utilizing the various tools available to tackle these crimes under UN conventions, especially the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and of the need to look beyond CITES international trade rules and listed species” Scanlon said. “If we hope to end wildlife crime, we need a more fundamental shift in how we tackle these serious crimes. The UNODC Report serves to reinforce the need for a wildlife crime convention to unequivocally embed these crimes where they belong - into the international criminal law framework.”

The Report limits itself to the illegal international trade in CITES listed species and does not analyze the massive illegal trade in the millions of species that are not listed, especially fish and timber species, and it does not address the full suite of wildlife crimes, including domestic crimes.

It notes that current wildlife trade laws do not address public or animal health and the need to adopt a 'One Health' approach to wildlife trade. The Report does not, however, analyze any species in illegal trade that could pose a risk to human health, including bats, whether listed under CITES or not, from a public health perspective.

"The impacts of such illegal trade need to go beyond seizure data and monetary value, and account for the public health risks", according to Lisa Genasci, CEO of the ADM Capital Foundation.

"Further data and analysis is needed in this regard and EWC encourages UNODC to address these gaps in future reports as part of a One Health approach", she said.

"As many parts of the world begin to reopen in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with others still struggling to cope, the Report reminds us that illegally traded wildlife may be a source of the current pandemic, and that illegally traded wildlife poses a risk for future wildlife-related pandemics", said Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy at the Born Free Foundation.

With virtually every country in the world identified in the Report as playing a role in the illegal trade, it is a global issue that needs a global solution. The [End Wildlife Crime](#) initiative was established to promote international legal reforms to help ensure we avoid future pandemics.

"The lack of a comprehensive global legal framework on wildlife crime and significant gaps in trade laws omitting human and animal health, are at the core of the work of the End Wildlife Crime Initiative" said Genasci. "The Initiative aims to facilitate the transformative change needed via an international legal agreement for wildlife crime and amendments to wildlife trade laws".

This week the [End Wildlife Crime Initiative](#) launched a network of influential Champions to help achieve international legal reform and stem the **under-regulated, poorly regulated and illegal wildlife trade**. Founding Champions include [World Travel and Tourism Council](#), [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#), [TreadRight Foundation](#), [ADM Capital](#), and The [Wildlife Justice Commission](#).

"Wildlife crime is a problem for every single one of us", says Douglas Flynn of SYSTEMIQ, who works with the Food and Land Use Coalition, a community of organisations and individuals committed to the transformation of food and land use systems. "The impacts of COVID-19 demonstrate the risks we face if we don't act now. By supporting a global agreement on wildlife crime, CEOs, companies, industry groups and investors can stand together to address these risks."

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. This was reiterated by the World Health Organization COVID-19 response, which highlights the importance of a One Health approach. The methodology recognizes the interdependence of human, animal and ecosystem health.

The World Wildlife Crime Report 2020 is [available from UNODC](#).

About the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime

End Wildlife Crime is an alliance of individuals and organisations that support the need for international law reforms. Chaired by John Scanlon AO, former Secretary General of CITES, the initiative aims to encourage States to fill serious gaps in international law by advocating for and offering technical support to create a new global agreement on wildlife crime and amend existing international wildlife trade laws to include public and animal health in decision making.

We believe this can be achieved by:

- a) advocating for the adoption of a fourth protocol on wildlife crime under the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime; and,
- b) amending the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to include public health and animal health criteria into the Convention's decision-making processes.

The two reforms are inter-related. New regulations on the trade in wildlife, including possible new trade bans on health grounds and bans on certain high-risk markets and consumption, will require a scaled up, cooperative global enforcement effort...

Hosted by ADM Capital Foundation in Hong Kong, Chaired by Scanlon, and with Founding members the Born Free Foundation, The Food and Land Use Coalition, the Global Environmental Institute and The ICCF Group, the Initiative gathers an array of organisations and individuals in its Steering Group representing environmental, policy, business and public health interests. The initiative also includes advisers on private sector engagement, building partnerships and CITES, as well as a technical support group that includes renowned international lawyers and criminologists.

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