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Media Release

For Immediate Release

World unites to fight wildlife crime as UN adopts historic resolution

BANGKOK, Thailand – Faced with an unprecedented surge in wildlife crime, the UN today adopted a historic resolution committing all countries to ramp up their collective efforts to end the global poaching crisis and tackle the vast illegal wildlife trade.

Initiated by Gabon and Germany and co-sponsored by over 70 other nations including Thailand the UN General Assembly resolution, *Tackling the Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife*, is the result of three years of diplomatic efforts and is the first time that every nation has acknowledged the seriousness of wildlife crime and the urgent need to join forces to combat it.

"The UN resolution marks a new phase in the fight against wildlife crime, which has evolved into a serious threat not only to countless species but also to national security and sustainable development," said Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International. "This landmark resolution proves that ending wildlife crime is no longer just an 'environmental' issue and not just limited to a few countries: it has become a priority for every nation."

With elephant populations collapsing in Mozambique and Tanzania and record numbers of rhinos being killed in South Africa, the poaching crisis is clearly undermining global conservation efforts. But the UN resolution also spells out the broader effects of wildlife crime, which undermines good governance, the rule of law and the well-being of local communities as well as financing criminal networks and funding armed conflict.

"While progress is being made to end the illegal ivory trade within Thailand, the government has joined the international community in its fight against wildlife trafficking. This year Thailand passed its first ever piece of legislation to control the domestic ivory trade and made African elephants a protected species in Thailand." Said Yowalak Thiarachow, Director of WWF-Thailand.

"Considerable work still needs to be done to implement regulations and increase enforcement, clamp down on illegal traders and reduce demand. But, this already shows that Thailand is committed to eradicating wildlife crime." added Ms. Thiarachow.

Recognizing that only a comprehensive approach can curb the current crisis, all 193 UN member states agreed to enhance regional and international cooperation along the entire illegal wildlife trade chain, including measures to stop the poaching, trafficking and buying. Along with strengthening judicial processes and law enforcement, the resolution encourages countries to actively involve local communities in the fight against the illicit trade by enhancing their rights and capacity to manage and benefit from wildlife resources.



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Attracted by the relatively low risks and high returns, organized crime networks have muscled their way into the illegal wildlife trade, bringing with them more sophisticated poaching and trafficking methods – and greater violence and corruption.

In response, the resolution highlights the transnational and organized nature of crimes that impact the environment and stresses the need for countries to counter corruption and address money laundering linked to wildlife crime.

“If countries fully implement the resolution, wildlife crime will become far riskier and far less rewarding,” said Elisabeth McLellan, Head of the Wildlife Crime Initiative, WWF International. “The resolution’s strong reporting mechanism should ensure that real progress is made and that any critical gaps are effectively addressed.”

Starting in 2016, the UN secretary general is tasked with presenting an annual report on global wildlife crime and countries’ implementation of the resolution, together with recommendations for further action. Already lined up for debate next year is the possible appointment of a special envoy – a move that WWF believes would promote greater awareness and help hold countries to account.

“WWF has played a key role in shifting global attitudes towards wildlife crime over recent years, highlighting its impact on communities and on dwindling populations of elephants, rhinos, tigers and other species,” said Lambertini. “WWF will now focus on assisting countries to implement the resolution and help end the terrible global scourge that is wildlife crime, once and for all.”

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Notes to Editor:

WWF and TRAFFIC launched the Wildlife Crime Initiative in 2014 following their joint Illegal Wildlife Trade campaign, which was launched in 2012 and generated unprecedented momentum and high-level political will.

The UNGA resolution builds on a series of major international declarations on illegal wildlife trade, including the 2013 Paris Declaration, the 2014 London Declaration, the 2015 Kasane Statement and the 2015 Brazzaville Declaration.

More on UNGA Resolution:

https://cites.org/eng/unga_resolution_wildlife_trafficking_150730

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About WWF

WWF is one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org/news for latest news and media resources

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