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EX.CL/910(XVII)

**REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ILLEGAL
EXPLOITATION AND ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILD
FLORA AND FAUNA IN AFRICA,
BRAZZAVILLE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO 27-30 APRIL 2015**

**REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ILLEGAL EXPLOITATION
AND ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILD FLORA AND FAUNA IN AFRICA,
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PART I: INTRODUCTION

I. BACKGROUND

1. The AU Decision **EX.CL/Dec.832 (XXV)** of the Executive Council on African Wild Flora and Fauna Conservation and Illegal Trade in Wildlife made at its Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session held from 20 – 24 June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, among other items, welcomed the offer by the Republic of Congo to host the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, and requested the Commission to collaborate with the Republic of Congo in hosting the said Conference.

2. Following this Decision, the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa was held from 27-30 April 2015 in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo at the Palais des Congrès and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE

3. The main objective of the conference was to provide a platform for Governments, experts and development partners to deliberate on a draft African common strategy to combat illegal trade in wild flora and fauna, a roadmap and plan of action with a sustainable funding instrument.

III. PARTICIPATION

4. Under the patronage of H.E Mr. **Denis Sassou N'guesso**, President of the Republic of Congo and the aegis of the Commission, the conference saw the participation of over **500** delegates with at least 250 experts. The following countries were represented at the conference:- **Africa:** Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Uganda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe (26 Countries) **Europe:** Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom, **Asia:** China, **North America:** Canada, USA.

5. The participants were drawn from African Member States, international organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and associations, diplomatic missions, national and international media, scientific community, local parliamentarians and local governments; representatives from United Nations Agencies including UN Development Programme

(UNDP), UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank (WB); agencies and institutions including the African Development Bank (AfDB), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), World Conservation Society (WCS), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Lusaka Taskforce, TRAFFIC, US Forest Service and Development partners including USAID, French Development Agency, GIZ, Suisse Agency for Development and Cooperation and Chinese Cooperation.

6. Financial and logistical support for the conference was provided by UNDP, AfDB, ECCAS, WB, EU Delegation to Congo, and Chinese Embassy in Congo while the commission provided interpretation and translation services for the conference.

PART II: DELIBERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7. The conference was organized in two segments: - (1) Experts session and (2) High-level segment

IV. EXPERTS' SEGMENT 27-28 APRIL 2015

4.1 Opening ceremony

8. The experts segment was held from 27-28 April 2015 with the Republic of Congo Presiding. The opening ceremony was presided by Honorable Henri Djombo, Minister for Forest Economy and Sustainable Development, who officially opened the Experts' segment.

4.2 Organizational Matters

9. The opening ceremony was followed by organizational matters where the following countries were nominated

| <u>Country</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Congo | President |
| Kenya | 1st Vice-President |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 2nd Vice-President |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | Rapporteur |
| Republic of South Africa | Rapporteur |
| Algeria | Member |

10. The organizational matters were followed by parallel sessions during which 14 presentations were made covering the following themes: - Regional Peace and Security, Legal frameworks and Governance, Socio and economic development,

Regional and International Development. This was followed by discussions on the draft strategy and the declaration in plenary.

V. HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT (29-30 APRIL 2015)

5.1 Opening of the high level Segment

11. The high level segment was officially opened and graced by H.E Mr. Denis Sassou N'guesso, President of the Republic of Congo.

12. In addition, statements at the opening were delivered by H.E Mr. Henri Djombo, the Minister of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development; Ms. Yasmin Warsame, Goodwill Ambassador; Ms. Saskia De Lang, Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Congo; Mr. Benoit Bosquet on behalf of the World Bank; Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, the UNEP Deputy Executive Director; H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture; Mr. Daniel Ona Ondo, Prime Minister for the Republic of Gabon; and H.E Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad and President of ECCAS.

13. The statements highlighted the detrimental economic, security, social, and environmental implications of the illegal trade in wild flora and fauna and called upon the African Union and its Member States to act together to bring this to an end.

14. H.E the president of the Republic of Congo called for coordinated efforts to safeguard Africa's biodiversity for future generations while H.E the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture called for practical home-grown solutions towards decisively eliminating poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

5.2 Ivory Burning Ceremony

15. Following the official opening of the high-level segment of the conference, H.E Mr. Denis Sassou N'guesso and H.E Idris Deby Itno, then presided over the a burning of five tonnes of ivory and 48 m³ of illegally harvested wood in a symbolic act to express commitment in the fight against Illegal Exploitation of wild fauna and flora.

VI. MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

16. The Ministerial session was held in closed session and was Co-Chaired by the republic of Congo represented by H.E Minister Djombo and the Commission, represented by H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture with the participation of Ministers and the representative of Ministers of the following countries:- Republic of Congo, Gabon, Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Niger, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Burundi, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

17. During this session, the Ministers deliberated on (i) the Draft African Common Strategy of Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna and (ii) the Brazzaville Declaration which were adopted with amendments.

6.1 The African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora

18. The Common Strategy has been formulated to guide a common, coordinated response by countries in Africa to combat the illegal trade in wild fauna and flora (IWT). It promotes a strong national, regional and international response towards safeguarding all wild fauna and flora in Africa and complements all other on-going programmes, initiatives and activities. The strategy addresses issues relating to source, transit and destination countries of illegally traded wild fauna and flora and their products. In particular, it aims at providing an agreed Africa-wide framework for operationalizing decisions reached at various international fora and mobilization of resources to support and ensure its implementation.

19. It builds upon and supports actions taken by African Governments to implement their obligations and commitments under international agreements, including under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In addition, it builds upon the commitments from a number of recent high-level events culminating in Brazzaville that have generated significant momentum at international, regional and national levels to enhance efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade more effectively, to raise the profile of illegal wildlife trade and to secure political support for these efforts. This Common Strategy takes that political commitment forward in a bold step of African solidarity to combat and defeat illegal wildlife trade.

20. The **objective** of the Common Strategy is to prevent, reduce and eventually eliminate the illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa through the development, ratification and implementation of an Africa wide strategic framework, endorsed and acted upon by the African Union and its member states.

6.2 The Brazzaville Declaration

21. The Brazzaville Declaration recognizes the need to strengthen national legislation, the need to ensure that the trafficking of wildlife was more widely regarded as a criminal activity of similar importance to drug smuggling; the need to enhance regional and sub-regional platforms for research, capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and communications systems; and the importance of promoting sustainable livelihoods for local communities and involving them in conservation efforts. The declaration contains the following **key elements**:-

22. **Adopts** the Common African strategy to guide Africa's response in the fight against illicit trade in wild fauna and flora, together with its action plan and road map for Africa's response to illegal exploitation and illicit trade in wildlife.

23. It requests the African Union Assembly to (a) nominate Ambassadors at the Head of State to advance the cause of combatting illegal wildlife trade and crime by engaging the transit and demand countries; (b) to hold a joint conference with the transit and consumer countries with a view to agree on joint actions to be carried out to eliminate supply, demand, and trade in the illegal wild flora and fauna products in Africa; (c) to urge all African countries to reconsider the ratification/accession to existing continental instruments, such as the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as the Maputo Convention, in order to strengthen cooperation in fighting crime in wild flora and fauna; (d) to urge all African countries to review and amend national legislation, as necessary and appropriate, so that offences connected to wildlife and forest crime are treated as "predicate offences", as defined in the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, for the purposes of domestic money laundering offences, and are therefore actionable under domestic proceeds of criminal legislation.

24. The Brazzaville Declaration also recommends several actions including (a) that the African Union presents to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) the African Strategy adopted in Brazzaville for its inclusion in the global strategy against this scourge prepared by the United Nations and (b) that the next Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Africa-China Summit, Africa-Japan Summit, Africa-India Summit, Africa-Arab Summit, and Africa-European Summit, as well as other relevant summits, include the issue of wildlife crime as a priority agenda item.

VII. PARTNERS' ROUNDTABLE

25. The roundtable was moderated by UNEP and brought together the Commission, Ministers or their representatives, technical and financial partners including the European Union, France, Germany, and Switzerland: Institutions and organizations including AfDB, AWF, IUCN, Lusaka Agreement, TRAFFIC, UNODC, UNDP, WCS, WHO, World Bank and WWF. The roundtable provided a platform for joint deliberations on resource mobilization options for the implementation of the Common Strategy and its Action Plan with some of the organizations offering to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the common strategy.

VIII. CLOSING CEREMONY

26. The closing ceremony took place on 30 April 2015 and graced by H.E Mr. Firmin Ayessa, Minister of State and Director of and Director of the Presidential Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Congo. During the closing, the Brazzaville Declaration was read out by the Minister of Environment of Benin while the closing remarks were delivered by H.E the Minister of State.

IX. PRESS CONFERENCE

27. After the official closing of the conference, a joint press conference was held to announce the outcomes of the conference. The questions were addressed to the H.E. Henri Djombo, H.E. Commissioner Tumusiime Rhoda Peace and Mr. Thiaw, the UNEP Deputy Executive Director.

28. The conference was organized into two parts, an experts' session which was followed by a high level segment and covered the following themes: - Regional Peace and Security, Socio and Economic development, Legal Frameworks and Governance, and Regional and International Cooperation. It was co-hosted by the Commission and the Republic of Congo with the support of the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant partners.

EX.CL/910(XVII)
Annex

DECLARATION



**International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wild Flora and
Fauna in Africa
27-30 April 2015 BRAZZAVILLE**

DECLARATION

We, the Governments,

Having met in Brazzaville, from 27 to 30 April 2015 at the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa;

Recalling Decision *EX.CL/ Dec.832 (XXV)* of the Executive Council of the African Union, Decision on African Wild Flora and Fauna Conservation and Illegal Trade in Wildlife, made at its Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session 20 – 24 June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, welcoming the offer by the Republic of Congo to host the International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, and requesting the African Union Commission to collaborate with the Republic of Congo in the organization of the Conference;

Further recalling Decision *EX.CL/ Dec.832 (XXV)* of the Executive Council of the African Union, on Decision on African Wild Flora and Fauna Conservation and Illegal Trade in Wildlife made at its Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session 20 – 24 June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, requesting the African Union Commission, with the support of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, the Taskforce of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and relevant partners, to prepare an African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora to be reported on during the June 2015 Ordinary Session of the Executive Council;

Recalling resolution 1/3 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its first session on illegal trade in wildlife;

Recalling also the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions that called on Member States to step up their responses to illicit trafficking of wild fauna and flora, including General Assembly Resolution 68/193 that called for coordinated action to eliminate corruption and disrupt the illicit networks that drive and enable trafficking in wild flora and fauna;

Recalling Decision 15/2 made at the 15th Session of AMCEN in Cairo, Egypt, on the African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora that agreed that the process that was embarked upon to develop the draft African Common

Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora should continue at The International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa to be held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, and that the strategy should have a shared understanding of the key issues listed in the decisions;

Taking note of the Arusha Declaration on Regional Conservation and Combatting Wildlife/Environmental Crime of 2014 in Arusha, Tanzania; the commitment made in June 2012 in N'Djamena, Chad by the Ministers of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) on Central African Wildlife Law Enforcement Action Plan (PAPECALF) and the South African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement agreed in 1999;

Taking note of the firm commitments agreed upon at the 2013 and 2015 African Elephant Summits (in Gaborone and Kasane, Botswana, the Elysée Summit on Peace and Security in Africa, in Paris, 5th December 2013, the 2014 London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in London, UK, and the 2015 Kasane International Conference on Illegal wildlife trade in Kasane, Botswana; and the 13th UN Congress on Crime in Doha April 2015 in Doha, Qatar;

Taking note of the joint declaration of the 7th College-to-College meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission made on 22 April 2015 in Brussels, Belgium, that includes, among others, a commitment on cooperation to fight against illegal wildlife trafficking and to work to strengthen wildlife trade legislation and its enforcement, where necessary, to eliminate corruption associated with wildlife trafficking and to address the supply and demand for illegal wildlife products; and engage with one another on matters to be discussed at Conference of the Parties of international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES);

Taking note of the availability of the analytical toolkit provided by the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to national governments, developed with the aim of assisting countries by enhancing the national capacity of the institutions involved in combatting the illegal trade in wild flora and fauna;

Recognizing the initiatives of member countries of the Council of Ministers of the WAPO Complex (Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, and Togo) in adopting an urgent action programme to combat poaching during the period of 2014-2019;

Appreciating the support provided by all of the members of the international technical committee (spell out the names of all the partner members of the ITC) for its contribution to the process of organization of this international conference and preparation of the African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

We declare as follows:

- 1- *Adopt* the common strategy to assist Africa in the fight against the illicit trade in wild fauna and flora, together with the action plan and the road map for Africa's response to illegal exploitation and illicit trade in wildlife;
- 2- *Request* the African Union Assembly to nominate Ambassador's at the Head of State level to advance the cause of combatting illegal wildlife trade and crime by engaging the issues in Africa and with transit and demand countries;
- 3- *Recommend* to the African Union to present to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) the African Strategy adopted in Brazzaville for its inclusion in the global strategy against this scourge prepared by the United Nations;
- 4- *Request* the summit of the African Union to hold a joint conference with the transit and consumer countries with a view to agree on joint actions to be carried out to eliminate supply, demand, and trade in the illegal wild flora and fauna products in Africa;
- 5- *Recommend* that the next Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Africa-China Summit, Africa-Japan Summit, Africa-India Summit, Africa-Arab Summit, and Africa-European Summit, as well as other relevant summits, include the issue of wildlife crime as a priority agenda item;
- 6- *Request* the African Union Summit to urge all African countries to reconsider the ratification/accession to existing continental instruments, such as the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as the Maputo Convention, in order to strengthen cooperation in fighting crime in wild flora and fauna;
- 7- *Request* the Assembly of Heads and State and Governments to urge all African countries to review and amend national legislation, as necessary and appropriate, so that offences connected to wildlife and forest crime are treated as "predicate offences", as defined in the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, for the purposes of domestic money laundering offences, and are therefore actionable under domestic proceeds of criminal legislation;
- 8- *Urge* African states to formally engage in promoting good governance, transparency, and equity in the management of fauna and flora;
- 9- *Urge* African Governments, as well as technical and financial partners, to continue to support the preparation and subsequent implementation of the strategy and action plan at national, regional, and continental levels;
- 10- *Commit* to ensuring that any measures taken to combat wildlife crime will comply with the obligations under international laws relating to human rights,

international humanitarian law, and the rights of indigenous/marginalized populations;

- 11-** *Encourage* Member States to recognize the rights and increasing the participation of indigenous populations and local communities in planning, management, and use of wildlife resources, promoting sustainable and alternative livelihoods, and in building their capacities to fight against wildlife crime;
- 12-** *Request* government authorities in range, transit, and destination countries, UN agencies, Regional Economic Communities, Development Banks, non-governmental organizations, civil society, private sector, academia, and other relevant partners to provide the necessary technical, financial and logistical support in the implementation, reporting, and review/monitoring and evaluation for the strategy and action plan;
- 13-** *Encourage* development partners, United Nations agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, and media, to enhance and strengthen their active and joint collaboration with governments, parliamentarians, and regional economic communities for the implementation of the recommendations of this declaration;
- 14-** *Further recommend* that, national, regional, and continental consultations be carried out to ensure country ownership of the strategy adopted by the International Conference held in Brazzaville;
- 15-** *Recommend* the dissemination of the Common African Strategy against the illegal exploitation and illicit trade in wild fauna and flora and its plan of action at the local, national and regional level in order to ensure that the interests of local and indigenous communities are taken into account;
- 16-** *Request* the Member States of the African Union and partners to take into account the needs of local populations confronted with man-fauna conflicts in order to make them allies of the African Strategy;
- 17-** *Also request* the African Union Commission to establish an ad hoc committee, with two representatives from each of the five regions, in order to finalize the African Common Strategy document;
- 18-** *Urge* the African Union to include the illegal wild flora and fauna issues into their agenda during the upcoming Financing for Development Forum to be held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

- 19- *Recommend* to the African Development Bank to mobilize, under the coordination of the African Union, and in collaboration with the World Bank and the Global Environmental Facility, funding for the implementation of the Plan of Action and the Common Africa Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa;

- 20- *Extend* our appreciation to His Excellency, Denis SASSOU NGUESSO President of the Republic of Congo, the Government, and the People of Congo for successfully hosting this conference.

Done this 30th day of April 2015, in Brazzaville Republic of Congo.



2015

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