

**AFRICAN UNION**  
**الاتحاد الأفريقي**



**UNION AFRICAINE**  
**UNIÃO AFRICANA**

---

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 002511-115 517 700 Cables: OAU, Addis Ababa  
website : [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)

---

SC12233

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
**Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session**  
**20 - 24 June 2014**  
**Malabo, EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

**EX.CL/843(XXV)**  
**Original: English**

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON AFRICAN WILDLIFE,  
FAUNA AND FLORA CONSERVATION AND ILLEGAL  
TRADE IN WILDLIFE**

## REPORT OF AU COMMISSION ON AFRICAN WILDLIFE FAUNA AND FLORA CONSERVATION AND ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE

### INTRODUCTION

1. While Africa has significant resources in respect to the wild flora and fauna: e.g. 25% of the world's mammal species and 22% of plant species are in Africa. Illegal trade of wild flora and fauna in Africa is a serious social, economic and environmental problem that threatens peace and security, potential economic development and ecosystems management, and reduces future options for the use of resources.

2. Globally Illegal wildlife trade is recognized as the fourth largest global illegal trade closely behind illegal drugs, humans and arms trafficking. Of particular concern in Africa is the current poaching crisis affecting elephants, rhinos and other wild animals to supply ivory, horns and other animal products to markets in Asia. Furthermore, many other species of wildlife are also affected, including great apes, birds, fish and timber species.

3. The Libreville Declaration<sup>1</sup> of the Pan-African Conference on Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, held from 13 to 17 September 2010 called for adoption of appropriate measures at both the bilateral and multilateral levels to combat transboundary crime, including by encouraging African countries to accede to the 1994 Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in wild fauna and flora.

4. The Marrakesh Declaration adopted in 2013 by the Governors of the African Development Bank Group and its 10-Point Action Plan call to combat trafficking of endangered species of wild fauna and flora.

5. However, there has been dramatic escalation in the rate of illegal wildlife trade of fauna and flora depriving nations of their natural capital and cultural heritage, with serious political, security, economic, ecological and social consequences undermining sustainable economic development.

6. In recognition of the economic, social and environmental value of wildlife in Africa, this report is prepared to examine the current state of illegal trade/trafficking of wild flora and fauna in Africa as well as to propose recommendations on the conservation and sustainable trade and conservation of African Wildlife.

### I. THE STATE OF ILLEGAL TRADE OF WILD FLORA AND FAUNA IN AFRICA

7. Activities including species smuggling, illegal logging and timber smuggling are internationally defined as *Environmental Crimes*. The below is the state of illegal trade of wild flora and fauna in Africa.

---

<sup>1</sup> AMCEN/SS/IV/INF/7.

### **Elephants and Ivory**

8. Over the last decade the poaching of elephant reached unprecedented levels throughout the African continent with economic, peace and security and environmental implications which require collective and individual efforts from both international institutions and national governments. Although the intensity and form this criminal activity varies from one country to another the tendency is that the proportions are alarming and urgent actions are needed.

9. Southern Africa holds over half (55%) of the known elephants on the continent. Eastern Africa holds just under a third (28%) and Central Africa about one sixth (16%). In West Africa, less than 2% of the continent's known elephants are found in the region.

10. Across Africa, one elephant is killed every 15 minutes and more than half of all elephants found dead are killed illegally. At current rates of poaching, African elephants would disappear from many parts of Africa in the next ten years.

11. The Market for the majority of illegal traded elephant ivory is China. Furthermore, domestic ivory markets also flourish, and African countries with the biggest scale of domestic ivory market are: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

### **Rhinos and Horn**

12. The total population of white and black rhino in Africa is around 20,000 and 5,000 respectively. Rhino poaching increased by 7,000% in South Africa between 2007 and 2013, with around 1,000 rhinos poached in 2013 alone in South Africa, which is home to over 80% of Africa's rhinos.

13. With market value of \$65,000 per kilogram, rhino horn prices are now higher than gold. The market for the majority of illegally traded rhino horn is Vietnam.

### **Great Apes**

14. The illegal trade in great apes is emerging as a major threat to the long-term survival of chimpanzees, gorillas and bonobos in Africa. Great apes occur naturally in 21 African countries, but all are classified as "endangered" and four nations (Gambia, Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo) lost all their great apes in the late 20th century. Only 840 Mountain gorillas exist in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Cross River gorillas of Cameroon-Nigeria may number as few as 250.

15. The illegal trade in great apes centers on live infant animals for fashion or zoos for apes on display. Many apes is killed to secure a single infant for the illegal trade. As many as 10 chimpanzees or bonobos and two gorillas die for every live infant traded. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 2,500 great apes are lost from the forests of Africa each year.

16. Great apes can have a major impact on the economy of nations through sustainably managed tourism projects. In 2012 alone, Rwanda received 28,483

visitors for gorilla trekking only. In Uganda it is estimated that each Mountain gorilla earns \$1 million USD per year for the national economy.

### **Fisheries**

17. Pirate fishing accounts for an estimated 20% of the world's catch. The costs of pirate fishing are significant, with the value of pirate fish products estimated at between \$10-23.5 billion annually.

18. Fisheries crime in Africa has been associated with destroying marine habitats, distorting competition, money laundering and fraud, human trafficking, and traffic in illicit drugs. West Africa, recognized as one of the world's richest fisheries grounds teeming with snapper, grouper, sardines, mackerel and shrimp, loses up to \$1.5 billion worth of fish each year to vessels fishing in protected zones or without proper equipment or licenses.

### **Timber**

19. Africa's forest cover is estimated at 675 million ha, constituting 17% of the world's forests and 23% of the total land area of the region. Some 3.4 million ha/yr were lost from 2000-2010.

20. Illegal logging degrades forests, costs governments billions of dollars, promotes corruption and funds armed conflict and above all undermines local livelihoods. It impedes sustainable development in some of the poorest countries of the world. An estimated €30-100 billion is lost through illegal logging globally each year.

21. Rates of illegal logging in Africa vary, but in some cases are high, such as 50% for Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea to 70% in Gabon and 80% in Liberia. However, there remain significant discrepancies between reported imports versus reported exports of timber across much of Africa. In Uganda, for example, the under-payment of duties and taxes on imported timber was estimated at 50% in 2011, and in Gabon, 70% of harvested timber is considered illegal.

## **II. IMPLICATIONS OF ILLEGAL TRADE OF WILD FLORA AND FAUNA IN AFRICA**

22. Wildlife has intrinsic values including its ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic contributions to sustainable development and human well-being. The illegal trade of goods such as wildlife and timber in Africa is a serious economic and environmental problem that can disrupt whole economies and ecosystems, undermine environmentally sustainable activities, create instability and insecurity, and reduce future options for the use of resources.

23. In addition to the serious environmental consequences, these forms of illegal activity across borders can involve corruption and financial crime, loss of tax revenue for African governments, parallel trading with other forms of criminal activities, and distortion of the licit market. Furthermore, over the last decade, 1,000 park rangers have been killed by agents of illegal wildlife trade.

24. Wildlife crime alone is estimated globally to be worth USD 15 - 20 billion annually. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing accounts to USD 11 - 26 million tons a year, equivalent to 15 percent of world catches. The illegal timber trade by organized crime groups is estimated to be worth between USD 30 and 100 billion. (The value of the global official development assistance is USD 120 billion per year. Oil smuggling is estimated USD 12 billion a year and diamond smuggling is USD 0.3 billion a year).

25. Environmental crime can garner vast incomes for organized criminals, but because of its illicit, clandestine nature, it is generally a cash economy and therefore avoids conventional banking systems. INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) acknowledged the upsurge in the recent years in the involvement of rebel groups in wildlife crime, and evidence is growing of the involvement of some of Africa's most notorious rebel armies – i.e. the Lord's Resistance Army, the Al Shabaab and Darfur's Janjaweed.

## CONCLUSION

26. There are various important initiatives, efforts and actions already being taken by African Governments, African institutions, the United Nations system<sup>2</sup> including the Security Council and the General Assembly to combating illegal trade in wildlife and related criminal activities. However, It is important to note that economic, political, social, and environmental impacts of illegal wildlife trade can only be effectively tackled by eradicating everywhere in the world both the demand and supply of illegal products occurs. To address issues of the demand and supply of illegal wildlife trade/trafficking, the below recommendations can be considered:

- a) **Zero Tolerance Approach:** all nations to apply zero tolerance approaches, take decisive and urgent actions to strengthen laws and policies, engage communities so as to create deterrence and punish wildlife criminals and related criminal activities such as corruption, money laundering, organized crime, illicit fire arms and drugs and terrorism.
- b) **Mobilization of Financial and Technical Resources:** African governments need to commit in mobilization of financial and technical resources from national and bilateral and multilateral sources to support implementation of measures at national and regional levels aimed at combating illegal trade in wildlife. African countries also need to strengthen cross-border and regional co-operation and enforcement, share intelligence, information and other needed resources. In this respect, international community should do everything possible in providing the necessary financial and technical support to enable Africa to face the enormous challenges posed by illicit trade in wildlife products.

---

<sup>2</sup>The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; INTERPOL; the World Customs Organization; the World Bank; and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime; the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the UN Convention against Corruption; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Development Programme; the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks.

- c) **Implementation Modality at country level:** Enhanced implementation of National Actions and enforcement of rules and regulations and curb illegal trade in wildlife.
- d) **Development of African Common framework:** the Commission of the African Union and the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) should develop an African common strategy for engaging other countries and parties that are involved in illegal trade in wildlife from Africa and present the same at the next Summit for consideration.

**27.** Furthermore, Combating wildlife and flora trafficking requires the highest political leadership and collective and coordinated engagement from African governments with the leadership of African Union Commission in collaboration with the RECs and other intergovernmental bodies. This should be embedded into African Union Priorities with an actionable plan.

AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

---

Organs

Council of Ministers & Executive Council Collection

---

2014

# Report of the commission African wildlife, fauna and flora conservation and illegal trade in wildlife

African Union

African Union

---

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/4563>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*