



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

WILDLIFE CRIME & CORRUPTION WWF AND TRAFFIC ASKS TO G20

WWF and TRAFFIC, 23 January 2017

WWF and TRAFFIC call on G20 Leaders to

1. **Commit to fight corruption in wildlife crime** in the Leaders' Communiqué;
2. Support, through the Anti-Corruption Working Group, the establishment of robust **corruption risk assessment** and **management procedures** in the wildlife sector, supported by iterative monitoring and evaluation;
3. Encourage financial policy and regulatory bodies, for example the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to redefine existing principles or guidelines to **make more explicit links between wildlife crime and financial crime**.

Background

WWF and TRAFFIC welcome the initiative of the German presidency to enhance the G20 work on corruption and address wildlife crime in this context.

Wildlife crime is increasingly recognized as a specialised area of transnational organised crime. The current unprecedented spike in wildlife crime poses a significant threat to many plant and animal species, and has **profound economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts**. It is a threat to **rule of law, security**, and the wellbeing of **local communities**.

Wildlife crime has recently attracted considerable international attention, particularly concerning the dramatic loss of African elephants and rhinoceroses. In 2007 in South Africa, 13 rhinos were poached, reaching more than 1200 in 2014. Tanzania's elephant population dropped from 100,000 in 2009 to 43,000 in 2014 – a **decline of 60%**. An estimated 20,000 African elephants are currently being killed each year for their ivory.

The **value of wildlife crime** is estimated at US\$18 billion a year and is the **fourth largest source of transnational illegal trade** after drugs, counterfeit goods and human trafficking. It attracts organized crime groups due to high profits, low punishments and low risk of detection.

Wildlife crime threatens nature-based tourism, the economic powerhouse of many African States, worth an estimated US\$36 billion per year in Africa alone. Investor confidence is weakened in countries with high levels of crime and corruption; this deters **investments and business opportunities** in all countries, regardless whether **source, demand or transit countries**.

Corruption and wildlife crime

According to UNODC¹ and others, **corruption is the key enabler of wildlife crime**, and plays a major role along the **entire value chain**, from poaching at source to the destination market. Corruption in supply, transit and demand countries can take place *inter alia* in wildlife protection agencies, law enforcement agencies, customs and border agencies and the judiciary system. Corruption is a complex challenge. For example, procurement abuse may result in rangers not being able to patrol because of equipment deficits; rangers also may not patrol because they have been bribed not to. In both cases the result is the same, but potential solutions are very different.

International commitments

A series of recent **international commitments** recognize the need to **address corruption in wildlife crime**, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN General Assembly's resolution "Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife" (A/RES/69/314, 2015), Resolution Conf. 17.6 "Prohibiting, preventing and countering corruption facilitating activities conducted in violation of the Convention" of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 2016) as well as several state-led processes, including the London Declaration (2014), the Kasane Statement (2015) and the 2015 Declaration of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

WWF and TRAFFIC asks to G20 on corruption and wildlife crime

1. G20 members play a significant role as supply, transit and demand countries in the global wildlife crime chain. G20 Leaders need to send a **strong policy signal to address corruption in wildlife crime** and support this commitment with **concrete actions and follow-up**.
2. Despite significant advances, the understanding of corruption and the evidence base for successful interventions remain weak. The conservation community and anti-corruption community must join forces to **deepen understanding of corruption in wildlife trafficking** and to build the evidence base for successful interventions. **Development agencies and anti-organised crime communities** should be part of this conversation, supported by the G20.
3. Low-level actors are often the only target of enforcement actions. This disproportionate focus needs to be redressed to target the financial beneficiaries of wildlife trafficking as well as their support networks and enable a proportionate response to those benefitting financially from environmental crimes. The G20 should **encourage financial policy and regulatory bodies**, for example, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to redefine existing principles or guidelines to **make more explicit links between wildlife crime and financial crime**. This approach should be supported by structured reporting guidelines between financial institutions and in country financial investigative units.