



World Wildlife Day 2015 Emphasises Expanding Threats in Southeast Asia – UNODC

Bangkok (Thailand) 3 March 2014 – On World Wildlife Day 2015, the trafficking of wildlife in Southeast Asia continues to increase and exceeds an annual value of US \$2.5 billion USD, warns the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

According to Mr. Giovanni Broussard, of the UNODC Global Programme on Combating Wildlife and Forest Crimes, “more than 1,200 rhinos were poached for the trade in African ivory in 2014 alone.” “Rapidly growing illicit wildlife animal trade accelerates the extinction of large and endangered species. Reverting this trend requires bold and immediate changes in the way governments address both the demand and supply of illicit wildlife.”

Poaching of African ivory increased 100-fold in the past seven years, with Southeast Asia emerging as a rapidly growing market. The Ivory is harvested illegally and shipped over seas from Africa to countries in the region. Subsequently, criminal groups, consisting of small time traffickers as well as highly organised organisations, continue the movement of these products throughout East Asia, causing significant harm to elephant and rhino populations in Africa.

“Despite efforts from governments and international organizations to curb this crime, the numbers tell us that the illegal trade of wildlife and timber is still on the rise,” says Mr. Broussard.

The almost industrial scale of organized wildlife crime has dramatic consequences for many of the world’s forests and wild animals, including iconic species of elephants and tigers in Southeast Asia. Less known species in the region are also threatened with extinction, including Pangolins and a variety of fishes

“Southeast Asia has become a transshipment hub for the illegal trade in wildlife”, warns Mr. Matthew Nice, Regional Coordinator of the UNODC Border Management Programme for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. “As the ASEAN regional integration process facilitates legitimate trade with greater investments in infrastructure and less burdensome border controls, greater investments are also needed in law enforcement, justice and effective border management capacity to counter the rapidly growing and evolving threat of wildlife trafficking throughout Southeast Asia.”

In addition to threatening the existence of wild animals, the large revenues generated through the illicit wildlife trade contribute to other criminal activities by transnational crime groups, such as corruption and the trafficking of counterfeit products, posing far-reaching security concerns for the ASEAN region. UNODC urges governments and international partners to step up their efforts to address wildlife crime in lieu of World Wildlife Day 2015.

Media inquiries:

Zoey Tung – Communications Officer
UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia
and the Pacific
Zoey.tung@unodc.org M: +66.95.464.4775

Giovanni Broussard – Programme Manager
UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia
and the Pacific
Giovanni.broussard@unodc.org

The UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (ROSEAP) enhances the core capacities of law enforcement agencies and criminal justice authorities to identify and act on transnational crime challenges.