Wildlife and forest crimes significantly affect the environment and undermine efforts to achieve SDG 15. The trafficking of wild fauna and flora directly contributes to the global extinction crisis and biodiversity loss. At the same time, forests are under significant threat due to global deforestation, illegal logging and timber trafficking, which are progressing at an alarming rate. Environmental crimes are highly profitable and often used to finance other criminal activities and conflict in some cases. They are often interlinked with corruption and other economic crimes and directly impact local communities' livelihood and social and economic development.

Through the Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, UNODC assists Member States in preventing and responding to these crimes. The Office currently provides technical assistance to more than 40 countries, building capacity from the crime scene to court. UNODC also assist countries in adopting, strengthening and reviewing national legislation; improving their forensic capacity and increasing accessibility to wildlife forensic services; preventing and countering corruption related to crimes that affect the environment; improving international cooperation and cross-border investigations; and assessing their national criminal justice and preventive responses to wildlife and forest crime.

UNODC supports the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to manage corruption risks. In 2015, Kenya and most of East Africa were experiencing a wildlife-poaching crisis, seeing numbers in flagship species deteriorating by the day. Corruption was identified as the main enabler of wildlife crime.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
In response to this, the Office began working with KWS in strengthening internal mechanisms and systems to better prevent future occurrences of corruption from taking place. After significant institutional and structural changes and strengthened accountability and transparency within the KWS, poaching has decreased, and the number of elephants, rhinos and big cats, including lions, has increased. Further, in 2022, KWS received a 100 per cent score in the 2022 Anti-Corruption Performance Indicator of Kenya’s Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission compared to 88 per cent in 2021 and 49 per cent in 2020.

Furthermore, UNODC-INTERPOL LEAP Programme assists Member States by supporting law enforcement in key countries across Latin America and Southeast Asia. Through enhancing intelligence sharing, building national task forces and providing operational support, mentoring and capacity building relating to combating forestry crime and illegal tropical deforestation, LEAP contributes to tackling climate change and achieving SDG 15. The programme further encourages multi-agency cooperation at the national and regional levels and public-private sector cooperation. A concrete example of LEAP’s activities is, for example, technical workshops on timber trafficking in Brazil. During training, frontline law enforcement officers identified suspicious shipments and conducted physical inspections in conjunction with UNODC and INTERPOL technical experts, which resulted in 130 cubic meters of illegal timber being seized and processed by Brazilian authorities.

UNODC further leads data collection, research and analysis on the issue, developing resources such as the Guide on Drafting Legislation to Combat Wildlife Crime and the World Wildlife Crime Report. The second edition of this flagship report presents the wildlife crime situation with a focus on the illicit trafficking of specific protected species of wild fauna and flora and offers a broad assessment of the nature and extent of the problem at the global level. In addition, concrete examples of UNODC’s support to prevent crimes in the forest sector include analyses of illegal timber trade, identifying vulnerabilities in the timber supply chain prone to crime and corruption and promoting capacity building to increase prevention and interdiction of timber trafficking.
Other UNODC programmes, such as the **UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP)**, **Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP)**, **Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP)** and the **Global Programme against Money Laundering**, also provide targeted and specialized technical assistance at particular stages of the enforcement and criminal justice chains when addressing crimes that affect the environment.

Lastly, UNODC is part of the **International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC)**, consisting of five global entities - the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), UNODC, the World Bank Group (WBG) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) - working together to provide multi-agency support and capacity building to countries and regions affected by wildlife crime. Through these efforts, UNODC assists Member States in achieving SDG 15, particularly Target 15.7.