EMERGING CRIMES THAT HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT: SCOPE, TRENDS AND LINKS TO CORRUPTION AND ORGANIZED CRIME

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Environmental crime as hidden crime

➤ very limited information

• difficult to detect for a variety of reasons

• low motivation to report offence (”necessary evil”?)

• different definitions, different regimes (criminal law, administrative law, civil law)
How do you count a polluted river?

Counting problems

- disparity of data collection systems

- what is the unit of count and period of time? (offender? tonnage? value? incident? harm?)

- each type of environmental crime has its own specific counting problems

- many misleading estimates
Scope and trends

➤ dumping of industrial wastes
  • one estimate: 100,000,000 tons
  • 70 % of recycled waste from Europe?

➤ illegal fishing
  • 13–31 % of total catch, US$ 5-11 b? (2003 data)
  • considerable regional variation
Scope and trends

➤ trade in endangered species
  • one estimate: US$ 5-20 billion?
  • clear regional export -> import patterns

➤ smuggling of ozone-depleting substances
  • CFCs during 1990s, now HCFCs (Montreal Protocol)
  • flow from "south" (Asia!) to "north"

➤ illegal logging
  • 15–30% of logging (up to 50–90%)
  • US $ 30 – 100 billion?
Links to organized crime

➤ S-G reports from 2002 and 2003
➤ corporate crime or organized crime?
➤ trafficking is organized, even if it is not OC
➤ a legal organization (collectors?) may act illegally
  • difficult to detect for a variety of reasons
➤ OC often involved where risk is low, profit is high
➤ OC may branch out into environmental crime if the same smuggling network can be used
➤ EUROPOL 2011 OCTA: illegal waste disposal organized
Links to corruption

➤ petty corruption at source facilitates poaching, illegal logging, illegal dumping
➤ petty law enforcement corruption to avoid detection
➤ petty customs, border guard corruption facilitates trafficking

➤ structural corruption: “wrong” priorities in development facilitate illegal logging, illegal dumping
Lessons learned and “unkowns”?

➤ we are learning how to detect, count and assess
➤ member states, UNEP, INTERPOL, WWF …
➤ e.g. UNICRI, AIC and ISISC contributing
➤ ISA/CWB note identifies some “unknowns”
  • wildlife: OC and rebel group role, traditional medicine role
  • fishing: species at risk; regional patterns; POC and FOC role
  • dumping: source and destination countries, routes
  • logging: OC and rebel group role
  • trafficking in precious metals? ship-breaking?
THANK YOU!

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