



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

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European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations

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 “unkowns”
 - 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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