



Special event at the 14th United Nations Congress
on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

THE NATURE OF CORRUPTION

ADDRESSING CORRUPTION LINKED TO
WILDLIFE, FOREST AND FISHERIES CRIME

Monday, 8 March 2021 | 14:00-15:30

Conference Room A

BACKGROUND

There is an increasing recognition that to curb the global surge in wildlife trafficking, the international community must increase its efforts to fight the pervasive corruption that enables it. The facilitating role played by corruption in wildlife, forest and fisheries crime is amply documented in literature, including in UNODC's World Wildlife Crime Reports, and sustained by a large body of empirical evidence related to past and ongoing criminal investigations. Corruption fuels and abets transnational organized crime and is particularly rife in higher-value wildlife trafficking. It is multifaceted and can occur at every stage of the wildlife, forest and fisheries value chain. Corruption can include bribes to access information on the movement of animals or patrols, obtain permits and quotas, or ensure that shipments are not inspected or seized.

UNODC, as guardian of the UN Conventions against Corruption and Transnational Organized Crime, is working with partners from other international organizations, civil society and the private sector to build understanding and ensure that anti-corruption authorities and wildlife, forest and fisheries agencies are working together to prevent and address corruption. Various initiatives, tools and collaborative partnerships have been created since the last Crime Congress in 2015, and this high-profile event will highlight the challenges and showcase some of the promising approaches to address corruption linked to wildlife crime.

The special event has the following objectives:

- 1) Create space and influence participating Member States and relevant agencies to discuss the links between corruption and wildlife, forest and fisheries crime and voice their commitment to the pledges proposed in the 2021 Kyoto Declaration;
- 2) Accelerate the political momentum behind recognizing the importance of preventing and mitigating corruption throughout the wildlife, forest and fisheries value chains;
- 3) Embed the awareness of corruption linked to wildlife crime on the global crime prevention and criminal justice agenda, and more broadly into the biodiversity and climate change agendas; and
- 4) Promote the use of UNODC tools and other international mechanisms to combat corruption in the wildlife, forest, and fisheries sectors and highlight success stories from their use.

KEY MESSAGES:

1) Fighting corruption related to wildlife / forest / fisheries crimes is integral to achieving sustainable development

Plainly put, corruption undermines the achievement of Agenda 2030.. For the foreseeable future, the economies of developing countries around the world will be dependent on the equitable utilization of natural resources, including wildlife, forests and fish. If the proceeds from the sale of national resources are diverted into the hands of corrupt public officials, poverty and instability will persist. In short, corruption associated with natural resources is one of the most important factors in determining the future of the developing world.

2) This is a race against time

Urgent action and political commitment are required if we are serious about protecting our planet's ecosystems and curbing biodiversity loss and deforestation. Ecosystems are being devastated at an alarming rate, with impacts on climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to build collective momentum and embed the issue of corruption linked to wildlife, forest and fisheries crime into the global crime prevention and criminal justice agenda before all the endangered and critically endangered species are gone for good.

3) Success is possible

UNODC has been working with Member States to combat corruption linked to wildlife, forest and fisheries crime around the world, and we know that success is possible. Key range states have begun to conduct corruption risk assessments and develop mitigation strategies for their wildlife and fisheries management authorities. Institutional and structural changes have resulted from these processes, and accountability and transparency measures have been strengthened, resulting in fewer opportunities for corrupt acts to take root.