Corruption and Wildlife Crime

Special Event on the G20 High Level Principles on Combatting Corruption Related to Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Wildlife Products
Jointly organized by the German G20 Presidency and UNODC
Vienna, Austria – 12 September 2017

CHAIRS’ SUMMARY

The G20 High Level Principles on Combatting Corruption Related to Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Wildlife Products were adopted at the G20 Leaders’ Summit in June 2017. This special event was organized to inform members of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group of actions already being taken to implement the High Level Principles by Governments, civil society and international organizations, in order to generate further ideas as to how to strengthen the implementation of the principles.

This deliberation comes at a critical time. The necessity to take action against corruption linked to wildlife crime has now been recognized on the international agenda and there is an urgent need to scale up practical “on the ground” responses: Many wildlife species are endangered and extremely limited in number and the surge in the level of wildlife crime and its associated corruption has been extremely rapid. Law enforcement was not well equipped to deal with this phenomenon and to date, cases are rarely prosecuted.

Panel 1 comprised speakers from the CITES Secretariat, the Wildlife Justice Commission, the Czech Environmental Enforcement Agency and the Eagle Network, Uganda. This panel focused on detection, investigations and international cooperation in source, transit and destination countries for illegal wildlife products and highlighted initiatives that have met with significant success in the investigative arena.

Panel 2 was comprised of speakers from OECD, Sri Lankan Customs, World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), UNODC and Kenya Wildlife Service. The panel focused on practical steps being taken to prevent corruption linked to wildlife crime and the importance of undertaking corruption risk assessments and developing pragmatic and effective corruption risk mitigation strategies.
**Panel 1**

**Detection, Investigation and International Cooperation**

**Key Issue**

Rapid surge in the level of wildlife crime and its associated corruption within the last decade, law enforcement not well equipped to deal with this phenomenon.

**Key Message**

When investigators and prosecutors with adequate skills and resources undertake wildlife investigations, they are able to uncover the corruption that was used to facilitate the crimes. Despite this, the related corrupt acts have rarely, if ever, been prosecuted.

**Approach**

Strengthen capacity of law enforcement, domestically and via technical assistance, to ensure effective prosecution.

**G20 Principles**

1. Fully applying anti-corruption provisions of national and international laws to corruption related to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products and ensuring corrupt practices associated with illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products on both the supply and demand sides are punishable as criminal offences.

2. Strengthening the capacity of investigators and prosecutors for corruption offences related to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, including through targeted awareness-raising measures and trainings.

3. Ensuring that investigations and prosecutions of all wildlife crimes, particularly those identified as a result of seizures, extend, as appropriate, to potential corruption linked to the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, including through the tracking of financial flows.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

- Recognize transnational illicit trafficking in wildlife involving organized criminal groups as a serious crime under UNODC.
- Collect/create and disseminate to law enforcement authorities and/or key stakeholders:
  - Material to raise awareness about the link between corruption and wildlife crime.
  - Comprehensive and systematic analysis of good practices.
  - Intelligence and evidence.
- Use and promote use of new technologies, in particular forensic science technologies.
- Provide operational support.
- Set up specialized investigative units.
- Promote and strengthen mechanisms for international cooperation.
- Stimulate the communication between investigators and prosecutors.
- Strengthen domestic coordination between different agencies.

*The recommendations reflect the suggestions made by the speakers in the course of the discussion.*
**Panel 2**

**Preventing Corruption and Corruption Risk Management**

**Key Issue**
Corruption present on all levels and at every link of the value chain, from the point at which the animal was poached to the point at which an illegal wildlife product is sold.

**Key Message**
Strategies that include risk management systems, codes of conduct and specialized training programs, coupled with proper funding and exposure to best practices can have visible effect. Small steps, taken at the institutional level, will lead to the resolution of many of the broader problems relating to corruption and wildlife crime.

**Approach**: Develop, disseminate and implement standardized approaches for corruption risk mitigation in the wildlife sector.

**G20 Principles**

- **a)** Raising awareness: Raising awareness regarding the existence, causes and costs of corruption related to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, and raising awareness and changing attitudes on the supply of and demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products.
- **b)** Identifying corruption risks along the entire trade chain: Undertaking institution-specific corruption risk assessments to identify corruption risks along the entire trade chain and taking action to address weaknesses.
- **c)** Risk mitigation: Building systems and institutional capacity to help understand and mitigate corruption risks related to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products in all areas of the public sector (agencies, workplaces, human resources etc.) and in particular in positions in trade hubs where networks of organized crime are most active.
- **d)** Private sector: Engaging the private sector to foster more integrated approaches across the public and private sectors and to encourage the adoption of adequate internal controls, upstream traceability systems in line with international standards, and ethics and compliance measures for businesses, including financial institutions, involved in legal trade.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

- Conduct further research into the broader links between wildlife crime and corruption, including into:
  - Building the understanding of the link between wildlife crime, corruption and human rights.
  - Promoting standardized approaches to research and the identification of best practices in research methodologies.
  - Community sensitization on the dangers of corruption in regard to wildlife crime law enforcement.
  - Incorporate ethics/integrity in curricula.
- **Urgently identify priorities through dialogue with practitioners.**
- **Develop standardized approaches for corruption risk mitigation in the wildlife sector.**
- **Ensure that corruption risk mitigation strategies are in place in agencies responsible for:**
  - Managing wildlife.
  - Import of wildlife products.
  - Sale of wildlife products.
  - Issuance of licenses and permits for managing/transporting/setting wildlife products.
- **Vetting of every person involved in the above activities, as well as in wildlife crime trafficking cases.**

"Many wildlife crimes and the linked corruption occur in small communities in remote areas, far from institutional oversight."

**UNODC**