

**Statement by the Wildlife Justice Commission at the UNCAC CoSP10: General Discussion**  
**Delivered by Lisa Hartevelt, Director of External Relations**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We would like to call to attention the critical nexus between corruption and organised criminal networks, particularly those engaging in crimes affecting the environment. Crimes that affect the environment have become one of the most lucrative criminal activities in the world. They are estimated to generate between 110 and 281 billion USD per year. Wildlife crime alone is a multi-billion-dollar industry and the fourth largest form of illegal trade, constituting a meaningful source of revenue in criminal operations. Due to its perceived low risks and high rewards, criminal networks frequently engage in these crimes as means to increase profits across a range of illicit commodities. The repercussions of these crimes extend far beyond the deterioration of our environment and climate, as they threaten the rule of law, public health, and overall security, including that of human life.

Since 2015, investigations by the Wildlife Justice Commission have uncovered many ways in which corruption serves as the lifeblood that allows criminal networks to thrive in these illicit businesses. Throughout its entire supply chain, corrupt actors exploit the vulnerabilities in how natural resources are sourced and traded.

Crimes that affect the environment and corruption must therefore be addressed as interconnected challenges rather than distinct issues. A collaborative approach is needed to identify and address corruption risks across their supply chains. By doing so, we can effectively curtail the influence of corruption and diminish the opportunities for criminal networks to engage in these crimes.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) provides essential tools to combat environmental crime and corruption. Alongside the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC), it equips us with crucial preventive and criminal justice approaches to effectively combat these crimes. These commitments must be translated into practical actions on the ground.

Specifically, we call for State Parties to ensure increased transparency in the environmental sector, protection of environmental and human rights defenders, and enforcement of anti-corruption measures. In this regard, special investigative techniques, including financial investigations, are vital in identifying, disrupting, and dismantling these criminal networks. Above all, international cooperation is paramount for sharing crucial information across borders and ensure an effective response.

It is our collective responsibility to protect current and future generations against the most devastating effects of environmental crime and corruption. It is therefore that we urge State Parties to ensure that this dimension of corruption is taken into serious consideration when engaging in substantive discussions this week.

Madam Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, I thank you for your attention.