

**Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational
Organized Crime**

**Working Group on International Cooperation and Working Group of
Government Experts on Technical Assistance**

**Joint thematic discussion on the application of the United Nations Convention
against Transnational Organized Crime for preventing and combating
transnational organized crimes that affect the environment**

Vienna, 23-27 May 2022

General Statement – Angola, Kenya and Peru

Mr Chair,

For the first time we take the floor, we would like to remember that just last week, during its Thirty-first session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) adopted a resolution titled “Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife”. On behalf of the co-sponsors of that resolution, Angola, Kenya and Peru, we would like to take this opportunity to thank my distinguished colleagues from across all regions for constructively engaging in its negotiations, supporting its adoption, and working together to advance this important conversation.

Allow me, Ms/Mr Chairperson, to thank a number of countries in particular - the countries that co-sponsored our resolution: Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Honduras, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Paraguay, Philippines and the United States of America.

This week, distinguished colleagues, we meet once again to discuss the application of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) for preventing and combating transnational organized crimes that affect the environment.

Angola, Kenya and Peru welcome the recent focus on crimes that affect the environment and are generally supportive of the efforts undertaken in different United Nations fora to address these destructive crimes. While there is no agreed definition, we do, however, have a good sense of the main crimes that affect the environment, and we also know that their scale, nature and consequences vary.

There are common threads to these crimes, but they are not all the same, and the international response needs to be tailored to fit the circumstances. Our focus is on one crime that affects the environment, namely illicit trafficking in wildlife. The issue of illicit trafficking in wildlife is extremely important for our countries, which is why we brought the resolution to the CCPCJ last week. We are biodiverse-rich source countries, determined to protect our unique fauna and flora from the illegal exploitation of our wildlife by transnational, organised criminal networks.

We agree that illicit trafficking in wildlife is a crime that affects the environment. These crimes drive species of wild animals and plants towards extinction and degrade entire

ecosystems, including their ability to mitigate climate change. However, illicit wildlife trafficking cannot be only viewed through this narrow lens.

The severe consequences of illicit wildlife trafficking are, in fact, not limited to the environment. These highly destructive crimes pose a threat to public and animal health, destabilize national and regional security, deprive governments of revenue, lead to the injury and death of rangers, and impoverish local and indigenous communities. They are exacerbated by corruption and often involve the same actors as other forms of organized crime, such as drug trafficking and firearms smuggling, and they are inter-related to corruption, fraud and financial crimes.

Last week a distinguished delegate suggested that because illicit wildlife trafficking is referred to in resolutions on crimes that affect the environment that they are now one and the same. We do not share this characterisation and nor is it supported by any resolution. While there are some common elements, each crime has its own characteristics.

For this reason, we are seeking to advance the inter-governmental conversation on illicit wildlife trafficking in its own right, while also acknowledging that it is a part of a wider conversation, as a crime that affects the environment.

In this context, we draw attention to the fact that ‘Tackling illicit wildlife trafficking’ has independently been the subject of six specific United Nations General Assembly resolutions, the first in 2015 and the most recent in 2021.

To move the inter-governmental conversation forward, we believe it is now important to implement the resolution adopted last week by the CCPCJ and carefully consider all possible responses, including an additional Protocol under the UNTOC, to address illicit wildlife trafficking.

Mr/Ms Chairperson, we look forward to initiating this important conversation on illicit wildlife trafficking with other Member States, while also continuing to constructively engage in the dialogue on crimes that affect the environment.

Thank you very much.