Understanding the size and shape of illicit trade in wildlife

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UNCTAD Illicit Trade Forum: Session 1
Geneva, Switzerland, 3 February 2020

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD
Contents of Presentation

• CITES background and objectives.
• The importance of legal trade.
• The scale, impact and serious nature of wildlife crime.
• The global response to address wildlife crime.
What is CITES?

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
Agreed in 1973, entered into force in 1975
Currently 183 Parties to CITES
Regulating international trade in 36,000 species of wild animals and plants, over 30,000 of which are plants.
How does CITES work?

• 3 Appendices establish different levels of protection

Appendix I (3%)
International commercial trade is prohibited

Appendix II + III (97%)
International commercial trade is allowed but controlled
Legal trade in wildlife

- Seven billion people consuming biodiversity every day.

- Millions of people depend on plants and animals for their livelihoods and survival, most particularly in local and indigenous communities.

- CITES ensures that use of these species is legal, sustainable and traceable, and does not threaten their survival in the wild.

- CITES Parties issue over 850,000 permits per year.
### Legal trade in wildlife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; furniture</td>
<td>Mahogany, rosewood, cedar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Vaccines, herbal, research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>Wax, oils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Caviar, fish, wild meat, plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leather &amp; fashion</td>
<td>Bags, watches, fur, fibers</td>
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</tbody>
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Legal trade in wildlife

The international community is relying more than ever on CITES as the instrument to ensure the legal, sustainable, and traceable international trade in CITES-listed animal and plant species.
Combating illegal trade in wildlife
CITES Enforcement

- The effective enforcement of CITES requires, among other things:
  - national control of legal international trade in CITES-listed species; and
  - national measures to stop illegal international trade in these species

- Non-compliance has serious implications for the conservation of biological diversity and species extinctions
Wildlife crime: A serious and global threat

• The world has been confronted by illegal wildlife trade for decades.

• There has been a spike in the scale and change in the nature of this illicit activity.

• Today well recognized that it is a serious transnational organized crime.

• A number of CITES-listed species are high-value items, targeted by organized crime groups.

• Wildlife crime often at industrial scale, pushing many species towards extinction.
Wildlife crime: A serious and global threat

The first ever UN *World Wildlife Crime Report* (2016) estimated that over 7,000 species find their way into illegal trade.

Share of type of wildlife among total seizures (aggregated on the basis of standard value) 2005-2014
Wildlife crime: A serious and global threat

- Estimated that the population of African elephants declined by 111,000 in recent years.

- Illegal trade in pangolin specimens continues at alarming rates. Large scale pangolin scale seizures of thousands of kilos at a time are made.

- Seizures of live tigers increased from 62 in the nine year period 2000-2009, to 61 in the period 2010-2012.

- Vaquita, the world's smallest and most endangered porpoise found only in Mexico's Gulf of California, is being wiped out due to bycatch in the illegal harvesting of totoaba.
Illegal trade in eels

- Increasing levels of seizures of European eels observed.
Main flows of rosewood and timber seizures

Illegal trade in rosewood

Fig. 5 | Share of rosewood seizures by country identified as destination (metric tons), aggregated 2007-2015

- Malaysia: 237
- UAE: 338
- Singapore: 213
- Other: 320
- China: 7,783

Source: World WISE

Share of global rosewood seizures by species (metric tons), aggregated 2005-2015

- Dalbergia cochinchinensis: 798
- Dalbergia granadillo: 295
- Other pterocarpus: 458
- Pterocarpus santalinus: 2,404
- Malagasy rosewood: 5,892
Study prepared for CITES CoP17
The cost of illegal logging, fishing and wildlife trade

• $1 trillion to $2 trillion per year.

• In low-income countries where livelihoods depend on natural capital, governments forego about $7–$12 billion in potential fiscal revenues per year.
Wildlife crime: A serious and global threat

• Illegal trade in wildlife undermines conservation efforts as well as legal, sustainable and traceable trade, and pose a serious risk to wild animal and plant species.

• It weakens and compromises the security of the supply chain engaged in international trade.

• It causes criminal organizations to thrive due to high profit margins generated by such illegal trade.

• Syndicates involved in wildlife crime are also involved in other transnational crimes, posing additional threats.
CITES Resolutions and Decisions

Resolutions adopted to guide the interpretation and implementation of the Convention:
https://www.cites.org/eng/res/index.php

Decisions adopted to provide specific short-term time-bound instructions:
https://www.cites.org/eng/dec/index.php
New Resolution on *Designation and role of Management Authorities* (Res. Conf. 18.6)

- URGES Management Authorities and enforcement authorities to cooperate closely in the fight against illegal trafficking in wildlife.

- Management Authorities to:
  - establish mechanisms for coordination and communication between government agencies with a role in the implementation and enforcement of the Convention
  - coordinate the preparation of an annual illegal trade report
How to better respond to corruption

- Resolution 17.6 on Prohibiting, preventing, detecting and countering corruption, which facilitates activities conducted in violation of the Convention.

- In response to CITES CoP Decision UNODC developed a guide to assist authorities to combat corruption associated with wildlife crime.

- Decision 18.77 encourage Parties to actively pursue and promote the use of the guide to strengthen responses to overcome the risks and challenges posed by corruption.
Annual illegal trade reports

- Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP18) on *National reports* URGES all Parties to submit an *annual illegal trade report* by 31 October each year.

- The *first* annual illegal trade report was *due on 31 October 2017*.

- Each annual illegal trade report should *cover the period 1 January to 31 December of the year preceding* the year in which it is submitted.

- Still a *relatively new process* under CITES, but *already delivering important data* and proving to be a *valuable source of information*.

- Annual illegal trade data:
  - Expected to become a powerful tool to *inform decision making*; and
  - Support the development of appropriate *law enforcement responses* to wildlife crime.
MIKE and ETIS

Detailed analysis is available on the illegal killing of, and trade in, African elephants. This is achieved through the following global monitoring and reporting systems for elephants and trade in elephant specimens recognized under CITES:

- The CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme, a site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range States make appropriate management and enforcement decisions.

- The Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), established to track the trends in the illegal trade in ivory and to provide an information base to support decision-making on management, protection and enforcement needs of elephants.
Working collectively to address wildlife crime

• We can not do it alone.

• There are many different role players:
  – CITES Authorities
  – Customs
  – Police
  – Prosecutor
  – …

• Therefore coordination and engaging in partnerships is essential.
The change in the scale and nature of wildlife crime has not gone unnoticed

Currently a global collective effort underway across governments, the UN, international and national organizations, the private sector, local communities and others, to combat illegal trafficking in wildlife.
The change in the scale and nature of wildlife crime has not gone unnoticed.
Strengthening responses to combat wildlife crime

ICCWC Strategic Programme 2016-2020 Donors
The ICCWC response

The CITES Secretariat

INTERPOL

UN Office on Drugs and Crime

World Bank

World Customs Organization

Complementary mandates

Unique pool of knowledge and expertise

Extensive national and regional networks

Joining forces as ICCWC

A unique pool of knowledge and expertise, extensive national and regional networks, and complementary mandates.

The ICCWC response
Building capacity: ICCWC Products available to Parties
OPERATION THUNDERBALL 2019
Tackling illegal wildlife crime

109 countries

582 suspects arrested

1,828 seizures including:

- 545kg ivory
- 1.3t pangolin scales
- 9,777 live tortoises and turtles
- 604t and 2,551m³ timber
- 1.7t plants
- 4,304 live birds
- 9,820 marine species
- 1,422 live reptiles
FRENCH CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICCWC STRATEGIC PROGRAMME

€ 85,000

CITES Mission to Viet Nam
18-22 September 2017
Focus on CITES CoP17 Decisions on Rhinoceros
Meetings with: wildlife law enforcement, CITES Management Authority & other local authorities
Visit of 2 “carving villages”

Key priorities to combat rhino horn trafficking
Map out criminal groups
Collaborate in operations and investigations
Forensic sampling
Guidelines to identify worked rhino horns
Implementation of new 2017 penal code

For more information see: SC69 Doc.31.2
https://cites.org/eng/prog/icccw.php

WIRE/RIACM in Viet Nam
16-20 October 2017
WIRE-Customs: Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement meeting for Customs officers
RIACM: Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting

Exchange of knowledge & information:
Trends, routes, modus operandi, etc.

Next steps:
* Information and intelligence sharing
* Targeted investigations
* Follow up operation & activities

For more information see: SC69 Sum 4 (Rev. 1)
https://cites.org/eng/prog/icccw.php

UK contribution to the ICCWC Strategic Programme

£ 4 million
2018-2021

Regional workshops
Promote prosecutorial/judicial networking
Mentorships

Regional threat assessment
Organization of side events
Communications

Anti-money laundering
Online investigations
Operational support
Controlled deliveries

Training on identification & prioritization of corruption risks
Support to prosecutorial network
Training on anti-corruption

Strengthen regional cooperation & law enforcement
Training on specialized investigation techniques

CITES NIAP Task Force
Continental event to prevent illegal wildlife trade in the Americas
Workshops on Mutual Legal Assistance
Support convening of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime

Implementation of Toolkit, Toolkit Recommendations & Indicator Framework

ICCWC Toolkit
Coordination
Global level
ICCWC Senior Experts Group

https://cites.org/eng/prog/icccw.php
Wildlife Crime: Are we making progress?

CoP18 Report on rhino: The number of rhino poached across Africa dropped below 1,000 in 2018, for the first time in six years.

Elephants
Thank you

Email: info@cites.org
Website: www.cites.org