

# ~~END~~ **WILDLIFE** ~~CRIME~~

Vienna, 17 October 2024, **UNTOC COP12 SIDE EVENT**

## **WILDLIFE CRIME HAS DEVASTATING IMPACTS; HOW ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CAN HELP PREVENT AND COMBAT THESE SERIOUS CRIMES**

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### **OPENING REMARKS: John E Scanlon AO, Chair Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime**

A very warm welcome to today's side event "Wildlife Crime Has Devastating Impacts; How Enhanced International Cooperation Can Help Prevent and Combat These Serious Crimes", sponsored by Brazil, and co-sponsored by Angola, Costa Rica and Peru, four beautiful biodiverse rich countries, and by 16 supporting organisations, including the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime, which I Chair.

Today's side event continues a critically important conversation on how to strengthen international cooperation to tackle wildlife crimes, including on the merits of a potential additional protocol or protocols to the UNTOC (UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime). I'm going to spend a few minutes recapping some of this progress.

This conversation got momentum in April 2021 when the presidents of Gabon and Costa Rica jointly called for the adoption of a global agreement on preventing and combating wildlife trafficking, taking the form of an additional protocol, which was supported by the presidents of Angola in September 2021 and Malawi in February 2022. The European Commission also publicly expressed its support for a potential additional protocol covering wildlife trafficking in 2022.<sup>i</sup>

In May of 2022, this topic entered the formal work of the CCPCJ (Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice), through the adoption, by consensus, of resolution 31/1, originally submitted by Angola, Kenya and Peru. This historic resolution invited Member States to provide the UNODC with their "views on possible responses, including on an additional Protocol under the UNTOC, to address any gaps that may exist in the current international legal

framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife”. It was co-sponsored by twelve other Member States.<sup>ii</sup>

Between February and December of 2023, the UNODC collected the views of 76 States and the European Union, compiling and analysing them in a report that was presented to the CCPCJ in May of this year, and today’s panel session will explore the results of that process.<sup>iii</sup>

The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime has worked to support States and partners over the past four years to help advance this discussion, including through a series of four insightful side events held here in Vienna since 2020, including at this year’s 33rd session of the CCPCJ on the “Benefits of an additional protocol to UNTOC: lessons learned from the existing protocols.”

And now this critically important conversation has been brought back to the UNTOC, through today’s side event, and several others, and more importantly through the consideration of a draft resolution on “Enhancing measures to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the UNTOC and the Protocols thereto”, submitted by Brazil, France and Peru, a resolution that could, if adopted, launch an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to prepare a report on how Parties can best advance the issue.

We warmly welcome this draft resolution. However, I would also like to take this opportunity to suggest that we should not try and homogenise these crimes – they clearly have a common thread but we should also recognise that they are different in terms of their scale, nature and impact; including their transboundary impact.

Our Initiative is of the view that the draft resolution should recognise this difference, and also recognise the extraordinary efforts made by Presidents, Ministers and Diplomats over the past decade to advance efforts to tackle wildlife trafficking.

For example, the draft could include reference to the six UN General Assembly resolutions on tackling wildlife trafficking since 2015, the critical role played by rangers in tackling crimes that affect the environment, especially wildlife crimes, as was recognised in these resolutions since 2019<sup>iv</sup>, and the historic CCPCJ Resolution 31/1.

Our Initiative defines wildlife to include all wild fauna, flora and funga – we do not disaggregate fish and timber species from other species of wildlife; although we note that States tend to do so, which opens up the discussion over whether we may require one or more additional protocols.

Colleagues, today’s side event aims to amplify our understanding of the industrial scale, the massive value, and the staggering impacts of wildlife trafficking, which our wonderful line up of speakers will highlight, and of the need to strengthen international cooperation to prevent and combat these crimes, including through considering the benefits of an additional protocol or protocols to the [UNTOC](#).



Hosted by Brazil, and supported by Peru, Angola, Costa Rica, and 15 organisations, we will explore the devastating impacts of wildlife crime, including on biodiversity, climate change and human health. Join us for a discussion on the need to enhance international cooperation, and the possible strengthening of the international legal framework, to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking.



17 Oct 2024  
2:00-2:50pm



Room CR7,  
Vienna International Centre

State Sponsor:



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<sup>i</sup> In its November 2022 "Revision of the EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking"

<sup>ii</sup> Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Honduras, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Paraguay, the Philippines and the United States.

<sup>iii</sup> The report reveals that "more than half of the respondents" have a positive view of a potential additional Protocol to the UNTOC on preventing and combating wildlife trafficking, noting that several States were also of the view that "the scope of a possible additional protocol should be extended to include other crimes that affect the environment."

<sup>iv</sup> The [2019 UNGA Resolution](#) on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, which included specific recognition to the crucial role played by rangers and guards in the fight against wildlife trafficking under adverse conditions.