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# COMBATING POACHING AND WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

A PRIORITY  
FOR UNDP

## FUTURE WORK

The UNDP biodiversity and ecosystems portfolio is the largest in the UN system, covering over 130 countries and 500 projects with USD 1.5 billion in funding and USD 3.5 billion of co-financing. Through the biodiversity and ecosystems programme, UNDP has helped establish over 2,000 protected areas in 85 countries around the world, covering 272 million hectares of land. We will build on this portfolio of work and are exploring new and innovative partnerships that help countries and communities tackle illegal wildlife trafficking and poaching. These include partnerships with governments, sister UN agencies such as UNEP and UNODC, the World Bank, the United for Wildlife coalition of wildlife conservation organisations, and other civil society groups to tackle poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking, and reduce the global demand for wildlife and wildlife products.



Wildlife trafficking is among the five most lucrative illegal trades globally, worth an estimated 23 billion USD annually. It is a multifaceted global threat, with specific challenges in various regions and countries. Africa has been at the epicentre of the wildlife trafficking crisis, witnessing a steady increase in poaching in recent years, spurred by international demand for elephant ivory and rhino horn, among other wildlife products. Some regions of Asia and Latin America face similar challenges. The negative impacts on human security, economic development, environmental integrity, and community well-being, however, are all too consistent across the planet.

- It erodes biodiversity and ecosystems. Wildlife trafficking and poaching are ravaging key populations of endangered wildlife, driving many to the brink of extinction.
- It creates insecurity, fuels conflict, and feeds corruption. Wildlife trafficking is a serious global security concern of the highest order. Poaching syndicates are often linked to organized crime.



- It undermines poverty reduction efforts and diminishes livelihoods. Poaching and wildlife trafficking strip countries of their national assets, erode social cohesion, and undermine the rule of law.

It is now widely recognized that to meet the challenges posed by poaching and wildlife trafficking, we need not only stronger institutions and law enforcement, but also decisive action on poverty, the creation of economic opportunity, and the full involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is advancing strategies that support countries to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking as a pathway to inclusive growth and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## UNDP'S VISION, STRENGTHS, AND STRATEGY

UNDP works in more than 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty and advance sustainable development that leads to transformational change and real improvements in people's lives. UNDP promotes an integrated approach that tackles the connected issues of multidimensional poverty, inequality and exclusion, resilience and sustainability, while enhancing knowledge, skills, governance and production technologies needed to reduce risks and sustain development gains.

UNDP efforts to combat the illegal trade in wildlife draw on this integrated approach. We leverage our expertise, partnerships, and global networks to support countries to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, empower women, and build strong institutions, all of which support the rule of law. This includes help to access the funding and technical support needed to combat wildlife poaching and trafficking. We work across the supply chain that drives the trade, addressing illegal supply, transit, and demand. We also work at all levels, focusing on communities where site-level enforcement is key, linking a range of national stakeholders for cohesive country-level action, and working with regional and international partners to ensure global cooperation and coordination of efforts. UNDP uses a three-pronged approach that focuses on: 1) expanding economic opportunities, including of women and men living in poverty; 2) strengthening governance and law enforcement; and 3) raising awareness of the problem among all stakeholders.



### Expanding economic opportunities and livelihood options

Addressing rural poverty and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods is an essential dimension of tackling wildlife poaching and trafficking. Individuals and communities faced with the option of engaging in poaching or trafficking must be given viable alternatives. UNDP work focuses on diversifying rural livelihoods, managing human-wildlife conflict, and sharing the benefits from sustainable wildlife management. Supporting community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is an important part of our strategy.



### Strengthening governance, enforcement, and coordination

Strengthening governance and law enforcement is necessary for an effective response to the wildlife trafficking and poaching challenge. We focus on increased and more effective ranger patrols, equipping rangers with the skills and technology they need to be effective, and helping coordinate on-the-ground communications, intelligence sharing and aerial surveillance. At the national level, we are building national strategies and platforms that facilitate coordination between the various arms of authority needed for effective country-level responses: policy, customs, intelligence services, judicial systems, and the military. Our emphasis is on strengthening institutions to enforce the rule of law and combat corruption. UNDP also oversees a sizable portfolio of projects that support countries to strengthen management and enforcement in protected areas. At the international level, our work focuses on mainstreaming anti-trafficking strategies into global transport chains.

### Raising awareness and building cooperation

Reducing demand for illegally traded wildlife requires a significant increase in global awareness about the true value of wildlife to communities and nations, as well as the ways in which the illegal wildlife trade is undermining development progress, security and stability, and economic growth. Awareness-raising efforts are complemented by diplomatic engagement, interventions to change behaviour on the supply side in source countries, coordinated advocacy, and resource mobilization. UNDP facilitates south-south and triangular cooperation between source, transit and consumer countries to harmonize approaches, share technologies, and transfer best practices.