

DECLARATION OF THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL
ON THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

(June 2014)

THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL¹ :

Recognizing the serious threat posed by a significant increase in the illegal wildlife trade²;

Reaffirming the need to address the illegal wildlife trade, which jeopardizes the sustainability of populations through irreversible changes to the natural landscape and the reduction of biodiversity, as well as provides sources of funding to criminal groups and thus constitutes a threat to national and international security;

Supporting the principles of the Marrakech Declaration (a 10-point Action Plan to Combat Illicit Wildlife Trafficking adopted in May 2013), the London Declaration on the Illegal Wildlife Trade adopted in February 2014, and other international instruments dealing with this issue;

Committed to the implementation of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Action Plan for Combating Cross-Border Environmental Offences, adopted in February 2008 by the WCO Enforcement Committee, and to partnerships such as the multilateral effort within the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and bilateral engagement within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding with TRAFFIC;

Considering the role played by Customs in the prevention and counteraction of illegal activities and the facilitation of legal trade, through the implementation of controls on the cross-border movements of goods, means of transport and persons;

Acknowledging that the majority of seized specimens of wildlife and wildlife products cannot be reintegrated into their natural habitat and can serve only as an indicator of the scale of the crime committed;

Determined to serve as an efficient and effective deterrent against the proliferation of this phenomenon;

¹ Customs Co-operation Council is the official name of the World Customs Organization (WCO).

² For the purposes of this Declaration, "illegal wildlife trade" means illegal trade in fauna and flora.

DECLARES that it :

Endorses close cooperation at national and international level between Customs and other regulatory and enforcement agencies in relation to information exchange and investigations, with a view to preventing the illegal wildlife trade and bringing perpetrators to justice;

Supports regional cooperation efforts within and among the Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) and the WCO's Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs);

Advocates a deeper engagement with partner intergovernmental organizations, using all relevant bilateral and multilateral platforms;

Invites Customs authorities to continue their dialogue and enhance their cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and with the private sector in the sphere of combating wildlife trafficking, in the spirit of public-private partnership;

Underlines the importance of the WCO Compliance and Enforcement Package (CEP), including in particular the WCO Customs Risk Management Compendium, the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN), and particularly its seizures database, and ENVIRONET - a CENcomm application that serves as a communication tool for the exchange of information on environmental issues;

Requests Customs authorities to participate actively in enforcement operations aimed at combating wildlife trafficking;

Urges Customs authorities to use the full range of detection and investigative techniques, including risk profiling, intelligence sharing, controlled deliveries, forensic techniques, detector dogs and other non-intrusive equipment; furthermore, to use the full extent of the law to secure an appropriate level of punishment that would act as an effective deterrent;

Highlights the need to address the problem of corruption related to the wildlife trade, by adopting a zero tolerance policy on corruption in this sphere;

Encourages Customs authorities to study and make use of the available training and reference material, and develop new tools and guidelines to support frontline Customs officers in their daily work;

Calls on Customs authorities to continue to raise awareness, through specialized events and public campaigns, of the problem of wildlife trafficking and its impact on the economy, security and sustainability.

x

x x