



MEDIA RELEASE

Combating illegal wildlife trade through transnational collaboration

(Nairobi, Kenya – 27th May 2014) The fight against illegal wildlife trade received a boost today. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on bilateral cooperation in combating wildlife crime in Africa. The MoU will facilitate cooperative wildlife law enforcement operations and relevant capacity building programmes between the two organizations to benefit Lusaka Agreement member states and the entire African continent.

Speaking at the event, IFAW Regional Director James Isiche stated: “Wildlife crime is of international concern hence the need to develop strong partnerships not only amongst countries but international agencies as well, in tackling the vice. IFAW is happy to support such initiatives and strongly believes that a coordinated inter-country and inter-agency response is critical to effectively deal with wildlife crime.”

Wildlife crime and related illegal trade is now globally ranked as one of the most serious international crimes. Recent reports from wildlife conservationists indicated that proceeds of wildlife crime are also used to finance other international crimes including proliferation of illegal firearms, human trafficking and terrorism cartels of which no country or agency can single-handedly manage.

LATF Director Bonaventure Ebayi noted: “We are witnessing increased sophistication in transnational illegal wildlife trade. The criminal networks have devised means to elude law enforcement by often changing their *modus operandi*. This coupled with corrupt practices along the illicit trade chain is causing nightmares to law enforcement agencies across the continent and therefore our resolve should even be stronger augmented by a solid conviction that these threats portend grave consequences to our wildlife, our livelihoods and national economies. LATF is committed to the fight and will remain focused in supporting national regional and global enforcement efforts and developing strategic partnerships in fulfilling its regional mandate”.

For the last 15 years, IFAW and LATF have collaborated in combating wildlife crime. The signing of the MoU also fulfills a decision of the 10th Governing Council of the Parties to the Lusaka Agreement sitting in November 2011 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, with a view of building capacities of LATF and Parties to the Lusaka Agreement and in the process strengthen the IFAW/LATF partnership.

In addition to illegal wildlife trade, intensive poaching and overexploitation of the resources, habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict are seen as other greatest problems facing wildlife populations in Africa. To mitigate these, IFAW undertakes various interventions including training law enforcement officers in wildlife trafficking prevention and partnering with conservationists and communities to conserve environments, monitoring elephant migratory routes and securing more space for elephants. In the same vein and with the support of partners, LATF complements the efforts of Lusaka Agreement member states in carrying out effective law enforcement activities, building capacities of national agencies and promoting effective cooperation among members and with other African states towards safeguarding Africa's much treasured wild fauna and flora against illegal exploitation.

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About IFAW (the International Fund for Animal Welfare)

Founded in 1969, IFAW saves animals in crisis around the world. With projects in more than 40 countries, IFAW rescues individual animals, works to prevent cruelty to animals, and advocates for the protection of wildlife and habitats. For more information, visit www.ifaw.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About The Lusaka Task Force Agreement (LATF)

LATF is an intergovernmental law enforcement agency and the Secretariat and Operational arm of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, adopted in September 1994 by African states under the auspices of UNEP. The Lusaka Agreement is deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations as an Environmental Treaty (XXVII.11). For more information, visit www.lusakaagreement.org

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