

## PRESS RELEASE

**Nairobi, Kenya, Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.** Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) today has announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Grace Farms Foundation (GFF).

Poaching and illegal wildlife trade remains a major problem globally but their devastating impact is largely felt in Africa. It is a development issue with detrimental repercussions on economies, significantly affecting sustainable use of wildlife and related revenues accruing therefrom. Iconic species such as the elephant, rhino as well as pangolins and assorted timber have borne the biggest brunt of this menace, which is fourth leading among transnational crimes after drugs, arms and human trafficking. The need for enhanced collaboration and cooperation in the fight against wildlife crime is therefore a matter of necessity rather than an option. Governments, Inter-Governmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Civil Society need to closely work together to enhance efforts to improve governance frameworks and win the fight against the escalating trade in wildlife and forestry species including their products and derivatives.

Lusaka Agreement Task Force and the Grace Farms Foundation have agreed to partner in accomplishing mutual goals in wildlife conservation especially in combating poaching and illegal wildlife trade and safeguarding wildlife resources in Africa. This collaboration will focus on supporting cooperative law enforcement activities and undertaking capacity building programmes at both regional and national levels particularly to benefit Lusaka Agreement member states.

Mr. Edward Phiri, Director of Lusaka Agreement Task Force stated “the signing of the MoU between LATF and the Grace Farms Foundation has marked an important milestone and demonstrate the two organizations’ steadfast commitment in enhancing cooperation in the fight against wildlife crime. Development of strategic partnerships remains one of LATF’s key focus areasto strengthen the already existing networks for law enforcement”. “LATF wishes to tap into experiences of the Grace Farms Foundation in undertaking law enforcement training especially in combatting and successfully prosecuting national and transnational organized wildlife crime at local, national and global level” he concluded.

Grace Farms Foundation’s expertise in wildlife conservation and training in transnational organized crimes fosters action-oriented collaborations to disrupt and combat all forms of contemporary slavery and wildlife trafficking on a global scale. Mr. Rod Khattabi, the Director of Global Justice Initiative Trainings & Risk Officer at the Grace Farms Foundation stated: “Grace Farms Foundation is looking forward to working with the Lusaka Agreement Task Force in providing its expertise towards the disruption of the illegal wildlife trade. The need for a

public-private partnership, while building capacity, is instrumental in successfully combatting transnational organized crime involved in wildlife trafficking.”

Mr. Mark Fowler, Nature Initiative Director at Grace Farms Foundation added, “We believe that the best way to combat illegal wildlife trade is to directly empower regional and national task forces in Africa. This partnership with LATF is strong step in making this strategy successful.”

### **About Lusaka Agreement Task Force**

The Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), is a permanent intergovernmental law enforcement organization established to support the efforts by countries in reducing and ultimately eliminating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora. LATF was launched in June 1999 headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. It is the Secretariat and operational arm of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, a regional multilateral environmental agreement adopted in Lusaka, Zambia on 8 September 1994 under the auspices of UNEP and deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. LATF bridges source, transit and destination countries of contraband wildlife specimens originating from Africa, carries out intelligence and investigations, supports and coordinates intelligence led enforcement operations. It also undertakes capacity building, promotes state cooperation as well as interagency collaboration and synergies in the fight against transnational wildlife and forestry crimes. <https://lusakaagreement.org/>

### **About Grace Farms Foundation**

The Grace Farms Foundation is a Non-Profit Organization established in USA that supports initiatives in the areas of nature, arts, justice, community, and faith, and encourages participation locally and globally. The Foundation carries out its work through the publicly available facilities and integrated programs of Grace Farms, an 80-acre property owned and operated by the Foundation. Grace Farms was established as an essential platform for the Foundation, serving as a welcoming place where individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and government entities come together to collaborate for the common good. GFF aspires to advance good in the world, providing a peaceful respite and porous platform to experience nature, encounter the arts, pursue justice, foster community, and explore faith. [Gracefarms.org](http://Gracefarms.org)

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