

## **TICAD7 SIDE EVENT: Strengthening Information Sharing Infrastructure and Governance Frameworks to address Human-Nature Conflicts, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019**



Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) in collaboration with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, United Nations Developmental Programme (UNDP), the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES)-Japan and the Remote Sensing Technology Center (RESTEC) of Japan convened a side event on the sidelines of TICAD 7, held on 28th August in Yokohama, Japan. The core theme of discussion during the side event was to explore the building of a robust spatial data infrastructure for facilitating information sharing and governance frameworks to address illegal wildlife trade, human wildlife conflicts and agro-pastoral conflicts in Africa.

The TICAD 7 side event was graced and presided over by the President of Democratic Republic of Congo, His Excellency Felix Tshisekedi. The President of the Democratic Republic of Congo was on his first overseas engagement at TICAD7 and it was indeed a great pleasure to have his Excellency give a key note address at the event reiterating the adverse impact posed by illegal wildlife crime, human-wildlife conflict and Agro-pastoral conflict in Africa.



***President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, giving his key note speech at the LATF organised side event in Yokohama, Japan***

The side event which was a big success was officially opened by the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism of the United Republic of Tanzania Dr. Aloyce Nzuki and featured experts from LATF, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, United Nations Developmental Programme (UNDP) and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

The experts discussed strategies for building the capacity of LATF and the development of a spatial data infrastructure for addressing human-nature conflicts in Africa. For the first time at TICAD7, with the efforts of LATF and partners, wildlife and conservation in Africa have been featured in the outcomes of the Africa-Tokyo conference which brought together high-level government officials to set the continent's development priorities (TICAD-7 declaration also called Yokohama declaration).

This is an important milestone achieved in supporting sustainable developmental goals (SDG), especially in addressing SDG Target 15.7 -Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.



***Dr. Aloyce Nzuki giving his remarks at the official opening ceremony of the TICAD7 side event***

The TICAD7 side event was a follow-up to the Arusha conference on Strengthening Information Sharing Infrastructure and Governance Frameworks to address Human-Nature Conflicts held from 14 to 16 June, 2019 in Tanzania. One of the key recommendations of the conference was the immediate requirement for a near to real-time spatial transboundary monitoring system that needs to be hosted by an intergovernmental enforcement body and supported by African governments.

In this regard, LATF was recommended as the most suited organization to host the spatial data infrastructure and spearhead implementation of recommendations of the conference. Such a system should be interfaced or linked with various line ministries managing the portfolios of wildlife, police, customs and border police. However, for a shared information system to be functional, it requires strengthening of information infrastructures and governance frameworks across Africa as well as increased regional and international cooperation, including technology transfer and capacity development efforts. The conference also highlighted the need for strengthening LATF. Nearly 17

years since its formation, LATF is facing challenges related to funding, infrastructure and manpower. LATF does not have an independent facility and is housed within the premises of Kenya Wildlife Service in Nairobi. However, LATF is the only wildlife Enforcement Inter Governmental Agency within Africa, constituted of a governing council represented by ministers from seven sub-Saharan African countries, which carries out transboundary enforcement efforts.

Hence for strengthening transboundary enforcement measures, it is paramount that the capacity of LATF be reinforced. This includes an independent office facilitated with a robust command and control centre that can collate and analyse spatial data on poaching and illegal wildlife trade for informed enforcement action. LATF is currently hosting the Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System (WEMS-Africa) –a transboundary tool for monitoring poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).



***LATF Director Edward Phiri, speaking at the side event, emphasizing the need for the building of LATF infrastructure with a command and control centre to support information sharing and monitoring transboundary illegal wildlife trade***



***Ms Midori Paxton UNDP Head of Ecosystem and Biodiversity Programme, Outlining activities of UNDP in supporting countries combat illegal wildlife trade such as the global wildlife programme.***

