



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
16 June 2016

Original: English

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## Seventieth session

Item 15 of the preliminary list\*

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

## **Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/314 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. The report provides an overview of the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, reports on the implementation of resolution 69/314 and contains proposals for possible future action.

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\* A/70/50.



## I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/314 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the implementation of that resolution, taking into account Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40. Specifically, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, to report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/314 and to make proposals for possible future action.

2. Member States have recognized, in numerous resolutions, the worrying scale and scope of illicit trafficking in wildlife and the need for international cooperation in tackling it. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/64, expressed concern over the negative impact that poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking have on the ecosystem, human development and regional security, and called upon Member States to take concerted action to counter the phenomenon, including through implementation of resolution 69/314. Furthermore, the Assembly, in its resolution 55/25, expressed its strong conviction that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime would constitute an effective tool and would provide the necessary legal framework for international cooperation in combating such criminal activities as illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild flora and fauna.

3. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 2013/40, 2011/36, 2008/25 and 2003/27, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in its resolutions 23/1 and 16/1, called for international cooperation and crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in wildlife.

4. The Security Council, in its resolution 2262 (2016) expressed concern that illicit trafficking, trade, exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, including wildlife, had a negative impact on the economy and threatened peace and stability in the Central African Republic. Similarly, the Council, in its resolution 2198 (2015), recalled the linkage between the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife, illicit trade in such resources, and the proliferation and trafficking of arms as one of the major factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in the Great Lakes region. Additionally, the Council has made the provision of support to armed groups or criminal networks through the illicit exploitation of or trade in natural resources, including wildlife and wildlife products, a criterion for imposing sanctions on both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic sanctions regimes. In its presidential statement on the Central African region of 11 June 2015 (S/PRST/2015/12), the Council also expressed concern at the link between illicit trafficking in wildlife and natural resources and the financing of armed groups in the subregion, including the Lord's Resistance Army, and further encouraged the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to continue to support the development of a coherent and concerted subregional approach to address the issue.

5. The United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in its resolutions 1/3 and 2/14, recognized the adverse economic, social and environmental impact of the illegal trade in wildlife

and strongly encouraged Member States to take measures to combat the illegal trade in wildlife.

6. Moreover, target 15.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls on Member States to take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and to address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products, and target 15c calls for enhanced global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.

7. The present report is based, *inter alia*, on information shared by Member States, United Nations organizations and the partners that make up the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime. The Consortium is a collaborative effort of the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization. It works to bring coordinated support to the national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to the subregional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act in defence of natural resources. The country-level information presented in section III of the present report is based on the responses of Member States to the note verbale transmitted by the Secretariat pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/314.

8. There was great interest on the part of civil society to volunteer additional information and ideas for tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. In order to ensure a multi-stakeholder approach, the General Assembly may wish to consider soliciting input from civil society for inclusion in future reporting.

## **II. The global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade**

9. Because there is no international agreement on the matter, there is no universal definition of the term “illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade”. Each State has laws and regulations to protect its wildlife, and most States are signatories to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. States are required to penalize trade that contravenes the Convention, but there are many areas of wildlife crime that fall outside its scope, including poaching and domestic trade. In particular, much timber and fisheries crime does not involve species protected by the Convention.

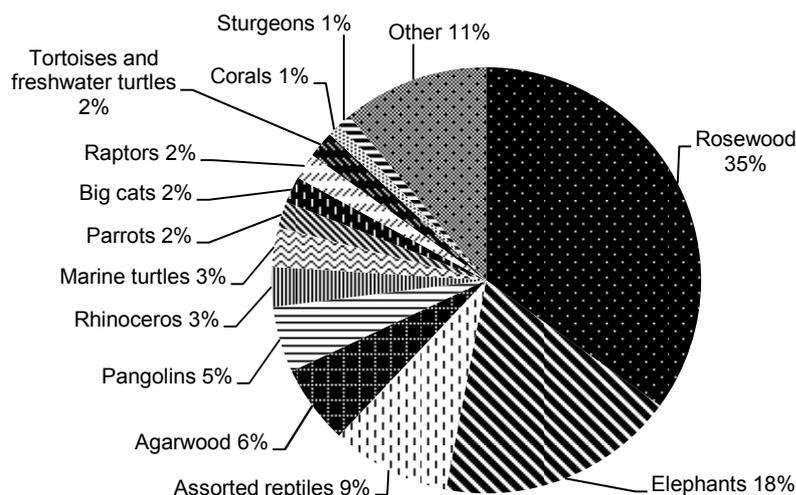
10. As there is no universal definition, there are no global data on wildlife crime. The single largest collection of wildlife crime incidents was recently compiled by UNODC and is rooted in information provided by the secretariat of the Convention and the World Customs Organization. The world wildlife seizures database (known as “World WISE”) contains information about 164,000 wildlife contraband seizures coming from 120 States. Many of those seizures, but not all, were made in connection with violations of laws that implement the Convention.

11. The seizures in the database involve a wide range of wildlife products from at least 7,000 species of animals and plants. Combining the data and tracking them across time requires a common unit of measurement. Since organized crime is

committed for material gain, an indication of the criminal significance of each seizure can be derived from its value. Since legal markets exist for all wildlife products, the relative value of those products can be derived from import declarations. The ratio of the total annual seizure value to the total value of legal imports has been proposed as an indicator for progress under target 15.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on such valuations, the largest illicit markets for wildlife products can be identified (see figure 1).

Figure 1

**Shares of various species in the total seizure value, 2005-2014**



Source: World WISE.

12. These data show that while iconic species draw much attention, many lesser-known species are prominent in illegal markets. These include plants: the highest grades of rosewood and agarwood are worth more per kilogram than any animal product. As a species becomes increasingly scarce, it becomes less prominent in illicit trade. For example, there are very few tigers remaining in the wild. Therefore, while the trade in tiger parts may not generate large criminal revenues, it has great ecological impact.

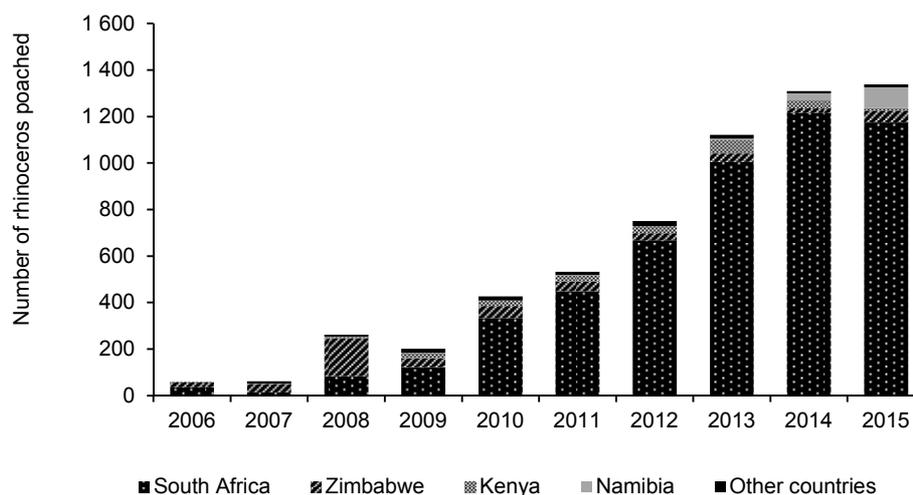
13. The trade in many specimens stretches back centuries, but growing affluence has greatly augmented demand. Both elephants and rhinoceros had survived intense waves of poaching in the twentieth century and were on the road to recovery, until, in the mid-2000s, demand surged again. Elephant poaching appears to have peaked around 2011. There are a number of indicators that the market has declined since that time, although many national elephant populations remain seriously imperilled. Poachers particularly appear to target the United Republic of Tanzania and Gabon, and most of the ivory is trafficked to Asia. The number of African elephants poached annually in recent years appears to lie between 10,000 and 40,000, out of a population of perhaps half a million.

14. Rhinoceros poaching continues to rise, although less dramatically so than in the recent past (see figure 2). Since 2013 there have been more than 1,000 violent

deaths per year out of a global population of less than 30,000. South Africa has the world's largest population of rhinoceros and, despite a decline in poaching over 2015, remains the country most targeted. Kruger National Park, which abuts the country's border with Mozambique, has been hit particularly hard. Much of the traffic appears headed for Viet Nam, where rhinoceros horn is used for medicinal and ornamental purposes.

Figure 2

#### Detected poaching of African rhinoceros



Source: International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

15. In addition to this iconic species, many lesser-known species are used illegally. Many reptiles, including lizards, snakes, turtles and tortoises, end up as pets or are turned into food, medicine or fashion items. The pangolin, or scaly anteater, has traditionally been consumed as food or made into a medicine or fashion items in both Africa and Asia, and the recent boom in demand has devastated populations in some areas. Pangolins are reclusive, nocturnal mammals that give birth to a single offspring after a long gestation period, so rapid uncontrolled harvesting can have long-ranging effects.

16. The markets for wildlife products are as varied as those for any other type of commodity. Mixed loads of wildlife contraband have been detected, but most seizures involve a single species. Some illegally harvested wildlife products are largely retailed in illegal markets, such as ivory or pangolins. But other products have been passed off as legal goods and introduced into legitimate commercial channels. Doing so enables traffickers to take advantage of legal demand among buyers who would never knowingly buy illegal wildlife products.

17. There are a number of ways in which illegal wildlife products can enter legal commercial channels. Virtually any wildlife product can be sold legally, provided it has been sourced and traded legally. Proof of legality is provided by paperwork, and paperwork is a major source of vulnerability because it can be bought, forged, and otherwise fraudulently acquired. Many source countries are also developing

countries, so their ability to combat this type of corruption and fraud may be limited.

18. For example, most products from protected species may be traded internationally, provided that they come from commercial breeding or cultivation operations and that the necessary paperwork is in order. But wherever it remains more inexpensive to find such species in the wild than it does to produce them in captivity, there is a risk that otherwise legal operations will be used to launder illegally acquired wildlife. Since there are over 35,000 species under international control, it may be difficult for inspectors to distinguish between protected and non-protected products. Species misdeclaration has been detected on many occasions. As in all areas of regulation, corruption can undermine even the most scrupulous controls. The same issues apply to the sourcing of other natural resources from developing countries: there is a need for a watertight system to secure supply chains and assure that goods taken from remote areas with little oversight are nonetheless gathered and exported in accordance with the law.

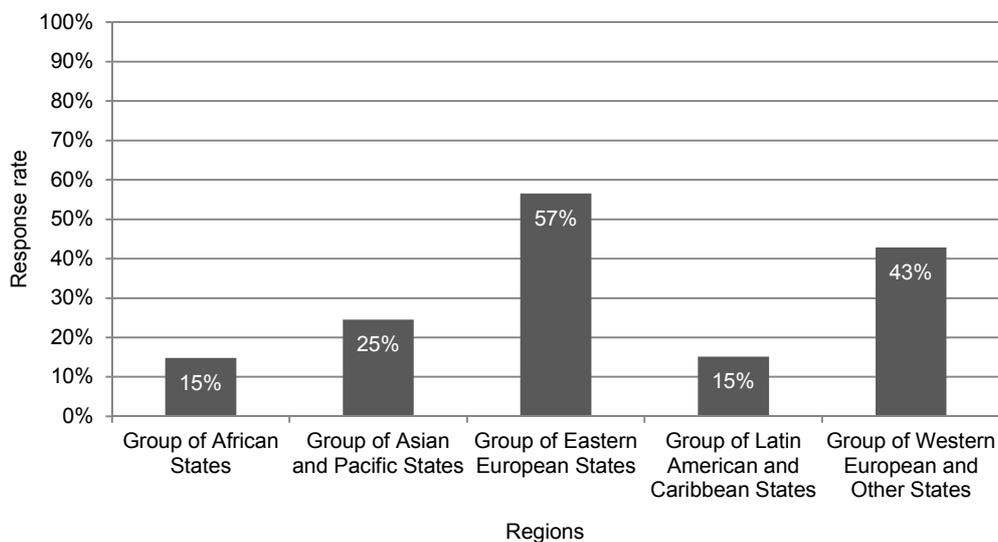
### **III. Implementation of resolution 69/314**

19. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/314 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, requested the Secretary-General to report on that resolution's implementation. The present section is based on responses to a questionnaire sent to Member States and United Nations organizations and on information from the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime. The Secretariat issued a note verbale accompanied by the questionnaire to Member States on 2 February 2016. In total, 51 Member States returned the questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> All regional groups of Member States are represented, with eight responses received from the African Group, thirteen from the Asia/Pacific group, thirteen from the Eastern European Group, five from the Latin American and Caribbean Group and twelve from the Western European and Others Group (see figure 3). Responses received after the deadline, if applicable, will be included in future reports.

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<sup>1</sup> The following Member States returned the questionnaire: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey and Uganda.

Figure 3  
Member State response rate by geographical region



Source: Member State responses.

20. UNODC further requested information from United Nations organizations on the implementation of the resolution, in a letter dated 5 February 2016. Responses were received from the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the World Food Programme.

#### A. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/314 by Member States

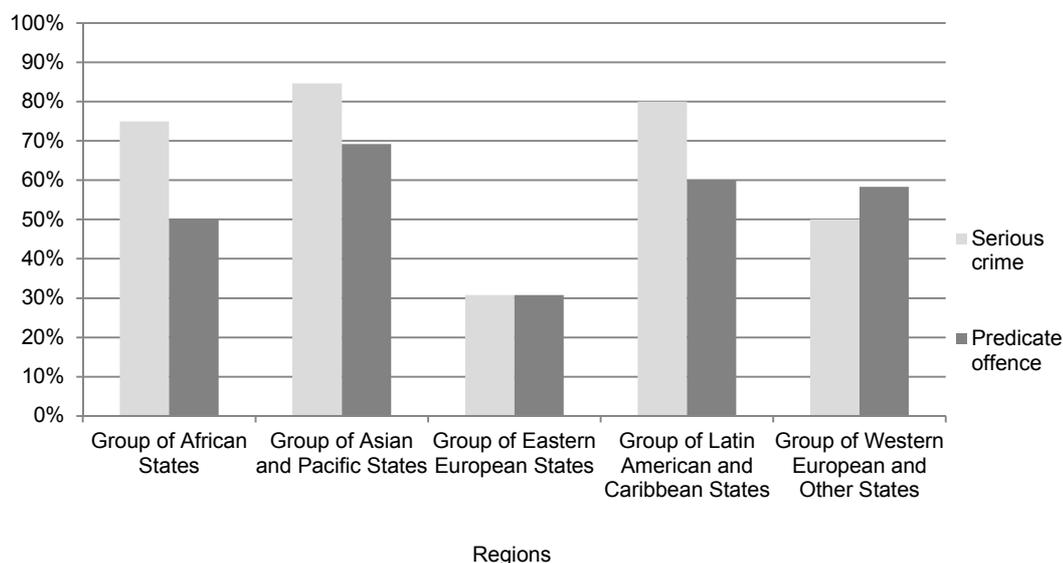
21. In its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly urged Member States to take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in wildlife, as well as to strengthen enforcement and criminal justice responses. In that regard, the vast majority of responding Member States reported that illicit trafficking in wildlife is a criminal offence in their jurisdictions. Two Member States consider it an administrative offence and one Member State is drafting a law that will criminalize illicit trafficking in wildlife. Member States reported that they had undertaken further action to combat illicit trafficking in wildlife. Canada, for example, reported the successful conviction of wildlife traffickers and Colombia reported the development of a national strategy to prevent and control illicit trafficking in wildlife. More recently, the European Union developed an action plan against wildlife trafficking, which outlines current challenges within and among European Union member States in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife and identifies priorities for action.

22. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to adopt effective measures to prevent and counter poaching. Most Member States reported taking measures against poaching. Measures reported included introducing legislation on poaching, encouraging inter-agency cooperation, publishing guides on the implementation of existing legislation that included case studies, holding awareness-raising campaigns and developing national anti-poaching strategies and action plans. For example, Kenya's action plan to combat poaching includes 6 thematic areas and 29 concrete actions that range from improving the capacity for intelligence gathering to ensuring that staff are sufficiently motivated. Bulgaria reported opening its central emergency telephone number 112, accessible around the clock, for reports about potential poaching. China has extended an existing ban on importing ivory from trophy-hunting and introduced a new ban on importing ivory that falls outside the scope of the Convention.

23. In its resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a serious crime. Article 2, paragraph (b) of the Organized Crime Convention defines a crime as serious when it is "punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty". Throughout the present report the term "serious crime" is used in that sense. The Organized Crime Convention further provides States with a framework for providing mutual legal assistance in investigations and prosecutions of serious crimes. Thirty-two Member States reported that illicit trafficking in wildlife is a serious crime in their jurisdictions. Three Member States reported that they had increased the maximum penalties for illicit trafficking in wildlife in 2015; in the case of Finland the increase was sufficient to make such trafficking a serious crime. However, in one third of respondent Member States illicit trafficking in wildlife is not a serious crime under national legislation (see figure 4).

24. In the resolution, the General Assembly also called upon Member States to review and amend legislation as necessary so that offences connected to the illegal wildlife trade were treated as predicate offences, for the purposes of money-laundering cases. Article 2, paragraph (h) of the Organized Crime Convention defines "predicate offence" as any offence as a result of which proceeds have been generated that may become the subject of a money-laundering offence under domestic law. Twenty-seven Member States reported taking the necessary measures in order to treat offences connected to the illegal trade in wildlife as a predicate offence for money-laundering.

Figure 4  
**Percentage of countries considering illicit trafficking a serious crime or predicate offence, by region**



Source: Member State responses.

25. In the resolution, the General Assembly acknowledged that the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime could provide valuable technical assistance in strengthening enforcement and criminal justice responses to the illegal trade in wildlife. In that regard, the Consortium, through its global network of regional and country offices, supports national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement and subregional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act to combat the illicit trafficking in wildlife. Key tools developed by the Consortium include the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit*, its Indicator Framework for combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, the *Guidelines on Methods and Procedures for Ivory Sampling and Laboratory Analysis* and the *Best Practice Guide on Forensic Timber Identification*.

26. The *Toolkit* is a technical resource that assists Member States in reviewing the effectiveness of their criminal justice and preventive response to wildlife and forest crime. It builds on the technical expertise of Consortium partners and on extensive consultations with subject-matter experts. UNODC leads the implementation of the *Toolkit* on behalf of the Consortium in response to an official request from Member States for assistance. To date, the Consortium has received requests to implement the *Toolkit* from 19 Member States. Implementation has been completed in Bangladesh, Botswana, the Congo, Gabon, Mexico, Nepal, Peru and Viet Nam and is at different stages of implementation in Madagascar and Mozambique. Angola, the Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Kenya, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania have formally requested the Consortium to implement the *Toolkit*.

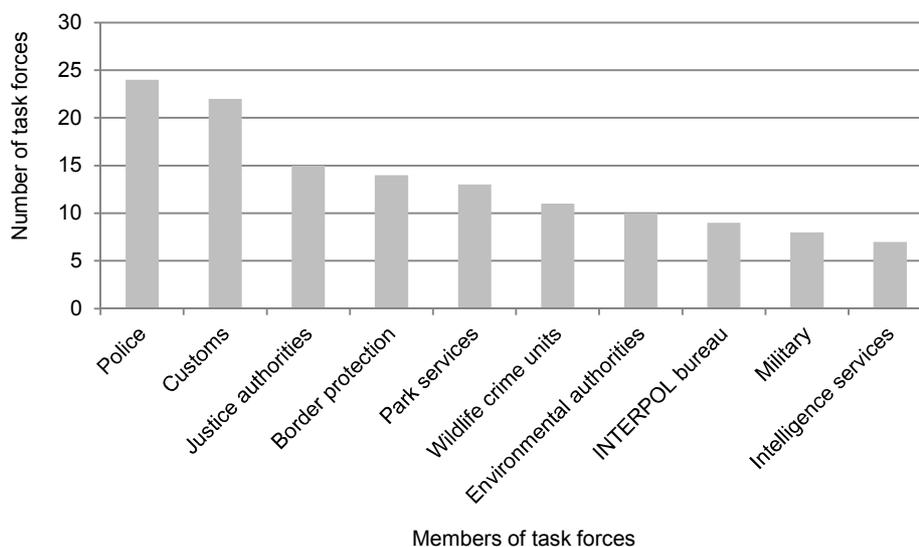
27. Indonesia, Malaysia, Portugal, Singapore, the Sudan, Sweden and Thailand also reported applying the *Toolkit*, while Germany reported applying “its underlying

principles”. Additionally Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Georgia, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Qatar, Spain, Turkey and Uganda reported plans to implement the *Toolkit*. The *Toolkit* is relevant for a wide range of Member States wishing to gain a better understanding of the main issues related to wildlife and forest crime at the national level. The Indicator Framework complements the *Toolkit* and is intended to provide a standardized approach to measuring the effectiveness of national law enforcement responses. It enables Member States to independently monitor performance over time and to identify changes in the effectiveness of their law enforcement responses.

28. In the resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to harmonize their judicial, legal and administrative regulations to support the exchange of evidence among government agencies, and to facilitate the prosecution of illicit trafficking in wildlife. In that regard, 29 Member States reported taking measures to harmonize and align their regulations. Israel reported that one government agency is responsible for all arrests, searches and seizures, investigations and prosecutions of wildlife crime. Several Member States reported that the exchange of evidence is already regulated by national law, and one Member State reported currently drafting such a law. Other Member States regulate the exchange of evidence through memorandums of understanding, statements of cooperation or similar types of agreements. Some Member States hold coordination meetings or maintain open communication channels among relevant agencies and departments, either in an institutionalized or in an ad hoc manner. Two Member States reported the publication of handbooks and guides outlining the applicable procedures for exchanging information among relevant agencies. One Member State reported conducting inter-agency workshops to raise awareness on the issue.

29. In the resolution, the General Assembly also encouraged Member States to establish national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces. In that regard, 26 Member States reported the establishment of wildlife crime task forces. Task force composition varies, though customs and police are represented on most task forces (see figure 5).

Figure 5  
**Composition of national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces**



Source: Member State responses.

30. Ministries of defence and of the interior, marine authorities, port authorities, financial intelligence units, coast guards, zoos and academia also participate in some task forces. China reported that it is currently establishing a national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task force. Some Member States without task forces in the Group of Western European and Other States indicated that their current institutional arrangements provide for a sufficient degree of cooperation among different agencies.

31. In its resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about the risks associated with the supply and demand for illegal wildlife products. In that regard, 40 Member States reported having introduced awareness-raising campaigns, with some concentrating on the supply side of wildlife trafficking and others on the demand side. Many Member States reported using targeted strategies to influence consumer behaviour. For example, as a result of an action plan mandated by a new conservation law, Morocco is in the process of developing awareness-raising campaigns on illicit trafficking in wildlife. France reported planning a new campaign that specifically targets officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development in France and abroad, as well as French tourists and expatriates.

32. In the resolution, the General Assembly strongly encouraged Member States to support, including through bilateral cooperation, the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking in wildlife and its adverse impacts. In that respect, 21 Member States reported taking measures to support alternative livelihoods, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Ten Member States reported supporting ecotourism in order to provide employment to affected communities, for example by training tourist guides. Further measures included involving communities in profit-sharing schemes, providing them with

cash payments for conserving forest cover, rewarding informants, training communities on wildlife management and protection, notably by training some community members to become park rangers, and providing information programmes on food security and good nutrition. France, Spain and Switzerland reported supporting the development of alternative livelihoods for affected communities through development cooperation projects focusing on agroforestry, ecotourism, apiculture and measures to minimize wildlife-human conflict.

33. In the resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to prohibit, prevent and counter any form of corruption that facilitates illicit trafficking in wildlife. In that context, over 90 per cent of Member States reported adopting measures that prohibit, prevent or counter corruption in general. Although several Member States indicated that existing corruption laws apply to all forms of corruption, including corruption linked to illicit trafficking in wildlife, many pointed out that they are not always applied to cases involving illicit trafficking in wildlife. Conscious of this shortcoming, some Member States highlighted the need to identify specific links between corruption and illicit trafficking in wildlife. France, for example, reported issuing a ministerial circular instructing prosecutors to examine possible links to corruption in wildlife crime cases.

34. In the resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to ratify or accede to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Organized Crime Convention and the Convention against Corruption. In that regard, over 95 per cent of respondents reported ratifying or acceding to all three conventions. One Member State has signed the Convention against Corruption and the Organized Crime Convention and is in the process of ratifying both. One Member State has not yet ratified the Organized Crime Convention.

35. In the resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to fulfil their obligations under relevant multilateral agreements other than the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Other treaties that were reported as relevant include the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

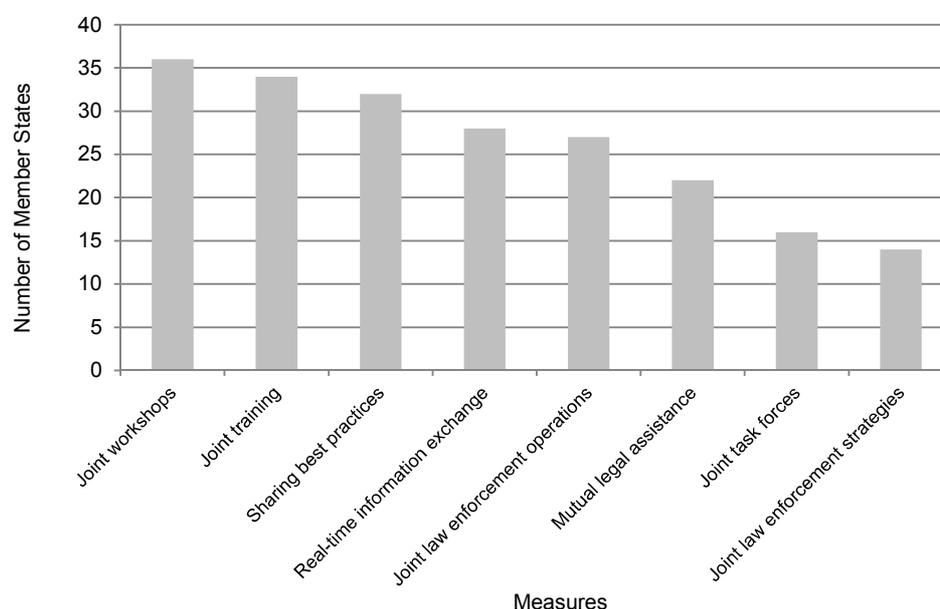
36. Some Member States also mentioned the following treaties as relevant: Civil Law Convention on Corruption, Convention for the Conservation and Management of the Vicuña, Convention on Biological Diversity, Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, Trans-Pacific Partnership and Treaty on the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration on Wildlife Conservation and Tourism Development. Several European Union member States further referenced Council regulation (EC) No. 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein and subsequent European Commission regulations, which incorporate

provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora into European Union law. Further instruments and bodies that were mentioned include the African Elephant Coalition, various bilateral round tables, the European Police Office, the Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, INTERPOL, the project “Minimizing the illegal killing of elephants and other endangered species”, the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Wildlife Enforcement Network, and the ASEAN Experts Group on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

37. In its resolution, the General Assembly strongly encouraged Member States to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in wildlife. In that respect, 43 Member States reported cooperating internationally to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife. Most Member States reported conducting joint workshops, joint trainings, sharing best practices, sharing information in real time, conducting joint law enforcement operations, providing mutual legal assistance, participating in joint task forces, and developing joint law enforcement strategies and joint anti-poaching strategies (see figure 6). Member States also reported working internationally through the Pacific Islands Law Officers’ Network, the European Union Trade in Wildlife Information Exchange, the export of forensic know-how and wildlife enforcement networks. European Union member States again mentioned the European Union action plan against wildlife trafficking, regular meetings with all European Union member States, and the mandate of the European Police Office for coordinating European cooperation in this field.

Figure 6

**Measures taken by Member States to cooperate internationally**



Source: Member State responses.

38. Finally, in the resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to enhance cooperation for the repatriation of live illegally traded wildlife. Twenty-three Member States reported adopting measures to that effect. For example, Bulgaria reported a case where authorities had seized, confiscated and repatriated grey parrots to a range country in Africa, while Peru reported a bilateral treaty with Chile for the return of live illegally trafficked wildlife.

## **B. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/314 by United Nations organizations and entities**

39. In its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly called upon United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to continue to support efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife. In that respect, efforts are currently being undertaken by several United Nations entities, including the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, UNODC, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, UNOCA, and the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

40. The secretariat of the Convention reported providing Member States support in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife through capacity-building, support for alternative livelihoods, technical and financial assistance, legal advice, the exchange and secondment of enforcement personnel and awareness-raising campaigns. Specifically, the secretariat reported implementing, in close collaboration with African range States, the project “Minimizing the illegal killing of elephants and other endangered species”, which builds on the previous project by the same name and is designed to generate reliable and impartial data on the status of and trends in the population of wildlife species. The secretariat also convened the Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force of the Convention to develop strategies, and proposed actions to improve international cooperation to combat rhinoceros poaching and the associated illegal trade in rhinoceros horn. The secretariat further assisted stakeholders in accessing funding for issues related to biodiversity and wildlife crime through the Global Environment Facility, facilitated the implementation of the 2015 World Wildlife Day awareness-raising campaign and continued to provide tools and services to Member States, such as the Virtual College of the Convention.

41. FAO reported supporting projects in Southern and Central Africa to ensure that resources and biodiversity are managed sustainably and that information on sustainable wildlife management is made available. Additionally, the Organization provided support for the development and enhancement of national legislation and provided training and policy advice on fisheries management.

42. UNDP reported taking a series of measures to support Member States in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, including through providing policy advisory services, specialized training and capacity-building, and equipment. UNDP worked with local communities to create jobs and support livelihoods, provided financial assistance and legal advice, assisted in the development of national and regional strategies, promoted advocacy and improved communications, and facilitated partnerships and South-South-North learning.

43. UNEP supported Member States in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife through policy and legislative development, which included delivering the best

available science to strengthen the evidence base for policy dialogue and targeted awareness-raising strategies. Other activities included capacity-building in law enforcement, the development of national and regional strategies and action plans, and outreach and communication efforts to raise awareness and reduce demand.

44. UNODC implemented activities in source, transit and destination countries worldwide, with a particular focus on Africa and South-East Asia. Specifically, the Office supported the review of national legislation related to wildlife and forest crime; provided specialized training and equipment to rangers, police and customs; delivered training to prosecutors, investigators and members of the judiciary, including by embedding mentors with specialized units; strengthened port control mechanisms by delivering training on risk profiling for wildlife and timber shipments; built capacity for wildlife forensic analysis in range States; implemented the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* in a number of Member States; and supported international cooperation among law enforcement agencies.

45. UNOCA, in its capacity as the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, worked closely with Gabon, chair of the forty-first ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, and with UNODC to implement General Assembly resolution 69/314. The forty-first ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee was held in Libreville from 23 to 27 November 2015 and resulted, among other things, in a high-level declaration on the fight against poaching and in a renewed commitment on the part of Central African States to address illicit trafficking in wildlife as a cross-border threat to peace and security. Furthermore, in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA (S/2016/482), Central African Governments were called upon to take concrete steps towards the implementation of specific measures needed to operationalize strategic decisions on countering the illicit wildlife trade, including General Assembly resolution 69/314, and the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, adopted on 30 April 2015. UNOCA continues to support the development of an emergency anti-poaching action plan for the Economic Community of Central African States through its cooperation framework with that organization.

46. Finance and resource mobilization remain crucial to ensuring continued support to Member States. Ongoing work between the World Bank and the United Nations in identifying donors represents an important step in that regard. The option of participating in joint trust funds and programmes also merits further consideration.

47. In its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further improve the coordination of activities undertaken by United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Accordingly, the Secretary-General convened a series of Policy Committee meetings. The Policy Committee decided that, in the light of the global nature and multi-dimensional impact of illicit trafficking in wildlife, relevant United Nations organizations should develop a robust evidence base, a shared analysis and consequent recommendations to ensure an effective, system-wide response to the security, political, economic, environmental and social aspects of illicit trafficking in wildlife. Those organizations included the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information and the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations, all of the Secretariat, as well as UNODC, UNEP, UNDP and the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, in consultation with regional presences of the United Nations and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime.

48. Some United Nations organizations reported taking steps with relevant stakeholders in order to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, including by establishing working groups and task forces. For example, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime was created by the World Bank, UNODC, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the secretariat of the Convention in an effort to bring coordinated support to national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to subregional and regional networks that act in defence of natural resources. A donor round-table meeting was convened by a number of donor countries in collaboration with the World Bank, UNODC, UNDP, UNEP and the secretariat of the Convention with the purpose of finding opportunities for strengthening existing funding arrangements and developing new arrangements to finance initiatives. Additional round tables are anticipated with a broader scope.

49. Furthermore, FAO and the secretariat of the Convention have signed a memorandum of understanding and work on joint projects to support fisheries management and develop capacity for enforcement officers and prosecutors. The Organization also reported establishing the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management with other international and civil society organizations. The Partnership promotes initiatives on sustainable wildlife management and has held events showing how sustainably managed wildlife plays a vital role in obtaining food security, nutrition and income while contributing to the alleviation of poverty.

50. In its resolution 69/314 the General Assembly called upon UNODC, within its mandate and resources, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 and in close collaboration with Member States, to continue to collect information on patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in wildlife and to report thereon. Accordingly, UNODC issued the *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in Protected Species*,<sup>2</sup> the first of its kind, at the twenty-fifth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The *Report* takes stock of the present wildlife crime situation, with a focus on illicit trafficking of specific protected species of wild fauna and flora, and provides a broad assessment of the nature and extent of the problem at the global level. Further reports building on the research for this *Report* and looking at additional species would be welcome.

#### **IV. Proposals for possible future action**

51. In its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly, requested the Secretary-General to make proposals for possible future action to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife. Some proposals included in the present section have been based on the resolution, while others have been submitted voluntarily by Member

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.XI.9.

States or have been based on their responses to the questionnaire on the implementation of the resolution.

52. Given the widespread increase in poaching, the evolving nature of illicit trafficking in wildlife and the fact that Member States are continuing to share proposals for future action, the General Assembly may wish to consider requesting further reports from the Secretary-General on the issue. In its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consider the appointment of a special envoy on illicit trafficking in wildlife to promote awareness and galvanize international action. As no Member State has so far commented on a suggestion in the questionnaire to that effect, the idea could be considered further in the future.

53. The proposals are grouped thematically, and include measures that Member States can take at the national and international levels, as well as measures United Nations organizations can take. It would be welcome if Member States and organizations, which have already implemented some of the proposals, shared their experiences and lessons learned with others.

54. Measures and steps that aim to prevent and counter illicit trafficking in wildlife, notably by changing national legislation and by strengthening law enforcement, criminal justice and preventive responses, are referred to in operative paragraphs 2 to 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 of the resolution. Although many Member States have taken decisive steps in that direction, including through widespread criminalization of illicit trafficking of wildlife and awareness-raising campaigns, the action taken appears to be insufficient, as there has been little notable increase in the amount of investigations, convictions and sentencing of criminals involved in illicit trafficking in wildlife. There is scope for additional efforts and further measures. For example, possessing wildlife that has been illegally harvested in another country is rarely criminalized. Existing tools, including the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit*, the Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, forensic guidelines and existing technology could be used more extensively by Member States to strengthen criminal cases, improve monitoring and better guide policies and approaches. Further measures could be taken to harmonize the exchange of evidence among government agencies in wildlife trafficking cases. The General Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to:

(a) Strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice responses to prevent and counter illicit trafficking in wildlife, including by setting up national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces and harmonizing national legal frameworks to facilitate the exchange of evidence among government agencies in illicit trafficking in wildlife cases;

(b) Ensure that measures are taken to address the supply of and demand for wildlife, including through awareness-raising campaigns and the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for affected communities;

(c) Review and amend national legislation to prohibit possession of wildlife that was illegally harvested in, or traded from, other countries anywhere in the world;

(d) Increase the use of legal instruments available at the national level to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife, including through legislation related to money-laundering, corruption, fraud, racketeering or financial crime;

(e) Mainstream illicit trafficking in wildlife across relevant national agencies in national and regional strategies and action plans;

(f) Promote the use of existing tools and services to analyse and guide responses to illicit trafficking in wildlife, such as the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* and the Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime;

(g) Strengthen the use of existing control instruments, including traceability mechanisms such as track-and-trace technology and mechanisms for profiling and targeting suspicious shipments and persons;

(h) Promote, strengthen and increase the use of sophisticated investigative techniques, such as those involving controlled deliveries, informants and undercover surveillance;

(i) Introduce modern stockpile management systems, as well as mechanisms and procedures for the disposal of seizures, including facilitation of sampling using DNA and isotope methods to determine the origin and age of seizures;

(j) Increase the use of forensic wildlife science, which can contribute to the identification of species and the design of targeted law enforcement responses, and improve compliance with the formal requirements of filing criminal charges and other court documents with a view to strengthening prosecutions;

(k) Draw the attention of prosecutors and judges to relevant international obligations, to the serious nature of illicit trafficking in wildlife and to the link between wildlife cases and corruption by issuing administrative circulars or similar documents to that effect;

(l) Introduce a case management system for wildlife crime in order to monitor successful prosecutions, penalties applied and failures to prosecute, and to determine the key reasons for successes and failures.

55. The Organized Crime Convention and the obligations it imposes are referred to in operative paragraphs 4, 5, 9 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 69/314. Although 186 Member States have ratified or have acceded to the Organized Crime Convention, the process of domesticating or implementing its obligations is ongoing. For example, not all Member States have made the illegal wildlife trade a serious crime or a predicate offence for money-laundering cases within the meaning of the Organized Crime Convention. There is a need for continued action by Member States to revise national legislation to ensure that the penalty for illicit trafficking in wildlife is not only commensurate with the crime but also serves as a deterrent. The General Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to:

(a) Consider ratifying or acceding to the Organized Crime Convention, if they have not yet done so;

(b) Make illicit trafficking in wildlife involving organized criminal groups a serious crime as defined in the Organized Crime Convention;

(c) Review and amend national legislation so that offences connected to the illegal wildlife trade are treated as predicate offences for the purposes of domestic money-laundering offences and are actionable under domestic legislation on proceeds of crime;

(d) Raise awareness among law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners of the importance and effects of recognizing illicit trafficking in

wildlife as a serious crime of transnational dimensions and as a predicate offence for money-laundering offences.

56. In its resolution, the General Assembly requested that Member States prohibit, prevent and counter any form of corruption that facilitates illicit trafficking in wildlife, in particular in operative paragraph 10. Similarly, in its resolution 1/3, the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP called for policies of zero tolerance towards corruption associated with the illegal trade in wildlife. Member States have recognized that corruption is one of the most critical factors facilitating illicit trafficking in wildlife in all its aspects, that it fosters the expansion of organized criminal groups and that it can occur at every stage of the illegal wildlife trade. With its 178 States parties, the Convention against Corruption is nearing universal ratification. The Convention against Corruption provides an innovative and comprehensive approach for preventing and combating corruption in all its forms, including corruption related to illicit trafficking in wildlife. However, many States still lack awareness of corruption in the context of wildlife trafficking and do not have the capacity to prevent and respond to it. Furthermore, effective application of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora depends largely on Member States' control over the issuance, inspection and acceptance of Convention documentation, as well as on the ability to detect cases of illegal trade in wildlife, both of which are seriously undermined by corruption. The General Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to:

(a) Consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention against Corruption, if they have not yet done so, and taking appropriate measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of that Convention;

(b) Raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes of and threats posed by corruption, in particular corruption linked to illicit trafficking in wildlife;

(c) Strengthen measures to prevent corruption in wildlife management, in particular through the formulation of anti-corruption strategies;

(d) Build systems to identify collusion between criminals involved in illicit trafficking in wildlife and officials from both the public and private sectors involved in the transport of wildlife products, and to identify and mitigate corruption risks in organizations and agencies in both sectors;

(e) Identify best practices based on previous anti-corruption investigations and strengthen the capacity of investigators and prosecutors to use anti-corruption techniques to take action against wildlife traffickers;

(f) Cooperate with the private sector and with civil society to reduce the opportunities for corruption and increase the chance of illegal activities being identified.

57. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and its obligations are referenced in operative paragraphs 1 to 3, 9 and 12 of General Assembly resolution 69/314. The Convention enjoys widespread support, with 182 Member States having ratified or acceded to it. However, its obligations have not always been transposed into domestic law. To ensure universal membership

and effective implementation of the Convention, the General Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to:

- (a) Ratify or accede to the Convention, if they have not yet done so;
- (b) Review and amend national legislation to ensure the domestication of the Convention, including by establishing or strengthening Convention management and scientific authorities;
- (c) Support the inclusion in the appendices to the Convention of additional species that meet the listing guidelines and make optimal use of appendix III where they experience illegal trade and need the support of importing countries;
- (d) Raise public awareness on the obligations arising from the Convention's system of trade regulation in wildlife, especially among regular travellers.

58. The need for international cooperation in tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife is mentioned in operative paragraphs 1, 11 and 12 of General Assembly resolution 69/314. Some regions have established wildlife enforcement networks and about half of the respondent Member States reported introducing measures to facilitate the repatriation of illegally traded live wildlife. However, international coordination on specific cases remains limited. Few joint investigation teams have been established and available diplomatic tools are not always used. Additional measures are needed in this regard. The General Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to:

- (a) Enhance South-South cooperation and cooperation between source, transit and destination countries to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in wildlife, including through the exchange of intelligence, best practices, and lessons learned, and through the deployment of joint investigation teams;
- (b) Encourage the strengthening and, where appropriate, the development of regional and international networks, including wildlife enforcement and wildlife forensics networks;
- (c) Consider the use of diplomatic tools for more effective cooperation with relevant source, transit and destination countries and regions, including through the use of wildlife attachés at diplomatic missions;
- (d) Promote mutual legal assistance among Member States, recognizing that a number of subregional, regional and international legal frameworks exist for that purpose;
- (e) Encourage efforts to undertake international joint investigations, including by promoting the use of sophisticated investigative techniques and recognizing the importance of targeting the many links in international criminal networks.

59. In operative paragraph 14 of its resolution 69/314, the General Assembly recognized the importance of research in that it called upon UNODC to continue to collect information on patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in protected wildlife. Accordingly, UNODC has compiled and released the first world wildlife crime report, with support from the partners that make up the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, making use of the world wildlife seizures database (known as "World WISE"), which currently contains data from 120 countries on more than 164,000 seizures. The database is a key component of the tier 1 indicator

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for target 15.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and provides the empirical basis for a series of case studies on illicit wildlife markets. However, additional research and monitoring is needed in order to ensure that conservation policy and enforcement strategies continue to be based on the best available scientific evidence. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following proposal:

Request Member States to mobilize resources to further research the patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including by mandating UNODC to continue collecting information and reporting on these issues, and supporting the UNODC World WISE database.

60. In operative paragraphs 13 and 15 of its resolution 69/314 the General Assembly urged United Nations organizations to support efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife and requested the Secretary-General to improve the coordination of such efforts. In that regard, an effective and coherent United Nations response to illicit trafficking in wildlife requires proactive information-sharing, harmonized efforts and coordinated action across the United Nations system and at the national, regional and global levels. The United Nations continues to support the fight against illicit trafficking in wildlife through, inter alia, its increasing assistance to law enforcement efforts, legislative reforms and the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for affected communities. There is general agreement among various international forums that United Nations organizations could expand their role in outreach and communication activities, including awareness-raising. However, a considerable number of current activities are paid for using extrabudgetary funds. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following proposal:

Address the need to provide United Nations organizations fighting illicit trafficking in wildlife, in line with their respective mandates, with adequate, predictable and stable resources, including additional regular budget resources.

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