



Addressing Growing Threat to African Wildlife: Gaps, Opportunities and Solutions

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Background

- Wild lands have shrunk and degraded in the face of expanding human populations and agriculture;
- Rifles, fast vehicles, and widespread armed conflict and unrest have helped wipe out wildlife populations across vast areas;
- Previously remote forest and desert areas are exposed to intensive hunting along rapidly spreading networks of logging, oil, mining and road construction projects;
- Pronounced urbanization in Africa and the growing African diaspora abroad has greatly increased the demand for bushmeat;
- rapidly expanding human populations and settlement are creating a surge in human-wildlife conflict especially with 'problem' wildlife populations – lions, elephants, great apes among them;
- the export in live wildlife and animal parts is linked to enormous international demand and largely unregulated and illegal trade networks



Current Situation

- An African Elephant is killed every 15 minutes!
- The number of elephants killed in Africa is in the range of 20,000 to 25,000 per year out of the population of 420,000 – 650,000 (CITES 2013)
- The size of forest elephant population is estimated to have declined by around 62% between 2002 and 2011
- Poaching of Rhinos has increased dramatically from less than 50 in 2007 to over 1000 in 2013
- 94% of rhino poaching takes place in South Africa and Zimbabwe
- Rhino, lion, and elephant populations are today threatened with extinction due to poaching, human wildlife conflict and illegal trade driven by growing demand, in particular from Southeast Asia and China
- Bush meat, live trade, human-wildlife conflict. Illegal Wildlife trade contributes significantly to the problem

Current Situation

- UNEP study estimated that up to 25% of tropical forest wildlife species may become extinct by 2020
- Between 2009 and 2014 we witnessed more than 60 significant seizures comprising of over 92 tons of elephant ivory
- Between 18,000 to 22,000 great apes were taken from the wild in Africa between 2005 and 2011
- The illegal trade in pangolins was estimated at between 40,000 and 60,000 animals in 2011 alone
- Involves multiple dimensions including poverty and governance and often hidden within the legal trade
- Illegal trade is depriving developing economies of billions of dollars in lost revenue and development opportunities

Current Situation

- The resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to provide ecosystem services to local peoples diminishes as wildlife populations disappear
- Risk of transmission of diseases from wildlife species to humans (that is, zoonosis) or their livestock. Several regions in Africa have been identified as hotspots for emerging disease risk due to human-wildlife interactions. The bushmeat trade has been implicated in the transmission of several serious diseases due to people eating wild animals. (e.g. Ebola)
- Driven by perception of low risk and high profits attracting the greater interest of organized crime groups
- Organized criminal syndicates are moving poached or illegally harvested wildlife with the help of the same sophisticated techniques, technologies and networks used for illicit trafficking in persons, weapons and drugs

Current Situation

- Transnational organized environmental crime worth between \$70 billion and \$213 billion (Vs ODA \$135 billion annually)
- It is estimated that between \$48 - \$153 billion of resources is lost through Illegal Wildlife Trade (Vs ODA \$135 billion annually)
- Rhino horns poached in 2013 had a street value of around \$63.8 million to \$192 million
- The finance resulting from this illegal trade is linked to conflicts and terrorism “threat finance” to the tune of \$4 million to \$12.2 million
- Represents a significant economic, environment, security threat
- The short-term, minimal, and inequitable profits of the wildlife trade derived by local communities and economies are vastly outweighed by the damage done to local ecosystem services and sustainable, resilient livelihoods

Gaps

Illegal activities flourish when appropriate governance and regulation is lacking, including failures to protect natural resources, ineffective, inappropriate or weak regulation and corruption

- Disconnect in the fights against wildlife crimes and corruption
- Non existing, weak and/or ineffective Wildlife Law Enforcement
- Poor domestication of regional and international conventions, treaties and agreements in national legislation
- Lack of specie specific legislation in most African countries

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