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Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/326](#), 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, contains information on the implementation of resolution [71/326](#) and also contains proposals for possible future action.



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution [71/326](#), on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of that resolution to it at its seventy-third session, taking into account Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, and to make proposals for possible future action.
2. The international community has recognized the worrying scale and scope of trafficking in wildlife and the need for international cooperation in tackling it. The General Assembly, in its resolutions [69/314](#), [70/301](#) and [71/326](#), expressed concern about the adverse economic, social and environmental impacts of poaching and wildlife trafficking and encouraged Member States to take action to counter such phenomena. Furthermore, the General 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 the necessary legal framework for international cooperation in combating trafficking in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.
3. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 2003/27, 2008/25, 2011/36 and 2013/40, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in its resolutions 16/1 and 23/1, also called for international cooperation and crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in wildlife.
4. 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 it.
5. Target 15.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals is to take urgent action to end poaching of and trafficking in protected species of flora and fauna and to address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products. Target 15.c is to enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching of and trafficking in protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities. Target 16.3 is to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
6. The present report is based on information shared by States, United Nations entities and 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 (WCO). It works to provide coordinated support to national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to the subregional and regional networks that act in defence of natural resources. The country-level information presented in chapter III of the present report is based on the responses of States to the note verbale transmitted by the Secretariat pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/326](#).

II. Global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade

7. In the *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in Protected Species*, published by UNODC in 2016, the main trends in wildlife trafficking around the world were highlighted. In the report, UNODC identified the largest illegal flows of wildlife based on valuations of wildlife products. The five largest of those illegal flows were in rosewood, ivory, reptiles, agarwood and pangolin. It also highlighted the existence of distinct markets and trafficking dynamics by species: some illegally traded wildlife products feed only into illegal markets, while others end up being sold through legal

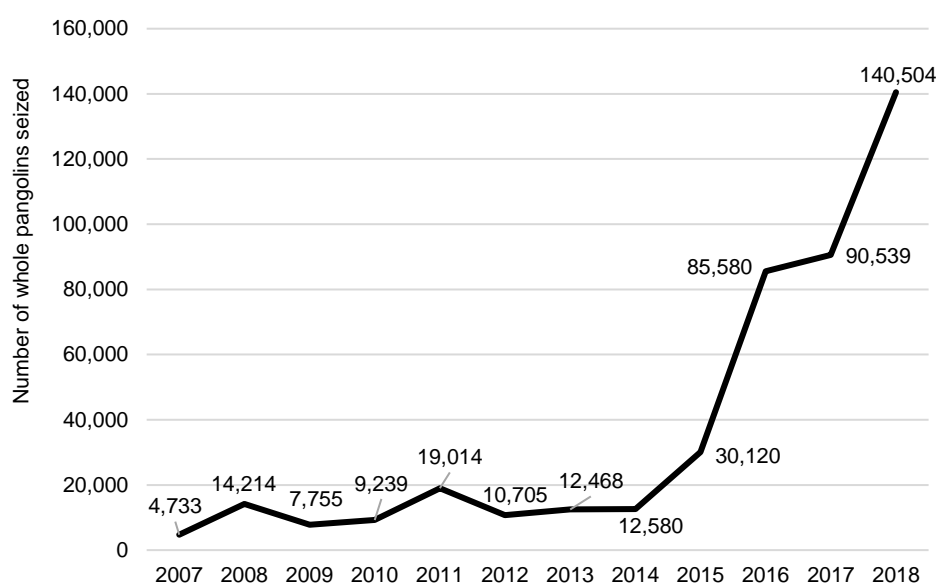
outlets. The report was produced on the basis of data from the World Wildlife Seizure (World WISE) database, created and maintained by UNODC.

8. Since 2016, the database has been improved and its new iteration, World WISE 2.0, now includes details of over 200,000 wildlife contraband seizures from 132 countries. UNODC compiles the data primarily from the illegal trade reports that States parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora are required to provide the Convention secretariat every year. The data are supplemented with seizure data provided by WCO, the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange database and the United States of America Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) database. Many, but not all, of those seizures were made because the wildlife that was being traded is protected under the Convention.

9. The trade in protected wildlife covers a range of species, with the most commonly traded species changing on the basis of consumer demand. Trafficking in pangolins has increased significantly in the last decade (see figure I); their scales are used for traditional medicine and cuisine in parts of Asia. African pangolins are now being illegally exported to Asian countries because the Asian subspecies' populations are in decline from over-harvesting. Rhinoceros remains a key poached species, with the death of the last male northern white rhinoceros in 2018 highlighting the dire straits that some subspecies are in and also highlighting that poaching must be addressed at the source, before wildlife is hunted to extinction.

Figure I

Global pangolin^a seizures, 2007–2018

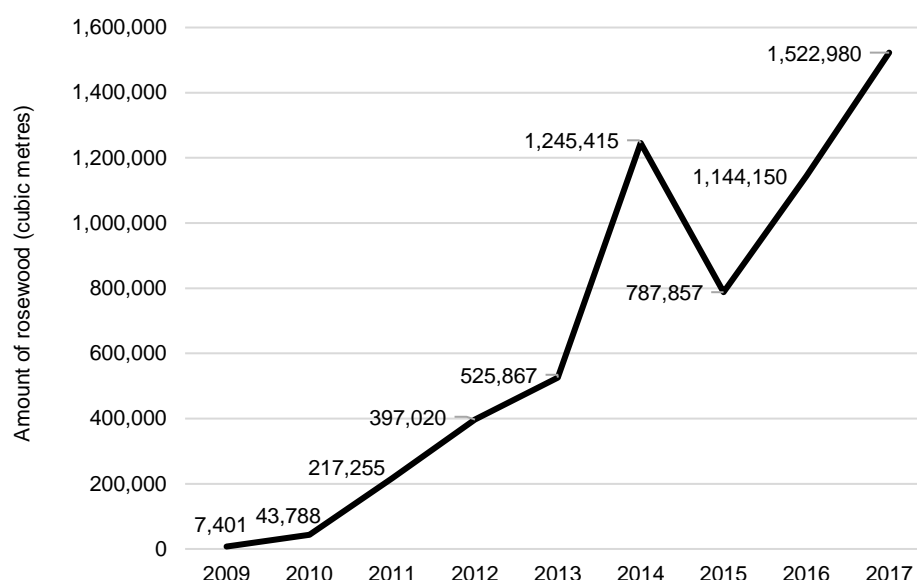


Source: World WISE database and Environmental Investigation Agency.

^a The number of pangolins was calculated using factors that convert various pangolin products, such as scales, into the number of whole pangolins that they would equal.

10. For timber, rosewood remains a booming market, with most logs illegally sourced but legally imported, often with forged Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora permits. According to Asian import statistics, the amount of rosewood logs imported from West Africa has increased almost continually since 2009 (see figure II), including for species such as *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, which was placed in appendix II to the Convention in January 2017.

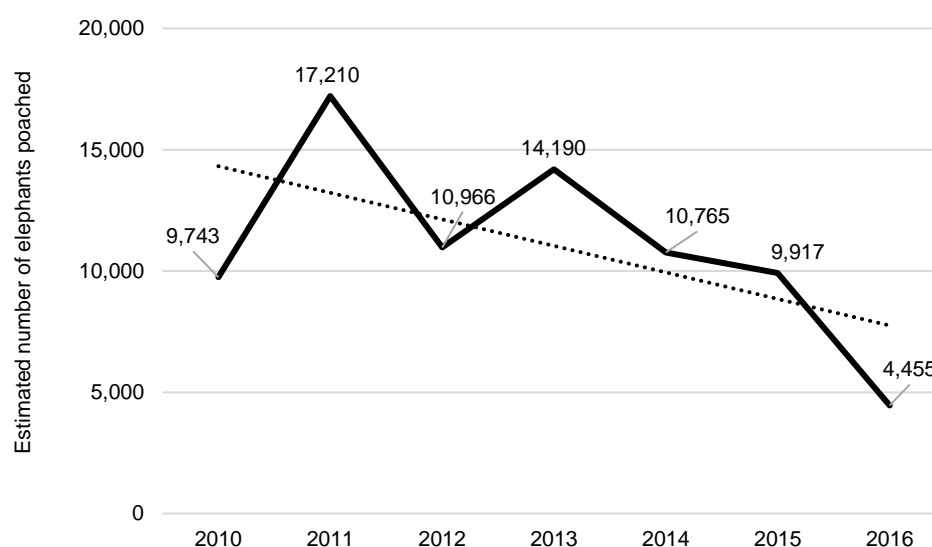
Figure II
Rosewood exported from West Africa to Asia (cubic metres)



Source: World WISE database.

11. New species appear regularly on global wildlife trafficking markets and are increasingly being seized by authorities as they gain prominence among consumers. Trafficking in European glass eels, for example, is now a major concern. Poachers take them from their breeding grounds in the Atlantic Ocean and transport them by air for farming in Asia, where demand for them as a delicacy is high. In the 2017–2018 season alone, nearly 6 tons of glass eels were seized by enforcement authorities globally. Meanwhile, other markets, such as that for ivory, are slowing down; there has been a decline in the number of elephants killed since the peak of the elephant poaching epidemic, in 2011 (see figure III). That decline is, in part, thanks to targeted anti-poaching efforts and the closing of key markets (such as that in China), through country-wide ivory trade bans. Yet, despite such efforts, ivory trading and trafficking remain a serious concern globally, in particular in regions such as South-East Asia, suggesting that poachers are shifting their trafficking to less-policed areas in response to increased enforcement.

Figure III
Estimated number of elephants poached in East and Central Africa, 2010–2016



Source: World WISE database.

12. The markets for wildlife products are also expanding into the digital arena, with many species, such as turtles for the live pet trade, being almost exclusively traded on social media platforms. Advertisements for these products are often shown in public forums but sellers arrange the details of the purchase through private messages once buyers have been identified. It can often be hard to determine from these postings if the wildlife discussed has been sourced legally or not, or whether it can be legally traded, making it particularly challenging for online retailers and law enforcement agencies to pursue the sellers. Wildlife traffickers continuously change methods, which poses significant challenges for law enforcement entities as they try to stay a step ahead.

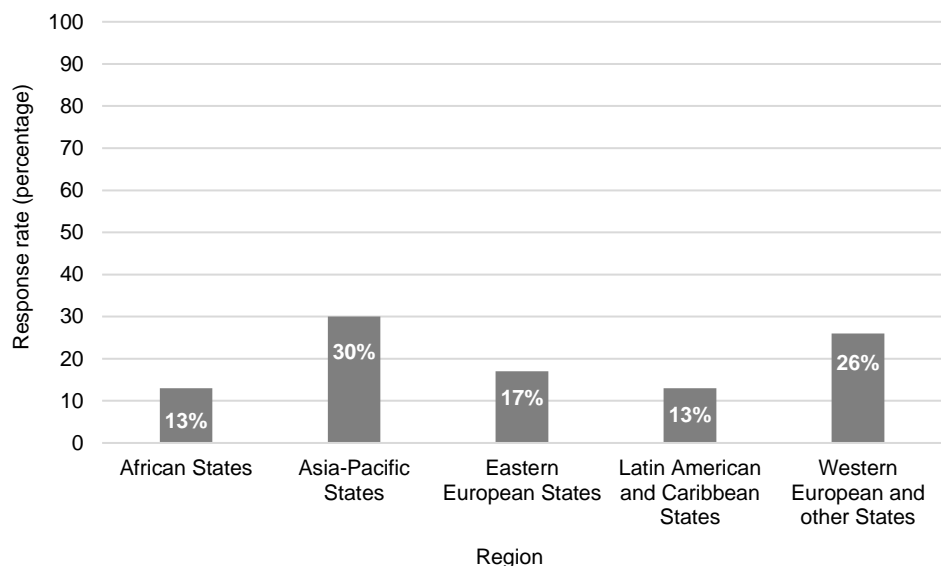
13. Furthermore, as certain species are becoming harder to source from the wild, traffickers are seeking alternative species to meet demand, through both legal and illegal means. This includes, for example, the trade in lion bones as a substitute for tiger bones, which are used in traditional remedies and status products such as tiger bone wine. In addition, traffickers are now also seeking out breeding facilities to obtain stocks of tiger bone to supplement wild sources. Such facilities can facilitate the introduction of illegal wildlife products into legal commercial channels, especially where corruption remains a challenge for the enforcement of national wildlife protection laws and international conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Many of the countries where these breeding facilities exist continue to struggle to implement relevant national wildlife legislation, including anti-corruption and broader environmental laws, making them vulnerable to corruption.

III. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/326

14. In its resolution 71/326, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implementation of that resolution. The present section was produced on the basis of responses to a questionnaire sent to States and United Nations entities on 20 December 2018 and on information submitted by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime. In total, 46 States returned the questionnaire.¹ All regions were represented, with 6 responses received from African States, 14 from Asia-Pacific States, 8 from Eastern European States, 6 from Latin American and Caribbean States and 12 from Western European and other States (see figure IV).

¹ The following Member States returned the questionnaire: Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States. The following non-member State also returned the questionnaire: State of Palestine.

Figure IV
State responses, by geographical region



15. UNODC also requested information from United Nations entities on the implementation of the resolution, in a letter dated 21 December 2018. Responses were received from the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the Secretariat and UNEP.

16. In addition, UNODC requested information from the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, which consists of a number of interregional and regional institutes. Responses were received from the Basel Institute on Governance, the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights and the Thailand Institute of Justice. Those responses were incorporated by UNODC into the present report.

A. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/326 by States

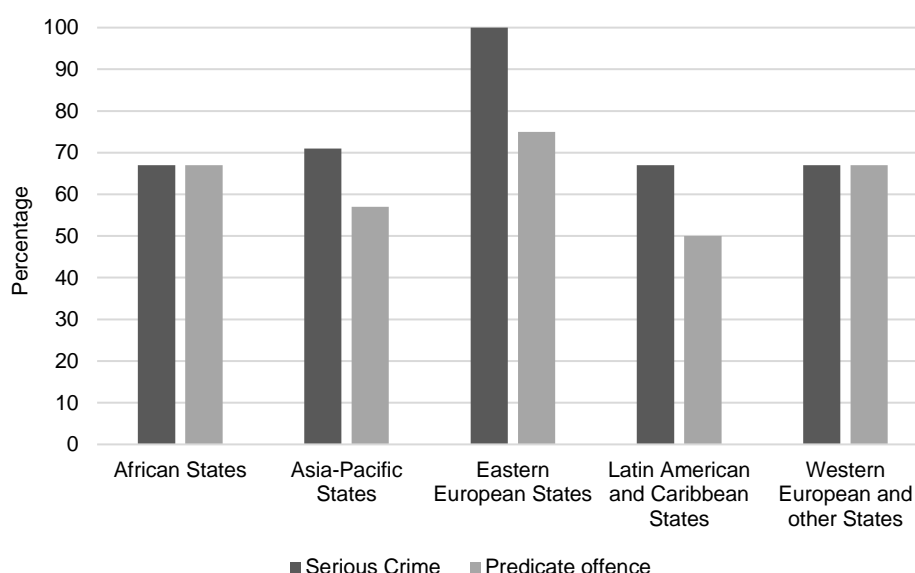
17. In its resolution 71/326, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to adopt effective measures to prevent and counter poaching. The majority of States (40) that responded to the questionnaire reported that they had adopted such measures. They included the introduction of new laws, the establishment of new wildlife monitoring systems, the introduction of measures to improve inter-agency cooperation and the development of normative guidance and measures related to the compulsory registration of certain protected specimens.

18. In the same resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in wildlife, including by strengthening enforcement and criminal justice responses. In that regard, the vast majority (44) of responding States reported that illicit trafficking in wildlife was a criminal offence in their jurisdictions. In two States, it was not a criminal offence, but was sanctioned as an administrative or civil matter. Twenty States reported that they had undertaken further legal measures to combat illicit trafficking in wildlife since the adoption of the resolution. Germany, for example, had developed a national enforcement action plan based on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan. Côte d'Ivoire had initiated the preparation of three draft laws on the protection of wildlife and the fight against trafficking, and the United Republic of Tanzania had operationalized standard operating procedures and developed a rapid reference guide for investigators and prosecutors of wildlife and forest crime.

19. Also in the same 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 also provides States with a framework for providing mutual legal assistance in investigations and prosecutions of serious crimes. Thirty-four States reported that illicit trafficking in wildlife was a serious crime in their jurisdictions, meaning that illicit trafficking in wildlife was not treated as a serious crime under national legislation in more than a quarter of responding States (see figure V).

Figure V

Percentage of countries considering trafficking in wildlife a serious crime or predicate offence, by region



20. Legislation in the vast majority (41) of the responding States allows for the seizure, confiscation and disposal of assets linked to the illegal trade in wildlife. Twenty-two States reported that legislation related to money-laundering, corruption, fraud, racketeering and financial crime had been used to investigate and prosecute those involved in wildlife trafficking. A much lower number of States (19) reported that investigating financial crimes linked to wildlife trafficking was part of the standard procedure for wildlife crime investigations.

21. In its resolution [71/326](#), 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. The Consortium continues to support States in that regard and has operationalized its strategic programme for the period 2016–2020. Key tools developed by the Consortium include the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit*, the Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, the *Guidelines on Methods and Procedures for Ivory Sampling and Laboratory Analysis*, the *Best Practice Guide for Forensic Timber Identification* and the Wildlife Crime and Money-Laundering Training Programme.

22. The *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* is a technical resource that assists 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 a State for assistance. To date, the Consortium

has received requests to implement the *Toolkit* from 29 States. *Toolkit* assessments have been completed in Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, the Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Peru, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam and is at different stages of implementation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Namibia, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Angola, the Bahamas, Bhutan, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Kenya, the Philippines, Senegal and Togo have formally requested the Consortium to implement the *Toolkit*. The implementation of recommendations stemming from national analysis is subject to funding.

23. Argentina, China, Guatemala, Latvia, Malawi, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and the United States reported applying the *Toolkit*. Additionally, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Morocco, the Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Singapore, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey reported plans to implement the *Toolkit*. The *Toolkit* is relevant for a wide range of 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 States to independently monitor performance over time and to identify changes in the effectiveness of their law enforcement responses. To date, the Indicator Framework has been completed in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Namibia and Uganda and the process has been launched in Angola.

24. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly encouraged Member States to utilize article II, paragraph 3, of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by listing in its appendix III protected species in their jurisdiction. Twelve States reported that they had included species in appendix III and 24 States reported assisting in controlling the trade in species protected under the Convention, including those listed in appendix III. The secretariat of the Convention reported that an increasing number of States had been utilizing appendix III.

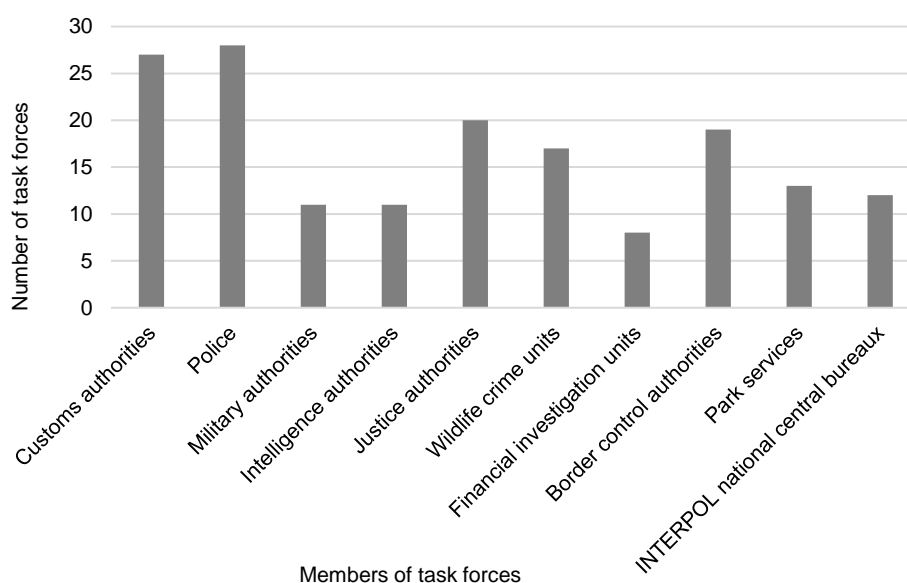
25. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to harmonize their judicial, legal and administrative regulations to support the exchange of evidence among government agencies and to facilitate the prosecution of illicit trafficking in wildlife. In that regard, 25 States reported taking measures to harmonize and align their regulations. Several States reported that the exchange of evidence was already regulated by national law. Bhutan reported that the Office of the Attorney General was responsible for the drafting of all laws and ensuring the harmonization of provisions. Some of the responding States regulated the exchange of evidence through memorandums of understanding and inter-agency agreements. Other States had held coordination workshops or had established interagency units to enhance communication and cooperation. One State reported the publication of a guide outlining the applicable procedures for exchanging information among relevant agencies. Several States reported new initiatives such as the establishment of working groups or committees to review procedures. One State reported that it was currently drafting a law that would include regulation of the exchange of evidence, while another was in the process of amending its penal code in that regard.

26. Also in the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to establish national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces. Thirty-three States reported the existence of such task forces, with two States establishing such task forces since the adoption of the resolution. Another State was in the process of establishing a task force. The composition of the task forces varied, although customs and police were represented on most (see figure VI). In addition to the authorities shown in figure VI, marine authorities, forestry departments, tourism departments, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora management and scientific authorities and various ministries (agriculture, defence, interior and justice) also participated in some task forces. Some States without

dedicated wildlife task forces reported that their current institutional arrangements provided for a sufficient degree of cooperation among relevant agencies.

Figure VI

Composition of national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces



27. Also in General Assembly resolution [71/326](#), Member States were encouraged to enhance their enforcement efforts, including through recording and monitoring both seizures and successful prosecutions, to more effectively counter and deter the illegal trade in wildlife. Twenty-nine States reported that recording and monitoring of wildlife seizures had improved since the adoption of the resolution. Some States had established new databases while others had introduced new electronic data-collection tools. European Union member States mentioned improved data collection for communication to the European Commission and as part of the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange database. Others made reference to improved systematic data collection as part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora illegal trade report process. Only 16 States reported that recording and monitoring of wildlife prosecutions had improved since the adoption of the resolution. Some States reported improvements, for example, through the restructuring of the national prosecution service and improved database management. Other States reported that adequate prosecution recording systems were already in place, for example, through court monitoring programmes.

28. In the same resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about the risks associated with the supply of and demand for illegal wildlife products. Thirty-six States reported having introduced awareness-raising campaigns. The campaigns were focused on the supply and demand sides of wildlife trafficking and incorporated targeted strategies to influence consumer behaviour and create greater awareness of laws prohibiting illegal trade in wildlife and associated penalties.

29. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly invited Member States to enhance the ability of developing countries to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife. Fifteen States reported having provided assistance in that regard. Many of those States reported providing financial assistance while others supported capacity-building activities. For example, China reported engaging in a series of outreach campaigns in African countries dealing with the illegal wildlife trade, while the United Kingdom reported increasing its financial support to the Global Environment Facility, as well as providing support through overseas development assistance and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Office of Law

Enforcement of the United States had stationed experienced criminal investigators as wildlife law enforcement attachés at United States embassies in seven countries.

30. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities. Half of responding States reported taking measures to support local communities in that regard. Measures included promotion of ecotourism, public-private partnerships and enhancing community rights and awareness. Further measures included involving communities in profit-sharing schemes, rewarding informants and providing cash incentives, including micro-financing, for livestock breeding and other sustainable agricultural programmes.

31. Also in the same resolution, the General Assembly strongly encouraged Member States to enhance their support, including through transnational and regional cooperation, for the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities. Seventeen States reported measures in this regard. Austria, Finland, Germany and the United Kingdom reported supporting the development of alternative livelihoods for affected communities through development cooperation projects focusing on community conservancies, public-private partnerships, sustainable tourism, education, enhancing community rights and capacities and measures to minimize conflict between wildlife and humans.

32. Also in its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly encouraged Member States to integrate measures to address illegal trade in wildlife into development policy, planning and programming. Twenty-one States responded that they had integrated measures in that way. Many of those States reported incorporating those measures into national action plans and national development plans. For example, the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan was aimed at balancing development across different sectors, including those related to wildlife.

33. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to initiate or strengthen collaborative partnerships among local, national and international development and conservation agencies to enhance support for community-led wildlife conservation and promote the retention of benefits by local communities. Twenty-three States reported that they had made efforts to initiate or strengthen collaborative partnerships. Those partnerships often took the form of partnerships between government agencies and conservation organizations. Fifteen States reported promoting the retention of benefits by local communities, including by reinforcing the voice of local people as key stakeholders and implementing measures that balanced the need to tackle the illegal wildlife trade with the needs of communities, including through the sustainable use of wildlife. Some States reported partnering with international conservation organizations to deliver community participatory conservation and enforcement programmes.

34. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly strongly encouraged Member States to participate in global, regional and national donor coordination and knowledge-sharing efforts to enhance understanding and mobilization of investments to prevent and combat illegal trade in wildlife in order to maximize effectiveness and engage new partners. Twenty-one States reported engaging in coordination and knowledge-sharing forums, mentioning, for example, conferences and initiatives under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Biological Diversity, INTERPOL and UNODC. States also reported participating in wildlife enforcement networks, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Expert Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime and the illegal wildlife trade conferences led by the United Kingdom. A small number of States specifically mentioned donor coordination and sharing of information in relation to funding and investments. In those cases, States referred to the international donor coordination round tables organized by the World Bank, the series of illegal wildlife trade conferences and regional coordination mechanisms such as the Southern African Development Community.

35. In the same resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States that had not yet done so to consider taking measures to ratify or accede to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Organized Crime Convention and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Of the responding States, only three had not ratified or acceded to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; two had not ratified or acceded to the Organized Crime Convention (one of which was in the process of ratification); and two had not ratified or acceded to the Convention against Corruption. Eighty-nine per cent of responding States had ratified or acceded to all three conventions.

36. Also in the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and other relevant multilateral agreements. Relevant treaties reported on by responding States included the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention for the Conservation and Management of the Vicuña, the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

37. Some States also mentioned the following instruments and bodies: African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; Arab Union for Protected Areas; Arab Union for Wildlife Protection; East Africa Community; European Union action plan against wildlife trafficking; *International Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation: the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations*; global threat intelligence centres; INTERPOL; South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network; Southern African Development Community Protocol against Corruption; and Southern African Development Community Protocol on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. Additional regional agreements mentioned included the Agreement for the conservation of the flora and fauna of the Amazonian territories of Colombia and Brazil and the Agreement for the conservation of flora and fauna of the Amazonian territories of Colombia and Peru.

38. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly called upon Member States to prohibit, prevent and counter any form of corruption that facilitated illicit trafficking in wildlife. The majority of States (39) reported adopting measures that prohibited, prevented or countered corruption in general. Many States indicated that their existing anti-corruption laws applied to all forms of corruption, including corruption linked to trafficking in wildlife. Some States reported adapting laws and strategies to explicitly address trafficking in wildlife and the promotion of integrity in the environmental sector. Twenty States reported taking measures to assess or mitigate corruption risks in capacity-building programmes related to wildlife and 31 States reported strengthening capacity to investigate and prosecute such corruption. Responding States mostly reported on initiatives to combat corruption in general. Such measures included undertaking corruption risk management, delivering training, establishing anti-corruption hotlines and developing guidelines and normative tools. Only a small number of States provided examples of action to tackle corruption linked to wildlife trafficking. Some reported establishing new bodies or strengthening the capacity of existing bodies to address corruption linked to wildlife trafficking. For example, the National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime in Norway had established an anti-corruption task force and the United Kingdom had launched the United for Wildlife Financial Taskforce. Several European Union member States reported supporting projects in developing countries to build corruption prevention capacity and to improve the investigation of financial crime

linked to wildlife trafficking. Eighteen States requested UNODC support in that regard, with the majority of those requests pertaining to the provision of training.

39. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon Member States to ensure that legal domestic markets for wildlife products were not used to mask the trade in illegal wildlife products. Thirty-six States reported taking action in that regard. The majority of those States reported making random inspections at local markets and regularly monitoring wildlife facilities, with audits conducted and proof of breeding required. Some States reported using forensic techniques to confirm species and parentage. Other States reported monitoring online markets and using informants and search-and-seize techniques.

40. Also in the same resolution, the General Assembly urged Member States to close legal domestic ivory markets, as a matter of urgency, if those markets contributed to poaching or illegal trade. Ten States reported closing legal domestic ivory markets; eight of those States were from the Asia-Pacific region. Other States reported that they did not have domestic ivory markets.

41. Also in its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly encouraged Member States to take measures making permit systems more resilient to corruption and to take advantage of modern information and communications technologies. Twenty-one States responded that they had taken measures to make permit systems more resilient to corruption. Most of those States reported using electronic permitting and processing systems for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora permits. Some States reported that single-window systems were under development. Some European Union member States mentioned that their systems were aligned with European Union regulations. Some States reported taking no new measures as electronic permit systems were already in place.

42. In the same resolution, the General Assembly recognized the efforts of the Group of 20 in countering corruption at both the global and the national levels. The Group of 20 has continued that work. For example, during 2018, the Group, with UNODC support, surveyed States on progress in implementation of the High-level Principles on Combating Corruption Related to Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Wildlife Products.

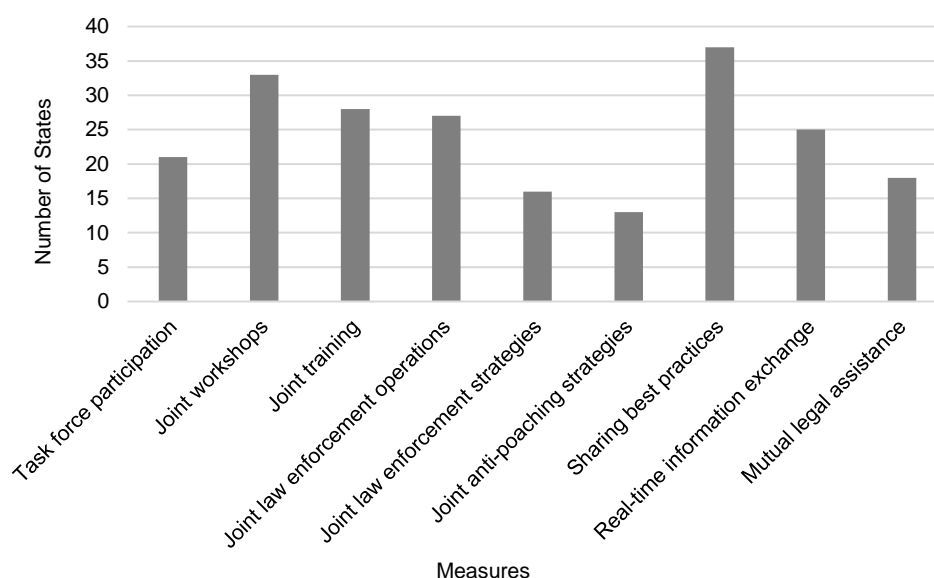
43. Also in the same resolution, the General Assembly recognized the efforts of the African Union to prevent and reduce, with a view to eliminating, the illegal exploitation of and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa. The African Union has continued with those efforts, supported by an expert group for the implementation of the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa. The expert group serves as a platform for coordination and for African Union member States to discuss and exchange information on priorities for Africa at global forums on wildlife, including Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora events. A monitoring and reporting framework for the strategy was developed and endorsed in July 2018 by the expert group and will be rolled out in 2019 to facilitate the collection of data on the implementation of the strategy.

44. Also in its resolution [71/326](#), 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, all but two States reported cooperating internationally to fight trafficking in wildlife. The most commonly reported measures were conducting joint workshops and joint training, 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 VII). States also reported working internationally through wildlife enforcement networks and through the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean. In addition, States reported cooperating through bilateral agreements, regional initiatives and international trade agreements, as well as through specific cooperation to confirm the

authenticity of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora permits and to develop law enforcement and anti-poaching strategies.

Figure VII

Measures taken by States to cooperate internationally



45. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to enhance cooperation for the repatriation of live illegally traded wildlife. Half of States reported adopting measures to that effect. Austria reported that countries of origin rarely requested repatriation. Morocco reported that its Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora management authority responded favourably to requests for repatriation of wildlife originating in Morocco, provided that the wildlife was confirmed to have been exported from the country and met the conditions required by its veterinary services.

46. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly encouraged Member States to enhance information-sharing among national and international authorities in the seizure of illegally traded wildlife. Thirty States reported enhancing information-sharing in that regard. States reported sharing information through various channels: secretariat and national authorities of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Convention; INTERPOL (national central bureaux, Ecomessages, purple notices and working groups); South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network; ASEAN working group on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Wildlife Enforcement; WCO; and competent authorities (for the purpose of mutual legal assistance). European Union member States also mentioned the following: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol); Eurojust; Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange database; and the Enforcement Group of the European Commission.

B. Implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/326](#) by United Nations entities

47. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly called upon United Nations entities, 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 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, UNEP, UNODC and the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

48. The secretariat of the Convention reported that it had continued to support States in tackling trafficking in wildlife through, among others, capacity-building, legal advice, compliance and enforcement assistance, the provision of technical support and the provision of support to wildlife law enforcement efforts worldwide. The secretariat supported a broad range of activities on enforcement matters, with a specific focus on key issues and species identified by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including: combating illegal trade in Asian big cats, cheetahs, helmeted hornbills, ebony, rosewood, ivory, pangolins, rhinoceroses, tortoises and freshwater turtles; carrying out elephant conservation work; and implementing the national ivory action plan process. The work of the secretariat has also supported targeted measures to combat corruption and money-laundering and to facilitate asset forfeiture and the development of tools and databases to facilitate access to forensic facilities. Discussions had also been held on strengthening the Convention provisions on combating wildlife crime linked to the Internet. Other activities included developing demand-reduction strategies and raising awareness, such as through facilitating celebrations for World Wildlife Day; collecting, monitoring and analysing data on illegal trade; and facilitating access to funding and capacity-building materials.

49. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs reported that the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) had supported the regional collaboration of Member States to tackle the interlinked issues of wildlife trafficking, trafficking in other natural resources and the wider security situation. Those issues had been discussed at regional forums including the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, for which UNOCA is the secretariat. For example, wildlife trafficking had been raised during the forty-seventh meeting of the Advisory Committee, held in N'Djamena from 3 to 7 December 2018. During that meeting, ministers from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) member States acknowledged the alarming security situation along vulnerable border areas, where much transnational trafficking took place. The presence of wildlife and other natural resources in border areas, combined with weak governance and limited State capacity, made it important to consider ecological and environmental security aspects. In its report, the Advisory Committee recommended integrating efforts to counter wildlife trafficking into an eco-security approach, echoing a declaration by ministers of ECCAS member States of 27 July 2017 on the security of natural resources, conflicts between wildlife and humans and other conflicts related to the use of land in Central Africa. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs reported efforts by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau to raise awareness among law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau of wildlife protection. While the mission does not have an explicit mandate for the protection of wildlife, those activities are undertaken as part of its broader security sector reform efforts.

50. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [71/326](#), UNEP reported that it had continued to support Member States in tackling the illegal wildlife trade through the provision of policy support at the national, regional and global levels, for example, through the production of high-level scientific environmental assessments and the development of guidance on best practices for community engagement in wildlife management decision-making. UNEP also provided support to the expert group for the implementation of the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa and hosted meetings of the East African Community and the Working Group on Rural Communities of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. UNEP developed guidance on strengthening legal frameworks for licit and illicit trade in wildlife and forest products. Technical legal assistance was provided to nine countries, the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA) was updated and events to celebrate excellence in the fight against environmental crime were held in Thailand in September 2017 and November 2018. UNEP has continued to lead the successful One United Nations global campaign, Wild for Life (which is carried out in eight languages), to raise broad public awareness of the social, economic and environmental implications of the illegal trade

in wildlife. UNEP collaborates closely with the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, serves as the informal secretariat for the Green Customs Initiative and as the secretariat for the African Elephant Fund. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre continues to support the hosting, maintenance and analysis of the Trade Database of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

51. UNODC reported that it had implemented activities in source, transit and destination countries worldwide, with a particular focus on Africa and South-East Asia and in cooperation with a range of partners. Specifically, UNODC conducted training courses and advisory sessions for law enforcement, prosecutors and judges; raised awareness and built capacity with regard to conducting parallel financial investigations through the provision of mentorship support; built corruption risk management capacity in wildlife management and enforcement authorities; supported Member States with regard to corruption and economic crime risk identification in the fisheries sector; initiated a regional programme for Central Africa focused on eco-security; strengthened port control mechanisms by delivering training on risk profiling for wildlife and timber shipments; built capacity for wildlife forensic analysis, including through the African wildlife forensics network; initiated a project to strengthen the criminal justice response to forest crime in Peru; conducted extensive awareness-raising and capacity-building in the area of fisheries crime; compiled legislation, case law and national strategies related to wildlife crime in an online knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC); and supported international cooperation among law enforcement agencies. UNODC also published the *Guide on Drafting Legislation to Combat Wildlife Crime*, developed a series of rapid reference guides for investigators and prosecutors of wildlife crime for Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania and developed tertiary education modules on wildlife, forest and fisheries crime under the Education for Justice initiative. Two corruption prevention tools were also developed: *Integrity Guide for Wildlife Management Authorities* and *Rotten Fish: A Guide on Addressing Corruption in the Fisheries Sector*.

52. The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime continues to implement a range of targeted activities through its strategic programme to build law enforcement capacity and improve geographical and cross-sectoral cooperation to combat wildlife crime. Key activities supported since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [71/326](#) include: a meeting of the Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; a regional workshop in Barbados to explore the development of a network to combat wildlife crime in the Caribbean; a meeting of representatives of parties involved in the development and implementation of national ivory action plans; a regional investigative and analytical case management meeting for national ivory action plan parties; and Operation Thunderstorm. Moreover, UNODC, in close cooperation with the Consortium, convened an Africa–Asia wildlife interregional enforcement meeting in Nairobi in November 2018 to strengthen law enforcement responses to combat wildlife crime and enhance cooperation in the interception, investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime. The Consortium is developing guidelines for new and existing wildlife enforcement networks, and work to implement the *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* and Indicator Framework in requesting States is ongoing.

53. The United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network consists of UNODC and a number of interregional and regional institutes around the world, as well as specialized centres. The network has been developed to assist the international community in strengthening cooperation in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. Some of the institutes involved in the network reported making efforts to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife. As part of its organized crime and illicit trade programme, the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights identifies and analyses linkages and convergences between related sectors of

illicit trade, including wildlife trafficking. This work is conducted through research and technical assistance. The Basel Institute on Governance supports action by States against wildlife trafficking in a number of ways: working with investigative agencies to go beyond simple seizures; working with national authorities to develop regular, high-impact intelligence and analysis streams on wildlife trafficking dynamics and actors; assisting in the coordination of formal and informal regional and international cooperation and dialogue; and helping to lead collective action initiatives to bring together law enforcement, civil society and private sector actors against wildlife trafficking. The Thailand Institute of Justice partnered with the Institute for Global Law and Policy of Harvard University Law School (United States) to initiate an executive programme on the rule of law and sustainable development. Under the programme, the value of inclusive participation in conservation is taught through a case study of community-led forest management that empowers the local community to find the right balance in forest use, between livelihoods and conservation.

54. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further improve the coordination of activities undertaken by United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Some United Nations entities reported working with relevant stakeholders to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach in tackling wildlife trafficking, including by establishing working groups and task forces. For example, relevant United Nations entities continue to collaborate through the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products. Task Force activities since the adoption of the resolution include the organization of two symposiums on strengthening legal frameworks to combat wildlife crime. The first symposium was held in Bangkok in July 2017 and was attended by 90 participants from 22 African and Asian countries; the second was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 11 and 12 September 2018 and was attended by 50 participants from 38 countries in Central and West Africa.

55. Also in its resolution [71/326](#), 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 trafficking in wildlife and to report thereon biennially. Accordingly, UNODC issued the *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in Protected Species* in 2016. The Office will publish the second *World Wildlife Crime Report* in 2019.

IV. Proposals for possible future action

56. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make proposals for possible future action to tackle trafficking in wildlife. In the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to take action to improve legislation and strengthen law enforcement, criminal justice and preventive responses to trafficking in wildlife. The proposals included in the present section are not an exhaustive list of actions but, rather, are recommendations made on the basis of insights gained through analysis of State responses to the questionnaire on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/326](#) and on the basis of experience and research conducted by United Nations entities.

57. The Organized Crime Convention, the Convention against Corruption and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora are nearing universal ratification. Full and effective implementation by States of the obligations contained in those Conventions is now required. Such measures include making trafficking in wildlife involving organized criminal groups a serious crime; ensuring offences related to wildlife trafficking are treated as predicate offences for the purposes of domestic money-laundering offences; and reviewing and amending national legislation to ensure the integration of the conventions into domestic law.

58. In addition to implementing those three conventions, States should adopt mutual recognition laws that criminalize the possession of wildlife products that have been illegally harvested or trafficked from another country.

59. Corruption is at the core of wildlife crime, and international assistance is needed so that wildlife-rich States have the capacity to monitor officials whose discretion or complicity can facilitate trafficking. Such officials include rangers, those issuing Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora certificates and those controlling key transport hubs. Few States reported taking measures to prevent and combat corruption linked to wildlife trafficking specifically, and this is an area requiring increased attention, including through the development of corruption-risk mitigation strategies.

60. State responses highlighted that investigating financial crimes linked to wildlife trafficking is not part of the standard procedure for wildlife crime investigations in the majority of countries; such investigations should be integrated into standard procedures.

61. Industries making use of wild-sourced raw materials should be supported in designing measures, professional standards and mutual monitoring programmes on supply-chain security to prevent the introduction of illegally sourced wildlife into legal trade.

62. Wildlife outside protected areas is more vulnerable to being poached. Support should be given to the establishment and sound governance of protected areas where a wide range of interdependent species can prosper alongside local populations, reducing the incentives for poaching.

63. Rangers provide the first line of defence of wildlife from all threats, including wildlife crime. When corrupted, they can become a serious threat. International assistance is required to bolster and monitor ranger activity in protected areas.

64. Intelligence-led investigations can help dismantle wildlife trafficking networks. Focus should be placed on actors further up the crime chain, such as the well-resourced brokers and corrupt officials whose decisions inform wildlife crime, rather than on poachers and low-level criminals.

65. Customs officials comprise the front line in preventing international trafficking and require support in identifying internationally protected species.

66. Since the Convention system hinges on species identification, wildlife forensic capacity, including DNA analysis, is key to effective interdiction and can provide robust evidence to strengthen investigation and prosecution.

67. In order to evaluate the tactics, evidence and prosecutorial tools needed to combat wildlife crime, States should collect and analyse criminal justice data on wildlife crime arrests, prosecutions, convictions and sentencing and share that information with the international community.

68. International standards on the storage, stockpiling and disposal of any seized wildlife should be created.

69. There is currently little systematic data collection on the gender dynamics of wildlife crime. More research is therefore needed to understand the role that gender plays in the wildlife trafficking chain.

70. International cooperation to tackle wildlife trafficking is increasing but further cooperation is required. States are encouraged to actively participate in global wildlife law enforcement operations, share information and pursue follow-up investigations to ensure that the full crime chain is addressed and that the criminals involved are effectively prosecuted and convicted.

71. Donor coordination is limited. Further efforts are required by States and United Nations entities to enhance communication and coordination and to avoid duplication.

72. States reported taking measures to improve data collection, research and monitoring, including through the development of electronic databases and systems. Further adaptation and modernization of responses to wildlife crime are required to stay abreast of the changing methods applied by wildlife traffickers. For example, States should build capacity to tackle cyber-enabled wildlife crime.

73. In its resolution [71/326](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consider the appointment of a special envoy to promote awareness and galvanize international action. At the present time, given the high-level international attention on illicit trafficking in wildlife and the near-universal ratification of the most relevant international criminal legal instruments available to address the subject matter, together with the stronger role played by existing coordination mechanisms, it appears that the current mechanisms are adequate.

74. United Nations entities continue to support the fight against 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. Increased support could be provided if adequate, predictable and stable resources, including additional regular budget resources, were available.
