

26 September 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at a luncheon to discuss joint action on Poaching and Illicit Wildlife  
Trafficking**

**Your Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic of Gabon,  
Your Excellency Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal  
Republic of Germany,  
Excellencies,  
Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today to exchange views with our distinguished guests on the growing threat of poaching and illegal trafficking.

Let me begin by thanking our hosts, the President of the Republic of Gabon, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, for convening this event. Together, it gives us an opportunity to share perspectives and ways to bring an end to this scourge.

For the many countries confronted with wildlife trafficking and poaching, including in Africa, this is a problem with far reaching socio-economic implications and consequences. Illegal wildlife trafficking not only threatens species and eco-systems; it affects the livelihood and well-being of local communities. It also compromises efforts towards sustainable development and poverty eradication.

We should also acknowledge that poachers are becoming more and more violent. Organised criminal networks, and even rebel and terrorist groups, are now also involved. This makes illicit wildlife trafficking no longer simply an environmental and economic issue, but also one with serious security implications for many countries and regions.

Inevitably, illegal wildlife trafficking has become a prominent issue on the international agenda over the last few years. The Outcomes of Rio+20 in 2012, explicitly recognised the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife. During the 68th session, the General Assembly proclaimed 3rd March as World Wildlife Day, reaffirming its intrinsic value and its many contributions. Most recently, the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals referenced the need to address these crimes in the context of the protection of biodiversity.

I am glad that the international community is mobilizing its efforts to curb the vice. With 180 State Parties, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) provides an international framework to protect over 35,000 species of animals and plants. The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) also plays an important coordination

role, providing support to countries and regions, while the United Nations system is also engaging its diverse resources to combat these crimes.

Assistance must be given to those on the front lines of this fight, including rangers, customs officials, and prosecutors. This will require stronger legislation and enforcement mechanisms. It will as well require increased demand-side efforts across multiple countries. I encourage all Member States to join this global effort and to further enhance, and scale up their law enforcement responses to illegal wildlife trade.

At the United Nations, we should scale up our support of these efforts, and explore possibilities for a General Assembly Resolution on combating illegal wildlife trafficking and poaching. I stand ready to play a part in supporting this process during this session.

**Excellencies,**

Each and every species plays a unique part in the larger symphony of nature. Animals, insects and plants not only ensure the balance of complex ecosystems. They contribute to our overall well-being, while representing an important piece of our cultural heritage.

As we prepare to set our world on a sustainable course, let us be mindful of the serious implications of wildlife crimes and recommit our efforts towards the protection of the exceptional flora and fauna inhabiting our planet.

I thank you.