

6 June 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Launch of the First “World Wildlife Crime Report”**

H.E. Sylvia Bongo Ondimba, H.E. Dominique Ouattara, Under-Secretary General Mr Yuri Fedotov, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all.

It is a great pleasure to participate in this launch of the first “World Wildlife Crime Report”.

And I would to congratulate our friends in UNODC, the Wildlife Conservatory Society and the Missions of Gabon and Germany, in their role as chairs of the Group of Friends on Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking, for organizing this event.

I am particularly pleased to see the participation of so many organizations and individuals who are dedicated to ending this crime. Thank you for your efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, the depletion of wildlife is a disaster for our world.

UNODC’s inaugural World Wildlife Crime report demonstrates that thousands of species are being decimated by an illicit trade.

It demonstrates also that wildlife crime is not simply a domestic issue, but an issue that transcends all borders.

It is now widely accepted that the illegal trade of Wildlife is both a moral tragedy and an incredible loss to the vitality of our ecosystems and the prosperity and stability of local communities.

And it is this reality that led member states to include in the Sustainable Development Goals a target demanding “urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.”

In doing so, they were building on the momentum generated by last year’s General Assembly resolution on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife.

Together, the GA resolution and the SDGs send a strong signal that Governments are serious about tackling world wildlife crime.

But now, we need action.

Governments must move to give effect to these promises and their recommendations.

They must adopt effective measures to prevent and counter the serious problem of crimes such as illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products, including flora and fauna and poaching.

They should consider making illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a “serious crime.”

And they should consider translating the recommendations contained in the report released today by the Secretary-General on the current situation of illicit trafficking in wildlife, into solid action.

The General Assembly should also remain seized of this matter, and follow-up on implementation, including of the Secretary-General’s report.

The initiative of the Group of Friends on Poaching and illicit Wildlife Trafficking for a follow-up resolution would therefore appear to very timely and appropriate.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, pleas for urgent action are not uncommon here at the UN.

But as this new *Report* shows, transnational crime is putting many animal and plant species in immediate and grave danger.

If we are to change this situation, we need bold and concerted action against the criminals both by individual countries, by the international community and by all those who care for the world’s flora and fauna.

But, we need that action today, tomorrow may already be too late.

Thank you.