



Background Paper

Committee: United Nations Environment Programme

Topic: International Cooperation in Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

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Illegal wildlife trade has long threatened biodiversity, including fascinating animals such as elephants, rhinos, tigers, and pangolins and other less prominent species such as saiga, helmeted hornbills, geckos, and rosewoods. Recently, the exponential increase in demand for products such as ivory, rhino horn, and tiger parts has created a market lucrative enough to attract international criminal networks. This has resulted in a wholesale assault on the world's wildlife, which is exterminating global biodiversity, threatening many species with extinction, and plundering valuable natural assets that are ultimately worth more alive than dead, particularly to those who rely on natural resources for their very livelihood.

The United Nations Environment Programme is responsible for providing leadership and encouraging teamwork to care for the environment. In addition, promoting and helping nations to seek viable solutions is crucial for the international community to improve the quality of life without compromising that of future generations, more importantly, many nations are facing the consequences of this illegal trade, which are habitat destruction, invasive species, pollution, and climate change.

While threats to wildlife and plant species come from multiple sources, such as pollution, deforestation, destruction of natural habitats, and climate change, wildlife trafficking contributes significantly to the problem through poaching, collection, or depletion of significant numbers of already threatened or endangered species. Trafficking in wildlife, animal parts, and plants has far

extensive implications, not only for the species involved but also for human livelihoods, biodiversity, and governance. “The diverse and significant implications of wildlife trafficking, in turn, mean that the protection of wildlife, forests, and fish must be part of a global approach to achieving poverty, food security, and sustainable development, including the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, economic growth, social well-being, and sustainable livelihoods.” (UNODC)

Many studies have demonstrated the extinction of a large amount of species and trade has become a number. The species are found in 37 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 70% in Southern Africa, 20% in Eastern Africa, 6% in Central Africa and 3% in West Africa. However, the tropical timber also leads us to South America, West/Central Africa, and Southeast Asia. We're facing a global poaching crisis, threatening to overturn decades of conservation successes and this is the reason. The focus of this debate is how we can lower the number of species being traded, have solutions that all nations can agree on, and come together and make an agreement to look for the common good of nations, as well as, advocating for an end to illegal wildlife trade globally.

***Remember that background papers help delegates understand the topic: its history (hence-*background* paper), its relevance and impact in the international community, and **aid with potential sources of information**. It helps them write their first paragraph and know enough about the topic so they can research their country in that situation and develop coherent solutions to the issue.

Make sure to support the statements you give in your paper! It is INFORMATIVE (not argumentative - you should not include any bias -opinions-)

Works Cited:

Stephen. "Is Tropical Hardwood Sustainable? - Logic Manufactured Bespoke™." *Logic Manufactured Bespoke™ - Raised Planter Edging & Seating*, 27 Nov. 2023, logic-bespoke.com/is-tropical-hardwood-sustainable/#:~:text=When%20discussing%20external%20furniture%2C%20tropical,Ekki%2C%20Cumaru%2C%20and%20Opepe.

"Stopping the Illegal Wildlife Trade." *WWF*, www.wwf.org.uk/what-we-do/stopping-illegal-wildlife-trade. Accessed 28 Nov. 2023.

"Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade." *Fauna & Flora*, 23 Sept. 2023, www.fauna-flora.org/expertise/species-and-habitats/combating-illegal-wildlife-trade/.

"Wildlife, Forest & Fisheries Crime Module 1 Key Issues: Implications of Wildlife Trafficking."

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<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/wildlife-crime/module-1/key-issues/implications-of-wildlife-trafficking.html>. Accessed 18 January 2024.