



# ~~END~~ **WILDLIFE** ~~CRIME~~

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## GLOBAL INITIATIVE OUTLINES A “ONE HEALTH” APPROACH TO REFORMING WILDLIFE TRADE LAWS

**HONG KONG 7 September 2020** - [The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime](#) (EWC) today outlined an innovative “One Health” approach to reforming wildlife trade laws that the group said would help avoid future devastating wildlife-related pandemics.

“No organisation on its own can address the multiple threats that could lead to the emergence of new wildlife-related diseases, or the spread of older diseases, with potential catastrophic consequences for economies, people and wildlife,” said EWC chair, John E Scanlon AO. “We must take a collaborative global approach to wildlife trade, one that brings together animal, human and environmental health – a “One Health” approach – and embed it into the international legal framework if we want give ourselves the best chance of averting future wildlife-related pandemics.”

**In a [briefing paper](#) released today, EWC proposes specific amendments to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to include public health and animal health criteria into the Convention’s decision-making processes.**

“The COVID-19 crisis has brought home just how vulnerable we all are as a result of our dysfunctional and destructive relationship with wildlife and the natural world,” said EWC Steering Group member, Will Travers, OBE, Co-founder and Executive President of Born Free Foundation. “Transformative changes are clearly needed, and CITES, the global wildlife trade regulator with its 183 member countries, existing structures and compliance mechanisms, has the critical mass to play a vitally important role.”

The most likely explanation for COVID-19 is that the virus was transmitted to humans from a reservoir host, a horseshoe bat, via another intermediate host species such as a pangolin.

“We know that past pandemics, such as Ebola, SARS and MERS, have been caused by wildlife-related zoonotic diseases and we now understand the conditions that make spillover from animals to humans more likely,” said Lisa Genasci, CEO of the ADM Capital Foundation (ADMCF).

Despite this, current wildlife trade laws do not take into account public or animal health considerations. Amending these laws to include public and animal health criteria is an objective of EWC and the briefing paper details specific changes that could be made to the CITES Convention.

There is growing political will within countries to address the root causes behind COVID-19 and reduce the risk of future zoonotic disease outbreaks. “We are seeing that policymakers around the world are becoming increasingly concerned about the nexus between conservation and public

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health," said Susan Lylis, Executive Vice President of ICCF, "and they are motivated to find solutions to prevent future pandemics".

CITES currently regulates international trade in live wildlife and wildlife products to ensure that trade is legal and sustainable. EWC proposes new legally binding provisions, including a new Appendix, or list of species, to regulate wildlife trade that poses a threat to public health or animal health.

These provisions will only allow trade after certain findings are made, including that the proposed trade is reviewed by public and animal health authorities and is found to not pose a significant risk to human or animal health. Proposed trade that does not meet these requirements will be prohibited.

"CITES is the only legally binding international framework that fits this critical need," said Craig Hoover, Executive Vice President of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and Special Advisor to EWC on CITES. "By adding a new Article and Appendix to the treaty that lays out specific requirements and restrictions on the capture, transport, and trade of wildlife species that pose a risk to public or animal health, we can leverage a globally recognized and enforceable agreement to avert future pandemics."

According to the EWC paper, to prevent the next wildlife-related pandemic, we must expand efforts to end illegal wildlife trade; and where wildlife trade threatens human and animal health, stop such trade, close wildlife markets and stem consumption.

To achieve this, the world could move swiftly to amend CITES to include a broader health-related mandate and increase collaboration with WHO, OIE and FAO.

"The world, its wildlife, its people, and its economy may depend on it", Scanlon said.

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## About the [Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime](#)

End Wildlife Crime is an alliance of individuals and organisations that support the need for international law reforms. Chaired by John Scanlon AO, former Secretary General of CITES, EWC aims to encourage States to fill serious gaps in international law by advocating for and offering technical support to create a new global agreement on wildlife crime and amend existing international wildlife trade laws to include public and animal health in decision making.

We believe this can be achieved by:

- a) Advocating for the adoption of a fourth protocol on wildlife crime under the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime; and
- b) amending the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to include public health and animal health criteria into the Convention's decision-making processes.

Hosted by ADM Capital Foundation in Hong Kong, chaired by Scanlon, and with a Steering Group comprising the Born Free Foundation, the Food and Land Use Coalition, the Global Environmental Institute and the ICCF Group, EWC represents environmental, policy, business and public health interests. The initiative also includes Special Advisors on private sector engagement, building

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partnerships and CITES, as well as a technical support group that includes renowned international lawyers and criminologists.

## **Champions of the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime:**

**Founding Champions:** [ADM Capital](#), [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#), [TreadRight Foundation](#), [Wildlife Justice Commission](#), [World Travel and Tourism Council](#).

**Champions:** [African Wildlife Foundation](#), [Elephant Protection Initiative](#), [IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law](#), [Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation](#), [The Jane Goodall Institute Global](#).

## **Resources:**

[‘What is the impact of the coronavirus pandemic? Global experts answer the big questions’](#), Financial Times interview, July 2020

[A Crucial Step Toward Preventing Wildlife-Related Pandemics](#), Scientific American, 15 June 2020

Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime [website](#).