



Photographs: Paul Hilton, Earth Tree Images. Further press materials [here](#).

UN Report Reveals Growing Momentum for Global Agreement Against Wildlife Trafficking!

Vienna, May 22: Newly published [report](#) released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveals a **growing level of support for a global agreement against wildlife trafficking**. The findings come as wildlife trafficking continues to escalate against a backdrop of environmental, human health, and security challenges, contributing to a biodiversity and climate crisis that could see [a million species](#) disappear over the coming decades ([IPBES 2019](#)).

Despite being one of the world's most profitable crimes, with an estimated value of \$1 trillion or more per year according to [The World Bank](#), there remains no global agreement on how to end wildlife trafficking.

Released for the annual gathering of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna, Austria, the report compiles the views of 60 Member States and the European Union on strengthening the international legal framework for cooperation to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, including insights into national legislation, approaches and measures.

The Member States variously expressed their views, including possible responses “to address any gaps that may exist in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife.” Importantly, the question of whether to introduce a new global agreement in the form of an additional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) was asked.

At the request of Angola and Gabon, a preliminary and partial technical review of the responses has been conducted by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC).

EWC’s preliminary analysis reveals that, of the 53 Member States expressing a view on a possible additional protocol to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, **75% were either in favour of a protocol or open to discussing it**, with some requesting further information or suggesting its scope be broadened to include other environmental crimes.

The presidents of Angola, Gabon and Malawi have previously expressed their strong support for a global agreement to tackle wildlife trafficking, which was reiterated in their support of an additional UNTOC protocol in their responses.

“Gabon is grateful for the expression of support coming from many States for a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, as well as a willingness amongst others to discuss the idea. There is a growing momentum for a new agreement and Gabon looks forward to working with all States in now advancing this critical endeavour to the next stage,” said **Prof. Lee White CBE, Minister of Water and Forests, the Sea and Environment of Gabon**.

“The report highlights a strong level of support for a global agreement coming from countries across all regions, especially biodiversity-rich, source countries and particularly in Africa. We are the countries on the receiving end of this dangerous form of transnational, often organized, crime and we need the support of all Member States to end it. Angola warmly welcomes the publication of this report and will continue to work to advance the discussion on an additional UNTOC Protocol on wildlife trafficking” added **Paula Francisco Coelho, Secretary of State for Climate and Sustainable Development of Angola**.

Furthermore, **50% of responding states acknowledged there are gaps in the international legal framework to prevent and combat trafficking in wildlife, with a further 20% recognising a series of challenges**. International co-ordination was seen as a particular concern, as states grapple with expansive and increasingly sophisticated networks of wildlife traffickers across the globe; as well as a diversity of national wildlife crime legislation.

“Over the past two years we have seen increasing levels of support for a new international agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, which is reflected in the report released by the UNODC this week. The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime stands ready to further support Member States, upon request, with its technical expertise, research, and collaborative efforts,” said **John Scanlon AO, EWC Chair**. “We look forward to working with States, and our International Champions, supporters and partners, in advancing these calls for a new global agreement, also recognising that its scope may be further broadened,” added Scanlon.

Expressions of support in submissions from every region

Thailand, battling trafficking kingpins such as the infamous Boonchai Bach, said that “international cooperation both formal and informal among States still needs to be enhanced in order to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking.” It highlighted the need for a mechanism for central information exchange.

“We see the need to add a protocol to combat wildlife trafficking, which is as important as the rest [of the protocols]” said Qatar, adding that the illegal trade in wild fauna and flora is detrimental to biodiversity and highlighting that over one million species are threatened with extinction.

Mexico indicated that an additional Protocol would have “great benefits, as it would generate obligations for States that are signatories to the [UNTOC] Convention to begin with the process of more effective legislative initiatives for combating wildlife crime, including illegal logging”.


Portugal described its position as “favourable”, adding that an additional Protocol could help “raise awareness of the problem” and “help in the drafting and establishment of a legal framework that is more appropriate to the scale and seriousness of these crimes. This will make it possible, on the one hand, to extend cooperation and, on the other hand, to help strengthen existing collaboration, which will result in greater efficiency in the investigation”.

Norway welcomed “a protocol on illicit trafficking in wildlife as it could help in strengthening the focus on wildlife crime”, adding, in line with other European States (e.g., France, Germany, Italy and Romania), that “it should also be considered to include other environmental crimes (pollution, IUU fishing, mining, forest, and illegal land conversion)”.

Strong expressions of support also came from several African States, with Kenya stating that “There is need for the streamlining and harmonization of the member states national laws to be in line with the UNTOC for incorporation of strict measures/ penalties and in ensuring that trafficking of wildlife is criminalized”.

The CCPCJ will be discussing the report during its week-long meeting on Wednesday 24th May. The EWC is hosting a side event meeting entitled ‘Strengthening the International Legal Framework against Illicit Wildlife Trafficking’ on 25th May from 13:00-13:50. It is an open session and anyone attending the CCPCJ meeting in Vienna is welcome to attend, and those not in Vienna can join via Zoom. Full details [here](#).

May 22 is International Day of Biological Diversity #BuildBackBiodiversity

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About The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime

The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime is an initiative of organisations working on wildlife crime and trade related issues and is hosted by the Hong Kong SAR based [ADM Capital Foundation](#), chaired by John Scanlon AO and with a Steering Group comprising the [African Wildlife Foundation](#), the [Born Free Foundation](#), Freeland, the [Global Environmental Institute](#), the [International Conservation Caucus Foundation Group](#), and [The Food and Land Use Coalition](#) (represented by [SYSTEMIQ](#)). More information on the Initiative, including its Steering Group, the 30 organisations that have signed up as International Champions of the Initiative, and its Special Advisers and Supporters, can be found on the [EWC website](#).

Background

The CCPCJ is the principal policy making body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and is the governing body of the UNODC.

The report “Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife “ was prepared by the UNODC pursuant to [resolution 31/1](#) of the CCPCJ.

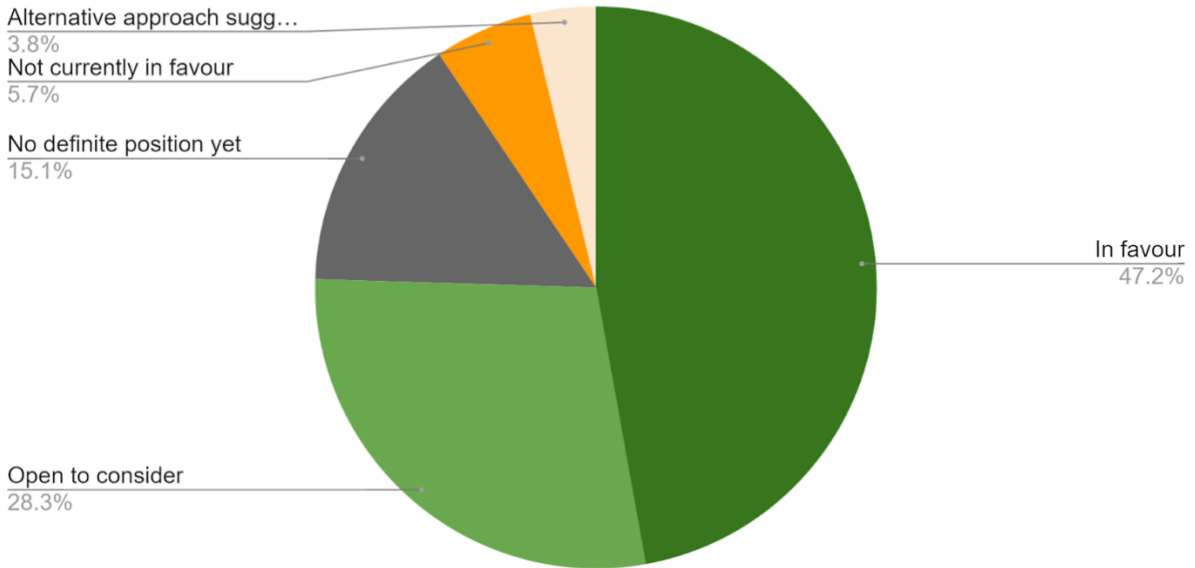
CCPCJ Resolution 31/1, [adopted in May 2022](#), invited Member States to share “their views and possible responses” “to address any gaps that may exist in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife”, including the potential of a new global agreement, taking the form of an additional protocol to the UNTOC. It was the first United Nations resolution to ever mention a potential international instrument on tackling wildlife trafficking.

The report, available in full [here](#), collates Member State responses to 10 questions regarding an international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife, ahead of the 32nd session of the CCPCJ.

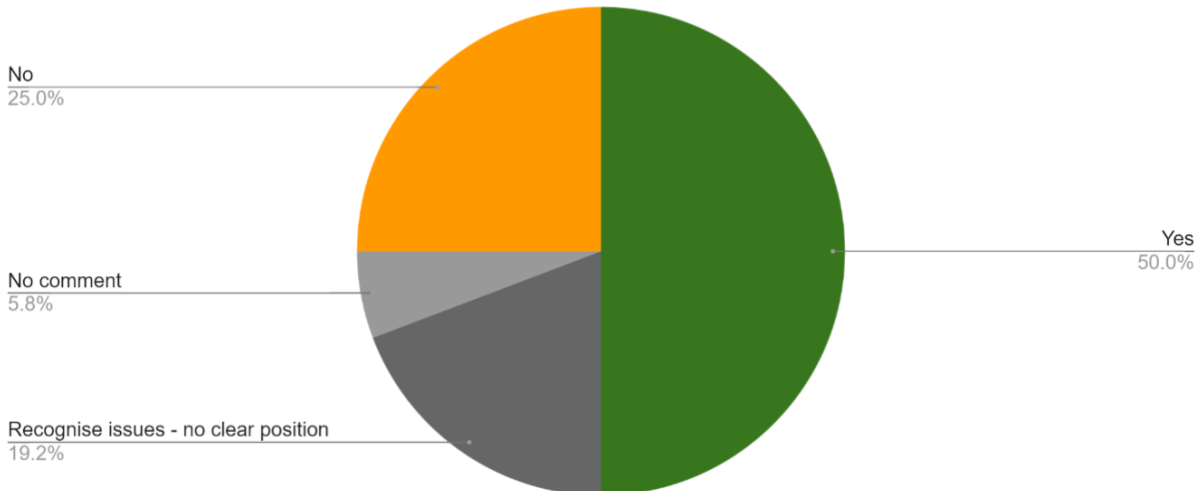
Additional Information: UNODC Report Preliminary and Partial Analysis

Disclaimer: this is a preliminary and partial analysis conducted of the responses (to questions 1, 2 and 3) received by the UNODC and published on the CCPCJ webpage. It has been conducted at the request of Angola and Gabon. This analysis has been undertaken independently of the UNODC, which has not reviewed nor endorsed this document.

Q3 - What is your view on the potential of an additional protocol on illicit trafficking in wildlife to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime? Why?



Q1 - Do you see any gaps in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife? If yes, please elaborate.



Preliminary Analysis of Country Responses to Question 3, Broken Down by Continent:

| Continent | In favour | Open to consider | No definite position yet | Not currently in favour | Alternative approach suggested |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Africa | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Asia | 3 | 4 | 1 | | |
| Australasia | | | 1 | | |
| Europe | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | |
| North America | 1 | | | | 2 |
| South America | 4 | 2 | 1 | | |
| TOTAL | 25 | 15 | 8 | 3 | 2 |