



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

UN Report Shows Clear Majority of States Now Favour a New Global Agreement Against Wildlife Trafficking

[Vienna, December 7] An updated [report](#) released this week by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows a clear majority of States support a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking.

According to a preliminary analysis conducted by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC) at the request of Angola, **78% of responding States are either in favour** of a potential additional Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) on tackling wildlife trafficking, **or are open to discussing it**.

Released ahead of the reconvened 32nd session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna, Austria, the updated report compiles the views of 73 Member States and the European Union (EU) on strengthening the international legal framework for cooperation to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking. The report represents the updated version of a [document](#) released by UNODC in [May 2023](#) and summarises the views expressed by 13 additional Member States.

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, a preliminary and partial¹ technical review of the findings was conducted by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC). The preliminary analysis reveals that, of the 73 Member States and the EU expressing a view on a possible additional protocol to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking², 78% are either in favour of a potential additional Protocol to the UNTOC, or are open to discussing it.

Of the 78%, **54% are in favour of a Protocol, while 23.9% are open to discussing it**, with some States suggesting specific provisions to include within a Protocol, and others suggesting its scope could be broadened to include other crimes that affect the environment. Only 10.5% did not see the need for a Protocol or suggested an alternative approach. [See Annex, Figure 1]

Notably, a strong expression of support came from Africa, with **over 85% of African States either in favour of a Protocol or open to discussing it**. [See Annex, Figure 2]

¹ The assessment is based on the preliminary analysis of questions 1, 2 and 3 of the report.

² The States provided an answer to Question 3: “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?”.

Among the additional States who expressed their views in the updated report is Nigeria. “An additional protocol on illicit trafficking is long overdue.” said the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). “There is need for an additional protocol on illicit trafficking in wildlife especially on intelligence gathering and prosecution” added the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA).

An expression of support also came from Ethiopia, which responded saying an additional Protocol to the UNTOC would “enhance cooperation among state parties” and bring “the issue of illicit trafficking in wildlife to the attention of UN international legal framework by raising its profile”. Similar was the view expressed by the United Republic of Tanzania, which claimed to be fully supportive of a Protocol, because “it will enhance efforts to prevent and combat serious and organized crimes”.

The expressions of support, however, were not limited to the African Continent. The Philippines said that a “specific protocol would emphasize how serious and unique wildlife trafficking is as a kind of international organized crime. It would offer a targeted and concentrated strategy to stop this specific type of illegal conduct. An extra agreement would make it easier to harmonize legal requirements between nations, offering a unified framework for combating wildlife trafficking. This would facilitate international cooperation and reciprocal legal assistance while assisting in overcoming legal inequalities. The protocol might set up procedures and commitments that would allow nations to collaborate more successfully in stopping, looking into, and prosecuting wildlife trafficking instances. It might have clauses addressing capacity building, cooperative activities, and information exchange”.

Positive views were also voiced by South American countries, with Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay talking about an additional Protocol to the UNTOC as a beneficial tool.

Finally, in response to Question 1³, **52% 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.** [See Annex, Figure 4]

REACTIONS TO THE RELEASE OF THE REPORT

Angola, Kenya and Peru were the original co-sponsors of CCPCJ [resolution 31/1](#), which initiated the consultation on the potential of an additional UNTOC Protocol against wildlife trafficking.



“Angola warmly welcomes this updated report, which confirms, for the second time in 2023, that over half of Member States see the added value of a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, and over three quarters are either supportive or open to considering it. It is particularly telling that over 85% of African States are supportive of this proposal: our irreplaceable wildlife continues to be stolen, benefitting organized criminal networks at the expense of local and rural communities, depleting our biodiversity, and exacerbating climate change. We need a new agreement to advance much stronger international cooperation between source, transit and destination countries to end these highly destructive crimes, which has never been more important. This is why our government stands firmly in support of the proposition for an additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.” said Paula Francisco Coelho, Secretary of State for Climate and Sustainable Development of Angola.

“Over the past three years we have seen increasing levels of support for a new international agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, which is reflected in the updated 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.

³ Question 3 reads “Do you see any gaps in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife? If yes, please elaborate”.

“We look forward to working with States, and our International Champions, supporters, technical experts and partners, in advancing these strong calls for a new global agreement to tackle wildlife trafficking, while recognising that States may also decide to explore whether its scope should be further broadened to address other crimes that affect the environment,” added Scanlon.

“These results reveal an encouraging and positive trend, with many nations supporting an international agreement on wildlife crime. The call to action from biodiverse rich nations is especially clear. Strengthening the international legal framework and promoting intergovernmental collaboration, is a significant step towards ending destructive wildlife crimes.” said Sophie le Clue, CEO of ADM Capital Foundation, host of EWC.

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ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO END WILDLIFE CRIME

The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC) 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 Foundation](#), [The Global Environmental Institute](#), the [International Conservation Caucus Foundation Group](#). Learn more about EWC’s Steering Group, International Champions, and its Special Advisers [here](#).

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.

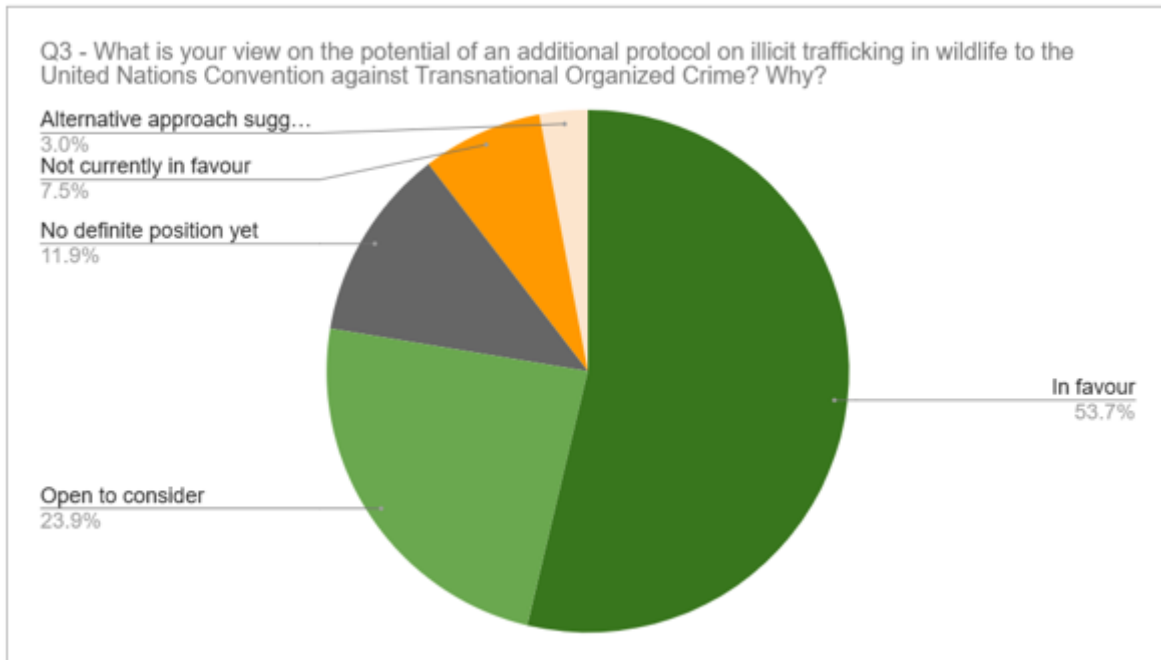
The report “**Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife**” was prepared by UNODC pursuant to [resolution 31/1](#) of the CCPCJ.

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.

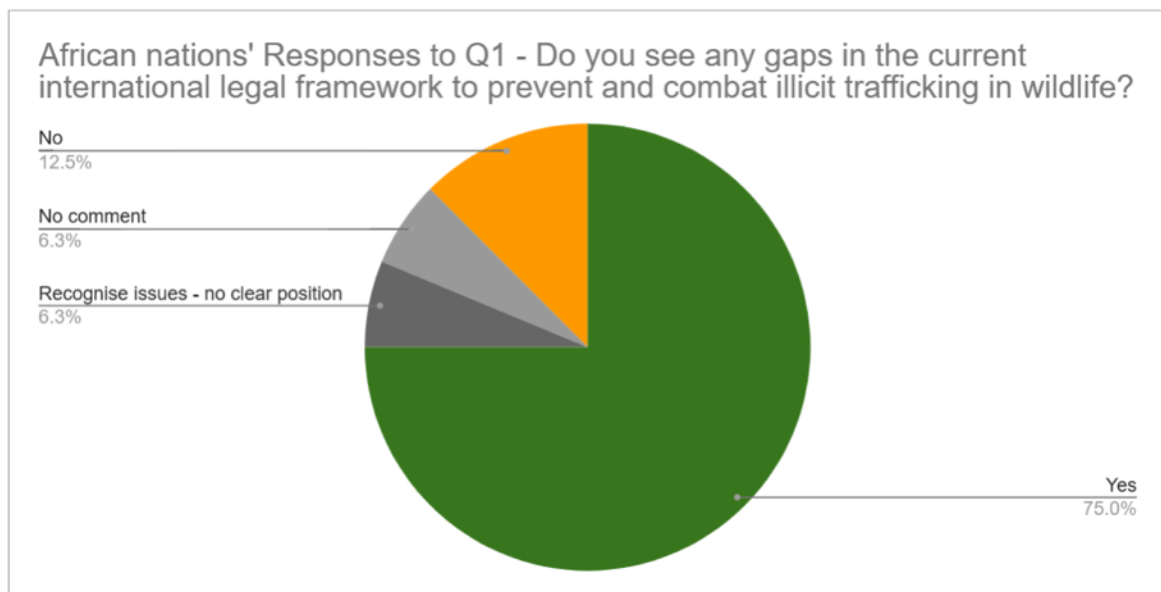
The original report, available in full [here](#), collates Member State responses to 10 questions regarding an international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife. An [updated report](#), released in December 2023, contains the views of 13 additional Member States.

ANNEX I

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. This analysis has been undertaken independently of the UNODC, which has not reviewed nor endorsed this document.



[Figure 1]

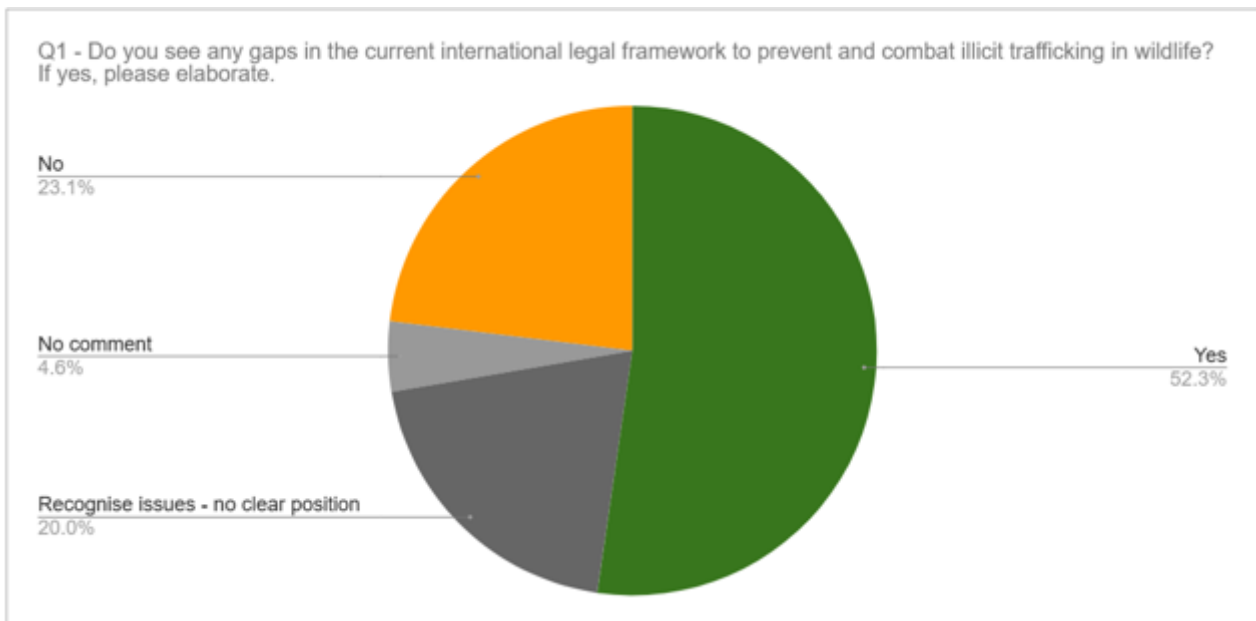


[Figure 2]

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?

Continent	Alternative approach suggested	No	No definite position yet	No response	Open	Yes	Grand Total
Africa		1	1		1	13	16
Asia		2		2	5	8	17
Australasia			2				2
Europe		2	4	5	8	7	26
North America	2					2	4
South America			1		2	6	9
Grand Total	2	5	8	7	16	36	74

[Figure 3]



[Figure 4]