END WILDLIFE CRIME

UNTOC COP 12 – Agenda item 4: International cooperation

Oral statement by the ADM Capital Foundation for the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime

Thank you Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

Wildlife trafficking is one of the largest, most lucrative and destructive global criminal activities. It is transnational and organized and it affects every continent.

Despite the highly destructive impact of wildlife trafficking on both people and nature, wildlife trafficking is not directly addressed in any international legal instrument. There is no global legally binding instrument that includes an agreed definition on wildlife trafficking. Having such a definition could facilitate a convergence in national approaches regarding the establishment of domestic criminal offenses, that would support efficient international cooperation in preventing and combating wildlife trafficking, as we have seen with other existing UNTOC Protocols.

This critically important topic has gained significant momentum and progress due to the strong leadership of States. This includes the adoption of the groundbreaking CCPCJ Resolution 31/1, where States were asked to provide their views on gaps in the international legal framework and possible ways to address them.

The report on Resolution 31/1 published by UNODC in May of this year collected the views of 76 States and the European Union. In the collection of responses, over half of responding States identified insufficient transnational cooperation as a gap in the international legal framework to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, and elaborated, among others, on the need to unify approaches in Mutual Legal Assistance processes, joint investigations and extraditions.

An additional Protocol to the UNTOC on wildlife trafficking could address these gaps, by automatically triggering the UNTOC's general tools for cross border cooperation, without the need to make offenses punishable by four years imprisonment or more. It could also elaborate on specific obligations that are relevant to preventing and combating these crimes.

Such an instrument would act as a catalyst for heightened international cooperation which is desperately needed.

Wildlife trafficking is a transnational problem that doesn't recognize national borders – it affects all continents, and we will not end wildlife crimes without deepening international cooperation. It is here, at UNTOC, that States can advance deepening international cooperation, including through the consideration of the adoption of an additional protocol or protocols to the Convention.

Thank you.

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