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United Nations General Assembly High-level debate
Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife and other Crimes that Affect the Environment
New York, 8 June 2026

Oral statement by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime

Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and participants, it is an honor to address you today on behalf of the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime.

In recent years, we have witnessed the adoption of numerous United Nations resolutions aimed at preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment - including tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife - by the General Assembly, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Conference of Parties to the UN Conventions on organised crime and corruption, and other multilateral bodies.

We have also witnessed transformative leadership demonstrated by various States, civil society organizations and initiatives, to advance and support the development of an additional protocol to the organized Crime Convention, on crimes that affect the environment - including the establishment by Brazil of the multistakeholder Coalition for Multilateral Action against Crimes that Affect the Environment. This coalition includes over 20 States, and the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime is a proud founding member.

A formal intergovernmental expert group convened in Vienna under the UNTOC framework to evaluate and strengthen the international legal response to crimes that affect the environment, following the adoption of Resolution 12/4 of the organized crime Convention. This process brought together State delegates and experts to consider responses to identified gaps in the international legal framework that hinder action to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment, and to consider possible responses to those gaps, including an additional protocol to the Convention.

Although the intergovernmental expert group concluded without formal consensus on the draft recommendations, the process itself was highly valuable and expertly facilitated. The robust participation of over 100 Member States underscores the growing global significance of this issue.

Madam President, 2026 offers a rare, generational window to take decisive and concerted action to tackle transnational organized crimes that affect the environment with the urgency and seriousness they require.

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We respectfully encourage States to support the development and adoption of a Resolution at the upcoming Conference of Parties to the Organized Crime Convention, to launch a negotiation process for an additional protocol to the Convention on crimes that affect the environment.

Through a well-crafted protocol, States can strengthen international cooperation, adopt advanced law enforcement tools, deploy a broader range of penalties, and establish a robust legal framework to prevent and combat these highly destructive crimes.

This is a pivotal moment to send a clear signal to the world that the international community is ready to take decisive action to translate political commitments made over the past fifteen years into a powerful and effective legally binding framework.

The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime and its network of over 60 civil society organizations will continue to lend our support to States in this endeavor.

Thank you, Your Excellency.