

# Wildlife Justice

A bilingual wildlife law enforcement journal

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## WILDLIFE OFFENCES AND CRIME

*"Wildlife crime is transnational and can have a serious impact on conservation"*

*Syd Maddicott  
British High  
Commissioner,  
Yaounde*

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**WILDLIFE CRIME  
ENTERS UN CRIME  
CONGRESS AGENDA  
FOR THE FIRST TIME**

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**"TRADERS ARE THE  
HIGHER TARGET IN  
THE FIGHT AGAINST  
WILDLIFE CRIME"**



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# WILDLIFE OFFENCES AND CRIME



*The United Nation (UN) Congress on crimes acknowledged the fact that wildlife trade is the third largest crime in the world after international illicit arms trade and drug trade. This means that the wildlife law breakers being put behind bars in Cameroon on a weekly basis are criminals- people involved in different criminal activities working in an organized network in the world trade on protected wildlife species connected with drugs and arms.*

*I Illegal trade in protected wildlife species is a global problem impacting the survival of endangered wildlife species in Central and West Africa. Global collaboration is urgently needed to wage a strong war against wildlife crime. There is therefore the need for professionals and all actors involved in this war to better understand how wildlife crimes are organized. This is already being recognized in institutional capacity building inside the UN Congress on crime, Interpol and governments around the world.*

*Cameroon as a leader in wildlife law enforcement continues to play a positive role in fighting wildlife crime in Africa. This effort by government needs the blessing of all stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies that should pay greater attention to effective wildlife law enforcement as a prelude to sustainable wildlife management. The full participation of the media is very important in this fight in which it is playing in Cameroon the crucial role of creating the necessary deterrent factor in wildlife crimes which hitherto has been a missing ingredient in the conservation formula in Africa south of the Sahara.*

*The fight against wildlife crime must happen through targeting big city based dealers who are the main generators of illegal trade in protected wildlife species through the provision of a ready market and putting in the money needed to finance complex wildlife trafficking networks.*

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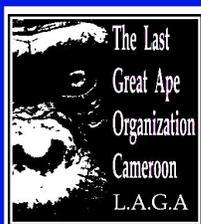
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*Cover Picture: Arrest of drug and ape dealer with 50 Kg of marijuana and young chimpanzee in Bafia in January 2006*

# “TRADERS ARE THE HIGHER TARGET IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WILDLIFE CRIME”

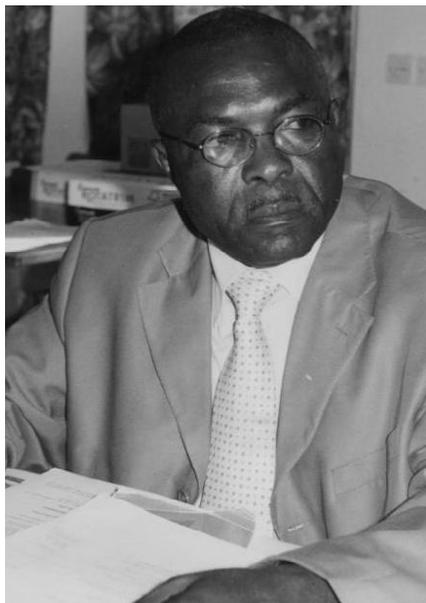
By \*CHI Augustine MUAM  
(Ph.D), University of Douala

In the protection of wildlife, the implementation and enforcement of two international instruments becomes inevitable. They are the 1973 Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the 1992 United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Chronologically, implementation and enforcement has been by the 1994 wildlife law, its Decree of implementation and the 2005 Decree on the application of certain provisions of CITES. In essence, the 1973 Convention was intended to regulate illegal trade in protected wildlife species thanks to the implementation and enforcement of the 1992 Convention. As can be noticed late implementation of the former 1973 Convention gave room to targeting poachers while ignoring their principal accomplice the ‘traders’ in the fight against wildlife crime. This has seriously compromised the sustainable management of wildlife as can be deduced from the analysis of the above legal instruments.

## TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION TO CONSERVE WILDLIFE

As its name suggest, the objective of the Convention on biological diversity is the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use. The Convention recommends the designation of protected areas as a commendable strategy in achieving its objective. Though an area-based oriented objective, though the establishment of protected areas human activities are prohibited or controlled with the aim of safeguarding particular species or their habitat. As was the case, the 1994 wildlife law adopted the concept of protected areas by envisaging for ‘fauna reserves’ and ‘hunting reserves’ (zones cynegetiques) among others.

The law also adopted a species-based oriented objective by establishing a list of protected animal species living in the national territory. For the purpose of protection species are classified into three classes of A, B, and C. But because emphasis has switched from management of species to management of activities and processes that have potentially harm on species, hunting as an activity was regulated as a common and well-established form of wildlife protection. Regulation provides that hunting be subject to the grant of a hunting permit or



*Chi Augustine Muam*

license. Poaching was therefore considered as any hunting activity without a license, out of season, in reserved areas or with prohibited vehicles or weapons. Licensing will facilitate enforcement of the legislation, by permitting the identification of hunters and providing effective administrative (i.e. license suspension or withdrawal) and judicial (i.e. fines and imprisonment) sanctions for offences. Also licensing constituted a source of revenue, as a fee is usually charged for their issuance or renewal.

## LATE IMPLEMENTATION TO REGULATE TRADE

The goal of the 1973 CITES was to control, reduce or eliminate international trade in those species whose numbers or conditions suggest that further removals of individuals would be detrimental to the species’ survival. In other words, CITES controls trade in live specimens of listed species and also in products deriving from them. Given the broad nature and scope of the word ‘trade’ there are many matters of detail, which must be settled at national level and for which enabling legislation is in many cases required. For example, the choice by a Prime Ministerial Decree of 2005 of the Minister of Forestry (MINFOF) as the authority charged with implementing and enforcing the Convention with powers to create organs such as an independent Scientific Authority, is belated (coming almost 33 years later).

The Scientific authority has an

essential role to play, as its advice is required before the Management Authority (MINFOF) can issue or refuse a trade license or permit. It is therefore important that the Scientific Authority be highly qualified scientifically and enjoys a considerable degree of independence. Interestingly, this requirement is already provided in legislation but the tasks of the scientific authority are yet to be clearly spelled out. Finally, is the much welcome idea that related administrative structures implicated in the control of trade ought to cooperate hence the legal requirement that the text of classification of wildlife protected species provided in the Convention be displayed in the offices of the services of wildlife, customs and the forces of law and order. It is to concretize this aspect that an inter-ministerial coordinating committee, composed of representatives of the above sectors (Wildlife, Police, Customs, Gendarmerie), has been created by a Prime Ministerial Arrete of 2006. The enforcement of this law presupposes that henceforth traders will become the key target, as will be substantiated below.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR TARGETING TRADERS

It is widely acknowledged that one of the activities having a deleterious effect on the conservation of wildlife is illegal wildlife trade perpetrated by traders. Trade is officially banned for 675 species of wildlife or products derived from them, listed on Appendix 1 of the 1973 Convention. Trade is also strictly regulated for at least 30,000 species listed on Appendix II. Figures indicate that the illegal trade in endangered or protected species of wildlife is worth \$1.5 billion annually. This represents about 30% of the total trade in wildlife and wildlife products. Most of this illegal trade takes place in Cameroon as it is reported that the Customs authorities at Zurich airport, Switzerland have made several seizures of ivory that have been discovered in transit from Cameroon to destinations in Europe and the United States of America. Eight seizures in a short space of time suggest a lack of control by the authorities in Cameroon over exports and domestic ivory markets. These seizures, together with information in the ETIS (Elephant Trade Information System) database, confirm that Cameroon is an important source of illegal trade in ivory.

*\*Senior Lecturer of international environmental law at the University of Douala*

# "Laws can help protect biodiversity"

*Mrs. Mary M. Fosi: Technical Adviser No. 1, Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection.*

Cameroon joined the rest of the international community nationwide in celebrations marking World Biodiversity Day, observed May 22 each year. This year's theme was "Let's protect biodiversity in dry lands: Achieving the 2010 target". Activities in Yaounde included a Roundtable on the conservation of biodiversity in dry lands held under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MINEP), with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). On the occasion, the Technical Adviser No 1 in MINEP, Mrs. Mary M. Fosi talked to \*Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu on a wide range of issues touching on environmental law enforcement in Cameroon. Excerpts:

*You have the biosafety and the environment laws just as you have the wildlife law. While the wildlife law is being effectively enforced by bringing offenders to justice, can this be also applied to the biosafety and environment laws?*

You know fully well that laws can help protect biodiversity and ensure its sustainable use, be it the 1994 wildlife law which the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA) is assisting the Government to effectively apply; be it the 1996 law on environment, or the biosafety law which has just been adopted and whose enabling act has been finalised. Laws are made and if you don't apply them or if people break them and are not punished it is just the same as there would have been no laws. Once we enhance their implementation we can be sure of protecting our rich biodiversity for sustainable use by present and future generations.

So the 2003 biosafety law which is also a biodiversity related law is going to help this country very much because it will regulate the movement of genetically



*Mrs. Mary M. Fosi, Technical Adviser No. 1 Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection*

modified organisms (GMOS) which could have inconveniences for biodiversity conservation.

Once implemented fully this law will help protect biodiversity in both wet and dry lands.

*What is the idea behind the theme chosen for this year's Biodiversity Day making reference to the year 2010?*

The 2010 biodiversity target is what the Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted in 2003 in the Hague. This particular theme, "Let's protect biodiversity in dry lands: Achieving the 2010 target", is aimed at reducing biodiversity loss because it was discovered that there are five drivers, so to speak, which propel loss of biodiversity and that action should be taken by all countries in the world to curb biodiversity loss.

These drivers of biodiversity loss include: climate change, invasive species and unsustainable agricultural practices, which all contribute to reducing biodiversity in various ecosystems.

And so the theme for this year stresses the need for us to see how Cameroon is

going to reduce biodiversity loss in the dry lands of the northern part of the country.

*Biodiversity management cuts across different government Ministries with specific mandates. How can institutional differences among these Ministries be resolved to attain a common vision in biodiversity conservation and management?*

Within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), MINEP is the coordinating institution, but it doesn't mean it claims ownership of the whole activity. We work with various institutions.

We see where their aptitude fits better. For instance, we have the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and once you look at the classification of biodiversity you see that it is agrobiodiversity which cuts across all the ecosystems. This means that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is involved in all the ecosystems-be they mountain, coastal or marine, or sahel ecosystems, implying that the Ministry is exploiting all the ecosystems. Similarly, the Ministry of Livestock, Fishes and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) has animal being reared in all the ecosystems which impact on land in these ecosystems.

All these are environmental issues which, as MINEP, we are supposed to work with these key Ministries which have particular actions in these ecosystems. It continues with Women's Ministry and other Ministries, more especially Forestry and Wildlife.

In celebrating the World Biodiversity Day therefore, all the Ministries are concerned in one way or the other.

*\*Communication Officer, LAGA*

# Flagrante delicto proceeding *A solution to illicit trade in endangered wildlife species*

By \***TALLA TENE MARIUS**

**T**he fight against illegal trade and illegal trafficking of threatened and protected animal species has become a priority to the Cameroon government. This fight is without any doubt, for it is through it that the deterring elements are created. It is therefore clear that the proceedings used by the judge to prosecute those thought to be guilty of wildlife crimes is very significant.

For two months, the direct summon proceedings was being used but due to its closeness and for the fact that those who appeared freely in court never actually stopped their criminal activities even during the judgment period; magistrates recommended that flagrante delicto method be adopted. At this juncture one should ask oneself if the procedural method gives the satisfaction which the summon method couldn't give.

## **Advantages of flagrante delicto proceedings**

The flagrante delicto proceedings is one which imposes the referring of a suspect to the public prosecutor who then goes ahead to identify the suspect; interrogate him and if legal proceedings have to be taken up against the suspect, he/she will be put into temporal detention, or set free with or without bail.

Flagrante delicto is thus a conservatory means of preventing the detainee from escaping from justice or to carry on with what evil they did and are being judged for. It is essentially this conservation aspect which gives an advantage to flagrant delicto in matter of public order keeping and restoration of justice.

On the contrary, in matters of the fight against illegal trade in protected wildlife species whose objective as aimed at by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife before choosing the flagrant delicto proceedings was to make sure that justice should be done equitably and fast as concerns the breaking of wildlife law.

## **Risks involved with flagrante delicto**

In fact, it has always been with great grief that the Ministry of

Forestry and Wildlife sees people who are supposed to be prosecuted for having sold or having been arrested in possession of protected animal species, being released at the public prosecutor's office.

The big problem created by this release is that once freed, not only do these people escape justice; they carry on with their criminal activities. Concrete examples to this act abound; an ivory dealer released in Douala was again caught by foresters of the Littoral provincial Delegation for Forestry and Wildlife, selling ivory on board a Chinese ship. Another judicial proceeding was again instituted against him while the other one was still going on.

Another ivory dealer of Guinean origin took advantage of his having been released to flee to his country without having cleared his account with judiciary in Cameroon which was to prosecute him for illegal trafficking of ivory.

These examples are not the only ones, for in Yaounde a man who was arrested in possession of a live chimpanzee (class A animal which is completely protected) was released at the public prosecutor's office and his immediate action was to quit Yaounde for Belabo meanwhile he had legal proceedings against him in the Central Administrative court in Yaounde for illegal detention and trade of a class A animal which is fully protected. Ever since he has never appeared in any of the court sessions to which he was summoned.

From this analysis, it becomes clear that the flagrante delicto proceedings suggested by magistrates and applied by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife can only achieve its goal if the people referred to the Public Prosecutor are detained temporally rather than released on bail or without bail. An appeal is therefore addressed to Magistrates who deal with wildlife crimes to consider the fact that the culprit or suspect detained may start over the illicit activity once freed before judging them.

\* **Marius Talla Tene is Head of LAGA's Legal Department**

## **THE TRADE CHAIN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 101 OF THE LAW**

**BY \*HORLINE NJIKE**

THE THREAT OF EXTINCTION OF CERTAIN SPECIES OF animal in the Central African region in general and in Cameroon in particular is due mainly to the high pressure exerted by human beings on environment and on the wild animal living in it. Man is actually at the centre of the concurrent massacre perpetrated on wildlife species living in their respective natural habitat. The pressure mounted on the wild animals can be seen through the direct and indirect actions carried out in a system or in a chain which constitutes the illegal trafficking of protected wildlife species threatened with extinction.

It seems as if the destruction of wild animals is not just the work of poachers who capture or kill the animals in the wild. Their destruction appears to be orchestrated from a very little suspected base made up of traders and businessmen whose main merchandise is composed of wildlife products acquired illegally.

The analysis of this traffic chain shows that high up on the chain, are found businessmen who supply the fire arms, ammunitions, and financial motivation to the rest who in turn ensure the provision of illegally gotten wildlife products through capturing or killing them. The overseer here is the big businessmen rather than the poachers who often times than not only get commands from above.

Faced with this situation, the Cameroon legislators provided in section 101 of the 1994 law on wildlife punishment to be meted out to these traffickers found high on the illegal trade chain. In fact, this section stipulates that, "anyone found anywhere at anytime in possession of part of or an animal belonging to class A or B dead or alive, is considered to have captured or killed it". This section also takes into consideration the implications of anybody who so ever in the trafficking of wildlife products. According to this section (101), anybody involved in wildlife traffic is as guilty as the illegal hunters of protected animal species.

This implies that for example, if a lion skin is seized three people can be held responsible for the killing of the same lion according to section 101 (1) combine with section 150 (2) which places the accomplices under the same sanctions as the authors of the crime determined by the wildlife law.

The legislators of 1994 had it in mind that it is not only through this means that illegal trade in wildlife animals or their trophies could be stopped or slowed down. It now rests on the shoulders of structures or institutions charged with carrying out the enforcement of this law to exploit this margin in order to end the trafficking of protected wildlife species and poaching which inflicts a loss on the country's wildlife resources.

\***Horline Njike is LAGA's Legal Adviser**

# CAMEROON'S FUNCTION IN INTERNATIONAL ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

By \*Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu

As indicated in this map, Cameroon is presented as a junction for wildlife crime showing trafficking lines within the first half of 2006.

Sharing a long border with Nigeria into which wildlife products are exported from Cameroon's neighboring countries like Chad, Central African Republic, Guinea and Gabon, Cameroon has become the centre of concentration in illegal wildlife trade in apes, ivory, lions and leopard skins etc. It has really become a magnifying glass in the whole chain of illegal wildlife trade.

The lightning arrows show areas where wildlife law enforcement were carried out at the various trade junctions. One arrow points to 6 or more wildlife operations where illegal trafficking of wildlife products is intercepted. At one point Cameroon has become an alternate place for export of wildlife products to Asia. Trophies are moving to one



Illustration map

direction, that is Nigeria from Cameroon's eastern neighboring countries indicating that Nigeria is the estuary where ; illegal wildlife trade is linked to drug trade. To the LAGA Director, Ofir

Drori, "ivory or ape trafficking can move long distances from East Africa through Cameroon which has become an alternate exit point".

\*Communication Officer - LAGA

## CREATING DETERRENCE IN WILDLIFE CRIMES: *ROLE OF THE MEDIA*

**The public needs to understand that wildlife offenders targeted are criminals**

BY \*MAX SAINTCLAIR MBIDA

**T**he on-going nation-wide operation launched by the Cameroon Government in 2003 with the technical assistance of the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA) to effectively enforce the 1994 wildlife law seeks to; above all, create the necessary deterrent factor in wildlife crimes which hitherto, has been a missing ingredient in the conservation formula in sub-saharan Africa. This article explains how deterrence against wildlife crimes could be created, drawing inspirations from the experiences of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the United States of America.

EPA perceives wildlife law enforcement as comprising "a set of actions that governments and other organisations take to achieve compliance within the regulated community and to correct or halt situations that endanger wildlife". In this context, enforcement serves wildlife policy and legislation on two main objectives, namely: promoting compliance and providing credibility.

This involves a distinction between corrective and preventive enforcement. Corrective enforcement occurs when the enforcement action is directed at a behaviour that has already taken place. On the other hand, preventive enforcement aims at future behaviour with the primary goal of changing behaviour before offences occur. This now takes us to the notion of deterrence in wildlife crimes.

In demonstrating preventive enforcement in concrete terms, the Assistant Attorney General of



*Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu sending out messages on wildlife law enforcement through the media*

EPA warns, "business must either comply with [wildlife law] or inevitably pay a stiff price for avoiding their public responsibility". There are three possible situations in which the development of enforcement policy occurs. The first situation is where there is no wildlife law enforcement at all, the second is where there exist adhoc or irregular approach to enforcement and the third is one in which enforcement is approached regularly and systematically, resulting in structured and planned law enforcement as is the case with the on-going law enforcement Operation launched by the Cameroon government in 2003.

The arrest and prosecution of wildlife criminals under this Operation are always accompanied by wide media publicity because, as EPA indicates, "a strategic approach for both enforcement and communication is a pre-requisite

for success". Furthermore, EPA stresses that there can be "no enforcement without communication" and vice-versa, "no communication without enforcement". Deterrence in wildlife crimes in Cameroon is thus created by involving the media in the on-going operation in wildlife law enforcement in the country.

EPA experts say effectiveness in wildlife law enforcement harps on the

notion, "chance to get caught", which means the probability to get caught if one violates the wildlife law. The effect this notion has on compliance with the law is based on the actual chance to get caught and the perception of the chance to be caught in the act.

Experience has shown that the notion, "chance to get caught" could greatly change people's behaviour towards species of wildlife protected by law and thus illustrates the potential of the media to optimize the effectiveness of wildlife law enforcement. Since it is unrealistic for law enforcement agencies to apprehend and prosecute all wildlife criminals in a given country, the need to involve the media in these activities in order to create deterrence with few wildlife cases with severe sanctions becomes imperative.

*\*Enviromental Communication Consultant*

# INTERPOL ORIENTATING ACTIVITIES TO FIGHT WILDLIFE CRIMES

By *\*Olive Nahkuna Mfonfu*

**I**nternational Police known by its acronym as INTERPOL, is a system of communication network put in place to fight against international crimes and whose activities are now being orientated to include the fight against wildlife trafficking across national boundaries.

Given the fact that wildlife crime is being pursued nowadays as a very serious international problem as it now ranks third after illicit drug and arm trade at national, regional and international levels, INTERPOL in 1992 became fully involved in fighting wildlife crime. In a resolution of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the INTERPOL General Assembly in Rome, an Environmental Crime Committee was adopted.

The Committee immediately went to work by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with several Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES), which Cameroon signed in 1981. The Committee comprises two working groups, namely: the Wildlife Working group and the Pollution Working Group.



*Illegal trade in ivory is an international crime*

## WILDLIFE WORKING GROUP

The INTERPOL Wildlife Working Group in 1989 signed an MoU with CITES Secretariat and immediately adopted an action plan to understand and perceive the increasing complexity of wildlife law enforcement on a global scale. The plan

is intended to solidify and embrace ever-increasing networks of national, regional and international contacts in the global fight against wildlife crimes.

INTERPOL thus has as its mandate to facilitate the sharing of information between CITES and INTERPOL member countries including Cameroon in a timely and legal manner for the sole purpose of effective wildlife law enforcement and as mission to detect, prevent and report international crimes to which has been added the fight against wildlife crimes.

## ECO-MESSAGE

In order to attain its goal, INTERPOL has designed what it calls "eco-message system"-a system aimed at facilitating the exchange and analysis of information on wildlife crimes on the globe. The major challenge facing wildlife law enforcement agencies today is ensuring that developing countries that are the main source of wildlife for smugglers make maximum use of the eco-message system.

The on-going nation-wide operation on effective wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon is now integrating into its activities the principles of INTERPOL in fighting drug trafficking which is moving alongside wildlife crime as was the case with a drug dealer arrested in Bafia in the Centre Province of Cameroon in possession of 50 kilogrammes of marijuana and a young chimpanzee on sale.

*\*Graduate, Environmental Science*

## INTERPOL IN CAMEROON

By *\*Horline Njike*

**I**nterpol is an institution which invests in the fight against international crimes. The fight against environmental crime falls in line with the objectives of most international organizations which are interested in the protection of the environment. The fight is equally that of Interpol which has been organized consequently to track down environmental criminals at the international level.

A working Group on wildlife has been put in place to face the problem of growing international illegal trade on protected wildlife species and products. This Group works in collaboration with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES) and other wildlife management organizations. The activities of the Wildlife Working Group extends from the collection of data and information throughout Interpol member countries to the enforcement of the national and international wildlife law.

At the level of every member state like Cameroon for example, a national Interpol office exists to ensure link with the regional office so that every action taken can be represented over all the network.

*\*Legal adviser, LAGA*

## Wildlife law enforcement

### *Seizure is nothing without prosecution*

By \*Eugene N. Nforngwa

Experts estimate that about a century ago more than a million chimpanzees lived in 25 African countries. Today only about 150,000 are known to be living in just six countries. In a year, at least 4,000 chimpanzees and 3,000 gorillas are killed, mostly for trade. And today it is considered that trade poses the biggest threat to protected wildlife species. "If nothing is done, chimpanzees and other endangered species in Africa would disappear within 20 years," says Dr. Jane Goodall— a world renowned primatologist.

This threat is true for the entire African continent as it is with Cameroon that is host to a number of protected and endangered species. Wildlife trade is on the rise, and with the opening up of new roads by logging companies, dealers can reach protected and endangered species deeper and deeper into the forest.

This is what a 1994 wildlife law intends to check in the country. "People caught killing or found in possession of part of or live endangered wildlife species have to be prosecuted," says Grace Mbah Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife for the West Province. According to the law, dealers in protected wildlife (elephants, lions, gorillas, drills, crocodiles, chimpanzees etc) and wildlife trophies face imprisonment of up to three years and/or a fine of up to ten million CFA.

But, wildlife enforcement officials have limited their interventions simply to the seizures of suspected meat or trophy. Media reports continue to come from the provinces of cases of seizures and public sale of wildlife meat. These officials argue that seizures and public sales can deter and discourage trade in wildlife products. But letting go perpetrators without punishment is not doing the course any good, argue critics of this way of going about with the enforcement of the law. "Just seizing and auctioning illegally obtained wildlife while well known dealers continue to walk free is both wrong and ineffective", says Grace Mbah.

In addition, enforcing the wildlife law through seizures and auctioning



*Operation against an ape dealer in Kribi*

has been carried out abusively and corruption is feared to have infiltrated the process. The law in fact does not prohibit hunting altogether but seeks to check illegal hunting and trade in protected species. That means small-scale or subsistence hunting of wildlife species not classified as endangered or protected is allowed. Certain species can also only be hunted by licensed persons.

"If some one hunts a cane rat, which is not endangered and cooks it, that is for subsistence, we cannot arrest such a person. We are against people hunting for commercial purpose, without permits or people hunting protected species or keeping them without permits", explains Grace Mbah. But this is not always the case. The media is full of reports of seizures of all types of wildlife species, irrespective of whether or not they are protected. Reports also point to the fact that traders can always bribe to get their products back.

But that is changing. A nation-wide government wildlife law enforcement process, which went fully operational

in 2003, is being implemented by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, the Secretariat for Defence (National Gendarmerie) and the General Delegation for National Security, with technical support from the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA). The main aim of this initiative is the effective application of the 1994 wildlife law by bringing violators of the law to justice.

Also, the deterrent factor concept has been integrated into the government's wildlife law enforcement strategy. It deters potential wildlife law violators by combining criminal prosecution with wide media coverage. The idea is that making public cases of defaulters who have been found guilty and sent to prison or slammed huge fines will discourage others from going into illegal wildlife, trade or keeping of protected wildlife species.

*\*Coordinating Editor, The Herald*

## WILDLIFE CRIME ENTERS UN CRIME CONGRESS AGENDA FOR THE FIRST TIME

By \*AKWEN CYNTHIA

ILLEGAL TRADE IN PROTECTED wildlife has, for the first time, made it onto the agenda of the United Nation (UN) Crime Congress which went underway in Bangkok, Thailand on April 18, 2005, states a report by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA). With offices in London and Washington, EIA is an independent, international campaigning organisation committed to investigating and exposing, environmental crime including illegal trade in products of endangered wildlife including ivory, lions, tiger and leopard skins.

In a report, Debbie Banks, the EIA senior campaigner affirms that their investigations have uncovered “evidence that the international illegal trade in wildlife, which is second in value to the illegal drugs trade, is driven by powerful, sophisticated international criminal networks”. The international community including International Police (INTERPOL) has now recognized this link, and the need to treat this as a serious organized crime. Tiger and leopard skin trade in India is said to be dominated by organized networks of illegal hunters, tanners and dealers operating across the country and internationally. This holds true of West and Central Africa for

ivory, lion and leopard skins as evident in recent apprehension and prosecution of foreigners (Nigerians, Guineans etc) in Cameroon involved in illegal trade in leopard and lion skins alongside with ivory trade. To Banks, EIA campaigner, “breaking these networks will require real commitment from the professional enforcement community”, because, as he

cooperation between countries will ensue”.

The main theme of the 11<sup>th</sup> UN Crime Congress held in Bangkok, Thailand from April 18 to 25, 2005 was, “Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”. The high level session of the Congress, adopted what is called the Bangkok Declaration whose 12<sup>th</sup>

paragraph is related to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES).

With respect to increased involvement of organized criminal groups in illicit trafficking in protected species of wildlife the Declaration recognizes the importance of combating this form of crime, bearing in mind the relevant

international legal instruments such as CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This Declaration calls on Parties to these Conventions to take effective measures to strengthen international cooperation in combating wildlife crimes.

Above all, the Declaration notes that such attention being given to illicit trade in wildlife “is an important step forward” and reflects the call made at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES held in Bangkok in 2004 “for a higher priority to be given wildlife law enforcement.

\*Assist. Communication officer, LAGA



*MINFOF and Security officials combating wildlife crime in Cameroon*

reiterates, “serious criminals are taking advantage of the weak laws, uncoordinated enforcement and light penalties to wildlife trafficking”.

Given the magnitude of wildlife crimes in the world today, the entry of wildlife crime into the UN Crime Congress is praise worthy. Says Bank, “placing wildlife crime on the agenda of the UN Crime Congress is a step in the right direction”, noting that this “will require bold leadership to turn words into action”. He finally expresses hopes that, “leaders of today will rise to the challenge” and that, “hard core enforcement, stricter laws and improved

## **“Wildlife crime can have a serious impact on the conservation of the worlds’ rarest species”;**

***His Excellency, Syd Maddicott, British High Commissioner in Yaounde***

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), a campaigning organisation committed to investigating and exposing environmental crime, with one of its offices in London in the United Kingdom has disclosed that illegal trade in protected wildlife species has, for the first time, made it onto the agenda of the United Nations (UN) Crime Congress. The British Government took part at the UN Crime Congress which held in Bangkok, Thailand from 18 to 25 April 2005. The British High Commissioner in Yaounde, His Excellency, Syd Maddicott talked to Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu on strategies put in place by his government to combat wildlife crimes. Excerpts:

**By \*Vincent Gudmia Mfonfu**

***May we know, Your Excellency why the British Government is throwing a heavy weight behind wildlife law enforcement in particular and sustainable wildlife management in Cameroon as a whole?***

Thank you! The United Kingdom (UK) has a long history of promoting effective wildlife law enforcement and believes that wildlife conservation controls cannot work if they are not fully implemented and enforced. UK also firmly believes that wildlife crime is transnational, and it can have a serious impact on conservation of some of the world’s rarest species and that it can be lucrative-which can be an incentive to organized criminals, who pay scant regard to the legislation protecting the species concerned.

The UK’s Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW), launched ten years ago, brought together Organisations and Government Departments with an interest in combating wildlife crime. PAW supports the UK’s Police Wildlife Crime Officers and Customs Officers who have responsibility for enforcing the controls, as well as, providing a strategic overview of and response to wildlife crime.

Furthermore, UK’s National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit was launched in 2002, with the task of targeting and disrupting criminals involved in a serious wildlife crime at the national and international levels. This Unit has built strong links with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Wildlife Species (CITES) Secretariat, INTERPOL and other international bodies.

As a matter of fact, UK is committed to supporting initiatives to disrupt transnational wildlife crime and in February 2006 joined the United States-led Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT). UK is considering possible further action at the next Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES, to raise the profile of wildlife law enforcement.



***H.E. Syd Maddicott, British High Commissioner in Yaounde***

***The British Government took an active part at the Bangkok UN Crime Congress in April 2005. How is your Government helping the Government of Cameroon comply with the Declaration reached at this important Congress?***

First of all, UK is delighted to see that the illegal trade in endangered species was recognized by the UN Crime Congress as a matter of serious concern and welcomed the Bangkok Declaration, urging countries to take measures to strengthen international cooperation in fighting wildlife crimes. Although the UK has not so far taken specific measures to help the Government of Cameroon comply with the Declaration, it has been working hard to raise the profile of wildlife law enforcement.

We are particularly pleased to see the recent reports of the Cameroon authorities in the North West Province intercepting an elephant tusk being exported and also to read of the steps that the Province is

taking to fight the illegal exploitation of wood and wildlife.

***What legal policy has Britain adopted to stop international illegal trade in products of protected wildlife species destined for European and North American markets?***

The legislation of UK makes it an offence to import or export endangered wildlife species without the appropriate permits. People found guilty of these offences could face up to seven years in jail and or an unlimited fine. The legislation also makes it an offence to sell the most endangered wildlife species including their parts and derivatives. The penalties for doing so can be a jail sentence of up to five years and or an unlimited fine.

Furthermore, the UK actively participates in the European Union’s implementation of its Regulations to control the trade in wildlife species. In October 2005, UK hosted a Wildlife Trade Enforcement Coordination Workshop of enforcement officials from all 25 European Union Member States. That workshop agreed a statement of recommendations and a draft Action Plan-work is underway to take those actions forward. In fact, UK firmly believes that its membership of CAWT will enhance its relations with the United States of America and lead to further cooperation and coordination of wildlife law enforcement activity.

To compound all, my government is convinced that the key to success in tackling international wildlife crime by sophisticated networks of criminals is to ensure that the enforcers are empowered to cooperate with the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group, the CITES Secretariat to carry out joint operations with counterpart agencies in other countries. Above all, UK believes that particular attention should be given to the establishment of effective mechanisms and agreements for cross-border cooperation and the swift exchange of intelligence.

***\*Communication Officer LAGA***

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By \*Akwen Cynthia

Officials of the Delegation of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) in the North West Province were recently drilled on techniques of effective control of illegal hunting and trade in timber at a workshop organized in the North West Provincial capital of Bamenda under the chairmanship of the MINFOF Delegate, Mr. Joseph Mbongblang. The workshop grouped field staff of the Provincial Forest and Wildlife Control Brigade, senior officials of the Provincial Delegation and the Divisional Delegates of Forestry and Wildlife in the Province. To Mbongblang, “more training workshops for law enforcement officers are needed to improve their investigation and operation skills, as well as legal procedures and smuggling detection methods for protected wildlife species and their trophies”.

The workshop was supported by the Forest Environmental Sector Programme (FESP) after having supported similar training workshops in the other 9 Provinces in the country.

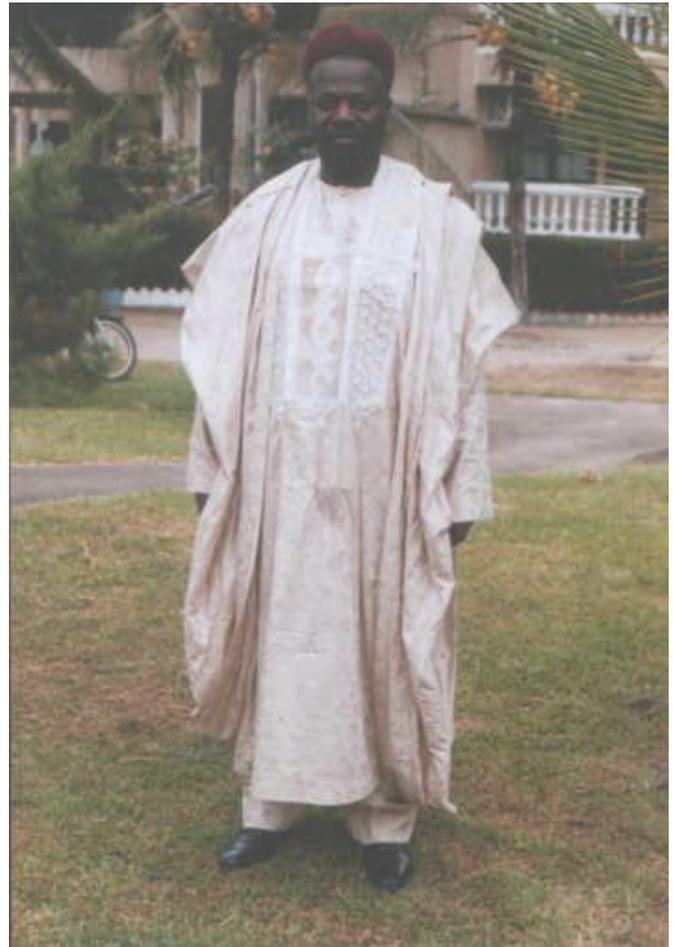
Since 1999, the Government of Cameroon, with support from the international conservation community started a process of setting up a National Programme called the Forest Environment Sector Programme (FESP), whose aim is to “contribute towards the implementation of its policy of sustainable participatory management of forest and wildlife resources of the country”.

The overall objective of the FESP is to lay down a framework for harmonizing all interventions in the sector.

This national development sector programme, put in place by the Government, is open to financing from all funding bodies and contributions from the civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGO). The Programme is made up of 5 main components, the third of which has to do with wildlife extension and the fifth with institutional capacity building and training of actors in the sector.

The Basket Fund is a mechanism that aims at providing, in a fast and efficient manner, technical assistance and training required for the implementation of the FESP, according to the priorities identified in the work plans of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection.

\*Assistant Communication Officer LAGA



Provincial Delegate of MINFOF in the North West , Mr Mbongblang Joseph

## Drug and chimpanzee dealer behind bars

A orphan chimpanzee, with a poacher’s bullet wound on its head was rescued from the hands of a dealer specialized in trade in protected wildlife species on January 29, 2006 in Bafia. Four large sacks of drugs popularly known as marijuana, weighing about 50kilogrammes were also seized from the dealer along with the young chimp. Another kind of drug was also caught in possession of the dealer which he admitted was cocaine. However, the drug is being verified in the police laboratory in Bafia.

The drugs and wildlife dealer has been employing at least 4 poachers and has been trading other protected primates regularly. The dealer is behind bars despite corruption attempts. This operation was appreciated by the local police, admitting this has been the largest marijuana seizure in that Division.

Photo: Baby chimpanzee and sacks of marijuana in car boot showing the link in trade of drug and ape (Page 2)