

Key note speech of the EU Delegation at the
Seminar "The Fate of Tigers and the Status
of Endangered Species Conservation in Vietnam"
in celebration of the International Tiger Day 29 July 2019
&
Launch of the EU supported action
“Partners against wildlife crime” in Vietnam

8:30 am, 29/7/2019, Vietnam Trade Union Hotel, No. 14 Tran Binh Trong Str., Hanoi.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today to celebrate the International Tiger Day 2019, launch the European Union supported action “Partners against wildlife crime”, and share with you about EU’s commitment and efforts in the area of biodiversity conservation and forest and wildlife crime.

Wildlife trafficking is considered to be generating around USD 90 billion annually and growing at 2 to 3 times the pace of the global economy. This makes it the fourth largest form of crime in the world after drug trafficking, counterfeiting and trafficking in human beings.

Wildlife and forest crime have become a serious threat to the security, political stability, economy, natural resources and cultural heritage of many countries and regions. These criminal activities threaten the survival of some of the world’s most charismatic species, like elephants, rhinos and tigers.

To respond to this challenge, the EU has developed in 2016 a comprehensive **Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking for the period 2016-2020**, which sets out a blueprint for joined-up efforts to fight wildlife crime inside the EU, and for strengthening the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities. The Plan has three main strands – **better enforcement, enhanced cooperation, and**

more effective prevention. The Action Plan is implemented jointly by the EU and its 28 Member States.

The EU has also been playing a very active role in the **Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**, which aims to ensure that international trade in some 35 000 protected animal and plant species does not threaten their survival. Since July 2015, **the EU is a Party to the Convention in addition to the 28 EU Member States**, which reinforces EU's voice. In recent meetings, the EU has supported stronger compliance measures for countries that do not comply with their obligations under CITES, including when necessary through the adoption of trade sanctions.

Although the EU currently has no specific bilateral cooperation programme on wildlife conservation with Vietnam, the EU works on this topic with Vietnam through participation in policy dialogues with stakeholders and projects funded by the EU on biodiversity conservation and against wildlife and forest crime, in partnership with other development partners, like CITES, Interpol, UNODC – the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, WCO – the World Customs Organisation, the World Bank, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and international or local NGOs.

Let me give you some concrete examples of EU engagement.

Firstly, we have two EU flagship initiatives:

- **EU Biodiversity for Life (B4Life)** contributes to halting biodiversity loss and reducing poverty by promoting a cross-cutting and innovative approach that fully integrates biodiversity and ecosystem conservation with socio-economic development and poverty eradication; and
- The **EU Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)**, the EU's response to illegal logging and the trade in associated timber products. The FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Vietnam and the EU went into force on 1 June 2019.

Secondly, the EU has a number of programmes, projects and policy instruments in this area:

1. Law enforcement and fight against forest and wildlife crime (2018–2022)

In December 2018, the EU launched a global 4-year programme "**Law enforcement and fight against forest and wildlife crime**" with a total budget of EUR 49 million, of which EU contributes around 90%.

Its **specific objective** is to **reduce wildlife and forest crime** in and between a series of strategic countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America by building the **capacity** of, and establishing effective **partnerships** between, stakeholders at all levels. The programme aims at building partnerships between the different actors involved in security. This will enable a more effective **cooperation and coordination** between stakeholders and countries along the **Illegal Wildlife and Forest Trade value chain**.

The "Law enforcement and fight against forest and wildlife crime" programme has two components:

- Component 1, which is implemented through the **International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICWC)**¹, strengthens **police, judicial systems and border controls** of countries prone to Illegal Wildlife and Forest Trade (IWT). It also increases **international cooperation** against wildlife trafficking and forest crime to harness its transnational dimension. It is;

The specific objective is to reduce wildlife and forest crime in and between a series of strategic countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. In our region, it focuses on Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and **Vietnam**. These countries are known to be heavily involved in, or impacted by, the increasingly well organised illegal wildlife trade.

- Component 2 strengthens **civil society organisations** in their efforts to combat wildlife crime and illegal logging through information gathering, investigations, wildlife conservation and economic development.

One such project is implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Pan Nature together with other partners, and is being launched today with the overall objective to "disrupt the illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market in the **Greater Mekong Region**, Malaysia and China by **leveraging civil society partnerships** to increase the effectiveness of Government action"

More details about this project and its planned activities in Vietnam will be presented soon by WCS.

2. Asia Wildlife Enforcement and Demand management (01/05/2016 to 30/04/2020)

The project "**Asia Wildlife Enforcement and Demand management**", EU co-financed with EUR 5 million, is managed by

¹ ICCWC is collaborative initiative by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

UNODC and the CITES Secretariat, with the specific objective of "strengthening prevention, investigation and prosecution of wildlife crimes affecting key wildlife species in key Asian countries, especially elephants, rhinos, pangolins and tigers".

3. Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP)

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity implements the project "Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) 2017-2021", EU co-financed with EUR 10 million. It contributes to global sustainability by ensuring ASEAN's rich biological diversity is conserved and sustainably managed toward enhancing social, economic, and environmental well-being. The project enhances conservation of biodiversity and effective management of protected areas in Southeast Asia to halt or significantly reduce biodiversity loss in the ASEAN region.

4. Trade policy instrument

Besides development cooperation through grant support, the EU also uses trade policy instruments to improve the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as CITES. Related provisions are often included in the EU's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with third countries.

On 30 June 2019, the **EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement** (EVFTA) was signed in Hanoi. The FTA will still be presented to the European Parliament for consent, after which it could enter into force, hopefully in the first semester of 2020.

As a "new generation Free Trade Agreement", the EVFTA includes a Chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development covering commitments on labour and environment. On environment, the EVFTA includes commitments on sustainable management of marine

resources and forests, the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change.

In line with these commitments, EU and Vietnam commit to adopt and implement appropriate effective measures leading to:

- a reduction of illegal trade in wildlife, such as awareness raising campaigns, monitoring and enforcement measures.
- encouragement of trade in products that contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity, in accordance with domestic laws and regulations;
- cooperation at regional and global levels, with the aim of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in natural or agricultural ecosystems, including endangered species, their habitat, specially protected natural areas and genetic diversity; the restoration of ecosystems; the elimination or reduction of negative environmental impacts resulting from the use of living and non-living natural resources, including ecosystems; the access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation.

I hope my examples provide you with an overview of EU's strategy and actions to join forces with the global community to protect our nature and fight wildlife and forest crime.

I would like to thank World Conservation Society (WCS), Pan Nature and their partners for their commitment and the organisation of the event. I am pleased to note the active involvement of government and justice sector stakeholders.

Finally, I wish you great success with the implementation of the project activities in Vietnam.

Thank you all for your participation and continued support!