



## Lusaka Agreement on Co-operative Enforcement Operations

### Directed at Illegal trade in Wild Fauna and Flora

*“Fostering cooperation to conserve wild fauna and flora in Africa”*

REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR, LUSAKA AGREEMENT TASK FORCE DURING THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT LAW ENFORCEMENT DAY CELEBRATIONS HELD AT THE KWS FIELD TRAINING SCHOOL - MANYANI ON 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2011

Your Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki, C.G.H., M.P., President and Commander in Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya;

Hon. Prof Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities of the Republic of Uganda, Representing the President of the Lusaka Agreement Governing Council;

Hon Ministers and Representatives from the Lusaka Agreement member states;

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Senior Officials from the United Nations University – Japan and ITC-University of Twente-Netherlands

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols observed,

On behalf of the Lusaka Agreement Task Force and on my own behalf I am extremely delighted to welcome you all and for the privilege to give some remarks at this unique event in the history of the Lusaka Agreement. Your presence today, Your Excellency, demonstrates your unreserved support and commitment towards conservation of our wildlife to which we all treasure.

Twenty years after the first disposals of large ivory contraband through burning by the Governments of Kenya in 1989 and Zambia 1992, Africa today, through a regional initiative, the Lusaka Agreement and its permanent Task Force known as the Lusaka Agreement Task Force-LATF, takes the lead to show her common stand against the ever increasing and sophisticated illegal trade in wildlife specimens and elephant ivory in particular.



The importance of wildlife needs not be overemphasized. The African continent has continued to experience threats to its elephant populations which have faced the biggest brunt and significantly decreased in most range states thereby adversely affecting governments socially, ecologically and economically.

**Your Excellency,**

Making seizures of contraband wildlife specimens locally or overseas is good but preventing poaching and illegal trade in affected range states is critical.

Monitoring poaching and illegal trade as well as compiling billions of criminal data is an exciting undertaking but this will have no value added to wildlife resources if it does not contribute to development and implementation of specific measures and strategies to address the threats.

There is need for the international community to become more engaged in assisting affected states in Africa with effective law enforcement approaches to ensuring sustainable conservation and survival of the species. Similarly, African states should recognize conservation of wildlife species, which is more often disregarded, to be top of national priorities and sufficiently invest in wildlife law enforcement activities.

The Lusaka Agreement Task Force, an inter-governmental institution established to promote inter-state cooperation and combat cross border wildlife crime in Africa is striving to be the best model of a regional wildlife conservation agency focusing on law enforcement and compliance. It is geared towards curtailing wildlife crime that mainly includes poaching, illegal logging, unlawful possession or possession of illegally acquired wildlife specimens and particularly illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa. These challenges can be surmounted through raising of the profile, enhanced knowledge sharing and awareness of the crimes among states, partners and stakeholders. We need adequately trained officers as well as agencies equipped with modern tools and advanced techniques.

Mobilization of adequate resources has been a key challenge in wildlife law enforcement in member states and the Task Force requires to be well resourced to carry out its mandate effectively which the member states on their own cannot provide; consequently, we call upon cooperating partners and the donor community to extend their support to the organization.

For Africa:

**Time is over** for insistent complaints, criticizing and blackmailing each other for mismanagement of wildlife resources, inadequate border control or inefficient law enforcement in combating poaching and illegal trade in wildlife specimens in Africa.

**Time has come** to complement each other and work together strategically towards achieving our common interests



**Time has come** to stand up and recognize that our wildlife resources are invaluable and it behooves us as Africa to play an integral role in ensuring they are well managed, conserved, sustainably utilized and promoted to benefit African communities and economies and serve the whole world.

**Time has come** to identify and work with our friends in conservation, those who continuously interact and support us in improving status of wildlife populations, enhancing capacities of conservation and enforcement agencies.

### **Your Excellency,**

The Lusaka Agreement was born to live and to thrive for as long as wildlife and the need for cross-border activities in preserving the resources will remain relevant in Africa throughout generations. The Agreement is open to accession by all African states so is the Lusaka agreement Task Force and the other organs established under the Agreement open to effective partnerships with all conservation and enforcement agencies world wide.

Everyone, every country, every agency has a role to play in implementing the Lusaka Agreement, and we believe that together we will succeed in fighting wildlife crime and related activities in Africa. The Task Force will do all it can to ensure this cooperation is nurtured.

I would like therefore to reiterate our call to all African states by urging once again their governments to ratify or accede to Lusaka Agreement on co-operative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

### **Your Excellency,**

At the Lusaka Agreement Task Force we value state sovereignty, rights, national laws and regulations in accordance with ratified MEAs, Conventions and protocols. We value decisions made by Governors jointly or individually. These arrangements guide our work as we remain conscious of our responsibilities, mandate and capacities in implementing the Agreement. While focusing on co-operative law enforcement, we gather wide range of knowledge and facts which are shared with relevant institutions operating in various fields of wildlife and environment conservation.

Allow me to take this opportunity to sincerely thank:

All the members of the Ivory Disposal Implementation Committee for a job well done; our partners and stakeholders who have supported and accompanied us throughout preparations to make this important event a reality today. These include:



Ministers and Experts of the member states to the Lusaka Agreement represented here today, Management and staff members of KWS Manyani Field Training School, UNEP, CITES and INTERPOL Secretariats, International Fund for Animal Welfare (FAW), Environmental Investigation Agency –EIA, Ms. Kuki Galman, Mr Robin Hollister, Total Kenya, Dynamic Green Technologies, Information Clearing House, Square Gold PR and Marketing, Media fraternity and all those who in one way or another have contributed to the success of this event.

Indeed, may I thank all the member states for their invaluable support that has contributed to what we have achieved to date. I wish to recognize and thank the host, the Government of the Republic of Kenya, one of the most active members of the Lusaka Agreement and particularly the Kenya Wildlife Service for providing immense support to the work of the Task Force over the years without which it would not have been possible to effectively achieve what we are celebrating today.

On wildlife conservation and in appreciating the plight of the African Elephant, we heartily thank you, Your Excellency, for gracing this occasion

**Thank you Mheshimiwa Rais.**

Bonaventure Ebyai  
Director- Lusaka Agreement Task Force-LATF