

Community Voices: Local Perspectives on International Responses to Illegal Wildlife Trade

Wednesday 10th October 2018 at the Zoological Society of London

CALL TO COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING

BACKGROUND

The London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, to be held on 11th -12th October 2018, will be the fourth in a series of high-level conferences which seek to increase international commitments to tackling the illegal wildlife trade (IWT). These previous conferences – as well as various other regional and international policy forums – have increasingly recognised the important role of the Indigenous Peoples and local communities who live side by side wildlife in addressing IWT (see annex).

Despite these commitments, the emphasis to date in IWT discussions and in implementation has been – and remains – strongly on strengthening government or private sector-led law enforcement and reducing consumer demand for illicitly sourced wildlife commodities. Scant emphasis has been placed on how to effectively engage local people who live alongside wildlife. And even less on actually listening to those communities and - as the Kasane Statement says – reinforcing their voice as active stakeholders in this debate.

OUR EVENT - GROUND-TRUTHING THE IWT DEBATE

Immediately before the London Conference 2018 IIED, IUCN and TRAFFIC are partnering with FFI and ZSL to convene a meeting that brings these different experiences together and provides a unique opportunity for local people who live alongside wildlife from IWT source countries to:

- 1) voice their opinions and share their experience of current efforts to combat IWT and in particular on progress in implementing the commitments (see Annex) made to date;
- 2) meet and exchange experiences;
- 3) increase their voice in international IWT policy-making.

The meeting will focus on community perspectives of what works, what doesn't and why in terms of community engagement in combating IWT. We will explore different strategies that have been advocated in the previous three inter-governmental IWT conferences (collaborative law enforcement; increasing the benefits for communities from conservation and from wildlife; reducing human wildlife conflict; developing alternative livelihoods to reduce dependence on IWT) and hear what communities themselves think of these strategies and what alternatives/additions they might propose. Based on these discussions, participants will agree a set of recommendations to strengthen international responses to IWT. This will be fed directly into a panel session in the London Conference on IWT 2018.

STRUCTURE OF THE EVENT

Evening of 9th October

Joint networking event with the [Evidence to Action: Research to Address Illegal Wildlife Trade](#) event

Morning of 10th October

Voices from the field – presentations from local community representatives

Afternoon of 10th October:

Stream A: Facilitated discussion for community representatives only (closed to other participants) focussing on implementation of the commitments to date (building on experiences heard in the morning and any gathered beforehand). The session will be used to craft 3 or 4 key messages for a panel session in the London Conference, as well as to identify and refine messages and experiences that can be shared with the press and others.

Stream B: Presentations and discussion for NGOs and community support organisations – lessons learned on engaging communities to tackle IWT.

Final Plenary: Feedback from Stream A and Stream B as to key conclusions from their separate sessions

WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT

If you are interested (or are a support NGO and would like to nominate participants) please send us an email with answers to the following 5 questions (**please answer all questions**).

1. **If you are a community representative:** which community do you represent and what is your position in the community? **If you are a support NGO:** Would you like to participate in the event or would you like to nominate and sponsor a community representative (and if so what community does he/she represent and what is his/her position in the community)?
2. **What experiences you would like to present to, or discuss with, the group. Please clearly outline what you would like to talk about under one of the issues below:**
 - a. **Implementation of international commitments:** In your experience and in your location, have the international commitments (detailed in Annex 1 and summarised below as a set of “Rules of Engagement”) been implemented? Which have and which haven’t and what impact has this had on you, your family / your community and on IWT? Are there any commitments that you think are missing that you would like to see the Conference address?

“Rules of Engagement” – a simple summary of international commitments on communities and IWT

- 1) Support local communities to capture benefits from wildlife
- 2) Recognise and respect the rights of local communities
- 3) Establish meaningful partnerships with local communities
- 4) Support community-led conservation
- 5) Support wildlife-based livelihood strategies
- 6) Support non-wildlife based livelihood strategies
- 7) Recognise and help reduce the cost of living with wildlife
- 8) Recognise and reduce the negative impact of IWT on local communities

- b. **Community-based efforts to tackle IWT:** Have you been involved in any efforts to tackle IWT? If so, how? (for example, do you have a community game guard programme? Do you get benefits from wildlife? Do you feel there is a need for you to protect wildlife? Have there been efforts to reduce any negative impacts from wildlife on your community?? Have there been efforts to develop income streams within your community that reduces your reliance on wildlife?)
- c. **Effectiveness of efforts to tackle IWT:** What do you think of current approaches to tackle IWT in your location? Do they work? Are there other/better approaches that would work better?
- d. **Impacts on communities of efforts to tackle IWT:** How have external efforts to tackle IWT affected your community (for example have there been any benefits or disadvantages associated with increased law enforcement Have you managed to gain a conservation job?)
- e. **Other** (please be VERY specific and ensure the issue you raise is related to IWT).
3. **Do you (or the person you are nominating) have a passport and do you require a visa to enter the UK?**
4. **Are you (or the person you are nominating) comfortable presenting and conversing in English (unfortunately we have no resources to cover the cost of translation).**
5. **Would you (or the person you are nominating) require funding to attend? Are there any sources available to you to secure that funding.**

6.

Please note we are interested in hearing of on-the-ground, practical experience, **not** academic research (if you are an academic researcher please consider applying to present at the Evidence to Action conference on 9th and 10th October:

<http://www.illegalwildlifetrade.net/iwt18event/programme/>). Also please note we are focussing on **INTERNATIONAL ILLEGAL** trade in wildlife, **NOT** domestic trade (eg of bushmeat) nor community-based conservation in general – only where it applies to illegal wildlife trade).

We have extended the deadline for receiving expressions of interest - please send your expression of interest by the 31st of July 2018 AT THE LATEST to: Francesca.booker@iied.org

Please note: we only have a limited amount of funding to support attendance by community representatives at this event. We are however hoping to collect additional community perspectives through video, audio and written records.

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Additional resources are being sought and we are also interested to hear from potential donors who may be able to sponsor one or more participants.

Annex 1: International commitments on communities and IWT

| International Commitments on Engaging Communities in Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade | |
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| African Elephant Summit (2013) | Engage communities living with elephants as active partners in their conservation |
| London Declaration (2014) | Increase capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities and eradicate poverty Work with, and include local communities in, establishing monitoring and law enforcement networks in areas surrounding wildlife |
| Kasane Declaration (2015) | Promote the retention of benefits from wildlife resources by local people where they have traditional and/or legal rights over these resources. We will strengthen policy and legislative frameworks needed to achieve this, reinforce the voice of local people as key stakeholders and implement measures which balance the need to tackle the illegal wildlife trade with the needs of communities, including the sustainable use of wildlife. |
| Brazzaville Declaration (2015) | Recognize the rights and increase the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the planning, management and use of wildlife through sustainable use and alternative livelihoods and strengthen their ability to combat wildlife crime. |
| UN General Assembly Resolution 69/314 on Tackling Illicit Trafficking In Wildlife (2015) | Support ... the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking in wildlife and its adverse impacts, with the full engagement of the communities in and adjacent to wildlife habitats as active partners in conservation and sustainable use, enhancing the rights and capacity of the members of such communities to manage and benefit from wildlife and wilderness; ... |
| SDG 15 (2015) | Increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities |
| Hanoi Statement on Illegal Wildlife Trade (2016) | ... recognizing the importance of supporting and engaging communities living with wildlife as active partners in conservation, through reducing human-wildlife conflict and supporting community efforts to advance their rights and capacity to manage and benefit from wildlife and their habitats; and developing collaborative models of enforcement. The active participation of local people is critical to effective monitoring and law enforcement as well as sustainable socio-economic development. |
| UN General Assembly Resolution 71/326 (2017) | Encourages Member States to increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities, including from their local wildlife resources... Strongly encourages Member States to enhance their support, including through transnational and regional cooperation, for the development of sustainable and, as appropriate, alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking in wildlife and its adverse impacts, with the full engagement of the communities in and adjacent to wildlife habitats as active partners in conservation and sustainable use, enhancing the rights and capacity of the members of such communities to manage and benefit from wildlife and wilderness |

Annex 2: The team – our work to date

Since 2014, IIED, IUCN and TRAFFIC have collaborated with a range of partners on initiatives to highlight the importance of the role that local people play in conserving wildlife and combating IWT and to better understand their perspectives. The *Beyond Enforcement* initiative has entailed a series of international and regional symposia in South Africa (2015), Cameroon (2016) and Vietnam (2016): these have profiled successful community-based initiatives to tackle IWT, explored the impacts of IWT (and of over-zealous or poorly-targeted law enforcement to tackle it) on local people, and developed a Theory of Change for tackling IWT through community level action. The *First Line of Defence* (FLoD) initiative has taken these insights to the field in order to guide future interventions and policy. It has been field-testing a refined version of the theory of change and seeking to understand the extent to which the assumptions and logic behind existing anti-IWT interventions are in line with community understanding.

The IIED-IUCN-TRAFFIC team has also been involved in other initiatives to increase the voice of local people in sustainable wildlife management debates, including through support to the newly established Rural Communities Working Group in CITES and through an analysis of lessons learned on community-based wildlife management as an input to the UN Environment Assembly.

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) works across more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Eurasia and the Americas. Taking a practical, field-based approach, FFI focuses on securing wild populations and deterring poaching and trafficking. FFI and others' experience has shown that effective engagement with local people in source countries is fundamental to the success of efforts to tackle illegal wildlife trade. As such, our approaches seek to engage communities as active and motivated partners in species protection and law enforcement, mitigate impacts of human wildlife conflict on local people, and to strengthen community participation on wildlife management, and their rights and capacity to benefit from wildlife.

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity whose mission is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. The society is active in over 50 countries globally with local communities a key constituent of our work to try and address IWT; carrying our research to understand the issues linking people and IWT, developing and implementing innovative approaches that empower and engage local communities to address IWT and working to provide incentives that promote human wildlife co-existence in landscapes impacted by IWT.

Some key lessons from our and others' work is that focusing on state/private-sector led enforcement can be both ineffective and/or inequitable in combating poaching. It can lead (and has led) to human rights abuses, resentment and hostility from local people, and loss of local incentives to conserve wildlife and habitat. Some analysts suggest that improved enforcement higher up the trade chain, through increased seizures, may increase poaching by increasing the margin illegal traders expect to lose before their products reach the market.

If we are to move from the current focus on catching poachers to actually stopping poaching at the source, experience highlights time and time again the crucial importance of getting the right local incentive structures, governance systems, and resource access and ownership rights in place.