



SUMMARY REPORT

POACHERS OR PROTECTORS?

Local Communities at the Frontline of Conservation

What really drives wildlife trade, hunting and trafficking?

20 April 2016

European Parliament, Brussels

High-level experts in the domain of wildlife conservation were gathered in the European Parliament by MEP Pavel Poc on the 20th of April 2016 to discuss together with policy-makers and stakeholders the role of local communities in wildlife management as well as the benefits provided by wildlife trade to local communities.

Pavel Poc MEP and Chair of the EP Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development” welcomed participants by highlighting the long standing involvement of the Intergroup on core issues related to wildlife conservation.

David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) highlighted that the CBD aims to conserve biological diversity, ensure sustainable use of its components and provide fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets developed under the CBD were highlighted along with the Sustainable Development Goals, which can help address the drivers of biodiversity loss and maintain biodiversity in a broad socio-economic agenda. It was explained that the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) was established in 2013 following a request from CBD Parties to enhance coordination and exchange information on sustainable wildlife management. Its membership comprises of thirteen international organizations, including three biodiversity-related conventions, with substantive mandates and programmes for the sustainable use and conservation of wildlife resources. The partnerships aim is to promote the sustainable use and conservation of terrestrial vertebrate wildlife in all biomes and geographic areas, contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and to human food security, livelihoods and well being. It was underlined that the main driver of biodiversity loss is land use change and with a growing population it is likely that further pressures on global ecosystems will increase. In order to address the challenges leading to biodiversity loss it was said that a multifaceted approach is needed improving policy and governance at national level. The need to address international aspects including wildlife crime was stressed underlining that only by supporting and enabling local communities to manage wildlife populations will the benefits of reversing the current loss of biodiversity be achieved.

Johannes Stahl, Scientific Support Officer for Fauna, CITES Secretariat stressed that wildlife conservation and trade in wildlife are closely linked. He emphasised that legal, sustainable, and traceable trade can support wildlife conservation and contribute to sustainable development. CITES regulates trade in more than 35,000 species which are listed in the



CITES Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes those species that are threatened with extinction (3% of 35,000) and in which commercial trade is prohibited. It was pointed out that the vast majority of species are found in Appendices II, which includes species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction but may become so unless trade is strictly regulated. Dr. Stahl said that the overall economic value of wildlife trade is not well documented but some information exists for certain sectors. The convention estimates that the overall trade value grew from 160 to 323 billion USD from 1990 to 2009. He pointed out that the utilization, production, handling, and processing can contribute significantly to local livelihoods and economies. He explained that CITES is a trade related and conservation convention each Party must implement national legislation. Further, when a state decides to join the Convention and trade in CITES-listed species, it must (i) make a legal acquisition finding showing that the specimens to be traded were taken in accordance with national law; (ii) make a non-detriment finding, which is a science-based biological sustainability finding that takes account of the role of the species in its ecosystem; (iii) formally authorize the transaction through the issuance of a CITES permit or certificate, and (iv) report the trade to the CITES Secretariat for compilation and analysis. Dr. Stahl highlighted the case of Vicuñas as an example of how regulated trade has helped a previously endangered species recover while at the same time providing benefits to local communities.

Daniel Kobei, Chairman Ogiek Peoples Development Program and representative of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) highlighted the important role of Indigenous Peoples in wildlife management as they live and use the resources of approximately 22% of the global land area, which in turn harbours 80% of the world's biological diversity. Traditional wildlife management is tied to people's culture and their customary use of biodiversity and it was stressed that these traditions ensure strong stewardship of wildlife. Therefore, the stewardship role of Indigenous Peoples has led to collaboration with conservation organisations for maintaining biodiversity and by sharing and exchanging knowledge about wildlife in international collaborations has the potential to benefit Indigenous Peoples in their territories. It was explained that COP12 of CBD resulted in Decision XII/18 on Sustainable use of biodiversity: bushmeat and sustainable wildlife management. Article 10 of this Decision encourages Parties *"to assess, minimize and mitigate the impacts of illegal hunting on the subsistence hunting and livelihoods of indigenous and local communities, and on other subsistence users of wildlife resources"*, while Article 11 encourages Parties *"to strengthen the capacity of indigenous and local communities to exercise their rights and responsibilities in relation to the sustainable management of wildlife"*. It was reiterated that Indigenous Peoples possess a wealth of traditional knowledge, which they have acquired over generations enabling them to use natural resources sustainably. The CPW contributes to the development of technical advice that can be used internationally but can also be a source of information for Indigenous communities to support self-determined strategies for sustainable wildlife management. It was stressed that Indigenous Peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. It was said that laws should be made to impose a total ban on poaching or capturing of any endangered species. Further, the natural habitats of wild animals should be preserved and it



was called upon the European Parliament to support the work of CPW and Indigenous Peoples for sustainable wildlife management.

John E. Fa, Senior Research Associate, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) & Jean-Claude Nguingiri, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) highlighted that wild meat is an essential and socially acceptable informal sector contributing significantly to food security and human nutrition, but is unregulated in many countries. It was stressed that wild meat is economically significant and largely non substitutable and if used unsustainably it can affect the conservation and food security of local communities. Studies show that the extraction and consumption in the two main basins, the Amazon and the Congo, are substantial highlighting the important role it plays to communities as well as the need to ensure sustainable resources through conservation. It was said that 5 million tonnes per year of wild meat is extracted in the Congo Basin which is equivalent to 15 million domesticated cows and 2 billion chickens pointing out that substituting wild meat with such amounts is not sustainable or possible. Wild meat is regularly eaten in rural areas and the consequences from removing its availability will have considerable consequences on nutrition. It was stressed that this would lead to a protein gap with the overall protein supply falling from about 85g to 41g/person/day by 2050, which is 79% of the WHO recommended minimum of 52g/person/day. A serious fat gap as well as a micronutrient gap would occur stressing that removing access to wildlife would increase the numbers of children suffering from anemia. It was underlined that a broader view of the nutritional contribution made by wild meat to humans is necessary. It was said that one way forward is to create a new menu that legitimises the debate around bushmeat by reviewing national legislation for coherence, include it in national statistics as a vital national economic activity, acknowledge the contribution to food security and health in national strategies, analyze both the livelihood and conservation implications of a given intervention on all stakeholders (including gender), and develop a framework to “formalise” parts of the trade.

Ian Redmond, Chairman of the Ape Alliance, and a founder and former Envoy of the UN Great Apes Survival Partnership underlined that vital lessons can be learned from gorillas as they were only a century ago seen as an important trophy hunting species, but by realising the value they have to ecosystems it is no longer acceptable to hunt them. It was stressed that this transition must progress to other large mammals with slow reproduction cycles such as elephants. A number of unintended consequences of trophy hunting were raised. Firstly, it was said that social disruption leads to increased mortality through fighting and infanticide. Secondly, killing the ‘best’ specimen is the opposite of natural selection, with long term evolutionary consequences if it happens every year. Thirdly, it was said that the ecological impact of removing an individual in his/her prime removes decades worth of the ecological role of that individual. It was stressed that gorillas produce a tone of fertilizers and by loosing individuals from families ecological importance is lost. It was argued that gorillas can be more valuable alive than dead in indirect economic terms. It was said that gorilla tourism is an important part of wildlife conservation and finances the protection of gorillas. The example of Uganda was provided, which receives approximately 20,000 visitors per year and the economic gain from permits, hotels and services creates jobs and brings in about \$300 million per year. It was said that revenue sharing has funded 181 community



projects providing clinics, schools, community centres, bridges, roads, maize mills and a water project. It was reiterated that because we have earned the trust of gorillas we can benefit from their ecological importance, which is a value that must be taken into account. The example of elephants was also mentioned as it was said that the value of their tusks is considered more often higher than the ecological role they play in forests.

Jan Heino, President of the Policy and Law Division, International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) underlined that the CIC promotes, on a global scale, sustainable hunting as a tool for conservation to benefit nature and people while preserving the hunting heritage. It was underlined that hunting was considered a human activity, part of the natural food chain but because of industrialization humans have been displaced from nature and hunting. It was also said that there is a lack of adequate definitions on hunting as they are often hard to agree upon and sometimes even hinder the establishment of agreements and conventions. Even though hunting has been defined in the EU Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity¹ as *“the pursuit and/or take of wild game species by all methods permitted by law within signatory countries, and motivations for this activity include consumption (use of meat, hides, furs and/or trophies), recreation, and/or management of game populations”*, countries have various definitions. Other terms that are lacking common, broadly accepted definitions include trophy and commercial hunting. It was informed that to progress on this the CPW launched on the 3rd of March 2016 a [Glossary of Wildlife Management Terms and Definitions](#), which aims to raise awareness of the diverse usage and meanings of technical items related to wildlife management and conservation. Another issue raised is the need to distinguish between hunting and poaching. It was underlined that trophy hunting is legal and not leading to the extinction of animals rather it supports administrations and local communities in law enforcement. It was said that in many places trophy hunting is an important source of income. The revenue contributes to positive attitudes towards wildlife. The CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe and the Namibian community conservancy model were brought forward as excellent examples of how the land-owning communities receive the full amount of the hunting revenue. It was stressed that there are many underlining causes for poaching with some socio-economic drivers similar to deforestation. It was reiterated that hunters need to be closely involved in countering wildlife crime as they play an essential role in monitoring at field level. It was concluded by stressing that hunters are the first to participate in anti-poaching activities.

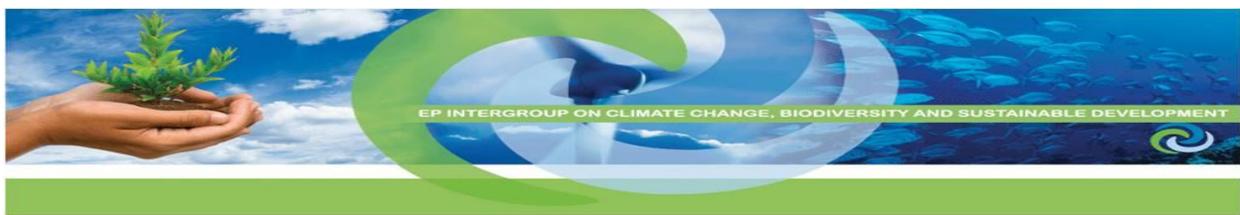
Rosie Cooney, Chair of the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, International Union for Conservation of Nature underlined that while most global wildlife trade is legal and much of it sustainable, illegal wildlife trade has reached crisis proportions. It was pointed out that illegal wildlife trade is increasingly linked to organised crime and can be a source of revenue to armed militias. Three areas of action characterise most policy responses; law enforcement, reducing demand for illegal products; supporting communities and livelihoods. It was said that, however, the latter measure has not received the attention

¹ http://fp7hunt.net/Portals/HUNT/Hunting_Charter.pdf



it deserves. Even though law enforcement is always a critical element to combat illegal wildlife trade it was said that "top down" approaches can be problematic as they can be associated with human right abuses and undermine conservation approaches based on attempts to work in partnership with communities. It was also said that where even where effective, they can lead to displacement of poaching to other areas; increased prices and increased incentives to poach. It was emphasised that when addressing illegal wildlife crime the broader conservation context must be understood. Wildlife policies have often led to wildlife having no value to people, and yet living next to wildlife is often dangerous and costly. This can drive conversion of natural habitats to other land uses, poaching, and retaliatory killing. It was underlined that it is important to make wildlife valuable to people and provide strong incentives to co-exist. Further, it was underscored that communities can be powerful and positive agents for change as they can be the eyes and ears of enforcement. They are also highly motivated where they have a strong sense of ownership/stewardship and perceive poaching as stealing from them. Further, strong cooperative relationships with arresting authorities were stated as crucial. Two community-led examples were highlighted. Firstly, the Mali Elephant Project which has established volunteer brigades with non-financial benefits to help protect elephants. It was said that the engagement in anti-poaching activities supports cultural identity, help protects livestock and manage resources. It was stated that poaching still exists but this initiative helps curb it. The second example entails community engagement against rhino poaching in Mangalane, Mozambique, which ensures financial benefits from gaining share of trophy hunting revenues, which is used for community development. It was pointed out that the impact on poaching is not yet clear but community attitudes to wildlife and conservation have changed. It was stressed that there is no panacea but what matters is the need to work alongside communities to address illegal wildlife trade. It was recommended that; policy-makers recognise the central role that communities play; strengthen community voices in decision-making; support community rights and responsibilities for managing wildlife; strengthen communities' abilities to benefit from wildlife; ensure enforcement efforts are sensitive and accountable; strengthen partnerships between communities, conservation NGOs and law enforcement agencies in tackling illegal wildlife trade; strengthen the evidence base on the motivations for, drivers of, dynamics of, and responses to illegal wildlife trade.

Alexander Kasterine, International Trade Centre (ITC) underlined that what pays stays, stressing that the main problem facing biodiversity is competition with agriculture for land use. In response to this it was pointed out as essential to think about how wildlife is valued so that it can essentially compete with these forces by building economic value. It was said that biodiversity must be viewed as a trade opportunity in order to harness the market and support conservation. It was said that ITC works to promote sustainable sourcing of CITES listed species. The methodology used in addressing the aid for trade programmes is a two-step approach. Firstly an analysis is made to determine sustainability and competitiveness issues in selected value chains, and secondly provision capacity building to value chain actors such as farmers, SMEs, policy makers. The example of promoting sustainable sourced python skin in South East Asia was given. It was explained that ITC undertook a study to identify concerns about the sustainable use of pythons examining the economic and sustainability analysis of wild harvest and captive breeding to livelihoods as well as the



traceability schemes for python trade. The outcome of this led to improved basis for CITES parties decision-making and improved welfare and sustainable sourcing. It also highlights a successful public-private partnership encouraging sustainable legal trade. Another example highlighted was the assessment of consumer demand for rhino horn in Viet Nam, which highlights more economic analysis of consumer preferences for rhino horn. It was examined who consumes, what is the overriding preference (Illegal, sustainable, farmed, wild, substitute), and if demand can be reduced. It was said that the outcome has provided better decision-making on policy. It was stressed that trade in wildlife is a credible livelihood strategy. It was underlined that sustainable sourcing is a function of resilience of species, governance (trade bans, quotas, CSR, property rights), and consumer preferences (e.g. legal and sustainable vs illegal; level of substitution between farmed, wild, synthetic). It was stressed that capacity-building on sustainable sourcing and management are required. Further, policy-making needs to incorporate socio-economic analysis as well as biological assessment and legal frameworks.

Philippe Mayaux, Head of Biodiversity and Forests Sector, DG DEVCO, European Commission underlined that the EU continues to provide support to African National Parks as the sound management of ecosystems and species is a major concern at global level. It was also said that from the development point of view it is essential to ensure socio-economic development in these regions as conservation also leads to stability and security. The Commission along with partners recently produced the Larger than Elephants study², which aims to identify at the scale of Sub-Saharan Africa the principal threats to wildlife and the most appropriate responses for the next 10 years. The study is not limited to wildlife trafficking, but focuses on conservation and sustainable management of wildlife and its linkage with development. The strategy stands on three pillars; site, national, and international level. With regards to site level it was said that it aims to work on 77 key landscapes for conservation. It was reiterated that national parks are at the center and must be protected with strong force along the protected areas, but that in the same time, livelihood improvement of local communities and their involvement in law enforcement is essential for maintaining the integrity of large ecosystems and endangered species. With regards to the national level institutional strengthening and capacity-building are essential. At the international level it aims to stop the illegal killing, trafficking and demand of wildlife products. The EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking³ was also mentioned, which aims to address the drivers of illegal wildlife, ensure enforcement, and to build a strong international partnership. It was also said that the debate regarding sustainable hunting is a complex issue and policies need to adapt to the local situation stressing the need for a pragmatic approach where the ultimate goal is to ensure development of communities and biodiversity. Sustainable hunting can be one of the activities generating revenue for ensuring the biodiversity conservation, together with tourism, exploitation of non-timber products or payment for ecosystem services. But the sustainability must be maintained in all dimensions: economic (with the long-term guarantees for the private operators), ecological (with activities based on robust and regular surveys of populations and adaptive

² https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eu-wildlife-strategy-africa-synthesis-2015_en_0.pdf

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0087&from=EN>



management) and social (with the main benefit for local communities). The various models of Private-Public-Communities Partnership (PPCP) should be adapted to the local situations.

The debate with the audience highlighted the issue of putting more emphasis on the ocean and its immense biodiversity as well as the need to discuss unregulated and illegal wildlife related to fisheries. In response to this it was said that the CPW aims to promote conservation through the sustainable management of terrestrial vertebrate wildlife but marine wildlife is an important component of wildlife in general. It was said that the marine realm together with timber are the most important economic areas with regards to wildlife trade. It was also mentioned that Indigenous Peoples and Local communities possess traditional knowledge systems which can contribute to sustainable development. However, due to direct and indirect pressures some traditional knowledge systems have become less relevant. The importance of wild meat was further stressed underlining that in many rural places people have negative impressions of domesticated meat and find it satisfying to catch and hunt their own living. It was underlined that sustainable hunting will not be sustained unless source areas are managed also highlighting the complexity of coming up with alternative protein sources. It was also said that better inspection is needed on informal imports on wild meat. The recent IUCN Briefing on Trophy Hunting⁴ was highlighted with participants taking various views to its contents. It was noted that the briefing provides evidence that some trophy hunting has benefits, and that trophy hunting is sometimes poorly managed and unsustainable. Better administration and management of hunting is needed. It was also noted that trophy hunting is usually not a significant cause for species decline and can provide reasons for the protection of species. It was said that in many cases hunting is returning inadequate benefits, which is one of the fundamental reasons to why some hunting programmes are not working well and the need to increase the benefits is part of the reform needed. The need to ensure policy coherency among all levels was also stressed also underlining that in order to improve policies more evidence can be gathered by conducting further studies and analyses to underscore the benefits of these approaches.

Pavel Poc MEP and Chair of the EP Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development” concluded by welcoming further discussion on this important matter in order to achieve the overall objectives of conservation and enhancing human well-being.

⁴ http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_informingdecisionsontrophyhuntingv1.pdf