

Transport sector joins fight against wildlife crime

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Container port on the North Sea, Antwerp, Belgium. Credit: WWF / Michel GUNTHER

The global fight against wildlife crime received another major boost with the signing of a declaration at Buckingham Palace in London committing the leaders of the global transportation industry to take concrete steps to tackle wildlife trafficking.

Leaders of 40 airlines, shipping firms, port operators, customs agencies, intergovernmental organisations and conservation charities from around the world signed the historic Declaration of the United for Wildlife International Taskforce on the Transportation of Illegal Wildlife Products at the palace.

"The poaching crisis is bringing violence, death, and corruption to many vulnerable communities and threatens to rob future generations of their livelihoods," said the Duke of Cambridge. "But this crisis can be stopped. By implementing these commitments, the signatories of the Buckingham Palace Declaration can secure a game changer in the race against extinction. I thank them for their commitment and I invite any other company in the industry to sign up to Declaration and play their part in the fight against the poaching crisis."

The Buckingham Palace Declaration is the result of a year's worth of meetings, research, and coalition building by the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce, convened by The Duke of Cambridge and chaired by Lord Hague of Richmond.



Workers at the customs department in Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport open a box of seized illegal elephant Ivory. Credit: WWF / James Morgan

Transport representatives on the Taskforce include companies and organisations based in China, USA, UAE, Kenya, the UK and Denmark.

"The Buckingham Palace Declaration is a major achievement as the transport sector has a key role in tackling this destructive trade. This landmark agreement sets out clear actions the transport industry can take to stop criminals from exploiting their legal transit routes," said Glyn Davies, Conservation Director, WWF-UK.

"We applaud the 40 companies that have already signed this landmark agreement and encourage other companies to sign up too. Together we can stop this devastating trade."



Southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*). Adult and calf at water way. The white rhino is listed by the IUCN and all other conservation groups as endangered. Many game wardens and researchers routinely risk their lives to help protect this species from poachers. New and innovative management programs are being developed to help save this magnificent creature. Just over 4000 white rhinos exist in the wild today. Southern Africa and East Africa. Credit: Martin Harvey / WWF

The Declaration commits signatories to eleven steps that will raise standards across the transportation industry to prevent traffickers from exploiting weaknesses as they seek to covertly move their products from killing field to marketplace.

The commitments focus on information sharing, staff training, technological improvements, and resource sharing across companies and organisations worldwide. They will also see the world's leading transportation firms assisting those in poorer nations who are in need of expertise and new systems.

"WWF is proud to be part of this dynamic United for Wildlife Taskforce and looks forward to continuing to work with the signatories in tackling this devastating trade in the parts of threatened animals," added Davies. "Now we have the Declaration, efforts must focus on implementing the much needed actions to help end this illegal trade. Only by making it harder for criminals can we stop the trade."



Elephants are among the flagship species in Uganda. Credit:
Naturepl.com/AndyRouse/WWFCanon

The work of the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce has been strongly supported not only by the transport sector but a number of intergovernmental agencies including the World Customs Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme and importantly CITES – the world's regulatory instrument on trade in endangered species.

"I want to thank everyone who has been part of this unprecedented initiative and I ask them all to sustain the momentum we have established over the past 15 months," said Lord Hague. "It is nearly too late to save our rhinos, elephants, tigers, and other iconic species, but it is not quite too late. It will require our combined efforts, resolve, and intensified determination and that is what this Declaration is about."

- The commitments in the Buckingham Palace Declaration include:
- Developing information sharing systems for the transport industry to receive credible information about high risk routes and methods of transportation;
- Supporting a secure system for passing information about suspected [illegal wildlife trade](#) from the transport sector to relevant customs and [law enforcement authorities](#); and
- Notifying relevant law enforcement authorities of cargoes suspected of containing illegal [wildlife](#) and their products and, where able, refuse to accept or ship such cargoes.

Provided by WWF

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