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PRESS INVITATION

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Tokyo Conference on Combating Wildlife Crime

DATE + TIME: Monday, 3 March 2014, 9:30 AM–5:30 PM (Conference) and
Tuesday, 4 March 2014, 4:00 PM (Plenary Session and Press Briefing)

VENUE: U Thant Hall (3F), United Nations University Headquarters, Tokyo

ORGANIZER: The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability

You are cordially invited to attend the **Tokyo Conference on Combating Wildlife Crime**, a **World Wildlife Day** event starting from 9:30 AM on 3 March, and a conference plenary session and press briefing starting from 4:00 PM on 4 March. The events will be held at the United Nations University (UNU) Headquarters in Tokyo.



**WORLD
WILDLIFE DAY
3 MARCH**

Each year the illicit wildlife trade accounts for US\$ billions in criminal transactions, while destabilizing ecosystems and pushing some of the world's most sensitive species closer to extinction. In December 2013, to spotlight the need for protection of wildlife and to recognize its intrinsic value to science, society, ecosystems and economies, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 3 March as World Wildlife Day. This was followed by the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade held on 12–13 February 2014, where 46 countries jointly declared landmark commitments to tackling wildlife trafficking and its impacts.

Reinforcing these commitments, and in recognition of World Wildlife Day, the UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability will host the Tokyo Conference on Combating Wildlife Crime to raise awareness of and promote targeted solutions to this pressing global problem.

Since 2005 the UNU has led development of the Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System (WEMS), a Geographic Information System-based initiative that measures and analyzes wildlife crime data to improve compliance monitoring for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Through interdisciplinary development of this transboundary information strategy, the UNU and its partners have empowered four African countries — Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and the Republic of the Congo — to unite against wildlife poaching, through effective and timely information sharing across borders.

Despite the success of WEMS and related initiatives carried out by INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the CITES Secretariat, the growing sophistication of trafficking syndicates urgently calls for an increasingly coordinated response from the international community. To spur new approaches and partnerships, the Tokyo Conference will bring together leading experts — on wildlife crime and conservation, on transboundary enforcement, and on the latest wildlife monitoring technologies — for a series of public panel discussions intended to share diverse insight on the current issues impacting wildlife protection policy.

Tokyo Conference on Combating Wildlife Crime

Representatives from governments, enforcement programmes, international NGOs, and UN agencies will have a rare opportunity to meet and co-examine their roles in supporting evidence-based policymaking to fight wildlife crime. Importantly, the conference will feature experts from Japan's government and NGO sectors who will share lessons from the country's experiences of combating wildlife crime.

Persistent obstacles to fighting wildlife crime include both the lack of a common global plan for transboundary information sharing as well as limited access to updated wildlife crime data. Overcoming these challenges will be the focus during two days of post-conference working groups, a public plenary and a technical WEMS training.

On 4 March the highlighted outcome of the working groups and plenary session will be the Tokyo Declaration on Transboundary Information Sharing, a first-of-its-kind commitment to bridging the existing mechanisms in transboundary information exchange while defining a role for science in data analytics, policymaking and capacity development.

Media representatives and journalists are invited to attend the conference on 3 March as well as the plenary session and press briefing on 4 March.

Simultaneous Japanese–English interpretation will be provided for the 3 March conference, but will not be provided for the 4 March plenary session and press briefing.

For further details, or to register to attend, please see the event announcement on the UNU website: <http://unu.edu/events/upcoming/combating-wildlife-crime.html>

Journalists who have questions, or who prefer to register by e-mail or phone, may contact Ms. Makiko Arima, UNU-IAS Communications Associate (arima@ias.unu.edu, +81 45 221 2327).