



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS**  
on the occasion of  
**WORLD WILDLIFE DAY**  
**3 March 2015**

At the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Parties recognized in Decision XII/18 the considerable scale of illegal trade in wildlife and its detrimental economic, social and environmental consequences. They also recognised the importance of embedding a livelihood and governance perspective to address the challenge.

This decision demonstrates that governments are coming to realise that monitoring and curbing wildlife crimes both in and outside protected areas requires a coherent and cross-sectoral approach that integrates wildlife values into policies and plans of relevant economic and social sectors. It requires us to go beyond enforcement policies and look at governance, institutions and empowerment, including of indigenous peoples and local communities.

The limited distinction between illegal activities driven by large scale profits, versus those driven by poverty poses serious threats to local communities. The challenge for many countries is to counter the strong economic forces in the illegal trade of wildlife that far outmatch incentives to conserve and sustainably use wildlife resources. The impact on livelihoods of declining wild populations of species that are important for subsistence use or income generation cannot be overlooked. In this context, empowering indigenous peoples and local communities and incentivizing them through co-management approaches to sustainably manage wildlife, will be crucial.

The words of Dr. Elinor Ostrom are instructive “*we will all be the poorer if local, self-organized institutions are not a substantial portion of the institutional portfolio of the twenty-first century*” Communities themselves can often define ways to govern the commons to assure its survival for their needs and those of future generations. Communities develop monitoring mechanisms consistent with the customs that characterize the way in which those communities live. Effective examples of “governing the commons” have been reported in her research in Kenya, Guatemala, Nepal, and Turkey, to name a few.

Through the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), fourteen likeminded partners, including the CBD Secretariat, have been devising initiatives to safeguard biodiversity and sustainably use wildlife resources, strengthen local capacities and foster international cooperation where it matters most. The E-sourcebook on bushmeat launched today is an example of the type of joint awareness raising initiatives developed by the CPW.

On World Wildlife Day, as we seek to work to combat illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, let us look at ways to combine enforcement with empowerment, and therefore protect the “Future we Want,” a future of life in harmony with nature.