



Statement

MALAWI JOINS CALL FOR A NEW GLOBAL AGREEMENT TO PREVENT AND COMBAT WILDLIFE CRIME

Situated in the heart of Southern Africa, Malawi has long been at the forefront of the fight against illicit wildlife trafficking, fighting against both those who use Malawi as a source of illicit wildlife products and those who use it as a significant transit and distribution hub for products sourced from surrounding countries. Reaffirming once again Malawi's commitment to tackling this issue, I am now proud to join the Presidents of Costa Rica, Gabon and Angola in calling for a new international agreement to prevent and combat wildlife crime.

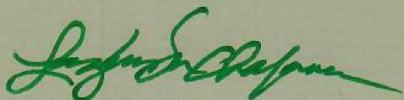
As I have stated previously, "in 2016, Malawi was identified as a country of primary concern at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Wildlife crime was eroding our natural resources, undermining our nation's economic prosperity, threatening our social stability and inhibiting benefits derived from legal nature-based enterprises like tourism." This is why today, wildlife crime is at the top of Malawi's political agenda, and significant progress has already been reported in that regard, thanks to much-needed legislative reforms, increased inter-agency cooperation, and a progressive model of investigations and prosecutions.

Additionally, we have made it a key priority to combat corruption in the sectors of wildlife and forestry, as it is with the support of corrupt individuals in the trafficking supply chain that international organized criminal groups continue to illicitly trade in products such as ivory, pangolin, and rhino horn. We are aware that wildlife crime is a highly-organised transnational phenomenon and no single country can successfully eradicate it on its own. But we are determined to do our part. We can no longer stand by as we witness the destruction of our nation's natural heritage. I therefore proudly support the call to action of President Ali Bongo Ondimba, President Carlos Alvarado Quesada and President João Lourenço, and urge other countries to do the same.

Malawi is joining Angola, Costa Rica and Gabon in calling for preventing and combating wildlife crime to be embedded into the international criminal law framework by developing a new global agreement, namely a new agreement

on wildlife crime, taking the form of a Protocol under the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) to stop the illicit trafficking in wild fauna and flora. The existing UNTOC Protocols are on trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.

Malawi is determined to sustain its global reputation as a bastion and haven of flora and fauna diversity, as well as its impressive track record of tackling the illicit trade of ivory, for which it has been recognised internationally.



Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Lilongwe

Thursday, 6th January 2022

