



Présidence de la République Gabonaise
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Joint Statement

Gabon and Costa Rica call for a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife crime

Costa Rica and Gabon are 10,000 kilometres apart, separated by the wide expanses of the Atlantic Ocean, but both nations are standing side by side in calling for a new international agreement to prevent and combat the scourge of wildlife crime.

“Wildlife crimes, pose a threat to human and animal health, driving many species towards extinction, degrading entire ecosystems and their ability to sequester carbon, depriving governments of revenue, exacerbating corruption, insecurity, and poverty. If we include the impacts of these crimes on ecosystems, then The World Bank estimates their value at a staggering \$1-2 trillion a year” said His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba President of the Gabonese Republic.

“The world is still feeling the full brunt of a pandemic, which most likely had its origins in wildlife, we are advised that there are hundreds of thousands of new viruses that could spill over from wildlife to humans, we are struggling to combat climate change, and staring down the loss of a million species. The illicit trafficking in wildlife is exacerbating all of these inter-related global crises” said His Excellency Carlos Alvarado Quesada President Republic of Costa Rica.

“Given the scale of the risks to people and the planet, we simply cannot stand by and watch wildlife continue to disappear without strengthening our collective response, including international laws for combating and preventing wildlife crime. It’s time to treat wildlife crimes as the serious and highly destructive crimes that they are. We owe it to the world’s youth to act boldly and swiftly to ensure we pass on a healthy and prosperous planet” said President Ali Bongo Ondimba and President Carlos Alvarado Quesada.

Both Costa Rica and Gabon are 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 Fourth Protocol under the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) against the illicit trafficking in wild fauna and flora. The three existing Protocols are on trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.

Costa Rica and Gabon are global leaders in promoting nature conservation and recognising its centrality to protecting biodiversity, combating climate change, preventing future wildlife-related pandemics, ensuring security and for generating decent jobs.

Gabon and Costa Rica have some of the most unique biodiversity on the planet and are recognised internationally for their leadership and efforts in setting aside marine and terrestrial protected areas, as well as for their leadership role in seeking to combat illicit trafficking of wild fauna and flora, and Gabon has co-chaired of the UN Group of Friends on Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking, established in New York in December 2013.

Gabon and Costa Rica are both members of the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People](#), a coalition of over 60 inter-regional countries championing the protection of 30% of planet’s land and 30% of the planet’s ocean by 2030.

Notes to editors:

Single use images and footage [here](#). Credit: Paul Hilton Earth Tree Images.

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