

CITES COP16 Side Event Report

United Nations University-Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) in partnership with Lusaka Agreement Task Force, ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and ITC-University of Twente, presented the Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System (WEMS) initiative on 6th March 2013 during the sidelines of the 16th Conference of Parties of the CITES Convention held in Bangkok.

The event was presided by the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism of the United Republic of Tanzania Hon. Ambassador Khamis Juma Suedi Kagasheki and Minister for Forest Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Congo, Hon. Henri DJOMBO, (MP) (who is also the President of the Governing Council of the Lusaka Agreement) along with the Vice Rector of United Nations University, Prof Govindan Parayil; Dr. Theerapat Prayurasiddhi, Deputy Director General, Department of National Parks, Thailand and, the Director of Lusaka Agreement Task Force, Mr. Bonaventure Ebayi. The event was supported by International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

Prof. Govindan Parayil spoke about the importance and relevance of CITES convention in a time when the wild flora and fauna is under threat due to illegal trade. Congratulating the CITES staff for their intense effort to protect the species from unsustainable trade, Prof. Parayil emphasized the need for advanced level monitoring and the use of ICT in overcoming the challenges in illegal trade. He stressed the importance of Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System (WEMS) initiative and how it has helped enforcement agencies in the pilot countries where the project was implemented. Please [click here](#) to find the complete speech.

Mr. Bonaventure Ebayi highlighted the significance of WEMS in East Africa and how the governance framework developed by UNU-IAS and ITC-University of Twente had made significant contribution in bringing consensus over transboundary information sharing. He highlighted the need for stronger collaboration with ASEAN region so as to work out a trans-continental ICT framework in effective enforcement information sharing.

Dr. Theerapat Prayurasiddhi DDG of national parks of Thailand highlighted how WEMS initiative will help support the work of ASEAN enforcement agencies. He stressed the need for the use of new technologies in combatting wildlife crime and the need for bridging ASEAN and Africa regions through the WEMS initiative. Dr. Theerapat also mentioned that he will bring up the need for the implementation of WEMS in the ASEAN region during the upcoming ASEAN meeting.

Mr. Kelvin Alie from IFAW provided an overview of WEMS initiative and the role of civil society participation. Kelvin highlighted the commitment of IFAW to continue the support for WEMS initiative.

The Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism of the United Republic of Tanzania Hon. Ambassador Khamis Juma Suedi Kagasheki thanked United Nations University for supporting the East Africa Region and he said WEMS should be expanded to serve the wider purpose of African countries. In a time where resources are short, the need for cooperation and coordination through new technologies were also highlighted.

The Minister for Forest Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Congo, Hon. Henri DJOMBO, (MP), also reaffirmed his commitment to strengthen the WEMS initiative and as the Chair of the governing council of Lusaka Agreement, he will take note of the developments that have taken place and will push for greater global coordination among international donors.

A panel of scientists working on WEMS initiative gave a technical presentation during the event where the role of science was highlighted.

Mr. Remi Chandran described the different governance frameworks that were adopted in WEMS for its successful implementation. Describing the long history of WEMS initiative, he stressed the need for greater participation among various actors including civil society, and governments to enhance information sharing. [Presentation is available here](#)

Dr. Ng Chong described the unique role of the United Nations University Cloud Computing in ICT-enabled development strategies in Africa and how its inbuilt technology can be a source of trust in managing the different views of participating government agencies in WEMS. The UNU Cloud is also the only private cloud facility within the UN system that has been put into use as a secure platform for information sharing in the global fight against wildlife crime. [Presentation is available here](#)

Dr Lisa Lee highlighted the role of research and how research using real time data can bring about good enforcement actions on the ground. The analyzed data from the WEMS system was used to showcase the trends and threats on illegal wildlife crime in Africa. [Presentation is available here](#)

Dr. Thomas Snitch gave an overview on the use of satellite technology and UAV's. The presentation highlighted the use of drones in combatting wildlife crime and the challenges associated with it. [By clicking here you can find a complete presentation.](#)

Dr. Samuel Wasser from the University of Washington gave a presentation on DNA analysis and how the technology can be used to trace back to the origin of the seizure. [Presentation is available here](#)

Dr. Wendy Guan from Harvard University presented the Harvard World map and how it is integrated into the WEMS system. [Presentation is available here.](#)