## **ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME,** IT'S GLOBAL THEFT





**ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME PROGRAMME** 





### **Environmental crime and its impact**

Environmental crime is big business. In fact, it's currently one of the most profitable forms of criminal activity taking place throughout the world, with billions of dollars being made every year. And it's growing. From the illegal trade in wildlife and the illicit transport of hazardous wastes, to illegal fishing and the trade in stolen timber, environmental crime is a serious international problem that can affect a nation's economy, security or even existence.

Take illegal logging for example. Not only does it contribute to deforestation but it can cause increased flooding and is known to be a major contributor to climate change. Or take the illegal emissions of pollutants into the air. The United Nations estimates that more than 2 million people die prematurely every year from air pollution. If that isn't bad enough, illegal air emissions reduce the amount of arable land far from the pollutant's source causing further disease, hunger and economic turmoil.

Furthermore, consider the effects of illegal wildlife poaching and trafficking on the planet's biodiversity. Ruthless criminals who poach tigers to feed the illicit market have brought many of the iconic big cat species close to extinction in their natural habitats, and the tigers are not alone. Every day endangered species are brought closer to the brink by the actions of these criminals and, if their activities are permitted to continue unchecked, we will see yet more species added to the endangered list.

But it's not just the effect on the world's ecological and economic balance. Organized crime networks are responsible for a significant proportion of environmental crime. It takes a lot of careful planning to traffic illegal items across countries and continents, and the same routes are used to smuggle weapons, drugs and people. It's no surprise that environmental crime often occurs hand in hand with other offences such as passport fraud, corruption, money loundering and murder.

Clearly, there is a global dimension to environmental crime that can be tackled effectively only with the combined commitment and action of law enforcement agencies, governments, international organizations and the private sector across the world.



### **INTERPOL**

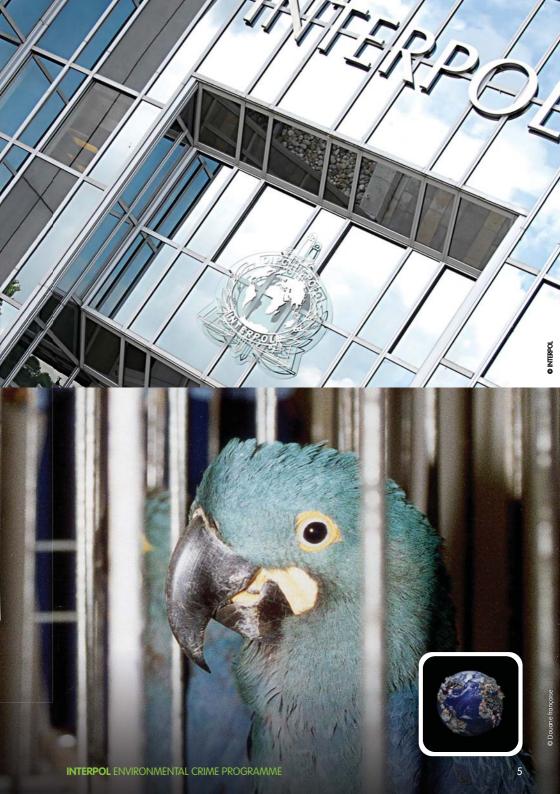
INTERPOL is well placed to make a difference. As the world's largest international police organization with 188 member countries, our primary objective is to assist the law enforcement community in combating all forms of transnational crime. We facilitate communication and co-operation between agencies in different countries with different languages and cultures. In addition to environmental crime, INTERPOL'S work covers many specialized areas including fugitives; public safety and terrorism; drugs and organized crime; trafficking in human beings; financial and high-tech crime; and corruption.



INTERPOL'S current worldwide activities are based around the following four core functions:

- Secure global police communication services via a system called I-24/7, which provides police around the world with a common platform to share information;
- Operational data services and databases for police, giving member countries direct access to information such as known criminals, fingerprints, DNA profiles and stolen or lost travel documents;
- Operational police support services, including a Command and Co-ordination Centre which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- Police training and development to share knowledge and best practice and to enhance the capacity of member countries to combat transnational crime.





### WHAT ON EARTH?

# The INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme

So what is INTERPOL doing to help conserve the world's environment, biodiversity and natural resources and prevent criminal gangs from plundering the planet for a quick profit?

INTERPOL's dedicated Environmental Crime Programme strives to identify trends in environmental crime, to support the international exchange of skills and information throughout INTERPOL's 188 member countries, and to provide on-the-ground assistance in law enforcement operations.

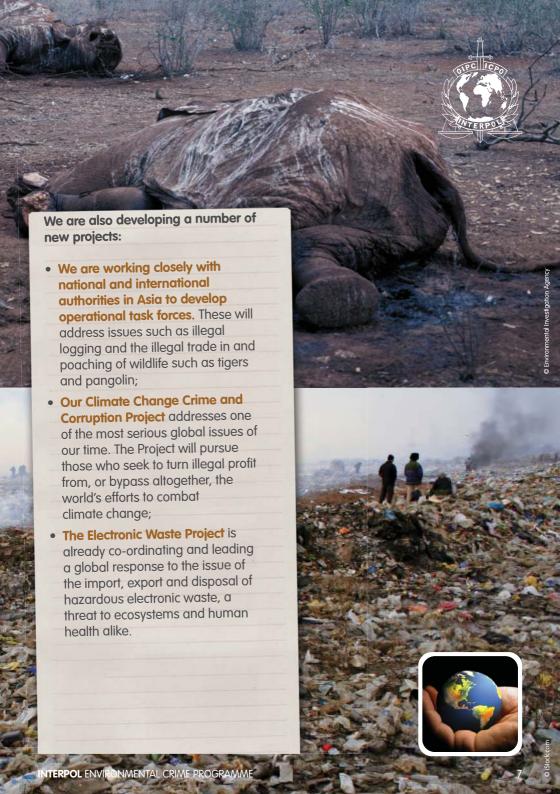
We are building up a co-ordinated network of specialized environmental law enforcement officers to lead initiatives in this area and forming working groups to tackle specific environmental crime threats. These groups will act as centres of best practice and expertise, and will lead new projects related to the prevention of crime and the detection and apprehension of those criminals who flout environmental laws.

If you want evidence that our programme is working, take a look below:

- We assisted the Brazilian Federal Police with their largest operation in a decade against wildlife crime.

  The first day of the operation resulted in 102 arrest warrants being issued, 140 search warrants being carried out and the seizure of 3,597 specimens of wildlife. One suspect, a European National, was arrested as far away as Indonesia due to the use of INTERPOL'S Red Notice (an international alert for a wanted person) and secure communications systems;
- Operation Baba The largest international operation against wildlife crime ever conducted in Africa led to the arrest of nearly 60 people and the seizure of one ton of illegal elephant ivory. The five-country law enforcement operation was co-ordinated by INTERPOL;
- In conjunction with the CITES

  Secretariat we published an
  operational manual on the controlled
  delivery of illegally trafficked wildlife
  and, through Project Clean Seas, we
  developed a manual on investigating
  vessel pollution. These tools have
  already been embraced and are in
  operational use throughout our
  member countries.







### **Get involved**

We all have a responsibility towards our planet. And if INTERPOL is to continue to identify and respond to emerging environmental crime trends, we need your support.

Law enforcement officers, you can contact your INTERPOL National Central Bureau to find out what's happening in your country and to share your ideas and best practice. Or get in touch with us at the General Secretariat with any requests or suggestions. Remember, we need your input in order to build a solid network of international environmental law enforcement specialists.

Naturally, keeping our services in line with the fast-evolving challenges of international crime requires funding and partnerships with other international organizations and the private sector. If you think you can contribute in any way, we'd like to hear from you, as only together can we conserve the environment for future generations.

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