

## SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP 2H: WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT NETWORK

Facilitators: Azzedine Downes, International Fund for Animal Welfare  
Yvan Lafleur, Environment Canada  
Ladislav Miko, Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic

Rapporteur: Anita Sundari Akella, Consultant, United States

### GOALS

- (1) To identify tools to encourage information sharing among wildlife enforcement experts at the interagency and international levels.
- (2) To establish a mechanism for coordination and exchange of information regarding wildlife enforcement, including input from various relevant organizations and agencies.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The facilitators opened the workshop by advancing a series of questions discussed by the participants:

- (1) What should the membership of a wildlife enforcement network be?
- (2) What is the function of a wildlife enforcement network?
- (3) How can such a network be effective across barriers arising from level of development, language, and culture?

### 2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Ms. Donna Campbell began the discussion by asserting that “wildlife protection” should include not only managing illegal trade, but also habitat protection.

Mr. Ken Ledgerwood asserted that the wildlife enforcement network's goal should be to break the links in the chain that Bill Clark discussed during Panel 3 (Enforcement Initiatives: Stories of Success) earlier in the day.

Mr. Azzedine Downes pointed out that in the past, networks have linked lawyers to lawyers and investigators to investigators only, but that this is not necessarily the best way to advance a network. Instead, the network should link disparate

agencies involved in enforcement, and even people whose direct function is not necessarily enforcement should be included. Mr. Peter Pueschel elaborated on the idea by offering that such a network could also help overcome the silence on wildlife enforcement issues at the decision-making table.

Mr. Ofir Drori offered his opinion that the network should focus on two types of objectives: strategic (giving a global view of the problem so that appropriate responses can be generated) and tactical (collaborating and exchanging information on specific cases).

In response to Ms. Donna Campbell's inquiry into what the problems are with the networks that currently exist, Mr. Yvan Lafleur declared that from the enforcement official's perspective, a network like this is only useful if it helps you obtain information and contacts from other countries. For instance, if you can get information on cultural context (specific details relevant to a particular investigation, or help in identification of species), or on laws in other countries (through links to expert lawyers, etc.)

Ms. Rosalind Reeve also stated that from a non-governmental organization's (NGO's) perspective, a network like

this should provide a place to give information on wildlife trade and smuggling issues and cases because they often have information, but nowhere to report it. Accordingly, NGOs should definitely be involved in such a network, after establishing certain protocols for NGO participation to avoid compromising sensitive data, etc. She explained that wildlife enforcement networks do exist, but they tend to be closed off to anyone other than enforcement or government officials (e.g. the Tiger Enforcement working group of CITES and the Interpol working group) and/or relate to a specific region only (e.g. Lusaka, which is only in Africa, only accessible to government). Aside from this, most “networking” is happening informally, individually, and could probably benefit from greater cohesion.

Dr. Ladislav Miko, Deputy Minister for the Czech Ministry of the Environment, declared that the Interpol Working Group has been very useful to him both in finding contacts and allowing him to make use of technical capacity (e.g., experts or laboratories) in other countries. However, a major challenge he recognized is how to institute interaction and cooperation with non-enforcement bodies like NGOs. Many times, these channels are actually only accessible by the police, and not even by Ministry officials. Many of the “networks” tend to be diffuse and informal, based on personal relationships only. This lack of cohesion may be difficult to overcome – for instances, there are databases in different countries that all get their information from the same source (e.g. Ecomessage) and yet the databases containing this same information cannot be joined.

At this point, Ms. Donna Campbell asked whether much of the information would be available to NGOs if they were even included in the network. In response, Mr. Yvan Lafleur stated that the network could be sanitized so that they would be able to have access to it without any concerns about sensitivity arising. On another point, Mr. Lafleur noted that there really is no point in the existing formal/interpersonal networks operating in isolation, but

acknowledged that we will never be able to change the way that the World Customs Organization, Interpol, and others conduct their business. Therefore, if those “clubs” were to be part of a larger umbrella, maybe there could be greater interaction.

Mr. Bill Clark elaborated that sensitive data should not be much of an issue anyhow, since the truly sensitive information is not transmitted via a network, but government to government. Mr. Peter Poeschel added that in many instances, sharing even nominal information can be useful, not just the sensitive information. Dr. Ladislav Miko illustrated this point by arguing that information on what you do with a seized animal – where you can send it and be assured that they are treating the animals well – could be facilitated by a network that could give this type of “vetting”.

Mr. Ofir Drori emphasized that it is important to divide the objectives of the network at the different levels of operation. For instance, a network should include (a) General information (e.g., contacts in other countries), (b) Strategic information (e.g. like data found in Ecomessage), and (c) Tactical information that maximizes the availability of data for operational use. The last is the most conflicting objective because it involves ensuring confidentiality of data. Mr. Drori then questioned how a network would guarantee that information gets to the right place without spreading the data around.

Mr. Azzedine Downes further declared that a network should also contain an education component that helps to avoid repetition in training programs, organizes capacity-building efforts, addresses overlapping content, etc. It is important that the network make every effort to move beyond the management level, actually getting down to the level of practitioners in the field (not just ministry level or enforcement agency decision-maker level). Ms. Rosalind Reeve elaborated on this by stating that the fact that enforcement agents are not involved in policy and decision-making is a major problem. Because of this, policies that are developed are often impractical for applica-

tion on the ground, or ignore key real issues. We need to also work to put enforcement on the agenda of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

Dr. Ladislav Miko interjected that a network should be a lot of things, but perhaps at this moment we should focus on what is achievable now, rather than getting too lofty or over ambitious. What seems easily done in the short term are things like information sharing and coordination of training activities.

Mr. Bill Clark said that the ground rules for this network in the first instance should be to not engage in projects that are big or sensitive, and to stick to activities that are at the information level, but we can certainly work to assist other existing networks, engaging in do-able mini-projects. For instance CITES has no enforcement authority but countries are meant to identify and list their enforcement authorities with CITES, yet most have not – this could be a constructive project for the network to engage in. In addition, the network could make a listing of the dozen most commonly seized Appendix I/II animals and try to find the best sanctuaries where they can be sent, or identify 200 persistent offenders worldwide and make sure that if captured, there is some public record of it – like a name and shame list, so that it can be consulted by the CITES Management Authority or by local authorities before permits are given. Mr. Yvan Lafleur responded that the only problem is that this type of name-and-shame listing may increase the risk of people deciding not to bother getting a permit.

Mr. Ken Ledgerwood noted that unless networks have a “nerve center” that includes personnel and some access to funding, they do not work. Totally informal does not necessarily work.

Mr. Azzedine Downes added that the International Foundation for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Assurance (INECE) are currently working on developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for joint activities over five years and will be identifying joint projects

Dr. Ladislav Miko looked at the

possibility of providing support from the European Commission (EC) on green issues and identified this as a major priority for his work at the EC. Dr. Miko suggested that this network may or may not have to occur through INECE.

Mr. Peter Pueschel added that developing a system that allowed people access to information without having to go through bureaucratic channels would be an improvement. In this discussion, the prioritized objectives from the group he specifically noted are: (a) Information – new trends in wildlife trade, legislation, publicly accessible databases, and naming and shaming; (b) Special Cooperation/Exchange – rating shelters, developing capacity-building standards, building national capacity, and legislation drafting; and (c) Advocacy/Message-Sending – this happens automatically as the network becomes a presence in congresses where policy/legislation is set.

Dr. Ladislav Miko also added that it is important to engage the NGOs by providing an address to which they can send any information on wildlife trade/smuggling that they have. Ms. Rosalind Reeve stated that the Biosafety Clearinghouse of the Convention on Biological Diversity is a really great nexus of information that could serve as a model/tool for us to learn from as we develop the network.

Mr. Yvan Lafleur pointed out that in order to get people to commit to giving information into the system, it needs to be something formal and established. Also, to avoid people not wanting to be a part of it, it should be based somewhere neutral.

Dr. Hedia Baccar added that the network should also have a sub-regional component.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Dr. Ladislav Miko summarized that some “outputs” or guidelines that we have discussed here include: (a) contacts, information sharing, (b) a specialists group to analyze key problems and come up with recommendations for how each should be handled, and (c) some regional structures

that are linked to an international structure. In addition, the overall points seem to be as follows: (a) Such a network is necessary and useful, (b) it should be informal, but under a formal umbrella, (c) it could be under INECE but need not necessarily be,

(d) the functions of such a network would include strategic and tactical objectives, general data sharing, education/training/capacity building, (e) it should be comprised of both regional subgroups and an international umbrella group.