

REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING:

The Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, created by Executive Order 13648 (July 1, 2013), is in the process of developing a National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking (Strategy), pursuant to Section 4(a) of the Executive Order.

The Task Force is soliciting the recommendations and advice of the Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking on matters to be addressed in the Strategy. In accordance with the Executive Order, the Task Force is considering issues including:

- (i) effective support for anti-poaching activities;
- (ii) coordinating regional law enforcement efforts;
- (iii) developing and supporting effective legal enforcement mechanisms; and
- (iv) developing strategies to reduce illicit trade and reduce consumer demand for trade in protected species.

We welcome the Advisory Council's input on how best to address each of these issues, or others of their suggestion to inform the interagency review process to develop the final Strategy. Attached is a Working Outline that is linked to the Strategy.

The Task Force expects that the Strategy will be a concise document and will lay out the United States' overarching priorities and objectives, as well as the principles that should guide our efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. Items included in the Strategy will be further crystallized and expanded through implementation guidance as needed and appropriate. As we develop the Strategy, we are also considering how best to implement it, and we welcome the Advisory Council's input on more detailed implementation matters as well as on the priorities and objectives to be included in the Strategy itself.

Please note that the Working Outline is subject to change and further development since the Task Force is in the process of deliberating, gathering information, and getting additional feedback from federal departments and agencies, which will need to consider trade-offs and resource issues, as the Strategy is further developed.

Working Draft – Outline National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking

The Task Force has developed a draft of Guiding Principles and Priorities, set forth below. The draft Strategy is being developed consistent with these Principles and Priorities. The Task Force seeks the Advisory Council’s advice on the principles, priorities and the specific actions described to advance the priorities. This Working Outline also includes some directed questions in relation to proposed specific actions – which will draw more specifically on Council members’ expertise. The questions we pose are intended to promote consideration and input by the Council but not to prevent the Council from addressing other relevant issues.

Wildlife Trafficking Strategy Guiding Principles

To respond to the global wildlife trafficking crisis and address related threats to U.S national interests, we will be guided by the following principles.

- 1. Marshal Federal Resources for Combating Wildlife Trafficking** by taking a whole of government approach and by integrating our Nation’s commitment to combat wildlife trafficking into the core missions of all relevant executive branch agencies and departments.
- 2. Use Resources Strategically** by identifying priorities and strategic approaches and by coordinating and harmonizing funding and programs across agencies to maximize strategic impact and minimize duplication of efforts.
- 3. Make Decisions Using the Best Available Information** by developing and using innovative and science-based tools to gather and appropriately share the information needed to fight wildlife trafficking and to assess and improve our and our partners’ efforts.
- 4. Consider All Links of the Illegal Trade Chain** in developing and evaluating strategies to fight wildlife trafficking in order to establish strong and effective long-term solutions that address all aspects of the problem.
- 5. Strengthen Relationships and Partnerships** with the many public and private partners who share our commitment and our belief that continued coordination among nations, as well as with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, are key to stopping wildlife trafficking.

Wildlife Trafficking Strategic Priorities

We have identified three strategic objectives tracks to respond to the global wildlife trafficking crisis and address related threats to U.S. national interests. These are:

1. Strengthening enforcement
2. Reducing demand for illegally trade wildlife, and
3. Building global commitment and cooperation.

We will pursue these priorities using appropriate U.S. Government resources and capabilities across agencies and working in cooperation with other governments, regional and international intergovernmental organizations, and partners from the nonprofit and private sectors.

1. Strengthening Enforcement

To effectively fight wildlife trafficking, countries must have the investigative, enforcement and judicial capabilities to respond to these crimes and disrupt wildlife trafficking networks.

U.S. Domestic Enforcement

- **Assess and Strengthen Legal Authorities.**
 - analyze and assess the existing laws, regulations, and enforcement tools that can be used against wildlife trafficking to determine which are most effective and which may need to be strengthened or supplemented
 - ensure that tools used to address other serious crimes can be used to combat wildlife trafficking as well.

Questions for the Advisory Council: Are there particular enforcement tools or laws that should be strengthened or otherwise changed to improve wildlife protection and enforcement? For example, are there legal authorities or tools currently available to address other types of transnational crime that are not available now, but should be, to address wildlife trafficking? Are there new enforcement tools that should be established either administratively or legislatively?

- **Use Existing Administrative and Regulatory Tools to Fight Wildlife Trafficking.**
 - prioritize near-term policy and regulatory changes that address the current poaching crisis for elephants and rhinos
 - work to eliminate regulatory loopholes

Questions for the Advisory Council: How could administrative or regulatory authorities be used to better address trafficking or other related issues? For example,

are there particular administrative steps that should be taken by Federal agencies to further restrict trade in elephant ivory and rhino horn?

- **Strengthen Interdiction and Investigative Efforts.**
 - enhance efforts to sever the illegal flow of wildlife across and within U.S. borders
 - improve interagency cooperation to detect and interdict wildlife trafficking.
 - identify and address weaknesses in import/export systems

Questions for the Advisory Council: What is the best approach to more effectively stem the illegal flow of wildlife across and within U.S. borders? Are there particular weaknesses in export control mechanisms, international trade controls, and U.S. and foreign financial systems that make them vulnerable to abuse by wildlife traffickers?

- **Prioritize Wildlife Trafficking Across U.S. Enforcement Agencies**
 - work to improve visibility of wildlife trafficking across agencies
- **Enhance Coordination Among Enforcement and Intelligence Agencies.**
 - work to improve interagency cooperation to detect, interdict, and investigate wildlife trafficking
 - work to improve intelligence gathering on transnational organizations

Questions for the Advisory Council: What specifically should be done to improve interagency cooperation and coordination in combating wildlife trafficking? How should federal agencies institutionalize appropriate pathways for conveying intelligence gathered on transnational organizations involved in wildlife trafficking?

- **Use the Funds of Wildlife Traffickers to Stop Trafficking.**
 - use all appropriate tools to capture funds from wildlife trafficking and use those funds to combat wildlife trafficking
 - share information domestically and with committed international partners to investigate the financing of organized wildlife trafficking activities and target the assets of traffickers

Questions for the Advisory Council: Are there existing tools to capture the assets of wildlife traffickers that are not being effectively utilized? Are additional legal authorities needed to ensure that funds generated by wildlife trafficking are directed towards combating wildlife trafficking or remedying the harms caused by such trafficking? Do the fine and penalty provisions in existing laws provide adequate deterrence?

Global Enforcement

- **Strengthen Implementation of International Agreements.**

- Strengthen existing treaties and agreements

Questions for the Advisory Council: What additional steps can the US take to strengthen treaties and agreements to improve implementation? What is the highest priority?

- **Support Governments in Building Capacity.**

- enhance efforts to support our foreign government partners in building their capacity to stop wildlife trafficking

Questions for the Advisory Council: What are the highest priority steps the Federal government can take to support foreign government partners in building their capacity to stop wildlife trafficking and to develop and effectively enforce wildlife trafficking laws?

- **Develop and Disseminate New Technologies and Analytical Tools.**

- support the development of new cost-effective and accurate analytic tools to support wildlife trafficking enforcement
- develop law enforcement tools and techniques that can successfully address cyber activities related to wildlife trafficking

Questions for the Advisory Council: What technologies and analytic tools to support wildlife trafficking enforcement should the Federal government focus its efforts on developing and disseminating? How can the Federal government more effectively engage the private sector in this effort?

- **Enhance Intelligence Collection, Methodology, Analysis, and Information Sharing.**

- ensure that intelligence collection is appropriately integrated into our international wildlife trafficking enforcement efforts

Questions for the Advisory Council: Are there particular steps that the Federal government should take, on its own or with our partner countries, to ensure that intelligence collection supports our international enforcement efforts?

- **Participate in Multinational Enforcement Operations.**

- improve multinational wildlife trafficking enforcement coordination and operations
- foster the development of harmonized standards for screening and forensics to support these enforcement operations.

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the Federal government better support multinational wildlife trafficking enforcement operations and more effectively

engage in joint operations with enforcement authorities of other nations or multinational and intergovernmental bodies? What are the most important issues to address in harmonizing standards for screening and forensics?

- **Support Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) to Facilitate Regional Enforcement Cooperation.**

- continue to provide advice, assist with capacity building, and give operational and technical assistance to these growing networks

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the Federal government better support regional cooperation through WENs, or otherwise? Are there additional areas where WENs would be effective? What, if anything, can the U.S. government do to increase the effectiveness of WENs?

- **Address Wildlife Trafficking in Fighting Other Transnational Organized Crime.**

- increase coordination among the enforcement agencies so that wildlife trafficking issues are addressed as part of the fight against transnational organized crime, generally

Questions for the Advisory Council: What is the best way to increase enforcement of wildlife trafficking as a serious transnational organized crime?

- **Focus On Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows.**

- increase our efforts to work with partner countries to detect and shut down corruption that supports wildlife trafficking

Questions for the Advisory Council: Are there particular steps that the Federal government should take to detect and eliminate corruption among foreign public officials? For example, are there specific ways that we should work with our international partners to identify corruption and disrupt the financial infrastructure associated with wildlife trafficking networks?

2. Reduce Demand for Illegally Traded Wildlife

Increasing anti-poaching and anti-trafficking enforcement efforts will have only limited effect unless we work simultaneously to address the persistent market demand that drives this trade. The illegal taking and sale of wildlife thrives due to the robust demand that exists for contraband wildlife and wildlife products.

- **Raise Public Awareness Regarding Demand**

- work to raise awareness both in the U.S. and around the world of wildlife trafficking and its negative impacts not only on species and the environment but also on national security and the economy
- implement an appropriate public diplomacy strategy to reduce consumption of trafficked wildlife
- work with domestic and international NGOs, civil society groups, private donors, the media and academia

Questions for the Advisory Council: In what ways could the U.S government increase public awareness and recognition of wildlife trafficking and its negative impacts both here and abroad? What is the best way to communicate the harmful impacts of wildlife trafficking on people as well as wildlife? What should be the focus of our diplomatic strategy? How can we best work with domestic and international NGOs, civil society groups, private donors, the media and academia to address this issue?

- **Build Partnerships to Reduce Domestic Demand.**

- team more effectively with non-governmental partners, diaspora communities, and private industry to reduce domestic demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife parts

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the Federal government more effectively team with various groups, including the transportation industry, the tourism sector, restaurant and hotel associations, those in the exotic pet trade, companies operating internet marketplaces, and other private sector entities to reduce demand for illegally trafficked wildlife? Are there ways that the Federal government could more effectively partner with domestic and international NGOs, civil society groups, private donors, the media and academia to focus on research and building political will to combat the organized criminal networks that conduct or facilitate wildlife trafficking?

- **Promote Demand Reduction Efforts Globally.**

- collaborate on public information campaigns with other interested governments and non-governmental partners

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the U.S. government best encourage, support and collaborate with interested governments and others to launch public information campaigns to discourage the sale and purchase of illegally traded wildlife?

3. Build Global Commitment and Cooperation

Combating wildlife trafficking requires the engagement of governments in range, transit, and consumer countries throughout the world. We look not only to promote commitments to conservation and wildlife crime-fighting within each country that faces this challenge but to facilitate cooperation across national borders and within and among regions globally. Our efforts to engage the world in addressing wildlife trafficking must reach beyond governments to recruit, embrace, and empower partners old and new – partners that range from nonprofit conservation groups to grass-roots activists, and from industries that provide infrastructure for both legal and illegal wildlife trade to the media who report on them.

- **Use Diplomacy and Development to Catalyze Political Will.**
 - build on our successful bilateral and multilateral efforts
 - continue to pursue regional initiatives
 - cooperate with and assist wildlife range countries to strengthen their capacity
 - work with local communities to stimulate alternative livelihoods and create support for conservation.

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the U.S. government effectively use multilateral and bilateral efforts in international fora to focus on wildlife trafficking, secure commitments from other governments to take action and treat wildlife trafficking as a serious crime, and strengthen international cooperation? Are there specific ways that the U.S. government should assist wildlife range countries to strengthen their capacity to protect their borders and natural resources?

- **Promote Effective Public-Private Partnerships.**
 - build partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, media, and others to combat wildlife trafficking
 - strengthen existing mechanisms such as the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Trafficking

Questions for the Advisory Council: What are the best specific ways in which the Federal government could build partnerships with the private sector to support sustainable supply chains that will not contribute to illegal wildlife trade? Which public sectors should be our focus?

- **Strengthen Implementation of International Agreements.**
 - consider opportunities to incorporate provisions related to wildlife trafficking into existing and new treaties.
 - examine existing and future U.S. free trade agreements and other trade-related initiatives to enhance cooperation on enforcement activities

Questions for the Advisory Council: How can the Federal government take a greater leadership role in strengthening and ensuring the effective implementation of existing treaties and agreements such as CITES? What about changes in Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties? How can the Federal government more effectively support regional fishery management organizations to better detect and suppress Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fishing?

- **Encourage Development of Innovative Approaches.**
 - leverage the United States' technological expertise and our convening power
 - challenge the private sector and the NGO and academic communities to think beyond business as usual.

Questions for the Advisory Council: How should the Federal government leverage the United States' technological expertise and our convening power to promote creative ideas, innovative solutions, such as advanced wildlife forensics and tracking financial flows, and strategic partnerships? Are there ways that we can more effectively work with the private sector and the NGO and academic communities to assist us in this process?