



**Office of the President  
of the General Assembly  
80<sup>th</sup> Session**



**High-level debate on the theme  
“Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife and other Crimes that Affect the  
Environment”  
Monday, 8 June 2026, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
General Assembly Hall United Nations Headquarters, New York**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **Mandate**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 80/229 of 18 December 2025, the President of the General Assembly will convene a high-level debate on the theme “Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife and other Crimes that Affect the Environment”, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with the involvement of relevant stakeholders.

#### **Background**

Crimes that affect the environment, including trafficking in wildlife, are increasingly recognized as a significant threat to global security and sustainable development by degrading biodiversity and ecosystems, linking with organized crime, hindering climate action, undermining the rule of law, eroding economies, exacerbating social inequalities, and threatening human health.

The most prevalent types of activity currently encompassed by environmental crime include: 1) acts that cause environmental pollution or degradation; 2) acts involving the illicit movement or dumping of waste, within and across national borders; 3) illicit trade or possession of protected or prohibited species of fauna and flora, within and across national borders; and 4) acts that result in the depletion of natural resources, including illegal logging; illegal hunting, illegal fishing or gathering of wild fauna and flora; illegal mining<sup>1</sup>.

Crimes that affect the environment remain among the most lucrative forms of criminal activity, and they are often serious, transnational and organized in nature. Criminal groups engaged in crimes that affect the environment can make use of the same hubs and routes, engage the same

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Statistical Commission (E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40)

facilitators and follow the same techniques as are used for trafficking other commodities, exploiting gaps in national law enforcement and criminal justice systems. The profits generated by this crime type have also been used to finance other criminal activities, and in some cases, to finance conflict, contributing to instability. Crimes that affect the environment are also frequently interlinked with corruption and other forms of economic and financial crimes, and the ultimate beneficiaries of these crimes are rarely brought to justice.

Since over a decade various intergovernmental bodies have adopted resolutions recognizing illicit trafficking in wildlife and environmental crime as part of other transnational organized crimes. The adoption of such resolutions signified a major step forward in raising awareness of the growing threat that environmental crime poses to peace and security and sustainable development.

In June 2025, the General Assembly adopted resolution 79/313 entitled *Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife*, marking a decade of sustained engagement. Similarly, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), as the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, has been actively involved in addressing crimes that affect the environment, particularly wildlife trafficking. A recent example was that, at its 34<sup>th</sup> session, held in May 2025, the CCPCJ approved the resolution entitled *Tackling illicit trafficking in wild fauna and flora, including timber and timber products, the illegal mining of and illicit trafficking in minerals and precious metals, illicit trafficking in waste and other crimes that affect the environment*, which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2025 (A/RES/80/227).

Additionally, State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)<sup>2</sup> have recently adopted key resolutions aimed at addressing the increasing sophistication of crimes against the environment as well as its links to corruption. In particular, in October 2024, the Conference of the Parties to the UNTOC adopted a resolution<sup>3</sup> establishing an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to take stock of the application and collective implementation of the Convention in addressing crimes that affect the environment, identify any gaps that may exist in the international legal framework and to consider possible responses relevant to those gaps including the possibility, feasibility and merits of any additional Protocol to the Convention.

## **Objectives**

The high-level debate will raise awareness on the scale and complexity of crimes that affect the environment, and their impact on security, sustainable development and human rights. The meeting will offer a platform to reiterate the strategic importance of preventing and combating this type of crime, to share information on their trends and exchange good practice in responding to them. The meeting will also contribute to addressing the relationship between crimes that affect the environment and corruption.

---

<sup>2</sup> UNCAC/COP/2025/11 Resolution 9 “*Preventing and combating corruption as it relates to crimes that affect the environment*”.

<sup>3</sup> UNTOC/COP/2024/12 Resolution 4 “*Enhancing measures to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*”

Members States and Observers of the General Assembly, UN entities and stakeholders participating in the high-level debate are invited to share existing promising practices from across regions, reflecting on effective national and regional policies, including the importance of community involvement in responding to crimes that affect the environment.

Participants are invited to share their experiences and reflect on best practices and persisting challenges by addressing the following guiding questions:

- What evidence-based measures and approaches have been proven successful in addressing crimes that affect the environment, including illicit trafficking in wildlife, at national and regional level? What are the main challenges that hinder effective responses to prevent and combat such crimes?
- How does the existing international legal framework support the effective prevention and combating of trafficking in wildlife and other crimes that affect the environment? How can this framework and its implementation be strengthened to support more effective preventive and enforcement efforts?
- What are the impacts of crimes that affect the environment, particularly on local communities, indigenous people and minorities? How can inclusive engagement and meaningful consultation among policymakers, stakeholders, and communities be supported, and what evidence-based approaches have been proven successful?
- What concrete measures can be taken to build and strengthen strategic partnerships, including between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations as well as with civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. What prevention measures and partnerships have been most effective in reducing illegal activities, and what made them succeed?
- What role does technology play in preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment, including illicit trafficking in wildlife?

### **Outcome**

The outcome will be a summary of the discussion prepared by the President of the General Assembly, to be transmitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to all Member States, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 80/229.

### **Programme outline**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Segment</b>
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Opening segment
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Plenary segment with interventions from Member States and Observers of the General Assembly
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Continuation of the plenary segment followed by interventions from relevant stakeholders

## **Participation**

Member States and Observers of the General Assembly are invited to participate at the highest possible level (Ministers). Representatives of the UN System, regional and sub-regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders are also invited to attend and may intervene after interventions from Member States and Observers, time permitting.

The list of speakers will open on the e-deleGATE portal on 15 May 2026 at 10:00 a.m. and close on 7 June 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The time limit for statements will be three minutes for individual delegations and other stakeholders and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a Group of States. Time limits will be strictly enforced by way of automatic microphone cut off.

In view of the limited time available for the plenary segment, the texts of statements submitted by speakers inscribed on the list that are not delivered by the end of the meeting will be posted in the Journal of the United Nations. In this regard, delegations are encouraged to send their statements to [estatements@un.org](mailto:estatements@un.org) to facilitate interpretation and posting under eStatements of the Journal of the United Nations.

## **Accessibility arrangements**

Delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat of the accessibility requirements of their delegates in order to facilitate participation in meetings. Upon request, adjustments can be made to seating arrangements with a view to enabling the participation of persons with disabilities. Enquiries related to assistive devices and other accessibility-related services should be directed to the Meetings Support Section (MSS) of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (e-mail: [accessibilitycentre@un.org](mailto:accessibilitycentre@un.org); phone: +1 212-963-7348/7349) no later than three working days prior to the meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*