



## TRAFFIC to help Africa fight illegal wildlife trade

Business | 2021-08-11

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**A NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisation fighting wildlife trafficking, TRAFFIC, has signed an agreement with the African Union (AU) to help the continent combat illegal wildlife trade and support development.**

The agreement came about after several years of negotiations between the two organisations, TRAFFIC's head of communications, Melissa Matthews, told the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project in an email last Wednesday.

The deal was signed by ambassador Josefa Sacko, who is the commissioner for rural economy and agriculture of the African Union Commission, and Steven Broad, TRAFFIC's executive director, who said the document is a "promising and welcome step" towards sustainable wildlife trade on the continent.

The African Union is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the African continent.

Organised crime syndicates with access to high-tech tracking devices and weapons are responsible for most wildlife poaching in Africa.

Illegal wildlife trade in animals such as rhinos and elephants has long been of major concern for conservationists.

TRAFFIC's technical support and policy experience will help the AU "keep the use and trade of wild harvested flora and fauna at legal and sustainable levels", and "combat any illegal trade and overexploitation threatening our biodiversity", Sacko said.

Under the agreement, TRAFFIC will help support environmental protection and wildlife management efforts throughout Africa, as well as serve as a framework in the fight against illegal exploitation and trade.

In particular, TRAFFIC will help the AU Commission implement the Green Recovery Action Plan, a five-year plan launched last month that maps out a strategy to improve climate resilience and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic with sustainability and renewable energy goals at the fore.

The wildlife conservation organisation has also signed on to help the AU and its member states prepare for multinational summits, like the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which often set critical environmental protection goals.

*\* Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*