

FG Vows To Eradicate Wildlife Trafficking



The federal government has unveiled the sculpture of an elephant crafted from crushed elephant tusks and ivory stockpiles.

Speaking during the unveiling the minister of state for Environment , Dr. Iziaq Salako stated that the event was a signal of Nigeria’s zero tolerance for wild like trafficking.

The minister stated that on January 9, 2024, Nigeria took a giant step by publicly destroying 2.5 tonnes of confiscated elephant tusks and ivory.

He noted that the step was aimed at protecting the nation’s dwindling elephant population, discouraging illegal wildlife trade and deterring illicit traffickers from using the country as a transit route.

Salako explained that the crushing of the stockpile which was under the custody of the Nigeria Environmental Standards Regulation and Enforcement Agency (NESREA) became the first of its kind in the country and of the few such exercises in the world.

“I did promise at that Jan 9th event that the powder obtained from the pulverisation exercise will be used to build a monument in memory of hundreds of elephants killed illegally and as a symbol of our unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation.

“Today, in fulfillment of that promise, it is a thing of joy for me to be part of the event for the unveiling of an elephant statue built from the crushed tusks and ivory,” he said .

The minister explained that NESREA, a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Environment with the mandate to enforce all environmental laws, policies, guidelines, standards and regulations as well as to enforce compliance with the provisions of multilateral environmental Agreements, Protocols,

Conventions and Treaties to which Nigeria is a signatory, over the years has been working with other sister regulatory agencies to ensure effective policing of our environment.

“I am happy to see that the journey started on January 9th 2024 has now been carried to a logical conclusion. Let me therefore seize this opportunity to congratulate NESREA and our partners that contributed to making today a reality,” he said.

He added that those engaged in the crime of illegal wildlife trade were very tenacious as the demand for wild animal’s parts and derivatives persisted with a surge in black markets.

“We must therefore be resolute, enforce our laws and upscale the deployment of technology in fighting these criminals. These will require a collaborative approach working with other agencies of government in law enforcement especially the Nigeria Custom Service, the military, Nigeria Police, National Park Service, ICPC, Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit and other relevant agencies.

“In the spirit of collaboration, I wish to use this opportunity to commend the exemplary enforcement action of the NCS which resulted in a recent seizure of Pangolin scales and its derivatives worth over 3 billion Naira along the Kebbi State axis,” he said.

Salako added that the ministry will continue to do everything possible to ensure that it plays its part in harnessing the nation’s natural resources for sustainable development.

“I also want to appreciate our donor partner the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation (EPIF), other international partners like the US Embassy, United Nation Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Wild Africa Fund and others who have made today exercise a success. I am again re-assuring you of Nigeria’s unwavering commitment to the fight against wildlife crime in Nigeria.

The minister while unveiling the statue named it, ‘Giwa Statue For Renewed Hope’.

“Giwa in Hausa means elephant, in Yoruba it refers to a leader or great one while in the Ika dialect, an Igbo subgroup, it refers to something taken in secrecy. The Giwa Statue for Renewed Hope is unveiled for posterity, education, recreation and as a symbol of renewed hope for Nigerian wildlife,” the minister said.



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