

US embassy hosts meeting on combatting wildlife trafficking



CURBING WILDLIFE CRIME ... Rachel Futter from the Namibia Nature Foundation in conversation with ambassador John Giodarno during the roundtable discussion on 24 February. Photo: United States embassy Namibia

United States (US) ambassador to Namibia John Giodarno hosted a discussion to combat wildlife trafficking in Windhoek on 24 February.

The meeting brought together Namibian conservation leaders and US government officials to discuss progress in arrests and convictions, regional coordination efforts and investigative capacity building when it comes to wildlife crimes.

“As a former United States attorney, I have seen first-hand how criminal networks try to exploit gaps in enforcement and governance. Wildlife trafficking operates like any other organised crime enterprise: It relies on logistics networks, money-laundering channels, and cross-border coordination. It must be met with seriousness and prosecutorial focus,” Giodarno said at the event.

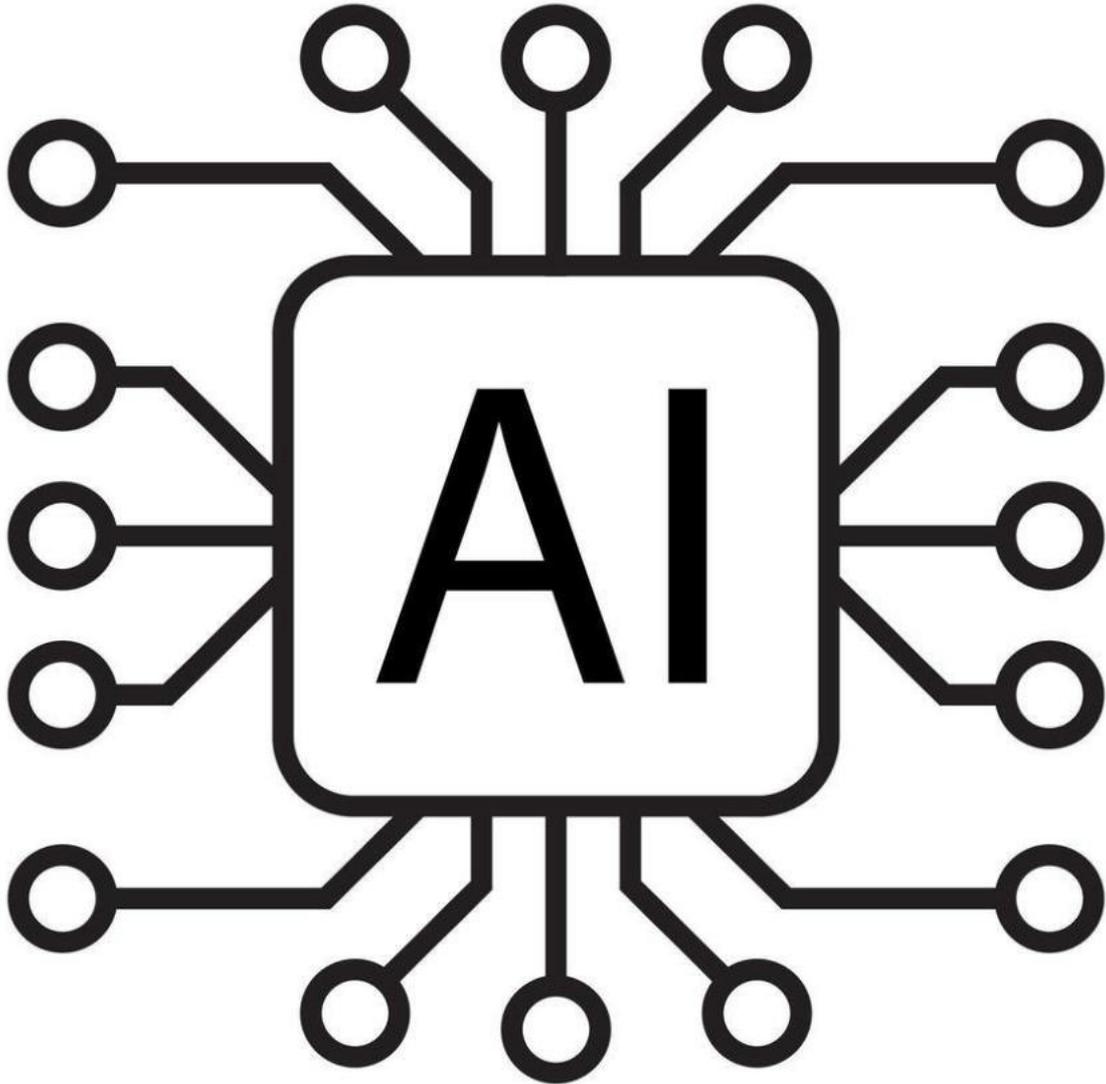
In a press release on Wednesday, the US embassy said the US had spent N\$142 million (US\$8.7 billion) on anti-wildlife trafficking efforts in Namibia.

The US has funded the Blue Rhino Task Team, a collaboration between Namibian Police and the ministry of environment that investigates wildlife crime.

It also established the Wood Identification and Screening Center in Namibia together with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to combat illegal timber trafficking, the embassy says.

“Environmental crime undermines economic security. Namibia’s conservation success story is a strategic asset, not just for biodiversity, but for tourism, investment, and long-term economic resilience,” Giordano said.

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