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WORLD
WILDLIFE DAY
3 MARCH

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World Wildlife Day: greater effort needed to ensure sustainability in wildlife trade

(Geneva) – Governments and businesses must step up cooperation to stem the illegal wildlife trade. Calling on the international community to promote conservation, biodiversity and sustainability on the first [World Wildlife Day](#) on 3 March, ITC Executive Director [Arancha González](#) said greater efforts must be exercised to ensure [sustainability in the trade of wildlife products](#).

‘Through trade, the sustainable use of wildlife products can help link local communities to international markets. This can create powerful incentives for conservation, which can also act as an engine for economic development,’ she said.

Many of the world’s poorest people depend directly on wildlife for their livelihoods. According to The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity [interim report](#), wildlife contributes up to 80% of the gross domestic product for the ‘bottom billion’ – the billion poorest people in the world.

In Peru, ITC is supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in certifying and sustainably sourcing superfoods such as sacha inchi, maca and cat’s claw. Across the wider Andean community, ITC is supporting the wild vicuña conservation efforts, by helping facilitate better access to markets for vicuña products. In Madagascar, ITC is working to strengthen sustainability in the sourcing of natural resources and increasing the potential benefits of ecotourism.

‘Transparent and well-regulated markets have a huge role to play in the conservation of wild plants and animals,’ said Ms. González. ‘ITC builds trade models which encourage communities and businesses to use biodiversity products and services in a sustainable way. We help counteract threats from unscrupulous traders and instead, place the benefits of legal trade in the hands of local communities.’

A 2012 [ITC report](#) found that the annual trade in South-East Asian python skins is worth US\$ 1 billion. While this trade provides benefits to poor people, half of the trade in python skins is estimated to be illegal. To address this, ITC has formed a partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Kering to jointly conduct research, raise awareness, strengthen traceability and improve animal-welfare practices in the python-skin trade.

Earlier this year, Ms. González and the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), John E. Scanlon, signed [an agreement](#) on fostering greater sustainability in the global wildlife trade. The collaboration is expected to bridge the widening information gap between harvesters, producers, regulators, retailers and consumers by mapping and preparing analyses of the dynamics of value chains for selected species.

Note to Editors

The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on 20 December 2013, dedicating 3 March as World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world’s wild fauna and flora.

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The celebration of World Wildlife Day falls on the anniversary of the adoption of the [CITES](#) document – an agreement among 180 states aimed at ensuring sustainable global trade in plants and animals.

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the [Aid-for-Trade agenda](#) and the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

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