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|  | منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة | 联合国 粮食及 农业组织 | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture | Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций | Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura |
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| AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION |
| NINETEENTH SESSION |
| THIRD AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE WEEK |
| WINDHOEK, REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 30 September - 4 October 2013 |
| Theme: Development of the Forest and Wildlife Sectors for effective contribution to Food Security and a Green Economy in Africa |
| ILLEGAL TRADE AND POACHING OF WILDLIFE PRODUCTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA |

Background

1. Poaching and bushmeat trade have long been recognized as a severe threat to wildlife populations in the forests of West and Central Africa. They are considered as causes of a conservation crisis in that biome, also described as empty forests syndrome. In the African savannah biome of eastern and southern Africa, however, the issue has received far less attention. Nevertheless, recent studies confirm that also there it is a growing problem and that poaching and the bushmeat trade represent a considerable threat to wildlife in savannah areas which is not less severe than in the forest biome¹ (Lindsey et al., 2012).
2. Furthermore, the impacts of illegal hunting are likely to increase in the future as demand for bushmeat and other wildlife products is increasing while supply is declining in many areas, resulting in elevated pressure on remaining wildlife populations.
3. In addition to severe ecological impacts, illegal hunting can confer serious negative economic and social impacts. Economic consequences include major negative effects on wildlife industries which can preclude the option to develop sustainable wildlife based land uses. Social consequences include negative impacts on food security in the long term through the loss of a potentially sustainable supply of meat protein through legal hunting, the loss of tourism-based employment and loss of

¹ Lindsey et al., 2012. Illegal hunting and the bushmeat trade in savannah Africa: drivers, impacts and solutions to address the problem. Panthera/Zoological Society of London/Wildlife Conservation Society report, New York. 74 pages.

wildlife heritage. The scale and severity of the threat is such that without urgent intervention, one of Africa's most valuable natural resource will be lost across vast areas of the continent.

4. Data on the scale and economic value of bushmeat and other wildlife products are scarce, partly due to the covert nature of the trade. Nevertheless, even illegally sourced bushmeat contributes to economies and food security but these contributions are often unsustainable and far outweighed by the severe negative consequences of a looming loss of the wildlife resource. Furthermore, most forms of illegal hunting for bushmeat represent an extremely wasteful and inefficient way of wildlife use which captures only a tiny fraction of the value of the resource it destroys.

5. Urgent efforts are required to raise awareness among policy makers and the international and donor communities of the severity and urgency of the threat posed by illegal hunting and trade in bushmeat. Failure to address the problem will have dire consequences for wildlife and biodiversity conservation in Africa, will preclude the sustainable use of wildlife as a development option, and have long term negative impacts on food security. All these will have negative implications for economic development in Africa.

Key drivers and scale of illegal hunting and bushmeat trade

6. The drivers of illegal hunting of wildlife represent a broad scale from obtaining meat for direct consumption (subsistence) and/or immediate community trade, to commercial trade in urban centres or even international markets. There are indications that illegal hunting is increasingly commercial in many areas in response to growing human populations.

7. The key drivers of illegal hunting and bushmeat trade are:

- Increasing demand for bushmeat in rural and urban areas;
- Human encroachment into wildlife areas;
- Inadequate penal system and lack of law enforcement;
- Lack of alternative livelihoods;
- Insufficient alternative food sources;
- Lack of clear rights over wildlife or land, and/or inadequate benefits from legal use of wildlife;
- Political instability, corruption and poor governance;
- Demand for wildlife body parts for traditional medicine and ceremonies;
- Abundant supplies of trapping devices.

8. All these drivers contribute to increased incidents of illegal hunting and bushmeat trade in African countries with the scales that vary from country to country depending on the ecological, economic and social conditions.

9. In several countries, bushmeat trade involves vast quantities of meat and generates significant economic returns. In Tanzania, for example, on the average 2,078 tonnes of bushmeat are confiscated annually with a value of over US\$ 50 million (CBD, 2011) and in Mozambique 182,000-365,000 tonnes of bushmeat are reported to be consumed per year, with an economic value of US\$ 365-730 million per year (Barnett, 1998). Estimates of bushmeat harvest from Central Africa are even higher: Gabon 49,000 tonnes; Central African Republic 59,000 tonnes, Cameroon 234,000 tonnes, Republic of Congo 189,000 tonnes and Democratic Republic of Congo 1.7 million tonnes (Fa et al., 2003; CBD, 2011).

10. The economic value of the bushmeat trade exceeds that of legal forms of wildlife utilization in many countries. However, comparison with the scale of legal wildlife use is not particularly

meaningful. First, the illegal bushmeat trade is not sustainable and so estimates of the scale of the industry represent snapshots reflecting the state of wildlife populations at a given moment in time. Second, legal forms of wildlife use are under-developed in many countries and if harnessed fully via tourism, trophy hunting, live animals and legal meat sales they could potentially far exceed the value of illegal trade. In Central Africa for example, the value of the illegal bushmeat trade has been estimated at US\$42-205 million/year (Davies, 2002) whereas in South Africa and Namibia where legal wildlife-based land uses are developed, the game ranching industry on private land turns over US\$ 912 million and US\$ 166 million/year respectively, in addition to the significant earnings from wildlife on state and communal lands (Barnes et al., 2010; Lindsey et al., 2012). In addition, unlike earnings from the illegal bushmeat trade, revenue generated from legal wildlife-based land uses is sustainable. However, the scale of illegal bushmeat trade does demonstrate the scale of the threat and the challenge posed in terms of developing sustainable alternative livelihood options and protein supplies for the people involved.

11. Illegal hunting is an inefficient form of wildlife utilization due to many reasons including: high levels of waste; high impacts on populations due to lack of gender/age selectivity of the harvest; failure to capture the tourism, trophy or existence values of the animals killed; and often low prices for bushmeat. In Zimbabwe, for example, illegal hunters capture less than 1% of the wildlife resource that they destroy (Lindsey et al., 2012). Through efficient, regulated and selective harvest, legal cropping of wildlife can potentially produce significant quantities of meat on a sustainable manner. Many African ungulates are polygynous and focusing harvest on males in such species can yield large quantities of meat with negligible population impacts.

12. Wildlife-based land uses have the potential to capture a much more diverse set of benefits from wildlife than those derived solely from meat. The potential for generating income from trophy hunting, ecotourism and the sale of by-products such as skins and meat is the reason why wildlife-based land uses outcompeted livestock production across large areas of private land in semi-arid parts of southern Africa (Child, 2000) Tourism and trophy hunting decouples income from grass production, enabling wildlife-based land uses to provide consistent returns in the variable rainfall regimes that characterize much of the savannah biome (Bond et al., 2004).

13. During a regional workshop on illegal hunting and bushmeat trade in the SADC region, organized jointly by FAO and SADC Secretariat in Johannesburg in October 2012, emphasis was placed on cross-sectoral coordination and engagement, without which the illegal use and trade of wild meat will continue and the efforts to promote legal use will be curtailed. Member states discussed possible interventions to reduce and/or prevent illegal hunting and trade of bushmeat while using the potential of wild meat to contribute to overall food security of the region, and to recognize the wider economic potential of wildlife as a form of land use with multiple benefits.

14. Member states acknowledged that a new, multi-sectoral and unified approach was needed to address the increasing threat of the unsustainable use and trade which greatly underuses the wild meat resource and threatens the viability of key development projects which focus on improving livelihoods through the legal use of wildlife (such as trophy hunting, photographic tourism and supplies of natural products). Unsustainable use also threatens natural ecosystems upon which human communities depend.

Points for consideration

15. In this regard, the Commission may wish to invite countries to:

- Acknowledge the problem of illegal hunting and trade of wildlife products and recognize the real and complete value of wildlife to local and national economies and food security and reflect it in appropriate policies and increased budget allocations;
- Promote innovative mechanisms, including public and private sector partnerships, to empower communities and build their capacities for participatory wildlife management to meet their needs with regard to food and livelihoods, and ensure that those who bear the cost of living with wildlife benefit from it as much as possible;

- Ensure cross-sectoral coordination and engagement in dealing with illegal use and trade of wildlife and its products by promoting legal and sustainable use.
- Harmonize, to the extent possible, policies and regulations on use and trade of wildlife and its products to enhance transboundary cooperation and law enforcement;
- Expand legal options and create a favourable policy and taxation environment for the sustainable and legal production of wild meat to meet demands for and increase the benefits from this commodity ;
- Promote effective land use planning for the protection of wildlife as well as compatible land use and infrastructure to reduce illegal hunting and trade of bushmeat;
- Develop mechanisms to monitor the patterns and drivers of illegal use and trade of wildlife, fill critical information gaps and collate and share information and research results to inform and guide management actions.

16. The Committee may wish to recommend that FAO, in collaboration with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), supports countries in:

- Developing strategies to reduce illegal hunting and bushmeat trade;
- Building capacities of communities and local stakeholders for participatory wildlife management, and support enabling wildlife policies and legislation;
- Developing sustainable wildlife-based land uses to generate benefits from wildlife and produce wild meat legally;
- Collecting and sharing information and data on illegal use and trade in wildlife products, assist with their analyses to inform and encourage policy measures and strategic interventions;
- Improving national capacities to monitor and assess the contributions made by wildlife to food security and national economy.

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