

Eastern African nations launch Steering Committee for Zanzibar Declaration on Illegal Trade in Timber and other Forest Products

Nairobi, Kenya, 12th April 2017—representatives from across Eastern Africa meet this week to discuss implementation of the Zanzibar Declaration on Illegal Trade in Timber and other Forest Products and formally launch its Steering Committee.

The Zanzibar Declaration was signed in September 2015 during the XIV World Forestry Congress in South Africa and has been heralded as a huge step forward in regional efforts to address the rampant illegal timber trade in East Africa.

Member States currently include Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Madagascar, and mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar—under the umbrella of the Southern African Development Community and the Eastern African Community.

As well as launching the Steering Committee and reviewing progress with implementation of the Declaration, Member State forestry department representatives will also discuss a range of shared issues relating to timber trade.

They include the development of a mechanism to collaborate on implementation of trade governed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), including how to deal with produce seized from illegal trade.

At the most recent meeting of the Convention in October 2016, a number of relevant timber species—including the entire *Dalbergia* genus—were listed within Appendix II of CITES, meaning trade is now regulated through a system of permits.

Another critical issue for discussion will be laying the groundwork for a block agreement between signatories of the Zanzibar Declaration and importing countries in Asia—such an agreement could have major economic impact for the region given the high levels of timber trade currently taking place with East Asia, in particular China.

“This meeting marks a significant step forward in efforts to ensure timber trade in Eastern Africa is managed in a way that brings equitable benefits to all those engaged in the legal trade chain—everyone from the local communities on whose land the timber grows all the way to the end consumers in a distant part of the planet,” said Mr. Emilio Mugo, Chief Conservator of Forest, Kenya Forest Service.

Meeting delegates will also discuss ways to standardize gathering of import, export and transit records, including the nomenclature of the species in trade.

“Standardization of trade reporting mechanisms may not appear terribly important at first glance, but it is an absolutely critical issue,” said Mr. Said Hugues, Director of Forest Control in the Directorate General of Madagascar.

“If your figures are collated in the same way it highlights any discrepancies, which could be a signal some untoward trade is taking place and action needs to be taken.”

The meeting for the launch of the Steering Committee to the Zanzibar Declaration on Illegal Trade in Timber and other Forest Products was organized by TRAFFIC and WWF and hosted by Kenya Forest Service.

ENDS

Further information:

Anne Kaari

Head, Corporate Communication, Kenya Forest Service

Email: akaari@kenyaforestservice.org, mobile: +254 722 371651

About Kenya Forest Service

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is a state corporation that was established under the Forest Act, 2005. Commencing its operations in February 2007, the Service's expressed mandate to enhance development, conservation and management of Kenya's forest resources base in all public forests, and assist County Governments to develop and manage forest resources on community and private lands for the equitable benefit of present and future generations. KFS is both a service provider working with partners and stakeholders for the sustainable management and utilisation of forest resources, and an enforcement agency.

Richard Thomas, Global Communications Co-ordinator, TRAFFIC. Email:

Richard.thomas@traffic.org, mobile: +44 (0) 7921309176.

About TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, is the leading non-governmental organization working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. TRAFFIC's mission is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. TRAFFIC's vision is of a world where wildlife trade is: managed in a way that maintains healthy wildlife populations and ecosystems; contributes to meeting human needs; supports local and national economies; and helps motivate commitments to conserve wild species and habitats. Visit: traffic.org Follow: @TRAFFIC_WLTrade. For more information: +44 (0)1223 277427.

Nashipae Orumoy

Communications Manager, WWF-Kenya

Email: norumoy@wwfkenya.org, mobile: +254 (0) 701 864021

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. For **latest news and media resources**, see panda.org/news