

LEGAL TRADING OF AFRICA’S WILDLIFE COULD FINANCE CONSERVATION EFFORTS

DR FRANCIS VORHIES

SINCE the launch of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992, there have been ongoing negotiations about financing the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife.

A major focus of these negotiations has been the CBD commitment for developed countries that are parties to the Convention to “provide new and additional financial resources” to developing countries that are signatories. Whereas this focus is on international aid, there are real opportunities for international trade.

With the launch of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022, the CBD commitment to “raising new and additional resources” now also includes “encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity.” This is a most positive development encouraging private sector investment by enabling a return on this investment, for example through the legal trade in wildlife products.

The CBD Decision 15/23 to “promote the mainstreaming of the sustainable use of biodiversity, in particular that of wild species, into all relevant sectors” further supports wildlife trade.

Most importantly, GBF Targets 5 and 9 are an international commitment to ensure that the use, harvesting, and trade of wild species benefits people through “sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services.”

In short, wildlife conservation can

be financed directly by trading wildlife products – something that is already happening.

Given this positive development, it is fitting that the theme for this year’s World Wildlife Day on 3 March is ‘Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet’.

This provides an opportunity for exploring how financing generating from wildlife trade can and does support the conservation of wildlife. Across Africa, and other parts of the world, wildlife trade can generate vast sums of funding for wildlife conservation.

Key ecotourism destinations generate many millions of US dollars of revenue much of which goes directly into conserving habitats and wildlife. For example, Kruger National Park in South Africa and Galápagos National Park in Ecuador each generate over \$100 million annually. In Kenya’s Masai Mara gate fees alone bring in over \$20m annually, and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe generates over \$30m annually.

In the US, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park produces over \$2 billion in revenue! These few examples show that well-managed conservation areas – both public and private – can and do generate billions of dollars worldwide for conservation.

Domestic and international hunting also generates many millions of dollars that directly support conservation. Hunting in Namibia yields \$14m annually, in Botswana \$20m, and in

South Africa \$800m. In Canada, the annual revenues are \$3bn. In both the United Kingdom and France, the annual income from hunting trapping, and shooting is \$4bn. In the US, the hunting industry generates \$27bn annually.

In addition to the revenues earned from ecotourism and hunting, another key service of conserving wild species is to sequester carbon. The global nature-based carbon offsets industry is now generating about \$100bn annually.

These include projects to store carbon by restoring and conserving wild plants in both terrestrial forests and marine ecosystem systems. Mangrove carbon projects can be found in Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal and elsewhere in Africa’s coastal regions.

Wildlife trade includes not only services like photographic and hunting tourism and carbon storage, but also goods from harvesting and trading wild animals, plants, and fungi. The annual income from the legal trade in wild species is \$220bn.

Most interestingly, there are also significant revenues generated from the legal trade in endangered wild species regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) – \$2bn annually for animal species and \$9bn annually for plant species.

The marine fishing industry – which includes both commercial and recreational fishing – also generates about \$500m annually in South Africa, \$800m in Ghana, and \$1bn in Mauri-

tania. Globally, wild-harvested marine fisheries generate \$160bn, albeit the sustainability of marine fisheries is an area of ongoing international concern.

Wildlife-based tourism, hunting, carbon sequestration, foraging and fishing together bring in many billions of dollars.

As most of this trade is sustainable, it directly finances the conservation of wildlife and their habitats. Hence, wildlife trade also contributes directly to the GBD commitment to scaling up area-based conservation. Enhancing the sustainability of this trade will further align the financial flows from this trade with wildlife conservation.

With the prospects for expansions of the wildlife economy across the African continent, we can expect revenues from the sustainable use and trade of African wild species to grow substantially.

This means that Africa will be able to self-finance the conservation of its wildlife though trading wildlife products across the continent and internationally.

Trade, not aid, will ensure sustainable financing for Africa’s wildlife. With World Wildlife Day 2025 serving as platform for “innovative financial solutions for wildlife conservation,” in Africa, these solutions include liberalising legal and sustainable trade in wild species across the continent.

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LETTER

Preventing a nuclear catastrophe

PRESIDENT Trump’s confrontation with President Zelensky and the warning of World War 3 is indeed chilling.

Real live time events in Europe, Asia and The Middle East are spiralling out of control. A new world war could erupt at any time.

It was Mr.William Perry, who was Secretary of Defense under President Bill Clinton, that issued a stark warning some time ago, that a nuclear war could erupt and erase humanity if politicians continue with their fiery rhetoric.

The volatile and escalating situation between Russia, Ukraine, Taiwan, USA, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and Israel, cannot be resolved by military force or political subjugation. Any act of brinkmanship, could result in a deadly chain of events, that their arrogant leaders will not be able to control and contain.

The major powers are blissfully unaware or are ignorant of the grim global consequences of a nuclear exchange between these antagonists.

Deadly nuclear debris does not respect neutrality or geographical frontiers, radio active ash will encircle the globe. Military hawks and strategists, remain oblivious on the consequences of a fully fledged nuclear attack.

These countries will not survive a nuclear holocaust. In these deadly conflict areas, there is no substitute for diplomacy.

A powder keg cannot be defused by intimidation, history teaches us and graphically reminds us, throughout recorded history, it was diplomacy that ultimately prevailed. Those who start a nuclear war, will not be alive to witness the carnage of their folly.

Before this decade is out, the world will witness a nuclear conflict. The constellation of global events is spinning out of control, as ill informed politicians turn to ill equipped military leaders, for solutions that neither of them can offer.

The fate of the world lies in the hands of irrational men, who can neither comprehend nor realise, that war cannot be an instrument of peace. For over 2000 years, war has dismally failed to restore civility and peace on earth.

The grim reality is that, every military power has deployed cutting edge military weaponry and hypersonic missiles that will reduce a state of alertness to a mere few minutes in order to respond to any act by design or accident. Some military doctrine, involves the use of nuclear tactical weapons, to thwart a massive conventional military invasion.

This scary tactic will involve the detonation of a 30 kiloton weapon on their soil, which could kill over 50 000 of its own citizens in a nearby city. The ensuing firestorm will release radioactive ash that would darken skies across the planet, cool temperatures, and disrupt agriculture around the globe for a decade or more.

Millions will perish while many more millions will be displaced, as nations are reduced to radio active rubble and catastrophic debris. Studies conducted over the past 5 years have estimated that a conflict involving 100 nuclear weapons could lead to the deaths of 2 billion people worldwide.

In the first 24 hours of intense combat, more than 12 million people will perish when ground zero strikes. Explosions could release 5 million tons of smoke into the air, triggering a nuclear winter, that could last till 2030.

The effects of this regional exchange could eliminate 20% to 50% of the ozone layer over populated areas. Surface temperatures would become colder than they have been for at least 1000 years.

The world has never fought a nuclear war, any leader who believes that a nuclear war is winnable, is dicing with death on a global basis.

Nuclear chess has no rules and no limits, checkmate is not an option. Atomic war, is insanity gone berserk. It was US President John F Kennedy, who warned the world during The Cuban Missile Crisis, that in the aftermath of a nuclear war, the living will envy the dead. Global suicide is no defence.

FAROUK ARAIE | Johannesburg

LETTERS

Write to arglet@inl.co.za. Letters must contain full names, addresses and contact details (not for publication).

Zelenskiy will have to return, cap in hand, to Washington DC

ALL ROADS do not lead to Rome anymore but to Washington. There, ensconced in all his glory in the Oval Office of the White House is the world’s most powerful man, Donald Trump.

Daily, like an imperial monarch of old, he receives dignitaries and world leaders from all corners of the globe. First in line was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He went not only to congratulate Trump on his historic return to the White House but also to seek assurances from him that the US will continue to support the Jewish nation against its Zionist enemies. Next in line was Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, followed by King Abudullah of Jordan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine, President Emmanuel Macron of France and lastly, Prime Minister Keir Starmer of Britain, a longtime ally of the US.

President Cyril Ramaphosa wants a meeting with Trump over the US aid debacle. Of course, there’s the big one, a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. But it was the meeting with Zelenskiy that made news around the world. What was supposed to be a meeting to end the war and sign a lucrative agreement on rare earth minerals degenerated into an acrimonious war of words between Zelenskiy and Trump and his Vice-President, JD Vance. Trump told Zelenskiy that he didn’t have the cards and he was not only gambling with millions of lives but he was also gambling with World War III.

He virtually threw down an ultimatum: sign a peace deal or the US will stop funding the war. But Zelenskiy would not bow down to Trump. He left the White House in a huff, without striking a deal and without the customary lunch.

World leaders were quick to throw their weight behind Zelenskiy. At the Ukraine summit held in London days after the Trump-Zelenskiy showdown, British Prime Keir Starmer led by example and pledged to give Ukraine £1.6 billion to buy missiles. This, he said, would bolster Ukraine’s air defence and help it to negotiate from a position of strength.

But while the leaders were critical of Trump, they also realised that, in the end, Zelenskiy will have to be pragmatic. Ukraine needs the support of the most powerful nation in the world in its war with Russia. He will have to make compromises. He’ll have to eat humble pie and go back to Washington with a begging bowl.

Putin must be in seventh heaven. Russia’s arch enemy is now his ally. With Trump on his side and Zelenskiy in a tight corner, it will embolden him to strike even deeper into Ukraine and strengthen his hand at the negotiating table. In the end it may not matter if Zelenskiy’s Ukraine is the victim. All that matters is appeasing the aggressor and ending the three-year bloody war. Putin may even come to the White House as an honoured guest. But what if Trump has an ulterior motive, eyeing the Nobel Peace Prize? It would be the icing on the cake! With Trump, you can never tell.

THYAGARAJ MARKANDAN | Kloof

Bullies should not be tolerated

ZELENSKY’S visit to the Whitehouse, and subsequent chaotic interaction with Americas leaders, should be concerning to all who want to do business with America.

Anyone observing the meeting would have come to the realisation that the toxic serpent in the room was not Trump... but rather his Vice President Vance... a dangerous man,

seeking the proverbial limelight... as he steered the meeting towards certain confrontation. Vance is clearly a man on a self serving mission. This TV disgrace will ensure that no sensible political leader will ever set foot in the Whitehouse again, until Trumps administration is removed from office by the American people.

This display of aggressive bad

manners, reflects an America that can no longer be trusted to be considered a loyal friend.

Zelensky will probably fall now... but the negative repercussions on the image of America, has been irreparably tarnished. Bullies should not be tolerated under any circumstances!

PETER BACHTIS | Paradise

SPACE MISSION



THIS photograph, taken and released by Firefly Aerospace on Sunday, shows the Firefly’s Blue Ghost lander’s shadow on the moon’s surface during its lunar landing as part of the Ghost Mission 1. Firefly Aerospace is only the second private company to successfully land a spacecraft on the moon. | AFP

A critical look at Trump and Zelensky

THE deplorable Oval office bullying by US President Donald Trump and Vice-President JD Vance, shows the influence of imperialism, narcissism and geopolitical absurdity. Like former leaders Muammar Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein and others, who were disposed of when they no longer served an operative function, Zelenksy’s head is now also on the guillotine.

The widely televised shouting match with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, sparked by the catastrophic US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, exposes

the growing rift between the United States and its NATO allies.

Western and more specifically, American double standards have been unmasked during this White House debacle.

Trump, the carrot-topped ignoramus individual, has been given the presidential seat with a particular long-term aim of consolidating a US colonial hegemony with imperial allies from the centre-right within Europe. The constant fawning and obsequious behaviour of the heads of state of the United Kingdom, France and Germany is testimony to this.

ANC is in panic mode and trying to shift blame elsewhere

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC and mainstream media are in a proper tizz over Afriforum’s recent visit to the White House in Washington, US.

News channels are running around like headless chickens trying to frame Afrikaner minority groups as the scapegoat for the rapid deterioration of the South Africa-US relationship. Ramaphosa and the media are making ridiculous claims and very desperate statements regarding the agenda of civil rights groups Afriforum and Solidarity, making it seem like Kallie Kriel and his colleagues have committed treason.

It is absolutely laughable! What Ramaphosa doesn’t realise, or what he fails to admit, is that these

Afrikaner minority groups have been pleading with our government for several years now to do away with the appalling, racist laws being signed into action, and not even legally so, given the fact that these pieces of legislation just land on the desks of other GNU (Government of National Unity) partners before they have even had a chance to consider them or discuss the matter at hand.

No more money for you, Cyril! Sorry old friend! Likewise, Putin is cosying up to Trump and a peace deal with Ukraine seems imminent.

If the ANC doesn’t change its arrogant ways very quickly, it will soon plunge our whole country into economic chaos. Job losses will cripple our already devastated

fiscus, and the ANC won’t have anywhere left to turn or any funds to loot. Unlike what the ANC accuses Afriforum of, which is “sowing division in country”, it seeks to stop Agoa (African Growth and Opportunity Act) from being wiped off the table by Trump.

But you see my fellow South Africans, this corrupt ANC would never want you to believe that it is actually the one and only reason that we are in this mess right now. It keeps shifting the blame, attacking Afriforum and Solidarity and it is losing its grip. This may be the beginning of the end of the gravy train ride to the land of milk and honey. We told you so, Cyril!

L OOSTHUIZEN | Durban