

OPENING REMARKS BY THE STATE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AT THE EAST AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF PROSECUTORS WORKSHOP ON “THE ROLE OF THE PROSECUTION IN COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME IN EAST AFRICA”

- The Representative of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement;
- The Representative of African Wildlife Foundation;
- The Representative of Space for Giants;
- Dear prosecutors and wildlife agencies officials from EAC member countries.
- Excellences’ ladies and gentlemen

First of all let me take this opportunity to wish you a warm welcome in Rwanda, the country of thousands hills.

Am honored to address you in this workshop on “the Role of Prosecutors in combatting wildlife crimes in East Africa”.

Indeed, with the development of technology, criminals have changed their way of committing crimes and trend to commit organized crimes whereby a criminal sitting in one country can conspire with another criminal located in other country and succeed to commit any category of crime.

As far as wildlife offences is concerned and considering the character of our borders which are most of the time open for travelers, it is very easy for a criminal to commit a crime in one country and transfer the proceed of crime in another country or even escape the justice of one country and hide in another country.

This situation needs the prosecution authorities from different countries to join their effort in preventing and combatting all kind of crimes including wildlife crimes. Therefore the organization of such kind and joint trainings or workshops is a step forward in the fulfillment of this objective.

It is our hope that enhancing the capacity of prosecutors on wildlife offences will ensure an effective prosecution and increase the conviction rate so that wildlife

criminals as well as the general public are deterred from committing wildlife offences.

Such trainings not only constitute a good opportunity for prosecutors to increase their knowledge on investigation and prosecution techniques but also permit them to widen the network which is another tool of sharing experiences with their colleagues from different countries in the region.

Therefore, the creation on the East African Wildlife Prosecutors Coalition (EAWPC) which will be created during this workshop will be used as a tool to strengthen formal and informal cooperation between prosecutors while investigating and prosecuting wildlife offences.

Rwanda, as a country is committed to support this initiative and we thank the East African Association of Prosecutors and its partners mainly the African Wildlife Foundation, Spaces for Giants, and the US Department of State.

We also thank the departments of public prosecutions from your respective countries for having secured you this time to participate in this important workshop.

It is on this note that I declare open this workshop on the “Role of Prosecutors in combatting wildlife crimes in East Africa” and wish you to achieve all of its objectives including the creation of the East African Wildlife Prosecutors Coalition.

Thank you very much for your attention and have a very good stay in Rwanda.

