



Address by UBA Chairperson

Protocol

- The USAID/Uganda Combatting Wildlife Crime, Chief of Party
- The Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)
- The Director, Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
- The Executive Director Supervision, Bank of Uganda
- The Commissioner Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
- The Representative from the USAID,
- Financial Intelligence Authority
- Heads of Compliance from UBA Member Financial Institutions
- The Representatives from Royal United Services Institute and;
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- The Representatives from the Mobile Money Operators
- Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning to you all.

On behalf of the Uganda Bankers' Association as a co-host of this workshop, I welcome you all and thank you for making time to attend this important Combating wildlife crime through financial compliance'.

As you may be aware, Uganda's biodiversity faces significant threats including poaching and wildlife trafficking, which undermine the country economic prospects and growth. Historic trading patterns, porous borders, weak enforcement, limited capacity to combat wildlife crime have established Uganda as a convenient source, consolidation and transit country for illicit wildlife product flows as they move from Africa to other parts of the world and vice versa.

Commercial banks and other supervised financial institutions that make or receive international transfers, trade in foreign currency, or – like our friends from mobile money here today – send countless transactions at the click of a button; and as a result, we all have inherently high risk of involvement in illicit financial flows connected to transnational sourcing and transit of illicit wildlife commodities.



As supervised financial institutions, payment system providers/operators, we are also best placed to prevent it, due to the rigorous approaches and responsibilities to anti money laundering compliance. I believe, we have the most influence over our combined ability – alongside our colleagues in law enforcement and criminal justice – to stop it. All we need is to know more, to understand more about the way money related to wildlife crime moves through our systems. If we are adequately informed about wildlife related financial typologies, we can have a greater impact on wildlife crime, protecting Uganda’s natural heritage and biodiversity, bringing long-term benefits to the national economy and our people.

In light of the above, UBA welcomed the opportunity to partner and work with the Royal United Services Institute and Wildlife Conservation Society to implement public private engagement workshop series with support from the USAID Uganda Combatting Wildlife Crime Programme. This is the first in a series of workshops, which will engage key public and private sector actors to combat wildlife crime, and aims to achieve these objectives;

- a. Raising awareness of wildlife crime and its direct or indirect harms, promoting intrinsic and economic value of wildlife.
- b. Increasing knowledge of existing resources and materials for building understanding of global wildlife –related illicit financial flows.
- c. Strengthening understanding of the specific risks and financial modalities around wildlife crime in Uganda.
- d. Gathering support from Heads of Compliance for prioritizing wildlife related illicit finance and creating subject matter expertise within their analyst teams.

As the Umbrella Organization for financial Institutions licensed and supervised by Bank of Uganda, UBA is promoting partnerships and transforming banking through research & innovation, advocacy, good governance and best practice.

As we strive for a strong, vibrant and respected financial services industry in the East African region, UBA remains committed to working together with the relevant authorities and stakeholders; to collaborate to improve the understanding of the illegal wildlife trade and strengthen our efforts to combat wildlife-related illicit financial flows through targeted capacity building and engagements.

We are looking forward to learn from Royal United Services Institute and Wildlife Conservation Society blended by the rich crop of resource persons lined up for these workshops and we are hopeful that this collaboration involving various stakeholders will help us agree on the goals and commitments to better identify, monitor, detect, investigate and prosecute wildlife crime in Uganda and contribute to development of the banking and financial sector.

As I conclude, I wish to thank the UBA members, our colleagues in mobile commerce, and our counterparts in enforcement and justice for coming to participate today. Thank you also to RUSI and WCS for their work in putting together the event and coordinating everything, and also to



the UBA team for helping to convene everyone here today. Thank you to USAID, for their support of the Combating Wildlife Crime activity, without which these workshops would not be taking place. Thank you to our speakers, as well as our officiants at this opening ceremony, Bank of Uganda, the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Wildlife Conservation Society. And thank you finally to the FIA for guiding us all, and for identifying that wildlife crime is an important money laundering risk for Uganda.

I thank you for Listening and it is my honour to officially open this workshop.

Sarah Arapta
Chairperson