



Robert B. Zoellick, President, The World Bank Group

**Video Address to
Delegates of the 80th INTERPOL General Assembly
November 2, 2011
Hanoi, Vietnam**

Mr. President, Secretary General, Delegates, and Officers,

Let me start by thanking all of you for your dedication and commitment to fighting crime around the globe. I know your work is always difficult and often dangerous. And I deeply respect your sense of duty and professionalism.

At the World Bank Group, we have learned the hard way that good governance, a functioning judiciary, and the rule of law are absolutely central to the fight against corruption and poverty, and for fair opportunity and inclusive growth.

That's why we are working closely with INTERPOL on a wide range of initiatives – from the Global Focal Point Initiative, a global network of asset recovery experts; to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which promotes and supports improved governance in resource-rich countries.

Environmental crime is a growing transnational enterprise. We see it in the illegal trade that threatens to push endangered species to extinction; in the illegal logging that contributes to climate instability; and in the illegal fishing that takes money out of the hands of local fisheries and protein-rich food out of the mouths of the poor. These crimes destroy livelihoods; fuel fraud, money laundering, and violence; and they can even threaten national security when the profits fund insurgencies and dismember legitimate institutions.

The World Bank Group's active support for environment and natural resource law enforcement agencies around the world is growing and diversifying. With the support of Bank-financed projects, Liberian coast-guard officers recently seized a foreign trawler that was illegally fishing in national waters; and officials in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Laos, and Nepal are enforcing a range of wildlife laws and regulations.

I'm particularly proud of the catalytic role being played by the Global Tiger Initiative, and the Bank Group's early contribution toward Project PREDATOR. This innovative effort among tiger-range countries – including right here in Vietnam – will reduce trafficking in tiger parts, with the add-on effect of reducing other wildlife crime in Asia.

These criminals are stealing life and heritage; they profit from killing and cruelty. They should be caught and punished – deterring would-be traffickers in killings.

One key challenge remains: spreading awareness of the scale and severity of the problem. Whenever I get the chance, I urge leaders to give their criminal justice systems the power and resources to protect wildlife, forests, and fisheries from those who are plundering the planet's natural capital and countries' living heritage.

The Bank Group can do more, too. And we will. That's why we are working with INTERPOL and other partners through the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime to help countries take apart the syndicates that still operate with near impunity. We want to bring our anti-money laundering expertise to the table in the fight against illegal logging and wildlife trade.

So I want to thank you again for your increasing focus on environmental crime, and for your partnership. This effort will only succeed if we work across borders.

I wish you all success in your discussions. And I look forward to hearing your conclusions so we can learn how better to support those of you on the frontlines of law enforcement and justice.

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