



## Concept Note



### Big Cats: Predators under Threat



## High-Level event at UN Headquarters to observe World Wildlife Day 2018 and to discuss the conservation of big cats

ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, 2 March 2018

### World Wildlife Day

On 20 December 2013, the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly decided to proclaim 3 March, the day of the adoption of CITES, as [World Wildlife Day](#), and requested the CITES Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations system organizations, to facilitate the observance of the Day. World Wildlife Day has since been celebrated four times at numerous events across the globe.

The 2030 Agenda of the United Nations called for a world “in which humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other species are protected.” Three General Assembly resolutions have been adopted on illegal wildlife trade. Raising public awareness on the links between wildlife conservation, rural livelihoods and sustainable development, as well as the role of governance and public-private partnerships, is critical to advancing the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Good communication also enables the sharing and promotion of good practices on wildlife conservation and the importance of habitats and ecosystems services to our societies and economies.

The theme of the 2018 World Wildlife Day is: “*Big cats: predators under threat*”. The majestic big cat predators, including the cheetah, clouded leopard, jaguar, leopard, lion, puma, snow leopard, tiger, are facing a wide range of threats including from land degradation, habitat loss, poaching, illicit trafficking, human-wildlife conflict and climate change.

“Predators under threat” focusses attention on the pressing need for international, national and individual actions to ensure the survival of all big cat species. Challenges arising from human activities must be resolved by people. At a time when a crisis can still be averted, it is essential to act now.

The UN System, in collaboration with Member States and civil society, are unrolling a series of global and national events and social media activities around World Wildlife Day in 2018, including a high-level

event in New York at UN HQ on 2 March. The event is organized by CITES, UNDP, UNEP, UNODC, WCS, WWF, Panthera and African Parks with the Permanent Missions of Gabon, Germany, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand.

The CITES Secretariat is also co-organizing an International Big Cats Film Festival with the Jackson Wildlife Film Festival to galvanize the power of media and catalyze change for big cat conservation. The winning films will be highlighted during the World Wildlife Day event in New York.

The UN Postal Administration will also issue 12 stamps on 2 March showing wild animals and plant species included in CITES Appendices in the past 25 years to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the UN Endangered Species always featuring CITES-listed species.

### **Objectives:**

The World Wildlife Day Event in New York has the following complementary objectives:

- Raise awareness across several audiences of the challenges faced by Big Cats and the links to the SDGs;
- Share global messages on wildlife conservation with a focus on Big Cats and effective solutions, as well as updates on regional and national initiatives involving all stakeholders;
- Highlight and strengthen the coordinated, collective response by the UN System, Member States, civil society and private sector; and
- Contributes towards the HLPF 2018 discussions, during which SDG 15 will be reviewed in depth.

### **Format and Contents:**

The proposed format of the 2 March event at the UN Headquarters includes:

- A series of high-level remarks on wildlife conservation, the Big Cats, and links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the UN Secretary General, Member States, UN Agencies, and Civil Society, including the Co-Chairs of the Friends Group, and one or more celebrity advocates;
- Panel discussions on current challenges, on-going global efforts to protect big cat species and what more needs to be done;
- Announcement of the winning films and showing of trailers from the International Big Cats Film Festival with the Jackson Wildlife Festival;
- First day ceremony with the UN Postal Administration on the issuance of 12 stamps marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Endangered Species featuring CITES-listed species.