



## Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN)

### Africa Regional Forum on Illegal Wildlife Trade

#### **Background**

The Horn of Africa (HoA) is richly endowed with a variety of rich and diverse biodiversity including rare and endemic wildlife species, unique habitats, ecosystems, tangible and intangible heritage. The region has more than 1 500 known species of mammals, 1 400 known breeding bird species and more than 3 200 species of higher plants.

The rich resources provide potential for sustainable development and livelihood support. The region has high potential for tourism and other natural resources based development programmes and if well managed, the resources of the region can provide a firm foundation for sustainable development of the region<sup>1</sup>.

Some of these unique species are under threat due to high population growth, poaching and related illegal wildlife trade, human wildlife conflicts, habitat loss and degradation, climate change, industrialization, overexploitation, poor land use practices, increasing levels of pollution among others. If not effectively addressed, it will combine with other social, economic security, and environmental problems to undermine sustainable development, food security, good governance, and the rule of law.

One of the main emerging threats and challenges faced by the HoA is the illegal trade of live cheetahs. The UNODC World Wildlife Crime report, 2020 estimated that the main countries of origin of this illegal trafficking were Ethiopia and Somalia. If the data related to this trafficking is not readily available, there are reports that indicate that cheetahs including those originating from the HoA countries are trafficked from and through the Horn of Africa to the Arabic peninsula, posing serious threat conservation in the region.

Concerned by the unsustainable use of and, increase of wildlife and forest crime in the region, the African Union adopted an Executive Council decision in 2014 on the illegal exploitation and trade of wild flora and fauna. Based on this decision, the African Union developed a Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna. With the objective of operationalizing this strategy, AU formulated an Action Plan to implement its strategy where IGAD – as one of the Regional Economic Communities – adopted its Wildlife Management Strategy in July 2017 and agreed to implement it with a harmonized action plan with the AU.

The IGAD Region consists of eight Member States of the most commonly called, Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda covering approximately 5.2 million km<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> IGAD Wildlife Management Strategy (2017)



## **Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN)**

Based on these challenges and dynamics in the IGAD region, the Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN) was formally launched in 2017 with the objective of creating a regional network to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking in the Horn of Africa. The aim of this concept note is to provide HAWEN enough resources to effectively coordinate and facilitate Member States in implementing IGAD's Wildlife Strategy, establish harmonized information sharing, and transboundary collaboration – with the long-term objective of reducing or eliminate wildlife crime and trafficking in the IGAD region.

The HAWEN Secretariat was activated and is sitting at IGAD Headquarters in Djibouti. The Secretariat has started actively engaging in developing its operations and implementing some elements of the HAWEN Action Plan that was approved by the Executive Committee in 2018.

The objective of HAWEN is to facilitate cooperation, governance, and capacity-building in the IGAD region to combat the wildlife and forest crime which would ultimately lead to a reduction in CITES-listed/endangered species trafficked through IGAD Member States and a reduction of threats posed by organized wildlife crime to the security, resources, resilience, and livelihoods of local communities in the HAWEN region.

### **o What are the financing mechanisms of the HAWEN (how does HAWEN facilitate its operations)?**

HAWEN is currently not receiving direct funding from bilateral donors and its activities are mainly supported by partners (International Organisations and CSOs such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), UNODC, the Cheetah Conservation Fund etc). The HAWEN Secretariat has been operationalised by the secondment of an officer from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in March 2021 under the umbrella of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) support of activities to HAWEN.

The HAWEN Secretariat and IGAD are currently working on developing several ways of financing mechanisms:

1. Bilateral donors: a concept note was developed and approved by the HAWEN Executive Committee members for further dissemination to potential donors with the objective for HAWEN to obtain direct funding support to fully operationalise the HAWEN Secretariat and implement the HAWEN Action Plan.
2. Self-financing by the HAWEN Member States: HAWEN has requested the IGAD Secretariat to budget for the HAWEN Secretariat in the regular IGAD budget.

### **o What are the experiences and lessons learned by working with other networks?**

As HAWEN is relatively new and has experienced lack of funding and difficulties to organise activities during the covid-19 pandemic, HAWEN has not yet worked with other networks.



**o What opportunities for collaboration and coordination with similar networks exist? identify specific areas of synergy/common interest, and leverage.**

Over the last Executive Committee meetings (with the last one which took place in 27-28 October 2021), HAWEN has identified several collaboration and coordination opportunities with other networks such as:

- L ATF

The L ATF is mandated to undertake investigative functions which could be a basis for enhanced cooperation with HAWEN. Kenya and Uganda – which are in the HAWEN region – are Party States to the L ATF while Ethiopia is a signatory. At the 2nd HAWEN Executive Committee meeting, enhanced collaboration between L ATF and HAWEN was discussed.

- Other WENs

The Chair of HAWEN represented HAWEN at the 3rd Global Meeting of WENs which took place in January 2021 on the margins of the CITES CoP18 with the view to start potential collaboration with other WENs.

- TWIX platform - TRAFFIC

HAWEN Executive Committee members agreed to welcome the implementation of the TWIX platform for Horn of Africa. It consists of a website and database on illegal wildlife trade, and functions as an internet tool to facilitate information exchange and international co-operation between law enforcement agencies and management officials in a timely manner. It connects relevant officials from different countries via their work emails providing real time information sharing based on restricted access. A sensitization workshop on the TWIX platform was requested by HAWEN with the view of a potential implementation in the HoA.

**o What challenges and obstacles to regional cross-border cooperation & collaboration does the network face, and what are the possible solutions?**

Since the implementation of HAWEN, the HAWEN Executive Members identified the following challenges and obstacles. During the Executive Committee meetings, potential solutions are identified.

- The major challenge at the moment for HAWEN is the lack of current funding and consequently human resources making HAWEN depending on external funding from partners for delivering activities and organising meetings but also for coordinating the HAWEN Secretariat. The HAWEN Secretariat is currently coordinated by a seconded officer from UNODC under the supervision of the Environment Protection Section of IGAD. The HAWEN Secretariat is today operationalised but need long-term funding solutions to implement the HAWEN Action Plan that was adopted in 2018. IGAD and the HAWEN Secretariat are currently working in mobilising funding.



- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person meetings, trainings and workshops could not be organised in most countries of the region. In the meantime, internet connectivity in the Horn of Africa is not reliable making it difficult to organize virtual events. In-person meetings are being organised when possible.
- The region is facing political instability which could lead for representatives from Member States having difficulties to travel within the region.
- The HAWEN Protocol has been signed by 6 Member States (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda) while the signature by Kenya is still pending.
- HAWEN/IGAD is currently not working with the countries from the Arabic Peninsula which are mainly the destination countries for the species trafficked from/through the Horn of Africa. IGAD is currently working to enter into contact with the Gulf Cooperation Council.