LAW ENFORCEMENT AS A RESPONSE TO GREAT APE TRAFFICKING

Alain B. ONONINO
WWF

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THE CRISIS

➢ Hunting for food and for cultural purposes
THE CRISIS

HUNTING FOR TRADE or Commercial hunting

Philips case
- Selling Primate Skulls - 22 consignments of primate skulls sent to the U.S.
- Using Falsified CITES Permits
- Collaboration with USFWS helped to arrest him
THE CRISIS

HUNTING FOR TRADE or Commercial hunting

Ape trafficking connected to drug trafficking
THE CRISIS

HUNTING FOR TRADE or Commercial hunting

- Illegal
- Very lucrative (huge profit)
- Involved high level authorities
THE CRISIS

➢ Laws do exist but not properly applied: CITES and national legislations

  ▪ Few arrests: almost no arrest of high level traffickers

  ▪ No prosecution of high level traffickers (white collar traffickers)

  ▪ Very lenient penalties given by magistrates

➢ The situation is almost the same in all GA range states
TRADITIONAL RESPONSES

- SENSITIZATION/EDUCATION
- DEVELOPMENT OF IGA (INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES)
- FIELD PATROLS
WHY IS LAW ENFORCEMENT A (SHORT TERM) SOLUTION?

- All GA range states are parties to CITES that regulates international trade in endangered species
- National wildlife laws do exist:
  - GA are classified totally protected species (max. protection)
  - Severe sanctions provided by WL for the killing of a TPS:
    - 3 years imprisonment in Cameroon
    - 5 years imprisonment in Congo
    - 06 months imprisonment in Gabon
WHY IS LAW ENFORCEMENT A (SHORT TERM) SOLUTION?

- Appropriate and effective strategy to tackle ape trafficking: key activities include
  - INVESTIGATIONS/ INTELLIGENCE GATHERING
  - FIELD OPERATIONS
  - LEGAL FOLLOW UP
  - COMMUNICATION

- One measurable standard: the number of major traffickers arrested and prosecuted according to the law

- One deterrent factor (missing ingredient in the conservation formula): severe penalties provided by WL
SOME LAW ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES

- LAUNCHING OF SPECIALIZED LAW ENFORCEMENT NGO/PROJECTS
  - WWF supporting AALF, RALF and recently launching Support to LE specialist project in Cameroon
  - WCS supporting PALF in Congo

- SUPPORT TO LE ACTIVITIES BY CONSERVATION NGOS
  - WWF supporting AALF, RALF and recently launching Support to LE specialist project in Cameroon
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SOME RESULTS

- LAGA-MINFOF Collaboration: One major trafficker arrested every week

- PALF-MDDEFE collaboration: arrest and prosecution of major traffickers including Chinese nationals and ecoguards

- AALF-MEF Collaboration: successful prosecution of major traffickers including a sub-prefect
MAJOR OBSTACLES

- CORRUPTION

- LACK OF EQUIPMENT OF WILDLIFE RANGERS (ECOGUARDS)

- POOR KNOWLEDGE BY LE OFFICERS/MAGISTRATES OF WL AND PROCEDURES
SOME SOLUTIONS

- Political will from other GA range states (Eq. Guinea, Angola) to set up LE projects in their countries
- All the conservation actors should assume responsibility of Law Enforcement
- Address the issue of corruption at the highest level
- Involve and work in close collaboration with other key actors: Customs, FLO, INTERPOL, Magistrates
- More equipment for field agents
- Capacity building of Law Enforcement officers
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION