



Promoting wildlife protection on International Biodiversity Day

Unsustainable consumption of endangered species is the focus this year.

Hanoi, May 22, 2014 –The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) hosted a special ceremony to celebrate International Biodiversity Day today, in recognition of the value of biodiversity for all people in Vietnam. The ceremony marked the culmination of a series of awareness events and activities held this week to celebrate the day.



“Unsustainable consumption of endangered wildlife species is one of the most critical issues facing biodiversity in Vietnam today, and that is why it is the focus of this year’s International Biodiversity Day celebrations” says Associate Professor Dr. Bui Cach Tuyen, Vice-Minister of MONRE. *“Raising public awareness of the importance of wildlife protection for all of society is a very important part of government efforts to address this issue. We hope this event today will help enable the public to recognize their*

responsibilities in protecting wildlife and our unique and precious biodiversity.”

The ceremony and awareness activities for International Biodiversity Day were carried out under the scope of the project "Wildlife Consumption in Vietnam: Reforming Policies and Practices to Strengthen Biodiversity Conservation" (WLC Project), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) via the World Bank.

Around 400 guests attended today’s event in Hanoi, including representatives from Central Youth Union, relevant government agencies and institutions, embassies, NGO, experts, clubs, students and media agencies. The ceremony also featured the presentation of prizes to 17 winners of the “Youth for Wildlife Protection” competition.

The competition was a joint initiative of the Vietnam Environment Administration under MONRE and the Central Youth Union, and involved students and young people creating and recording original performances of songs, plays and dances, with the theme of wildlife protection. A judging panel including professional artists selected the winners based on the most imaginative performances and the best messages.

“We were very impressed by the quality and creativity of the entries in the competition,” says Mr. Nguyen Phi Long, Member of the Standing Committee, Head of the Youth Solidarity Committee, and Standing Vice-Chairman of the Youth Union of Vietnam. *“The winning competition entries will now play an important role in Youth Union campaigns to continue to raise awareness of the need to protect our endangered wildlife species. They are messages created by young people, for young people, with the aim of building a more sustainable future for our country.”*



Amongst the 17 prize winners were the organization 'Action for Wildlife', which was presented with a special award for its video clip "Is it true that wildlife has magical medicine properties?" and Nguyen Duy Khoai from Da Nang, who was awarded first place for his song "For the Survival of Wildlife".

"The alarming decline in wildlife populations due to demand for consumption and the illegal trade is an issue of growing international concern," says Ms. Anjali Acharya, Environment Cluster Leader at the World Bank. "However, it is very encouraging to see such a strong response from young Vietnamese to wildlife protection efforts, and we believe that young people can make a valuable contribution in motivating behavior change for biodiversity conservation."

In addition, a third component of the ceremony was the presentation and discussion of findings from the "Biodiversity Barometer" survey, which was conducted by the Union for Ethical Bioproducts, in partnership with Helvetas Vietnam and Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA) under MONRE. The survey helps to measure progress in biodiversity awareness of the world's citizens, in contribution to one of the United Nation's 2020 targets. This is the first year that Vietnam has taken part in the survey, as one of 13 participating countries.

The survey conducted online interviews of 1000 Vietnamese consumers aged between 18-50 years old, and overall findings showed that although Vietnamese consumers have a high level of biodiversity awareness, there is a gap between awareness and understanding of the issues. In particular, some of the key results included that 92% of Vietnamese respondents expect companies to respect biodiversity through their sourcing policies, but only 61% believe that companies pay enough attention to ethical sourcing of biodiversity, and 55% believe it is essential to personally contribute to biodiversity. The survey findings will be of strategic importance for companies investing in Vietnamese markets, and also to help implement Vietnam's Green Growth Strategy.

Other activities that were carried out this week in recognition of International Biodiversity Day included:

- A joint workshop on May 20 with the Ministry of Health and MONRE on reducing the use of endangered wildlife in traditional medicine;
- The release of a [public service announcement](#) (PSA) to raise awareness of wildlife protection law and penalties for wildlife crimes, which will be aired on VTV channels for one month;
- The airing of a documentary on endangered species and biodiversity conservation on VTV1 and VTV2 television channels, and Voice of Vietnam radio;
- The widespread distribution of communication materials on wildlife protection and reducing illegal wildlife consumption, including an information leaflet, posters, banners, and helmets. The materials were sent to all relevant ministries and government agencies, provincial and municipal People's Committees, and provincial Departments of Natural Resources and

Environment, with instructions to strengthen local communication activities on this issue and promote International Biodiversity Day;

- Hanging a series of wildlife protection awareness banners in the streets of Hanoi;
- Distributing helmets with wildlife protection messages to members of the public and government officials.

For more information, please contact:

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About International Day for Biological Diversity

Since 2000, the UN General Assembly has adopted 22 May as the International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues around the world. In 2014, the theme of the day is island biodiversity, and the national theme of the day in Vietnam is reducing illegal consumption of endangered wildlife to protect biodiversity.

About Wildlife Consumption

Vietnam is recognized globally for its unique biodiversity. It is home to many rare and endangered species, including some that are found nowhere else in the world.

However, illegal wildlife trade and consumption have become major problems in Vietnam. Despite efforts to manage the trade and conserve wildlife, rapid economic growth over the past two decades has contributed to an unsustainable increase in wildlife consumption. Illegal consumption and the associated trade have led to the alarming decline of wild populations of many mammal, bird, and reptile species.

Illegal and unsustainable wildlife consumption not only devastates species populations and destroys ecosystems, but it also has negative consequences for the whole of society, our economy, human health, and even national security. The WLC Project is part of a range of new initiatives from the Vietnam Government aiming to address these issues.