

## Government and Organization Leaders urge the protection of endangered wildlife

**Hanoi, 22 December 2014** - The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) has released two new Public Service Announcements (PSAs) ahead of the New Year and Tet holiday period, which urge the public not to buy, sell, or consume wildlife products, and encourage the protection of Vietnam's endangered species for future generations.

These are the first two PSAs to feature high level Vietnamese government leaders directly delivering conservation messages, in an effort to demonstrate the seriousness of the illegal wildlife trade and consumption issue.

The PSAs have been released during the New Year and Tet holiday period because the months surrounding the Tet lunar New Year (October to March) are recognized as the peak time for wildlife violations in Vietnam, as demand for goods including wildlife products intensifies. This is due to consumers purchasing luxury gifts for their bosses or other influential people, or purchasing wildlife meat and wine to consume with family and friends.

The first video clip recalls an important message from President Ho Chi Minh in 1963: *"The forest is gold. If we know how to conserve and manage it well, it will be very valuable."* It then features Dr. Bui Cach Tuyen, Vice-Director of MONRE, discussing the negative impact that illegal wildlife consumption has on biodiversity resources, and ends with Mr. Bui The Duc, Vice Chairman of the Communist Party's Central Committee for Propaganda and Education (CCPE), encouraging the protection of endangered species and Vietnam's natural heritage for future generations.

The second video clip also features Dr. Bui Cach Tuyen discussing illegal wildlife consumption as an issue of global concern, and Vietnam's cooperation with international agencies in efforts to address it. It then features the World Bank's Country Director for Vietnam, Ms. Victoria Kwakwa, and the former United States Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. David Shear, discussing how and why their agencies are working with the Government of Vietnam.

The increase in illegal wildlife consumption and trade is one of the most critical issues facing biodiversity management in Vietnam today. This not only includes eating wildlife as meat, in wine, and traditional medicine, but also the demand for exotic pets, ornaments and decorations. It is considered to be one of the biggest causes of the loss of endangered wildlife from Vietnam's ecosystems, and is pushing many species to the brink of extinction. The last Javan rhino in Vietnam was killed for its horn in 2010, and scientists estimate that there may now be less than 30 tigers and 100 elephants remaining in the wild.

*"We need to send a strong message that illegal wildlife consumption is directly contributing to the loss of a valuable natural resource, and that this is having a significant negative impact on our ecosystems,"* said Dr. Bui Cach Tuyen. *"It is essential that we conserve and sustainably use our biodiversity; not just for nature, but also for the substantial contribution it makes to the national economy and the wellbeing of society."*

*"We hope these PSAs will help people to understand the importance of wildlife protection; and that by simply not buying, selling, or using products made from endangered species, everyone can help to protect our unique and precious biodiversity for the benefit of future generations too."*

The PSAs are both one-minute each, and will be aired on national and provincial VTV channels throughout January and February. The release of the PSAs is part of a wider communication

campaign from MONRE calling for wildlife protection during the Tet period. The campaign includes other activities such as a special event to engage young business leaders in wildlife protection awareness; and a roundtable meeting with the Central Committee for Propaganda and Education to integrate the issue on the agendas of other government agencies and organizations.

The two video clips were produced within 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.

*For more information, please contact:*

**Biodiversity Conservation Agency**, Vietnam Environment Administration, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

**Address:** 10, Ton That Thuyet, Cau Giay, Hanoi

**Contact person:** Ms. Nguyen Thi Van Anh

**Phone:** +84 4 3795 6868; ext. 3116

**Email:** nguyenvananh.bca@gmail.com

### **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 Government of Vietnam aiming to address these issues.