

## Make the Right Choice and Stay Safe with Modern Medicine: Reject Wildlife Products

**Hanoi, March 3, 2021** – Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) has just released their newest Public Service Announcement (PSA), [Safer with Science](#), which drives home the fact that Vietnam is moving towards a future that chooses modern medicine over wildlife products.

[The PSA](#) begins with an ambulance rushing a patient to seek medical help. Suddenly, the ambulance halts as they come to a fork in the road, forcing the driver to choose left towards wildlife medicine or right towards modern medicine. After an argument between the doctor, wife, and even the critically ill patient, eventually they head right towards modern medicine.

“After a chaotic year enduring the consequences of zoonotic outbreak, ENV’s [newest PSA](#) is calling on the Vietnamese public to head in the right direction by ending the trade and consumption of wildlife in Vietnam,” states Nguyen Phuong Dung, Vice Director of ENV. “While authorities and law enforcement in Vietnam are showing increased effort to stop wildlife trade, the public must do their part to end demand. Using wildlife products is not only killing our natural world, but as we saw in 2020, it has extremely deadly effects on people as well.”



Exploitation of nature and wildlife is threatening our planet and our well-being. The trade and consumption of wildlife is linked to a number of deadly infectious diseases as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to WHO, about 70% of all infectious diseases over the last 30 years have been zoonotic, including HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, swine flu, SARS, Ebola, MERS, and now Covid-19.

Due to the serious risks to public health posed by the wildlife trade, ENV is calling on the Ministry of Health in Vietnam to create and promote more communications campaigns educating the public about the dangers of hunting, trading, consuming, and being exposed to wildlife. ENV’s current Covid-19 campaign, *Never Again*, has been running nationwide since April 2020 with the aim of spreading the message that wildlife is not safe for consumption or trade.

In addition to NGO-led awareness campaigns, Dung stresses the importance of a more vocal role by relevant ministries in helping educate the public. “Wildlife trade and consumption not only endangers our biodiversity, but also threatens our own safety and health,” Dung says. “The message from nature has been loud and clear, and it’s in our best interest to listen and take the necessary action to prevent future occurrences of zoonotic threats to our health and survival.”

Last year, ENV’s Wildlife Crime Unit received more reports of wildlife crime than any other year in ENV history, and by the end of 2020, the Wildlife Crime Hotline was receiving 10 new reports of wildlife crime a day. Alarming, an increasing amount of reports were online advertisements for wildlife products, indicating that demand for wildlife is still high in Vietnam.

For the past ten years, ENV has worked to eliminate the sale of wildlife products at traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) shops, which is illegal. As part of this campaign, ENV recently sent nearly 2,300 copies of

TCM advocacy brochures to TCM shops across the country, providing knowledge on wildlife laws and encouraging TCM practitioners to use plant-based alternatives to stay in compliance with the law.

“Just like the patient in the [PSA](#), we cannot afford to waste any time. As a country, we must stand together to eliminate Vietnam’s illegal wildlife trade,” warns Dung. “I believe the public in Vietnam will make the right choice to protect wildlife and our health by trusting in modern medicine.”

ENV wishes to thank and acknowledge U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Save the Rhino International for funding this PSA to increase educational awareness and reduce demand for endangered wildlife products.

## **ENDS.**

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## **About ENV**

Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) was established in 2000 as Vietnam’s first non-governmental organization focused on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. ENV combats the illegal wildlife trade and aims to foster greater understanding amongst the Vietnamese public about the need to protect nature and wildlife.

ENV employs creative and innovative strategies to influence public attitudes and reduce demand for wildlife trade products. ENV works closely with government partners to strengthen policy and legislation, and directly supports enforcement efforts in the protection of endangered species of regional, national, and global significance.

Since 2007, ENV has focused its activities on three major program areas that comprise ENV’s integrated strategic approach for addressing illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam. These include:

- Reducing consumer demand for wildlife products through investment in a long-term and sustained effort to influence public attitudes and behavior.
- Strengthening enforcement through direct support and assistance to law enforcement agencies and mobilizing active public participation in helping combat wildlife crime.
- Working with policy-makers to strengthen legislation, close loopholes in the law, and promote sound policy