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## **LAUNCH OF THE REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF COURT TRIALS UNDER THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT, 2013**

### **REMARKS BY KWS DIRECTOR GENERAL- MR KITILI MBATHI**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to share this day with you in celebrating the culmination of two years of work. WildlifeDirect is a long standing partner of Kenya Wildlife Service. The work by WildlifeDirect in monitoring wildlife cases in Kenya is hugely important as it offers a review of what is working and therefore needs to be scaled up and what needs transformation.

As result of the recommendations in the 2013 baseline study by WildlifeDirect, KWS has successfully lowered the poaching rate by more than 80%. However, more work needs to be done ensure that Kenya no longer is a conduit for the trafficking of ivory and illegal wildlife products that have been poached from other countries in Africa. Studies have shown that the trade in illegal wildlife products is mainly orchestrated by transnational organized crime cartels.

To this end, having read this report and acknowledging its importance and the urgency, KWS is committed to not only implementing the recommendations from this report that touch on it, but also providing leadership to ensure that all stakeholders in the sector are working together to bring these cartels to justice.

I strongly believe this war, against the illegal trafficking of wildlife species and their products, can only be won by collaborative partnerships between the government and NGO players as well as the private sector. It is with this in mind that KWS requested for the assistance of WildlifeDirect in setting up our own in-house prosecutions unit.

Further, KWS endeavours to stamp out corruption and ensure that it does not interfere with the prosecutorial and investigative process in wildlife crime. We will be working closely with the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission to ensure that all our officers involved in the prosecutions and investigative process are vetted. This will ensure that KWS is accountable and upholds the highest levels of integrity.

Finally, KWS and WildlifeDirect as the convener of the wildlife crime committee at the Conservation Alliance of Kenya, will also hold monthly meetings to ensure coordination of efforts in providing interventions in wildlife crime.

These are few of the immediate interventions that KWS will provide in ensuring that the recommendations in the report are implemented as matter of priority so that we have even better news to report on at the upcoming CITES convention in December.

We call on all our partners and stakeholder to join us in this war against illegal wildlife trafficking and to ensure that our national wildlife heritage endures forever.

**Kitili Mbathi**