

## Africa

# Wildlife Task Force

On 17 March, six countries formally empowered an international Task Force to fight wildlife crime in Africa. They are: Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. This Task Force is the first of its kind in the world and will have its headquarters at the Kenya Wildlife Service in Nairobi.

The Task Force functions under the Lusaka Agreement on Co-operative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, signed in Lusaka in 1994. So far, six countries have adopted the Agreement which entered into force in 1996. The estab-

lishment of the Task Force will strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Force is composed of seconded national law enforcement officers from each Party and designated National Bureaux. The National Bureaux will work together with Task Force Headquarters on joint cross-border operations against wildlife crime. The Director, Intelligence Officer and support staff are expected to be appointed in the next few weeks. □