

## February 2006 Report

### Highlights -

- **Accomplice of Ecoguard killer operation**
- **Hitting Guinean ivory Connection**
- **Unprecedented damages awarded**
- **Organaizing Eco-tourism and Great Apes meeting**

### General

February month the operational level of LAGA continued to grow with good results in investigations and operations involving none-wildlife crimes like handling the case of the Ecoguard killer. Action continued against foreigners involved in the ivory trade in two operations against the Guinean dealers in Douala.

In the legal side unprecedented damages awarded stand to convince the government employment of lawyers can be financially self-sustainable. A computerized system was developed to control the complex schedule of assignments of the legal unit handling cases all over the country. Like with any other tool LAGA develops, the aim is to disseminate it to other partners.

Media targets for 2006 have already been achieved with many talk shows on radio and TV with guests as the Minister and Secretary General of MINFOF.

### Investigations

- **14 investigations were held in 7 provinces.**
- The unit shows a high professional level in **the investigation of the killing of the ecoguard**. This is the second investigation this year involving **crimes outside wildlife**.

### Operations

- Institution development – The National Brigade/ special unit has participated in our operations. Attempts were made to train more police officers so that different teams could operate at the same time.
- On January a poacher in South West Cameroon **killed an unarmed ecoguard** from a one meter range, setting a very dangerous precedence. After a two weeks investigation by the forces of law and order arrived to a dead end, LAGA's one week investigation discovered that a known poacher and ivory dealer known to us has been hiding the killer and an accomplice. By the time we brought the Ministry team and the forces of law and order, the two have apparently escaped to a house of the killers brother, in another town. On 20.2.05 in a LAGA collaborative operation the subject was arrested. With him were seized one tail of elephant and a letter he wrote that implicates him as connected to the killing. Interrogation continued and we moved the subject around the country . By the end of the month, interrogation to indicate the location of the killer has not been successful yet. The subject confessed he has **killed more than 280 elephants** from 1977 till now. The man confesses he was the one

writing and signing the implicating letter (on the letter was a title - "Read and burn in fire").

- **Two operations against Guinean ivory connection.** The two were in Douala and are a follow up on foreigners involved in international ivory trade. Last year LAGA brought to the arrest of a big trader in Douala of a Guinean nationality. He used to buy tusks from all over the country and employ carvers manufacturing models for the Asian market. Now the operations arrested 3 Guineans operating in two different places with 68 Kg of ivory.
- For more details see LAGA's case tracking System.

### Legal

- **14 dealers behind bars:** 1 in Central province, 5 in South province, 1 in the North province, 2 in the West Province and 1 in the North west province, 1 in South West province 3 in Littoral province. Jail visits held for all prisoners.
- 17 actives cases: 2 cases waiting for the complaint to be sent to court; 6 cases waiting for a date of trial, and 9 cases already passing in trial
- **1 prosecution** in the West province – total of 4.4 million CFA (\$8,150) fine and damages and one year imprisonment suspended for the next 3 years.
- Financial sustainability program (proving to the Ministry lawyers fees could be financed by damages awarded) - **unprecedented damages awarded** for a wildlife case– 2.4 million CFA (\$4,445). The offenders started paying already 500,000 CFA.
- Work collaboration increasing with the legal unit of MINFOF.
- Legal Unit developed a new **computerized system to control schedule**. It consists of creating a schedule of assignments for each active court case and automatic alerts for any assignment not accomplished on time.

### Media front

- **Media targets for 2006 already met.**
- **21 media pieces** were produced and pushed to radio written press and TV. more talk shows were introduced.
- Subjects – wildlife law enforcement including – our operations in North-West, South West and West provinces, Taiping Four, Apes and Health, CITES, tradition values and enforcement, Drugs and Apes case.
- Guests – including, **The Minister, the Secretary General**, Ministry directors, local Chief, an MP, NGOs. Getting more interviews from Central administration.

### External Relations and Policy

- LAGA organized a meeting **on apes' ecotourism potential** in Cameroon as a follow up of the Kinshasa GRASP meeting.. The meeting was held on 9.2 in the US embassy and has put together a wide spectrum of stakeholders for developing ecotourism in Cameroon – 3 Ministries, NGOs, Donors, national and international economic operators. An international guest – Praveen Moman, Director of Volcano Safaris, gave an account of mountain gorilla's safaris and the lessons taught. The views expressed gave a comprehensive

insight of the challenges ahead. The meeting has been described as a good starting point and as new wind blown into an old and slow process.

- Beyond the GRASP context the development of ecotourism in Cameroon is politically important an alternative to a pro-use policy.

### **Management**

- LAGA started testing candidates for secretary position after Eunice Nekwa fully took over the position of Assistant Manager.

### **Finance**

- The US FWS grant used from April 2005 is fully exhausted.

### **LAGA Expenditure for February 05**

<b>Budget line</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
<b>Investigations</b>	14 investigations, 7 provinces	2,908,874	\$5,289
<b>Operations</b>	3 operations - ape+ivory Guinea	1,814,585	\$3,299
<b>legal</b>	follow up of 17 cases	2,007,425	\$3,650
<b>Media</b>	21 media pieces	788,720	\$1,434
<b>Policy and External Relations</b>	Ectourism	131,333	\$239
<b>Management</b>	Coordination	1,593,150	\$2,897
<b>Office</b>		516,601	\$939
<b>LAGA Family - Investing in team spirit and professional level</b>		25,000	\$45
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE FEBRUARY</b>		<b>9,785,688</b>	<b>\$17,792</b>

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount CFA</b>	<b>Amount USD</b>
Born Free	2,352,750	\$4,277.7
FWS	253,789	\$461.4
World Bank	489,200	\$889.5
AWI	0	\$0.0
BHC	4,476,145	\$8,138.4
WSPA	581,669	\$1,057.6
Arcus	1,632,135	\$2,967.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,785,688</b>	<b>\$17,792.2</b>

Ofir Drori  
 Director  
 The Last Great Ape Organization

**THIS MONTH IN PICTURES**

