To
The Chief Secretaries
All State Governments/UT Administrations

Sub: Advisory on establishment of ‘Wildlife Crime Control Units’ in the States/UTs - reg

Sir/Madam,

1. India has rich bio-diversity and it is home to about 8% of the world’s known biodiversity. National wildlife heritage is however under threat due to poaching and illegal trade of wildlife & their parts/products; and depletion of wild flora & fauna is matter of grave national concern.

2. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, is the umbrella legislation for wildlife crime enforcement in the country; and its provisions are enforced primarily by state police & forest departments. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) is a multi-disciplinary statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India, mandated inter alia to coordinate actions by various officers, State Governments and other authorities in connection with the enforcement of the provisions of this Act; and the Bureau is working with various government agencies and relevant non-governmental stakeholders, to stop wildlife crime in the country.

3. Over the years, wildlife crime especially its illegal trade has become highly organized with trans-border ramifications. Its effective combating requires systematic identification and busting of organized networks by dedicated crime control units. The existing wildlife crime enforcement infrastructure in the country has certain institutional weaknesses that hinder its effective functioning requiring urgent attention. One of such limitation is the lack of adequately resourced and mandated institutional mechanism with state police and forest departments, to deal exclusively with wildlife crime.

4. The issue had been on the agenda of a series of inter-agency coordination meetings of wildlife law enforcement agencies convened by the Bureau in different parts of the country. Based on the deliberations there, the Bureau has drawn upon the following recommendations to make the system of wildlife crime detection, investigation and prosecution more effective:

(i). Constitute High Level Inter-Agency Coordination Committee in each State/UT to promote inter-agency coordination to control poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking. The members of the Committee may include heads of relevant state agencies and representatives of WCCB & other relevant central government agencies having presence in the State/UT.

(ii). Set up exclusive ‘Wildlife Crime Control Unit’ in each State/UT police and forest department. Such unit in the forest department may be under the Chief Wildlife Warden and in
the police department under State police CID. Units are suggested to have statewide jurisdiction and empowered to perform the following functions:

(a). Collect and collate intelligence related to wildlife crime activities; and to disseminate the same to field units for enforcement action.
(b). Establish wildlife crime databank.
(c). Prevent, investigate and prosecute organized wildlife crime cases having wider ramifications.
(e). Coordinate inter - agency wildlife crime enforcement actions in the State/UT.
(f). Advice the State Government on issues relating to wildlife crime and related laws.

5. All the States/UTs are therefore advised to consider constitution of State Level Inter - Agency Coordination Committee on combating wildlife crime and establish exclusive ‘Wildlife Crime Control Units’ in the Forest and Police Departments with mandate as suggested at Para 4 supra and any additional measure that is required for the effective action against wildlife crime in their jurisdictions.

Yours faithfully,

(S.B. Negi)
Additional Director/IGP

Copy for information and necessary action to:

1. The Director Generals of Police of all States/UTs.
2. The Chief Wildlife Wardens of all States/UTs.
3. PS to the ADG (WL), MoEFCC – for information.
4. Guard File