



STATEMENT ON WORLD WILDLIFE DAY 2026

The Centre for Environmental Education and Communication (CEEC) joins the global community in commemorating World Wildlife Day on 3rd March 2026. This important day, declared by the United Nations in 2013, marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973. It serves as a global platform to celebrate wildlife and promote the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.

This year's theme, "*Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods*," highlights the critical role that plants play in sustaining human health, supporting cultural heritage, and strengthening local economies.

At CEEC, we recognize that wildlife is not only about iconic animals such as elephants and rhinos, it also includes plant species that are essential to daily life in Malawi. Across our communities, many households depend on traditional medicine as a primary source of healthcare. Medicinal and aromatic plants such as Moringa, African ginger, Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), Aloe species, and Neem contribute significantly to nutrition, health, and income generation.

Communities around many forest reserves in Malawi sustainably harvest indigenous plants for medicinal use and livelihoods. The available biodiversity further supports traditional knowledge systems and eco-tourism opportunities.

However, these valuable plant species face growing threats from deforestation, overharvesting, climate change, and illegal trade. In Malawi, pressure on forest reserves due to charcoal production, agricultural expansion, and unsustainable land use practices continues to endanger medicinal plant resources.

CEEC emphasizes that conservation is not optional, it is fundamental to our health, cultural identity, and economic resilience. Protecting medicinal and aromatic plants means safeguarding; community health systems, indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage, rural livelihoods and income opportunities and biodiversity for present and future generations

As an organization committed to environmental education and behaviour change communication, CEEC calls upon government institutions, traditional leaders, civil society, the private sector, and young people to work collaboratively in promoting sustainable harvesting practices, forest restoration, and awareness on the importance of medicinal plant conservation.

World Wildlife Day 2026 is more than a celebration. It is a call to action for Malawi to protect its natural heritage and ensure that medicinal and aromatic plants continue to sustain our health, heritage, and livelihoods for generations to come.

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