

Distell celebrates CSR and elephant conservation with Amarula and WildlifeDirect

By **Chris Madden** on November, 14 2019 | Spirits & Tobacco



Distell and Amarula celebrated their CSR elephant conservation message at a special event



Distell Head of Europe Joseph Walsh said the brand is proud of its African roots



WildlifeDirect CEO Dr Paula Kahumbu addressed the vital work the charity does



Amarula cocktails were served at the event

Money raised from the sale of Amarula is helping fund lawyers on the frontline battling to bring elephant poachers in Africa to justice.

Elephant protection is a core aspect of Amarula's brand identity. This week, parent company Distell held a special awareness event in London as part of its ongoing CSR mission to raise money to continue the fight to protect Africa's elephant population.

"We are very proud of our African roots," Distell Head of Europe Joseph Walsh told guests at Cambridge Cottage, Kew Gardens, on Tuesday. He added: "No other company has the CSR message we do."

Amarula's Don't Let Them Disappear campaign has featured at travel retail outlets around the world ²

and helped raise international awareness of the plight of the African elephant.

Money raised by the brand is donated to WildlifeDirect. The charity carries out vast conservation efforts in Kenya, including following up court cases against poachers and going back over historical cases to help educate officials about the problems faced with bringing poachers to justice.

Keynote speaker, WildlifeDirect CEO Dr Paula Kahumbu, addressed the challenges the charity faces, including court files disappearing and judges not understanding the issues surrounding poaching. She said that thanks to the charity's work and support from brands like Amarula, the conviction rate for poachers in Kenya is now 95%.

"Why does this matter?" Dr Kahumbu asked guests. "Because our population is very young. Arica's median age is 19 ½. Can you imagine that demographic bulge? Those guys are ripe for falling in love with nature. That is what we are all about."

She explained that raising awareness of conservation in Africa is very difficult; despite the wealth of wildlife documentaries shot in the country very few are shown there.

In order to "reach that future generation who are deciding our leaders and our policies", Dr Kahumbu and her team have launched a new show called Wildlife Warriors, which brings the work of Africa's conservationists to the fore.

Since its launch it has garnered 4 million viewers in Kenya and 79 million in Africa as a whole.

"For the first time, people who were invisible, even to us in Kenya, are visible and getting recognition," she explained.

Alongside raising awareness, WildlifeDirect faces challenges both at home, with a lack of understanding from official and increased infrastructure destroying the elephants' natural habitat, as well as from abroad. Dr Kahumbu highlighted China's "incredible reach into Africa" as one of the sources of both infrastructure change and demand for ivory.

To battle this wider threat, WildlifeDirect has been involved with a documentary film called The Elephant Queen about matriarch elephant Athena and her herd, which will raise awareness both at home and abroad.

"I want to thank Amarula," Dr Kahumbu said. "A lot of the ideas came from the campaign Don't Let Them Disappear."

She concluded: "Let's keep seeing elephants in their majesty. But also, when they exist in their number in the ecosystems where they are supposed to be, they play such an important role in keeping those ecosystems thriving."