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## **Basic requirements to ensure that a ban on commercial fishing in Marine Parks will benefit fisheries, wildlife, and Hong Kong's economy**

### ***Coordinated Efforts between Conservation and Fisheries Divisions of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department***

#### **1. Licensing**

To avoid the debate on developing sustainable fisheries running in an endless circle, WWF believes the Government should take logical steps to license fishing, as a prerequisite to strength law enforcement efforts in deterring illegal fishing boats entering Hong Kong waters. Without efficient and effective law enforcement efforts to compliment the establishment of marine protected areas, it would be difficult to ensure that our waters would be truly protected for marine conservation and sustainable fisheries.

Therefore, WWF requests the Government to do this hand-in-hand with the banning of commercial fishing in marine parks and immediately establish a joint working group within AFCD to coordinate the work between the Conservation and the Fisheries divisions under the same work schedule.

#### **2. Alternative livelihood options - Release of report to Committee on Sustainable Fisheries**

It is imperative that the loss of fishing ground is remedied not only through *ex gratia* payments but also by providing alternative choices of employment. Due to the limitations that this community faces in terms of age, education level and skills, it is necessary to present alternatives that take advantage of its skills set and knowledge of the sea. The 18-month consultancy study for producing a report on sustainable fisheries and its relevant public consultation ended over a year ago, but the report – which should shed light on both alternative livelihood opportunities and marine protection measures – has yet to be released.

Therefore, WWF requests the Government to immediately release the Sustainable Fisheries Report and proactively coordinate efforts required to facilitate effective marine life protection and alternative livelihood options to help the affected fishing community to embark on new path and opportunities. It is fundamental that the two divisions of AFCD carry out this whole exercise under a coordinated approach followed by a clear timeline to ensure that the fishery situation in Hong Kong improves for the benefit of its fishing community and the community at large. Further delays are not acceptable.



### **3. Conclusion**

WWF hailed the banning of commercial fishing in Hong Kong marine parks because this is the **minimal** measure we need to see healthy recovery of marine life in our waters. Besides marine protected zones, policies on alternative livelihood and enforcement against illegal fishing must go parallel with such marine protection measures.

Marine protection and sustainable fisheries should be viewed as one issue to be dealt with by AFCD which is currently overseen by the Environment Protection Department and the Food and Health Bureau. A joint working body is deemed essential to ensure the right policies are designed to watch out for the interest of both the environment and the community as a whole, not in a piecemeal manner. Such policies must also be accompanied by a timeline and roadmap to ensure their fair and timely implementation.