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**Bills Committee on Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and
Plants (Amendment) Bill 2017**
Submission of Opinions from Endangered Species Advisory Committee
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HKSAR

On behalf of the Endangered Species Advisory Committee of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, I express our agreement on the legislative proposal to phase out the local ivory trade without financial compensation, and increase fines and penalties. The number of elephants has dropped by more than 60% in the last decade, and now the estimated population is only about 400,000. This is due to the loss of habitat and more importantly, poaching of the animals for their tusks, which is mainly for ornamental purposes. Hong Kong has already banned almost all ivory trade across the border and trading within the territory is quite minimal. Nevertheless, Hong Kong is implicated as having an underground trade, and is used by smugglers for trans-shipment. Mainland China, which consumes the majority of the global ivory, has already declared a ban on the ivory trade by the end of 2017. Hong Kong will be at odds if it does not taking appropriate action. As the raising of the environmental awareness, we believe this proposal will have the support of the general population.

The proposal of a five-year grace period is appropriate. This will provide sufficient time for the industry to transform. A concern is whether such proposal will make the private property becomes commercially worthless and will lead to judicial review. We anticipate the authority is considering this matter from different viewpoints and will settle the issue on a sound legal basis.

Pang-Chui Shaw
Chairman

22th August, 2017