

Mr. Kenneth Leung  
Chairman  
Bill Committee on Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Bill  
2017  
Legislative Council  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

August 24, 2017

The Honorable Legislator Leung:

On behalf of Humane Society International (HSI), our affiliates and millions of supporters worldwide, we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the September 6 public hearing regarding the legislative proposal to phase out Hong Kong's ivory trade. HSI is the global affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States, the largest animal protection organization in the United States. HSI is in firm support of the Hong Kong government's effort to combat ivory trafficking and to prohibit the ivory trade in your jurisdiction.

As we iterated in our testimony to the June 6 hearing, we continue to support the legislative proposal to prohibit the import and re-export of ivory specimens, phase out the domestic trade, and strengthen criminal penalties for ivory trafficking. In addition, we continue to oppose traders' request for compensations for their stockpiles. It will set a terrible precedent for future similar policy for other wildlife products in Hong Kong and elsewhere. The United States implemented a near-total ban on ivory sales last year. Seven states, such as New York, Hawaii and California with large ivory markets, also adopted state laws to prohibit ivory sales. Neither the federal nor the state governments provided compensations to antique dealers or other ivory businesses. Most of the Hong Kong ivory dealers claim that they had imported the ivory before the CITES ban in 1990. The dealers would have already had decades to sell and deplete their stockpiles. In addition, the phase-out period gives the dealers an additional five years to sell their items until December 31, 2021.

HSI regrets that we cannot attend the public hearing in person to express our support for the proposed legislation. We stand ready with the Legislative Council and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) as you move forward with the efforts to curb ivory trafficking and other wildlife crime.

Sincerely yours,

Iris Ho  
Wildlife Program Manager, HSI

Audrey Delsink  
HSI-Africa Executive Director