



Ivory Ban

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Dear legco members of Hong Kong,

My name is Anne Ip and I am a student from South Island School. Lately, I heard a talk in my school about the killing of elephants for their tusks. I have heard these kind of talks many times already, and at first, I thought this would just be one of those talks. It will strike me hard, thinking of what humans can do to animals so cruelly, but then after a while, this distinctive feeling would leave me and I would forget all about the poor elephants waiting for us to help them. To my complete surprise and shock, it wasn't a striking feeling that hit me when I listened to the latest talk. It was a different feeling that was so subtle that I nearly wasn't aware of it, but as the talk went on, the feeling turned stronger and stronger. Soon, I realised that for something to convince someone, it doesn't have to create something majestic, dramatic and striking in them. It needs something subtle that turns strong, for that feeling will last with you, but the majestic, dramatic and striking feeling won't last in you.

I did some research on this topic - killing of elephants for their tusks and I found out that Hong Kong has launched a landmark bill for the ban of its domestic ivory trade. It is accusing the authorities of helping China provide what they need in the trade market. Now, the world's biggest retail ivory market is in Hong Kong and there are a lot more items made from ivory to be sold in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the majority of buyers are from mainland China and this is a cycle. Hong Kong gets the ivory and it put into stores to be sold. Then, people from mainland China come down to buy it. In addition, according to a recent report by Traffic, more than a third of licensed ivory dealers have been found to be telling the buyers secretly on ways to smuggle ivory out of city. How can the licensed dealers be trusted now? Yes, they have the license, but the words that come out of their mouths causes others to do an illegal crime. This draft of a proposal law that is supposed to be presented to parliament discussion would ban the import and export of ivory both raw and worked by 2021. This is why there should be no compensation for the traffickers.

Although, the trade is affecting elephant's existence, it is also affecting many families around the world. Just as the manager of Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Erik Mararv, said, "The truth is that people are being killed... people are seeing their families being destroyed because of the trade." The same goes for the elephants. They watch their babies or parents or friends get shot for their tusks. Imagine how they must feel watching their close friends, babies or parents falling to the ground. Despite their strong physique, they have a heart and thoughts too. Can you bare the thought of losing your parents, children or close friends? Don't even mention actually watching them die and inhaling their last breath on earth. This is cruel. This is inhuman. This is a nightmare coming to life. This is not what should happen, but it is precisely what is happening.

Therefore, I urge you all to make a difference. You are the ones in power. You have the authority to change the laws. You have the ability to save lives of both humans and animals, so please save them. Save them when you still have the authority to.

Sincerely,
Anne Ip (9C1)