



Consulado General de México
Hong Kong y Macao

HKO-C-0167
Hong Kong, August 30, 2017

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

Mr Chairman,

Trafficking of wildlife represents a significant threat to numerous species of animals and plants around the world, as well as to the rule of law. It is a form of transnational organized crime, and as such it must be addressed through effective international cooperation upon the principle of shared responsibility. It also requires concerted efforts to close gaps in legislation, law enforcement and criminal justice.

The Government of Mexico is undertaking a broad effort to save from extinction the world's smallest and most endangered porpoise, the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*). The main driver of the decline in its population is that these animals entangle in the gillnets used to illegally capture an also endangered marine fish, the totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*). Both are endemic to Mexico's Sea of Cortés and listed in CITES Appendix I. The market for illegal totoaba fish maw is found in the south China region.

Mexico, China and the United States have agreed to work closely together to counter all stages of the totoaba trade: illegal fishing, trafficking and the demand for illegal fish maw. We value the cooperation we have established with the corresponding Hong Kong authorities. We are also joining efforts with private institutions, non-governmental organizations and the communities involved.

In this context, Mexico recently reformed its legislation against organized crime by explicitly including environmental crimes such as the capture, trafficking, possession or sale of endangered or protected species. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for twenty years, plus applicable fines.

I recognize the decision of the Hong Kong Government to introduce a bill to amend the local legislation on endangered species. Its adoption as proposed would be in line with our common objective of safeguarding biodiversity and upholding our respective international commitments.

Sincerely,

Damián Martínez Tagüña
Consul General of Mexico