

**Bills Committee on Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants
(Amendment) Bill 2017 second meeting on 6 September 2017**

Dear Legislative Councilors and Representatives of the Government,

Elephants are one of the most iconic animals alive today, they are one of the first animals a child is taught and there is no wonder why. Elephants are majestic animals who have roamed the African planes for millions of years, they are the largest land mammal and can be seen to show levels of emotions similar to those of humans. It deeply saddens me to know that Hong Kong, the place I have spent my entire life living is contributing to the mass slaughtering of this wonderful and unique animal.

Ivory is now not only about the bloody and brutal slaughter of elephants, wildlife conservationists and park rangers are also losing their lives fighting this cause. Just recently Wayne Lotter, the founder of PAMS foundation, was shot and killed in Tanzania. His work has helped tremendously to stop poaching and just like many others he has died protecting African wildlife. Thousands of people and hundreds of thousands of elephants have been killed all for a material which is not essential to the survival of human beings.

Since the total ban of all sales of ivory obtained before the year 1990, Hong Kong 'traders' have stockpiled 700 tonnes of ivory, now 27 years later Hong Kong traders still have over 70 tonnes of ivory left. It seems strange that in 27 years these traders cannot clear their stock. Although traders claim all their stock is legal, many have been documented revealing to customers that they buy blood ivory and launder it so they can pass it off as legal. Another point these traders make is that ivory carving is an ancient Chinese art and tradition. The truth is ivory is no magic material that allows for beautiful carving, carving that is done with ivory can easily be done with wood and certain types of plastics. Ivory is an outdated trade and tradition which belongs in the past and has no place here in 2017.

I believe Hong Kong is making the right steps in this bill, and I hope that with it comes changes that will bring about a better world and an end to the ivory trade. I also believe that no compensation should be given to ivory traders and there should be an increase in wildlife crime punishments. Traders have been caught selling blood ivory and should not be rewarded with compensation or given a light sentence for engaging in illegal activity. They have had 27 years to clear their stock and if this bill passes they will have another 5 years. Since 1990 six Olympic Games have been played, five US presidents have been in office. They have had a longer time to clear their stock than I have been alive, it has been more than enough time.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man."

Please do not delay the implementation of the ban and destruction of the ivory stockpiles.

Yours sincerely,
Pierce Duffy
(Reference No.: 744B7CA8)