



For attention of Ms Tanya Chan - Chairperson of the Panel on Environmental Affairs

Jill Robinson to: info, panel_ea

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Sent by: Jill Robinson <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Karina O' Carroll, "Bernadette Carney (HKG)", "Dave Neale (UK)"

Dear Ms Chan,

I write on behalf of Animals Asia and our supporters across the world, including Hong Kong where our Head Office is based, to pledge support for a total ivory ban this year by the government of Hong Kong. We also support its proposal to increase maximum penalties for wildlife crime.

We are concerned regarding the proposed long phase out period for ivory sales of five years, particularly given that China, in its commitment to global responsibilities, has pledged to stop commercial processing and sales of ivory by the end of this year.

On the 27th February, Xinhua reported that China has seen a sharp decline in ivory smuggling, falling 80 percent in 2016 from previous peak years. In that same year China also imposed a three year ban on ivory imports in an escalating fight against illegal trading of wild animals and plants.

As the world's biggest retail ivory market Hong Kong remains a hub for illicit trading, with traders using legal stockpiles to launder illegal ivory. A four year gap between China enforcing the end of the ivory trade, and Hong Kong that allows it to continue (even while phasing it out), will inevitably send mixed messages to the local community and tourists, and see opportunities for an illegal trade to go on.

As the world looks to China's endeavours to recover declining elephant populations, now is the time for Hong Kong to take a stand, align with Beijing and bring the ivory trade to a close by the end of this year.

Yours sincerely,

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