

**REVISED:** I am Yvonne Sadovy, Professor of Biology at the University of Hong Kong – 24 years. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**I strongly support the proposed ivory ban.** Decisive action has now been taken by major ivory trading countries and is particularly important in Hong Kong because of our massive role in this trade. Unfortunately, laundering and illegal trade in ivory appears to be common into and through our city and we cannot control it. We must honour our international commitments in halting declines in elephants. Five years to start the ban, however, is much too long, given the alarming rates of poaching and illegal trade occurring. In 5 years' time a further half of much reduced African elephants will be gone. The ban should start by the end of this year; **little is gained by waiting 5 more years, too much will be lost.**

Some people who oppose the trade ban argue that ivory is culturally important. If true, then surely those who do care about this tradition should be the ones fighting to ensure that elephants have a future? But this is not happening; instead ivory trade seems to be mostly about high profits, very little about culture. Times have changed; young people today want to preserve our planet's natural heritage and see animals alive. The world has changed and we must change with it; Hong Kong is good at change, its people and businesses are used to it and adapt well to it; why not with the ivory trade?

**I strongly support increased penalties** for wildlife crime, all wildlife crime; sadly, much wildlife trade today is associated with organized and serious crime that must be stopped. Our penalties should reflect the high economic value of wildlife and the misery and cruelty associated with illegal trade in animals and the deaths of people working to reduce this trade. Just 3 weeks ago, Wayne Lotter was gunned down in Tanzania while trying to combat illegal ivory trade, adding to 1,000 ranger deaths so far.

**I strongly oppose the granting of compensation:** Traders have known for almost 3 decades of the increasing risks of trading ivory – government has sent clear messages over many years, from burning of 28 t ivory to long engagement with traders on this issue. Elephants have long been declining and many ivory traders have already refocused their trade. Those traders who continue to trade illegal ivory took a calculated risk seeking to benefit economically from increased prices associated with declining ivory. What is the justification to reward such behaviour with compensation using tax-payers' money? Who will compensate the families of the 1,000+ rangers killed during ivory poaching, who will compensate people in future who can no longer get an income from elephant/wildlife tourism or our young people who would never have the chance to see elephants?