



Animal Defenders International

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Ms Tanya Chan, Chairperson
Panel on Environmental Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
Legislative Council Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Chan

We are writing to you on a matter of great significance, which will affect the future survival of elephants in the wild. In consideration of the devastating impact the trade in ivory has on elephant populations, we urge you to support legislation proposed by the Hong Kong Government to phase out the domestic ivory trade.

The proposals are:

- to immediately ban the import and re-export of all elephant hunting trophies and remaining post-Convention ivory items
- to ban the import and re-export of pre-Convention ivory and subject pre-Convention ivory to licensing in the local market
- to ban the possession of all ivory for commercial purposes, to take effect in December 2021.

Poaching is a major threat to both African and Asian elephants in the wild. Classified as *Vulnerable* and *Endangered* respectively under the IUCN Red List, both species remain at high risk of extinction. The 2016 Great Elephant Census, the most comprehensive population count ever conducted, documented around 352,271 savannah elephants remaining in Africa, far less than previously thought. The Asian elephant population is estimated to be 40-50,000 individuals.

The wildlife trade monitoring network, TRAFFIC, report that legal ivory sales “are considered to provide an opportunity for the laundering of poached ivory....while also stimulating demand in consumer markets”.

As the world’s largest legal ivory retail market, Hong Kong is a key destination for ivory poached from elephants. Illegal trade is facilitated by international criminal networks; it is fuelled by and aids corruption, undermines security and the rule of law, and can even provide funding to those involved with militia and terrorist activities.

Countries around the world are taking action to end the global ivory trade, destroying stockpiles of seized and confiscated ivory, and closing their domestic ivory markets.

Hong Kong lawmakers can play their part in ending the elephant poaching crisis and restoring the health of economies and communities in Africa that have been devastated by poaching.

A debate on the legislative proposals to phase out the local trade in ivory will be held by the Panel on Environmental Affairs on Monday 27th March 2017, 14:30, in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex, with a final vote due to take place later in the year.

Please support the government's proposal to end the ivory trade in Hong Kong and urge that the ban be introduced as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Creamer', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Jan Creamer
President