



## WILDLIFE AFRICA INITIATIVE

*A Conservation, Research, Education and Wildlife Rescue Initiative*  
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19th May, 2017

Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Ma,

### **“LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL TO PHASE OUT THE LOCAL TRADE IN IVORY”**

#### **"WE SUPPORT THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL TO PHASE OUT THE LOCAL TRADE IN IVORY"**

Wildlife Africa Initiative is a “Conservation, Research, Education and Wildlife Rescue Initiative” with a vision to create a Growing generation, knowledgeable and motivated to take positive actions on behalf of the ‘Wildlife’ – Plants and animals that share our land and sea with us and the environment. This we do through partnerships with research institutions, NGOs, the private sector and cultural organizations nationally, regionally and internationally; to bring the knowledge of flora and fauna of Africa to people.

With this letter, Wildlife Africa Initiative makes its views known towards the legislative proposal to phase out the local trade in ivory in Hong Kong.

We would like to start by stating from our own findings, we have heard that there is an erroneous belief rightly or wrongly among the locals that Elephant Tusk or Ivory in this case are tooth that fell off from an Elephant and people just pick it up to sell basically to the people of Asia. You may wish to know and may cause the people to know that this is not true. Elephants are butchered and slaughtered mercilessly for their tusks.

We believe that Animals deserve to live free, safe and wild. They are sentient beings, charismatic, keystone and umbrella species. They are generally referred to as “Gardeners of the Forest”. There are several species of plants, trees and animals that depend on the continued existence of Elephants to survive. Some tree seeds for example will not germinate if it does not pass through the gut of an Elephant. Elephants have their intrinsic value and they don’t even have to benefit humans.

Elephants used to live free and Wild. Herds of Savannah and Forest Elephants used to Exist. In some parts of Africa, for example in Nigeria where I come from, their populations have gone extinct. In other parts of Africa, like in the South and East Africa, the remaining populations are being decimated with reckless abandon, NOT because Nigerians/Africans use Ivory for anything but primarily serving as a gateway to the Asian peoples’ demand, which Hong Kong belongs.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, (CITES) did a split protection for Elephants with complete Appendix I protection for some populations (i.e. absolutely no trade) and Appendix II protection (i.e. with permits) with some other populations but what they fail to realize is that, even though there is no such thing as Sustainable harvesting of Elephant tusk/ivory, because, at what point or at what number do we say their numbers are enough or too much or is the rate of harvest synonymous or less than the rate of reproduction and growth? The problem is not even with the Legal Trade. The problem is with the Illegal Trade, which is brutal and raging.

Considering the high level of Corruption in Africa and simple lack of the human capacity and security challenges, policing the Legal trade of these species is simply impossible. What this means is that illegal harvest of Elephant tusk/Ivory will continue to be fueled by the continued demand for Ivory in Honk Kong symbolized by the domestic Ivory market. If this domestic market of Ivory is not closed, Hong Kong can be sure that every single Ivory being sold in that market is because of a brutal poaching that is benefiting a few greedy individuals, corrupt politicians and possibly funding militias in Africa.



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**Felix Abayomi**

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