



ELEPHANT SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

marion.garai@gmail.com; www.esag.co.za
P.O. Box 98, Vaalwater, 0530 Limpopo, South Africa
Cell: 083 808 1800; 082 979 3800
IT001620/2015(C)

Legislative Panel on Environmental Affairs
Legislative Council
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

30 May 2017

The Honourable Madame Tanya Chan:

ESAG welcomes the opportunity to support the laudable efforts of the Legislative Council's continued efforts on phasing out Hong Kong's ivory trade and would herewith like to submit testimony for the June 6th public hearing. Hong Kong's role in ending the ivory trade and saving the remaining elephants is of great importance and closely watched worldwide.

We support the legislative proposal to prohibit the import and re-export of ivory specimens, phase out the domestic trade, and strengthen criminal penalties for ivory trafficking. Moreover, we understand that there is an ongoing debate regarding the compensation to traders for their remaining ivory stockpiles. We disagree with the request of the traders for compensations. The United States implemented a near-total ban on ivory sales last year. Several states, such as New York, Hawaii and California with large ivory markets, also adopted state laws to prohibit ivory sales. Neither the federal nor the state governments provided compensations to antique dealers or other ivory businesses. Most of the Hong Kong ivory dealers claim that they had imported the ivory before the CITES ban in 1990. The dealers would have already had decades to sell and deplete their stockpiles. In addition, the phase-out period gives the dealers an additional five years to sell their items until December 31, 2021.

We support the Legislative Council and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in your efforts to curb ivory trafficking.

Sincerely

Dr Marion E GARAI

Chairperson