



In support of the immediate ban of ivory trade in Hong Kong

Tansy Lau Tom to: panel_ea

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Dear Hon. Tanya Chan,

Hope all is well for you. I would like to express my strong support of the government's immediate ban on ivory trade AND oppose any suggestion of compensation.

The ban needs to be enforced immediately. It is obvious the traders have continued to import and export ivory contrary to the law. They were given 30 years to clear their stock and change to selling something else but they still say they have a lot of stock left in their stores and demand compensation. I object to giving compensation to the traders because without expensive scientific analysis its impossible to distinguish 'legal' Pre-Convention ivory from 'illegal' ivory from poaching. Traders have been found to replenish old ivory stocks with newly poached ivory. It is absolutely ridiculous that they demand compensation from the govt to pay off what they smuggled in! It's because of their own greed and disrespect for life that made them investing something that is illegal, and they have no one to blame for their loss but on themselves.

No other country has provided compensation and China will not do so when their ban comes into force at the end of this year.

Compensation can motivate dishonest traders in Hong Kong to increase their ivory stock in the short term from illegal sources, before the ban becomes effective. Thus increasing future compensation payments and having a perverse impact i.e. fueling poaching.

This will also immediately send a signal to the the illegal ivory trade that there is a finite period between the legislation passing and coming in to force, where they can poach ivory to supply the Hong Kong trade - thus again fueling poaching.

Public funds, should not be made available to any industries or trades which are adversely affected by changes in economic or commercial circumstances when they have been repeatedly forewarned over decades.

Therefore, I support the government's proposal to ban the import, re-export and possession of pre-Convention ivory for commercial purposes and increase penalties for wildlife crime immediately. Please don't wait till 2021. Even China will have the total ban by the end of 2017. The ivory traders WILL NOT be given compensation.

Today, ivory poaching has reached unprecedented levels driven by demand in Asia. If nothing is done, the African elephant populations in the wild will become extinct in our lifetime.

The illegal ivory trade impacts wildlife tourism economically, not to mention the tragic deaths of park rangers annually.

The global support for closing ivory markets is clear, 183 countries/territories of CITES are unified in closing domestic markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade in ivory. There is no deterrent sentencing in Hong Kong with respect to wildlife crime and penalties are minimal. It is a joke how backwards and uncivilised Hong Kong is on this matter. If we do not administrate the ban immediately, we will be under international criticism. Being the biggest market for ivory trade is nothing to be proud of and I, as a citizen of Hong Kong, do not wish our home to be labelled with such a shameful name.

Thank you very much for your kind attention,

Best regards,

Tansy Lau