



31st May 2017

Ms Tanya Chan  
Chair, Environmental Affairs Panel  
Hong Kong Legislative Council

Dear *Ms*

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**Re: The Hong Kong SAR Government's Ivory Trade Ban**

I am writing to you again as Chair of the African Elephant Coalition (AEC), an alliance of 29 African countries committed to the survival of African elephants free from the threat of international ivory trade. As I am sure you are aware, the elephant poaching crisis is far from over. Our member countries continue to suffer from the social, environmental, economic and security impacts of the ivory trade, as outlined in my letter of 22 March 2017.

The proposed legislation by the Hong Kong SAR Government to ban the ivory trade is vitally important. As CITES recognized in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), adopted by consensus last year, *"legal domestic markets for ivory may increase the risk to elephant populations and local communities, due to the opportunity it creates for the laundering of illegal ivory under the guise of legality"*. The recommendation in the Resolution that measures to close domestic markets for raw and worked ivory should be taken *"as a matter of urgency"* provides a lifeline for our elephants.

On behalf of the Coalition, I would therefore like to express strong support for both the Hong Kong SAR Government's proposed ivory ban, and the proposal to increase penalties for wildlife crime. Furthermore, I understand that there is pressure for the Government to pay compensation to traders for their ivory stocks. This is a matter of great concern since it risks escalating the poaching crisis by sending the wrong signals, and could put further strain on our resources to combat poaching and trafficking. I would therefore like to respectfully urge that no compensation be made to traders.

Once again, I would like to emphasise how welcome the Government's proposed legislation is given the critical role Hong Kong SAR plays in the ivory trade. Indeed, with the closure of China's market by the end of 2017, it is of great importance that Hong Kong SAR sends an equally clear signal to the world that its ivory market is closing down. If we work together and keep the momentum moving forward to close ivory markets, I believe we can end the threat of the trade and ensure the protection of elephants for future generations in Africa and Asia.

Yours

*Sincerely,*

Patrick Omondi, OGW  
Chair, African Elephant Coalition