



LegCo Testimony re Ivory Ban
Jasmine Williamson to: panel_ea

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To the Honourable Tanya Chan,

My name is Jasmine Williamson, and I write today on behalf of Stop Ivory - an international NGO that exists to implement the African-led 'Elephant Protection Initiative', in partnership with NGOs, IGOs, and private individuals and companies around the world.

We are so grateful to the LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel for the consideration of a ban in the trade in ivory in Hong Kong - a move taken by many countries worldwide, including the USA and China, in recognition of the urgent need to halt the elephant poaching crisis.

We wholly 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. As you may already know, the global support for closing ivory markets is clear: 183 countries/territories of CITES heeded the call of the member states of the Elephant Protection Initiative and the African Elephant Coalition, and following the landmark decision CITES COP17 in September 2016 are unified in support for the closure of domestic markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade in ivory. We understand there is evidence to suggest that the market for ivory that exists in Hong Kong does just that.

We also wish to express our reservations with regard to potential compensation offered to those who currently trade in ivory when a ban comes into force. We are concerned that it will trigger a rush by traders to purchase stock to maximise compensation payment, and a rush by poachers to supply this market, between the time the ban is announced and the time it comes into force. It is a risk that the most vulnerable and isolated of Africa's elephant populations - in the forests of West Africa, the conflict-impaired areas of Central Africa and others that are already teetering on the brink of extinction - simply cannot afford to take.

A ban will send a strong signal to consumers that ivory is not a commodity, will amplify the message of the damage the existence of the trade does to the future prospects of wild elephants everywhere, and will contribute enormously to diminishing the demand for ivory that drives the poaching of elephants and the trafficking of their ivory.

Please accept my regards, and my thanks for your time and consideration,

Yours faithfully,

Jasmine

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**STOP
IVORY**