

Ms. Tanya chan, Chairperson,
Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs,
Legislative Council of Hong Kong,
The Government of the HKSAR

4th June 2017

Dear Ms Chan,

I am writing to express my full support for the Administration's proposed ban on the sale of ivory in Hong Kong and implementation with amendments to Cap 586. The Chief Executive's pledge to ban the sale of ivory is to be applauded and Mainland China has followed suit and pledged to ban the sale by the end of 2017.

However, Hong Kong was and remains a major portal for the trade in illegal wildlife species partly due to its proximity to a region with high demand for such products. This US\$20 billion dollar industry is a major concern for global health and biodiversity.

With almost 30% of human deaths worldwide due to infectious diseases and 70% of emerging zoonotic diseases coming from wildlife, the ivory trade is a major fund raiser for the continuation of the trade in illegal wildlife as well as other criminal activities. The effect on wildlife biodiversity caused by the decimation of the wild elephant population will have serious repercussions globally. One only has to consider the global spread of diseases with wildlife origins such as SARS, MERS, Ebola, West Nile and avian influenza to recognise the danger of upsetting the balance of ecosystems.

As a territory that prides itself on being progressive, as a place that abhors animal cruelty, as a place that has had more than its fair share of diseases of wildlife origin and as a place that does not rely on the ivory trade for any substantial contribution to its GDP, Hong Kong has no excuse not to implement the ban immediately. Compensation for cessation of trade merely encourages the trade and more illegal stocking and sends the wrong message to the youth of today that profiting off this tragic trade should be rewarded.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically Signed.

Dr. Howard Wong

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