



Hong Kong can lead the World on saving elephants' teeth from the moribund ivory trade

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Hon. Tanya Chan & Members of Legislative Council Environmental Affairs Panel

Hawaii has led in whale recovery & now will ally with Hong Kong, China and former NBA star Yao Ming, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu and broadcaster David Attenborough to help stop the killing of African elephants. In order to save the elephant population for future generations, Hong Kong needs to take bold action now.

We 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. People who have speculated and stored ivory can sell this ivory now and do not need to be compensated. The greatest threat to wild elephant populations is poaching driven by demand for ivory products.

As the third largest domestic market for ivory in the United States, Hawaii was set to replace NY & CA as the biggest market, but it passed a ban bill in 2016. The United States was contributing to the poaching crisis by providing the second largest market in the world, after China, for ivory. Previous studies have shown that fully one-third of ivory offered for sale in the US was likely recently carved from elephants poached in Africa. Oahu possessed the highest number of suspected post- 1989 trade ban items.* The researchers found that one-third of the ivory on sale in the USA appeared to have been recently carved in China, so ivory markets in Hawaii fuel African elephant poaching. Fish and Wildlife Service gives exemptions that are being taken advantage of by persons who claim ivory they offer for sale fits them.

Ivory products encourage socially irresponsible spending, and illegal practices, so the trade in ivory surely belongs in the past, just as sales of whale teeth & shark fins. As part Hawaii's preparations to host the World Conservation Congress for IUCN in Sept. 2016, nongovernmental organizations like Sierra Club asked our leaders to act & they did!

In 2014 the Sierra Atlantic Chapter helped New York State establish a moratorium on the sale of elephant ivory products to eliminate the significant enforcement challenge posed by the legal ivory trade. Hawaii in this bill also raised consumer awareness, plus reduced the poaching pressures on elephants.

Another benefit of cutting ivory sales we learn from the president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, who, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack at a Nairobi mall, said that al-Shabbab has a major source of its funding from illegal ivory trade which (11 Oct 2013 Wall St. Journal). Now he says "Kenya will seek a global plan to end a business that endangers our wildlife and bankrolls attacks on our people." He launched a campaign calling for a global moratorium on ivory trading, while investing more in anti-poaching measures, noting this illegal trade cannot be curtailed without an offensive against overseas buyers. We ask you to vote for this Hong Kong bill.

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Ahahui Mälama I Ka Lökahi /Hawaiians for the Conservation of Native Ecosystems

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see

"Tracking Ivory" by Bryan Christy National Geographic Sept. 2015
series investigating wildlife crimes, NG TV Aug. 30 "Warlords of Ivory"

"Poaching in Africa" by Paul Rauber July 2013 Sierra