

# In Support of the Hong Kong Government's Ivory Trade Ban

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Hon Tanya Chan  
Room 814, Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Hon Tanya Chan,

I wish to thank the Government for its progressive proposal to ban the ivory trade in Hong Kong. I fully back the plan to abolish the Hong Kong ivory trade; in addition to its proposals to raise the maximum penalties under the Protection of Endangered Species Ordinance Cap 586. However, I **will not** support any plan in which ivory traders receive compensation or benefit from a buyout scheme.

## **i) Reasons For Supporting the Proposed Ivory Trade Ban in Hong Kong and Increasing Penalties**

- Hong Kong's 'legalised' trade in pre-Convention ivory has been administered through a flawed licensing system that has allowed illegal ivory to be laundered.
- Traders have been caught replenishing their stocks of old ivory with freshly poached tusks and other ivory products. Without expensive scientific analysis it is impossible to distinguish 'legal' Pre-Convention ivory from 'illegal' ivory from poaching.
- Elephant poaching has reached extraordinary levels, driven by demand in Asia. If nothing is done, the African elephant populations in the wild are predicted to become extinct within our lifetime.
- The illegal ivory trade impacts wildlife tourism, and therefore many communities, economically, not to mention the impacts of the tragic deaths of park rangers annually.
- The global support for closing ivory markets is clear. There are 183 countries/territories who are party to CITES, and are unified in their determination to close domestic markets which contribute to poaching or illegal trade in ivory.
- There is no deterrent sentencing in Hong Kong for wildlife crimes and the penalties are negligible.

## **ii) Reasons Why I Do Not Support Compensation for Traders or Any Government Buying of Ivory Stocks**

- The ivory traders were warned 27 years ago to prepare and sell their ivory. Further, under the proposal they have an additional 5-year "grace period" to sell the remainder of their stock.
- People who speculated and stockpiled ivory can sell this ivory now, they do not need to be compensated (the proposed ban was announced 16 months ago and is not envisaged to be fully in place until December 2021).
- Most traders have diversified their trades, and do not rely solely on ivory for their income.
- No other country has provided compensation and the People's Republic of China has no plans to do so when their ban comes into force in December of this year.
- Compensation will likely motivate unscrupulous 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. fuelling 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.

While I do not support compensation for these reasons, I do support investment in non-financial assistance programmes e.g. retraining for industry workers.

Yours sincerely,

Rory Chi Wai Lyon Fong

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