



**Letter in support of ivory trade ban without compensation**

Nissa Cornish to: panel\_ea

05/06/2017 17:14

Cc: info, dphk, bpa, contact, liberal, info, info, info, kwaichung, info, flucsb, lsd, info, info, Andy Cornish, Sophie Le Clue

Dear Chairman Chan and the LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel;

As concerned Hong Kong citizens, we strongly support the government's proposal to ban the import, re-export and possession of pre-Convention ivory for commercial purposes.

If this type of preventative action is not taken, African elephant and rhinoceros populations in the wild will likely become extinct in our lifetime.

The unprecedented levels of illegal ivory poaching in Africa are driven primarily by demand here in Asia.

It is foolish to believe that Hong Kong's 'legal' ivory trade has been, or could be, effectively regulated. The vast majority (est 85%) of ivory stock registered with the government in the 90s was from illegal sources.

More recently, the government tested ivory chopsticks sold in a shop in Sheung Wan and, through forensic technology, verified it to be illegal. Furthermore, a recent survey by TRAFFIC found that over one-third of Hong Kong traders have been encouraging mainland Chinese tourists to illegally smuggle ivory out of the city without the correct permit.

This illegal trade endorses the rampant and inhumane slaughter of endangered animals, as well as numerous annual deaths of dedicated park rangers. It also negatively impacts the economies of affected countries. We do not want Hong Kong to bear this kind of cruel responsibility.

Hong Kong is in the global spotlight with this bill, and the world's position is very clear; currently 183 countries/territories of CITES are unified in closing domestic markets that contribute to poaching or illegal trade in ivory.

We also strongly urge LegCo NOT to consider any proposals for any compensation to ivory traders.

Traders have had 27 years to dispose of their pre-CITES ivory, and will have a continued grace period of five years, under the proposed ban – although we believe that a grace period of two years would be more than adequate. There has been, and will be, ample opportunity to sell their existing stock.

Any offer of compensation will merely fuel the continued acquisition of illegal stock in the short term, in order for dishonest traders to maximize their capital gain in compensation when the time comes.

This, in turn, may have a devastating impact, fuelling poachers to increase their violent efforts in order to supply Hong Kong traders who stand to gain financially from their ivory stock holdings through compensation.

Taxpayers' money should not be used to compensate unscrupulous business that should have been phased out years ago.

It should be noted that no other country has provided compensation of this kind. This includes China, whose ban comes into force at the end of this year.

Thank you for your time. We believe that LegCo will make the wise and ethical choice on behalf of Hong Kong citizens.

With kind regards,

Andrew and Nissa Cornish