



Legislative proposal to phase out the local ivory trade
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05/06/2017 17:04

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5th June, 2017

To: The Honourable Panel on Environmental Affairs

Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Re: Legislative proposal to phase out the local ivory trade

Dear Members of the Panel:

I am writing in support of the following two ideas: **(I) phasing out the local ivory trade**, and **(II) opposition to offering compensation to ivory traders**. My justifications can be found below:

I. PHASING OUT THE LOCAL IVORY TRADE

Ivory should not be seen a commodity: the trade of ivory encourages poaching (and other related illegal activities such as arms-trade), it leads to the suffering and even the extinction of elephants, and it harms the ecosystem. Putting a price tag on ivory obscures the reality of animal exploitation on the part of humans and it distorts the fact that ivory comes from a flesh-and-blood animal which can sense pain and injury. Given the fact that human beings do not need ivory to live well and flourish, the ivory trade is outdated and should be banned—it is akin to *slavery*, an evil prevalent in the past which has no place in the contemporary world.

I. OPPOSITION TO OFFERING COMPENSATION TO IVORY TRADERS

Local ivory traders had got a chance to realise the monetary worth of their ivory stock through selling their ivory since 1989. And they have a 5-year grace period left to do so. In view of this, adopting an ivory ban to ivory trade in Hong Kong cannot be said to amount to any loss to ivory traders. (If there are still stocks of ivory left in Hong Kong, what it means is that there is little market demand for ivory. As Hong Kong is a *free market*, the SAR government is under no obligation to offer compensation to ivory traders.) The most important reason why we ought not offer compensation to ivory traders is that the prospect of compensation can lead to the use of ivory from the black market to claim compensation. This is a real danger because the Hong Kong SAR is not equipped with objective and scientific means to differentiate ivory harvested before 1989 and ivory obtained through other illegal means

(such as smuggling). Due to this inherent inability to distinguish legally-owned and illegally-sourced ivory, offering compensating to ivory traders is a self-defeating move. Most importantly, the trade of ivory leads to the suffering of animals, namely elephants; it also contributes to other forms of violence when the money from illegal ivory trade is used to fund warlords in African countries.

I therefore hope that the SAR government would implement a ban of ivory trade without offering any compensation to ivory traders.

Yours sincerely,

Hektor Yan

(Human being)

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