



Consulate of the United States of America

Hong Kong and Macau

June 05, 2017

Dear Honorable Tanya Chan,

I am writing this letter in support of the Hong Kong Government's commitment to introduce legislation to phase out local trade in elephant ivory and impose heavier penalties on smuggling and illegal trade of endangered species. Wildlife trafficking is an urgent conservation threat, a threat to global security, rule of law, and economic development. Poachers and traffickers are driving species like elephants to the brink of extinction, with an estimated average of one elephant killed every 15 minutes. We urge the Hong Kong Legislative Council to pass the proposed domestic ivory trade ban amendments to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance as currently proposed by the Hong Kong Environmental Bureau.

As ivory trafficking is a complex, global problem, it will take coordinated, focused efforts by all countries involved (i.e., as source, transit, or destination countries) to bring the devastating elephant ivory trade to an end. The United States works with countries around the world to combat illegal trade in ivory and other wildlife products. The United States implemented its near-total ban on elephant ivory on July 6, 2016 and urges other governments to act quickly and decisively to implement similar rules and regulations, which are crucial to preventing the extinction of the world's wild elephant populations.

I congratulate Hong Kong on the initiative and steps taken thus far to enact a local ivory ban. I hope the Hong Kong Legislative Council will expeditiously pass the currently proposed domestic ivory trade ban amendments to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance without consideration of compensation to prevent the escalated extinction of African elephants. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kurt W. Tong', written over a printed name and title.

Kurt W. Tong
Consul General

The Honorable
Tanya Chan,
Chairman of the Panel of Environment Affairs,
Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Of the People's Republic of China.