



世界自然基金會
香港分會

WWF-Hong Kong

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Chairman and Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs, Legislative Council

(c/o Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

17 March 2021

(By e-mail)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Panel on Environmental Affairs Meeting on 22 March 2021, agenda item
#VI “Briefing on the proposed Members’ Bill to amend the Organised and Serious
Crimes Ordinance to strengthen the combat against illegal wildlife trade”**

We understand the above captioned will be discussed during the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 22 March 2021. WWF-Hong Kong (WWF) strongly supports the proposed amendment of the Schedule 1 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO) (Cap. 455) to include certain offences under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586). WWF believes such amendment will have following benefits:

1. Safeguard Hong Kong’s reputation as Asia’s World City

A 2019 report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) concluded that an average of 25 per cent of global species are currently threatened with extinction. WWF’s 2020 Living Planet Report reveals two-thirds decline in wildlife populations on average since 1970, with illegal wildlife trade (IWT) being a major threat. Hong Kong is obligated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to conserve biodiversity and utilise resources sustainably. This year, the CBD COP15 (15th Conference of Parties) will be held in Kunming, China. By including wildlife crime offenses under OSCO, Hong Kong can showcase its determination in being Asia’s World City by deterring IWT and by contributing to global efforts in preventing biodiversity loss.

2. Strengthen investigation and enforcement power to end the illegal wildlife trade

By recognising wildlife crime as serious and transnational organized crime and by including wildlife trafficking offenses under Schedule 1 of Cap. 455, the HKSAR Government will increase its powers to investigate the financial flows associated with IWT, of individuals and companies. Criminal syndicates are tenacious, well-resourced, and adaptable, but the proposed amendment to Cap 455 will enable disruption of their

together possible™

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Patron: The Honourable Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, GBM, GBS
The Chief Executive of the HKSAR
Chairman: Mr Daniel R Bradshaw
CEO: Mr Peter Cornthwaite

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trafficking operations in a meaningful way. Despite the increasing number of investigations, prosecutions of large volume seizures in Hong Kong remain rare. Internationally significant cases have been dropped by Hong Kong prosecutors for lack of sufficient evidence. For example, Hong Kong's record pangolin seizure of 8.3 tonnes seized with 2.1 tonnes of ivory in 2019 remain unprosecuted.

We strongly support the proposed amendment of the OSCO. We hope to see the panel approve the proposed amendment to safeguard Hong Kong's reputation and prevent further biodiversity loss.

Yours faithfully,



David Olson
Director of Conservation
WWF-Hong Kong

Encl.

Cc: Mr KS Wong, Secretary for the Environment
Ms Michelle Au, Political Assistant to Secretary for the Environment
Mr Chin-wan Tse, Under-Secretary for the Environment
Mr Ka-chiu Lee, John, Secretary for Security
Mr Chi Kwong Au, Under-Secretary of Security
Ms Yeuk-wah Cheung, Secretary for Justice
Mr Ping Keung Tang, Commissioner of Hong Kong Police Force
Mr Yi Hoi Tang, Commissioner of Customs and Excise
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