



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hong Kong Public Supports Ivory Ban

As elephant poaching crisis continues, over three-quarters of citizens living in key ivory market support a comprehensive ban on sales.

HONG KONG (26 May 2015) — The Hong Kong public overwhelmingly supports a comprehensive ban on elephant ivory sales, according to a new survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme. 75% percent of the 1,021 respondents expressed support for outlawing ivory sales, which are currently poorly regulated in Hong Kong. Of those in favor, 55% “very much support” a ban, while 21% “quite support.” Additionally, three-quarters of respondents agreed that the Hong Kong government should stop issuing new ivory possession licenses.

The survey also found:

- 84% of respondents knew that it's illegal to import or export ivory from Hong Kong without a license.
- 71% knew that an elephant must be killed for poachers to collect tusks.
- Only 34% knew that African elephants could become extinct in the wild within our lifetime if current poaching rates continue.
- Only 26% knew that ivory poaching is linked to militant groups and organized crime.

The survey was commissioned by WildAid, Save the Elephants and African Wildlife Foundation, and is supported by Hong Kong lawmaker Elizabeth Quat of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB). (Click the following link to download the full report: <http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/WildAid-Hong%20Kong%20Ivory%20Survey.05.26.15.pdf>).

“Hong Kong’s ‘legal’ ivory stock was largely derived from elephants poached in the 1970s and 1980s before the international trade ban. Stocks have not been physically inspected and provide a perfect cover for the laundering of new illegal ivory,” said Peter Knights, WildAid CEO. “Traders have had 26 years to liquidate their stocks. It’s time to close this open door for poaching.”

Elizabeth Quat said, “The Hong Kong people have spoken. They clearly want the government to ban this immoral trade which not only profits from the deaths of thousands of endangered elephants, but is harming China’s flourishing business relationship with Africa.”

Chan Yung, a member of China’s National People’s Congress, said “At the Chinese Government’s National People’s Congress annual meeting in March, I felt honoured to submit a bill suggestion to the Standing Committee to ban China’s legal trade in ivory. Now that this has been suggested, we are stepping up our efforts to lobby the Hong Kong government to ban the ivory trade in our city. Hong Kong’s legal ivory trade masks a parallel trade in illegal ivory. This is aggravating Africa’s efforts to stem wildlife poaching, harming China’s international reputation and must be banned immediately”.

WildAid, African Wildlife Foundation and Save the Elephants are running a major public awareness campaign in mainland China to reduce the demand for ivory. The campaign uses public service announcements, billboards and subway ads featuring some of China’s biggest celebrities, including former NBA superstar Yao Ming, action hero Jackie Chan and top Chinese actress Li Bingbing, as well as The Duke of Cambridge (Prince William), David Beckham and others. In 2014, Hong Kong Lawmaker Elizabeth Quat was invited by all three NGOs to visit Kenya to experience elephant conservation efforts first hand.

Two years in, the campaign has significantly increased awareness of today’s poaching crisis, and is now active in Hong Kong, Thailand and the United States — all major ivory consumers.

In March this year, Elizabeth Quat successfully persuaded 32 Hong Kong deputies to China’s National People’s Congress (NPC), many from the DAB, to submit to the Standing Committee of the NPC a bill suggestion proposed by Chan Yung 陳勇 to ban the domestic sale and transportation of elephant ivory in China. The 32 lawmakers who signed the bill suggestion to the NPC SC were; 陳勇 Chan Yung, 鄭耀棠 Cheng Yiu-tong, 馬逢國 Ma Fung-kwok, 馬豪輝 Ma Ho-fai, 王庭聰 Wong Ting-chung, 王敏剛 Wong Man-kong, 盧瑞安 Lo Sui-on, 田北辰 Michael Tien, 劉佩瓊 Lau Pui-king, Priscilla, 李引泉 Li Yin-quan, 楊耀忠 Yeung Yiu-chung, 吳亮星 Ng Leung-sing, 張鐵夫 Zhang Tie-fu, 陳智思 Bernard Charnwut Chan, 范徐麗泰 Rita Fan, 林順潮 Lam, Dennis Shun-chiu, 羅范椒芬 Fanny Law, 胡曉明 Herman Hu, 姚祖輝 Andrew Yao, 黃友嘉 David Wong Yau-kar, 黃玉山 Wong Yuk-Shan, 雷添良 Tim Lui, 蔡素玉 Choy So-yuk, 蔡毅 Cai Yi, 廖長江 Martin Liao, 譚惠珠 Maria Tam, 吳秋北 Ng Chau-pei, 葉國謙 Ip Kwok-him, 顏寶玲 Ngan Po-ling, 霍震寰 Ian Fok Tsun-wan, 劉健儀 Miriam Lau, and 陳振彬 Chan Chung-bun, Bunny.

“Hong Kong has long been a hub for the illegal ivory trade, and suffers from weak ivory licensing controls”, said Alex Hofford of WildAid Hong Kong. “Without using expensive radiocarbon analysis technology it is absolutely impossible for anyone in the market to distinguish so-called legal old stocks from newly poached ivory.”

The Hong Kong government's inaction on the issue is perpetuating a modern-day elephant poaching crisis. Hong Kong's Secretary for the Environment KS Wong should legislate for a total ban on ivory sales in Hong Kong by setting a reasonable date for the city's ivory traders to finally dispose of their stocks – after which time no more ivory could legally be sold.

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Click here [<http://we.tl/ozInAo6bDq> / https://youtu.be/jpG1Q_waMYQ] for photos and video of recent ivory protests in Hong Kong (Credit: Alex Hofford/WildAid)

About the survey:

The University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme conducted a telephone survey from November 29 to December 9, 2014. A total of 1,021 qualified respondents were successfully interviewed with a response rate of 67 percent. The standard sampling error for percentages based on this sample was less than 1.6 percent. Click the following link http://www.wildaid.org/sites/default/files/resources/WildAid%20Ivory%20Consumption%20report_POP.pdf for more information on the survey methodology and results.

About WildAid:

WildAid is the only organization to focus on reducing the demand for wildlife products. WildAid works with hundreds of Asian and Western political figures, celebrities and business leaders, including the Duke of Cambridge, Yao Ming, Jackie Chan, Edward Norton and Sir Richard Branson, to dissuade people from purchasing endangered wildlife products. These public service messages and educational initiatives reach hundreds of millions of people per week in China alone through donated media space. "When the buying stops, the killing can too." For more information, visit wildaid.org. Follow us on Twitter @wildaid and on Facebook at facebook.com/wildaid.

About Hong Kong Legislative Councillor Dr. Hon Elizabeth Quat, JP:

Dr. Hon Elizabeth Quat, JP, known as EQ by her peers, is a Legislative Council Member, an IT person, winner of the Top Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award, an Open Water Scuba Instructor and a Marine Conservation Photographer. EQ is passionate about travel and community service. She has visited over 50 countries and more than 200 cities. She is the founder of numerous non-profit organizations, including the “Internet Professional Association”, the “e-Health Consortium”, the “Energy Saving & Environment Concern Alliance”, and the “Love-Family Foundation”. From both inside and outside the Council, EQ strives to promote Hong Kong's economic development,

innovation and technology development, women and family matters, and environmental protection. EQ has been actively promoting the protection of the earth and marine life through photographic images that she has captured from her underwater scuba expedition in Antarctica and her sharks expedition in the Bahamas. More recently she is also actively involved in the protection of elephants from illegal poaching. For further and updated information, please go to the following web site: www.eqweb.hk

About The University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme:

The Public Opinion Programme (POP) at The University of Hong Kong was established in June 1991 to collect and study public opinion on topics which could be of interest to academics, journalists, policy-makers, and the general public. Since its establishment, POP has been providing quality survey services to a wide range of public and private organizations, provided that they allow the POP Team to design and conduct the research independently. POP also insists that the findings should finally be open for public consumption some time in future. Visit hkupop.hku.hk/english/ for more information.

About Save the Elephants:

Save the Elephants (STE) works to secure a future for elephants in a rapidly changing world. To battle the current surge in ivory poaching, the STE/WCN Elephant Crisis Fund is identifying and supporting the most effective global partners to stop poaching, thwart traffickers and end demand for ivory. Leaders in elephant science, STE also provides cutting-edge scientific insights into elephant behavior, intelligence, and long-distance movement and applies them to the long-term challenges of elephant conservation. For more information visit savetheelephants.org and facebook.com/savetheelephants.kenya

About African Wildlife Foundation:

Founded in 1961, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is a leading conservation organization focused solely on the African continent. AWF's programs and conservation strategies are based on sound science and designed to protect both the wild lands and wildlife of Africa and ensure a more sustainable future for Africa's people. Since its inception, AWF has protected endangered species and land, promoted conservation enterprises that benefit local African communities, and trained hundreds of African nationals in conservation—all to ensure the survival of Africa's unparalleled wildlife heritage. For more information, visit awf.org and follow us on Twitter @AWF_Official and on Facebook at facebook.com/AfricanWildlifeFoundation.