

**Endangered Species Advisory Committee (ESAC)**  
**Confirmed Minutes of Meeting**

Date : 13 April 2007 (Friday)  
Time : 9:30 a.m.  
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)  
Headquarters

**Attendance**

Chairman

Dr TAM Wing-kun, BBS, JP

Members

Mr CHIU Ching-cheung

Dr Craig Kirkpatrick

Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin, JP

Prof. Albert LEUNG Wing-nang

Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah

Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing

Mr TSANG Sau-yuen

Mr Thomas WONG Cheung-chi

Mr LAU Sin-pang, JP

Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and  
Conservation

Mr C.C. LAY

Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and  
Conservation (Conservation)

Secretary

Ms Jenny WONG

Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD

## **In Attendance**

### AFCD

Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun	Senior Endangered Species Protection Officer
Miss Pauline TONG	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Enforcement
Mr Alfred WONG	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 1
Miss CHAN Yu-nam	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 2

### CUSTOMS & EXCISE DEPARTMENT

Ms KWOK Ngan-ping	Senior Superintendent (Office of Mgt Services) (Acting)
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### OCEAN PARK, HONG KONG

Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON	Executive Director, Zoological Operations & Education, Ocean Park
Mr Timothy NG	Director, Zoological Operations & Education, Ocean Park

## **Absent with Apologies**

Prof. Frances MAHR Ching-ki

Dr SUN Mei

Mr WONG Hing-keung

Mr CHOW Kwong                      Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports), Customs  
& Excise Department

Miss Florence CHAN                      Senior Administrative Officer (Conservation Division) 2,  
Environmental Protection Department

## **Opening Remarks by the Chairman**

01/07     The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **Agenda Items**

### **II. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 12 December 2006**

02/07 The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 December 2006 were confirmed without amendments.

### **III. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting**

#### **(a) Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Para. 30/06)**

03/07 Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun informed that since operation of the new Ordinance, the situation had been satisfactory. With the cooperation of the trade, no difficulty was encountered so far for the licensing work under the new law. Mr CHEUNG recapitulated that the number of licence applications for the import of live Humphead Wrasse from Indonesia had increased in late 2006 as some traders tried to fully utilize the export quota imposed by Indonesia for 2006. Yet, members noted that the licensed quantity of Humphead Wrasse from Indonesia had reduced from some 1,400 in December 2006 to some 400 in January 2007. Apart from Indonesia, it was noticed that Malaysia was another source of Humphead Wrasse for Hong Kong.

#### **(b) Education and Publicity Work in 2006 (Para. 33/06)**

04/07 To enhance public awareness of the new Ordinance, Miss CHAN Yu-nam informed that pamphlets highlighting details of the new regulation had been distributed to the public together with water bills from March to July 2007. Members noted that 6 more pamphlets on the protection of endangered species were under preparation. They would be available for distribution to different trades and stakeholders within this month. Besides, a 5-6 minute short film featuring protection of endangered species, control regime under the endangered species legislation and introduction of CITES had been produced. Among other things, the film would be shown to visitors of Endangered Species Resource Centre and during talks to schools and organizations.

(Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON and Mr Timothy NG of Ocean Park, Hong Kong joined the meeting at this juncture.)

05/07 Regarding the proposals to amend the Appendices and their annotations to be discussed at the CITES 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14), members would be briefed on the details under Agenda IV. The meeting also noted that a circular letter had been issued to traders and license holders to seek their views on the proposed amendments.

Besides, 6 consultation forums for traders would be held in April and May, 2007. Participants would be briefed of the proposed amendments and their views would be sought.

06/07 A member said that Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had education programmes for schools. He wondered if the message on protection of endangered species could be incorporated into their education programmes so that the youngsters and students could receive such message at an earlier age. Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that a module on protection of endangered species had already been incorporated into the secondary school curriculum. Besides, schools were invited to visit the Endangered Species Resource Centre so as to strengthen students' understanding on protection of endangered species.

07/07 Answering the member's further enquiries, Mr C.C. LAY said that the message could reach out to international schools as they were also under the umbrella of EMB. Mr LAY highlighted that the Endangered Species Resource Centre had been suggested by EMB as one of the learning centres to be visited by schools.

08/07 To extend the coverage among students, a member suggested the department to produce and distribute CD-Rom on endangered species protection to primary and secondary schools. Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that to tie in with implementation of the new Ordinance, a CD-Rom had been produced which would be distributed to schools in one or two months' time.

09/07 Another member further suggested to distribute the CD-Rom to youth services centres. Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun agreed and supplemented that three languages including Cantonese, English and Putonghua were available in one CD-Rom to suit various needs.

### **III. New Giant Pandas to Hong Kong (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/1/2007)**

10/07 The Chairman welcomed Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON and Mr Timothy NG of Ocean Park, Hong Kong (Ocean Park) for joining the meeting to brief members on the importation of a pair of new giant pandas No. 606 and 610 to Hong Kong.

11/07 Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun briefed members that the Central People's Government had agreed to give another pair of giant pandas as a gift to Hong Kong for the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR. Members noted that the new giant pandas would arrive in Hong Kong towards the end of April or early May 2007.

12/07 Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON said that Ocean Park was pleased and excited to be part of the process. Delegation of Ocean Park and AFCD had visited Wolong to see the animals. A general description of the two healthy pandas was provided. Ms GENDRON

remarked that the young pandas No. 606 and 610 would be named through a naming competition.

13/07 To prepare for the arrival of the new giant pandas, Ms GENDRON informed that Ocean Park had started the preparation works including renovation of the giant panda habitat in order to provide the best temporary living facility for the pandas prior to the completion of a new giant panda enclosure in 2008. With reference to the conceptual layout plan and photomontage, members noted that the renovated facility would provide five holding dens at the back-of-house and three separate living exhibits for the four giant pandas. The total panda usable area would be increased by 40% from 370 m<sup>2</sup> to 518 m<sup>2</sup>. The whole renovation was expected to be completed in mid June 2007 to tie in with public visitation which would commence on 1 July 2007.

14/07 Ms GENDRON went on to brief members on other preparatory works in relation to logistical arrangements for animal transportation, husbandry care and behavioural training of the new giant pandas. She expressed gratitude for the strong government support from Home Affairs Bureau, AFCD, Airport Authority and other concerned parties in this matter. She assured that every endeavor would be made to ensure the new pair of pandas would receive proper husbandry care.

15/07 Members noted that Ocean Park would continue to expand public education on nature and conservation. Ms GENDRON advised that a competition on creation of new toys for the two young giant pandas would be organized by Ocean Park and the winning toys would go in with the new pandas in July 2007. On conservation, the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong, would further strengthen its contribution to *in situ* and *ex situ* panda conservation projects.

16/07 Members were also briefed on the new giant panda facility within the new area named “Astounding Asia” under Ocean Park’s Master Development Plan. The facility would be completed in late 2008. To cater for breeding of new pandas, breeding dens, nursery and appropriate facilities were available inside the new facility. Ocean Park would closely work with the Wolong experts to develop research and breeding programmes in order to increase the genetic diversity of the captive giant panda population.

17/07 A member expressed concerns on transportation arrangements of the new pandas, for instance, how motion sickness would be dealt with. Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON replied that transport of any animals was always considered on all aspects including safety inside the container as well as space for movement so that they would not get hurt. Requirements stipulated under the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) would be strictly complied with. Ms GENDRON added that animals were usually not given food prior to the transport so as to minimize motion sickness. The two pandas were now being trained for

transportation in order to ensure that they would remain comfortable throughout the transport. Members further noted that the pandas would be accompanied by veterinarians during the whole journey and sufficient water would be available to avoid dehydration.

18/07 A member asked about lighting, noise and crowd control inside the panda exhibit. Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON advised that the current giant panda habitat had a complete skylight. As a result, good natural lighting was maintained inside the exhibit through the provision of natural and electric light. To provide a comfortable environment for the animals, sound level was kept at 45-60 decibels inside animal exhibits. The number of visitors for entering the exhibit would also be closely watched.

19/07 Another member expressed concern on flashlight from cameras inside the panda exhibit. Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON said that majority of flashlight would be reflected back by the glasses. With An An and Jia Jia's experience, it seemed that flashlight was not a problem to them. Having said that, Ms GENDRON assured that they would keep a close eye on the situation. Flashlight might be temporarily prohibited, where necessary. Their highest priority was to ensure that the animals would be comfortable and well adjusted to the new living environment.

20/07 A member opined that this would be an excellent opportunity to educate people on protection of endangered species. He wondered if it was feasible to have an AFCD corner so that literature, posters, etc could be displayed with a view to further enhancing the public awareness on protection of endangered species. Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON responded that a conservation kiosk would be placed in the new front entry plaza before the gate to Ocean Park to celebrate the work of the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong. She welcomed to have AFCD's conservation efforts to be highlighted at the conservation kiosk.

21/07 A member expressed concern on psychological status of the old pandas in case the public rushed to see the new cubs. Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON believed that the old pandas would unlikely be aware of the difference as there would be many visitors passing by their living exhibits. Most importantly, she was confident that An An and Jia Jia would still occupy a place in people's hearts. She also assured that Ocean Park's commitments to them were equally strong as to the new animals. Additional resources including new staff were acquired to ensure that everybody got the attention they needed and nobody would be neglected.

22/07 After discussion, members unanimously agreed the importation of the new pair of giant pandas. The Chairman believed that the pandas would be properly taken care of in the custody of Ocean Park. He looked forward to seeing the new animals in Hong Kong very soon.

23/07 Members had no further comments and questions. The Chairman thanked Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON and Mr Timothy NG for attending the meeting.

(Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON and Mr Timothy NG left the meeting at this juncture.)

**IV. CITES 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 14) – Proposals to Amend the Appendices and Annotations (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/2/2007)**

24/07 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/2/2007 and briefed members on the proposals to amend Appendices I and II and annotations to certain CITES-listed species to be considered at the coming Conference of the Parties. Members noted the content of the document.

25/07 A member informed that his organization had recommendations on each one of the proposal. He would forward them to AFCD for reference.

26/07 The member drew members' attention to CoP14 Discussion Document 52 which reviewed Parties' work in relation to the trade of tiger and other Asian big cats. He pointed out that China had suggested that they might consider re-opening their domestic trade for tiger bones. The member opined that China's decision in 1993 to prohibit domestic trade in tiger bones had been a great success in reducing the use of tiger bones. In his opinion, it was a step backwards to revert the policy from the conservation perspectives. He hoped that AFCD would do her best to liaise with concerned parties to seriously consider the suggestion. Mr C.C. LAY assured that the department would continue to actively pursue discussion in CoP, particularly in communicating with the China CITES management authority on all aspects to be discussed at CoP.

**VII. Serving the Community - Service Standards Committee 24<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/3/2007)**

27/07 Miss CHAN Yu-nam reported that, for the quarter ending December 2006, 96 applications representing 2% of the total number of licence/certificate applications could not be issued within two working days as pledged. This was mainly due to the shortage of one officer in handling such applications and the submission of 180 applications from an applicant within one day. Among other things, Miss CHAN said that the department would continue to streamline procedure with a view to fully achieving the targets.

**VIII. Any Other Business**

28/07 Addressing a member's enquiries, Mr C.C. LAY informed that, as a conventional arrangement, summary progress report of CITES work including enforcement and prosecution statistics would be provided for members' reference in the next meeting.

29/07 A member enquired the possibility of arranging a visit to Ocean Park to enable members to have an in-depth on site briefing of the panda issue. Mr C.C. LAY replied that such visit might be arranged in consultation with Ocean Park. Members would be informed of the date and details of the visit when the arrangement could be finalized with Ocean Park.

**IX. Date of Next Meeting**

30/07 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

31/07 The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

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