

**Endangered Species Advisory Committee  
Confirmed Minutes of Meeting**

Date : 9 December 2008 (Tuesday)  
Time : 2:30 p.m.  
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)  
Headquarters

**Attendance**

Chairman

Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing

Members

Professor CHU Lee-man

Dr Craig Kirkpatrick

Prof. Albert LEUNG Wing-nang

Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah

Dr SUN Mei

Mr TSANG Sau-yuen

Mr Thomas WONG Cheung-chi

Mr. C.C. LAY

Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and  
Conservation (Conservation)

Miss Vivien LI

Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation)  
Environmental Protection Department

Secretary

Miss Helen TAM

Assistant Secretary (Boards)<sup>1</sup>, 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
Mr. FUNG Ho-lam	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 2

### CUSTOMS & EXCISE DEPARTMENT

Mr. SOU Gryphon	Senior Inspector (Management Support Unit) 3
-----------------	--

### OCEAN PARK, HONG KONG

Ms Suzanne M. Gendron	Director, Zoological Operations & Education
-----------------------	---

## **Absent with Apologies**

Mr. CHIU Ching-cheung

Mrs. Justina LEUNG BGAJ Mou-yin, J.P.

Mr. WONG Hing-keung

Mr. LAU Sin-pang, J.P. Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Acting)

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

## **Opening Remarks by the Chairman**

33/08 The Chairman welcomed all members to the first meeting of the new term, especially a new member, Prof CHU Lee-man and the representative from Ocean Park, Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON. He also took the opportunity to thank the ex-Chairman, Dr TAM Wing-kun, B.B.S., J.P. and a retired member, Prof. Frances MAHR Ching-ki for their contribution to the Committee.

## **Agenda Items**

### **I. Declaration of Interests and Transparency Measures**

34/08 Mr. C.C. LAY drew members' attention to the guidelines on declaration of interests. He also asked members to note the transparency measures.

35/08 Members noted the guidelines on declaration of interests and transparency measures.

### **II. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14 May 2008**

36/08 The minutes of the last meeting held on 14 May 2008 were confirmed without amendments.

(Prof Albert LEUNG Wing-nang and Ms Suzanne M. Gendron joined the meeting at this juncture.)

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

(a) Amendments to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Para. 17/08)

37/08 Mr. Alfred WONG advised that the Orders to amend the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance would be published in the gazette and tabled at the Legislative Council in January 2009.

(b) Education and Publicity Work in 2008 (Para. 22/08 to 26/08)

38/08 Mr. FUNG Ho-lam reported that display panels on endangered species protection had been put up in public places, such as the visitor centres of country parks, public libraries and cultural centres.

(Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah joined the meeting at this juncture.)

### **IV. New Giant Pandas to Hong Kong**

39/08 Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON gave members a general update on the condition of the four giant pandas in Ocean Park i.e. An An, Jia Jia, Ying Ying and Le Le. A powerpoint

presentation on the activities of the pandas was shown to the meeting. She also briefed members on the giant panda reserve rebuilding work in Sichuan, including the setting up of the Giant Panda Base Rebuilding Fund. A series of fundraising campaigns had been held, and RMB 1 million worth of emergency relief materials had already been delivered to Wolong Giant Panda Center. Members also noted that Ocean Park had collaborated with Chengdu Research Base for four red pandas to be sent Hong Kong in early 2009. The Red Pandas would move in the “Amazing Asian Animals” (AAA), which was scheduled to be opened to the public in April 2009.

40/08 Regarding the incident that An An attacked a keeper in late November 2008, Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON advised that the incident was still under investigation. The concerned staff was recovering well. Ocean Park would review its guidelines and procedures to make sure that similar incidents would not happen again.

41/08 A member enquired about the import of red pandas. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun advised that red panda was listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora (CITES). Members’ views would be sought on the proposed import later during the meeting.

42/08 A member asked if Ocean Park’s donation to Wolong Giant Panda Center was part of the \$10 billion donation from the Hong Kong SAR Government to the Sichuan earthquake’s relief work. [The Sichuan Earthquake Relief- Giant Panda Base Rebuilding Fund is separate from the Hong Kong SAR Government’s donation to the Sichuan earthquake’s relief work.] Ms GENDRON replied that the concerned funds were donated by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, which provided funding to support some eleven reserves in Sichuan and Shaanxi, including Wolong Giant Panda Center. Nevertheless, Ocean Park had provided advice to the Government on how the government donations might be used for giant panda conservation work.

43/08 A member enquired about the safety and security problems of the ETFE roof of “Amazing Asian Animals”, where the Giant Pandas would move in early 2009. Ms GENDRON responded that to address the potential risks of the roof, barriers were installed to keep the roof out of reach from the animals.

44/08 In response to a member’s enquiry, Ms GENDRON said that they would send staff to Chengdu to learn the techniques and knowledge in raising the red pandas before their arrival.

45/08 A member noted that the two new giant pandas, Le Le and Ying Ying, had gained lots of weight after they arrived Hong Kong. He asked if it was a good and healthy sign for the pandas. Ms GENDRON replied that the two pandas had adequate exercises and were in good

body shape. She added that since the two pandas were raised under human care, they would be heavier than the wild ones.

46/08 In reply to the Chairman's enquiry related to the sources of the Giant Panda Base Rebuilding Fund, Ms GENDRON said that a series of campaigns were held to raise money to the Fund, including the donation of one-day's income to the Fund. The good sales of merchandize related to Le Le and Ying Ying also helped boost up the Fund.

47/08 A member suggested Ocean Park to use the "Panda TV" project as a means to raising donations to the Rebuilding Fund. Ms GENDRON replied that the project was done in collaboration with PCCW, which aimed to pass Ocean Park's messages to the public through Broadband TV. She thanked the member for her suggestion and said that she would follow up the suggestion with their marketing team.

48/08 Members had no further questions and comments. The Chairman thanked Ms. Suzanne M. GENDRON for attending the meeting.

(Ms Suzanne M. Gendron left the meeting at this juncture.)

49/08 Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun sought members' views regarding the import of red pandas by Ocean Park. In response to a member's enquiry, Mr. CHEUNG advised that this species was listed on CITES Appendix I with a very limited natural distribution. He added that the red pandas proposed to be imported were captive-bred animals from Chengdu Research Base which had a successful captive-bred programme of red pandas. A member said that Ocean Park should take great care in looking after the red pandas after their import.

50/08 The Committee agreed to the proposed import of red pandas to Hong Kong.

**V. Report on the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CITES Animals Committee and the tripartite meeting with CITES management Authorities of the Central Government and Macao SAR (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/5/2008)**

51/08 Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/5/2008. Members noted the content of the document.

52/08 A member noted that as compared with the CITES Appendices, there was a different list of protected species in the Mainland, which caused inconvenience to traders. He asked if AFCD could issue certificates to facilitate trade with the Mainland.

53/08 Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun said that different places might have their own considerations when drawing up a "control" list, in addition to the CITES Appendices. He

confirmed that AFCDC could help issue certificates to facilitate the trade if needed. However, whether a species could be imported into the Mainland was still subject to the decision of the Mainland authorities.

54/08 In response to the query raised by a member on the trade in sharks, Mr. C. C. LAY advised that currently there were three shark species listed on CITES Appendix II. He added that the regulation of trade and related activities of shark species was rather controversial and the Convention had been discussing the need to regulate shark trade with a view to promoting the sustainable use of the species. Mr. LAY stressed that the major concern of regulating shark trade was enforcement as most of the items in trade were parts or derivatives, identification of the items to species level was extremely difficult.

55/08 The member said that while there was the need to protect endangered species, many animals and plants were not endangered, including most of the sharks, and they could be commercially used. Mr. C.C. LAY replied that AFCDC would vigorously regulate the trade in endangered shark species in line with CITES and would not encourage giving the public the impression that many sharks were not rare species, which might cause confusion and misunderstanding.

56/08 A member enquired about the principles involved in considering the disposal of seized specimens, in particular whether a live animal should be released to the wild. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that there were different ways to dispose of seized specimens and returning live animals to the wild was one of the options. He advised that the Department had also donated seized animals to local schools and organizations such as Ocean Park, Kadoorie Farm, etc. Mr. C.C. LAY added that CITES had established guidelines on the disposal of confiscated specimens and AFCDC was in general following the guidelines when conducting disposal exercises.

57/08 A member noted that corals and three seahorse species were not included for review in the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of CITES Animals Committee and asked if there would be any follow up actions. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that the trade in the species was still subject to “Non-detriment Finding”. If unsustainable trade was found, they would be included again in the review at the next meeting of the Animals Committee.

**VI. Education and Publicity Work in 2009**  
**(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/6/2008)**

58/08 Mr. FUNG Ho-lam presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/6/2008, which reported the progress of education and publicity work on endangered species protection since the last meeting in May, and the new work planned for 2009.

59/08 A member complimented the work of Guangdong -- Hong Kong Protect Endangered Species Summer Camp. She said that the camp could offer a valuable chance for students to learn more about endangered species and share their views on the subject. She suggested that to enrich the content of the camp, more practical work could be given to students.

60/08 A member noted that there were talks and seminars in the summer camp. He believed that these programmes could enrich the students' knowledge and make the camp more fruitful.

61/08 A member also complimented the Department's efforts in organizing a summer camp for teenagers. He hoped the Department could put in more efforts and resources in the event and invite more students to the camp next year.

62/08 A member suggested the Department to hold the summer camp annually. He also proposed the Department to cooperate with NGOs to promote the message of endangered species protection.

63/08 The Chairman suggested that an experience sharing session should be held for the participants after the 5-day camp. Other students could be invited to the sharing session and learn from the experiences of the participants.

64/08 Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun thanked members' for the suggestions.

**VII. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work**  
**(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/7/2008)**

65/08 Miss Pauline TONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/7/2008 on AFCD's work in relation to CITES during the period 1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008. She highlighted a number of significant cases involving the import, transit and export of endangered species without licenses.

66/08 A member asked about the purpose of sending the endangered species to the Correctional Service Department (CSD). Miss Pauline TONG replied that the specimens were kept at Hei Ling Chau where they were properly accommodated and looked after. The animals could also assist the rehabilitation of the inmates there.

(Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah left the meeting at this juncture.)

67/08 A member asked if organizations could apply to keep the seized live specimens. Miss Pauline TONG replied that there were existing procedures for schools or other organizations to apply for keeping the seized live specimens.

68/08 The member further enquired about the current situation on illegal activities. Miss Pauline TONG advised that there was no great change in the number of illegal cases of import, export or possession of endangered species. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun added that illegal trade in endangered species was becoming more serious internationally and enforcement authorities would have to step up their efforts in combating these crimes. He noted that the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) had recently cooperated with the CITES Secretariat and issued a guideline on controlled delivery which aimed at improving the techniques in combating transnational wildlife crimes.

69/08 In response to a member's enquiry on a case in relation to 207 pangolin carcasses, Miss Pauline TONG replied that there was no information on their origin but in many cases the shipments were exported from Malaysia or Indonesia.

70/08 A member enquired how the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and Yan Chai Hospital would make use of the American ginseng roots that were donated to them. Miss Pauline TONG replied that the roots would be used for medical purposes. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun added that the hospitals had agreed that they would prescribe the roots free of charge.

71/08 A member enquired about the source of the American ginseng roots. Mr. CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that according to their inspections, all American ginseng roots seized had come from cultivated origin.

#### **VIII. Serving the Community – Service Standards Committee 27<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/8/2008)**

72/08 Mr. FUNG Ho-lam reported that for the quarter ending June 2008, some 90 applications on Import/Export/Re-export/Possession License in respect of Endangered Species could not meet the target. This was due to an influx of applications within a short period of time. For the quarter ending September 2008, the situation was similar and 1.2% of the



applications could not meet the target. He also said that during the reporting period, no complaints were received and the overall service standard was satisfactory.

73/08 Members noted the content of the report.

**IX. Any Other Business**

74/08 Members had no other business to raise.

**X. Date of Next Meeting**

75/08 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

76/08 The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

- End -