

In Attendance

AFCD

Mr Richard CHAN	Senior Endangered Species Protection Officer
Mr Alfred WONG	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Enforcement
Dr Azaria WONG	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 1
Ms Phoebe SZE	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 2

Customs and Excise Department (C&ED)

Mr LEE Chun-chiu	Senior Inspector, Boundary and Ports Branch
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Absent with Apologies

Ms Erica LO Lai-shan

Professor ZHAO Zhong-zhen

Mr YU Koon-hing, CDSM, CMSM	Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports), Customs & Excise Department
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OPENING REMARKS

34/13 The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting, in particular, Mr LEE Chun-chiu, Senior Inspector, Boundary and Ports Branch, Customs & Excise Department, who attended the meeting for the first time.

35/13 The Chairman informed members that, as an established practice, to facilitate the taking of meeting minutes, sound recording would be made during the meeting. The audio records would be destroyed after the meeting minutes had been confirmed.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 1 February 2013

36/13 The minutes of the last meeting held on 1 February 2013 were confirmed with the following amendment:

To add “, CMSM” after Mr YU Koon-hing, CDSM

II. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

(a) CITES 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) – Proposals to Amend the Appendices and Annotations (Para. 9/13 to 15/13)

37/13 The Committee agreed that this item was related to Agenda Item III and they should be gone through together.

(b) Education and Publicity (Para. 22/13 to 28/13)

38/13 Ms Phoebe SZE briefed members on the education and publicity activities organized between 1 January and 30 June 2013 and referred members to the Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/6/2013.

39/13 Ms Phoebe SZE answered a member’s enquiry that the main objective of the Chinese Medicine Resources and Conservation of Rare Animals and Plants Exhibition (CMRE) (中藥資源與珍稀動植物保育展覽) was to deliver the message of using captive-bred/artificially propagated species, common species with similar medicinal effects, or synthetic products in substitution for rare wildlife species to the public with a view of promoting sustainable development of Chinese medicine resources in the long run.

40/13 The member suggested that broadcasting in the multi-media programmes of East Rail Line of MTR might be more effective than hoisting of banners along the Lo Wu bridge of Hong Kong side for increasing the public awareness of licensing requirements on import of orchids. Ms Phoebe SZE thanked the member’s suggestion.

41/13 A member proposed that the licensing requirements on import of orchids could also be promoted by tourist guides to tour groups visiting flower cultivation farms and flower

wholesale markets. Ms Phoebe SZE responded that legislative control of endangered species in Hong Kong, including licensing requirements on import of orchids, was taught in the course to tourist guides.

(Ms YU Li-hua attended the meeting at this juncture)

42/13 In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Ms Phoebe SZE replied that publicity pamphlets and leaflets were distributed to tourist guides and the general public in reminding them about the licensing requirement of endangered species.

43/13 A member remarked that messages about control on import and export of endangered species were publicized in the 2013 Chinese New Year edition of the journal published by the Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guide General Union (香港專業導遊總工會) and in a pamphlet produced for the "27th International Travel Expo Hong Kong 2013 (香港國際旅遊展 2013)"

44/13 As regards the Chairman's enquiries on the survey on public awareness towards controls on endangered plant species, Ms Phoebe SZE replied that 250 persons were interviewed in each round of the survey and the respondents were not confined to Hong Kong citizens.

45/13 Mr Y K CHAN pointed out that the message "If in doubt, don't buy" should be emphasized to the visitors and the public since there were numerous endangered species controlled under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance and the list of regulated endangered species was ever changing. The Chairman consented to the message.

46/13 In response to Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP's enquiries, a member said that Continuing Professional Development Scheme for Tourist Guides (the CPD Scheme) (導遊持續專業進修計劃) did not have a specialised course on regulation of import and export of endangered species at the moment. She remarked that the content of the CPD Scheme was due for revision since the CPD Scheme had been organized for four years. She was considering the suggestion to include the subject of import/export control over endangered species into the new content of CPD Scheme at upcoming meeting of Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (香港旅遊業議會) held in late August 2013, and would appreciate more information on the topic.

The Chairman appreciated that the cooperation between AFCD and the member would enhance the content of the CPD Scheme.

47/13 The member supplemented that Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guides General Union (HKPTGGU) (香港專業導遊總工會) would also publicize the import and export regulation of endangered species to outbound tour escorts who were not required to attend compulsory training and development. She remarked that HKPTGGU would advise the Travel Industry Authority (旅遊業監管局), which was expected to be established in 2015 and was responsible for the regulation of tour escorts, to include the subject of import and export regulation of endangered species in future training and development of tour escorts. The Chairman commended the member's proposal.

III. Report on the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/5/2013)

48/13 Dr Azaria WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/5/2013.

49/13 As regards a member's enquiry about whether exemption from permit requirement for possession of endangered species transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I was applicable to personal possession or ownership, Dr Azaria WONG replied that the specimens were exempted from licensing requirement if they were personally owned or possessed for non-commercial purposes only. However, licences issued by AFCD were required if the specimens would be traded for commercial purposes in the future. To enhance AFCD in carrying out their work, the owners were required to report the existing stocks of their specimens to AFCD.

50/13 In response to the member's enquiry about the quantitative limitation of specimens of agarwood exempted, Ms Phoebe SZE replied that the quantity limit of beads or prayer beads and of woodchips were up to two sets and 1 kg respectively, and there was no limitation of the length of each set of beads. Mr Alfred WONG explained that the personal and household effects exemption was to facilitate people to import and export the specimen for genuine personal uses. Large quantity of endangered specimens claimed as personal effects could actually be used for commercial purposes. If there was reasonable suspicion, the specimens might be intercepted for investigation.

51/13 As regards a member's enquiry about enforcement actions taken for shark species, Dr Azaria WONG remarked that AFCD was empowered to intercept a shipment of suspected specimens of endangered species so as to allow sufficient and reasonable time for species identification. Mr Richard CHAN supplemented that five out of over 500 shark species were newly included in Appendix II and they altogether made up about 10% - 15% of annual import quantity of about 10,000 tonnes of shark fins in recent years. Given the huge import quantity of shark fins, AFCD was gathering information about the transportation mode of shark fins from the trade. He went on to say that visual inspection was conducted in the preliminary round of identification and would intercept a suspicious shipment if necessary.

52/13 The member mentioned that a kind of shark fins had been purchased at Ham Yu Street (鹹魚欄) and they were identified to have come from four shark species by DNA test; however, the fins of these four species could not be readily distinguished by visual inspection. As there would be a time lag between visual inspection and species identification, he suggested that random checking on shipments of shark fins at monthly intervals would probably be an effective means of controlling the trade of the five species to be newly listed in Appendix II.

53/13 Mr Richard CHAN pointed out that trade names of shark fins used in shark fin trade of Hong Kong and China were different from species names of the sharks concerned; hence, market category of shark fins purchased at the market usually consisted of shark fins of several species. He remarked that AFCD had been collecting more information from the trade so as to have a better understanding of the specimens in trade. Besides, Parties to CITES, in particular exporting countries, had been appealed to undertake appropriate measures to control the export effectively. The Chairman echoed that the matter was complicated.

54/13 As regards a member's enquiry about whether the trade names of shark fins complied with the Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices) (Amendment) Ordinance 2012 (Amendment Ordinance) (《2012年商品說明(不良營商手法)(修訂)條例》), Mr Richard CHAN explained that market category of traded shark fins usually consisted of several species, for example, Chun Chi (春翅) consisted of two or three species of hammerhead sharks. Hence, the trade names were not false trade descriptions under the Ordinance. Indeed, they were simply not scientific names. Besides, in local markets shark fins were sorted by their size or external features.

**IV. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/6/2013)**

55/13 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/6/2013 on AFCD's work in relation to CITES implementation in Hong Kong from 1 January to 30 June 2013. He supplemented that a total of 5.7 tonnes of ivory tusks had been seized in 2013. At a press conference held to publicize the ivory seizures, the media expressed interest in the means of disposal of forfeited ivory in Hong Kong. As members indicated at a previous meeting that they wished to be informed of the relevant news, Mr WONG reported the destruction of forfeited ivory in the Philippines on 21 June 2013.

56/13 Mr Alfred WONG answered a member's enquiries that about 40 tonnes of ivory seized had been reported worldwide in 2012. In some African countries, there were also stockpiles of legal ivory collected from elephants which died naturally.

57/13 The Chairman suggested that both the Committee and AFCD would probably need to review the disposal of forfeited ivory so as to work out an ultimate plan.

58/13 In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the disposal of forfeited specimens of other Appendix I species, Mr Alfred WONG replied that seizures of other Appendix I species were in much smaller quantity. Except for specimens of poor quality that would be dumped, AFCD would consider donation of Appendix I species to suitable institutes following the CITES guidelines or keep them in storage. Some Appendix II species of specific uses, for instance, seahorse and American Ginseng had been donated to charitable organizations for medical uses. The AFCD had also donated other specimens of endangered species to local schools or universities for education purpose.

59/13 In response to the Chairman's enquiries on donation of seized specimens to Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) (SPCA) and Hong Kong Society of Herpetology Foundation (HKHERP), Mr Alfred WONG replied that SPCA had implemented the measures suggested by the Committee in its placement scheme for pets of endangered species; including (1) selection of quality adopters with good attitude, adequate knowledge, sufficient resources and suitable accommodation, (2) submission of monthly reports to AFCD, and (3) micro-chipping of rehomed animals as far as possible. Mr WONG continued that HKHERP had not implemented such placement scheme at the moment and indicated its intention to AFCD to enter into a similar scheme. So far, the donated specimens were for conservation education only.

V. Serving the Community – Service Standards Committee 36th Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/7/2013)

60/13 Mr Richard CHAN presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/7/2013 on AFCD's performance for the quarter ended December 2012 and that ended March 2013. Members had no comment on the Paper.

VI. Any Other Business

61/13 There was no any other business to be discussed.

VII. Date of Next Meeting

62/13 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

63/13 The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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