

Endangered Species Advisory Committee
Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

Date : 23 January 2014 (Thursday)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

Attendance

Chairman

Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing

Members

Ms CHAN Chiu-ling, Ophelia, BBS

Dr CHIU Sein-tuck

Professor CHU Lee-man

Professor Kenneth Mei-yee LEUNG

Ms Erica LO Lai-shan

Ms WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella, MH

Ms YU Li-hua

Professor ZHAO Zhong-zhen

Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Mr Y K CHAN

Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Conservation (Conservation)

Ms Sian LI

Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation)
Environmental Protection Department

Secretary

Mr Patrick TSANG

Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD

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)

Ms Kitty POON	Group Head (Ports Control) (Acting), Boundary and Ports Branch
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For Agenda Item III only

Hong Kong Society of Herpetology Foundation (HKHERP)

Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony	Founder & Chairman of Board of Directors
Mr Tuen Kwok Leung, Michael	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Ip Ka Hang, Jack	Project Officer
Ms Kwok Sau Man, Mary	Project Officer

Absent with Apologies

Mr CHAN Wing-suen

Mr TSANG Kwok-keung

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

1/14 The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting, in particular, Ms Kitty POON, Group Head (Ports Control) (Acting), Boundary and Ports Branch, Customs & Excise Department, who attended the meeting for the first time.

2/14 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 8 August 2013

3/14 The minutes of the last meeting held on 8 August 2013 were confirmed without amendments.

II. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

(a) Amendments to CITES Appendices adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) (Para. 48/13 to 54/13)

4/14 Mr Richard CHAN reported that legislative amendments to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance to give effect to the changes adopted at CoP16 was in progress. It was expected that the amendments would be submitted to the Legislative Council and come into effect in mid September 2014.

(b) Disposal of forfeited ivory (Para. 55/13 to 57/13)

5/14 The Committee agreed that this item was related to Agenda Item IV and they should be gone through together.

III. Placement of Pets of Endangered Species with Hong Kong Society of Herpetology Foundation (HKHERP) (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/1/2014)

6/14 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/1/2014.

7/14 A member was concerned that HKHERP might not have sufficient professional knowledge of herpetofauna as the members were mostly amateurs. It was also heard that HKHERP might involve in the trading of herpetofauna.

8/14 Mr Alfred WONG informed that AFCD had evaluated HKHERP's capability and background after receiving its proposal. HKHERP was a registered charitable animal welfare organization which had established a long-term working relationship with AFCD on animal welfare issues. HKHERP's proposal was of non-commercial nature and similar to the existing placement scheme with SPCA. Hence, HKHERP should not gain profit from the placement of live animals. Upon commencement of the placement scheme, HKHERP would be required to provide monthly reports covering the animals taken in and donated during the period to AFCD for monitoring and evaluation of the scheme.

9/14 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP pointed out that the proposed placement scheme with HKHERP gave abandoned endangered animals a second chance to be taken care of by new owners and saved their lives from being euthanised. In the past years, HKHERP had been collaborating with AFCD's Animal Management Division and members of Legislative Council on animal welfare issues. He highlighted that AFCD would closely monitor the scheme to ensure that the scheme would not be used for profit-making purposes.

10/14 The member remarked that the trade was concerned about the licensing issues of the rehomed animals which might indirectly give rise to illegal re-selling of the animals.

11/14 Mr Alfred WONG responded that the transfer of the rehomed animals to other persons was not allowed under the proposed scheme. As a preventive measure, HKHERP would micro-chip the rehomed animals as far as practicable. In the event the animal was involved in suspected illegal trade, its source could be traced.

12/14 A member in principle supported the proposal.

13/14 Mr Alfred WONG replied to the member's enquiries that SPCA had provided reports with details of the 50 rehomed animals. He added that AFCD followed closely the

“Guidelines for the Disposal of Endangered Species” in exploring appropriate disposal options. Repatriation of live animals was not an easy process and required lengthy negotiation. AFCD had received about 2,700 live Pig-nosed Turtles from an illegal import shipment two weeks ago. In this case, the exporting country which was also the natural range of Pig-nosed Turtle had been responding favourably to AFCD’s proposal for repatriation. In other cases that the exporting country was not the country of origin of the confiscated animals, the animals had to be temporarily held in Hong Kong for opportunity of donation to conservation organizations in future. For those animals of comparatively lower conservation value, for example captive bred leopard tortoise (豹龜), the placement scheme would be a promising option to accommodate the confiscated animals and thus alleviating the burden of limited keeping facilities in Hong Kong. To detect and deter illegal selling of endangered species locally, AFCD carried out inspections at pet shops and aquariums from time to time.

14/14 A member concurred that AFCD had intensified its inspection effort.

15/14 In response to the member’s enquiry, Mr Alfred WONG replied that HKHERP was prepared to micro-chip the rehomed animals as long as animal welfare was not compromised. HKHERP would hold juvenile animals from adoption until they become suitable for microchipping. AFCD would discuss with HKHERP about appropriate method of marking rehomed animals that cannot be micro-chipped. Proper record covering the animals taken in and donated should be maintained.

16/14 Mr Alfred WONG answered the Chairman’s enquiry that SPCA had been informed of the placement scheme under consideration and had no objection. He pointed out HKHERP provided an additional channel for the placement of live endangered animals. This would shorten the time for disposal of the live animals and reduce the disposal by euthanasia.

17/14 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP pointed out that the placement of endangered animals was open to charitable animal welfare organizations subject to screening of AFCD.

18/14 The Chairman welcomed the following representatives from HKHERP to the meeting:

Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony Founder & Chairman of Board of Directors

Mr Tuen Kwok Leung, Michael Chief Executive Officer

Mr Ip Ka Hang, Jack

Project Officer

Ms Kwok Sau Man, Mary

Project Officer

19/14 Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony gave a powerpoint presentation about the background, activities and rehoming programme of HKHERP.

20/14 In response to a member's enquiries, Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony advised that adopters were not required to pay HKHERP for the animals but they had to pay annual membership fee of HK\$100 and cover the cost of micro-chipping. He remarked that monthly reports covering the animals taken in and donated during the period would be provided to AFCD. Only HKHERP's members were eligible to adopt an animal. The member would be allowed to keep the rehomed animal in the event his membership is discontinued.

21/14 In response to Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP's enquiries, Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony said that HKHERP would monitor the rehomed animals after adoption by home visit, telephone, and through social media. He said that a person could become a member of HKHERP and an adopter at the same time. Mr Tuen Kwok Leung, Michael supplemented that HKHERP had made reference to SPCA in formulating its membership system. There was existing post monitoring for adopted turtles, for example red-eared slider (紅耳龜). HKHERP planned to deploy more resources to the rehoming programme and a project officer would be designated to handle and monitor adoption applications.

22/14 As regards member's enquiries, Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony replied that HKHERP would allow a person to adopt more than one animal or species only if he has adequate knowledge, sufficient resources and suitable accommodation. HKHERP would visit the adopter's home again to assess whether he was capable of taking care of additional animals. Concerning the disposal of dead animal, he said that the adopter had the responsibility to inform HKHERP of the death of the animal. HKHERP would advise the adopter how to properly dispose of the dead body according to its guidelines. As the owner of the rehomed animal, the adopter could dispose of the dead body on his own accord.

23/14 Mr Tuen Kwok Leung, Michael supplemented that HKHERP, being an animal welfare organization, gave due consideration to animal welfare issues in operating its rehoming

programme. In this regard, HKHERP was against the keeping of excessive animals by a single adopter.

24/14 The Chairman enquired about how HKHERP verified that a rehomed animal was dead and cremated as claimed by its adopter instead of being resold. Mr Tuen Kwok Leung, Michael replied that the adopter might be required to hand over the dead animals to HKHERP or provide photos of the dead animals for record.

25/14 In response to a member's enquiry about how to prevent a person to become members by paying HK\$100 with a view to adoption of valuable endangered animals, Mr Yeung Ka Man, Anthony advised that the scheme would mostly involve endangered animals common in trade which are of lower price. He could not rule out the possibility that a person could adopt an endangered animal at a cost lower than the market value. He remarked that HKHERP would assess the suitability of an adopter through the existing screening mechanism as well as pre and post adoption visits.

(Representatives from HKHERP left the meeting at this juncture)

26/14 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP responded to a member's enquiry that the placement scheme with HKHERP, like the existing ones with the 13 organizations selected by AFCD (including SPCA), would be periodically monitored and reviewed by AFCD.

27/14 The Chairman summed up that members in principle supported the proposal. He supplemented that AFCD should follow up, including how to ensure that the adopted animal reported dead was not indeed sold by the adopter, with HKHERP on measures to improve the monitoring of the adopted animals.

IV. Review of Disposal of Forfeited Ivory (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/2/2014)

28/14 The Chairman informed members that the Secretariat had received a total of 12 e-mails, all of which supported the destruction of forfeited ivory. Among the senders was Dr Katheleen S. GOBUSH who supported the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration. The Committee also received letters from the Humane Society International, the Hong Kong for

Elephants, the ACE Foundation and the WWF Hong Kong in support of the destruction of forfeited ivory. In addition, the Public Art HK sent e-mails to the Chairman and a member, suggesting that the Committee should consider creating an artwork for permanent display at the future West Kowloon Cultural District Exhibition Hall with a portion of the stockpiled ivory for public exhibition purpose, apart from the option of disposal of the forfeited ivory by destruction.

29/14 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/2/2014.

30/14 A member supported the destruction of forfeited ivory. He suggested that AFCD might organise a publicity campaign in order to convey an unequivocal message of combating illegal trade of ivory. He also suggested that a portion of the forfeited ivory might be worked into sculptures for exhibition and education purposes upon addressing the security concerns. He opined that AFCD should emphasise to the general public and the media that the forfeited ivory would not enter into the market again.

(Professor Kenneth Mei-yee LEUNG left the meeting at this juncture.)

31/14 A member had reservations about the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration. Detailed comments on the disposal of forfeited ivory had been submitted to the Secretariat prior to the meeting (refer to Annex I).

32/14 The Chairman informed members that an absent member agreed in principle to AFCD's proposed disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration. Another absent member however considered it wasteful to dispose of the forfeited ivory by destruction. He proposed to produce ornaments from forfeited ivory for sale and the proceeds would be donated to charity.

33/14 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP said that taking the opportunity of the first destruction of forfeited ivory, AFCD would organise a major publicity campaign inviting senior government officials and consuls from relevant countries in order to demonstrate to the international community that Hong Kong was determined to combat illegal trade in ivory and poaching of African elephants with a view to promotion the conservation of elephants. Due to security concerns and possible contradiction to the message of elephant conservation, he had reservations about the proposed display of the artwork made of forfeited ivory at country parks or the West Kowloon Cultural District.

34/14 A member supported AFCD's proposed disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration. She proposed that AFCD should make it known to the public that there existed no security loophole in the disposal process.

35/14 A member supported AFCD's proposed disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration as this could demonstrate to the international community that Hong Kong was determined to combat illegal trade in ivory and poaching of African elephants. She also had reservations about the proposed display of the artwork made of forfeited ivory at country parks or the West Kowloon Cultural District. She suggested using incineration residues to make an elephant model for display at tourist sites and immigration control points, together with the relevant background information prepared for tourist guides, with a view to promulgating to visitors the message of elephant conservation and the Government's determination in combating illegal ivory trade. She also suggested that AFCD should publicise to the general public and the media that incineration residues would not be suitable for being made into artworks or ornaments.

36/14 A member proposed to add an expression of "An elephant killed for its ivory (象有齒以焚其身)" quoted from the chronicle *Zuo Zhuan* on the elephant model in order to enhance public vigilance, if such a model was made.

37/14 In response to the proposal made by a member, Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP advised that AFCD would provide the Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guides General Union with publicity information on promotion of endangered species protection.

38/14 Mr Y K CHAN pointed out that the value of ivory lied mainly in its worked products. However, a majority of the ivory stockpile were raw materials uncarved or unpolished and of no cultural or artistic values. He remarked that according to the principles under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), disposal of highly endangered species by means of sale was deemed to be a commercial activity, which was not allowed. Therefore, the proposed use of the proceeds from selling ornaments made of forfeited ivory for charity purpose was not feasible under CITES.

39/14 Mr CHAN continued that it might be in contravention of CITES to work the forfeited ivory into and exhibit such artwork for sale promotion. In accordance with the CITES guidelines on disposal, any means to dispose of highly endangered species should not stimulate

trade in the species. As such, as well as for the security concerns about where to put the artwork, AFCD had reservations about the proposal. He remarked that AFCD was committed to ensuring the safe custody and proper disposal of the forfeited ivory. As regards the trial conducted by AFCD in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), testing results showed that air emission during incineration would be at an acceptable level.

40/14 A member supported AFCD's proposal to dispose of forfeited ivory by incineration. She suggested that AFCD should explain to the public the grounds for the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration.

41/14 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP said that public opinion strongly supported the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration. AFCD would take this opportunity to demonstrate to the international community that Hong Kong was determined to combat the smuggling of ivory and to convey the message that Hong Kong would not allow the re-entry of forfeited ivory into the market.

42/14 A member suggested inviting an iconic conservationist who was highly esteemed in the international community and closely connected with the African countries to attend the first major publicity event. He also suggested that AFCD should organise a major publicity event once a year to constantly convey the above message to the world and the African countries concerned. Besides, he suggested that AFCD should organise roving exhibitions, alongside the above major publicity event, so as to educate the public on the conservation of elephants. The Chairman agreed with the member's suggestions.

43/14 A member said that he did not object to the destruction of ivory if it could serve the purpose of elephant conservation. However, he objected in principle to the dumping of destructed materials at landfill. He suggested AFCD to produce a promotional video on the cruel ways of poaching elephants, as well as to invite Jane GOODALL, a famous conservationist, to attend the first major publicity event.

44/14 A member reiterated his reservations about the proposed disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration, as the ivory destroyed was non-renewable resources.

45/14 A member also disagreed with the dumping of destructed materials at landfill. She elaborated that the elephant model made of incineration residues would let the public learn

about the dreadful fate of the poached elephants. Displaying the elephant model at various places would also let the public know that unworked and unprocessed ivory was valueless. She also suggested arranging roving exhibitions at shopping malls regularly, and setting up exhibition panels on the miserable situation of the elephants being poached and on the procedures of disposing of forfeited ivory by incineration. Besides, she suggested that AFCD might produce in advance an elephant model which could be displayed at the coming major publicity event, so as to enhance the effectiveness in promoting elephant conservation.

(Ms Ophelia CHAN left the meeting at this juncture.)

46/14 A member suggested that the penalties imposed on offenders could be mentioned in future publicity events.

47/14 Mr Y K CHAN said that AFCD would need to study carefully with EPD the proposal to work the incineration residues into the artwork, as the residues may contain toxics which were unsuitable to be used for the said purposes.

48/14 The Chairman concluded that most of the members agreed with AFCD's proposal to dispose of forfeited ivory by incineration. He suggested that the Committee might issue a brief statement to convey the Committee's decision to the media. After thorough discussion, members agreed to issue a statement on the Committee's decision (Annex II).

[Post-meeting note 1: The Chairman, accompanied by several members, made a statement to the media on the Committee's decision at the press conference held after the meeting.]

[Post-meeting note 2: On 16 April 2014, AFCD invited members to attend the Destruction of Confiscated Ivory Launching Ceremony to be held in the afternoon of 15 May 2014. AFCD thanked the Chairman for being the officiating guest and members for their presence at the launching ceremony to make it a success.]

V. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/3/2014)

49/14 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/3/2014 on AFCD's work in relation to CITES implementation in Hong Kong from 1 July to 31 December 2013. Members noted the Report.

VI. Education and Publicity
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/4/2014)

50/14 Ms Phoebe SZE presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/4/2014.

51/14 In response to the Chairman and a member's suggestion, Ms Phoebe SZE said that AFCD would explore producing a video on licensing requirements of endangered species for broadcasting on MTR and TV.

52/14 A member suggested that more elements of elephant conservation should be included in education and publicity materials and activities.

VII. Serving the Community – Service Standards Committee 37th Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/5/2014)

53/14 Dr Azaria WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/5/2014 on AFCD's performance for the quarter ended June and that ended September 2013. Members had no comment on the Paper.

VIII. Any Other Business

54/14 There was no any other business to be discussed.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

55/14 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

56/14 The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

- End -

对走私象牙收缴品的处理意见

- 1、香港严格遵守华盛顿野生动植物保护条例，查获非法入境的象牙已经表明了我们履行国际公约，不断加强野生动物保护的决心和行动力。
- 2、杜绝掠杀野生动物的非法行为，应从根源做起，惩治不法分子、斩断非法贸易链。香港并非象牙非法交易的主要市场，且进口控制严格，走私进来的数量有限，仅靠销毁这部分象牙，无法解决盗猎、出境、运输等其他环节的问题。
- 3、象牙无害，不同于鸦片、伪劣产品。销毁实在可惜。
- 4、建议将已经没收的象牙，除捐赠博物馆和教育机构以外，集中保存。或可造一座“象牙塔”，放置于郊野公园或西九文化公园，作为打击走私犯罪的长期展览，用以纪录历史、教育民众、警示后人。

Statement by the Endangered Species Advisory Committee

The Committee in principle agrees unanimously to the proposed disposal of forfeited ivory in the Government stockpile by incineration.

The major actions to be undertaken by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) are as follows:

1. The disposal of about 28 tonnes of the existing stockpile of forfeited ivory. It is expected that disposal can start in first half of 2014 and be completed in about one or two years.
2. About one tonne of ivory will be retained under AFCD's custody for uses permitted under CITES.
3. Any future forfeiture of ivory will be similarly disposed of on a regular basis.
4. Publicity events to promote conservation of elephants and other endangered species will be organized in connection with the ivory disposal plan.

The Committee strongly calls upon countries all over the world to make concerted efforts in combating illegal poaching of elephants and to undertake rigorous measures to protect elephants.

Ends