

Endangered Species Advisory Committee
Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

Date : 6 February 2015 (Friday)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

Attendance

Chairman

Professor SHAW Pang-chui

Members

Dr CHEUNG Siu-gin

Dr CHIU Sein-tuck

Mr TSANG Kwok-keung

Ms WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella, MH

Ms YU Li-hua

Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP	Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
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Dr P M SO	Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Conservation)
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Ms Sian LI	Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation) Environmental Protection Department
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Secretary

Mr Patrick TSANG	Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD
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In Attendance

AFCD

Mr Richard CHAN	Senior Endangered Species Protection Officer
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Mr Timothy LAM	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), Boundary and Ports Branch, Customs and Excise Department
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For Agenda Item VIII (a) only

Ocean Park Hong Kong (OPHK)

Mr Howard CHUK	Senior Curator, Terrestrial Life Sciences
Ms Cissy KOU	Assistant Curator, Terrestrial Life Sciences
Dr LEE Foo Khong	Veterinarian
Ms Loretta HO	Senior Registrar

Absent with Apologies

Ms CHAN Chiu-ling, Ophelia, BBS

Mr CHAN Wing-suen

Professor LEUNG Mei-yee, Kenneth

Ms Erica LO Lai-shan

Professor ZHAO Zhong-zhen, MH

Mr TANG Yi-hoi, CMSM	Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports), Customs & Excise Department
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OPENING REMARKS

1/15 The Chairman welcomed all members to the first meeting of the new term.

2/15 The Chairman introduced members and government representatives to each other. He also took the opportunity to thank the retired Chairman, Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing and the retired member Professor CHU Lee-man for their contribution to the Committee.

3/15 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. Declaration of Interests and Transparency Measures

4/15 Mr Richard CHAN briefed members on the guidelines on declaration of interests and transparency measures.

5/15 Members noted the guidelines on declaration of interests and transparency measures.

II. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10 July 2014

6/15 The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 July 2014 were confirmed without amendments.

III. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

(a) Amendments to CITES Appendices adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) (Para. 60/14)

7/15 The meeting agreed that this item would be discussed under Agenda Item IV.

(b) Placement of Pets of Endangered Species with Hong Kong Society of Herpetology Foundation (HKHERP) (Para. 61/14 to 62/14)

8/15 Mr Timothy LAM reported that the placement scheme had commenced since April 2014. The Department had been keeping close contact with HKHERP, visited its adoption centre and monitored the progress of the scheme. HKHERP received donation of 134 seized Appendix II freshwater turtles (淡水龜) and tortoises (陸龜) from AFCD by mid-January 2015. 32 of them had been adopted by members of the public and educational institutions, 49 were being under pre-adoption treatment, and 9 died under its custody. As a result, 44 turtles and tortoises were kept at the centre pending for adoption. All the turtles and tortoises, whether they were adopted or to be adopted, had been micro-chipped. HKHERP had requested the adopters to report the updated condition along with recent photo of the animal to HKHERP every 6 months in the first three years of adoption. HKHERP had not received any report of death of adopted tortoises and turtles by early January 2015.

9/15 Mr Timothy LAM answered the Chairman's enquiry that majority of the 32 re-homed tortoises and turtles were adopted by members of the public and only few of them were adopted by educational institutions.

(c) Review of Disposal of Forfeited Ivory (Para. 63/14 to 69/14)

10/15 Mr Timothy LAM reported that AFCD had invited ICAC to review the protocol for the disposal of forfeited ivory. The ICAC officers observed the process onsite, including the pre-treatment stage, delivery of forfeited ivory from storage to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre in Tsing Yi and incineration operation at the Centre, and made some suggestions on the protocol. AFCD adopted the suggestions and strictly implemented them. A total of eleven rounds of incineration had been conducted since the Destruction of Confiscated Ivory Launching Ceremony on 15 May 2014, resulting in the disposal of about 15 tonnes of forfeited ivory. The whole exercise was planned to be completed by mid-2015.

11/15 In response to the Chairman's enquiry about recent media coverage on the disposal of forfeited ivory, Dr P M SO said that an article about the transparency of the exercise appeared in a newspaper on 1 February 2015. Noting that the article contained biased information, he sent a letter to the editor on the morning of the meeting to clarify. Firstly, AFCD had put in place a protocol for the disposal of confiscated ivory and the protocol had all along been strictly adhered to. To minimise the risk of malpractice, advice had been sought from ICAC before finalising the protocol. Secondly, AFCD took the initiative to invite ESAC members to monitor each round of incineration to ensure transparency. He took the

opportunity to thank the Chairman, Dr CHEUNG Siu-gin, Dr CHIU Sein-tuck and Ms WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella, MH who had witnessed the incineration process. The newspaper article also hinted that the Committee might not be able to act on behalf of the public to monitor the incineration and suggested that green groups be invited to witness the incineration operations. The letter to editor clarified that majority of the ESAC members who witnessed the incineration operations were academic and members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). He pointed out that current membership of the ESAC did not comprise any representative from the ivory trade but representatives from other trade sectors.

12/15 Dr SO continued to say that the reporter also followed up the issue that AFCD would not allow green groups to witness the incineration operations. However, AFCD had not received any formal request for witnessing such operations from green groups. In fact, he met one of the interviewees mentioned in the foregoing article who informed him that he had no major comments on the incineration arrangement. On the day of this ESAC meeting, the AFCD received further enquiries from the reporter. He indicated that AFCD had no in-principle objection to having representatives from relevant large green groups to witness the incineration operations. Given that the venue of the incineration operations was not managed by the AFCD, AFCD had to liaise with the venue management for necessary logistic and security arrangements.

13/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP highlighted that it was necessary to clarify with the newspaper openly as the integrity of the Committee and AFCD in the disposal of forfeited ivory was implicitly questioned in the article. Besides, the entry to Chemical Waste Treatment Centre in Tsing Yi was restricted as chemical wastes to be disposed of were toxic in nature and under close monitoring of the Environmental Protection Department. He remarked that the disposal of forfeited ivory was a transparent and open process, and AFCD had not refused green groups to witness the incineration operations.

14/15 By sharing her experience of monitoring the incineration operation, a member was of the view that Members sacrificed for serving the public by inhaling foul-smelling gases. She commended the rigorous process of the disposal of confiscated ivory by incineration.

15/15 A member read out an email from the reporter the night before the meeting which asked him about his views on whether the media and NGOs should be allowed to monitor the incineration of forfeited ivory with a view to enhancing the transparency of the disposal process.

16/15 The Chairman echoed that he received the same email from the reporter the day before the meeting. In his reply email, he agreed that more publicity was better and it was good to have press event at an appropriate time so as to increase the public awareness of AFCD's work. He had no specific view on whether NGOs should be allowed to monitor the process as he did not know how to select NGOs. Hence, he was of the view that he was not in a position to endorse or reject the idea of allowing NGOs to monitor the process.

17/15 Mr Timothy LAM answered a member's enquiry that the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration was scheduled to be finished by mid-2015. Ivory incineration will be carried out once or twice every month from February to May 2015 inclusive.

18/15 A member said that he also received the same email two days before the meeting. Having attended one round of incineration, he opined that the whole process was rigorous and reasonable, and so no big problems would be expected if the process was to be opened to outside parties. Hence, he in-principle agreed to allow NGOs to witness the process to enhance transparency and avoid misinterpretation. Given that many areas of the venue were confined space, he suggested that a quota of one or two witnesses be offered to NGOs or the public on a selected basis.

19/15 A member suggested that AFCD would take the opportunity to organise a publicity event at the last round of incineration to state the completion of the ivory disposal plan and fulfillment of the responsibility for protecting elephants. In terms of transparency and fairness, the media and NGOs could be invited to attend the events subject to the limited space of the venue.

20/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP responded that he had no objection to enhance transparency. He observed that barely few people or organisations had interest in the issue after the article of 1 February 2015; hence, he had reservation on organising a large-scale event for only few people and organisations. Perhaps AFCD would arrange the few interested people or organisations to witness the disposal process. He assessed that the public had no interest in this issue and did not cast doubt on the integrity of the Committee and the Government. Nevertheless, AFCD would explore the member's suggestion on the publicity event at the last round of incineration.

21/15 Dr P M SO supplemented that the member's suggestion was a good idea and AFCD would explore the format of the publicity event in due course. AFCD would take the opportunity to organise this publicity event to promote conservation of elephants to the public upon the completion of ivory disposal plan.

22/15 In response to a member's enquiry about the best way to handle the enquiry from the reporter, Dr P M SO suggested two approaches. One was to advise the reporter to seek the views of the AFCD subject officer. Another approach was that the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, gave a short reply to the reporter.

23/15 The Chairman reiterated that he had replied personally to the reporter. He would give a formal reply if AFCD deemed that it was more appropriate to refer the reporter to him for reply.

24/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP opined that he was in support of transparency and so had raised the issue at the meeting. He suggested that the Chairman might give a short reply to the reporter about the stance of the Committee on the issues mentioned in the email.

25/15 After Dr P M SO had recapitulated his draft letter to the editor, the Chairman remarked that members should reach a consensus on the issues beforehand in the event that he would be requested by the reporter to give a reply on behalf of the Committee.

26/15 In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether an event would be organised for the media to witness the disposal of ivory in due course, Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP said that the mass media had attended the Launching Ceremony on 15 May 2014. Dr P M SO supplemented that so far the only media organisation that had been interested in the transparency regarding the disposal of forfeited ivory by incineration was the newspaper which followed up the case. Should the mass media had a growing concern about the transparency of the disposal exercise, AFCD would consider their request to witness the exercise.

27/15 As regards the allegation that NGOs were banned from witnessing the destruction of the ivory, Dr P M SO clarified that it was not correct as AFCD had not received any formal request from NGOs. Should AFCD receive such request from major relevant NGOs, AFCD would consider the request provided that logistic and security arrangements could be made

with venue management. If the Chairman and members had no objection, he suggested that the Committee might adopt the same approach in the Chairman's reply.

28/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP pointed out that AFCD were not aware of any general interests in the mass media to follow up the disposal process since the Launching Ceremony except this newspaper. Hence, it was not necessary to have a large-scale media function at the moment. He had no objection to organising a publicity event at the end of the ivory disposal plan and invite the mass media to witness the disposal process if there were great public interests.

29/15 Members were generally in support of the Chairman's remark that a publicity event could be organised at the end of the ivory disposal plan as suggested by a member.

30/15 Ms Sian LI remarked that elephant was not necessarily the endangered species with the greatest public concern. She opined that public education and publicity were indispensable in the protection of endangered species, and AFCD could explore appropriate formats and timing of education and publicity activities in due course. As the ivory disposal plan was implemented for the stockpile of forfeited ivory, a message should be promulgated to reinforce the undertaking that in future, forfeited ivory which come under AFCD's custody would be disposed of similarly on a regular basis.

31/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP echoed that *Aquilaria sinensis* (土沉香) had aroused more interests of the media and the public than ivory for the past six months.

32/15 Ms Kitty POON shared with the meeting that no NGOs or the public had witnessed the seizure disposal activities of C&ED for security and enforcement reasons. She further suggested that AFCD might consider the production of a video clip showing the whole disposal process of forfeited ivory by incineration for publicity and transparency, in addition to the publicity event to be arranged at the end of the ivory disposal plan.

33/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP highlighted that the proposed publicity event at the end of the ivory disposal plan was good for publicity and education.

(d) Business Raised by The Chairman (Para. 74/14 to 80/14)

34/15 The Secretary briefed members about the discussion on this item in the last meeting.

35/15 Regarding the posting of meeting minutes on the AFCD website, the Chairman was of the view that it might be possible to confirm the draft minutes of the last meeting prior to the forthcoming meeting. As the draft minutes of the last meeting were issued to members for comment with a deadline, he suggested that should members had no proposed amendment(s) after the deadline, the draft minutes would be confirmed accordingly. The confirmed minutes would be uploaded onto the AFCD website after seeking endorsement from the Chairman. As a result, the regular item "Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on [date/month/year]" would be deleted from the agenda of the forthcoming meeting.

36/15 Dr P M SO agreed to the Chairman's suggestion. He suggested that the draft minutes of the meetings would be circulated to members for comment as soon as possible. Should members have proposed amendment(s) to the draft minutes, the draft minutes would incorporate proposed amendment(s) and circulate to members for confirmation. The confirmed minutes would be uploaded onto the AFCD website upon confirmation and endorsement of the Chairman. Members had no objection to the arrangement.

37/15 A member had reservation about the proposed disclosure of full name of members in the minutes. He pointed out that some members representing the views of their industries might be discouraged to express their views freely if their names were disclosed. In fact, he noted that this disclosure practice was rarely adopted in the minutes of other meetings of similar advisory committees.

38/15 Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP echoed that as members were appointed by the Secretary for the Environment in their personal capacity, they were expected to express their views freely. Non-disclosure of members' names in the minutes facilitated candid exchange of views among members at the meeting and protected them from witch-hunting or undue pressure from outside parties afterwards. Unless a member requested his/her name to be disclosed in the minutes, it was considered that the expression "A member" was appropriate.

39/15 A member was of the view that the practice of non-disclosure of members' names in the minutes was advisable and effectual. Indeed, the practice had been widely adopted among government departments unless members requested their names to be disclosed.

40/15 The Chairman summed up that the practice of non-disclosure of members' names in the minutes of the Committee would be retained.

41/15 On the suggestions of an NGO to open the nomination of members to the Committee and on the composition of the Committee, the Chairman remarked that the matters were outside the ambit of the Committee's Terms of Reference.

42/15 A member expressed reservation on conducting the meetings in an open environment with full public access. He opined that some members representing views of their industries might be discouraged to express their views freely at open meetings. Besides, pre-mature disclosure on details of discussion issues and deliberations on the issues at open meetings might give rise to ill-informed criticism or unnecessary misunderstanding.

43/15 A member remarked that he would prefer to maintain closed-door meetings with a view to facilitating candid exchange of views among members. He was of the view that open meetings would result in unforeseen consequences that some members of the public would accuse members of their remarks and views afterwards.

44/15 The Chairman concluded that the Committee decided to maintain close meetings.

45/15 As regards the composition of the Committee, Dr P M SO said that he met the representative of the NGO late last week. He explained to the representative that in general about one-third of members of an advisory committee were representatives from relevant trades so that stakeholders' views could be heard, another one-third were experts and academics, and the remaining one-third were public figures from other sectors of the community. Such composition would ensure that the Committee could have a more balanced view from relevant stakeholders, experts and the wider community. Furthermore, as CITES was a trade agreement; hence, the involvement of stakeholders of relevant trades was indispensable. The representative understood and basically agreed to Dr SO's remarks.

IV. Report on Legislative Amendments to Cap 586 (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/1/2015)

46/15 Dr Azaria WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/1/2015.

47/15 Mr Richard CHAN answered the Chairman's enquiry about enforcement that AFCD, in close cooperation with C&ED, selected imported shipments for inspection in a risk-based approach. As at mid-January 2015, ten sea cargo shipments were inspected jointly by AFCD and C&ED and two of them were found to contain shark fins of suspected controlled species under a 3-month joint operation between the two departments starting from 28 November 2015. Ms Kitty POON supplemented that in response to the law amendments of Cap 586 with effect from 28 November 2014, C&ED had also stepped up its enforcement actions against smuggling activities concerning shark fins of controlled species. To date three imported maritime shipments were suspected to contain shark fins of controlled species, amounting to about 1,000 kg with an estimated market value of approximate \$1 million.

48/15 Noting that the representatives of Ocean Park had arrived, the Chairman suggested that the Agenda Item VIII (a) be advanced for discussion. Members had no objection.

VIII. Any Other Business

(a) Re-export and Re-entry of Giant Panda in the Giant Panda Breeding Programme 2015 of Ocean Park

49/15 Dr Azaria WONG reported that AFCD had circulated an ESAC Committee Paper ref. CP/ESAC/9/2014 which sought members' comments on the proposed re-export and re-entry of giant panda Ying Ying (盈盈) as outlined in the Giant Panda Breeding Programme 2015 of Ocean Park, and did not receive any comment from members to date. Hence, AFCD replied the Ocean Park that ESAC members had no comments on their proposal. On receiving AFCD's reply, the Ocean Park then submitted the application for a Licence to Re-export Ying Ying from Hong Kong to the Mainland. Having received copies of the relevant CITES permit issued by the Mainland CITES Authority from the Ocean Park, AFCD issued the re-export permit accordingly.

50/15 The Chairman welcomed the following representatives from Ocean Park Hong Kong to the meeting:

Mr Howard CHUK

Senior Curator, Terrestrial Life Sciences

Ms Cissy KOU

Assistant Curator, Terrestrial Life Sciences

Dr LEE Foo Khong

Veterinarian

Ms Loretta HO

Senior Registrar

51/15 Mr Howard CHUK briefed members about the Giant Panda Breeding Programme 2015, including background information and trained behaviours of Ying Ying and Le Le (樂樂), transportation of Ying Ying to the Wolong Reserve (臥龍保護區) to participate in the national giant panda breeding programme (全國大熊貓繁殖計劃) and return to Hong Kong after insemination, and pre-export inspection and coordination trip to Dujianyan Disease Control Centre (都江堰疾控中心) and Yaan Bifeng Gorge Base (雅安碧峰峽基地).

(Mr TSANG Kwok-keung attended the meeting at this juncture)

52/15 On a member's enquiries about the objectives and long-term plan of the Giant Panda Breeding Programme, Mr Howard CHUK answered that in general both male and female giant pandas reached sexual maturity at the age of five. However, it was quite difficult for male giant pandas which were captive bred or kept in zoos to practise natural mating because they were few in number and had no chance to learn the process. When the Ocean Park was drawing up the Giant Panda Breeding Programme during the last four years, it observed that semen of Le Le was already very good in quality and quantity and Ying Ying also reached full sexual maturity and behaved very well in estrous cycles. Hence, the Park considered that it was an opportune moment for Ying Ying to participate in the national giant panda breeding programme.

53/15 Mr CHUK went on to say that when Ying Ying and Le Le were given to HKSAR in 2007, the Park and the Wolong Reserve had signed a giant panda breeding and research agreement. The agreement stipulated that in the event that Ying Ying was transported to the Wolong Reserve for breeding and gave birth to panda cubs, the further keeping arrangement of the new born panda cubs would depend on their order of birth, i.e. odd numbered ones would be reared in the Park as conservation ambassadors for education and promotion to the public on protection of giant pandas and their habitats in Sichuan Province (四川省) and the others would be kept on the Mainland.

54/15 Mr CHUK explained the reasons why the Park decided to transport Ying Ying to the Wolong Reserve at the present time. In case Ying Ying gave birth to panda cubs, she would

generally spent two years for rearing her cubs and so she was not likely to breed in the coming two years. Given that female giant pandas were able to reproduce until they were 16 – 19 years old and Ying Ying was nine years old, it was expected that Ying Ying could participate in the national giant panda breeding programme for three or four times provided that she got pregnant successfully every two years. The Park learned from the experience in the last four years that both Ying Ying and Le Le were in very good health conditions and reached sexual maturity. Hence, it was an opportune moment to let Ying Ying join the national giant panda breeding programme so as to enhance the conservation of giant pandas on the Mainland.

55/15 In response to Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP's enquiry about the reasons why the Ocean Park had not considered to breed Ying Ying by artificial insemination in Hong Kong instead, Mr CHUK replied that the Ocean Park had attempted to breed the two giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le by methods including natural mating and artificial insemination in the last four years. However, those attempts had been unsuccessful.

56/15 Mr CHUK continued to say that the expert of the Wolong Reserve advised that natural mating had a higher success rate than artificial insemination. Nevertheless, successful breeding was also possible for artificial insemination, for instance, Yuan Yuan (圓圓) and Tuan Tuan (團團) in the Taiwan Zoo (台北動物園) had bred successfully by artificial insemination after unsuccessful natural mating two years ago. The Ocean Park, in collaboration with the Taiwan Zoo and with support from the expert from the Wolong Reserve, had attempted to breed Ying Ying and Le Le by both natural mating and artificial insemination in the past four years. The continuation of the same practice could not ensure a higher probability of achieving a successful pregnancy. If Ying Ying was transported to the Wolong Reserve, the Wolong Reserve would select eight to ten male pandas for mating with her. This would support the objective for maintaining genetic diversity within the population in captivity. Given that those male pandas had natural mating experience, this would increase Ying Ying's experience in natural mating which was in direct correlation with the success rate of pregnancy.

57/15 Mr CHUK further briefed members about the acquisition of an additional male golden monkey (or golden snub-nosed monkey, *Rhinopithecus roxellana*), information of two existing female golden monkeys "LeLe" (樂樂) and "HuHu" (虎虎), the planned layout of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Sichuan Treasures (HKJCST)(香港賽馬會四川奇珍館) after modification, and the estimated timeline for the acquisition plan.

58/15 Mr CHUK answered a member's enquiry that the exhibition area for golden monkey in the HKJCST (四川奇珍館金絲猴展區) was about 250 m², which was designed to house one male and three female golden monkeys under the loan agreement with the Chengdu Zoo (成都動物園) in 2012. Having noted that LeLe and HuHu had lived healthily in the Ocean Park since 2012 and they were sexually mature at the time being, the Ocean Park discussed with the Forestry Department of Sichuan Province (四川省林業廳) to acquire one male golden monkey for breeding with them.

59/15 Mr CHUK answered the Chairman's enquiries that the two female golden monkeys had been on loan from the Chengdu Zoo for a period of three years (2012 – 15). Apart from entering a five-year loan agreement with the Chengdu Zoo for importing the male golden monkey, the Ocean Park had reached an agreement with the Chengdu Zoo to extend the loan of the two females for five years. Similar to other national treasures in China, the breeding programme for golden monkey was managed by the State Forestry Administration. Hence, any new born golden monkeys were possessed by the Chengdu Zoo and would be returned to the Mainland.

60/15 The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Ocean Park for attending the meeting.

(Mr Howard CHUK, Ms Cissy KOU, Dr LEE Foo Khong, and Ms Loretta HO left the meeting at this juncture)

**V. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/2/2015)**

61/15 Mr Timothy LAM presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/2/2015 on AFCD's work in relation to CITES implementation in Hong Kong from 1 June to 31 December 2014.

62/15 Mr Timothy LAM answered a member's enquiry that the majority of significant cases involved import of endangered species and the offenders of a number of these cases were Mainland passport holders. Hong Kong residents were mainly involved in prosecution cases of import of live orchids from the Mainland without relevant CITES permits.

63/15 Mr Timothy LAM answered a member's enquiry that AFCD had previously repatriated confiscated live animals, in particular live turtles, to their home countries. A recent example was the repatriation of live Pig-nosed Turtles (豬鼻鰲) back to Indonesia in February 2014. However, repatriation of live animals to their home countries was not an easy matter as not many source countries were willing to receive confiscated animals. Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP supplemented that the AFCD, through the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, had repatriated Lemur (狐猴) to Madagascar (馬達加斯加) several years ago.

64/15 In response to Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP's enquiry, Mr Richard CHAN replied that according to the Committee's decision at the meeting on 23 January 2014, forfeited ivory which came under AFCD's custody in future would be similarly disposed of by incineration on a regular basis.

VI. Education and Publicity (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/3/2015)

65/15 Ms Phoebe SZE presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/3/2015.

66/15 Ms Phoebe SZE answered the Chairman's enquiry that there was no volunteer programme for education activities on endangered species at the moment. As regards the Chairman's suggestion of recruiting volunteers for education activities on endangered species and guided tours at the Endangered Species Resource Centre, Mr Richard CHAN added that some volunteers of the Hong Kong Wetland Park were previously trained and enlisted for education activities of endangered species, for instance the opening day of the Endangered Species Resource Centre held on Saturdays in February and March last year. Hence, volunteers of the Hong Kong Wetland Park could be rallied if necessary. However, since quite a large amount of resources would be required for the establishment of a volunteer team, AFCD might not be able to spare manpower to set up a volunteer team at the time being in view of staff constraint. He thanked the Chairman for the suggestion and said that AFCD would take note of his suggestion.

67/15 In response to a member's enquiry about whether relevant traders had requested AFCD to provide training for them on the identification of commonly encountered endangered species, such as shark fins and timber, Mr Richard CHAN explained that trade names of shark fins used in the trade, for example Qun Chi (群翅) and Jin Shan Gou Chi (金山勾翅), consisted of shark fins of several species. So far shark fin traders had not requested AFCD to conduct training for them. Indeed majority of shark fin traders were very experienced in the

identification of shark fins of different species in the trade as they had been working in the trade for decades. Similarly, timber traders were also very experienced in timbers in the trade and they had not requested for such training.

68/15 A member suggested that AFCD might consider recruiting tourist guides to be volunteers.

VII. Serving the Community – Service Standards Committee 39th Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/4/2015)

69/15 Dr Azaria WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/4/2015 on AFCD's performance in relation to issuance of certificate/license in respect of endangered species during the period from 1 April to 30 September 2014.

70/15 Dr Azaria WONG answered a member's enquiry that one or two more working days were required for processing those applications for Licences to Import/Export/Re-export/Posses which had not met target completion time of two working days. Mr Richard CHAN supplemented that during the reporting period, the department received 69 lots of bulk applications, resulting in significant increase in processing time for these bulk applications. Hence, the performance pledge could not be fully met.

71/15 In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether user-pay principle had been applied to the fees for the licences and certificates issued under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, Mr Richard CHAN replied that the fees were reviewed in 2013/14 according to the full cost recovery principle. Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP supplemented that according to the government policy on fees, the fees charged by the Government should be set at a level aiming at the attainment of full cost recovery. Besides, the user-pay principle and the attainment of full cost recovery were applicable to the costs of issuing the licences and certificates only but not the cost of enforcement.

VIII. Any Other Business

72/15 There was no any other business to be discussed.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

73/15 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

74/15 The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

(A group photo was taken for ESAC members at the end of the meeting)

- End -