

Government strengthens control on commercial possession of pre-Convention ivory and bans its import and re-export

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) reminded the public today (August 1) that Step 2 of the three steps under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 (Amendment Ordinance) has come into effect. The import and re-export of pre-Convention ivory is banned and control on the commercial possession of pre-Convention ivory has been strengthened to phase out the local ivory trade.

The spokesman said, "The Government is highly concerned over endangered species. Species listed in the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), including elephants, are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance in Hong Kong. The first step of the plan, under which the import and re-export of elephant hunting trophies and post-Convention ivory have been banned, came into effect on May 1.

"Under Step 2 which has been implemented today, the import and re-export of pre-Convention ivory have been banned. Except for antique ivory, the commercial possession of pre-Convention ivory in the local market is subject to the same licensing control as the one on post-Convention ivory. Generally, the AFCD will not issue a new Licence to Possess to non-registered pre-Convention ivory.

"The whole process will be completed by December 31, 2021, and the local trade in all ivory (except antique ivory) will be completely closed down."

Meanwhile, various departments, including the AFCD, the Customs and Excise Department and the Hong Kong Police Force, will continue to take vigorous enforcement action against smuggling and illegal trade in ivory.

The spokesman also reminded the public that the penalties for violating the Amendment Ordinance have been increased since May 1. The maximum penalty is a fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction. For more details of the Amendment Ordinance and the control of endangered species, please visit www.cites.hk or call the AFCD on 1823.