

Report of the Advisory Council on Regulation of Ivory Trade

[Summary]

Current status of ivory trade

- The ban on international trade in ivory has failed to stop poaching, resulting in decreases in elephant populations (except in southern African regions with stable elephant populations).
- In major countries of the world, the movement towards a ban on domestic trade in ivory has expanded, with Japan amending its law in 2018 to tighten its regulations on ivory trade.
- While ivory has been used in Japan since old times (as seen in the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's designation of "Edo Ivory" as traditional crafts), the market is shrinking (with a significant reduction in the number of ivory business operators caused by the law amendment).

Problems surrounding ivory trade

Questions raised against Japan's trade system

○ Movements at CITES-CoP

- A proposal calling on all countries including Japan to close domestic ivory markets (rejected).
- It was unanimously agreed that each country will report its measures to ensure that its domestic ivory markets are not contributing to poaching or illegal trade.

○ Voices from overseas directed to the Tokyo Metropolitan government

- The Mayor of New York City, environmental groups, etc. have voiced that the ivory trade in Japan (Tokyo) should be banned by using the Tokyo 2020 Games as a momentum.
- Some have also voiced that the ivory trade should be maintained.

○ Movements at the Advisory Council include:

- Problems include the lack of traceability due to the failure of the registration system to cover cut pieces and products.
- It is also necessary to pay attention to Human-Elephant Conflict in their habitat regions and to directly contribute to the coexistence of humans and elephants and to the prevention of poaching.

Illegal overseas export of ivory from Japan

○ Illegal overseas export of ivory

- 2.4 tons of ivory were confiscated during 2011-2016, with some reported cases in more recent years.
- Most illegal exports are destined for China.

○ Awareness among ivory business operators and customers

- A survey of business operators in Tokyo has found that there is room for improving the awareness of the "ban on overseas export" of ivory among ivory business operators and customers.
- Most business operators have taken appropriate action, with 73% having responded that they confirmed that they are not supposed to export ivory abroad in the course of sale.

○ Movements at the Advisory Council include:

- It is necessary to prepare for recovery in the number of foreign tourists to Japan.
- Overseas export of ivory from Japan involves a risk of inducing poaching through activation of black markets.

Voices from parties selling or using ivory

- Tokyo Ivory Arts and Crafts Association: Legal compliance and dissemination of correct information are necessary. Ivory handled by registered business operators does not contribute to poaching.
- Artist using ivory: We do not have to use ivory, but it is a wonderful, environment-friendly material. We want to continue to use ivory with care.
- Surveyed registered business operators: We are sorry if our ivory culture is lost. We hope that our ivory culture will continue by carefully managing ivory.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government's measures for appropriate ivory trade

Necessity and direction of new measures

- Amid the concerns over illegal overseas export of ivory and the Japanese market becoming a shield to hide illegal ivory, among other things, the current situation is problematic in that we are unable to prove that illegal ivory has been strictly excluded through effective management of the ivory trade.
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- It is necessary to **thoroughly prevent overseas export of ivory** by such means as **improving traceability** and to show to the world community that there is no room for illegal ivory to slip into the Japanese market.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government's efforts after establishing the Council

- Before the Tokyo 2020 Games, requests were made (by the Governor directly to the Minister of the Environment) for appropriate regulations on ivory trade and cooperation in the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's efforts.
- Based on discussions at the Advisory Council, efforts were made to prevent overseas export of ivory in cooperation with the national government and other entities, by using the Tokyo 2020 Games as a momentum.
 - Direct requests were made to ivory business operators in Tokyo to check customers' intentions, and most business operators took appropriate action (based on survey results).
 - Attention was drawn of athletes and persons involved who visited Japan for the Olympics, and information was disseminated in Japan and abroad through multilingual content.

Measures for appropriate ivory trade (the Advisory Council's recommendations to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government)

- Japan, with its large stock of ivory, is responsible for showing to the global community that the Japanese market does not contribute to poaching or illegal trade. With a large number of registered ivory business operators located in Tokyo, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government should promote efforts for appropriate ivory trade.
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(1) **Urging the national government** to make nationwide efforts under law towards more strict regulations on ivory trade.

- **Thorough border controls**, such as more effective regulations.
- Taking measures to **reliably enforce law**, such as improving the system for supervising trade.
- Taking measures to **improve the traceability** of domestic trade, such as enhancing the management of ivory products.
- Further enhancing **public relations and awareness programs** targeting entities in Japan and abroad.

(2) Continuing the **efforts to prevent overseas export of ivory** made by using the Tokyo 2020 Games as a momentum, to prepare for recovery in the number of foreign tourists to Japan.

(3) Considering legal or other effective means to **prevent contributions to poaching and illegal trade while protecting ivory culture and arts**.