

PRESS RELEASE
26 December 2008

**Singapore with the largest number of supporters in Asia for the
Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare.**

SINGAPORE, 26 December 2008- More than 40,000 people in Singapore have joined the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) in showing their support for the Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare (UDAW). This makes Singapore the country with the highest number of petition signatures collected in Asia.

The UDAW aims to achieve global recognition that animals matter, that they can feel pain and can suffer and that we have a responsibility to put an end to cruelty to animals around the world. The campaign seeks to collect 10 million signatures and achieve a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare at the United Nations.

"We are proud that so many people in Singapore have come forth to show their support for this initiative. This is surely a step forward in our efforts to create a more gracious and compassionate society and becoming responsible global citizens" said Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES.

The scale of suffering for animals in the world today is unprecedented. Improving animal welfare not only benefits the animals but can also improve the welfare of people relying on these animals. Over a billion people directly rely on animals around the world for their livelihoods. People rely on animals' companionship as well, and in many cases, animals are considered part of the family.

For a global problem, a global solution is needed. Agreement on the importance of an issue affects people's attitudes, and this in turn affects their actions. A Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare would have a real, long-term impact on the welfare of billions of animals worldwide.

The UDAW campaign represents the biggest ever global animal welfare initiative linking the entire animal welfare movement under one strategic goal - global recognition that animals are sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and suffering.

ACRES is part of a global coalition of almost 200 animal welfare organisations and thousands of supporters from around the world have been working hard to spread the word about the UDAW and collect signatures.

In Singapore, ACRES has held over 130 roadshows in the past 2 years to collect signatures and will be carrying out monthly roadshows next year in support of UDAW.

To date, over one million signatures have been collected and this marks a major milestone in the progress of the UDAW on its way to the United Nations. Nobel Lauriat and President of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, was the official 1,000,000th signatory.

You can sign the petition at: http://www.animalsmatter.org/Acres_SG

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Notes to editors

- The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) is acting as Secretariat of the inter-governmental steering committee for the UDAW.
- ACRES is a local charity and Institution of Public Character with a main aim of fostering respect and compassion for all animals. It currently has more than 16,000 individuals on its supporter database.
- Photographs of animals are available on request.