

## **PRESS RELEASE**

14 June 2002

### **ASIANS SPEAK AGAINST KOREAN DOG AND CAT MEAT**

ASIA, 14 JUNE -- Asia Link, a coalition of Asian animal welfare and conservation groups from 12 countries, is presenting a statement to the South Korean Government asking them to make a clear commitment during the FIFA World Cup to enforce and improve their legislation on animal protection. Today, the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) presented the South Korean Embassy in Singapore with the statement as well as a video, "Culture or Excuse", which exposes the cruelty of the dog meat trade in Korea. The footage shows conditions of farming, transporting and selling dogs for meat. Representatives from other groups in countries such as Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nepal are also submitting the Statement to their Korean embassies.

Not only is dog meat eaten but also the industry is now promoting dog meat products such as cosmetics. Dogs are bred in farms where most never leave their cages. At the markets, they are crammed into cages so they can hardly stand properly. Some are killed by electrocution. Others are hanged then beaten as they die or tortured in other ways. Cats are usually boiled, some alive, in large pressure cookers to produce a tonic that supposedly cures ailments. Others may be beaten with hammers.

Our ancestors domesticated dogs and cats as companions and we break a bond of trust when we treat them worse than livestock. Worldwide, more societies, including Korea, are considering dogs and cats as good companions. The Korean Government should take serious action to reduce, and finally ban dog and cat eating in Korea, and not merely improve the ways of slaughter.

In November last year, the FIFA President, Joseph Blatter had called upon FIFA Vice President, Dr. Chung Mong-Joon of Korea to take "immediate and decisive measures to put an immediate end to this cruelty".

Laws to prevent cruelty to dogs and cats in Korea are weak. Laws that exist are not well enforced. During the last decade, only two perpetrators of animal abuse were convicted and imposed small fines. Asia Link calls urgently for legislative and policy-related changes including:

- A permanent ban on the slaughter of dogs and cats for human consumption or other economic purposes.
- Korean animal protection law to be improved so that it clearly defines "animal cruelty" with regards to provision of food, housing, veterinary care, shelter, maltreatment, transportation and slaughter.
- Enhanced law enforcement of existing and new laws on the dog and cat meat trade.

- Higher penalties for animal cruelty.
- Formation of a National Animal Welfare committee, with representation from leading Korean animal welfare groups such as Voice4animals, to advise the Government.

Asia Link is urging everyone concerned to write to the South Korean President Kim Dae-jung showing support for these recommendations at:

<http://www.cwd.go.kr/cgi-bin/php/engletter/writeform.php3>

or at: 1, Sejongno, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea 110-050

"The World Cup will finish at the end of June. But there is no end in sight for the cruelty to dogs and cats in Korea. We cannot use culture to justify violence. It is people who make "culture", so they can change it. Dog eating was once popular in Taiwan but in 2001, the meat and fur of pets such as dogs and cats were banned from being used for economic purposes. In the Philippines, the slaughter of dogs for meat is prohibited in Metro Manila. In Thailand, opposition to it is building and just recently the "City of Dog Eating", Sakon Nakhon, banned the sale of dog meat in its efforts to create a "good image". As Asian societies ourselves, we are phasing out dog eating. We invite Korea to join us in this humane move," said Asia Link representatives including Mr. Louis Ng, President of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES).

Professor Changkil Park, Founder of the Seoul-based Voice4animals said, "Over the years, there has been very strong support from the Western world to stop the cruelty to Korea's dogs and cats. But this latest collective action by the Asian community clearly shows that there is now a world-wide demand for Korea to take immediate and enduring steps to stop the extreme cruelty to the animals here."

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#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. This is an independent **ASIA LINK** initiative. **ASIA LINK** was formed in 2000 to facilitate the sharing of information and resources between Asian animal welfare and conservation groups.
2. The following organisations currently form the **ASIA LINK** coalition:

- BANGLADESH** - Bangladesh Animal Welfare Organisation (BAWO)
- CHINA** - Educational Group for the Protection of Environment & Animals
- INDONESIA** - Animal Conservation for Life (KSBK)
- INDONESIA** - Bali Street Dog Foundation
- JAPAN** - Japan Wildlife Conservation Society (JWCS)
- JAPAN** - All Life In a Viable Environment (ALIVE)
- KOREA** - Voice4Animals
- MALAYSIA** - Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- NEPAL** - National Zoonoses & Food Hygiene Research Centre
- PHILIPPINES** - Philippine Society for the Protection of Animals (PSPA)
- SINGAPORE** - Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES)
- SRI LANKA** - Kandy Association for Community Protection through Animal Welfare (KACPAW)
- TAIWAN** - Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan (EAST)
- THAILAND** - Thai Animal Guardians Association (Thai AGA)