

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga

Request to Promote the International Agreement to Prohibit the Eating of Dogs and Cats

We represent the Parliamentary League for Animal Welfare, which was established in February 2020 as a suprapartisan organization.

Animals, like human beings, are living creatures capable of suffering, and they deserve to be treated with dignity. From this perspective, the term "animal welfare" refers to the state where an animal is sufficiently mentally and physically healthy, happy, and in harmony with its environment. The concept of the Five Freedoms (freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury, and disease; freedom from fear and distress; and freedom to express normal behavior) has been established on an international scale to achieve this end.

Japan has enacted the Act on Welfare and Management of Animals for the purpose of preventing the abuse and abandonment of animals and ensuring that they are handled properly. Last year, the Act on Welfare and Management of Animals was revised by Diet legislation to strengthen regulations on businesses that handle animals and to strengthen the penalty for crimes such as killing or harming protected animals. However, animal welfare is not adequately addressed by Japan's legal system, including the Act on Welfare and Management of Animals, and understanding of animal welfare is insufficient even in fields where animals are handled on a daily basis.

We established the Parliamentary League with the aim of contributing to the achievement of human health and a sustainable society by considering the ideal of animal welfare and contributing to its popularization across Japan. The problem the Parliamentary League is tackling now is the eating of dogs and cats.

Japanese people tend to think that dog and cat meat is only eaten in other countries, but dog meat is actually served in some restaurants in Japan and is even imported as well. In contrast, countries and regions such as the United States, Taiwan, Mainland China, and Hong Kong have already passed laws banning the eating of dog and cat meat, and there is a similar movement in the United Kingdom.

Against this backdrop, the World Dog Alliance (WDA), an international animal welfare organization, is promoting the establishment of the International Agreement to Prohibit the Eating of Dogs and Cats. It is my firm belief that this agreement will send a message to all countries that dogs and cats should not be eaten and that we must put a stop to such terrible acts of barbarism.

Members of the United States Congress and the British Parliament are campaigning under joint signatures to support this international agreement. As members of the Parliamentary League for Animal Welfare, we all hope that the Japanese government will promote the International Agreement to Prohibit the Eating of Dogs and Cats as soon as possible and inspire other countries to follow our example.

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All members of the Parliamentary League for Animal Welfare
Hidehisa Otsuji, Representative Sponsor