



PRESS RELEASE
6 February 2010

FIRST EVER COMMUNITY DIALOGUE WITH POLITICIANS ON ANIMAL WELFARE IN SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE, 6 February 2010 – Chong Pang CC Youth Executive Committee (YEC) and ACRES (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society) is delighted to announce the launch of the inaugural “Youth Forum on Animal Welfare- Animals Matter to Me!”, a first-of-its kind forum in Singapore.

Aimed at engaging youths and inspiring them to play a greater role in animal welfare issues, the forum is a platform for more than 240 youths to be a voice for animals and engage in a dialogue with Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Development, MP for Sembawang GRC and Adviser to Admiralty GROs), Dr. Lim Wee Kiak (MP for Sembawang GRC, Adviser to Canberra GROs and Vice Chairman, Sembawang Town Council), and Mr. Louis Ng (Executive Director of ACRES and Chong Pang YEC Environment and Animal Welfare Secretary).

Held at Chong Pang Community Club, the forum provides youths with an opportunity to give constructive feedback and help shape animal welfare policies in Singapore.

“Public education is important to raise the standard of animal welfare. It is vital to instill in our youths the values of kindness, respect and compassion by actively engaging our youths in issues of responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.” said Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman.

“It is heartening to see more youths coming forward to champion animal welfare. This is certainly a step towards a more gracious society and nation” said Dr. Lim Wee Kiak.

“We are delighted that so many youths are passionate about animal welfare and are keen to devote their time and play an active role in making a difference. The spirit of giving is certainly alive in Singapore” said Mr. Louis Ng.

Animal welfare is gaining rapid momentum on the world stage. And this growing international concern about animal welfare is taking place not only in developed countries but also in countries with emerging economies. In Asia, the majority of countries now have legislation in place to criminalize cruelty to animals.

The European Union recognises that animals are sentient beings and has started to include animal welfare in its Free Trade Agreement. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has recently integrated animal welfare into its strategic priorities and the Doha WTO Agreement on Trade placed non-trade concerns, including animal welfare, firmly on the agenda for future agricultural negotiations.

Leading the way, Singapore undoubtedly has some of the strongest animal protection laws, but animal cruelty remains a problem. While laws play an important role, it is vital to engage the public, in particular youths, empower them and work together towards addressing this problem.

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Notes to editors

- Chong Pang CC YEC has a vision of engaging youths in the Chong Pang constituency. Its main roles are to formulate programmes for youths and set up sub-committees to implement its activities, and to work closely with other grassroots organisations in implementing community development projects.
- ACRES is a local animal welfare charity and Institution of Public Character aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. It currently has more than 18,000 individuals on its supporter database.
- The event also included a roadshow by local animal protection organisations and schools, featuring displays about how youths can volunteer and make a difference for animals.