



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 April 2012

Original: English

Substantive session of 2012

New York, 2-27 July 2012

Item 7 (g) of the provisional agenda*

**Coordination, programme and other questions:
tobacco or health**

Statement submitted by Sirius Global Animal Organisation Charitable Trust, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

Should we infect the poor to fight poverty?

Sirius Global Animal Organisation Charitable Trust represents countless supporters globally, as was proved by the 4.75 million signatories to a petition calling for dogs to be classified as unsuitable for human consumption presented to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2001.

The purpose of the present submission is to show the health risks to humans from consuming dogs.

In some Asian countries, the practice of slaughtering dogs for human consumption is expanding and new semi-legal “dog farm” industries are emerging as economies evolve, despite growing acceptance of pets among the newly affluent. These operations tend to be more commercially orientated forms of previous cottage industries and cater largely for the older and less-educated population. Many countries have outlawed this practice. The Philippines has banned the consumption of dogs in the light of the ease by which rabies is transmitted through infected meat. Thailand has also cracked down on the illegal trade in dogs to neighbouring Viet Nam.

It is sometimes claimed that dogs are a source of protein for the poor. While this may be true in an extremely few isolated cases where dog meat is regarded as a traditional meat, it is usually more expensive than chicken, pork or even beef.

Rabies is not the only disease caused by the consumption of dog meat that can have a detrimental effect on humans. Knowledge of epidemiology is the first step in initiating a control programme. The ultimate objective is to protect and preserve both human and animal health. There are a number of zoonoses (and potential zoonoses) that are endemic in the dog population, largely in South-East Asia but also throughout the world.

By eating dog meat, the risk of contracting any and all of the following diseases is substantial: rabies, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp., *Shigella* spp., *Yersinia* spp. and *Campylobacter* spp.

The World Health Organization has pointed out an alarming increase in the incidence of antibiotic-resistant strains of salmonella as a result of the use of antibiotics in intensive breeding. The fact that antimicrobial resistance is so prevalent is of extreme importance in the consumption of all animals, especially dogs. Many of the bacteria and other pathogens found in dogs are resistant to antimicrobial therapy.

Dogs are companion animals that serve humankind well. Dogs are unique animals and it is indeed a fundamental human right to expect that they are not used in the human food chain.

We call upon the Economic and Social Council to recognize that, apart from being morally repugnant to a growing number of people in the countries where it is still practised, the eating of dog meat presents a serious risk to human health. It is seldom eaten through necessity but as a luxury item. Promoting it as food for the poor would be unconscionable.