

April 20, 2020

To H.E. Mrs. Maria Angela Zappia
Permanent Mission of Italy to the UN
One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
885 Second Avenue, 49th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Your Excellency,

I turn to you in light of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. As of today, COVID-19 has killed more than 165,000 people, infected over 4 million, and had an immense economic impact. The resulting loss of life and livelihoods are yet to be fully realized and will last long into the future.

According to scientific research, disease outbreaks like SARS and possibly COVID-19 have been linked to "wet markets." Wet markets are places where animals (wild and domesticated) are packed into small cages or spaces, and where the lower levels of the cages are inundated with the fluids and excrements of the upper ones. At wet markets, animals are bought, sold, and slaughtered for human consumption. These markets are packed with people and animals and pose a severe threat to human health. Their closure is critical to avoid the proliferation of new pathogens that will inevitably make their way to humans due to the unsanitary conditions and poor health of the animals confined and killed there. Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Dr Joseph Fair, Vice President and Director of Research and Development for Metabiota, are among the cadre of renowned scientists and virologists that have warned authorities of the public health dangers that these wet markets represent.

At Animal Equality, we are working tirelessly to protect animals worldwide, and our mission of protecting animals has a direct impact on the health of humans and our planet. Never has this been more true than now, and never has the need for a joint response to the challenges we face been more urgent. That is why we started an international campaign demanding the closure of wet markets worldwide. Public support of the campaign has been tremendous, with [over 400,000 people signing our petition calling for a ban](#).

Today, I ask Your Excellency to please hear the voices of the hundreds of thousands of people calling upon you as a global leader, to protect their health, the health of their loved ones, and the well-being of the animals with whom we share our planet. If wet markets are not addressed effectively, we will see another pandemic at least as devastating as COVID-19. I, therefore, call upon the Italian Mission to the United Nations to raise the issue multilaterally at the U.N. and, in particular, to request a dialogue or briefings on the matter at the U.N. Security Council. I believe you will find the matter ripe for diplomatic engagement, as calls for a global solution to this persistent threat are now rising from every corner of the world.

Yours sincerely,



Matteo Cupi
Executive Director - Animal Equality Italia