

The “One Health” Joint Declaration

- the Health of Humans, Animals, and Ecosystems Unified as One –

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Humankind is facing a historic crisis due to the pandemic of the new coronavirus infection (COVID-19). In recent years there have been increasing occurrences of emerging infectious diseases, including COVID-19, with roughly 70% of them accepted as “zoonotic diseases” (infectious diseases that transmit naturally between humans and animals). Drivers of these disease emergence are thought to be the negative impact of human activities on the natural environment, namely extreme weather events, large-scale deforestation, land use changes, expansion of the agriculture and livestock industries, and commercial trade and consumption of wild animals. While the number of viruses capable of infecting humans is estimated to be as large as 827,000, the cost of preventive measures is calculated to be a hundred times less than the amount of economic damage which would result from a pandemic. It is precisely now that we must take urgent steps through preventive approaches to achieve a society in which humans and nature can coexist.

We, as institutions and organizations in the fields of human and animal medicine, public health, and environmental conservation, come together under the principle of “One Health”, in which the health of humans, animals, and ecosystems is considered as one, to work toward the prevention of emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases and pandemics in Japan and the entire world. We vow to bring together our individual strengths, collaborate with each other, and hold dialogues with governments, toward accomplishing the following:

Protecting the Health of Ecosystems

- Acknowledging that the global expansion of human activities is causing the destruction of nature such as deforestation, whereby driving the occurrence of emerging infectious diseases, we will call on the society to recognize the dangers caused by such environmental problems.
- In order to prevent the occurrence of emerging infectious diseases and new pandemics, we will respect the healthy connections amongst living creatures constituting ecosystems and reconsider the ways in which we have excessively intruded into the natural environment and interacted with wild animals, including through unsustainable use of these animals.
- Always remembering that the ecosystems of the earth support the lives of people and animals, we will take steps to conserve and restore them while calling for the society to take actions accordingly.

Protecting the Health of Animals

- We will strongly recognize that the animals we are in contact with are not limited to pets (companion animals) and livestock, but also include many types of wild animals, of which we are often not conscious in our everyday lives.
- Recognizing that infectious diseases can spread between people and animals, we will reflect on the distance we keep from animals and consider proper ways of interacting with them. We will also reduce the use and trade of wild animals with high risks of infectious diseases.
- To accomplish the above, we will improve our understanding of the ecology of wild animals, including the risk that they may carry pathogens, and will promote the monitoring of livestock and wild animal health, measures against infectious diseases in pets and livestock, and the welfare of domestic animals.

Protecting the Health of Humans

- We will strongly recognize that securing healthy ecosystems is closely connected to the physical and mental health and well-being of humans and spread this awareness to an even greater number of people. We will aim to resolve environmental problems that pose serious threats to public health such as climate change, deforestation, and water pollution, through cooperation and collaboration at international and regional levels and strive to contribute to both physical and mental health.
- By conserving ecosystems, ensuring biodiversity, and establishing appropriate relationship with domestic animals, we will prevent health problems caused by zoonotic diseases (infectious diseases that transmit naturally between humans and animals), spread of drug-resistant bacteria, food contamination, and others, and will contribute to improving public health.
- We will spread the concept of “One Health” and its related activities to people of various generations, create a post-COVID lifestyle, and aim to achieve a society in which people and nature can coexist.

Recognizing that protecting the health of ecosystems and animals is also protecting the health of humans, we will consider these three types of health to be one unified whole which we will strive to safeguard.

Promoting Organizations (in the Japanese syllabary order):

Japan Committee for IUCN, World Wide Fund for Nature Japan, Tokyo Medical Association, Tokyo Veterinary Medical Association, Japan Medical Association, The Nature Conservation Society of Japan, Japan Veterinary Medical Association, Wild Bird Society of Japan, Japan Society of One Health Sciences, Society for Zoonoses Research, Japan Wildlife Conservation Society, The Real Conservation