

# International Organization for Animal Protection



Organisation Internationale pour la Protection des Animaux

Internationale Organisation für Tierschutz

Organizzazione Internazionale per la Protezione degli Animali - Onlus

NGO associated with the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC)

the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and accredited at UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)

Registration in the Register of Representatives of Interest of the European Commission

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To the kind Attention of  
Mr. Didier Pursun  
New President of  
Mauritius Society for  
Animal Welfare (MSAW)

Milan, 18 February 2021

Dear President Mr. Didier Pursun,

**Subject: stray dogs and animal conditions inside the MSAW pound**

I am writing on behalf of OIPA (International Organization for Animal Protection) an NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), accredited at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the UN Environment Program (UNEP) that embraces more than 200 animal rights associations across the world.

We publicly congratulate you for the new nomination as Chairman of Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) and we truly believe your election can now make the difference for animals in your country.

The **current state of animal welfare in Mauritius** is sadly known worldwide, with a constant rise in animal abandonment, animal cruelty and widespread of illegal breeding activities. Furthermore, the public institution MSAW, the only organization that benefits from public funding, has been deemed with evidence to be a place of inhumanly abuse and cruelty on animals instead of being a place where their welfare is guaranteed and a public entity that promotes education and information activities to local communities.

MSAW has been unfortunately perpetrating continued animal abuse, all in direct contravention to the Animal Welfare Act 2013, the same Act that has seen the establishment of the institution and is mandated to uphold. The situation of strays caught and killed and the conditions of dogs kept in pound are not a good "business card" for the entire Country as well as for the public figure of the General Attorney, principal legal advisor of the Mauritian Government, the Minister of Agro Industry, under whose responsibility animal welfare and the MSAW fall and of course for you as Chairman of MSAW.

Reading your interview on l'Express dated 19th January 2021, you clearly affirmed that MSAW management was not aware of the terrible situation going on inside the pound, but this situation was of public domain since the beginning of December 2020 following the testimony of an expatriate, who witnessed with his own eyes the horrific conditions in which dogs were kept inside the structure: skeletal dogs feeding on both dead and dying animals and kept in shelters in unhygienic sanitary conditions.

A group of local NGOs tried to visit MSAW pound on December the 9th 2020 in order to seek explanations and ask to inspect and assess the condition of dogs held under MSAW custody, but both requests remained unattended. Since the beginning of December 2020, several animal lovers have also alerted the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Animal Welfare Unit about the ongoing situation in MSAW.

Someone in the management, staffing and directorship of the institution should have known about the evident negligence and misconduct towards animals and those people, now that you are in charge, must now be considered responsible, sanctioned and dismissed with immediate effect, along with those council members who have taken direct or indirect part to these atrocities all these years in silence and have done nothing in their power to safeguard animals.

We are confident that you will now decide to employ skilled and qualified personnel in charge of running the organization, people who care and love animals as well as veterinarians, currently missing at MSAW, all able to operate in transparency and to correctly allocate funds in order to make the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare an ethical example to draw inspiration from.

Mr. Pursun you have now the opportunity to make the difference for animals and for your Country.

According to our experience in carrying out **dog population control programmes**, the increase of stray dogs present on the territory can be kept under control with a specific CNVR programme that aims to create a sterile population of dogs in the long term. CNVR is much more effective than catching and killing animals or sheltering them in the long run. As a matter of fact, if caught dogs do not return to their territory, their place will be then taken by new fertile dogs from the neighbourhood. The population of dogs, with an appropriate CNVR programme will then increase less rapidly (or even decrease) because sterilized animals cannot reproduce anymore. On the contrary, placing dogs in pounds where conditions are insane for their physical and psychological health or following lethal control of strays is useless in the long term reduction of the dog population.

You might not see any immediate change in the short term, but in the mid-long term no more puppies will be born and thus the population will begin to lower down in a sustainable and ethical manner in line with the Animal Welfare 2013 and any other international animal protection laws and regulations. Furthermore, dogs released back to their area will have been also vaccinated against dangerous diseases, so local communities can feel safer. Moreover, if a CNVR programme is accompanied by community awareness and complementary educational measures ( such as programmes of responsible pet ownership, good waste management and ban the phenomenon of illegal breeding) then it may be a great chance that, in the long term the problem would be largely eliminated.

Another important measure is to make neutering more affordable for pet owners otherwise non spayed and neutered owned dogs will constitute a major source for stray dogs increase in population.

We would also like to recommend establishing a collaboration with local and International NGOs. These groups are highly motivated, they bring resources and have extensive networks and experience with the matter. With the right combination of CNVR, international cooperation, shelters properly managed, commitment of animal welfare organizations and education it will be possible to realize an ethical and respectful dog population control.

We trust that you will give this matter your urgent attention and consider our suggestions and those of your local NGOs including Animal Lovers Mauritius.

Yours Sincerely,

**Valentina Bagnato**  
**Head International Relations Office**  
**OIPA**



*Valentina Bagnato*