experiments would entail safety checks of the vectors that carry specific genes into target organs. Company A, which has been encouraged by the biomedical use of chimpanzees in the USA, appears in its policies to strongly favor the biomedical/invasive use of its 107 chimpanzees. Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture has never financially supported such a kind of invasive study in chimpanzees in Japan, but the Ministry of Health and Welfare has.

We, as researchers of chimpanzees, are aware of how small the distances are that separate chimpanzees and other great apes from humans. All the great ape species are listed as "endangered" in CITES. Their numbers in the wild are decreasing, and captive populations remain small. Individuals survive 40 to 50 years, in some cases even longer. These characteristics are not congruent with the standards for so-called experimental animals. We believe that there need to be serious constraints on the biomedical use of chimpanzees and other great apes. We propose the following agenda to promote our scientific understanding of all great apes.

First, we shall undertake action for the conservation of the great apes and their natural habitat. Second, we shall endeavor to enhance the quality of life of the great apes in captivity. Third, we shall not use the great apes as subjects in invasive studies, but promote our scientific understanding through non-invasive techniques.

For our purposes, the word "invasive" refers to treatment that causes irreversible deficits of normal function. In short, illegal or non-ethical treatment prohibited in the case of human subjects is to be likewise prohibited in the great apes. Based on this agenda, we hope to halt current trends of invasive biomedical use of chimpanzees in Japan. We will then devise further plans for the scientific use of the 136 chimpanzees currently in the care of the medical companies from a broader perspective. Researchers, medical companies, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare need to work together to develop a suitable solution, as these chimpanzees represent unique genetic resources existing in Japan. The founding of a national institute for the scientific and noninvasive use of captive chimpanzees should be seen as a realistic goal.

We hope that primatologists all over the world will demonstrate their approval and support of the Japanese attempt toward a better life for chimpanzees and other great apes in the coming century.