



3rd Africa Animal Welfare Conference

2-4 September 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Animals, Environment & Sustainable Development: An Interlinked Approach

Executive Summary & Resolutions

For three years in a row, the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) has convened annual meetings bringing together representatives of various animal welfare and environmental conservation organizations as well as government officials from around the globe to deliberate on emerging threats to the environment, wildlife and the welfare of animals, with a specific focus on the African continent.

The third Africa Animal Welfare Conference was held from 2nd to 4th September 2019 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the collaboration and support of the Government of Ethiopia and the United Nations Environment Programme. The meeting brought together at least 151 participants representing civil society, government and intergovernmental organizations, from 34 countries to share their research as well as the lessons and best practices emerging from their experience working in the field of animal welfare.

The theme of the conference was ***Animals, Environment and Sustainable Development in 21st Century Africa: An Interlinked Approach***, with discussions revolving around the connection between animal welfare, the environment and the sustainable development goals.

Within this broad framework, the presentations and discussions at the conference were organized around eight sub-themes as follows:

- i. the linkages between animal welfare and sustainable developmental goals;
- ii. the threats of the donkey skin trade to animal welfare across Africa;
- iii. the implications of climate change, technology, research & training on the achievement of sustainable development goals;
- iv. the threat posed by the wildlife poaching and bushmeat trade;
- v. the initiatives and opportunities presented by regional/inter-governmental organizations;
- vi. the attainment of good health & wellbeing through improved animal & public health systems;
- vii. the role of the UN Environment Programme and the place of the civil society in the UN; and
- viii. strategies for improving the governance and funding of civil society organizations for greater impact.

The delegates proposed a number of resolutions and it was acknowledged that due to challenges in tracking and implementing all of them, there is need to focus on some attainable commitments so that a report on the progress of implementing the selected commitments can be tabled at the beginning of each subsequent conference.

Below are the actionable resolutions that were deduced from the conference:

PART I – RESOLUTIONS ON SUB-THEMES

A. ANIMAL WELFARE & SDGs

There are linkages between Animal Welfare and SDGs. While few of the Sustainable Development Goals directly reference animals, ecosystems, or the natural world, many others benefit from animal welfare and wildlife conservation. As such, the consideration of animals and their welfare is a valuable instrument to improve the long-term success, sustainability and attainment of the SDGs and improve the lives of people and animals in a holistic manner.

In recognition of these linkages and the potential for animal welfare to contribute to the attainment of SDGs, the participants resolved to:

1. Undertake a continuous monitoring of evidence of contribution of good animal welfare, collation of this evidence into compelling scientific rationale, and then packaging the message into narratives that can easily be taken up and utilized for decision making throughout the value chain of human–animal interactions.
2. Build a bottom-up country-led implementation of animal wellbeing within development projects.

B. DONKEY SLAUGHTER AND SKIN TRADE

There is strong evidence that shows that the socio-economic value of donkeys far outweighs the value and returns from donkey skin trade. Further to this, the entire trade and slaughter of donkeys has been demonstrated to pose serious animal welfare concerns especially in handling, transportation and the slaughter process. Despite this, some governments have legalized the slaughter of donkeys and the export of their skins (and meat) to meet demand in China. The legalization of donkey slaughter - especially in Kenya – poses an immediate threat to donkey populations given that the rate of slaughter by far exceeds the natural reproduction rate. The licensing of donkey abattoirs coupled with illegal slaughter has also resulted in an increase in theft of donkeys from families that need them most, thereby pushing these families deeper into poverty.

To address these concerns, the delegates resolved that:

3. International donkey skin trade be banned forthwith as it contributes to serious violation of animal welfare for donkeys and the ban provide that donkey theft linked to international skin trade be categorized as an economic crime.

C. CLIMATE CHANGE, TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH & TRAINING

Space-based technology offers a chance to improve animal welfare across the continent. There is also an opportunity to minimize the use of animals in educational programmes which exposes thousands of animals to harmful practices. Training on animal welfare across several

disciplines, especially in agricultural and animal courses, can also help raise awareness while establishing a new breed of professionals who are more conscious of animal welfare.

Climate change triggered, exacerbated by human activities is observed to increase suffering of all animals at the cost of human development and the environmental protection and acknowledging the direct relations between **wildlife and forestry**

In recognition of these challenges and opportunities, the delegates resolved that:

4. All stakeholders at international, government, private, community and individual levels find amicable innovations that adapts to climate change in a way that mitigates against or reduces untold suffering on animals, people and their environment in Africa such as restrictions on single use plastic bags.
5. Reform education policy to incorporate animal welfare as a cross-cutting issue in the development of the human society and environmental protection,
6. Incorporation of forestry in all discussions and interventions on wildlife conservation and animal welfare.
7. Adopt ways of reducing suffering of animals which are subjected to inhumane conditions and circumstances used in development of technology, research, knowledge advancements and industrialization in Africa.

D. ENGAGEMENT WITH UN ENVIRONMENT

There was initial cynicism over the place of animal welfare within the United Nations Environment Programme but this has since been overshadowed by rising recognition of the significance of animal welfare to the agenda of the UN. As such, the UN Environment Programme and the bi-annual UN Environment Assembly now provide an ideal platform for the civil society to get the attention of UN Member States to address animal welfare issues. Whereas a number of civil society organizations are already engaging with UNEA, it has been noted that quite a number are only active in the period of the Assembly as they do not take part in setting the agenda for the assembly, nor in follow up to ensure resolutions passed at the assembly are implemented in their countries.

To maximize on the opportunities presented both by UNEP and UNEA, the delegates resolved to:

8. Table a resolution to UNEA through a member state that recognizes and affirm the contribution and significance of welfare of animals to environmental protection, social justice and sustainable development of society.

E. BUSHMEAT & ANTI-POACHING

Illegal hunting of wildlife for bushmeat is prevalent in many countries across Africa. Most of the hunting methods used are cruel, inhumane and destructive. The demand for illegal bushmeat spreads across boundaries of countries and even continents and is driven by the same factors similar to other types of transboundary crimes. The most common type of

destruction from bushmeat hunting is extinction of species, destruction of invaluable ecosystems and livelihoods (increases poverty and risk to public health).

To address these concerns, the conference participants resolved to:

9. Support the enforcement mechanisms for CITES, CMS and Ramsar Convention.
10. Encourage an inclusive multi-sectoral approach in addressing illegal hunting including local communities.
11. Undertake comprehensive research on poaching and illegal bushmeat trade.

F. ENGAGEMENT WITH OIE, AU-IBAR

African intergovernmental organizations such as OIE, AU and IGAD are at the forefront in pushing for animal welfare on the continent. For instance, the Africa Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) spearheaded efforts to develop the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa for as a way of consolidating synergy towards better Animal Welfare in Africa. Governments and Civil societies in Africa are currently at various stages of domesticating the implementation of Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, coordinated through the Africa Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW). Still, there is room to speed up and enhance the impact of their work.

In order to tap into the potential presented by these organizations, delegates resolved to:

12. Governments to support the implementation of the AWSA and the work of APAW and mainstream animal welfare nationally.
13. Transmit the resolution of the conference to the member states through AU-IBAR.

G. ATTAINMENT OF GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING THROUGH IMPROVED ANIMAL & PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS

Factory farming poses numerous animal welfare, environmental and health challenges. Farms facing disease outbreaks across the continent are using ineffective and cruel methods to cull affected or infected animals, and these need to be fiercely prevented using legislation and international standards.

In light of these challenges, the conference delegates resolved to:

14. Lobby governments for the enactment and enforcement of animal welfare standards and adoption of international standards in factory farming.
15. Lobby for a global agreement on regenerative agriculture, which is a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems.