



4th AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE - *ACTION 2020 RESOLUTIONS*

THEME: Animal Welfare, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation for Sustainable Development In Africa: Enhancing Nature-Based Solutions



September 7-10, 2020

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 4TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE - ACTION 2020

Introduction

The Africa Animal Welfare Conference has steadily become a key animal welfare dialogue platform in Africa. Now in its fourth year, it has become a vibrant forum for the articulation of animal welfare, environmental and wildlife conservation issues and ideas in the continent, bringing together a heterogenous confluence of participants from civil society, NGOs, governments, UNEP, conservationists, youth, animal welfare, veterinary and animal health professionals and practitioners, academia, researchers and other interested stakeholders. The conference's attractiveness has crossed beyond the African continent's borders, to accomplish a participant base from other parts of the globe, especially Europe, Asia, South and North America.

The 4th Africa Animal Welfare Conference was held as a virtual event from 7-10 September 2020. It was jointly organised by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Africa Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW). The conference brought together 524 delegates from 53 countries who shared a rich mix of work experiences, research and study findings, as well as strategies, innovations and future opportunities in the disciplines of animal welfare, wildlife and environmental conservation. Of particular interest was the participation of 54 government officials from 23 African states.

The Conference theme was Animal Welfare, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation for Sustainable Development in Africa: Enhancing Nature Based Solutions. This thematic direction aspired to ventilate on the role of nature-based solutions in fashioning various responses

and solutions to Africa's motley developmental needs and challenges, alongside animal welfare and environmental interactions. It also sought to excite a relook at the role of natural solutions in curing food insecurity and food safety concerns in Africa, especially in light of addressing the emerging trend of factory farming in the continent. The conference also took full cognizance of the effects of COVID-19 in the global health, economic and social fabric, and therefore discussions were elevated on the lessons that humanity could carry home from this pandemic, and the necessary urgent actions to avert any such occurrences in the future.

The conference interaction was designed and delivered through oral presentations, which were neatly augmented with panel discussions and interspersed with question and answer sessions.

For ease of configuration and logical sequencing, the conference was organized into the following sub-themes:

1. Farm Animal Welfare
2. The Role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
3. Food Security and Food Systems
4. Education, Innovation and Learning
5. Wildlife Health, Conservation and Management
6. Animal Welfare and Environment: The Development Nexus
7. Animal Law

At the conclusion of the conference, the delegates formulated a raft of resolutions which embodied their vision of tangible actions and deliverables emanating from this Conference. These are in the next pages.

Conference Resolutions

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

Farm animals are susceptible to conventional production systems. These subject them to various forms of suffering that compromise their health, behavior and general welfare while posing a higher risk to public health and destroy the environment. Intensive farming is being driven by rapid human population growth which has led to increasing demand for food and a believe that intensive farming is a panacea to solving food insecurity. It is exacerbated by a poor or non-existent policy and legislative environment governing the farm animal sector in Africa.

In cognizance of these threats, the delegates resolved as follows:

1. To call for a ban on the introduction of intensive production, factory farming and industrial systems in Africa.
2. Advocate for development of animal welfare-based policies and legislation to prevent the introduction, growth and promotion of factory farming systems in Africa.
3. Promote alternative animal welfare friendly methods and standards of animal production to safeguard and enhance animal production and animal health while improving environmental health and public health.
4. Encourage governments to enact and/or update laws to regulate animal welfare to reduce the suffering of animals throughout the production and processing value chain, which includes standards in keeping, rearing, handling, transportation, stockading, marketing and slaughter.

ENGAGEMENT WITH UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Animal welfare is inextricably linked to good environmental health and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Working with UNEP offers civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders' opportunities and platforms to lobby and advocate for the inclusion of animal welfare and other animal issues into the global environmental agenda. It affirmed that the mandate of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is to ensure and encourage

active participation of all relevant stakeholders to align with UNEP in environmental governance based a strong science-policy interface.

Therefore, the delegates resolved as follows:

5. Urge African governments to support the process of developing and securing the adoption of an Animal Welfare resolution at UNEA.
6. Call upon the African governments to confirm their support for the Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare as an African Union resolution to the United Nations General Assembly.
7. Further, call on African governments to commit to implementation of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa.
8. Encourage animal welfare civil society organisations to seek accreditation with UNEP.
9. Urge UNEP to engage member states and civil society to ensure that animal health and welfare and animal interests are considered in the context of Nature Based Solutions for environmental protection.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ENVIRONMENT: LESSONS FROM COVID-19

COVID-19 has proven that animals host many unknown lethal pathogens that are contagious to humans. These pathogens and other emerging viruses are most disruptive and deadly if not responsibly managed. The nature of viral outbreaks depends on how societies interact with and handle animals. The global wildlife trade has clearly been linked with the increasing occurrence of wildlife zoonotic diseases as people encroach in wildlife areas and exacerbate biodiversity/habitat loss. Likewise, animal and wildlife trade have clearly been linked with the global spread of zoonotic disease, which currently comprise at least 75% of all emerging zoonotic diseases.

To prevent future pandemics and manage the risk of outbreaks, delegates resolved as follows:

10. Call upon the governments to integrate animal welfare into the development agenda at the global, regional, national and local levels.
11. Urge governments to urgently implement a strengthened and coordinated global, continental, regional and national approach to zoonotic disease surveillance, reporting, response, control and prevention, both for domestic and wild animals.

12. Appeal to governments and civil society organizations to urgently increase awareness and sensitization about the likelihood of outbreaks for zoonotic hazards from unknown pathogens that live in the bodies of wildlife species targeted for human consumption as well as trophy harvesting and pharmaceutical research.
13. Appeal to governments to demand an immediate global ban on the wildlife trade to prevent future devastating pandemics and the ongoing rapid devastation of biodiversity.

ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY THROUGH BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

The increasing human population of Africa, environmental degradation and impacts of climate change are exerting great pressure on agricultural productivity, especially subsistence agriculture, which is the mainstay of food security in Africa. This has led to proliferation of produce from industrial farming that has a close confinement system which is a breeding ground for disease and overuse of antibiotics and this leads to antimicrobial resistance in human. Studies have shown that products from industrial farms are a threat to food safety which affects public health.

Further studies indicate that food security in Africa is increasingly worsened by the neglect of indigenous knowledge, indigenous crops and breeds of livestock that are more resilient to local climates and environmental conditions. Furthermore, studies show that biodiversity loss through an extractive utilization of wildlife is a serious threat to healthy ecosystems. The global wildlife trade has reached such alarming levels that it is a stark pointer to the fact that the global system is unable to control it.

In recognition of this situation, the delegates resolved as follows:

14. Encourage governments and civil society to promote nutritional and food security value of indigenous food crops and livestock, especially in the fragile ecosystems of the expansive arid and semi-arid lands of Africa. Further encourage national and local governments in Africa to adopt the rich nature-based indigenous knowledge in the application of solutions to the challenge on sustainability

- and productivity in the plant and animal resources sectors, using evidence-based scientific backing to validate the proposed interventions and methods.
- 15. Urge governments and civil society to promote and adopt agro-ecological and regenerative methods as nature-based solutions, to enhance sustainable productivity in food and farming in Africa.
- 16. Call on development partners to support efforts to sensitize the public, using factual and effective delivery methods, on the short and long-term impacts of the unsustainable utilization of natural resources, including poor animal welfare, the consumption of products from unsustainable food production systems.
- 17. Call upon animal welfare stakeholders to promote the adoption of regenerative agriculture including livestock to address the and long-term impacts of the unsustainable utilization of natural resources, poor animal welfare and environmental pollution, including the consumption of products from unsafe food production systems
- 18. Call upon African governments to immediately ban the sale of donkeys and donkey skin trade from their countries as it has serious socio-economic threat to donkey-dependent communities, and urgently take donkey protection measures including the establishment and effective implementation of supporting policy and legislation.
- 19. Call upon civil society, international development organisations and governments to promote alternative sources of income and nutrition to communities in wildlife areas, so that they do not depend on bushmeat for their livelihood.

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the opportunity for use of digital platforms for communication and has availed innovative and resilient ways of how society interacts, exchanges information and transacts business.

In cognizance of these developments, delegates resolved as follows:

20. That governments, CSOs and NGOs to take advantage of the digital technology potential to empower the public through innovative technologies for education, sensitization and public awareness to enhance animal welfare and environmental integrity.

21. That governments and other stakeholders acknowledge the importance of a multi-sectoral approach in communication, involving relevant sectors and media, for optimal impact.
22. Urge governments to invest in appropriate infrastructure and support research to spur the development, uptake and use of digital technology.

ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the interconnection between animal welfare, human well-being and the environment. This connection calls

for interdisciplinary collaboration. Hence, the One Health One Welfare is a model for holistic policy collaboration. This enables and inspires the wellbeing of animals, people and their physical and social environment, by working across silos on science-based strategies and actions. Therefore, the delegates resolved as follows:

23. Civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders to promote the adoption by international organizations and governments of the One-Health-One-Welfare concept to include issues of public health, biodiversity loss, animal welfare and environmental degradation.