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Opening Remarks by Dr. Nick Nwankpa, Director of AU-IBAR, at the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa  
Animal Welfare Conference, 2022

**Theme:** “Animals, People and the Environment in a rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

31<sup>st</sup> October - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, Gaborone, Botswana

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, All Protocols observed, Good Morning**

1. It is my pleasure and honour to address this Assembly at the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Animal Welfare Conference that marks another step in the journey towards the development and integration of animal welfare in sustainable animal resources development in Africa.
2. On behalf the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat and Her Excellency Amb. Josefa Correia Sako, the African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Economy, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment and, I welcome you all to this conference. I sincerely recognise the partnership between the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, the UNEP and the Africa Network for Animal Welfare in co-organising this conference. I further recognize the exemplary support from partners, the World Animal Protection, Donkey Sanctuary, Brooke Hospitals for Animals and Animal People, among others, for the support provided towards the organisation of the conference. I sincerely appreciate their individual and collective efforts.
3. The theme of this conference, “Animals, People and the Environment in a rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, is the inspiration of my remarks this morning. The theme aligns to the UNEA 5:2 Resolution on the Nexus between Animal Welfare, the Environment, and Sustainable Development, which was adopted in March this year. It aligns to Agenda 2063, the blue print of Africa development in the next 50 years. It speaks the interlinkages between sustainable economic growth, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and healthy human beings, healthy animals and healthy ecosystems. The articulation of these principles is in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

4. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, as the stakeholders in Animal, Planet and People welfare, you are aware that African Union-Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources [AU-IBAR] holds a special responsibility to deliver on the African Union's mandate over animal resources. Driven by the intensification of animal production systems and its attendant animal welfare implications, animal welfare has increasingly become a barrier in international livestock trade. This has elicited the need for policy consideration of animal welfare in animal resource development. AU-IBAR is therefore promoting improvements in animal welfare itself, as well as helping to change attitudes towards the concept of animal welfare. There is urgent need to address Africa's animal welfare issues through policy, strategies and legal frameworks. Community education, awareness creation, and their participation in upholding animal welfare is necessary. These realities guided us when we developed the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, and established the African Platform for Animal Welfare.
5. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, this conference once again marks another step in the journey towards the integration of animal welfare in sustainable animal resources development and the preservation of a sustainable environment in Africa. The theme tells us that the dialogues coming up in this conference have a thrust that elicit the links within the wellbeing of the Animal, the Planet and the People. AU-IBAR is clearly cognizant of the fact that the integrity of the natural triad of Animal, Planet and People is the anchor of a natural and therefore sustainable future. The era we are in marks a time where we are now able to better understand the science behind climate change, better assess its impacts, and better develop tools to address its causes and consequences. There is abundant evidence that our food systems have a serious impact on the life experiences of animals and the environment, and that they contribute to climate change. We are pleased to note that the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27), which will be hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt from 6-18 November 2022 is coming up. It is important that among other key focus areas, COP27 will discuss the role of science, biodiversity loss, innovation and clean technologies, as well as the centrality of water and agriculture to the climate crisis. COP 27, coming soon after the UNEA's recent adoption of the Resolution on the Nexus between Animal Welfare, the Environment and Sustainable Development, is great news. We are hopeful that it will re-inforce commitments to use the One Planet / One-

Welfare / One Health Approaches in country, regional, continental and global development agendas.

6. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, the African Union is about building consensus on pertinent issues that confront the continent. I anticipate that the task of the presenters and other discussants in this conference is to make a case for the nexus of our collective welfare, through a systematic process. Towards a consensus, we expect the delegates to diligently dialogue over the conference recommendations at plenary and to propose Conference Resolutions that will steer Africa's animal resources to prosperity for the prosperity of the African Community. Through this approach, AU-IBAR anticipates that every Member State will undertake to play its role to enhance the wellbeing of Animals, Planet and People through the principles of One Health, One Welfare and Sustainable Environments.
7. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, as an update on the implementation of AWSA and the establishment of APAW, I wish to inform you that AU-IBAR has provided support to the IGAD / ICPALD and ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Centres to develop their regional Animal Welfare strategies and action plans for Eastern and Western Africa, respectively, in line with the continental framework. The IGAD Member States have initiated the implementation of their National Animal Welfare Strategies. Currently, we are assisting the Central and North African regions to develop their Regional Animal Welfare Frameworks. In the next phase, we will focus on the SADC Region. Up to now, AU-IBAR has provided technical and financial assistance to over 40 countries to modernize their national Veterinary Legislation / Animal Health & Welfare ACTs / Bills, with the inclusion of Animal Welfare related issues as well as the establishment and operationalization of Regional Animal Welfare Networks, as the regional chapters of the APAW. As I have mentioned above, the UNEA has adopted the Resolution on the nexus between Animal Welfare, the Environment and Sustainable Development. The aim of the Resolution is to place Animal Welfare at the Centre stage of the Global Environment Agenda and Sustainable Development. I trust that one of the key outcomes of this conference will be a clear commitment by every African Union Member State and Partners to support the implementation of the Resolution. I wish to reiterate that AU-IBAR will work relentlessly towards fostering partnerships and collaboration with Partners promoting Animal Welfare in Africa, by providing leadership in the responsible and sustainable animal

resources development through mainstreaming the animal welfare best practices across the continent.

8. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, AU-IBAR is immensely grateful to the Government of Botswana and its People for hosting this 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Animal Welfare Conference and for providing hospitality to the participants who have come from all over the continent and the world at large. I also thank the organisations, institutions and individuals participating in this conference, for making time for it.
9. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I thank you for your dedication and enthusiasm in supporting the mainstreaming of animal welfare in the development of sustainable animal resources in Africa.

I thank you all for your kind Attention. May God Bless you, and may God Bless Africa!

**Dr. Nick Nwankpa - Director, AU-IBAR**