

## **Opening Remarks by CVO Botswana, at the 2022 AU-IBAR session, Gaborone, Nov 2, 2022**

*All protocols observed*

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning**

I bring you warm greetings from the people of Botswana and gently welcome you to this meeting. It is my pleasure and honour to address you as we assemble here to interrogate the ways and means to enhance the integration of animal welfare in the development of sustainable animal resources in Africa.

I wish to begin by sincerely recognizing the stewardship of the AU-IBAR on the Animal Welfare agenda in Africa. I also wish to recognize the support from the FAO, the WOA, the UNDP, the UNEP, the Animal Welfare Organizations, and the other esteemed organizations who contribute to the endeavour to realize the vision for a prosperous animal resource sector in Africa.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, allow me to give you an overview of the animal resources sector in Botswana. Three quarters of the country consists of rangeland, so that livestock constitute the principal agricultural resource, contributing 80% of the value added by agriculture. Of this, cattle production is for the most part exported in the form of fresh or frozen meat, whereas small ruminants are oriented towards domestic consumption. To achieve the export market while protecting the national community, Botswana is committed to control livestock diseases. FMD, which is endemic in wild herds of buffalo and in neighbouring countries, is controlled by a combination of annual vaccination campaigns and a systematic division of the country into sanitary zones. The movement of livestock between zones, is controlled by means of cordon fences and quarantine camps.

We have a national policy for tribal grazing land, which constitutes the major component of the government's rural development policy. It has three main objectives: to stop overgrazing and degradation of the rangelands, caused by uncontrolled use of communal grazing areas by ever growing numbers of animals; to promote better income distribution in the rural areas; and to allow growth and commercialization of the livestock industry on a sustained basis.

Wildlife in Botswana contributes to 3% of the nation's GDP. Protecting our wildlife and nature is critically important for us, given that we have designated more than 40% of the country's land area to national parks and game reserves. This resource of nature is important to local communities in terms of the services it provides such as clean water and the generation of revenues for conservation, employment, provision of infrastructures, and general national development.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** from the above overview, it is quite evident that animal welfare is an important issue to this country. We recognize that there is a critical nexus between the environment, the wellbeing of our animals, and the welfare of our society. It is against this background that we are elated by developments such as the UNEA resolution on this nexus the AfCFTA, which aspires to enhance inter-Africa trade within the continent and the APAW initiative. The Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, AWSA provides an opportunity for a harmonized approach to safeguard the wellbeing of the animal resources in Africa as a mitigation against transboundary challenges that compromise the efforts of a given country to protect its own animal resource.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** finally, as I conclude my remarks, I wish to join the ranks of others who have congratulated the AU-IBAR and its partners, for choosing to hold the 6<sup>th</sup> AAWC in this country. We are elated by the recognition of our efforts to uphold the conservation of natural resources such as the animals and the fragile environment upon which they depend. We sincerely thank you.

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