



Goodwill Speech by Tennyson Williams [Director for Africa, World Animal Protection] at the 4th African Animal Welfare Conference 7th – 10th September, 2020

Greetings, honourable Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a great honour to address you in this conference.

I wish to begin by conveying my sincere sympathies and condolences to those affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I sincerely commend the African Union and other Global Supporters for taking leadership in the measures to cope with the current calamitous situation.

I would like to commend the organizers of this conference, for a truly fitting theme - **“Animal Welfare, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation, for Sustainable Development in Africa: Enhancing Nature-Based Solutions”**. Indeed, my organization believes in these principles.

We, World Animal Protection, are a global animal welfare organization with over 55 years of experience in safeguarding animals globally. Our vision is “A world where animals live free from cruelty and suffering”. To achieve this, we work with people, organizations and governments. We help them to understand the critical importance of good animal welfare, and encourage nations to commit to animal-friendly practices. To enable governments to evaluate and enhance their protection of animals, we have developed and launched the Animal Protection Index [API] tool. We are currently urging the global community to endorse the Universal

Declaration on Animal Welfare [UDAW]. The UDAW, basically, calls for the recognition of sentience in animals and hence the importance of protecting their welfare as a means of protecting human welfare. To better understand these innovations, please visit our website at www.worldanimalprotection.org.

Our work has been, until the end of this year, on Animals in Communities, Animals in Farming, Animals in the Wild, and Animals in Disasters. Having made considerable gains in the area of animals in disasters and animals in communities, we are, going forward into the 2021 - 2030 period, with greater focus on Animals in Farming and Animals in the Wild. Among other issues, we are making this bold move in recognition of the fact that the greatest threat to the global community today is from climate change and public health. These threats arise from the way man interacts with the environment.

Animals play an integral role in the integrity of biodiversity, and hence the sustainability of ecosystems. In April this year, the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity stated that biodiversity loss poses serious threats to future public health and agriculture. Scientists inform us that the occurrence of diseases in animals is associated with poor animal welfare. Evidence shows that Factory Farming seriously violates animal welfare, and thus it increase the vulnerability of animals to diseases. Therefore, besides the increased risk of zoonotic diseases [e.g. Avian flu, Swine flu, etc.] arising from such farming systems, there is a resultant heavy usage of veterinary medicines. The outcome of overuse of veterinary medicines is Antimicrobial Resistance [AMR], which is one of the greatest threats to modern global communities.

The only solution, therefore, is to **disrupt the farming systems** that cause poor animal welfare. Therefore, at World Animal Protection, we have committed to champion for transformational changes in farming systems that will lead to a better future for ANIMALS and humanity.

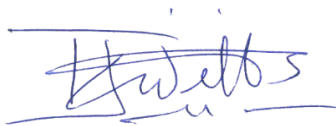
Equally important, is the unacceptable system of wildlife trade where wild animals are treated as mere **non-sentient commodities**. This causes extreme suffering, which translates into

an increased occurrence of diseases amongst them. Sadly, this makes them a serious threat to humanity. The WHO reports that **about 75%** of the emerging zoonotic diseases [e.g. COVID-19] **originate from wildlife.**

Wildlife trade mostly caters for luxurious non-essential needs of the affluent in society, while its impact poses serious threats to the entire society; e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports show that the value of wildlife traded through legal means almost equals the value of what is traded illegally. This is because it is a very lucrative type of business since it caters for the affluent. To protect biodiversity and hence ecosystems from over-extraction, governments around the world attempt to control wildlife for trade. This is why institutions such as Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species [CITES] of fauna & flora were established. Illegal wildlife trade makes this control futile, and therefore poses a serious threat to biodiversity. The loss of biodiversity in turn increases the risk of climate change, occurrence of zoonotic diseases, disruption of agriculture, and threatens the future of tourism in Africa. Additionally, illegal trade denies tax revenue for the affected countries. Given that wildlife trade creates the opportunity for illegal trade, it is evident that it is of little value to the majority in African as well as to the global society.

As an organization, we are convinced that only a total ban of global wildlife trade can salvage the grim future that Africa faces from biodiversity loss. I sincerely hope that this meeting will deliberate on this issue and come up with a position that is pragmatically useful to Africa, and to the global community.

In closing, Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few remarks, I wish you pleasant deliberations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tennyson Williams', enclosed within a rectangular box.

Tennyson Williams
September 7, 2020