



CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE DONKEY SPECIES PRESERVATION IN AFRICA: “DONKEY IN AFRICA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”

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An Integrated, Prosperous
and Peaceful Africa



Brief outline/description of the initiative



- Donkeys were first domesticated in Africa, making them a true African livestock, and a heritage of the continent.
- The donkey has significant impacts to household economies and countries' GDP. They provide clean energy for transport especially for communities in arid and semi-arid regions, agricultural rural areas across the continent
- Donkeys across Africa are not reared for slaughter but as a livelihood support option.
- Donkeys provide their owners/users with a source of income when used in commercial engagements and savings if used in areas where the owner would have had to pay for similar service if the donkey was not there.
- They are an indigenous genetic resource and they contribute to environmental welfare, and biodiversity through their manure.
- Data shows that a working donkey contributes up to 15 times more income when it is alive, than when it sold for slaughter.

Invisible Helpers - a livelihood support across Africa



Brief outline/description of the initiative **CONTS**



If a donkey is lost, the woman & child becomes the donkey

- Across Africa and across the globe, donkeys are now faced by a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin, propelled by a traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties.
- Donkey farming to meet the demand for skins is scientifically proven to be unsustainable. Donkeys have low fertility and long reproduction cycles, low welfare awareness and cross border smuggling between neighboring African Member States.
- Evidence shows that donkey skin trade has led to loss of livelihoods for donkey dependent communities, spread of donkey diseases, loss of indigenous genetic resource, alarming decline in the donkey populations exposed the animal to the risk of extinction further putting the livelihoods of the donkey-dependent communities in Africa at jeopardy.

Mass slaughter of indigenous donkeys for the skin trade



Thousands of donkeys at a holding facility waiting to be slaughtered



Thousands of donkey skins being salted for export



Thousands of donkeys moved on foot [others on trucks] to slaughter points [and across borders]

Africa is developing but in the meantime, donkeys are helpers



- For majority of donkey dependent communities, there is no viable alternative to replace the role of the donkey, given that majority of the users are in poor infrastructure areas and lack capital to purchase and invest in the maintenance expenses of alternative technologies
- The cross-cutting contribution of the donkey to the livelihoods of Africans, especially South of the Sahara, aligns to the Malabo Declaration which drew attention to the goals of achieving zero hunger, halving poverty, boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, enhancing the resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other shocks.

STC Ministers and governments representatives



5th STC STC-ARDWE DECISION: on 14-17 November 2023. “DONKEY IN AFRICA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”

- **9.15. Donkey species preservation in Africa:** The 5th STC recalled the decision of the 4th STC [EX.CL/1310(XL)] which called upon AU Member States to increase their commitment to protect all animals, including wildlife and other living species, and the Global Community to ensure that any use of natural resources, including terrestrial, ocean, sea and marine resources, is ecologically sustainable and humane, particularly the humane and sustainable farming practices. Further, the STC noted that the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources underlines the importance of animal genetic resources for the development of animal production to meet future challenges.
- The Strategic Priority 10 of the GPA highlights the need to establish national conservation policies, strategies and establish or strengthen in situ and ex situ national conservation programs.
- The STC further noted that despite the significant contribution made by the donkey in Africa, especially in rural areas, the donkeys are now faced by a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin, propelled by a traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties.
- The STC noted that donkey farming, to meet the demand for skins is scientifically proven to be unsustainable as donkeys have low fertility and long reproduction cycles, low welfare awareness and cross border smuggling between neighboring African Member States.
- **On the report on donkey species preservation in Africa, the STC;**

- **TOOK NOTE** of the report of the 2022 Pan-African Conference on Donkey Species exploitation in Africa “Now and in the future”.
- **RECOGNIZED** the socio-economic contribution of the donkey to livelihoods in Africa, and the concern about their welfare and unsustainable utilization in Africa, the lack of data to inform evidence-based policies, strategies, legislation and programs and the inadequate inclusion of donkeys in the national animal resources development policies, strategies, programs, and investment plans
- **RECOGNIZED** the alarmingly rapid decline in donkey population in Africa caused by the demand for their skins for international trade AND ALSO TO RECOGNIZED that unlike other animals, donkeys have very low reproductive rate affecting the population numbers, and hence the need to spearhead research on breeds and breeding of the donkey species.
- **URGED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to lead, plan and coordinate an African common position and moratorium on the exploitation of the donkey to anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of the donkey skin trade so as to ensure the preservation of the species with the ultimate goal of improving food and nutrition security, safeguarding the livelihoods of the donkey dependent communities, and to ensure its contribution to sustainable economic growth
- **URGED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to develop a Pan African Strategy for the Development of Donkey Species in Africa and action plan for increased production and productivity.
- **REQUESTED** the AU Commission, RECs and MSs with the support WOAHA, FAO and animal welfare organizations and other key relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a continentally coordinated program to enhance the conservation, development and management of the donkey and other working equid resources in Africa.

Post STC Engagements

- AUIBAR engaged in the sensitization and mobilization of the newly elected members of the Bureau and governments in Egypt, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Ethiopia for political and technical support during the Heads of States and Governments Summit.
- On 18 February 2024, the African Heads of States and Governments at the 37th African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, made an Executive Decision effectively Donkey Preservation in Africa and a moratorium on the mass slaughter the slaughter of donkeys for the export of their hides/Skins.

Group photo taken with the Minister of Livestock and the technical team



The Executive Decision of the Heads of States and Governments

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Moving Forward

1. Develop Support to draw and implement a road map for mobilization and lobbying of governments for political support to the implement the Heads of States Executive Decision that bans slaughter of donkeys.
2. Draw a Pan African Strategy for the Development of Donkey Species in Africa and action plan for increased production and productivity.
3. African common position and moratorium on the exploitation of the donkey to anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of the donkey skin trade
4. Advocate for MSs to establish a dedicate service for donkey health care and husbandry
5. Preparation for second Pan African Donkey Conference scheduled for March 2025 with the support of RECs and other strategic supporters.
6. Present the validated donkey preservation strategy and action plan; and the moratorium on donkey skin trade in the 2025 STC-ARDWE for Endorsement
7. Submit the STC-ARWE report the Head and Governements Summit of AU in February 2026 for adoption

Implementation Challenges

1 Coordinated Efforts

Requires collaboration between AU Member States, regional bodies, and partners.

2 Monitoring

Need for effective systems to track moratorium compliance.

3 Research

Ongoing studies on donkey populations and management strategies required.

4 Enforcement

Ensuring adherence of all African countries to the Decision of Donkey Species Preservation in Af



AU-IBAR's Role

Monitoring

Lead efforts to track moratorium implementation across Africa.

Research

Conduct studies on donkey populations & sustainable management.

Strategy

Develop long-term plans for donkey conservation and utilization.





Long-Term Vision

1

Population Recovery

Restore and stabilize donkey numbers across Africa.

2

Sustainable Management

Implement responsible practices for donkey utilization.

3

Rural Development

Strengthen rural economies through preserved donkey resources.

4

Continental Leadership

Establish Africa as a model for animal welfare and sustainable development.



Call to Action

Government Support

AU Member States to implement and enforce the moratorium.

Public Awareness

Educate communities on the importance of donkey preservation.

Stakeholder Engagement

Involve local communities, NGOs, and private sector in conservation efforts.

International Cooperation

Collaborate with global partners to support to the Decision

Conclusion



Securing Livelihoods

The moratorium protects vital resources for rural communities.



Sustainable Agriculture

Preserving donkeys ensures their continued role in food security.



Continental Leadership

The AU demonstrates commitment to animal welfare and sustainable development.

When donkeys are lost to slaughter for their skin, it is women and children who shoulder the burden





Thank You

