

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ANIMAL WELFARE: SYNERGIES AND CHALLENGES

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Environmental Sustainability And Animal Welfare

- the intersection of animal welfare and environmental sustainability is crucial for achieving comprehensive development goals, especially in Africa, where rich biodiversity coexists with diverse socio-economic conditions.
- Integrating these concepts promotes ethical treatment of animals and ecosystem preservation, enhancing the health and well-being of both animals and humans. In Africa, poor animal welfare practices and environmental degradation can significantly impact socio-economic and public health.
- There is emphasis on the need for cohesive strategies that align with the African Union's Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), showcasing case studies to provide insights into best practices for sustainable development through the integration of animal welfare and environmental sustainability.



objectives

- Examine how animal welfare and environmental sustainability mutually reinforce each other for holistic development in Africa.
- Discuss the challenges of integrating these areas, considering the unique socio-economic and environmental pressures in Africa.
- Showcase case studies and best practices demonstrating successful integration.
- Provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders on effective integration aligned with AWSA.



Synergies Between Environmental Sustainability and Animal Welfare

- Sustainability requires agricultural practices that ensure future generations can meet their needs, while incorporating the ethical treatment of animals as vital to sustainable systems.

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution on the Animal Welfare-Environment-Sustainable Development Nexus (2022) highlights the interconnectedness of animal welfare, environmental health, and human well-being, emphasizing that improved animal welfare can help achieve environmental and developmental goals. Key areas of synergy include:

- **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health:** Enhanced animal welfare practices decrease habitat destruction and pollution, supporting biodiversity essential for a healthy environment.
- **Climate Change and Resource Management:** Sustainable farming methods, including humane treatment, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resource efficiency, aligning with climate change mitigation.
- **Public Health and Livelihoods:** Higher welfare standards in animal agriculture lower the risk of zoonotic diseases and boost food security, benefiting human health and rural economies.



Synergies Between Environmental Sustainability and Animal Welfare

- The Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) further emphasizes the link between animal welfare and environmental sustainability. Key points include:
 - 1. Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity:** Good animal welfare practices aid biodiversity conservation and ecosystem sustainability, as healthy animals contribute to balanced ecosystems and support livelihoods.
 - 2. One Health Approach:** The AWSA promotes integrating human, animal, and environmental health, encouraging sustainable resource use and zoonotic disease prevention.
 - 3. Climate Change and Adaptation:** It addresses climate change's effects on animal welfare, advocating strategies to protect animals from adverse impacts while promoting environmental mitigation practices.
 - 4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The AWSA aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and global SDGs (SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 15 on Life on Land), emphasizing that improved animal welfare is crucial for achieving these goals, especially in rural contexts.
 - 5. Resource Use and Livelihoods:** Better animal welfare can lead to sustainable resource use, enhancing food security and reducing environmental impacts.



Challenges in Integrating Environmental Sustainability and Animal Welfare

- Integrating animal welfare with environmental sustainability presents significant challenges, particularly in Africa. Agricultural intensification, driven by the need for increased food production, often leads to environmental degradation and poor animal welfare, resulting in habitat loss, pollution, and a higher risk of zoonotic diseases that affect both animal and human health.
- These challenges are compounded by socio-economic factors such as poverty, rapid urbanization, and climate change, which often prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term sustainability.
- The Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) stresses the importance of policies that consider socio-cultural and economic contexts to ensure effective implementation.



Challenges in Integrating Environmental Sustainability and Animal Welfare

- Key challenges include:
 - 1. Conflicting Priorities:** Environmental sustainability and animal welfare can have conflicting objectives, leading to ethical dilemmas. For instance, conservation efforts may prioritize ecosystem health over individual animal welfare, as seen in Botswana's consideration of elephant culling to manage populations.
 - 2. Resource Constraints:** Significant resources—financial, technical, and human—are necessary to implement both initiatives. Many countries, especially in the Global South, lack these resources, resulting in gaps in policy and action.
 - 3. Lack of Integration in Policy and Governance:** Environmental sustainability and animal welfare policies are often developed in isolation, leading to fragmented governance and contradictions in implementation.
 - 4. Economic Pressures and Industrial Practices:** Intensive farming and industrial practices prioritize short-term profits over sustainability and animal welfare, contributing to environmental degradation and resistance to reform.
 - 5. Cultural and Social Perceptions:** Cultural practices regarding the use of animals can hinder the integration of animal welfare and environmental sustainability. Traditional uses of animals in medicine or livestock farming may clash with conservation efforts.



Challenges in Integrating Environmental Sustainability and Animal Welfare

6. Climate Change: Climate change poses a universal challenge, affecting both environmental sustainability and animal welfare through extreme weather, habitat loss, and shifting ecosystems.

7. Lack of Awareness and Education: There is often insufficient public awareness of the link between environmental sustainability and animal welfare, leading to a focus on one area without recognizing their interconnection.

8. Scientific and Ethical Disputes: Disagreements within scientific and ethical communities regarding ecosystem needs versus individual animal welfare complicate management strategies.

9. Legislative and Enforcement Gaps: Weak enforcement of existing policies, coupled with gaps in animal protection and environmental regulations, results in ineffective protection for both animals and ecosystems.

Addressing these challenges requires integrated policies, multi-sectoral collaboration, public education, and a shift toward sustainable practices that balance the needs of animals, the environment, and human development.



Innovative Interventions - Case Studies: integrating environmental sustainability and animal welfare

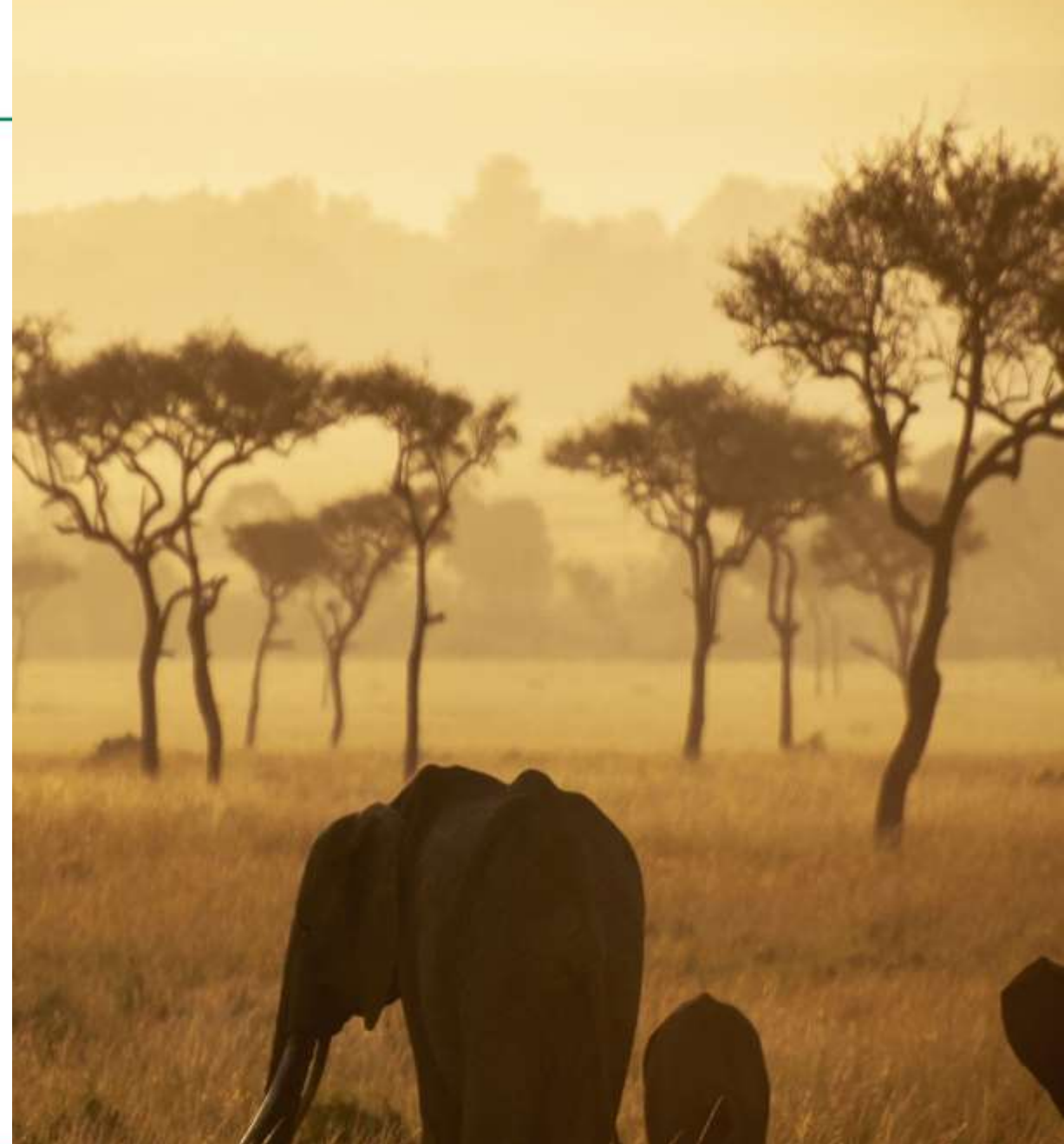
NAMIBIA

Namibia has taken the lead in implementing **community-based natural resource management (CBNRM)** programs that connect conservation with sustainable livelihoods. The government, along with non-governmental organizations, has assisted local communities in overseeing wildlife resources through conservancies, where they have the authority to manage and profit from wildlife on their land.

Animal Welfare Impact: This approach has resulted in a notable increase in wildlife populations, including elephants and rhinos. By granting communities ownership and responsibility, it diminishes human-wildlife conflicts, ensuring ethical treatment of animals and the preservation of their habitats.

Environmental Sustainability: The program encourages the sustainable use of natural resources by blending conservation efforts with economic incentives. Communities gain from eco-tourism, which generates income while helping to maintain wildlife populations.

Namibia has set up communal conservancies, designated areas where local communities hold the rights to manage and benefit from wildlife resources. As of 2021, more than 86 conservancies have been established, covering around 20% of Namibia's total land area. This enables communities to earn income through sustainable tourism, hunting, and crafts, motivating them to protect wildlife and their habitats.

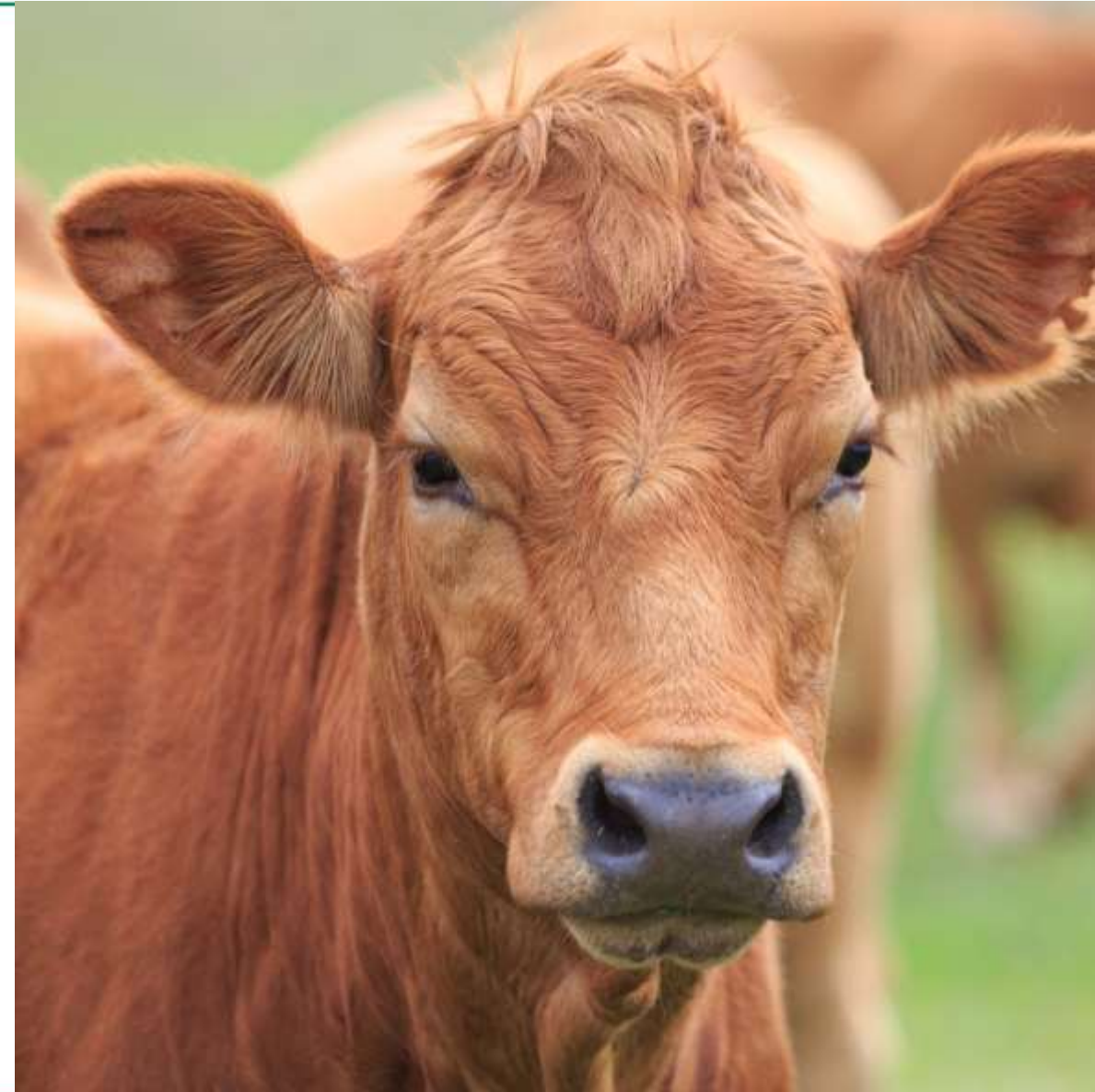


Sustainable Livestock Farming in Kenya

In Kenya, sustainable livestock farming methods are being adopted in regions such as Laikipia, where pastoral communities are utilizing rotational grazing and livestock management techniques that are in harmony with the natural environment.

Animal Welfare Impact: Rotational grazing enhances the welfare of livestock by **providing access to fresh pasture**, minimizing overgrazing, and ensuring better health and productivity. It also helps prevent the degradation of rangelands, which is essential for the well-being of both wild and domesticated animals.

Environmental Sustainability: This practice boosts soil health and mitigates desertification, contributing to the overall sustainability of the ecosystem. Additionally, it **fosters biodiversity by allowing vegetation to recover**, which in turn supports a diverse array of animal species.



Habitat Restoration and Wildlife Protection in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia's Bale Mountains, successful habitat restoration initiatives have been implemented to protect the critically endangered Ethiopian wolf and other endemic species. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Ethiopian government have collaborated to rehabilitate habitats that have been degraded by human activities.

Animal Welfare Impact: The restoration of natural habitats enhances the living conditions for wildlife, minimizing the risk of human-wildlife conflict and ensuring that animals can thrive in their native environments.

Environmental Sustainability: Restoring native vegetation contributes to soil stabilization, regulation of water cycles, and preservation of ecosystem integrity. This fosters long-term environmental sustainability, benefiting both wildlife and the local communities that rely on these ecosystems.



Integrating Animal Welfare into Zoonotic Disease Control in West Africa

In West Africa, initiatives aimed at managing zoonotic diseases such as Ebola have integrated animal welfare into their approaches. Programs like the USAID-funded **Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT)** initiative focus on enhancing the management of wildlife and livestock to prevent the transmission of diseases from animals to humans

Animal Welfare Impact: These initiatives prioritize the humane treatment of animals, which helps to lower stress levels and minimize disease transmission among livestock and wildlife. This includes implementing improved handling practices for livestock and establishing protected areas for wildlife.

Environmental Sustainability: By curbing the spread of zoonotic diseases, these programs support the overall health of ecosystems. They encourage a balanced relationship between humans and animals, reducing the need for harmful measures that could disrupt ecological systems.



*Providing Leadership in the
Development of Animal Resources in Africa*



Rewilding Projects in South Africa

South Africa has initiated rewilding projects, particularly in the Greater Kruger Area, where former farmlands are being transformed back into natural habitats. These initiatives focus on reintroducing native species and restoring ecological processes that were disrupted by agricultural practices and development.

Animal Welfare Impact: Rewilding enhances the welfare of reintroduced species by providing them with expansive, natural environments. The process also includes ethical considerations to ensure that animals are not subjected to unnecessary harm during their reintroduction.

Environmental Sustainability: These rewilding efforts boost biodiversity, restore vital ecosystem services, and aid in carbon sequestration. Additionally, they promote ecotourism, which brings economic benefits to local communities while prioritizing conservation efforts.



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Summary of Discussion & Conclusion

- Balanced ecosystems are vital for the health and well-being of both humans and animals. The interplay between environmental sustainability and animal welfare offers a holistic approach to addressing global challenges.
- However, challenges, particularly in Africa, are significant due to socio-economic pressures that often favor short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Issues such as rapid urbanization, habitat destruction, and climate change intensify these challenges, underscoring the need to integrate animal welfare into environmental policies. The UNEA resolution emphasizes the importance of cohesive strategies to tackle both issues concurrently.
- to harness the synergies between animal welfare and environmental sustainability, collaboration among governments, NGOs, local communities, and stakeholders is essential. This integrated approach aligns with the African Union's sustainable development goals, promoting a future where animals and humans coexist harmoniously with the environment.



Recommendations for Best Practices

- **Habitat Protection:** Prioritize the restoration of natural habitats to support biodiversity and animal welfare.
- **Sustainable Farming:** Encourage farming practices that enhance soil health, minimize chemical use, and support animal welfare.
- **Legislation:** Develop and enforce laws that protect the environment and animal welfare, ensuring compliance for effective sustainability initiatives.
- **Education:** Incorporate animal welfare and environmental education into school curricula and training programs to raise awareness among key stakeholders.
- **Research Support:** Invest in research to explore the benefits of animal welfare practices and their impact on environmental sustainability.



Call to Action

- All stakeholders—including governments, NGOs, local communities, and international organizations—must collaborate to promote practices that enhance both animal welfare and environmental sustainability. Key actions include:
- **Public Awareness:** Launch education and outreach programs to inform communities about the importance of these issues.
- **Collaboration:** Foster cooperation among governments, NGOs, and communities to develop integrated conservation and welfare initiatives.
- **Innovation Investment:** Support research and development of new methods and technologies to enhance sustainability and animal welfare. By addressing these recommendations, stakeholders can create balanced ecosystems that benefit all life on Earth, ensuring harmonious coexistence between humans, animals, and the environment.



Thank you

Merci

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Obrigado

Gracias

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