



AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

POLICY BRIEF

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS TO MAINSTREAM ANIMAL WELFARE IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This Policy Brief provides a set of policy recommendations to promote animal welfare in Africa. It is addressed to the Africa policy makers from the broad range of UN agencies, Regional Economic Communities, state departments, and regulatory authorities, involved in animal welfare, environment and development. It concerns donors, financial institutions and animal welfare organisations engaging in policy dialogue and advocacy. This brief builds upon the recommendation emanating from the Africa Animal Welfare Conference, ACTION 2017 that was held at the UN Environment headquarters in Nairobi.

Background

The value that animals put into our lives cannot be gainsaid. This is more so in agricultural-based economies of most countries in the continent where domestic animals, and particularly livestock, contribute nearly 60 percent of the combined agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Besides these, animals provide food, income, comfort and are a means of diversifying risk and increasing assets. We rely on animals for draught power, fuel, manure and transport all of which contribute significantly to farm productivity. Improving the welfare of these animals and protecting their health are pre-requisites for raising productivity and is part and parcel of sustainable development. If animals are such an important component in our lives, it is only wise that we cater for their welfare. We need to protect them in ways that can contribute to making their lives comfortable and devoid of cruelty and abuse.

Animal welfare is increasingly becoming a critical focus area in Africa's development, in trade agreements and a key consideration in the effort to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Malabo Declaration, and the aspirations of Africa set

in Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LIDESIA) promoted by the African Union alongside Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA). Regional Economic Communities such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has developed a Regional Animal Welfare Strategy covering all the Member States. There are unprecedented opportunities for the advancement of animal welfare.

While there is general acceptance of the Animal Welfare International Standards across the continent, the actual situation on the ground is that welfare policies are largely absent; legislation and enforcement are inadequate or lacking; and levels of education and awareness low. In addition, many of the changes we see in Africa are not anchored in long term policy and legislative agendas of the respective countries. Policy coherence will be key in ensuring that international animal welfare standards are incorporated and effectively implemented at the national and regional level, as well as across UN agencies in order to mainstream animal welfare into international policy.

Africa is on a development growth path in sectors such as technology, industry, economy and infrastructure; among others. Alongside this growth there is pressure on existing natural resources and in different cases, leading to competition for resources and space between man and animal. While some of these interventions have been environmentally friendly, some have instead resulted in environmental degradation that is manifested through varying environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, food insecurity, poor waste and ecosystem management and loss of biodiversity.

The Africa Animal Welfare Conference 2017 that was attended by 275 delegates representing 27 African countries deliberated on the “Nexus between animal welfare, environment and development: safeguarding our common destiny”, and given the intricate relationship between pollution, environment, animal and human health and welfare, it is critical for the UN Environment to embrace animal welfare as a substantive issue of discussion at the United Nations Environment Assembly level and as a thematic area, as well as support the inclusion of animal welfare in UN Environment contributions throughout the UN system, such as the High Level Political Forum and Sustainable Development Agenda.

Agreeing from a common vantage point that conservation of the environment, human health and welfare and sustainable development in Africa cannot be discussed abstractly, there is critical need to consider animal welfare as a custodian for the status of humans and environment. This therefore calls for adoption of animal welfare as a substantial agenda for discussion at UNEA level, a thematic area of UN Environment and adoption of common grounds by member states to better address animal welfare challenges.

Despite the difficulties in implementing animal welfare, good progress is being achieved in Africa; the challenge before us is the on-going need for governments to tackle issues related to animal welfare (for both domestic and wild animals). While Africa development path has put enormous pressure on existing natural resources and competition for resources and space between man and animal, it is of extreme importance to mainstream these policy recommendations deliberated during the Animal Welfare Conference 2017 into the UNEA agenda contributing to the International dialogue and action.

Recommendations

The recommendations set forth focus on what policy makers can do to create favourable conditions to significantly mainstream animal welfare in development agendas. Underlying the policy recommendations offered here is an essential understanding of the roles of government that are appropriate and helpful to promote and protect animal welfare in development.

Nurture a legal and regulatory environment that is conducive, takes into consideration the specificity of animal welfare and allow for innovation;

- **Disaster response:** Having underscored the interdependence between animals and humans and the role played by animals economically, protocols for disaster response are required to provide relief in times of disasters. These efforts carried out concurrently with humanitarian relief interventions would mitigate loss of animals and support resilience and restoration of communities stricken by disasters better. It is also important to come up with risk mapping and reduction and emergency relief programmes as a means of mitigation. Policy, protocols and models for disaster response that foster this multipronged engagement will be necessary for smooth functioning of these institutions.
- Pollution is a serious and growing problem all over the world and there is need to effect appropriate measures to address this problem at policy and implementation levels by civil society across Africa. In particular, intensive animal agriculture /factory farming is a major contributor to pollution of soil, land and marine and freshwater environments, as well as contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The contribution of this sector to the issue of pollution must be decisively addressed through UNEA 3. Changes and progress can only be effective with increased and focused partnerships and collaborations between the civil society, relevant government ministries and intergovernmental bodies to address animal welfare and environmental challenges.
- Clear policy and legislative guidance that recognizes and encourages meaningful community participation with the right level of incentives that supplement the legal norms in persuading the land-owners to implement practices that safeguard, rather than deplete natural resources. Particular policy focus is needed to reduce the harmful effects on animal welfare caused by the spread of intensive animal agriculture/factory farming and aquaculture, and to support farming practices and agro-ecological methods that are conducive to animal welfare while also improving human and environmental health outlooks.
- Increasing policy commitments to take action against illegal animal trade.
- **Incorporation of animal welfare considerations into biodiversity protection and sustainable use policies.** It is critical that the promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity does not supersede the welfare of wildlife.

Foster a dialogue among UN agencies, institutions and organisations in animal welfare sector and policy makers.

- The different departments of the United Nations should borrow the model by UN Environment to work with CSO's stakeholders to bring to the fore other relevant issues benchmarked with the Africa Animal Welfare Conference ACTION 2017 in meetings at global level such as UNEA.

This will promote consideration of animal welfare in major decision making and policy formulation by various governments and relevant agencies.

- Improved collaboration and engagement between the UN and different stakeholders can achieve much if the success of this conference is anything to go by.
- Where applicable and practical, CSOs should contribute more instead of being observers and in attendance in meeting of policy discussions. Adding relevant expertise and community perspective on this discussion ensures that policies formulated are implementable and practical enough for sustainable community engagement. There is now an Animal Issues Thematic Cluster in development under the High Level Political Forum Non-Governmental Organization Major Group which will facilitate CSO contributions on animal welfare. Similar structures should be organized to feed animal welfare perspectives and knowledge into various UN agencies.
- All stakeholders need to recognize and appreciate that animal welfare is part of our life, environment and development and must work with communities, decision makers and the private sector to make this understood.

Close the information gap on animal welfare through knowledge generation and management.

- Increased research and knowledge dissemination on animal welfare and conservation needs to be embraced. This will allow better representation of the role of animals in the ecosystems and communities while better preparing governments to extend budgetary support commensurate with the magnitude of importance of animals and their welfare.
- Ultimately, managing consumerism is critical for sustainable agriculture. Sustainable diets which can be achieved from non-intensive/non-factory farming production systems are definitely better for the environment since waste is managed in a better way. Additionally, the menace of antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic diseases associated with these production systems and can also be managed with more natural production systems for better human health.

- Use of animals for testing and research is no longer necessary with existing technology. Animals used for various purposes such as cosmetic testing, education and training and pharmaceutical testing have since been proven inaccurate compared to other technology such as; human tissue cultures and computer simulated modules.

The UN to embrace animal welfare as a thematic area and a substantive issue integrated in key strategies, policies and development processes to enable availability and access of resources.

- Time is critical to appreciate animal welfare as part of our life, environment and sustainable development and thus the need for mainstreaming animal welfare issues across Africa. And there is a need for the UN Environment to embrace animal welfare as a thematic area and a substantive issue of discussion at the United Nations Environment Assembly level.
- Animal welfare is a cross-cutting issue with inter-linkages to a number of Sustainable Development Goals. Increased attention to the importance of animal welfare in the policy, development agendas and sustainable development goals, such as livelihoods, food security, human health, climate change, water and sanitation, conservation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity is necessary.



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