

9TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE
- ACTION 2025

CONFERENCE REPORT

July 28 - 30, 2025
Yaounde, Cameroon



**Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and
Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet**



SPONSORS AND PARTNERS



RSPCA.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| AAWC | Africa Animal Welfare Conference |
| AHSA | Animal Health Strategy for Africa |
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| AMR | Anti - Microbial Resistance |
| AMCEN | African Ministerial Conference on the Environment |
| ANAW | Africa Network for Animal Welfare |
| APAW | Africa Platform for Animal Welfare |
| AU | African Union |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| AU-IBAR | African Union- InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources |
| AWI | Animal Welfare Institute |
| AWSA | Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa |
| CBD | Convention for Biological Diversity |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CIWF | Compassion in World Farming |
| COMESA | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| CPR | Committee of Permanent Representatives |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CSU | Civil Society Unit |
| CVO | Chief Veterinary Officer |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GMGSF | Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum |
| GMO | Genetically Modified Organism |
| ICWE | International Coalition for Working Equids |
| IFAW | International Fund for Animal Welfare |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| ILRI | International Livestock Research Institute |
| INC | Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee |
| INHE | International Network for Humane Education |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| KM-GBF | Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| KSPCA | Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals |
| LIDESA | Livestock Development Strategy for Africa |
| MEA | Multilateral Environmental Agreements |
| MGS | Major Groups and Stakeholders |
| LEGS | Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards |
| MGFC | Major Groups Facilitating Committee |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OECPR | Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives |
| OHHEP | One Health High Level Expert Panel |
| OWA | Open Wing Alliance |
| PADCO | Pan African Donkey Conference |
| PEP | Post Exposure Prophylaxis |

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PETSA | Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act |
| PFRS | Policy Framework and Reforms Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa |
| PrEP | Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis |
| PrepCom | Preparatory Committees |
| RAFFS | Resilient African Feed and Fodder Systems Project |
| RAWO | Rwanda Animal Welfare Organization |
| REC | Regional Economic Communities |
| RCM | Regional Consultative Meetings |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SPANA | Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad |
| TAWS | Tanzania Animal Welfare Society |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| TDS | The Donkey Sanctuary |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEA | United Nations Environment Assembly |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UDAW | Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USA | United States of America |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| VR | Virtual Reality |
| WAG | Welfare for Animals Guild |
| WAG | World Animal Protection |
| WFA | World Federation for Animals |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WOAH | World Organization for Animal Health |
| WTG | Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| WTS | Welttierschutzstiftung |

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was with incredible warmth and a high level welcome that Cameroon proudly hosted the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference - Action 2025. Cameroon is a land that truly represents Africa and is indeed Africa in Miniature,

We heartily thank the Government of Cameroon for welcoming us warmly to have the needed deliberations and discussions on animal welfare, wildlife conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development. We profoundly thank you for hosting the State Gala Dinner in our honor. We are grateful to our Conference Co-hosting Partners: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the African Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU- IBAR), the Government of Cameroon, and Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW).

We would like to thank all the delegates who attended the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference - Action 2025. The conference gathered 435 delegates with 327 delegates attending physically and 108 delegates attending virtually. They represented 31 countries with 23 being in Africa and 8 being from outside Africa. We would like to honor and are profoundly grateful for the presence of African High commissioners and ambassadors who took time to attend the conference. We thank the chair of the Africa Group at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in Nairobi, Ambassador Chivavi of Mozambique, Ambassador of Ghana to Kenya, Damtey Asare, Ambassador of Cameroon to Nairobi, Dr. Vivian Kuma, the Ambassador of Malawi, Motarika Kalista, Charge D'Affairs of the Embassy of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Nairobi, Mr. David Shivango, Botswana was represented by Ambassador Duke Lefhoko, and Muhammad Z. Bandiya, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to Kenya.

The secretariat would like to share our special appreciation to David Ombisi, Officer In Charge (OIC), Civil Society Unit, Governance Affairs Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Dr. Huyam Salih, Director of African Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), and Mr. Tennyson Williams, the Regional Director for Africa at World Animal Protection, and the Chair of the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) Organizing Committee.

We would like to recognize and thank Prof. James Nkansah-Obrempong, the Chair of Board of Directors of Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW). We thank our partners Susan Millward, Chief Executive Officer of Animal Welfare Institute (AWI). Linda Edwards of Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANA), Dr. Raphael Kinoti of Brooke East Africa, and James Yeates of the World Federation for Animals (WFA). We would also like to thank our donors - Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), GIZ, Humane World for Animals, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), WTS, and Center for Animal Law Studies (CALS) and thank them for supporting the conference.

In a special way, we would like to thank Gilbert Che and Christian Awantu for their industrious, effective and dedicated time and effort put in organizing the wonderful and successful conference.

We thank you for your invaluable contribution to this year's conference. We could not have achieved the deep conversation and engagement on this important discourse. A special thank you to all the presenters, panellists and speakers for fostering an environment of learning for the future of animal welfare in Africa.



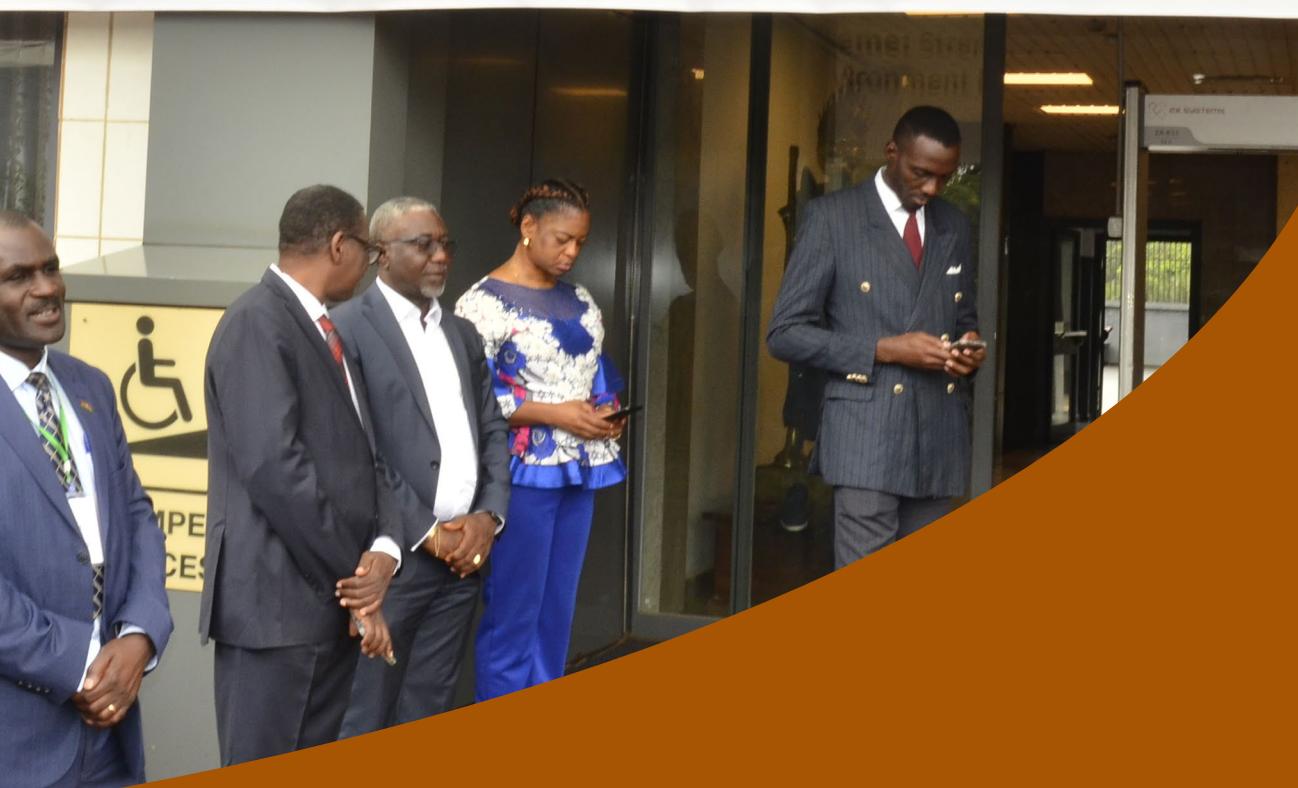
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programme

THE 9TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE

Theme: Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and



Hotel Franco, Yaoundé, Cam



OPENING SESSION

Preliminaries

Christian Awantu called the conference to order by welcoming online and in-person delegates to the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) in Yaounde, Cameroon, Africa in Miniature - the land of Roger Miller and Samuel Etoo. He oriented the delegates on the protocol to be followed and went through the housekeeping and technical issues for ease in participating at the conference.

He then officially invited the moderator of the opening session to take the stage and lead the first high-level segment of the conference.



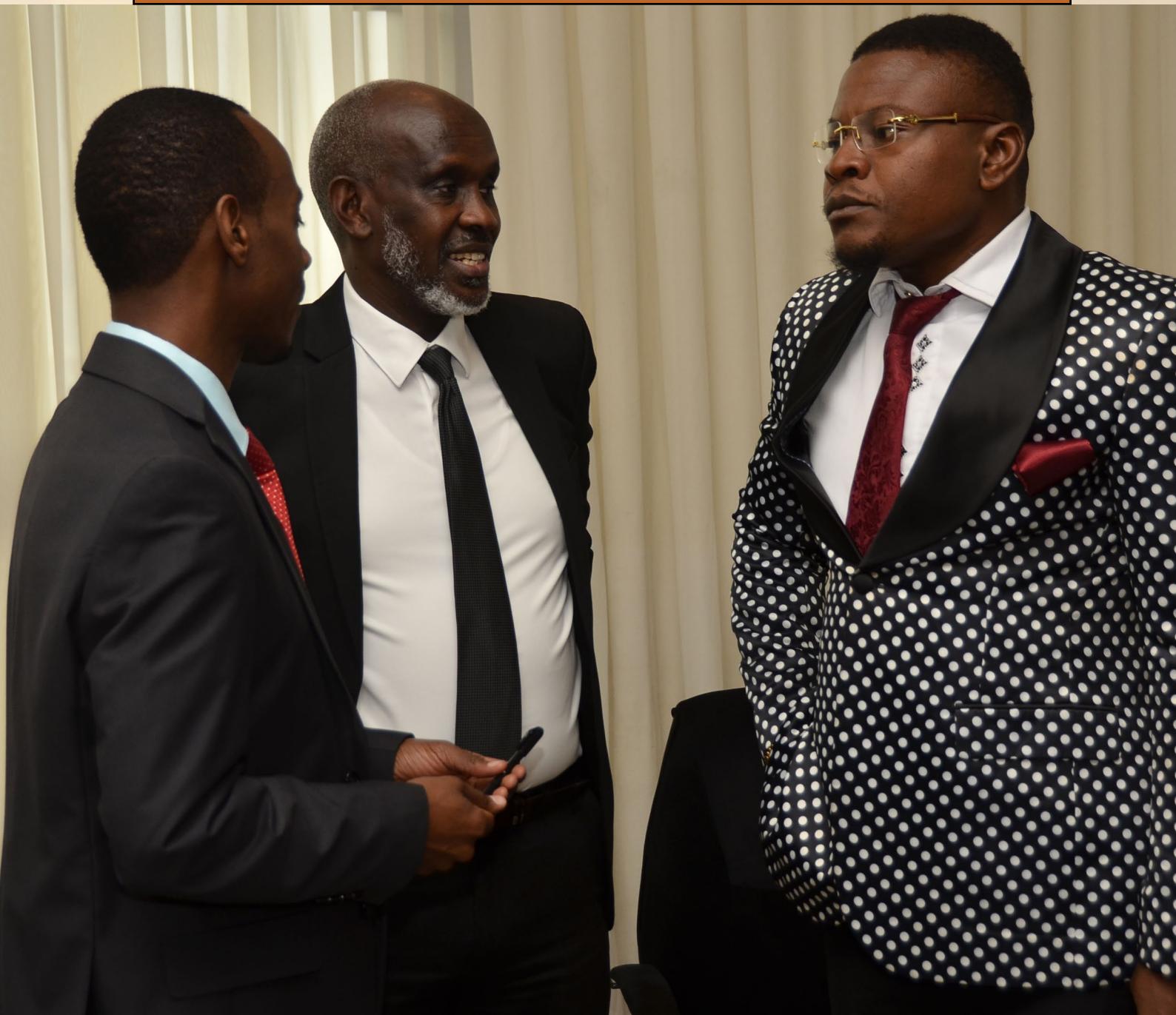
A man in a dark blue suit, light green shirt, and pink tie stands at a wooden podium, speaking into a microphone. He is wearing glasses and has a lanyard around his neck. Behind him is a white banner with logos for the UN Environment Programme, InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources, and ANAW (Africa Network for Animal Welfare). The banner also features the text 'AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE' and 'Animal welfare and Environment for a Resilient Plan'. A small sign on the podium also reads 'AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE'. In the bottom left corner of the image, there is a text box with the following information:

Tennyson Williams
Chair, Conference Organizing Committee;
Director, World Animal Protection

Mr. Tennyson Williams introduced himself and gave an overview of the program, particularly the opening of the conference. Mr. Williams took the opportunity to announce that the conference would be the last conference he was attending as the Chair of the Conference Organizing Committee. He had served as chair for three years.

He ushered in the CEO/Executive Director of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), Josiah Ojwang, and the Officer In Charge, Civil Society Unit, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), David Ombisi, to give welcome remarks.

Welcome Remarks



Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW)

Mr. Josiah Ojwang began by relaying greetings and welcoming the distinguished delegates attending online and in person to the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) - Action 2025 on behalf of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), and the Conference Secretariat. He cited that the conference was a special milestone because of the collective journey in animal welfare and environmental conservation that continued to gain momentum and significance every year.

He reminded the delegates that when the conference took off the aim was to create a pan-African platform where stakeholders from across the continent and beyond would gather, share knowledge, and advance the cause of animal welfare.

He was pleased to state that the conference has flourished, transformed from a modest gathering into a premier grand annual event on animal welfare in the African continent. Mr Ojwang relayed that the conference had over the years, taken place across African cities including Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Accra, Gaborone, Kigali, and now Yaoundé. He mentioned that the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) has served as a pivotal platform for influencing global dialogue by convening thought leaders, policymakers, civil society, scientists, academic researchers, advocates, and committed individuals and organizations. Mr. Ojwang noted that the delegates had been united by the vision of integrating animal welfare with environmental stewardship across the continent. He informed delegates that the discussions and resolutions arising from the conferences had facilitated policy development, fostered cross-border collaborations, and supported grassroots initiatives, contributing to positive outcomes for animals, communities, and ecosystems.

He noted that through sustained dialogue, collaboration, and advocacy at the annual conference, the AAWC galvanized regional consensus and strategic momentum, which proved instrumental in the development and eventual adoption of the



Mr. Josiah Ojwang
CEO/Executive Director, Africa Network
for Animal Welfare

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution titled, Animal Welfare, Environment, and Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution. He cited that the landmark resolution, passed at UNEA 5.2, recognized the intrinsic link between animal welfare, environmental health, and sustainable development, marking a significant advancement in elevating animal welfare as a global policy priority.

Mr. Ojwang highlighted the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet, stating that it reaffirmed the commitment to forging practical solutions that safeguard both animal welfare and the environment, recognizing their inseparable connection to Africa's sustainable development. He reaffirmed that ANAW was profoundly grateful to its co-hosts, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose unwavering support and partnership have given the conference enduring relevance and influence.

He acknowledged that the civil society organization owed a debt of thanks to the Government of Ethiopia and the people of Cameroon for graciously hosting us, embracing our cause, and providing a welcoming environment for this convening. He concluded that the delegates' support is a testament to Cameroon's growing leadership in animal welfare and sustainable development in Africa.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



David Ombisi

Officer-in-Charge, Civil Society Unit, Governance Affairs Office, UNEP

Mr. David Ombisi took the floor and began by thanking all the delegates attending this 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference both in-person and online. He expressed gratitude to partner with the co-hosting organizations in organizing these Conferences since 2017. He thanked the Government of Cameroon for agreeing to host the 2025 conference.

He stated that he was pleased to address this 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) which marks another step in the journey towards the development and integration of animal welfare and environmental sustainability in Africa. Through collaboration, strategic partnerships and knowledge sharing, this animal welfare conference continues to inspire action and create positive change that benefits Africa's people, animals, and the environment.

Mr. Ombisi highlighted that the 9th edition of the AAWC came at a time when Africa continues to face mounting challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution. He mentioned that recognizing the intricate link between animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and human well-being, the conference was focusing on strengthening actions that contribute to a resilient planet and a sustainable future. He noted that the focus resonated well with the theme for the 7th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) "Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet" that will be taking place in December 2025.

He took the delegates back through the years of the Africa Animal Welfare Conferences stating that they sought to promote a better understanding of the interconnected issue of animal welfare, human health and environment. He emphasized that this was cen-

which acknowledges the close links between human, animal, and environmental health.

Mr. Ombisi reminded the delegates that the Africa Animal Welfare Conferences led to the adoption of the landmark Animal Welfare, Environment, Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution during the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) in Nairobi in March 2022. The resolution highlighted the critical link between the wellbeing of animals, human health and ecosystem preservation and provides a vital framework towards improving the welfare of animals and environmental sustainability.

He informed delegates that since its adoption, a scoping report has been developed highlighting methodologies and processes for the implementation of the resolution. However, due to budgetary constraints, not much progress has been made in its implementation.

He took the opportunity to emphasize that UNEP is committed to encouraging opportunities for engagement in UNEP-led inter-governmental processes such as UNEA which provides an opportunity for diverse groups of stakeholders to equally contribute to global environmental governance. One of UNEP's objectives is to ensure that stakeholders are heard, listened to and that their input is mainstreamed into the work of UNEP. As such and as has been the practice, UNEP would hold a session with conference participants to provide insights into UNEP and its governing bodies, the process of formal accreditation, and opportunities for engagement in UNEP-led initiatives and the upcoming UNEA-7.

Mr. Ombisi informed delegates that UNEP had actively supported civil society engagement in Africa over recent years by having focused efforts to increase the participation of organizations from Africa in intergovernmental decision-making processes. He stated that as a result, UNEP has witnessed a significant rise in engagement and the number of registered African stakeholders in recent years. This was exemplified recently during the just concluded 20th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) that took place in Nairobi, Kenya. He indicated that this growth reflected UNEP's commitment to strengthening the role of African civil society in shaping environmental policy both at a regional and global level.

He concluded that delegates would find the conference a fruitful and productive experience. He stated that the conference presented an opportunity to share expert knowledge, compare valuable experiences, encourage innovation, and foster new partnerships on a range of issues in the field of animal welfare, human health and the environment.

Mr. Ombisi wished all present fruitful deliberations and looked forward to the outcomes of this key event.

GOODWILL MESSAGES



Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)



Susan Milward
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Susan Milward took the stage and introduced herself as the CEO of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI). She explained that it was a civil society organization that has been working on animal welfare issues for 75 years. She informed delegates that their team of scientists, lawyers, policy experts and support staff work to protect animals in laboratory experiments and research farmed and working animals, companion animals and wild animals. She stated that they investigate cruelty cases working on legislative initiatives to become a robust humane education program to teach the next generations about animals feeling pain, fear, thirst and hunger as well as love, happiness, loneliness and joy.

She mentioned that it was the second time that she had attended the conference although AWI had supported it several years prior to that. She was pleased to be able to be present in person and she looked forward to interacting with the delegates and learning a lot from all the sessions. She expressed that she knew that they were going to learn a lot as well and she looked forward to a wonderful conference.

Society For The Protection Of Animals Abroad (SPANA)

Ms. Linda Edwards began by relaying apologies for not being present in person and stated that it was a pleasure to join delegates virtually and share the goodwill message as part of the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference - Action 2025.

She introduced herself as the Chief Executive of the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANA). She mentioned that the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet, addressed the urgency of their shared mission. She stated that the theme reminded delegates that the well-being of animals, people, and the environment were not separate concerns, but were deeply interconnected. This integrated approach should be at the heart of the solutions they pursued.

At SPANA, they were proud to champion the welfare of working animals - animals that play a crucial, often overlooked, role in livelihoods, food security, and sustainable development across the African continent and beyond. Spanning from donkeys and horses to oxen and camels, these animals are vital partners in daily life for millions of people and they too must be part of the conversation about resilience and sustainability.

She explained that she did not just represent one organization or one area of animal welfare. She spoke in solidarity with a global community that recognizes the value and dignity of all animals and the need to protect the natural systems humankind depends on. People face enormous challenges from accelerating climate change to economic inequality and conflict.



Linda Edwards
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

However, they were also seeing a growing momentum. Ms. Edwards cited the inclusion of animals in disaster frameworks and the recognition of their role in One Health. She also emphasized the need for stronger international collaboration. She lauded the conference as a unique platform for sharing knowledge, strengthening partnerships and turning commitments into action. She commended the organizers for bringing together a rich diversity of voices and issues.

She cited that at SPANA, they believe that building a sustainable future means creating systems that are compassionate, inclusive, and resilient. She emphasized that animal welfare is not a side issue. It is central to environmental stewardship, public health, and advocating for human dignity. She wished delegates a productive, inspiring, and forward-looking conference. She hoped that the outcomes of the discussions would bring delegates closer to a more just and sustainable world for animals, for people, and for the planet - shared by all beings.

Brooke East Africa



Dr. Raphael Kinoti
Regional Director, Brooke East Africa

Dr. Raphael Kinoti took the stage and began by stating that it was an honor to share goodwill remarks at 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference - Action 2025 under the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet.

He took the opportunity to appreciate the organizers of the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) for their unwavering commitment to consistently convene the conference for the previous 9 years. He stated that it was akin to an Annual General Meeting for animal welfare in Africa. He commended the organizers recognizing that it was not an easy task convening delegates every year. He noted that many delegates have attended the conference, made new friends, derived new impetus and gone out to do great work in animal welfare.

Dr. Kinoti cited that Africa was built on a community that prioritizes dialogue, consensus, collective wisdom, and most importantly, action to solve challenges. He reminded delegates that from ancient civilizations to present day farming systems, animals have powered livelihoods, connected communities, and helped build the foundations of their societies. He asserted that the conference gives delegates the opportunity to honor the legacy of animals that have supported humankind in the past and continue to protect their livelihoods today. He brought to attention his interest in the welfare of working equines and stated that the animals support communities and improve livelihoods. He mentioned that, as Brooke East Africa, they help communities to improve animal care and practices and strengthen animal health systems. They engage governments and policy makers and raise awareness on the critical role equine's play in Africa's development ensuring they have a life worth living.

Dr. Kinoti explained that Brooke East Africa was mentoring animal health practitioners and has developed tools such as the Animal Health Mentoring Framework, the Agrovets Mentoring Framework and other frameworks to enhance competencies and improve the service provision. They were also supporting Donkey Care Clubs, and fodder production among other interventions that were related directly to equines and aim at driving and supporting Africa's livelihoods. He men-

tioned that he was happy to provide more information on this in the course of the conference if any of the delegates was interested.

He informed delegates that they carry out their work because they believe animals deserve not only to survive but to thrive and that they understand that thriving animals create thriving communities. A healthy donkey means a child can go to school, food can reach the market and families can build resilience and bounce back from a disaster.

He recalled that in a recent dialogue convened by AU-IBAR, in a unified voice, Africa produced a common position calling for a continental moratorium on the slaughter of donkeys and the trade for their skins in recognition of the existential threat posed to the animals and to people's livelihoods.

He mentioned that donkeys have been used in Africa for the last 7,000 years and that they are to humans what the horses are to the developed world. Donkeys wake up every day to pull an African family out of a pit of poverty, to remove the load out of the back of the woman, and to earn money that sends a child to school, to farm and fight hunger, and in many cases, to earn hard cash for the household use.

Dr. Kinoti informed delegates that the ejiao industry demands 7 million donkey skins every year. With a world population of 44 million donkeys, there was no capacity to meet the demand of the industry. He emphasized that in the same way the world had no capacity to meet the demand for rhino horns and elephant tusks, the world had no capacity to meet the demand for donkey skins for the ejiao industry. Dr. Kinoti stated that they continue to thank the African nations and AU-IBAR for the efforts that they were doing to save this critical animal species. He called upon African governments to fully support the continental moratorium on the trade of donkeys for their skin and more importantly to adopt and implement the Pan-African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkeys as a species. He mentioned that if delegates failed to act, then, history would judge them harshly. Action on the matter was critical and urgent.

Dr. Kinoti concluded by stating that as delegates engage in dialogue during the conference, Brooke extends its goodwill and reiterates its commitment to the resolutions that would emerge from the conference. He looked forward to deepening collaboration and to partnership as they continued to strengthen the actions for animal welfare and environmental sustainability across the continent.

World Federation for Animals



James Yeates
CEO, World Federation For Animals

Joining the conference virtually, James Yeates began by stating that the conference was a vital part of the animal welfare calendar in Africa and the world. He relayed his congratulations to AU-IBAR, UNEP and ANAW as well as the Conference Organizing Committee for an exceptional conference yet again.

He stated that it comes at a time when human beings had a chance to protect animals - perhaps a best chance, perhaps a last chance. He continued to state that it comes at a time when human beings knew that they needed to protect animals not just for their worth, sentience, magnificence and dignity, but also to protect themselves from

Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), from the unravelling of ecosystems, from climate change and its effects and from exploitative economic forces.

He emphasized that by using compassionate, integrated and traditional methods, human beings did not need the routine antibiotics. It has been shown that by protecting elephants in the Congo Basin, they are able to increase carbon sequestration by up to 14%. Strong progress has been seen from Africa and the world on pandemics, AMR, and animal welfare and it has been noted that the continent has played a leading role in tackling these challenges.

He mentioned that he looked forward to the climate Conference of Parties (COP) and the UN General Assembly later in the year and hoped to see the same leadership and force of progress in these conferences. He urged delegates that for that to happen, they needed to come together on the side of the angels, so that the forces of exploitation are legion and virulent.

He concluded by stating that the conference was great as it brings together many people who strive to help animals, to protect the planet and to help human beings in their development and health.



THEME EXPOSITION



Dr. Elynn Njeri
AU-IBAR

Dr. Elynn Njeri opened the session on theme exposition by welcoming delegates to the 9th edition of the Africa Animal Welfare Conference. Representing the African Union - InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), she reflected on the journey of the conference since its inception in 2017. Over the years, the forum had evolved into a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and policy advancement in animal welfare across the continent.

She highlighted the significant milestones achieved through past editions, including the adoption of landmark policies and the strengthening of strategic partnerships. Among these was the 2022 United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution, which has since catalyzed action among member states. Many countries have begun implementing the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, demonstrating growing momentum and commitment to institutionalizing best practices in animal welfare.

Dr. Njeri introduced the 2025 theme, “Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet,” as a timely and urgent call to action. She emphasized the interconnectedness of animal welfare, zoonotic diseases, environmental degradation, and human health, urging stakeholders to recognize the complexity and urgency of these challenges.

To illustrate the current state of the planet, Dr. Njeri shared an infographic and presented statistics. She noted that 75% of the Earth's land surface has been altered

by human activity, 85% of global wetlands have been compromised, and 66% of the world's oceans are experiencing significant degradation. Additionally, one-eighth of all species are currently facing extinction. She referenced Earth Overshoot Day, marked on July 24, 2025, which signifies the point at which humanity has consumed the planet's annual regenerative capacity. From July 25th onward, resource consumption exceeds what the Earth can replenish, underscoring the urgent need for sustainable practices.

Dr. Njeri celebrated Africa's rich biodiversity, including expansive savannahs, rainforests, coastal marine ecosystems, and arid zones that support thousands of species. She emphasized the continent's unique ecological wealth and the responsibility to protect it for future generations.

Looking ahead to the three-day conference, Dr. Njeri outlined the key objectives, which include integrating animal welfare and environmental conservation into national and regional policies, strengthening partnerships across governments, civil society, academia, research institutions, and the private sector, and showcasing scientific innovations that advance animal health and sustainability. She also emphasized the importance of indigenous knowledge and community-based conservation practices, recognizing their critical role in shaping sustainable futures.

As the conference explores its sub-themes, participants will examine the impact of climate change on animal welfare, biodiversity and habitat conservation, ethical and sustainable agriculture, and legislative frameworks that protect both animals and the environment. The program also includes learning sessions with local and indigenous communities, highlighting their sustainable practices and interactions with nature.

Dr. Njeri concluded by aligning the conference's theme with broader continental and global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063. She emphasized the importance of harmonizing initiatives and actions to advance the continent's welfare and sustainability goals. She expressed hope that the deliberations over the coming days would ripple across Africa and beyond, strengthening strategic partnerships and reinforcing collective commitment to animal welfare, environmental protection, and community livelihoods. The conference, she affirmed, is not merely a forum for discussion—but a turning point for decisive action. She then invited Mr. Wachira Kariuki to the stage to continue the exposition.



Wachira Kariuki

Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW)

Following Dr. Njeri's address, Mr. Wachira Kariuki of Africa Network for Animal Welfare continued the exposition by reinforcing the theme's central message: that inaction is not an option. He emphasized the need for proactive, interdisciplinary collaboration to advance animal welfare, calling for enhanced legal and policy frameworks, community empowerment, and innovative approaches tailored to local contexts.

Mr. Kariuki stressed that international frameworks must be grounded in localized, community-driven strategies to be truly effective. He urged participants to move beyond reactive responses and instead anticipate and shape future practices that align with ethical and sustainable standards. He reiterated that caring for animals and the environment ultimately

benefits humanity, and while such actions may appear altruistic, they are deeply interconnected with human well-being.

He called on delegates to embrace the theme not merely as a slogan but as a guiding principle that informs dialogue, shapes policy, and anchors the commitments and resolutions made during the conference. By prioritizing the protection of animals and ecosystems, he argued, Africa can lay the foundation for a more sustainable, resilient, and compassionate future.

Mr. Kariuki concluded with a heartfelt appeal for collective responsibility, urging all participants to work toward a future where all life flourishes in harmony with the natural environment. He reminded the audience that taking care of animals is not only a moral imperative but a shared duty that safeguards the continent's ecological and human legacy.



SPECIAL REMARKS





Tennyson Williams
Chair, Conference Organizing Committee;
Director, World Animal Protection

Mr. Tennyson Williams, Director for Africa at World Animal Protection and Chair of the Conference Organizing Committee, opened his remarks with a warm welcome to all delegates attending the 9th edition of the Africa Animal Welfare Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon. He began by acknowledging the tireless efforts of the organizing committee, inviting its members to stand in recognition of their year-long dedication to planning and executing the conference. He emphasized that the success of the event was the result of countless meetings, rigorous discussions, and a shared commitment to delivering a conference of substance and impact.

Mr. Williams took a moment to honor Mr. Josphat Ngyonyo, former Chief Executive of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), describing him as the intellectual force behind the conference's continued success. He praised Mr. Wambugu's vision and leadership, crediting him with helping shape the conference into the continental platform it has become.

Transitioning into his formal address, Mr. Williams expressed deep appreciation for the presence of delegates from across Africa and beyond whether attending in person or virtually. He highlighted the significance of hosting the conference in Francophone Central Africa for the first time, noting Cameroon's rich biodiversity, diverse landscapes, and cultural vibrancy. As Africa in Miniature, Cameroon offered an ideal setting to reflect on the continent's ecological wealth and the importance of protecting it.

Speaking on behalf of the organizing committee and World Animal Protection, Mr. Williams thanked the animal welfare community for its unified efforts to safeguard Africa's animals, which he described as integral to the continent's heritage and way of life. He reflected on the evolution of the conference since its inception in 2017, noting its transformation from a necessary conversation into a powerful movement that now brings together policymakers, scien-

tists, civil society, youth, and multilateral actors.

Mr. Williams recalled the momentum generated at the 8th edition in Nairobi, where animal welfare was increasingly recognized as a development, climate, and health issue. He cited tangible progress since that gathering, including Kenya's integration of animal welfare indicators into agricultural policy, and growing discourse in Uganda and Senegal around linking animal welfare to One Health and food systems. He also noted that regional economic communities are beginning to acknowledge the role of animal health and welfare in trade, food security, and public health.

He emphasized that this year's conference follows a major global milestone, the conclusion of the World Health Organization's pandemic agreement negotiations, which formally recognized the One Health approach. Mr. Williams credited Africa's animal welfare community for contributing to this achievement through years of advocacy, research, and storytelling. He congratulated stakeholders for elevating animal welfare to the global stage and affirmed that their work has made a meaningful impact. However, he stressed that recognition must now give way to action. The 2025 theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet, must serve as a blueprint for operationalizing One Health principles and embedding animal welfare into resilience and sustainability strategies. Mr. Williams reaffirmed World Animal Protection's commitment to supporting the conference's growth and long-term vision. He outlined the organization's efforts to promote humane and sustainable food systems and to challenge the commercialization of wildlife, which threatens biodiversity and public health.

Looking ahead, Mr. Williams urged delegates to ensure that the outcomes of the conference extend beyond the event itself. He called for alignment with broader policy platforms, including the Africa Climate Summit, the African Union's Union 7 in December 2025, and COP 30 in Belém, Brazil. He emphasized that animal welfare must be part of the solutions Africa brings to the global stage. In closing, Mr. Williams encouraged full participation, bold thinking, collaborative engagement, and practical recommendations. He expressed hope that the 9th edition of the conference would be remembered not only for its hospitality but for the transformative action plans, policy shifts, and partnerships it inspires. He extended heartfelt thanks to the organizing partners - ANAW, AUIBAR, UNEP, and the Government of Cameroon—for their dedication and collaboration.

Mr. Williams concluded with a powerful call to action: after eight years of thoughtful dialogue, the time has come to act. This year's conference must mark a shift from conversation to implementation, ensuring that Africa's animal welfare agenda continues to advance with purpose and impact.

Second African Climate Summit: Message From the Government Of Ethiopia



Dr. Zerubabel Tefera
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia

Dr. Zerubabel Tefera, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, delivered a special address on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia regarding the upcoming Second African Climate Summit. He began by expressing heartfelt gratitude to the people and government of Cameroon for their warm hospitality upon arrival, noting the vibrancy and welcoming spirit of the host city.

Dr. Tefera announced that the Second African Climate Summit will be held in Addis Ababa in September 2025, jointly organized by the Government of Ethiopia and the African Union. The summit is expected to convene over 45 heads of state, more than 25,000 delegates, and upwards of 50 side events, making it one of the continent's most significant gatherings on climate resilience and sustainable development. He shared his concern that, despite the scale and importance of the summit, no organization or network focused on animal welfare had yet registered to participate.

As a former Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Environment Programme, and one of the champions behind the UN resolution on animal welfare, environment, and sustainable development, Dr. Tefera emphasized that animal welfare must not be excluded from climate and environmental discourse. He recalled the pivotal moment during the Third Africa Animal Welfare Conference in Addis Ababa in 2019, where the decision was made to pursue a resolution that would formally integrate animal welfare into global environmental and development agendas. With UNEP scheduled to provide an update on the resolution's implementation, Dr. Tefera urged the community to walk the talk by ensuring their presence and contributions at the upcoming summit.

Dr. Tefera extended a direct invitation to the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), encouraging the organization to mobilize its network and participate actively in Addis Ababa. He offered his personal support to assist with registration and side event coordination, reaffirming his commitment to ensuring that animal welfare is reflected in the summit's outcomes, including the Addis Ababa Declaration.

He emphasized that progress in this space requires active engagement, not retreat. As a long-time attendee of the Africa Animal Welfare Conference, Dr. Tefera expressed his sense of belonging to the community and officially invited all stakeholders to take part in the summit. He concluded by expressing his eagerness to welcome delegates to Addis Ababa—a dynamic and rapidly evolving capital—and to host them in discussions that elevate animal welfare within Africa's climate and sustainability agenda.



African Union-InterAfrican Bureau For Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)



Dr. Huyam Salih
African Union-InterAfrican Bureau For Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

Speaking on behalf of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development and Blue Economy and Sustainable Development (ARBE) of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moses Vilikati, Dr. Huyam Salih conveyed her heartfelt greetings and deep gratitude to the host country, Cameroon for hosting the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference, convened in the vibrant city of Yaoundé, Cameroon.

On behalf of the African Union – InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), she also extended her heartfelt gratitude to partners including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) and to all African Union – InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), co-organizers, participants, and stakeholders, for making the conference possible.

She explained that over the years, Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) had grown to become a continental platform of great significance that brought together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and animal welfare advocates committed to advancing the welfare of animals and promoting environmental sustainability in Africa.

She cited that since its inception in Nairobi in 2017 to the previous conference in 2024, the conference had continued to reflect the evolving challenges, opportunities, and shared vision that underpin the conference partners' collective work. She pointed out that the conference produced key resolutions including calls to reform food systems for greater sustainability and animal welfare and enhance strategic partnerships and coordinated disaster interventions. She added that Member States were urged to prioritize the implementation and integration of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) into national policies, while promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management.

Dr. Salih mentioned that the 9th edition came at a critical juncture. Across the continent, they are witnessing challenges including biodiversity loss, climate shocks, unsustainable practices, and growing pressure on ecosystems. She emphasized that these realities demand urgent, inclusive, and transformative action.

She noted that the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet, was both timely and bold. She stated that it compelled delegates to reimagine sustainability through a more inclusive, holistic lens. She stated that it resonated with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035), the SDGs, and the Pan African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa 2035.

She asserted that these strategies recognize that Africa's development in the present and future depends on the health of animals, ecosystems, and communities. It calls delegates to take action to deepen the conferences' commitment, innovate our approaches, and center animal welfare as integral to environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and human well-being.

Dr. Salih mentioned that Africa was home to extraordinary biodiversity and rich indigenous knowledge systems. Yet, it is also among the most vulnerable regions to environmental degradation and climate change. She stated that it was imperative to act as it was not only ecological, but it was also ethical, economic, and generational. She expressed urgency in strengthening Africa's legal frameworks, scaling up sustainable agrifood systems, preserving habitats, and fostering inclusive policies that empower youth, women, and communities. These priorities are reflected in the conference sub-sub-themes and in the rich programme ahead.

She informed delegates that since AU-IBAR's inception in 1951 as a specialized technical office of the African Union for animal resources, AU-IBAR has championed animal health and welfare, as well as the sustainable utilization of these resources for the benefit of Africa's people. As AU-IBAR, they take pride in having spearheaded the development of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), a continental policy instrument that continues to guide Member States in advancing the animal welfare agenda. She noted that the alignment of national actions with AWSA and the broader regional efforts to integrate animal welfare into environmental, agricultural, and trade frameworks was growing.

Dr. Salih stated that AU-IBAR did not merely serve as a technical convenor, it actively supported the implementation of key resolutions and frameworks that shape the future of animal resources in Africa. Its leadership has been instrumental in the adoption of critical resolutions such as

the Dar es Salaam and Abidjan Declarations on Donkeys Now and in the Future.

She brought to focus a key element, that through its sustained collaboration with strategic partnerships, the conference has helped drive the adoption of critical resolutions; the adoption of the Animal Welfare, Environment and Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution at UNEA 5.2 in 2022, marking significant milestones in the advancement of animal welfare. The resolution, and the subsequent work around its implementation, underscores the interconnectedness of our planet and the urgency of collaborative, multisectoral actions.

She informed the meeting that AU-IBAR continues to champion continental actions informed by holistic, multisectoral and multidisciplinary lenses such as supporting One Health informed by the African Union Digital One Health information Policy and the associated Information Architecture Framework which has resulted into the development of the African Union Digital One Health platform that supports integration of OH data from various One Health Sectors for comprehensive and holistic evidence for decision making; the Pan African Programme for the eradication of PPR that also take a broader view of the challenge and catalyzes a broad coalition of actors in addressing it and other priority small ruminant diseases.

She stated that AU-IBAR was proud to be part of a movement that places animal welfare and environmental sustainability at the centre of our continental agenda. She stated that delegates would explore a set of compelling sub-themes from climate change impacts on animal populations, to community-led conservation models, to reforming legal and policy frameworks. These conversations must drive action in the upcoming week.

She encouraged delegates that as they engage in the deliberations, they should reaffirm the shared responsibility to safeguard our natural heritage not just for the animals under their care or the ecosystems they steward, but for the generations to come. She hoped that the conference would be a springboard for stronger regional cooperation, integrated policy reforms, and long-term investments that reflect their values as custodians of Africa's future.

She concluded by thanking the Honorable Minister and the Government of Cameroon for graciously hosting the important conference, UNEP and ANAW for their continued leadership in convening it, and to all delegates for finding time to be here. She encouraged them that they will not only engage in meaningful discussions but also enjoy your time, make new friends, and strengthen your professional networks, because, indeed, their networks are our net worth. She urged all to make the moment count.

She officially welcomed delegates to the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OFFICIAL OPENING





Government of Cameroon, Dr. Taiga, Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Government of Cameroon

The Honourable Dr. Taiga, Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, delivered the keynote address on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon.

The Minister began by warmly welcoming all participants to Yaoundé, The City of Seven Hills, and expressed his gratitude to the African Union-Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), the African Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and other technical and financial partners for their collective efforts in making the conference possible.

He noted that the ninth edition of the conference was being held under the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and the Environment for a Sustainable Future and a Resilient Planet. According to Dr. Taiga, this theme was not a mere slogan but the outcome of deep reflection on the urgent need for collective and co-ordinated global action. He emphasized that it called for a rethinking of the world's relationship with animals and nature, especially at a time when the planet faces unprecedented climate change.

Dr. Taiga highlighted the growing challenges posed by climate change, including rising sea levels, increasing global temperatures, degradation of arable land, depletion of ocean resources, and the threat of extinction facing nearly one million species. He observed that these developments have serious implications for Africa's food security, with rising food prices and the potential for humanitarian crises. Despite these challenges, he

reaffirmed Africa's potential as the world's second ecological lung, capable of reversing these negative trends through its rich biodiversity, dynamic youth, and indigenous knowledge systems.

The Minister cited several positive examples, including the adoption of the Abidjan Declaration in June 2025 on the illegal trade in donkey skins, the regional strategies for combating zoonotic diseases and the management of the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. He extended appreciation to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) for its continued support in Cameroon, through the provision of 250,000 doses of vaccines to fight Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), reinforcing Cameroon's leadership in disease control efforts.

While acknowledging the progress achieved, Dr. Taiga reminded delegates that much remained to be done. He pointed out that persistent challenges such as animal mistreatment, weak legal frameworks, the emergence of new diseases, inadequate research and innovation, and limited financial resources continue to hinder progress in biodiversity conservation and animal welfare in Africa.

He stressed that these issues should not be seen as inevitable but rather as a call for renewed, coordinated, and effective action. He urged African nations to seize the opportunity provided by the conference to strengthen integrated policies aligned with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He further emphasized the need to promote animal welfare as a lever for environmental justice, foster education, empower youth and women, encourage local innovation, and enhance legal frameworks for animal protection.

The Minister also reiterated that the African Animal Welfare Conference remains the premier continental platform for strategic dialogue, policy co-creation, promotion of local innovations, and community mobilization in favor of animal welfare and environmental protection. He expressed optimism that the three days of deliberations would be fruitful, as representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders discussed critical topics such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable food systems, legislation, and indigenous knowledge.

Dr. Taiga announced that the conference would also mark the launch of the National Assembly's Initiative on Animal Welfare, underscoring Cameroon's continued commitment to advancing animal welfare and environmental sustainability on the continent.

In conclusion, the Minister reaffirmed the Government of Cameroon's readiness to collaborate with all partners and stakeholders to build a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Africa.





SESSION ONE

Climate Change and Animal Welfare

The Negative Implications of Climate Change on Animal Population, Habitat, and Welfare



Dr. Kiming Ignatius Ngala

Dr. Kiming Ngala began his presentation by highlighting the escalating consequences of climate change across Africa's animal populations, linking human-induced greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation to rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. He explained that these environmental changes were causing long-term shifts in ecosystems and threatening animal survival through habitat loss, disease spread, and food scarcity.

He cited key examples of the shifts that could be seen across the continent. He noted that elephants migrate from Zimbabwe to Botswana due to water scarcity, mass livestock deaths in the Horn of Africa where approximately 13.2 million animals perished between 2020 and 2023 and the increasing wildfires endangering primates and carnivores in forest ecosystems. He explained that wildfires in parts of East and Southern Africa as well as coastal erosion along the shores of Cameroon, Mozambique, and Madagascar were noted as evidence of accelerating ecological degradation.

Dr. Ngala further described how extreme temperature and erratic precipitation patterns were disrupting breeding cycles, reducing reproductive success, and leading to higher mortality among young animals. He emphasized that climate change was altering disease dynamics, expanding the range of pathogens and parasites into new regions, and increasing outbreaks of vector-borne and tick-borne diseases such as babesiosis and leishmaniasis.

Indirectly, climate change was fragmenting habitats, driving human-wildlife conflicts, and undermining food security through declining forage availability. He observed the rising incidents of conflicts between herders and farmers in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and Turkana County in Kenya, which were linked to resource competition.

Dr. Ngala concluded his presentation by underscoring the dual challenge: while Africa contributed minimally to global emissions, it bore the greatest burden of their effects. He called for locally adapted policies that emphasize resilient ecosystems, integrated land management, and animal-inclusive adaptation planning, supported by research and early-warning systems for animal health and welfare.

A Just Transition to Equitable, Humane, and Sustainable Systems



Dr. Beryl Okumu
World Animal Protection

Dr. Okumu presented Global Strategy 2021–2030 of World Animal Protection, themed A New World for Animals, which promotes a transition away from industrial livestock production toward systems that are humane, sustainable, and climate-resilient. She described how intensive livestock systems, characterized by confinement, overcrowding, and high antibiotic use, cause immense animal suffering and contribute to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), zoonotic disease emergence, and greenhouse gas emissions.

She elaborated on the Just Transition White Paper, co-developed by a coalition of organizations including World Animal Welfare (WAP), the Center for Biological Diversity, Global Forest Coalition, and Brighter Green. The paper was developed through extensive consultation with more than 120 individuals and 72 organizations across 35 countries, including smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples. It calls for a collective movement to dismantle factory farming and replace it with equitable, humane, and sustainable food systems.

Dr. Okumu described the four characteristics of such systems including high welfare standards where animals' physical and behavioral needs are met, sustainable use of resources that benefits local communities, protection of biodiversity and use of climate-resilient breeds, and food sovereignty that involves all stakeholders. The Good Life Standards developed by WAP outline five key principles which include ensuring that animals live well from birth to death, animals are expressing behavior naturally, animals are treated humanely, and that there is fair value for farmers' work.

Dr. Okumu showcased WAP's research and advocacy work in Kenya, including:

- The Nyeri County AMR Project, which assessed how improved animal welfare practices reduce antibiotic use. The project's findings informed county legislation on animal welfare and AMR control.
- The Equitable, Humane, and Sustainable (EHS) Business Cases Project, conducted in partnership with Biovision Africa Trust, which developed tools for assessing agroecological farming systems. Ten pilot farms in Kiambu and Murang'a Counties were used to demonstrate viable humane and sustainable practices that could inform national policy and farmer training.

Dr. Okumu mentioned that WAP's advocacy work also involved hosting the Africa Protein Summit (2022–2024) and the Climate Change and Food Systems Transformation Roundtable (2024), which advanced dialogue on integrating welfare and sustainability. She enumerated policy impact such as the inclusion of animal welfare in Paris Agreement discussions, adoption of animal-inclusive climate strategies by several governments, and contribution to Kenya's Animal Health Bill (2025) and Animal Welfare and Protection Bill (2025).

In her closing remarks, Dr. Okumu issued a strong call to action for Member States to develop stronger Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets that include food-systems transformation, recognize traditional African food systems as models of sustainability, and redirect climate finance toward indigenous, small-scale farmers. She called on governments to resist the expansion of intensive livestock systems in Africa and to instead promote locally adapted, equitable, and humane models.

The Role of Donkeys in Supporting Community Resilience to Drought in Kenya and Ethiopia



Dr. David Obiero

Dr. David Obiero presented empirical findings from a British Academy-funded study examining the role of donkeys in sustaining livelihoods during periods of drought. The study used key informant interviews, community workshops, and policy analysis to document how donkeys underpin community resilience across Kenya and Ethiopia.

He explained that donkeys have been domesticated for over 6,000 years and were crucial during the Sahara's desertification as transport animals for agro-pastoral transition. During the 2020–2023 drought, which devastated East Africa's pastoral economies, donkeys were central to water access, household transport, and emergency response, ferrying humanitarian relief supplies into remote areas inaccessible to vehicles. Don-

keys, he stated, were lifelines that sustained families and enabled recovery through income generation and mobility.

However, he noted that this indispensable role remained invisible in policy frameworks. Donkeys, which support nearly 600 million vulnerable people worldwide, were often excluded from livestock policies, disaster-relief programs, and disease-surveillance systems. Interviewees reported negative cultural attitudes, where donkeys were seen as symbols of poverty, resulting in chronic underinvestment in their welfare.

The study further documented significant veterinary and training gaps. He explained that few professionals were equipped to handle donkey-specific conditions, and most treatments were inappropriately extrapolated from horses, sometimes fatally. Donkeys were also routinely left out of emergency aid targeting valuable species like cattle and camels, despite their role in sustaining those very herds.

Dr. Obiero elaborated on key recommendations. He advocated for the inclusion of donkeys in national drought and climate policies as critical infrastructure for resilience, the integration of donkeys in relief feed and veterinary programs, the incorporation of donkey medicine in veterinary curricula and CPD, the quantification of donkeys' contribution to GDP to strengthen policy advocacy and linking climate-adaptation funding to donkey-welfare initiatives.



QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Question 1

During the plenary discussion, delegates emphasized that the impact of climate change on animal welfare required both adaptation and mitigation strategies. They urged policymakers to design integrated frameworks that balance both priorities rather than viewing adaptation as Africa's only responsibility.

Response 1

Dr Ngala reaffirmed that Africa must indeed focus on adaptation first, but still adopt selective mitigation actions tailored to its development realities.

Question 2

Regarding food-system transformation, questions were raised about how plant-based transitions would affect smallholder farmers.

Response 2

Dr. Okumu clarified that WAP's recommendations primarily targeted industrial systems in high meat-consumption contexts, while smallholders were being supported through capacity building, local breed promotion, and humane, agroecological practices.

Question 3

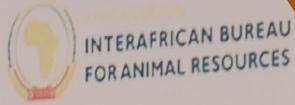
Questions also centered on antimicrobial resistance and veterinary capacity.

Response 3

Dr. Obiero noted that institutions such as the Kenya Veterinary Board and Brooke East Africa were working closely with universities to improve training and awareness. He stressed that effective AMR mitigation and donkey welfare improvement required continued collaboration among regulators, practitioners, and civil society.

The discussions reaffirmed that achieving a sustainable and resilient Africa required animal welfare to be embedded within climate policies, food-system reforms, and adaptation financing. Participants called for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration, improved veterinary education, targeted funding for smallholders and working equids, and increased recognition of animals' intrinsic and instrumental roles in resilience-building.

The session ended with a resounding call to make animal welfare and climate action inseparable pillars of Africa's development and environmental agenda.



THE 9TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

Theme: Strengthening Actions for animal welfare and Environment
Sustainable Future and Resilient Plan



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SESSION TWO

*Sustainable Agriculture and
Food Systems*

Echoes of the Ancestors: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge for Africa's Sustainable Future



Tozie Zokufa
CAAWO, South Africa

Mr. Tozie Zokufa began his presentation by emphasizing the central role of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) in shaping sustainable animal welfare and food systems in Africa. He described IEK as a cumulative body of knowledge, practices, and beliefs about the relationships between living beings and their environment, developed through centuries of observation and adaptation.

Unlike Western systems, he explained, IEK is holistic, locally adapted, and context-specific, passed down orally or through practice. He argued that with over 3,000 ethnic groups across Africa, each holding unique ecological knowledge systems, the continent possesses a wealth of practices balancing human, animal, and environmental wellbeing.

He highlighted the importance of traditional pastoralism, noting that animal welfare is not viewed as separate from livelihoods but as an intrinsic part of community survival. He gave examples such as rotational grazing to prevent overgrazing, ethnoveterinary medicine using plants and traditional healing, breeding resilient livestock, and sustainable water management in arid regions.

Mr. Zokufa also discussed the cultural practices where animals hold spiritual significance, featuring as protectors, messengers, or ancestral beings. Ceremonial roles such as cattle in Lobola reflect respect for animals, while taboos against harming certain species act as conservation measures. He acknowledged, however, that some practices, especially around transport and slaughter, require sensitive reform, and insisted that advocates must

understand their cultural meaning before pushing for change.

Mr. Zokufa further explored how Indigenous food systems strengthen sustainability through integrated crop and livestock farming, agrobiodiversity, climate resilience, and communal management of resources. He cautioned that the systems face growing threats from urbanisation, climate change, loss of land rights, education systems that undervalue indigenous knowledge, and policy gaps.

As a response, he called for bridging indigenous and modern approaches through participatory research, mutual knowledge exchange, integration of cultural contexts into modern standards, and legal reforms to recognize traditional systems. He illustrated this with African case studies such as the Maasai Livestock Health Program, which combined ethnoveterinary practices with modern care to reduce livestock disease by 30%, Fulani grazing corridors that reduced farmer-herder conflicts by 60%, and the Ngitili fodder reserve system in Tanzania that restored 500,000 hectares of land.

He also described how the Coalition of African Animal Welfare Organisations (CAAWO) was embedding indigenous knowledge into wider animal welfare discourse. According to Mr. Zokufa, the framework, rests on community partnerships that treat knowledge holders as equals, ethical documentation with proper attribution, advocacy for legal recognition, and dialogue between traditional custodians and scientists.

He announced CAAWO's plans to establish an Indigenous Knowledge Working Group, create a digital repository of best practices, develop community-based training programs, advocate for stronger legal protections, and facilitate cross-community exchanges.

Mr. Zokufa issued a call to action to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and educational institutions. He urged researchers to adopt participatory methodologies, policymakers to create enabling frameworks, practitioners to design culturally sensitive programs, and universities to integrate Indigenous knowledge into their curricula.

Tozie concluded his presentation by stating that the future of African animal welfare and food systems depends on honoring indigenous knowledge not as secondary but as a central, protected, and integrated part of modern approaches.

The Ordeal of Donkeys in Cameroon: A Zoom Into the Northern Regions



Christian Funwi Awantu
International Organization for Animal Protection

Christian Awantu, the National Project Coordinator of OIPA-Cameroon and researcher at IRAD, presented a sobering analysis of the plight of donkeys in the northern regions of Cameroon. He began by describing OIPA-Cameroon's role as part of the International Organization for Animal Protection, with a mandate that combines animal welfare and environmental protection. Since its registration in 2017, OIPA-Cameroon has worked through a volunteer-driven model with a vision of fostering compassion and care for all animals, while building partnerships with government, civil society, and communities.

Mr. Awantu explained that in Cameroon's northern regions, donkeys remain indispensable as draft animals in a landscape where agricultural mechanization is minimal. The areas, marked by long dry seasons, extreme heat, and drought, rely on donkeys for agricultural and household labor, transport, and income generation. Despite their contributions, donkeys are systematically undervalued compared to cattle and sheep.

He explained that Cameroon's donkey population stood at over 40,000, with 95 percent located in the north, owned largely by smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and entrepreneurs from the Fulani and Mbororo communities. Yet, the species receives far less protection and support than other livestock.

He outlined the immense socio-economic value of donkeys. They are essential for transporting farm produce, water, and household goods, provide manure as a natural fertilizer, and contribute to poverty reduction by lowering farming costs. They are used for in-

come generation through transport services, sales, and even tourist wagons, and have played life-saving roles during conflict by carrying women and children to safety. Mr. Awantu also acknowledged the darker side where donkeys are traded for their skins, sold for meat, and increasingly commodified in ways that undermine their welfare.

According to Mr. Awantu, donkey welfare in Cameroon is constrained by multiple intersecting factors which include feed shortages, the use of animals at inappropriate ages, uncontrolled breeding, poor housing, and inadequate healthcare. Financial barriers, such as lack of veterinary inputs and equipment, compound these challenges. Socio-cultural attitudes further devalue donkeys, seeing them as expendable labor. Environmental issues such as improper disposal of carcasses spread disease, while weak enforcement of animal welfare policy leaves donkeys vulnerable to exploitation.

Mr. Awantu proceeded to discuss OIPA-Cameroon's interventions. Through education and advocacy, the organization has sensitized over 6,500 students and trained 70 teachers in 23 communities to integrate animal welfare into education. In anti-cruelty efforts, OIPA-Cameroon has rescued more than 40 donkeys and trained 20 local donkey champions to lead welfare advocacy in their communities. A flagship intervention is the deployment of mobile veterinary clinics, which have so far treated over 6,000 donkeys while educating owners on welfare practices.

He concluded by stressing the contradiction at the heart of donkey welfare. Mr. Awantu stated that while communities depend heavily on these animals for survival, very little is invested in their wellbeing. The growing pressure from the international donkey skin trade intensifies the risk of overexploitation.

Mr. Awantu called for coordinated multi-stakeholder action involving government, veterinary professionals, researchers, and civil society to secure both the welfare and productivity of donkeys. He invited stakeholders to support OIPA-Cameroon through funding, partnerships, technical assistance, and advocacy to ensure sustainable protection for working donkeys.

Sustainable Culling Of Farm Animals



Douglas Wolhuter
NSPCA, South Africa

Mr. Douglas Wolhuter, the National Chief Inspector and Manager of the NSPCA Wildlife Protection Unit in South Africa, delivered a compelling presentation on the crisis surrounding captive tigers in the country. He began by providing context to the issue within the broader mandate of the NSPCA, which seeks to ensure animal welfare protection across species. In South Africa, however, the legal framework has created major loopholes that leave exotic animals like tigers largely unprotected.

Mr. Woulter explained that while South Africa has national legislation such as the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004) and its associated Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations, as well as international commitments under CITES, these instruments only apply to indigenous species. Because tigers are not native to South Africa, they fall outside the protections of NEMBA and TOPS. This leaves the Animals Protection Act of 1962 as the only instrument that applies to tigers, and even then, it only intervenes when there are clear welfare concerns. This legal vacuum has facilitated a booming but poorly regulated industry in tiger breeding, trade, and exploitation.

He highlighted how tiger cubs are frequently exhibit-

ed in public spaces, advertised for sale on social media platforms, or trafficked under the guise of other animal trades. The lack of regulation has led to widespread animal welfare abuse including poor hygiene and nutrition, inadequate shelter and space, lack of enrichment, and untreated health issues. Tigers are often denied the ability to express natural behaviors and are subjected to conditions that cause stress, neglect, and suffering. Permit officials, Mr. Woulter stressed, often whitewash cases, ignoring welfare considerations when granting authorizations.

Mr. Woulter described how practices such as fostering for the pet trade and trophy hunting have created a rapidly expanding industry with little oversight. In some provinces, such as the North West, hunting of tigers occurs with virtually no regulation. Beyond animal welfare issues, the lack of legislative clarity also facilitates international trafficking. He revealed how CITES restrictions are bypassed, with tiger skins hidden among donkey skins in export bales, and tiger derivatives such as tiger glue and tiger cake entering markets disguised as lion parts or other products.

The implications extend beyond animal welfare to the integrity of conservation and trade monitoring systems. Douglas emphasized that the justice system in South Africa remains slow and ill-equipped to deal with wildlife crime. Even when violations are identified, prosecutions often lag, creating opportunities for offenders to continue operating. He argued that technology must advance to keep pace with criminal innovation, and judicial processes need reform to enable the fast-tracking of wildlife crimes.

In conclusion, Mr. Woulter underscored the urgent need for legislative reform to close the gaps in exotic animal protection. He called for policymakers, enforcement agencies, and civil society to recognize the risks posed by unchecked tiger exploitation - both for the animals themselves and for the credibility of South Africa's conservation commitments. Without decisive action, the consumptive use of tigers under inadequate laws will continue to fuel cruelty, trafficking, and illicit trade.

Progress Of Cage Free Chicken Farming Campaigns In Africa



Aurelia Adhiambo
Africa Lead, Open Wing Alliance

Ms. Aurelia Adhiambo delivered a thought-provoking presentation on the development of a resilient cage-free ecosystem in Africa. She began by framing the issue not only as a challenge but also as a tremendous opportunity. The push for cage-free systems in Africa, she argued, must be seen through a lens that acknowledges the continent's distinct socio-economic realities and its unique trajectory compared to other regions.

Drawing on global perspectives, Ms. Adhiambo contrasted Africa's position with Asia and Europe. In Asia, the scale of industrial production and consumer-driven reforms has shaped the cage-free agenda, while Europe has been largely defined by strong policy frameworks and strict welfare regulations. Africa, however, cannot replicate these paths. Instead, it must craft its own model - one rooted in resilience, inclusivity, and a deeper appreciation of its structural and cultural contexts.

Central to Ms. Adhiambo's argument was the idea that cage-free transformation is not a single-issue campaign but an ecosystem that requires contributions from multiple actors. Producers, corporations, consumers, financial institutions, governments, and advocates all play interdependent roles. Neglecting one segment risks weakening the entire system. For instance, even with consumer demand,

progress will falter without supportive financing mechanisms or corporate commitments.

Ms. Adhiambo underscored the complexities advocates must navigate in the African context. Advocacy cannot ignore economic resilience, food safety and security, market access, or the One Health framework that integrates human, animal, and environmental health. If advocacy strategies disregard these realities, they risk being dismissed as elitist or impractical. Instead, advocates must ground their work in the lived experiences of farmers, businesses, and consumers.

She then introduced the notion of a tale of two markets, emphasizing the divide between formal and informal systems. Formal markets include supermarkets, hotels, and exporters, where regulatory frameworks and corporate accountability are stronger. Informal markets, on the other hand, consist of local vendors, small shops, and unchained restaurants that serve the majority of African consumers. Both markets are critical and neglecting informal systems would mean overlooking the vast majority of poultry trade and consumption across the continent.

To drive progress, Ms. Adhiambo identified five major levers for a cage-free future including producer empowerment, corporate leadership, consumer education, supportive financing, and policy reform. She emphasized that these levers must work in synergy to create change that is both resilient and sustainable. A piecemeal approach, focusing only on one or two levers, will not achieve meaningful transformation.

She concluded with a powerful call for strategic collaboration. The African cage-free movement, she insisted, must remain ecosystem-focused, context-specific, and rooted in collaboration across producers, corporations, advocates, and policymakers. Only by bringing these actors together can Africa build a cage-free future that is both humane and resilient, safeguarding animal welfare while strengthening livelihoods and food systems.



Innovating for Impact: New Frontiers in Advancing Farmed Fish Welfare in Africa



Wasseem Emam
Ethical Seafood Research (ESR), UK

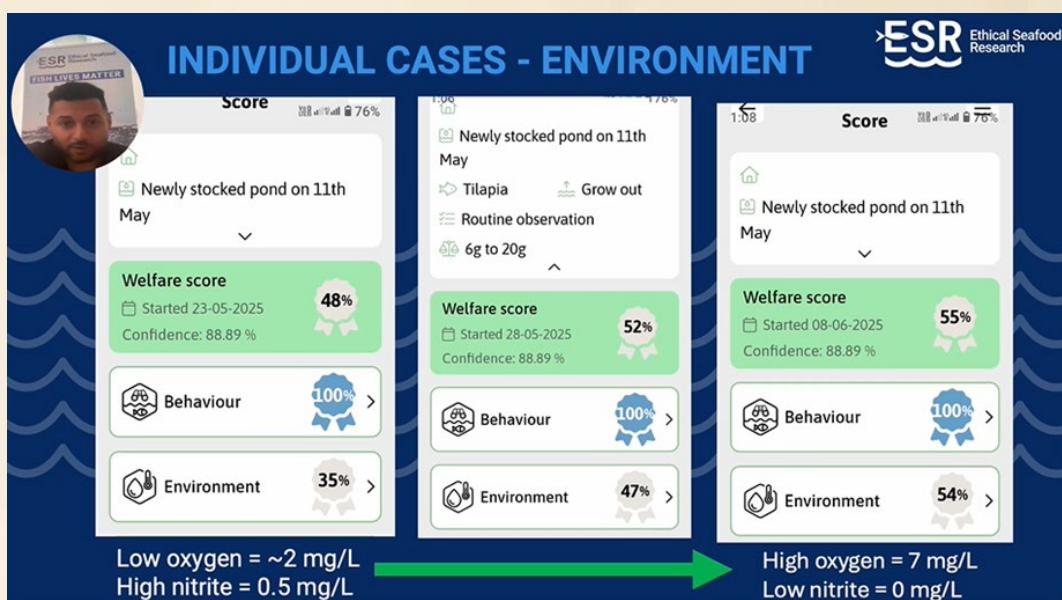
Mr. Wasseem Emam began by thanking partners for their commitment in convening the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) across nine editions. He noted that aquatic animals are often excluded from animal welfare debates, even though their welfare is closely tied to farmers' livelihoods, consumer well-being, food security, and ecosystem sustainability. ESR was therefore pleased to share its progress in developing technological solutions to improve the welfare of farmed fish, particularly tilapia, in Egypt and Kenya—the two countries where its work has been most focused.

He explained that aquaculture is the fastest-growing food sector globally, and in Africa tilapia is the dominant farmed species, often referred to as the “poor man’s protein” due to its affordability. Egypt produces 70 percent of all farmed fish in Africa and is the third largest producer of tilapia globally after China and Indonesia. While

aquaculture on the continent is still relatively new and less intensive compared to other regions, this presents an opportunity to integrate fish welfare practices early into its growth. ESR, founded in 2022, was created to fill a critical gap, as very little had been done to address the welfare of aquatic animals. With offices in Egypt, Kenya, Spain, and the UK, ESR's focus has been on applied research, training, policy engagement, and farmer-led interventions. For example, ESR contributed to the Zanzibar aquaculture strategy, which was adopted by the Ministry of Fisheries and integrates fish welfare as a priority area.

Mr. Emam highlighted ESR's collaboration with FAI Farms, a UK-based consultancy in food systems, to develop a Tilapia Welfare App. This innovative tool allows technicians to assess farms on indicators such as fish health, behavior, environment, and nutrition. The app generates welfare scores and provides tailored recommendations to farmers on how to improve practices. In 2024, more than 4,000 assessments were carried out across 1,000 farms in Egypt, covering roughly 15 percent of the country's aquaculture and involving an estimated 260 million fish. Farmers who engaged consistently with the app demonstrated significant improvements in practices such as feeding and water management, which translated into better welfare scores over time.

He shared evidence from farms that had been visited repeatedly, particularly in October just before harvest. These farms showed moderate to good improvements in welfare scores, with positive changes in feeding practices and water management reflected in the results. Beneath the scores were concrete behavioral shifts by farmers including adjustments to feeding schedules, water use, and disease management. Recurring challenges were also documented. Many farms struggled with water management, underfeeding, and disease outbreaks. Environmental conditions, especially during



Fish welfare improvement scores on the Tilapia Welfare App

the hot season, caused rapid fluctuations in water quality, with farmers lacking access to testing kits and relying only on visual observations. This led to poor oxygen levels, high ammonia, and fluctuating temperatures that negatively affected fish welfare. ESR's intervention, through the provision of testing kits and training, helped farmers to routinely monitor water and respond appropriately. One farm, for instance, initially recorded a welfare score of just 48% due to poor water conditions. After using the water testing kit routinely and applying the app's recommendations, such as pumping fresh water from another source, dissolved oxygen levels rose and nitrate levels dropped to safer levels, resulting in a clear improvement in welfare.

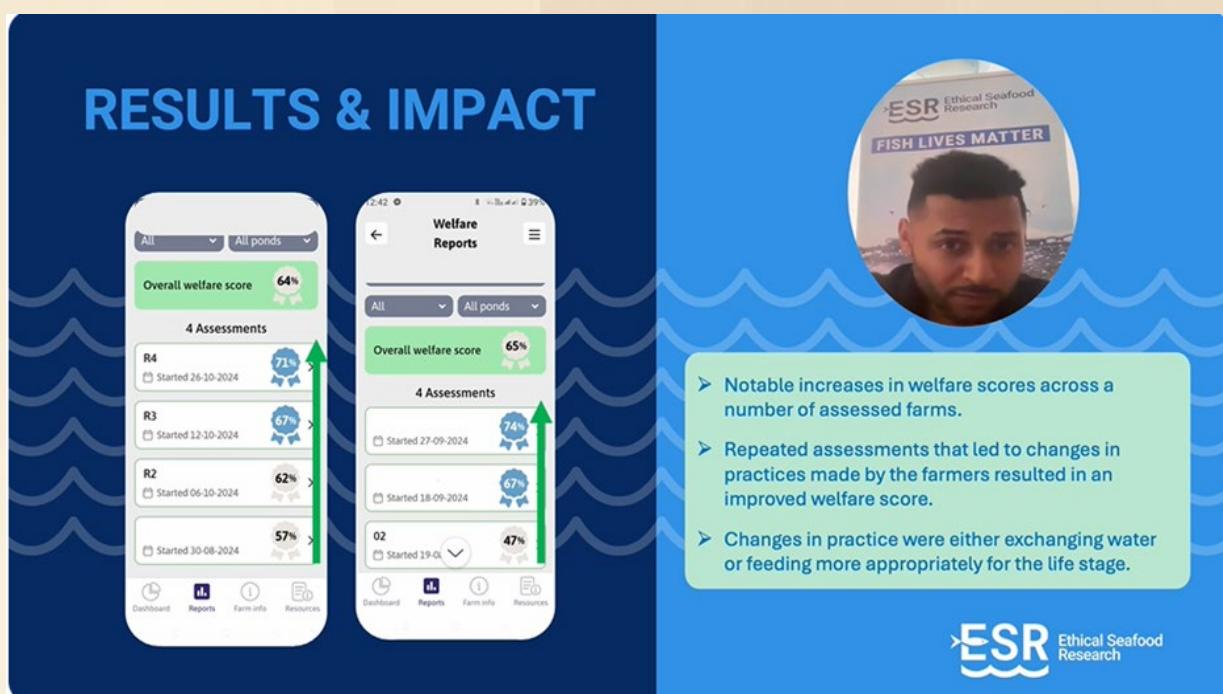
Behavioral indicators, such as fish responses to feed, were among the least understood by farmers but showed the most potential for change. Repeated visits and visual training helped farmers identify stress and welfare issues more accurately, and many began asking questions out of genuine interest. ESR now sees this as an opportunity to develop more behavior-based training materials, including videos and visuals, to enhance farmer capacity.

Mr. Emam informed delegates that in Kenya, ESR adapted its approach by working with government extension officers, who are mandated to visit farmers regularly. Officers were trained on how to use the Tilapia Welfare App and integrate assessments into their work, which also allowed them to provide evidence of performance to their supervisors. Most of this work was focused around Lake Victoria counties. Although the project only began in April 2024, results have already been encouraging, with higher average welfare scores than in Egypt, reflecting strong early adoption.

Mr. Emam noted that one key lesson in Kenya was that formal calls to county directors or extension officers were often ineffective. What worked instead was sending detailed WhatsApp messages to both officers and directors, and creating incentives; for example, allowing directors with the highest number of completed assessments to retain the water testing kits. Consistent training and follow-up, both physically and virtually, proved critical.

He emphasized that welfare thresholds must remain grounded in local conditions, especially since natural water sources can have unique characteristics, such as naturally high nitrates. Frameworks must be flexible to avoid overwhelming farmers or making them feel judged. Instead, the focus should be on building awareness and confidence. Farmers who understood behavioral indicators, for instance, became more proactive and motivated to improve.

Looking ahead, ESR plans to continue training farmers and extension officers, expand access to testing kits, and explore farmer-led certification schemes. These steps, Mr. Emam argued, will advance the One Welfare approach by simultaneously improving fish welfare, strengthening farmer livelihoods, and reducing environmental impacts. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing that fish welfare must become an integral part of Africa's aquaculture agenda. Even small interventions, such as improved water quality monitoring, can generate major welfare and productivity gains. Wasseem closed by thanking ESR's collaborators including FAI Farms, AquaVET Egypt, University of Kafr El-Sheikh, KEMFRI, Royal Holloway University of London, and most importantly, the farmers in Egypt and Kenya who continue to drive this change.



Fish welfare improvement scores on the Tilapia Welfare App



AFRICA ANIMAL WILFRE
CONFERENCE

UN
environment
programme



INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

ANAW
AFRICA NETWORK
FOR ANIMAL WILFRE

THE 9TH AFRICA ANIMAL WILFRE CONFERENCE

Theme: Strengthening Actions for animal welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Plan



SESSION THREE

**Beyond Instinct: Rethinking
Animal Sentience Across
Species**

PANEL DISCUSSION



Wachira Kariuki
Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW)

The panel discussion on Animal Sentience opened with a short video on animal sentience that captured the audience's attention. The Moderator, Wachira Kariuki, invited participants to describe their impressions of the video in one word. Responses were elicited such as welfare, happy animals, playfulness, joy, wellbeing, manipulation, humans, one welfare, domestic animals, holistic, and freedom. These responses reflected the emotional range and consciousness visible in animals and set the stage for a deeper discussion on animal sentience.



Susan Millward
Animal Welfare Institute

From what has been said and relating to the topic of animal sentience, how do human beings relate with animals?

The panelists agreed that animals have feelings and emotions and that they can perceive, express, and respond to their surroundings. They noted that animals display joy, pain, empathy, suffering, and even companionship. Philip Lymbery described the video as "uplifting," saying it showed animals expressing the joy of life when given the opportunity to do so freely. This, he added, was a strong demonstration that animals can experience pleasure and happiness when allowed to live in environments that support their natural behavior.



Josphat Ngonyo
Former CEO - ANAW



Dr. Raphael Kinoti
Brooke East Africa

What is a common public perspective about animal sentience?



Zerubabel Getachew
Ethiopia

Nkamunu Patita shared that while many people know animals can feel pain and suffer, the opportunity lies in deepening understanding and empathy. Companion animals, she noted, are the clearest example of shared emotions between humans and animals. She emphasized embracing a One Health, One Welfare, One Compassion approach that recognizes kindness and respect to animals as essential to human and environmental wellbeing. Patita also referred to research from Amboseli on elephant behavior showing mourning rituals among elephants-remaining around their dead for days-as an indicator of emotional depth. Other species, including fish, exhibit similar awareness. Naming animals, she added, strengthens bonds between people and animals, fostering empathy.

Josphat Ngonyo reflected on his experience living and working closely with animals, sharing that the animals he cared for would run towards him when they saw him-a sign of familiarity and emotional connection. He reminded the audience that science has already established



Patita Caroline Mkamunu
Community Leader

that animals are sentient beings and that this reality should shape how societies handle farming, research, and wildlife management. Recognizing animal feelings, he said, is at the core of humane relationships with animals.

How can we then foster understanding through knowledge dissemination, skills development, and attitude, and has the public been informed of this evidence?

Susan Milward appreciated that the participants in the room already understood animal sentience but emphasized the importance of extending this awareness to the wider public through humane education. Speaking on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), she explained that their humane education programs reach school children and youth, teaching respect for animals, nature, and each other. This includes integrating humane education into school curricula, developing lesson plans, offering scholarships, and providing incentives for students pursuing animal-related studies.

Ms. Milward stressed that humane education must be practiced by example: "We cannot ask people to be kind to animals if we are unkind to them ourselves and unkind to each other." She also discussed AWI's work in educating people on laboratory and farm animal welfare, ensuring reduced suffering and improved welfare. The organization is further exploring the effectiveness of humane education to determine if it reaches the right age groups and if strategies need adjustment. She commended ANAW for complementing similar work in Africa, adding that humane education, leadership by example, and rewarding compassion will help expand the understanding of animal sentience across families, schools, and communities.

Dr. Raphael Kinoti added a cultural and moral dimension, referencing a story from religious texts about a man who whipped his donkey when it stopped moving, reminding the audience that donkeys continue to serve people even in modern society. "Perhaps the donkey was just having a bad day," he said, drawing laughter while emphasizing that animals, too, have feelings. He suggested that religious and cultural forums could be powerful platforms for promoting compassion toward animals, as both the Bible and Quran contain teachings that value animal welfare.

What role does legislation, cultural and religious beliefs play in advancing and recognizing animal sentience?

Josphat Ngonyo quoted Proverbs 12:10, which links righteousness with kindness to animals, and shared a Quranic story of a woman who was blessed for showing compassion to a thirsty dog. He highlighted that many African communities celebrate animals in dance and storytelling, reflecting the deep ties between culture and respect for life. He underscored that legislation is vital in enforcing standards for humane treatment and embedding animal sentience into governance systems.

Zerubabel Getachew pointed out that animal sentience is

an important policy dimension, particularly in food systems transformation efforts such as those under the UN Food Systems initiative in Ethiopia. He explained that sustainable food systems cannot exist without recognizing the interconnectedness of humans, animals, and the environment which is the essence of the One Health approach. Without acknowledging animal sentience, he warned, animal welfare becomes difficult to achieve, which in turn undermines human and environmental health.

The panel recalled that animal sentience has been recognized in law in some parts of the world, beginning with the European Union in 1997, after extensive lobbying led by Peter Roberts, the founder of Compassion in World Farming. This marked a turning point in global animal welfare advocacy. The panel also referenced the 6th Africa Animal Welfare Conference held in Botswana, where a resolution was adopted recognizing animal sentience in policy discussions on regenerative agriculture and sustainable development. Panelists shared that efforts are now underway to table a resolution on animal sentience at the United Nations, aiming to institutionalize it across multiple sectors globally.

What is the policy implication of animal sentience and how is it applicable within the international boundary?

Mr Getachew explained that member states increasingly recognize that animal welfare is integral to achieving sustainable development goals. He emphasized the power of advocacy and awareness-raising, noting that events like the Africa Animal Welfare Conference play a crucial role in informing and influencing policymakers. Civil society organizations, he said, are instrumental because they have the technical expertise and grassroots reach needed for policy formulation. He also stressed that policy influence takes time, requiring persistence, education, and hands-on exposure, such as taking government officials to parks to help them better appreciate animal welfare issues.

How does respect of animal sentience advance sustainable development?

Philip argued that many forms of animal cruelty stem from industrial agriculture and exploitative practices. He observed that humanity cannot end hunger, combat climate change, or restore ecosystems without addressing the welfare of animals. "We cannot end human hunger without ending factory farming and respecting animal sentience," one panelist stated. They added that recognizing sentience is at the heart of the One Health approach, linking animal welfare, human wellbeing, and environmental sustainability.

In closing, Mr Getachew urged participants to read and understand published materials on animal sentience and use them to advance the agenda within their spheres of influence. He called for collective action to embed animal sentience into policy, law, and culture, saying, "Let's make kindness a central tenet of our societies - because the future will be brighter for all of us when we truly recognize and respect the sentience of animals."



SESSION FOUR

United Nations Environment
Programme (UNEP)

Session Moderator: Isaiah Otieno



Isaiah Otieno
UNEP

Mr. Isaiah Otieno began by acknowledging Mr. Josphat Ngonyo for his efforts and the good work he put in as he served at the helm of the previous eight conferences. He also appreciated Josiah Ojwang who took his place.

Mr. Otieno stated that since 2017 the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) has brought together Africans from across the continent. The conference branched out to regions in order to reach other Major Groups and Stakeholders of civil society and involve them in the deliberations. Concerns had been raised that UNEP activities were geared only towards East Africa. He relayed that the conference was hosted in Ethiopia, Ghana, Botswana, Rwanda, Kenya and presently Cameroon. The previous conference was hosted in Nairobi, Kenya where a review of the conference was done successfully.

He stated that the conference had indeed contributed to the work of UNEP through the Animal Welfare, Environment and Sustainable DevelopmentA Nexus Resolution. The conference had strengthened networks across Africa. He noted that the conference had great

convening power and encouraged delegates to interact with people and change contacts as partnerships and collaboration on projects may arise as a result of the event.

He informed delegates that UNEP is a normative organization - it does not run projects, it has the power to bring people together. He explained that the Civil Society Unit (CSU) is housed under the Governance Affairs Office - the secretariat, as they engage with Member States and civil society organizations that are accredited to UNEP. A key role of the Governance Affairs Office is to guide civil society organizations and ensure that working with UNEP is made as easy as possible.

Mr. Otieno also explained that the office was in charge of accrediting organizations that are interested in working with UNEP as Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS), for instance, in terms of contributing to the policy making process. Major Groups are able to make statements, be in the room where member states are making decisions, and have access to the unedited documents where one can prepare for the next meetings. He stated that however, non-accredited organizations can work with UNEP but in a limited capacity. Once an organization is accredited and they automatically join the Nine Major Groups and Stakeholders, a system that was passed and established in Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

He went ahead and invited the team at the Civil Society Unit (CSU) to give presentations. He introduced the team including David Ombisi, Edwike Nyauncho, Peter Kirongothi and the Major Group and Stakeholders - Africa Region Facilitator, David Munene. He encouraged the delegates to intermingle and participate interactively during the conference as he welcomed the team to give their presentations.



Preparations Towards UNEA-7 And The Role Of Major Groups And Stakeholders



David Ombisi
UNEP

David Ombisi began by introducing himself as the Officer In Charge of the Civil Society Unit at the Governance Affairs Office in UNEP. He explained that previously he was within the Africa Office and was managing the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN). He shared his apologies that he was not present at the conference.

Mr. Ombisi took delegates through the preparations for UNEA 7 particularly focusing on the engagement of the Major Groups and Stakeholders. He stated that UNEP is committed to partnering with the civil society actors as they play a major role. They facilitate engagement and support through transparency and inclusiveness in the intergovernmental decision making process at UNEP.

He mentioned that the Civil Society Unit supports civil society actors. UNEP is mandated to collaborate with non-governmental and nonprofit civil society organizations and networks through the Major Group and Stakeholders approach to ensure effective broad and balanced participation and representation of the civil society actors. He stated that organizations accredited to UNEP are essential partners to UNEP's mission and mandate as they contribute to the formulation and implementation of UNEP decisions and resolutions including UNEP's program of work and medium-term strategy.

He explained that UNEP has a Medium-Term Strategy that is renewed after every four years and it includes UNEP's Program Of Work which is renewed every two years. The interaction between UNEP and civil society has grown significantly in the past decade over the last 10 years and currently there are over 1,200 organiza-

tions that are accredited to UNEP.

He stated that UNEP works through the nine Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS). The concept of the MGS was established at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and this is enshrined in the outcome document Agenda 21. He informed the delegates that the MGS include nine Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) including business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous peoples and their communities, local authorities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), scientific and technological communities, women, and workers and trade unions. For each of these groups and stakeholders, two co-facilitators were identified.

Mr. Ombisi spoke about the role of the MGS as it relates to UNEA and by extension to UNEP. One of the key objectives is agenda setting which involves shaping UNEA's priorities. One of the contributions of MGS is to contribute to the consultations on identifying a theme for UNEA. He explained that every UNEA session has a theme that is agreed upon through consultations involving Member States and MGS, who provide critical input into the selection of the theme for each upcoming UNEA session. This is to ensure that global priorities are aligned with the concerns of the MGS.

He explained that the MGS also contribute to the tabling and negotiation of UNEA resolutions. Every UNEA session comes up with resolutions that are adopted and MGS play a key role particularly in influencing Member States to champion and table specific resolutions to UNEA making sure that the interests of the MGS are taken into account in the process of tabling and negotiating these resolutions.

Mr. Ombisi highlighted that there are also other opportunities to influence as MGS participate at the official Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). Mr. Ombisi stated that the secretariat encourages MGS to reach out to Member States and be able to ensure that their concerns are also taken into consideration during the negotiations.

He stated that the MGS have an opportunity to make their voice heard in several important ways.

MGS are able to contribute by making statements, providing comments, sharing views on ongoing negotiations, engaging in informal lobbying, and organizing side events at the Green Room held during UNEA. During UNEA sessions as part of opportunities for engagement, UNEP provides a space where MGS can propose or participate in side events which focus on a variety of environmental topics.

A dedicated space, the Green Room, which is a physical and virtual platform, is allocated for use by MGS throughout the week of UNEA. He expounded that this was a space where MGS exchange views, host events, hold discussions as UNEA progresses. It also serves as an informal space designed to amplify voices from civil society and provides opportunities to foster collaboration and bring forward innovative ideas and solutions in terms of advancing the agenda and the theme of the UNEA session.

Mr. Ombisi stated that during UNEA, the Green Room is used for morning briefings, where updates will be provided on the progress of various resolutions and ongoing discussions. These briefings, he explained, are intended to help MGS stay informed, decide which discussions to follow, and coordinate effectively to influence outcomes.

Mr. Ombisi announced that the call for UNEA 7 side events was open with the deadline set for October 30, 2025. He encouraged delegates coming from different organizations to take the opportunity to submit applications if they intend to organize a side event and participate in UNEA. The side events also offered alternative spaces for deeper discussions on pressing environmental issues. Mr. Ombisi encouraged interested organizations to submit their applications in time.

He expounded on the role of MGS during consultations. The consultation process is where Member States table draft resolutions that have to be agreed before being adopted. He called for civil society organizations to apply to be accredited as a MGS and informed delegates that a session on accreditation would be shared later during the sessions.

Mr. Ombisi stated that once the drafts have been tabled by Member States, they could be accessed on the UNEP Resolutions Portal. However, this only applied to accredited MGS only. Access can only be granted to non-accredited organizations through an organization that is accredited. He encouraged representatives of organizations that were not accredited to apply for

accreditation so that they could benefit from being able to access documents as they participate in UNEP organized meetings.

He explained that the UNEA resolution process was a detailed process where Member States tabled draft resolutions that would be negotiated by other Member States before adoption. The resolutions proposed were clustered around topics such as climate change, biodiversity, pollution, and chemicals. He stated that this makes the work easier and presents opportunities for synergies between the draft resolutions. Co-facilitators are identified from each UNEP region to lead the consultations.

Mr. Ombisi stated that Member States were already engaged in discussions on various issues, including the draft ministerial declaration. He added that this is also the stage where Member States begin to express their intent or wish to table draft resolutions. He said that, in addition, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and its subcommittees were in informal consultations. The CPR, under the guidance of the CPR Chair, facilitates in-depth consideration of draft documents in preparation for the upcoming open-ended CPR session.

Mr Ombisi emphasized the role of the Annual Subcommittee Meeting, which convenes a few months prior to the UNEA sessions. He noted that the 2025 Annual Subcommittee Meeting would be held from September 1-5, 2025 in Nairobi. According to Mr. Ombisi, this meeting served as the formal platform where Member States table - or signal their intention to table - draft resolutions. He stated that substantive discussions around the resolutions begin during the Annual Subcommittee Meeting.

Mr. Ombisi further explained that the Annual Subcommittee Meeting also reviews progress made in implementing previous resolutions. He said it proposes recommendations for continued consultations on draft resolutions, which are guided by the appointed core facilitators. He added that, subject to the agreement of the proponents - namely, the Member States who table the draft resolutions, ownership of these drafts are then transferred to the co-facilitators appointed for each resolution.

He noted that the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) meeting, which takes place one week before the UNEA sessions, serves as the next major step in the resolution pro-

cess. Mr. David Ombisi explained that the OECPR meeting is where detailed negotiations take place. He stated that the meeting involves word-by-word, line-by-line review of the draft resolutions, with particular attention to the language and specific provisions. He noted that resolutions agreed upon during the OECPR are then forwarded to UNEA for final negotiation and adoption.

He further elaborated that prior to the OECPR, proponents or co-facilitators present the latest drafts of resolutions to the committee for further consideration. According to Mr. Ombisi, these documents may include various text proposals submitted by Member States, often indicated in brackets. He clarified that bracketed text reflects areas still under negotiation, while unbracketed text signifies consensus.

He stated that if consensus is reached during these negotiations, the draft resolution is then transmitted to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) for formal adoption. However, Mr. Ombisi noted that if consensus is not achieved during the OECPR, UNEA establishes a new negotiation body known as the Committee-of-the-Whole to finalize the discussions. He explained that even within the Committee-of-the-Whole, if agreement is not reached in plenary, contact groups are formed to focus on specific draft resolutions. According to Mr. Ombisi, these contact groups then continue the detailed negotiations necessary to reach consensus.

He then emphasized the importance of active engagement by MGS during the negotiation process. He stated that it is crucial for MGS focal points to closely follow each stage of the negotiations and report back to their respective constituencies on the progress being made. He further encouraged MGS to use the opportunity to engage with Member States - particularly those sponsoring specific draft resolutions - through their focal points. According to Mr. Ombisi, this outreach is essential to ensure that the interests of MGS are taken into account before the draft resolutions are finalized and adopted.

Mr. Ombisi explained that the participation of accredited MGS in the negotiation process is subject to the discretion of the chair and co-facilitators, and contingent upon agreement by Member States. He stated that, when permitted, MGS representatives may attend and listen to the proceedings during plenary sessions, meetings of the Committee-of-the-

Whole, or contact group discussions.

He noted that while negotiations are primarily led by Member States, it has been customary for chairs to allow MGS to make general statements once Member States have concluded their interventions. According to Mr. Ombisi, this practice ensures that the voices of civil society and other stakeholders are heard and considered in the negotiation process.

Mr. Ombisi stated that accredited MGS may request that their general comments on draft resolutions be posted on the UNEA resolution portal. He explained that this allows MGS to submit written interventions, which can then be made available for Member States to consider during the final stages of negotiation.

However, Mr. Ombisi clarified that MGS cannot make concrete textual proposals directly from the floor during line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph negotiations. Instead, he emphasized that MGS are encouraged to channel their textual proposals through interested or supportive Member States. The Member States, if in agreement with the proposed text, may then formally introduce it on behalf of the MGS or civil society representatives.

He reiterated the importance of this approach, noting that it ensures the perspectives of MGS are considered within the formal negotiation framework. Mr. Ombisi also encouraged co-facilitators leading the negotiations to organize early consultations with MGS to foster inclusive dialogue and strengthen stakeholder engagement.

Mr. David Ombisi noted that throughout the negotiation week, there are opportunities for co-facilitators to meet with representatives of MGS. He stated that, upon request, co-facilitators can make themselves available for consultations to hear the views and concerns of civil society representatives.

According to Mr. Ombisi, this engagement helps ensure that co-facilitators are aware of stakeholder perspectives when guiding discussions on draft resolutions, and allows them to take these concerns into account as much as possible. He recalled that this approach was successfully implemented during UNEA-6, where MGS nominated resolution focal points to present common views on the drafts. Mr. Ombisi expressed confidence that this model could be replicated for UNEA-7.

He explained that MGS focal points engage in consultations with their constituencies to consolidate shared positions. When reaching out to co-facilitators, these

focal points present unified views on behalf of civil society. Mr. Ombisi added that a list of focal points from Major Groups was made available for each resolution during UNEA-6, and a similar list will be provided for UNEA-7. This list will also be published on the UNEA-7 resolutions portal.

Mr. Ombisi provided a reminder of the theme for UNEA 7, Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet. He explained that the rationale behind this theme was rooted in the collective efforts of Member States, international partners, and UN organizations to develop long-term, sustainable solutions that enhance planetary resilience.

He emphasized that many of the environmental challenges currently facing the global community had persisted over time. Therefore, he stated, it was essential to identify and implement solutions that are not only effective but also sustainable in the long run. Mr. Ombisi noted that UNEA-7 would focus on how to generate and scale such solutions to ensure a resilient planet for future generations.

He encouraged all stakeholders to take note of the key milestones outlined in the timeline for the Ministerial Declaration. He emphasized that active engagement, particularly in the consultations surrounding the declaration, is essential, given its significance as the political outcome of UNEA-7.

Mr. Ombisi noted that this five-day Annual Subcommittee meeting would be held in a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person participation in Nairobi and virtual attendance. He stated that one of the central focuses of the meeting would be the review of the new draft Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2026–

2029. Mr. Ombisi noted that the current Medium-Term Strategy was nearing completion, and a new strategy is being developed for the 2026–2029 period. He added that the meeting would also examine UNEP's proposed Programme of Work for 2026–2027. Mr. Ombisi expressed hope that the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) would endorse the Programme of Work, allowing it to be forwarded to UNEA-7 for formal approval.

He further explained that the meeting plays a key role in overseeing the implementation and accountability of the UNEP Secretariat. During the meeting, the Secretariat reports on the progress made in implementing previous resolutions and outline next steps for those that remain partially implemented. Mr. Ombisi noted that the Annual Subcommittee Meeting is conducted exclusively in English.

Mr. David Ombisi outlined several important dates and activities for Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) to take note of in the lead-up to UNEA-7. He emphasized the importance of coordinated participation and timely engagement to ensure that civil society perspectives are effectively represented. Mr. David Ombisi introduced the Group of Friends initiative, an informal platform established by interested Member States in collaboration with representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS). He explained that the initiative provided an additional space for civil society and MGS representatives to engage with Member States on a range of environmental issues and challenges.

- March 2025: Initial discussions on the Ministerial Declaration begin.
- July 2025: UNEA and CPR Bureau meeting reviews submissions for the first draft.
- End of August 2025: Revised first draft circulated for feedback.
- September 30, 2025: Deadline for feedback on the revised first draft.
- September 2025: Third intergovernmental consultation on the revised draft.
- October 15, 2025: Final draft reviewed in joint UNEA-CPR Bureau meeting.
- October 17, 2025: Final draft circulated.
- November 7, 2025: Deadline for feedback on the final draft.
- November 5, 2025: Fourth intergovernmental consultation on the draft Ministerial Declaration.
- November 27, 2025: Revised final draft reviewed by UNEA-CPR joint Bureau.
- December 1–5, 2025: Final consultations during the open-ended CPR.
- December 7, 2025: Final review by UNEA-CPR Bureau.
- December 8–12: 2025: UNEA-7 held at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi.
- December 12, 2025: Formal adoption of the Ministerial Declaration during the UNEA-7 High-Level Segment.

He emphasized that the platform is designed to facilitate informal exchanges of views, allowing MGS to share their positions on draft resolutions, decisions, the ministerial declaration, or other relevant topics. Mr. Ombisi noted that the Group of Friends also serves as a space to identify potential partners and avenues for collaboration, including side events and joint advocacy efforts. He announced that the next Group of Friends meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2025, and would be held in a hybrid format, both in Nairobi and online. Mr. Ombisi encouraged interested stakeholders to contact the Secretariat if they wanted to participate.

Mr. Ombisi concluded by outlining the formal modalities for participation by MGS at UNEA 7. He stated that each of the nine Major Groups would have a reserved seat in the plenary room, allowing their co-facilitators or designated representatives to participate directly in the proceedings. He noted that MGS representatives would also have the opportunity to deliver general statements during the opening plenary session.

In addition, Mr. Ombisi highlighted that each of the six UNEP regions - Africa, Europe, North America, West Asia, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America - would be invited to present regional statements during the opening plenary. He explained that these statements are prepared in advance through Regional Consultative Meet-

ings.

Mr. David Ombisi stated that, in line with established practice, chairs of the Committee of the Whole typically provide space for civil society to contribute their perspectives. He added that similar opportunities exist within working groups and contact groups, where MGS can collaborate with Member States and make interventions on specific topics or draft resolutions under negotiation. Mr. Ombisi emphasized that while individual interventions by organizations are permitted, they carry greater weight when presented on behalf of a broader coalition of MGS. He encouraged stakeholders to coordinate and deliver joint interventions, as they are more likely to be taken seriously and considered by Member States.

Mr. Ombisi reiterated the importance of the Multistakeholder Dialogue during the high-level segment of UNEA 7. He described it as another key opportunity for MGS to articulate their concerns and interests, ensuring these are reflected in the outcomes of the Assembly.

In closing, Mr. Ombisi thanked the Chair and all participants, noting that he would be happy to provide further clarification or respond to any questions from colleagues regarding preparations for UNEA 7 and the available engagement opportunities for civil society.

- September 29 2025: Deadline for Member States to submit draft resolutions in writing
- October 2025: Global virtual consultation meeting for MGS (date to be confirmed).

Purpose: Align on common views related to the UNEA-7 theme, ministerial declaration, and draft resolutions.

- November 29–30, 2025: Global Youth Environment Assembly. Youth leaders and advocates gather to exchange ideas and develop proposals for policymakers.
- December 6–7 2025: Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum.

Regional representatives share experiences and consolidate views for presentation at UNEA-7.

- December 6–12, 2025: Green Room open for MGS side events, consultations, and meetings. Dedicated space for stakeholder-led activities during UNEA-7.
- December 7, 2025: Youth presentation during UNEA-7 high-level segment.
- Youth delegates present the outcomes of their assembly to UNEA leadership.
- December 11, 2025: Multistakeholder Dialogue during high-level segment.
- 90-minute session for MGS to engage with Member States and international organizations on UNEA-7 theme and generate recommendations.

Outcomes of the Regional Consultative Meeting of Africa and Further Preparation of African Major Groups Towards UNEA-7



David Munene

Regional Facilitator, UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders

Mr. David Munene began by thanking the Chair for the introduction. He stated that he represented the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA) and also serves as the Chair of the Board of the Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute. Mr. Munene noted that in the context of the current discussion, he was one of the two elected Regional Facilitators for the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) Africa region. He acknowledged the earlier remarks by Mr. David Ombisi and affirmed that MGS representatives play a vital role in enabling engagement and influencing policy within UNEP spaces. He added that this influence extends beyond UNEP, including within regional consultative processes such as those held in the Africa context.

Mr. David Munene proceeded to explain the purpose and structure of the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for Africa. He described the RCM as a platform convened to facilitate dialogue on pressing and emerg-

ing issues within the continent, particularly those related to environmental sustainability and broader sustainable development goals.

He noted that the RCM serves as a preparatory meet-

ing comprising representatives from the UN-accredited MGS in Africa, as well as non-accredited civil society organizations and non-state actors. Mr. Munene emphasized that the RCM was inclusive and open to both accredited and non-accredited African organizations.

He explained that the meeting was traditionally convened by the elected Regional Facilitators, but underscored that this effort is never undertaken alone. Mr. Munene expressed deep appreciation for the support provided by the UNEP Regional Office for Africa - the UNEP secretariat, who contributed behind the scenes to ensure the success of the meeting. Mr. Munene affirmed that the collaborative nature of the RCM was essential, and that the success of the meeting depended on the collective efforts of all involved.

Mr. David Munene provided an overview of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) which brings together environment ministers and their technical experts from all 54 African Member States. He acknowledged the longstanding contributions of Mr. David Ombisi, who previously led the AMCEN Secretariat and played a key role in supporting both the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) and the engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) in Africa.

Mr. Munene explained that the RCM was designed to inform, influence, and occasionally support the positions of African ministers on environmental and sustainable development issues. He emphasized that the platform also allows non-state actors to raise concerns and priorities that may not have been identified by Member States but are pressing from a civil society perspective.

He stressed the importance of engaging with government representatives as peers, noting that many officials may have been part of civil society. Mr. Munene encouraged respectful diplomatic collaboration, rooted in a shared commitment to Africa's development and guided by a Pan-African approach.

Reflecting on the 2025 RCM, Mr. Munene described it as the most successful to date in terms

of both participation and outcomes. He highlighted that eight partner organizations supported the meeting, an unprecedented level of engagement. He noted that this support was not just financial but also a demonstration of trust in the process and its continued relevance.

Mr. Munene recalled that when he was first elected in August 2022, the RCM had no more than three partners. He expressed particular gratitude to the partners including Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), Oxfam in Africa, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), WWF International, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), and Green-Faith.

He informed delegates that the 2025 RCM was hosted for two days by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), which also serves as the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF). This hosting was made possible through support from the Stockholm Environment Institute Africa (SEI Africa), which shares the same campus.

Mr. David Munene shared several historic milestones achieved during the 2025 RCM for Africa. He noted that it was the first RCM to feature a dedicated Youth Day, marking a significant step toward inclusive engagement. Previous RCMs had not included a day specifically focused on youth participation.

He then described Youth Day as a landmark moment for African youth engagement. Mr. Munene emphasized that the day was not symbolic or tokenistic - it was fully organized, led, and run by African youth. Participation was limited to individuals under the age of 35, with older attendees invited only as observers unless their input was specifically requested. He noted that all expert presentations and moderation were handled by youth, and that the day culminated in the development of a youth position that was integrated into the RCM drafting process.

He also highlighted the launch of the official report from the 2024 RCM, which was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Mr. Munene stated that this report launch sets a new tradition for future RCMs and confirmed that the development of the 2025 RCM report is already underway. He added that the 2024 report is available online and will be shared in PDF format with hyperlinks for easy access.

Mr. Munene highlighted the launch of the first-ever

RCM Africa report, made possible through the collaborative efforts of the reporting team and design support from the Mohammed VI Foundation via its environmental training arm, the Hassan II International Center for Environmental Training. He credited Mr. Ayman Cherkaoui, the immediate former regional facilitator, for his leadership in this effort.

Mr. Munene emphasized that the 2025 RCM coincided with the 40th anniversary of AMCEN. Although the year 2025 marked the 20th Ordinary Session of AMCEN, the milestone of "AMCEN at 40" was commemorated with a special report. He shared that MGS Africa was featured in Section 211 (Page 27) of the AMCEN at 40 commemorative report, titled *A Legacy of Environmental Diplomacy and Leadership in Africa*. The report traced AMCEN's evolution since its founding in Cairo in 1985 and recognized the contributions of African civil society to environmental policymaking.

In terms of scale, Mr. Munene reported that the 2025 RCM was the largest ever held in Africa. Traditionally a two-day event, the 2025 meeting particularly spanned four days, attracting over 270 in-person participants and more than 50 consistent online attendees. For the first time, the RCM surpassed 100 participating civil society organizations, representing all five subregions of Africa, demonstrating both diversity and inclusion.

He stated that the high-level opening of the RCM was led by Dr. Rose Mwebaza, Director and Regional Representative for UNEP Africa, alongside the eight partner organizations.

Mr. David Munene continued by celebrating the election of his colleague Fatou Ndiaye from Senegal, who began her first term as regional facilitator just months before the 2025 RCM for Africa. He emphasized that this marks a deliberate African trajectory, one rooted in integrity and leadership renewal. While the rules do not prohibit extended terms, Mr. Munene affirmed that the principle guiding their leadership is that two terms are sufficient, and that leaders must recognize they are leading other leaders. He stated, "If you have not done something in four years, you're not going to do it in six, seven, eight, or ten."

He also acknowledged the growing number of accredited organizations in Africa. Mr. Munene reported that Africa had four global facilitators among the nine Major Groups, in addition to the two regional facilitators who serve as observers on the Major

Groups Facilitating Committee. He urged more organizations to pursue UNEP accreditation and pointed to available guidance from UNEP colleagues present in the conference and online resources.

Mr. Munene went on to describe the expert presentations held on the second day of the RCM. These sessions were designed to bring participants up to speed on key issues and priorities, including AMCEN at 40 and the strategic focus for the 2025–2027 period. Presentations were delivered by experts from the UN Major Groups and Stakeholders Africa, with occasional support from UNEP program leads.

He provided an overview of the expert presentations delivered during the 2025 Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for Africa. He noted that the first presentation was given by Mr. Alan Meso, the current Coordinator of the AMCEN Secretariat. This was followed by a session on preparations for UNEA-7, presented by Mr. David Ombisi, whose earlier remarks had already outlined the key milestones and processes.

Mr. Munene highlighted a series of thematic presentations, including one on the Conservation of Migratory Species, Minamata Convention CITES and Ramsar Conventions. He explained that although these topics were initially presented separately, they were later consolidated into a single discussion stream.

He acknowledged Ms. Anna Rocha from Tanzania, who presented on the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution. Mr. Munene emphasized the importance of aligning Africa's input ahead of the resumed Fifth session of the INC, scheduled for August in Geneva.

Additional presentations included:

- Mercury pollution, delivered by Ms. Monica, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, in anticipation of COP-6.
- Methane actions under the Africa Clean Air Program.
- Climate change expertise, with reflections on the outcomes of the 62nd session of the Subsidiary Bodies to the UNFCCC and forward-looking insights toward COP-30.

Mr. Munene explained that these expert sessions were designed to bring all participants up to speed on key environmental and policy developments. He noted that the presentations laid the groundwork for the thematic working groups, where participants organized them-

selves by focus areas to craft Africa's collective positions and statements.

Mr. Munene elaborated on the structure and leadership of the thematic working groups during the 2025 Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for Africa. He explained that each group typically has two thematic leads and one or two rapporteurs, depending on its size. He proudly noted that youth played a central role in leading these groups, with deliberate gender balance in several cases. Mr. Munene emphasized that this leadership model reflects Africa's commitment to empowering young people, not as leaders of tomorrow, but as leaders of today.

He then described the process of developing the RCM's long statement. Each thematic group drafts its own contribution, organized into preambular and operative paragraphs. These drafts are then reviewed collectively in plenary, allowing participants with cross-cutting expertise to contribute even if they were not part of a specific working group. The final long statement is published on the UNEP website.

In addition to the long statement, Mr. Munene highlighted the development of key messages and outcomes, an executive summary of the meeting's discussions. These were presented at the opening of the expert segment of the AMCEN on Monday, 14 July, 2025. Mr. Munene delivered the presentation on behalf of African civil society organizations, marking a continuation of a practice first introduced during the special AMCEN session in Abidjan in 2024.

He noted that the summary statement, a concise version of the long statement, is presented during the high-level ministerial segment. It was delivered by his co-facilitator, Ms. Fatou, who represented both accredited and non-accredited African civil society organizations.

Mr. Munene urged more African organizations to seek UNEP accreditation. He pointed out underrepresentation in key MGS such as Farmers, Local Authorities, the Scientific and Technological Community, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. He stressed that farming was the backbone of the continent and should be better represented, and called on colleagues to apply for accreditation as swiftly as possible.

Mr. Munene noted that this year's RCM was honored

by the presence of the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), accompanied by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Emir. This provided a valuable opportunity for civil society representatives to engage directly with IPCC leadership, share perspectives, and explore avenues for involvement in the development of the Seventh Assessment Report.

Mr. Munene also described a first-time bilateral engagement with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). He explained that the session aimed to foster understanding of AUDA-NEPAD's mandate and identify opportunities for collaboration between the agency and African civil society organizations. He emphasized that such bilateral meetings are essential for familiarizing stakeholders with the work of key institutions and expanding the impact of non-state actors.

Looking ahead, Mr. Munene advocated for extending the duration of future RCMs to at least three days, noting that the 2025 meeting's four-day format proved highly effective. He encouraged organizations to begin planning and budgeting for participation in future RCMs and AMCEN sessions.

To support this, Mr. Munene shared a practical funding estimate: organizations that earmark between USD 2,500 and USD 3,000 can reliably ensure the participation of at least one delegate in any African city. This estimate accounts for travel from the furthest points on the continent and the cost of living in major urban centers.

He urged colleagues to follow the example of consistent partners like the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) and integrate RCM and AMCEN participation into their annual planning cycles. He emphasized that these platforms were vital mechanisms for civil society engagement and influence in Africa's environmental governance.

Mr. Munene emphasized the unique role of the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for Africa. He stated that RCM Africa is the only civil society and non-state actor-led platform that is:

- Regional in scope, bringing together stakeholders from across the continent.
- Directly linked to AMCEN, making it the only consultative meeting that feeds into the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
- Multidimensional, addressing not only environmental issues but also broader developmental concerns.

- Influential globally, serving as a mechanism to shape Africa's positions on international platforms.

He illustrated this influence by explaining how positions formed during the RCM can inform AMCEN decisions, which in turn guide the Committee of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CA-HOSCC). The positions were also carried forward by the Africa Group during negotiations at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Mr. Munene announced the establishment of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Africa Science and Technology Community, to be led by Dr. Philip Osano of CIFOR-ICRAF, under the guidance of the regional facilitators. He noted that expressions of interest were already being submitted and encouraged African scientists to sign up via the provided link.

He shared that a task force was also being formed to engage with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), aiming to explore future collaborations. Mr. Munene reiterated the continued work of the six thematic working groups, covering AMCEN, UNEA-7, climate change, biodiversity (including CITES, Ramsar, and CMS), mercury pollution under the Minamata Convention, and plastic pollution under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

He emphasized that these groups, along with their leads and rapporteurs, would continue to support the work of UNEP MGS Africa by providing dedicated expertise from a Pan-African perspective.

Mr. Munene noted that extending the duration of the RCM does not necessarily guarantee timely completion of draft statements. Therefore, future RCMs will be preceded by group-level drafting processes, with final adoption taking place during the main meeting.

He closed by thanking participants and celebrating the success of the 2025 RCM Africa, describing it as a proud achievement delivered the Pan-African way. Mr. Munene ended with a quote from Dr. Rose Mwebaza, shared during the RCM's opening: "Africa rising is not a cliché, and we know the value of taking one step at a time."

QUESTION & ANSWERS

Question 1: UNEP Feels More Virtual to Cameroonian

A participant raised concern that UNEP feels more virtual and disconnected to Cameroonian, suggesting that citizens do not feel a tangible presence of the organization in their country.

Response:

Mr. Isaiah responded by acknowledging the concern and explained that UNEP is structured as a normative organization rather than an operational one. Unlike agencies such as UNDP or WHO, UNEP does not implement projects directly on the ground. Instead, its mandate focuses on science-based policy guidance, awareness creation, and convening Member States to address environmental issues collectively.

He clarified that UNEP does not maintain country offices, including in Cameroon, due to its foundational structure as agreed upon by Member States through the UN General Assembly. This lack of physical presence contributes to the perception of UNEP being virtual.

However, Mr. Isaiah emphasized that UNEP still works with all countries through their respective Ministries of Environment and via UN Country Teams, which exist in every nation. These entry points allow UNEP to influence national activities and collaborate on environmental priorities, despite its limited physical footprint.

Question 2: Status of the Animal Welfare - Environment - Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution

Mr. Raphael Kinoti from Brooke East Africa expressed appreciation for the presentations by Mr. Munene and Mr. Ombisi. He directed a question to Mr. Ombisi regarding the status of the UN resolution on the nexus between animal welfare, environment, and sustainable development, noting that many participants were eager to hear an update on its implementation.

Response:

Mr. David Ombisi acknowledged the importance of

the question and explained that limited progress has been made in implementing the resolution, primarily due to funding constraints. He noted that while some modest steps have been taken, including consultations with Member States and stakeholders, participation in African animal welfare conferences, and the submission of a report to UNEA-6, the overall advancement remains slow.

He shared that a steering committee comprising representatives from UNEP, FAO, WHO, and other partners was established and met several times to produce a scoping report with recommendations. However, due to budgetary limitations, further implementation has stalled.

Mr. Ombisi emphasized that efforts are underway to mobilize resources from various partners to move forward with the resolution. He urged Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS), especially those attending UNEA-7, to raise the issue with Member States, particularly those who sponsored the resolution, and to hold governments accountable for its implementation. He clarified that while UNEP supports the process, the responsibility for implementation lies primarily with Member States.

Mr. Isaiah added that UNEP's limited physical presence in countries like Cameroon contributes to perceptions of the organization being virtual. He explained that this is due to UNEP's normative structure, which differs from operational agencies like UNDP or WHO. He reiterated that UNEP works through Ministries of Environment and UN Country Teams.

Regarding the resolution, Mr. Isaiah underscored that the core challenge is funding. He contrasted the slow progress on animal welfare with the rapid advancement of the plastics treaty, which benefits from strong financial backing by ocean-bordering countries. He noted that even the scoping report for the animal welfare resolution had to be funded through UNEP's Environmental Fund, requiring the organization to stretch its limited resources.

Question 3: Lack of Progress and Unclear Path to Contribute to the Resolution

A representative from Brooke West Africa raised con-

cern that despite the adoption of the resolution on animal welfare, environment, and sustainable development, there appears to be no visible progress. They also expressed uncertainty about how their organization could contribute meaningfully to its implementation.

Response:

In response, it was clarified that UNEP is a government-driven organization, and therefore, contributions from civil society must be coordinated through government channels. Organizations interested in supporting the resolution, such as Brooke West Africa, were encouraged to liaise with government counterparts and explore how their financial or technical support could be integrated into the system.

It was emphasized that the core challenge is not a lack of will but a lack of funding. The distinction was made between situations where resources exist but are mismanaged, and those where implementation is stalled due to the absence of resources. In this case, UNEP has explicitly stated that the resolution's implementation is hindered by budgetary constraints.

Participants were encouraged to coordinate with individuals who are familiar with the resolution and can help facilitate collaboration among organizations willing to support its advancement.

Question 4: Representation, Policy, Ecosystem Balance, One Health, and Interagency Collaboration

Mr. Haru from Ethiopia, Director for Animal Identification, Traceability, and Animal Welfare, raised a series of questions concerning the representation within UNEP committees, the adequacy of environmental policies addressing farming impacts, the role of animal welfare in ecosystem balance, the One Health approach, and UNEP's collaboration with WHO and FAO.

Response:

The UNEP representative acknowledged the breadth of Mr. Haru's questions and suggested that a bilateral follow-up would be beneficial for deeper engagement. However, a summary response was provided for the benefit of all delegates.

Committee Representation: UNEP hosts experts across various disciplines, including chemicals, climate change, biodiversity, and animal welfare. While the organization is environment-focused, it integrates expertise from related fields. A dedicated animal welfare expert had previously led relevant work but retired recently. UNEP remains open to connecting interested parties with current experts.

Environmental Policy: UNEP supports Member States in developing environmental policies, but implementation is the sovereign responsibility of national governments. Policies exist at national, subregional, and regional levels, and are typically housed within Ministries of Environment or Livestock. In Ethiopia, for example, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) plays a key role.

Animal Welfare and Ecosystem Balance: Animals are integral to ecosystems, contributing through functions such as manure production and sustainable grazing. Proper management of livestock populations is essential to prevent overgrazing and water scarcity, which can negatively impact the environment. Animal welfare practices help maintain ecological balance.

One Health and Disease Prevention: The One Health approach recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. Zoonotic diseases such as Ebola and COVID-19 have demonstrated the risks of increased human-wildlife interaction, often driven by expanding settlements. Improving animal welfare can help reduce the emergence and spread of such diseases.

Interagency Collaboration: UNEP collaborates with WHO, FAO, and other agencies to address cross-cutting challenges. WHO brings health expertise, FAO contributes food and agriculture knowledge, and UNEP provides environmental leadership. Joint efforts under the One Health framework aim to leverage these strengths to tackle complex, interlinked issues.

The representative reiterated that these topics warrant deeper discussion and welcomed follow-up engagement with Mr. Haru and other interested stakeholders.

UNEP Major Groups And Stakeholders Accreditation Process



Edwike Nyauncho
UNEP

Ms. Edwike Nyauncho opened the session by introducing herself as a representative of UNEP's Civil Society Unit. She outlined the purpose of her presentation: to guide participants through the accreditation process, explain its significance, and describe how accredited organizations can engage with UNEP.

She emphasized that accreditation grants organizations consultative status with UNEP, enabling them to participate in agenda-setting, policy-making, and decision-making processes. Accredited organizations are also entitled to deliver oral presentations and submit written statements, particularly during UNEA sessions.

Ms. Nyauncho explained that the accreditation process begins with creating an account on UNEP's dedicated accreditation portal. Applicants must provide their organization's name, website, email address, and create a secure password. Upon registration, an authentication email is sent with a login link.

Once logged in, applicants complete a form that includes selecting a Major Group affiliation (only one group per organization), specifying their region, and uploading required documents. She detailed the documentation requirements as follows:

- **Cover Letter:** A template is available on the UNEP website. The letter should include a brief organizational background, a summary of na-

tional and international activities, and a statement of intent for seeking accreditation.

- **Constitution:** Must be stamped and physically signed; can be a charter or statutes.
- **Registration Certificate:** Certified copy showing non-governmental status, which varies by country.
- **Proof of Non-Profit Status:** Typically a tax exemption certificate or a clause within the registration certificate.
- **Proof of Environmental Engagement:** Recent annual reports and evidence of participation in environmental activities.
- **International Scope:** Documentation of global engagement, such as partnerships, conferences, or panel presentations. UNEP prioritizes active contributions over mere attendance.
- **National Activities:** Applicants are encouraged to highlight diverse activities beyond tree planting.

• Ms. Nyauncho noted that the standard processing time for accreditation is six months. The application window typically runs from January 1 to June 30, but for 2025, it was extended to August 31 to accommodate preparations for UNEA 7 in December. She encouraged applicants to submit documents in English to expedite processing, given the limited staffing.

She clarified that accreditation is not a prerequisite for accessing UNEP projects or partnerships. She clarified that non-accredited organizations may still participate. However, accredited organizations must comply with registration protocols for meetings such as the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and adhere to UNEP's procedural guidelines, which are outlined in the stakeholder handbook available online.

Ms. Nyauncho concluded by listing key meetings where accredited organizations could engage and participate in, including:

- The Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM)
- The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF), held prior to UNEA
- The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), including subcommittee and quarterly meetings
- The Open-Ended CPR and other ad hoc meetings coordinated by the Civil Society Unit

She then invited her colleague Mr. Peter Kirongothi to continue the presentation.

Mr. Peter Kirongothi joined the session by introducing himself as a member of UNEP's Civil Society Unit, which serves as a key gateway for engagement with Major Groups. He emphasized the importance of participating in UNEP's core meetings, particularly the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). These meetings are accessible both in person and virtually, and they offer accredited organizations the opportunity to submit oral and written statements. However, he stressed that such inputs must be coordinated through the facilitators of each Major Group to ensure collective representation.

He then outlined the structure of the UNEA, noting that it is preceded by several preparatory meetings. They include consultations on the UNEA theme, the ministerial declaration, and draft resolutions discussed during the OECPR. Mr. Kirongothi reiterated the role of RCMs in shaping regional inputs for UNEA and facilitating engagement with ministers and Member State representatives.

He highlighted the call for side event proposals, which are aligned with UNEA themes and offer organizations a platform to showcase their work. During UNEA, accredited organizations are encouraged to attend plenary sessions, deliver oral statements, and, where permitted, observe negotiations. He reminded participants that access to negotiations is at the discretion of the chair, as UNEA is a Member State–driven process.

Mr. Kirongothi emphasized the importance of well-crafted statements, urging organizations to keep them concise, inclusive, and representative of their entire Major Group. He explained that UNEP recognizes

nine Major Groups across six regions, each with two facilitators who serve as key points of contact for information and coordination.

He outlined the benefits of accreditation, including the right to participate in elections, nominate candidates, and vote within Major Group processes. He encouraged organizations to keep their contact details, especially email addresses and websites, up to date to ensure they receive timely communications. He also reminded participants that accredited organizations must submit a report of their activities every four years to maintain their status.

Mr. Kirongothi issued a strong reminder regarding the use of UNEP and UN logos. He stated that organizations were prohibited from using the logos unless formally authorized through official channels. He clarified that accreditation did not imply financial support or endorsement from UNEP. It was solely a mechanism for engagement with governing and subsidiary bodies.

He concluded by encouraging participants to visit the Civil Society Unit website, where they could access resources such as the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook, roadmaps for civil society and governing bodies, and meeting portals. He encouraged delegates to stay informed through regular updates from the Civil Society Unit and their Major Group facilitators.

Mr. Kirongothi thanked the delegates for the opportunity to give the presentation.



QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Question 1: Alignment Between UNEP and ECOSOC Accreditation

A delegate thanked the presenters for their informative session and asked whether UNEP accreditation aligns with ECOSOC accreditation, and whether one can precede the other or if they are entirely separate processes.

Response

The UNEP representative clarified that while both UNEP and ECOSOC offer accreditation to civil society organizations, they operate under distinct engagement mechanisms determined by Member States. ECOSOC accreditation encompasses a broader range of organizations beyond the environmental sector, whereas UNEP accreditation is specifically focused on organizations working in the environmental field.

If an organization is already accredited by ECOSOC, UNEP considers that due diligence has been conducted. In such cases, UNEP's accreditation process becomes more of a formality, with emphasis placed on verifying the organization's environmental relevance. However, UNEP cannot automatically accept all ECOSOC-accredited organizations, as some may not align with UNEP's environmental mandate.

The representative also noted that similar distinctions apply across other UN bodies, such as UNFCCC, each with its own accreditation requirements tailored to its thematic focus.

Question 2: Why Are There Differences in UN Accreditation Processes? What Is DESA?

A delegate asked why UNEP's accreditation process differs from the consultative status granted by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which is managed under ECOSOC. They sought clarification on the role of DESA and the rationale behind these accreditation differences.

Response

The UNEP representative explained that DESA operates under the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and grants consultative status to civil society organizations across a wide range of sectors—not limited to the environment. UNEP, by contrast, has a specific mandate focused on environmental issues, and its accreditation process is tailored accordingly.

Each UN entity has a distinct mandate defined by Member States, which in turn shapes how civil society can engage. For example, WHO and FAO have mandates related to health and agriculture, respectively, and their accreditation mechanisms reflect those priorities. UNEP's accreditation is governed by criteria established by Member States and does not require further approval once those criteria are met.

The representative noted that Member States are careful to ensure that UNEP does not overstep into areas governed by other agencies. This underscores the importance of respecting institutional boundaries when designing engagement mechanisms.

It was also clarified that accreditation is a voluntary process initiated by civil society organizations themselves—not imposed by governments. Organizations choose to seek accreditation based on their desire to engage with UN bodies relevant to their work.

Follow-Up Concern: Perceived Detachment Between Civil Society and UNEP

A delegate expressed concern that civil society organizations often feel disconnected from UNEP and perceive that only well-established entities have access to accreditation and high-level events. He described a dynamic where smaller organizations feel they must chase government support to gain recognition.

Response

The UNEP representative acknowledged this perception and emphasized that UNEP is committed to inclusive engagement. While UNEP works through Member States, it also provides direct pathways for civil society organizations to participate. The accreditation process is designed to be transparent and accessible, and UNEP encourages organizations to apply independently.

Efforts are ongoing to bridge gaps between civil society and institutional processes, including through regional consultative meetings, facilitator networks, and targeted outreach. UNEP reaffirmed its openness to dialogue and welcomed continued feedback to improve accessibility and representation.

Follow-Up Response

In response to the concern about a perceived gap between civil society organizations and UNEP, particularly the feeling that access to accreditation and participation in high-level events favors organizations with government backing, the UNEP representative offered a direct clarification.

He expressed concern that such a perception exists and reassured participants that the accreditation process is fully accessible online. No government endorsement is required. Any organization with internet access and the necessary documentation can apply independently through the UNEP accreditation portal.

The representative emphasized that the purpose of the current session was to demystify the process and provide clear guidance. He offered to assist applicants directly, including follow-up on application status, and reiterated that UNEP is available to support civil society organizations throughout the process.

He acknowledged that the concern may stem from a misunderstanding and invited the delegate to continue the conversation privately after the session for further clarification.

Question 3: Clarification from the Ministry of External Relations, Cameroon

The representative from the Ministry of External Relations, Cameroon, offered a clarification regarding the consultative status process. She explained that the Cameroonian government actively supports civil society organizations in acquiring consultative status with ECOSOC and other UN bodies. He noted that many organizations are unaware of this support and highlighted the role of the Department of United Nations and Decentralized Cooperation within the ministry, which oversees such processes.

The representative emphasized that even when organizations apply online, the relevant UN bodies often consult the ministry for its opinion before granting consultative status. She encouraged civil society organizations present at the meeting to approach the ministry for assistance in navigating these procedures.

Response:

Mr Isaiah Otieno thanked the government representative for the valuable clarification and acknowledged the supportive role of the Cameroonian government. He explained that UNEP's accreditation process differs from ECOSOC's. Once an organization meets UNEP's criteria and is approved, it becomes accredited without requiring further government endorsement.

Governments are informed of newly accredited organizations during the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) meetings, where they may raise any concerns. UNEP operates under a mandate from Member States that allows it to approve organizations independently, unlike other UN bodies such as ECOSOC or UNFCCC, which may involve additional government consultation.

Mr. Otieno reiterated that each UN entity has its own engagement mechanism based on its mandate. He invited participants to reach out via email or in person for further questions or support.

Opportunities For Major Groups To Engage At UNEP And UNEA

Mr. Isaiah Otieno opened his presentation by reaffirming that engagement with UNEP and UNEA by Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) was a right enshrined in Rule 70 of UNEA's Rules of Procedure. This rule, defined by Member States, underscores the importance of civil society participation in environmental governance.

He clarified that accreditation was required only for contributing to UNEP's policy-making processes and was not necessary for entering into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or implementing projects.

Mr. Otieno reiterated that UNEP operates across six regions and encouraged participants to attend UNEA 7, scheduled for 8–12 December 2025 in Nairobi. He explained that accredited organizations based in Nairobi, or those with a local representative, could receive up to three ground passes. These passes grant access to the UN complex and simplify participation in Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) meetings, which are often held weekly. Recipients must sign a code of conduct, which prohibits using the badge to seek employment or contracts.

Mr. Otieno described how UNEP occasionally reaches out to MGS for representation in specific processes. For example, when the GEO-7 requested indigenous representation, UNEP issued a call for nominations to relevant stakeholders.

He emphasized the importance of strategic engagement during UNEA, noting that ministers and permanent representatives are often accessible in informal settings. He encouraged participants to use such opportunities to engage respectfully and diplomatically, and to understand the complexities of negotiation and decision-making.

To ensure inclusive participation, UNEP organized MGS into nine categories, each contributing to a unified statement. This approach streamlined interventions and ensured that diverse voices are heard. Mr. Otieno urged participants to avoid repetition and instead build on existing points to enrich the dialogue.

He acknowledged that divergent views may arise but encouraged alignment and coordination. To

support this, UNEP provides a dedicated Green Room during UNEA, where MGS could hold side events and resolve differences. While official UN side events were limited due to demand from Member States, the Green Room offered an accessible alternative for accredited organizations.

Mr. Otieno explained the structure of UNEP's facilitation system. Each region and Major Group elects two representatives every two years. These facilitators ensure that collective views are shared and represented. He cited Mr. David Munene as the Regional Facilitator for Africa and encouraged accredited organizations to participate actively in elections to bring fresh perspectives into the process.

He stressed the importance of networking and bilateral engagement, urging participants to connect with new faces, exchange contacts, and explore collaborative projects. Member States are open to dialogue, and such interactions can influence policy outcomes.

Mr. Otieno highlighted that MGS were integral to the implementation of resolutions, such as those emerging from the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the Science-Policy Forum. Participation in these processes can lead to direct collaboration with UNEP and Member States.

He concluded by emphasizing the value of civil society engagement. MGS gives input on grassroots perspectives, scientific data, and lived experiences that enrich decision-making. Whether representing indigenous communities or scientific institutions, their voices were vital to shaping effective environmental policy.

In closing, Mr. Otieno reminded participants that the ultimate goal is to protect Africa's environment for future generations. He envisioned a continent where grandchildren can see elephants and lions in the wild, not just in pictures, and where food security is no longer threatened by environmental degradation.

He announced that registration was open for accredited organizations to attend UNEA and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF), which also welcomes non-accredited participants. Additionally, the Youth Environmental Assembly was open for registration. Mr. Otieno confirmed that UNEP would circulate the relevant links via email.



SESSION FIVE

COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION

Session Moderator:
Mr Linus Ngha Beng Kwokom, Community Youth Arts Center

Human-Animal Co-Existence: Case Study of Kasigau Ranch in Kenya



Isaac Maina
ANAW



Dr Dennis Bahati
ANAW



Agnes Haloni
ANAW

Mr. Isaac Maina began his presentation by introducing Kasigau Ranch, located in southern Kenya, as a model for sustainable conservation. He described it as a landscape where communities and wildlife not only share space but also benefit from mutual co-existence. The ranch lies within a vital ecological corridor connecting Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, making it a key site for human-wildlife interaction.

To illustrate this harmony, Mr. Maina referenced a photograph showing a zebra calmly situated within a settled area. He explained that this image captures the essence of peaceful cohabitation, where wildlife is integrated into the rhythms of daily human life without conflict. It symbolizes the success of Kasigau Ranch in fostering a balanced relationship between people and nature.

Mr. Isaac Maina then defined the concept of human-wildlife coexistence, describing it as “the ability of humans and wildlife to share the same landscape with minimal conflict”. He emphasized that coexistence is not merely about tolerance. It involves proactive strategies that benefit both biodiversity and local livelihoods.

He explained that for sustainable conservation, ecosystem balance, and inclusive development,

human-wildlife coexistence is essential. It fosters resilience in communities living near protected areas by encouraging positive attitudes toward wildlife. When communities learn to appreciate and live harmoniously with animals, conflict is reduced and conservation outcomes improve.

Mr. Isaac Maina provided a detailed overview of Kasigau Ranch, describing it as a 52,000-acre community-owned conservancy registered as a company. Strategically located between Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, Kasigau Ranch serves as a vital wildlife corridor within Kenya's largest conservation landscape. The combined Tsavo ecosystem spans approximately 21,000 square kilometers, making it the most expansive protected area in the country.

Mr. Maina emphasized that Kasigau Ranch is surrounded by other ranches, with human settlements interspersed throughout the region. This proximity makes conservation efforts especially critical, not only for wildlife movement but also for maintaining peaceful co-existence between animals and people. The ranch is home to a wide range of wildlife, including lions, giraffes, zebras, and other species. Importantly, local communities also reside within the ranch boundaries. Mr. Maina highlighted that Kasigau Ranch successfully balances biodiversity protection with community livelihoods, offering a model where

conservation and development reinforce each other. Mr. Maina highlighted the rich biodiversity of Kasigau Ranch, describing it as home to a wide array of wildlife species, including over 300 bird species. The landscape is ecologically diverse, encompassing savanna, grassland, bushland, and arid zones, all interspersed within the conservancy.

He emphasized the central role of Mt. Kasigau, which rises within the ranch and serves as a critical source of water for surrounding communities. Water is harvested from the mountain, making it a lifeline for both people and wildlife. Mr. Maina noted that this natural resource supports local livelihoods and reinforces the importance of conserving the mountain ecosystem. The co-existence model at Kasigau Ranch, he explained, is deeply rooted in the interdependence between biodiversity and community well-being. By protecting wildlife and natural habitats, the ranch also safeguards essential resources for human survival.

Mr. Maina emphasized the ecological importance of Kasigau Ranch, noting its role in facilitating wildlife migration and genetic exchange between neighboring ranches and the adjacent Tsavo National Parks. This connectivity helps prevent habitat isolation, overgrazing, and inbreeding, ensuring healthier wildlife populations and more resilient ecosystems.

He referenced a background image showing elephants migrating in a line, an illustration of the ranch's function as a safe passage for large mammals moving between protected areas. Kasigau Ranch also supports several endangered species, including elephants and African wild dogs, reinforcing its value as a biodiversity stronghold.

Mr. Maina highlighted that the ranch plays a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, which is essential for climate resilience and long-term ecological stability. He discussed how Kasigau Ranch supports community livelihoods, noting that local residents rely heavily on livestock rearing and small-scale farming. These activities take place both around Mount Kasigau and within the conservancy itself. He explained that cattle grazing is managed in a way that allows livestock to coexist peacefully with wildlife, minimizing conflict and promoting shared use of the land.

He highlighted ecosystem-based enterprises such as basket weaving, where local women produce hand-crafted items. ANAW helps facilitate market access by bringing in visitors, especially through experiential learning programs like guided hikes, which generate

income and foster community pride.

Mr. Maina also emphasized the role of carbon credit initiatives, led by partners such as Wildlife Works, which generate revenue by selling carbon credits earned through conservation practices. These funds are reinvested into the community, supporting development and reinforcing the value of environmental stewardship.

He explained that the natural vegetation of Kasigau Ranch contributes to water retention, carbon sequestration, and climate regulation, making the biodiversity of the area a vital life-support system for both wildlife and people.

However, Mr. Maina acknowledged that human-wildlife conflict remains a persistent challenge. Community settlements are flanked by protected areas on three sides, which means wildlife frequently moves through inhabited zones. Elephants and other animals often damage crops, creating tension and economic hardship.

To address this, communities have developed strategies to deter wildlife and reduce conflict, but he stressed the need for sustainable alternative income sources. Diversifying livelihoods is essential to reduce dependence on vulnerable farming systems and ensure long-term coexistence.

Mr. Maina addressed the persistent challenge of human-wildlife conflict in Kasigau Ranch. He explained that while co-existence is the goal, tensions remain high due to frequent wildlife incursions into community areas.

He identified several key conflict areas:

- Crop destruction, particularly by elephants and baboons. Elephants are known to clear entire plantations, causing significant losses for small-scale farmers.
- Livestock predation, especially by lions, which frequently attack and kill cows and goats both within the conservancy and in surrounding community lands.
- Human injuries and fatalities, with Mr. Maina noting that four people have died from elephant attacks in the past four years, including a regional figure within the conservancy.
- Property damage, with elephants destroying water tanks, homes, and other infrastructure—especially during the dry season when animals venture into settlements in search of water.

He also highlighted a troubling consequence of these conflicts: retaliatory actions by community members, including the poisoning of wildlife. Mr. Maina stressed that these incidents underscore the urgent need for sustainable solutions that protect both human livelihoods and wildlife populations.

Mr. Maina outlined additional challenges that undermine conservation efforts in Kasigau Ranch and the broader Tsavo ecosystem.

He noted that while elephant poaching for ivory had declined in recent years due to increased enforcement, bushmeat poaching remained a serious concern. Individuals continued to hunt wildlife using snares and other methods, driven by subsistence needs and informal trade.

Mr. Maina also highlighted the prevalence of illegal logging and charcoal burning, particularly in community areas and forested zones. These activities often involve clearing land for cultivation, which leads to habitat degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Another emerging threat is the expansion of mining activities within the ranches. These operations leave behind large, deep pits that pose physical dangers to wildlife, including the risk of entrapment. The cumulative impact of these activities, he warned, significantly reduces the effectiveness of conservation initiatives and threatens the delicate balance of human-wildlife coexistence.

Mr. Maina detailed the community-based conservation efforts supported by ANAW in Kasigau Ranch. He shared that ANAW has conducted training for 13 community scouts who operate within the ranch. These scouts play a critical role in protecting both wildlife and livestock, acting as frontline defenders of the conservancy.

The training covers a range of topics, including wildlife monitoring, conflict mitigation, and conservation ethics. To support their patrols, ANAW provides essential equipment such as camping gear, motorbikes, fuel, and uniforms, enabling the scouts to operate ef-

fectively across the vast terrain.

Mr. Maina also highlighted ANAW's commitment to conservation education, particularly among youth. Through school-based programs and community outreach, the organization fosters environmental awareness and builds a culture of stewardship. These initiatives aim to instill conservation values early and generate goodwill within the community toward wildlife protection.

He affirmed that human-wildlife co-existence is achievable when communities are empowered, supported, and actively involved in conservation. Kasigau Ranch stands as a testament to what is possible when people and nature work together.

Mr. Maina addressed animal welfare concerns, noting that rabies is the primary issue in the Kasigau Ranch region due to frequent interactions between domestic animals and wildlife. To mitigate the risk of outbreaks, ANAW conducts spay and neuter campaigns alongside anti-rabies vaccination drives targeting cats, dogs, and donkeys.

These efforts are essential for safeguarding both animal and human health, especially in a landscape where close contact between species is common. Mr. Maina emphasized that proactive veterinary interventions help prevent disease transmission and reinforce the broader goals of coexistence and community resilience.

He elaborated on ANAW's commitment to alternative livelihoods and community empowerment within Kasigau Ranch. He described how the organization supports women engaged in basket weaving, not only by helping them refine their skills but also by linking their craft to cultural tourism opportunities. This approach enables women to earn income while preserving local traditions.

He introduced the African Conservation Education Fund (ACEF), a scholarship program pioneered by ANAW's former Executive Director, Mr. Josphat Ngonyo,

Population Estimate and Migratory Route of Mt. Cameroon Elephants Using Capture-Recapture



Anya Dabite
University of Buea

Mr. Anya Dabite introduced his presentation by sharing that the research was part of his PhD work, as well as a personal commitment driven by his love for conservation. The study focused on estimating the population size and mapping the migratory routes of Mt Cameroon forest elephants using the capture-recapture method.

He began with an overview of Mt Cameroon, the highest peak in Central and West Africa, which hosts one of the continent's most diverse ecosystems. Among its inhabitants is the forest elephant, a keystone species that plays a vital ecological role but also leads in human-wildlife conflict incidents within the park.

Mr. Dabite shared personal experiences from his five years of fieldwork, including a tragic incident where an elephant killed a person, and another in 2022, when he and his team were pursued by an elephant and had to spend the night in a tree for safety. These encounters underscore the urgency of understanding elephant population dynamics, movement patterns, and behavior.

The study's objectives which were threefold included to estimate the population size of forest elephants in Mt Cameroon, to determine their movement, ranging, and distribution patterns across the park and to assess the influence of abiotic, biotic, and anthropogenic factors on their population dynamics and spatial behavior.

For methodology, Mr. Dabite employed a capture-re-

capture framework using camera traps. A total of 66 cameras were deployed across the northern, southern, and central zones of Mount Cameroon National Park. The study used an open population model, and data was collected between 2024 and 2025, providing a robust foundation for estimating population size and analyzing movement trends.

Mr. Dabite elaborated on the methodology used to estimate elephant populations and track their movements. The study was structured in three phases. First was the data collection stage, during which camera traps were deployed across the park to capture images of elephants in their natural environment. This was followed by a verification and identification phase, where each elephant was assigned a unique code based on its physical features. These codes enabled the team to model individual movement patterns and behavioral traits.

To distinguish one elephant from another, the team relied on a detailed identification system. They examined tail characteristics, tusk shape, ear structure, body marks, overall body size and shape, ear holes and tears, and unique features such as scars, tumors, and broken tusks. Each trait was scored, and elephants with a score of four or higher out of ten were included in the modeling to reduce identification errors.

Mr. Dabite referenced visual examples from the study, pointing out elephants with distinct features, such as one with a broken left tusk near the top, another with only one tusk, and a third with a mid-level break in the left tusk. These physical markers were critical in tracking individual elephants over time.

Using spatially explicit capture-recapture modeling, the study estimated a density of 2.1 elephants per square kilometer in Mt Cameroon National Park. Based on the area covered by the camera traps, the team concluded that the park hosts approximately 250 mature forest elephants. He clarified that detection probability was highest when elephants were within 20 meters of the cameras, which significantly improved image quality and identification accuracy. Mr. Dabite transitioned to the second objective of his study, which focused on understanding the movement patterns of forest elephants within Mt Cameroon National Park. Based on field observa-

tions and camera trap data, he reported that the elephants predominantly migrate from the northern part of the park to the southern part.

This movement was largely influenced by hunting pressure. In the northern region, hunters commonly used firearms, which posed a direct and immediate threat to the elephants. In contrast, hunting in the southern part of the park relied more on snares and traps, which, while still dangerous, were less disruptive in terms of noise and immediate confrontation. Mr. Dabite highlighted the area of Bakingili as a hotspot for human-elephant conflict, noting that many Cameroonian are familiar with the tensions in this region. He explained that elephants tend to flee southward when they hear gunshots in the north, seeking refuge in areas with better ecological conditions. The southern part of the park contains more primary forest, abundant fruit trees, and water sources, making it a more attractive and safer habitat.

However, this southward migration had led to a rise in human-elephant conflict in the southern zones, as elephants increasingly encroached on human settlements and agricultural land.

In examining the environmental factors that influence elephant movement and distribution, Mr. Dabite's team found that higher elevations tend to support larger numbers of individuals. This suggested that elevation, alongside human activity and resource availability, plays a significant role in shaping the spatial behavior of forest elephants in Mt Cameroon.

Mr. Dabite discussed the environmental factors that influenced elephant movement and detectability. He noted that dense, steep terrains hindered both elephant activity and camera effectiveness. Elephants tend to avoid steep slopes, which limits their presence in certain parts of the park and reduces

the likelihood of being captured on camera in those zones.

He also observed that larger trees, particularly fruit-bearing species, attracted more elephant activity. These trees served as feeding grounds, and elephants often linger near them. This behavior was consistently recorded across multiple camera sites, reinforcing the ecological importance of preserving mature forest stands.

Conversely, elephants were found to avoid disturbed zones, especially in the northern part of the park, where hunting and human encroachment are more prevalent. These pressures had contributed to the elephants' southward migration, intensifying human-elephant conflict in southern communities.

Looking ahead, Mr. Dabite shared his vision for a long-term behavioral study in Mt Cameroon. He proposed assigning names to identified elephants and creating community-facing posters to help locals and researchers recognize individual animals. For example, an elephant might be named "Anna," and visitors to the park would be encouraged to report their interactions with her, how she behaved and how they responded.

This participatory approach aimed to uncover whether human behavior influences elephant aggression, and to identify which elephants were consistently involved in conflict. Mr. Dabite emphasized that not all elephants were aggressive, and that some may be wrongly blamed. Understanding the root causes of aggression - whether environmental, behavioral, or human-induced - could lead to more effective conflict mitigation strategies.

He closed by reaffirming that his work is not only about elephants, but also about building mutual understanding between humans and wildlife. His goal is to foster co-existence through science, empathy, and community engagement.

The Socio - Economic Importance Of Working Animal In Central Ethiopia



Dr Hanna Zewdu (DVM,
SPANA-AAU,CVMA Project Lead

Dr. Hanna Zewdu began her presentation by introducing the findings of a recent research study focused on the socioeconomic role of working animals, particularly equids, in central Ethiopia. She outlined the structure of her talk, which included background context, guiding research questions, study design and methodology, key findings, and concluding recommendations.

She noted that Ethiopia currently holds the largest donkey population in the world, with approximately 10 million donkeys, 2.2 million horses, and 391,000 mules, according to the latest FAO report. Despite these significant numbers, working animals are often undervalued and overlooked in national development strategies.

Dr. Zewdu highlighted the diverse roles these animals play in Ethiopian society:

- Cart-pulling and goods transport: Equids are commonly used to move materials and products across towns and rural areas.
- Waste collection: Donkeys assist in rubbish collection, as illustrated by an image she referenced during the presentation.
- Water fetching: In regions where water sources are distant, equids are essential for transporting water—an especially vital service in arid zones.
- Plowing: While not common in central Ethiopia, horses are used in other regions to plow farmland.
- Agricultural logistics: Equids transport raw materials from markets to farms and carry farm produce back to market, supporting both production and trade.

Following this background, Dr. Zewdu introduced the research questions that guided the study.

Dr. Hanna Zewdu outlined the three guiding research questions that shaped the study:

1. What are the socioeconomic roles of working equids in the livelihoods of households in central Ethiopia?
2. To what extent does income from working equids contribute to total household income?
3. What are the cultural perceptions, social values, and traditional practices associated with these animals?

To address these questions, the research team employed a cross-sectional study design, conducted between May and October 2024. Study sites were purposively selected to reflect the diverse uses of equids across different regions. As some areas use them primarily as pack animals, others use them for cart-pulling, and others for both functions. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of their roles.

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data focused on economic contributions and was gathered through structured interviews with 1,149 participants. The qualitative data explored cultural and social dimensions through eight focus group discussions, two of which were conducted exclusively with women participants. Dr. Zewdu explained that this was necessary due to cultural taboos in rural Ethiopia that discourage women from speaking openly in mixed-gender settings.

Sampling was conducted using a stratified random method, with villages serving as strata. Households were randomly selected within each village to ensure representative coverage.

For analysis, the economic data was framed using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework developed by DFID, while the qualitative data was processed using specialized software to extract both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Dr. Hanna Zewdu presented the key findings from both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. The qualitative data, derived from focus group discussions, was analyzed using the six-step thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke.

From the 1,149 structured interviews, several demo-

graphic insights emerged:

- Gender distribution: Over 85% of respondents were men, reflecting cultural norms in Ethiopia where women are less likely to participate in public field-work.
- Marital status: 80% of participants were married.
- Average age: Respondents averaged 37 years, indicating that equine-related work supports individuals in their prime working years.
- Education levels: A significant portion had limited formal education—32% were non-literate, and another 32% had only completed up to grade 8.
- Family size: The average household included five members, with three dependents per family.
- Dr. Zewdu detailed the types of work performed by equids:
- 45% of respondents used their animals for cart-based taxi services.
- 28% relied on equids for farm-related transport, moving goods between markets and farmland.
- One of the most striking findings was the economic contribution of working equids:
- The average annual household income from all sources was approximately 205,000 Ethiopian birr (\approx \$1,480 USD).
- Of this, 68,000 birr (\approx \$490 USD) came directly from equid-related activities - 33% of total household income.
- Participants reported using equid-generated income in the following ways:
- 48% for household consumption (food, water, health, transport).
- 29% for savings, enhancing family preparedness and resilience.
- 30% for education costs, primarily for children.
- On the social and cultural dimensions, Dr. Zewdu shared that:
- 80% of owners believed that owning an equid boosts social status, with horses ranked higher than donkeys.
- 92% of respondents said women are responsible for daily care of equids, including feeding and watering.
- 41% of women were involved in financial decision-making—a modest figure, but a marked improvement from previous studies.
- Donkeys play a vital role in empowering women, especially in female-headed households, by providing reliable income.

Equids also serve as critical transport for healthcare access, particularly in rural areas with poor road infrastructure. They are used to carry sick individuals and women in labor to health posts, making them essential

for emergency mobility.

Despite their contributions, Dr. Zewdu noted that donkeys face cultural stigma, are excluded from religious rites and compensation schemes, and are often viewed as low-status animals.

She stated that working equids are indispensable yet invisible contributors to household resilience and social cohesion in central Ethiopia. They provide up to one-third of household income, enable access to markets and healthcare, and support emergency mobility. However, they remain undervalued in policy, face cultural barriers, and receive minimal welfare support.

Dr. Zewdu concluded her presentation by sharing the key recommendations derived from the study: Integrate working equids into national livestock and welfare policies. She expressed optimism about Ethiopia's recent launch of its first Animal Health and Welfare Proclamation, and voiced hope that working animals, especially donkeys and horses, would be included in its scope.

Address cultural stigma and promote awareness. Dr. Zewdu emphasized the importance of changing societal attitudes toward equids, particularly donkeys, which often face neglect and discrimination. She advocated for sustained awareness campaigns to elevate their status and highlight their contributions.

Empower women through equine programs. Given that women are primarily responsible for the daily care of working equids, she stressed the need to involve them more actively in equine-related initiatives, training, and decision-making.

Dr. Zewdu extended heartfelt thanks to SPANA, which funded the entire research project, and to the study participants and data collectors. She acknowledged the demanding nature of fieldwork, noting that interviews often required extended engagement, sometimes over 20 minutes per respondent.

She closed by inviting further discussion and noted that the research findings would soon be published on SPANA's website. Her contact information was made available for those interested in follow-up conversations.

Integrating Animal Welfare into Agricultural and Veterinary Education: A Rural Development Imperative for Tsolo Agriculture And Rural Development Institute



Dr. Nandipha Toyota Ndudane
A Rural Development Imperative for TARDI

Dr. Nandipha Toyota Ndudane began her presentation by introducing herself as the principal of Tsolo Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (TARDI), an agricultural college located in the Eastern Cape. TARDI is one of the few institutions in South Africa offering a Diploma in Animal Health, which falls under the category of Veterinary Paraprofessional Programs (VPPs) regulated by the South African Veterinary Council.

Dr. Ndudane explained that her chosen topic, the use of animals in training, is deeply relevant to her daily work. She emphasized the dual responsibility of training animal health technicians not only in technical skills but also in humane handling, ethical treatment, and professional conduct. She referenced images of students engaged in practical training, noting their enthusiasm and hands-on learning experiences.

She framed the college's mission as a rural development imperative, with responsibilities that include safeguarding public health, ensuring food security, and cultivating professional integrity among graduates. To achieve these goals, she stressed the importance of integrating animal welfare and ethics into every aspect of the curriculum.

This approach, she noted, aligns with international and national frameworks, including the World Organization for Animal Health guidelines, the South African National Livestock Strategy, the Veterinary Strategy, and the principles of One Health and One Welfare currently being implemented at TARDI.

Dr. Nandipha Toyota Ndudane addressed the gaps that Tsolo Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (TARDI) has identified in aligning its training programs with national and international animal welfare principles. She acknowledged the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which provided funding for a comprehensive curriculum review aimed at identifying areas for improvement. One of the key findings was that although TARDI offers a first-year course on animal welfare and handling, the curriculum was heavily weighted toward handling techniques, with limited emphasis on welfare principles. This imbalance meant that students were being trained in the mechanics of working with animals, but not sufficiently in the ethics and humane standards that should guide those interactions.

Dr. Ndudane also noted inconsistencies among animal handlers at the institution. While demonstrating procedures to students, some handlers failed to consistently model ethical and humane practices, which undermined the educational goals of the program. Beyond the classroom, outreach activities revealed that rural communities, which are integral to TARDI's mission, also lacked awareness and adherence to animal welfare standards. Given the institute's active engagement with these communities, Dr. Ndudane emphasized the need for TARDI to model best practices in animal welfare, so that local populations can learn by example and begin to adopt more humane and sustainable approaches.

Dr. Ndudane outlined the vision for TARDI's curriculum transformation, emphasizing the need to integrate animal welfare both theoretically and practically. The goal, she explained, is to produce graduates who are not only technically competent in their diploma qualifications but also deeply grounded in ethical principles, compassionate practice, and professional integrity.

She stressed that a well-rounded graduate would be equipped to support humane rural agricultural practices, acting as both practitioners and educators within their communities. These graduates would be able to demonstrate and teach the importance of animal welfare to rural populations, thereby extending the impact of their training beyond the classroom.

Following the curriculum review, several enhance-

ments were proposed. The existing module on animal welfare and handling would be strengthened with a deeper focus on animal behavior and welfare principles. Similarly, the jurisprudence module, which had previously centered on regulations from the South African Veterinary Council, would be expanded to include welfare legislation, ensuring students understand both the legal and ethical dimensions of their work. Ethical decision-making was identified as a foundational element across all modules. Dr. Ndudane noted that this was a natural fit for TARDI, especially given her role as President of the South African Veterinary Council, which allowed her to serve as a model and mentor in teaching veterinary ethics.

The curriculum would also embed One Health and One Welfare principles, recognizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. On the practical side, students would be trained in humane restraint, ethical animal handling, and treatment protocols.

To support these changes, two new modules were proposed: Applied Animal Welfare and Biosafety and Biosecurity. These additions would be developed in collaboration with external stakeholders, reinforcing TARDI's commitment to producing graduates who are both technically skilled and ethically responsible.

Dr. Nandipha Toyota Ndudane highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships in advancing animal welfare education at TARDI. Among the key stakeholders identified were welfare-conscious organizations such as Humane World for Animals, NPCA, and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC). These collaborations are central to promoting ethical decision-making and embedding animal welfare principles throughout the agricultural value chain.

She described how TARDI actively participates in community outreach, including Farmer's Day events, where faculty and students engage with rural communities to teach animal ethics, humane handling, and welfare practices. To strengthen these efforts, the institute is co-developing training materials with animal welfare organizations, leveraging their expertise to ensure content is both practical and impactful.

Capacity building remains a priority. Dr. Ndudane emphasized the need to align with the SAVC by developing a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) curriculum for educators and facilitators. A "train-the-trainer" model is being implemented, where selected staff attend welfare conferences and workshops, then

return to share insights and integrate them into the college's programs.

Resource mobilization and digital outreach are also part of the strategy. TARDI is working to expand its online training platforms, making animal welfare education more accessible to rural communities.

Dr. Ndudane reflected on the broader impact of integrating animal welfare and ethics into TARDI's curriculum. Graduates would emerge as animal welfare ambassadors, equipped to meet national compliance standards and contribute to ethical public service. This transformation is expected to boost livestock productivity in the Eastern Cape and across South Africa, while also enhancing rural livelihoods. By embedding animal welfare into project approval processes, especially within the Department of Agriculture, TARDI is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable and humane agricultural development.

Dr. Ndudane reflected on the real-world consequences of neglecting animal welfare. She referenced a recent case involving a Member of the Executive Council (MEC) whose pigs were left unfed for a week, an incident she attributed to a fundamental misunderstanding of the responsibility involved in caring for animals. This, she argued, underscores the urgency of embedding animal welfare education into every level of agricultural and veterinary training.

She reiterated that TARDI, as a government institution, faces challenges such as limited resources and resistance to change, particularly in shifting perceptions that animal welfare is optional. Dr. Ndudane was clear: animal welfare is not a side issue—it is compulsory, and institutions must comply.

Despite these challenges, she emphasized the opportunities ahead. The National Policy on Livestock Development and the Veterinary Strategy both embed animal welfare as a core principle. The South African Veterinary Council's Education Committee now requires institutions to report on areas such as One Health and animal welfare, creating a framework for accountability and progress.

She also highlighted the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in animal welfare, and the enthusiasm of young students who, once trained, can become powerful advocates for change. This, she said, presents a unique opportunity to scale up awareness and impact across rural

communities.

In her final remarks, Dr. Ndudane described animal welfare as a catalyst for rural development. By understanding community dynamics and teaching responsible animal handling, institutions like TARDI can help communities become more productive and resilient. She called for a pan-African collaboration

in welfare education, urging institutions across the continent to work together toward a shared vision of a humane and sustainable world.

She thanked the delegates for their attention and stated that animal welfare is not just a professional obligation. It is a transformative force for rural development.

Assessing The Impact of Animal Welfare Clubs on Club Members and Local Communities in Kenya



Eunice Robai
ANAW



Dr Brenda Okumu
ANAW

Ms. Eunice Robai opened her presentation by expressing gratitude to Susan for her supportive remarks the previous day, particularly in relation to education and its role in advancing animal welfare. She then introduced the audience to the Animal Welfare Clubs, a program initiated by the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) in 2012.

The clubs are designed to promote conservation education among primary school learners aged 14 and below. Eunice explained that the goal is to nurture young ambassadors who can influence their peers, families, and local communities to appreciate animals as sentient beings deserving of care and respect.

Through these clubs, both teachers and students engage with educational materials and share experiences that foster empathy and awareness. As of now, ANAW's program reaches 61 schools across six counties in Kenya, creating a growing network of informed and compassionate youth advocates for animal welfare.

Ms. Robai described how the Animal Welfare Clubs operate under the close guidance of teachers, ensuring that young learners receive structured and meaningful engagement. These students, drawn from both private and public institutions, become more aware of the importance of animals and learn how to prevent cruelty and abuse within their communities.

The program targets boys and girls aged 14 and below, and the current assessment spans several counties including Machakos, Nairobi, Nakuru, Taita Taveta, and Kilifi. Club members participate in activities designed to deepen their understanding of animal welfare and to extend that awareness into their local environments. Ms. Robai explained that the purpose of the ongoing assessment is to evaluate the impact of the clubs not only on the children but also on their families, local leaders, and broader communities. The goal is to determine whether the knowledge and values imparted in schools are influencing attitudes and behaviors in the places where these children live.

Ultimately, the vision is to raise a generation, young and old, that is conscious of animal welfare, fostering a culture of empathy, responsibility, and sustainable co-existence with animals across Kenya.

Ms. Robai detailed the methodology and early findings of ANAW's ongoing study assessing the impact of Animal Welfare Clubs on learners and their communities. A baseline study was launched at the beginning of the year across selected schools, with completion expected by year-end. The study aims to evaluate changes in knowledge, attitudes, and responsible pet ownership among club members and their surrounding communities.

The research employs a stratified simple random sampling technique, with schools categorized by county and proportionally selected. A mixed methods ap-

proach was used, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and focus groups involving students, parents, and community members. Quantitative data is being analyzed using linear regression and t-tests, while qualitative insights are examined through thematic analysis.

Preliminary findings include demographic profiles and behavioral insights. The study sample comprises 532 girls and 427 boys, most of whom report daily interaction with animals. Common animals include dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, birds, cows, goats, sheep, pigs, and even wildlife native to their regions.

The assessment focuses on three key dimensions: knowledge, attitude, and responsible animal care.

It explores awareness of animal welfare issues both within schools and in home communities, including extended family environments. Ms. Robai noted that while some animals in African households may not traditionally be considered pets, such as dogs and cats, they are nonetheless integral to family life and welfare education.

The study also examines attitudes toward animals, aiming to measure both positive and negative shifts as students engage with learning materials. A post-test design will be implemented later this year to evaluate behavioral changes and decision-making improvements

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Question 1

A 5th Year veterinary student expressed appreciation for the panel. She raised a question regarding humane restraint techniques used during clinical examination and treatment. Specifically, she asked whether there are approved standards that classify restraint methods as non-cruel, citing an example from the presentation where a cow's nose was held to stabilize it. She sought clarity on how to determine the degree of cruelty in restraint and whether standardized humane protocols exist.

Response

Dr. Ndudane affirmed that treatment is inherently part of animal welfare, but emphasized the importance of teaching students the correct and humane ways to handle animals. She provided examples from South Africa, particularly in the context of zoonotic diseases like rabies, where proper handling of potentially infected animals is critical.

She acknowledged that some traditional practices, such as chasing or tiring animals before capture - are still common but not humane. She recounted a field experience where students observed animal handlers beating cattle to move them into a crush pen, which she condemned as inhumane. Dr. Ndudane stressed the need to re-educate communities and students, especially when their home practices conflict with ethical standards. Her core message was that humane animal handling must be taught and modeled, both in institutions and in outreach settings, to shift cultural norms and ensure ethical treatment across all levels of animal care.

Question 2

The question focused on whether the study considered seasonality and how it impacted elephant behavior. The delegate also asked whether the researchers had identified combinations of environmental factors that had a stronger influence on movement patterns.

Response

Dr. Dabite confirmed that seasonality was considered in the study. He explained that elephants tend to move more during the dry season, likely in search of water. He also noted that group dynamics influence movement. Elephants in groups tend to travel shorter distances compared to solitary individuals. These findings are part of the first phase of the study, which focused on population estimates and movement patterns. The second phase will explore behavioral dynamics, including how elephants react to human encounters, with the goal of identifying specific elephants or groups that are consistently aggressive.

Question 3

Dr. Moses from the Chamber of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock and Forest of Cameroon directed his question to Mr. Dabite, asking for the surface area of Mount Cameroon National Park, how the study accounted for elephants entering or leaving the park, and whether there were relevant comparative studies. He also asked for clarification on the aim of the study. Additionally, he posed a question to Dr. Ndudane regarding the role of veterinary medicine in animal welfare and how zoonotic diseases fit into the One Health framework.

Response

Mr. Dabite stated that Mount Cameroon National Park covers approximately 581 km², with elephants absent from about 44.8 km² due to lava flows from past volcanic eruptions. The study area, where cameras were deployed, spanned 120 km². He explained the use of an open population model, which allows for births, deaths, and migration in and out of the park—appropriate for a long-term study conducted from 2015 to 2024. The aim of the study is to understand elephant numbers, movement, and behavior, particularly in light of increasing human-elephant conflict. Mr. Dabite emphasized that understanding elephant ecology and behavior is essential for developing effective management recommendations, which are being shared with regional forestry authorities and conservation programs.

Response 2

Dr. Ndudane responded by reaffirming that veterinary medicine inherently involves caring for animals, but emphasized that ethical and humane treatment must be explicitly taught and modeled. She acknowledged that while treatment is a form of care, animal welfare education ensures that practitioners understand the right way to handle animals, especially in field settings. Regarding zoonoses, she confirmed that One Health includes animal welfare as a critical component, since poor welfare can increase the risk of disease transmission between animals and humans. Teaching proper handling and restraint is therefore not only ethical but also essential for public health and biosecurity.

Question 4

The delegate asked whether it was possible to track students after they leave the animal welfare clubs, particularly as they transition into secondary school, to assess whether their behavior and skills are retained over time.

Response

Ms. Robai acknowledged the importance of the question and invited her co-presenter, Dr. Brenda Oliwa-Okumu, who joined online, to respond to the question.

Dr. Okumu explained that ANAW runs a program called the Africa Conservation Education Fund (ACEF), which supports learners as they move into high school. Many of these students were previously members of animal welfare clubs and continue to engage with animal welfare topics, often becoming leaders in conservation clubs such as the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK).

While follow-up is not yet comprehensive, ANAW has observed that many students retain their interest and knowledge in animal welfare. The current assessment aims to formalize this tracking by collecting structured data. The study is still in its formative stage, focusing on Grade 4 and 5 students, and seeks to isolate the impact of club membership on behavior related to pet ownership, animal welfare knowledge, and attitude toward animals.

Dr. Okumu concluded by noting that while long-term behavioral tracking into secondary school is not yet fully implemented, the organization is working toward it. Early signs from sponsored students suggest that interest and advocacy persist, reinforcing the value of early education in shaping future animal welfare ambassadors.



SESSION SIX

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Plastic Pollution And Animal Welfare In Zimbabwe



Linda Masudze

Ms. Linda Masudze, an environmental and wildlife lawyer from Zimbabwe presented an overview of plastic pollution and its impact on animal welfare in Zimbabwe. She explained that the country faced a growing crisis in solid waste

management, driven by cultural and systemic reliance on single-use plastics. Zimbabwe produced approximately 1.9 million tons of refuse annually, with plastics accounting for 342,000 tons—a figure higher than the African average of 0.65 kg per capita waste generation.

Despite being landlocked, Ms. Masudze emphasized that Zimbabwe suffered severe terrestrial impacts from plastic pollution. She revealed that over 5,000 animals—elephants, donkeys, cattle, sheep, and goats—died annually from ingesting or becoming entangled in plastics. Droughts worsened the problem, as animals scavenged at waste sites for food, leading to fatal ingestion of non-biodegradable material.

She detailed the legal and policy frameworks governing waste and animal protection. Zimbabwe's Environmental Management Act mandated regulation of waste management and prohibited harmful disposal, but lacked explicit linkages between waste and animal welfare. Other instruments, including Statutory Instrument 6 of 2007 (licensing recyclers and waste targets) and Statutory Instrument 98 of 2010 (banning thin plastics and polystyrene food containers), were notable milestones. However, enforcement gaps persisted, and animal welfare was often overlooked in environmental legislation.

Ms. Masudze proposed that Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 Master Plan and National Development Strategy integrate animal welfare provisions in waste management and pollution control frameworks. Her ongoing project under the Center for Animal Law Studies aims to develop a policy brief linking plastic pollution to animal protection, ensuring landlocked countries are recognized as equally vulnerable to plastic-related animal suffering.

Consumptive Utilization and The Lack of Adequate Legislation: A Case of Tigers in South Africa



Douglas Wolhuter
NSPCA, South Africa

Mr. Douglas Wolhuter, National Chief Inspector and Manager of the Wildlife Protection Unit at the National Council of SPCAs (NSPCA), presented a striking case study on tiger farming and welfare violations in South Africa. His talk traced the evolution of South Africa's captive big-cat industry, from lion breeding for tourism and trophy hunting to an emerging focus on tigers, an exotic species inadequately protected by national law.

He explained that under current frameworks, the National Environmental Management:

Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) and Threatened or Protected Species Regulations (TOPS) apply only to indigenous species, while the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) governs international trade but not domestic ownership. Consequently, tigers fall outside these protections, leaving the Animals Protection Act (1962) as the only legal recourse for cruelty cases.

Mr. Wolhuter exposed rampant welfare abuses: tigers confined in undersized enclosures, poor hygiene, lack of shade and enrichment, and cross-breeding between lions and tigers (ligers and tigons)—all contraventions of existing regulations. The absence of uniform provincial standards further enabled overstocked facilities, with some keeping up to 50 tigers per hectare far below humane thresholds.

He described systemic loopholes allowing tigers to be hunted without permits and traded illegally through "tiger glue" and "tiger cake", processed products smuggled under mislabeled wildlife exports, often hidden within donkey-skin shipments. This blending of illicit trades, he warned, risked undermining CITES enforcement and perpetuating organized wildlife crime.

The NSPCA's legal victories, such as the 2019 court judgment halting the lion bone export quota on welfare grounds marked progress but revealed deeper governance challenges. Mr. Wolhuter called for reform of national legislation to explicitly cover exotic species, fast-track wildlife crime prosecution, and modernize forensic tools to identify illegal wildlife derivatives. He concluded with a powerful reminder: "We stopped the lion bone trade; now we must stop tiger farming before it becomes the next crisis."

Examining Policy and Decision-Making Frameworks for Protection of Working Animals During Disasters in Low- And Middle-Income Countries



Franklin Ongwankwa
Brooke East Africa

Mr. Franklin Ongwankwa, from Brooke East Africa, presented findings from a multi-country study (2024-2025) conducted across Kenya, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Nicaragua, and Senegal in collaboration with the University College London and IRMA. The study investigated how working animals, particularly donkeys, horses, and mules, were included in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and climate adaptation policies.

The research involved policy reviews of 42 documents (22 animal welfare and 20 DRM-related), alongside 18 key informant interviews and focus group discus-

sions. Results revealed that while all countries had DRM frameworks referencing animals, most policies generically mentioned "livestock" and rarely addressed working equids directly. Kenya and Ethiopia had the most comprehensive policy coverage, yet still lacked provisions for emergency preparedness or recovery planning specific to working animals.

Common challenges included minimal community awareness, weak coordination between government agencies, inadequate funding, and limited veterinary capacity. In many cases, decision-makers lacked timely, reliable data for animal-inclusive planning. Early warning systems seldom incorporated animal welfare indicators, and risk maps and post-disaster assessments failed to account for animal needs.

The study concluded that effective DRM required explicit integration of working animals into national and local disaster policies, along with clear inter-agency coordination, dedicated funding, and inclusive participation of communities that depend on these animals. Mr. Ongwankwa called for leveraging global climate finance to include animal welfare as a component of resilience and adaptation strategies and urged further cross-sectoral research collaboration on equid welfare in droughts and floods.



The Use of Animals in Research, Testing, and Education in Africa

Craig Redmond

Mr. Craig Redmond, representing the Lush Prize initiative, delivered a recorded presentation summarizing findings from a continental scoping study on animal use and alternatives in research, testing, and education across Africa. The Lush Prize, a partnership between Lush Cosmetics and the Ethical Consumer Research Association, provides the world's largest financial awards to scientists and advocates advancing the replacement of animal testing.

The study examined 54 African countries, identifying 351 animal protection organizations, of which only 45 worked partly on research-related advocacy. Crucially, no African country collected or published official statistics on animal use in research, with South Africa estimated to use about 130,000 animals annually, primarily in biomedical and agricultural studies.

Findings revealed that animal use was widespread in universities, particularly in veterinary and biological sciences, and that many studies focused on productivity enhancement and plant-based medicinal testing using rodents. While in vitro and computational alternatives were emerging in at least 16 countries, they were often used alongside animal experiments rather than replacing them.

Mr. Redmond underscored that no African nation had dedicated legislation governing animal use in scientific research, though eight had partial welfare laws and four were drafting relevant bills. Weak enforcement, limited training, and lack of infrastructure perpetuated outdated animal-based models. He also warned that the rise of laboratory animal societies across Africa risked entrenching animal use rather than promoting replacement methods.

He urged investment in non-animal methodologies (NAMs) such as organo-chip, computational, and in vitro systems, arguing that Africa could leapfrog traditional methods by prioritizing innovation over imitation. He also advocated for regional collaboration, legal reforms to ban animal testing in cosmetics and education, and integration of NAMs into curricula and funding frameworks.

Discussion and Key Outcomes

Panel discussions emphasized that law, science, and ethics must evolve together to protect animals effectively. Participants highlighted that policy blind spots, such as excluding working equids from DRM or tigers from national wildlife laws, reflected broader structural gaps in how African legal systems conceptualized animal welfare.

The speakers collectively called for:

- Strengthening legislative integration of welfare across environmental, disaster, and research policies.
- Expanding regional cooperation and harmonization of standards under AU-IBAR and WOAH frameworks.
- Developing data systems and early-warning indicators that include animal welfare metrics.
- Redirecting climate and research funding to humane, sustainable, and animal-inclusive innovations.

The session concluded that Africa's progress in welfare advocacy was significant but uneven. Achieving One Welfare and One Health integration demanded cross-sectoral leadership, informed policymaking, and the courage to reform entrenched systems that normalize animal exploitation.



SESSION SEVEN

AFRICAN UNION INTERAFRICAN BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES (AU-IBAR)

Status of Animal Welfare in Africa



Dr. Elynn Njeri
AU-IBAR

AU-IBAR, through the presentation by Dr. Elynn Njeri, emphasized that the AWSA (2017–2036) remains the principal continental framework guiding welfare implementation. The Strategy aligns with the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA 2015–2035), the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA), and the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS).

The Bureau reported that substantial progress had been achieved in mainstreaming welfare across its

animal health, production, and biodiversity portfolios. Under the 2024 AU Summit Decision instituting a moratorium on the commercial slaughter of donkeys, AU-IBAR coordinated the development of the Pan-African Donkey Development and Preservation Strategy (2026–2035). The process culminated in the Second Pan-African Donkey Conference (PADCo II) held in Abidjan in June 2025, where Member States and partners validated the draft strategy and adopted the Abidjan Declaration.

AU-IBAR further highlighted collaborations with FAO, WOAH, and Brooke, as well as the African Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW), to strengthen coordination, research, and education. A previous stock-taking study undertaken revealed growing policy interest among Member States but limited budgetary allocation, weak monitoring frameworks, and fragmented advocacy.

The presentation concluded by emphasizing the need for:

Regional domestication of AWSA through RECs; Integration of welfare indicators into AU monitoring mechanisms such as the CAADP Biennial Review; Documentation and visibility of good practices to elevate Africa's voice in global welfare fora.

Aquatic Animal Welfare in Africa



Dr. Nelly Isyagi
AU-IBAR

The presentation highlighted the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) as the principal continental blueprint guiding sustainable management and equitable utilization of fisheries and aquaculture resources. The PFRS, adopted by AU Member States, is anchored in global and continental norms including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, AU Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Aquatic Animal Health Code.

Dr. Isyagi described the PFRS as structured around seven policy pillars: conservation and sustainable resource use; small-scale fisheries development; sustainable aquaculture; responsible and equitable fish trade; strengthened regional cooperation; awareness and capacity development; and management of high-seas fisheries. Cross-cutting themes include climate-change

resilience, gender and youth inclusion, and private-sector financing. She underscored that these pillars collectively advance the five animal freedoms—freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury, and disease; freedom to express natural behavior; and freedom from fear and distress—within all aquatic production systems

Africa's Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) was presented as the coordinating platform translating the PFRS into regional and national action. Under the Africa Blue Economy agenda, the PFRS and AFRM together provide the framework to ensure that aquatic animals' welfare, ecosystem integrity, and trade safety are integrated into development planning. Dr. Isyagi noted that aquatic animal welfare transcends the concept of "fish welfare," encompassing environmental health, pollution control, habitat conservation, and responsible aquaculture systems.

She identified key threats to aquatic animal health and welfare including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, habitat degradation, water pollution (notably plastics and noise), climate change and acidification, invasive species, and disease outbreaks. These pressures threaten not only biodiversity but also food security, trade competitiveness, and the sustainability of aquatic value chains.

AU-IBAR's continental approach was described as anchored on the One Health and One Welfare paradigm, promoting coherence between animal, human, and environmental well-being. The Bureau's work emphasizes the interdependence between aquatic ecosystem integrity, animal health, and so-

cio-economic development. Dr. Isyagi reaffirmed that actions and actors involved in aquatic animal welfare must be coordinated under the AWSA (Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa) and aligned with the PFRS through the AFRM, as recommended by the 5th Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment (STC-ARDWE).

In moving forward, she referenced the STC-ARDWE's endorsement of a Continental Aquatic Animal Health Strategy (2025–2034) under the theme "Sustainable and Resilient Agrifood Systems for a Healthy and Prosperous Africa." The strategy aims to strengthen biosecurity capacity, disease control, and market access through ecosystem-based approaches. Its objectives include: Promoting aquatic animal health and welfare to safeguard fishery, aquaculture, and biodiversity resources; Strengthening the resilience of aquatic ecosystems through coordinated transboundary management; Enhancing food safety and traceability in intra-African trade under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Controlling antimicrobial resistance along aquatic food value chains

Dr. Isyagi concluded by underscoring that aquatic animals play essential ecological, nutritional, and cultural roles beyond their economic value. She called for harmonized continental coordination, investment in aquatic biosecurity, and integration of animal-welfare indicators into the Blue Economy and One Health frameworks. The presentation reaffirmed AU-IBAR's leadership in ensuring that aquatic animal welfare remains central to Africa's sustainable development agenda and the long-term resilience of its aquatic ecosystems.



REGIONAL PROGRESS AND REC IMPLEMENTATION



ECOWAS



Prof. Hassane Adakal presented ECOWAS' integration of welfare into the Livestock Development Strategy for West Africa (LIDES) and its operationalization through the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC). The region advanced technical cooperation with Brook West Africa and national veterinary services to establish a regional donkey-welfare framework and operational guidelines for humane transport and slaughter.

Despite logistical disruptions linked to regional security challenges, ECOWAS maintained active participation in AU-IBAR coordination processes and initiated preparations for a five-year Animal Welfare Action Plan (2025–2030).

IGAD



Dr. Wamalwa outlined IGAD's progress in implementing its Regional Animal Welfare Strategy (2017–2021), the first of its kind in Africa, and its planned update for 2026. Several Member States had established National Animal Welfare Committees and enacted new legislation. Notable achievements included Kenya's enforcement of the donkey-slaughter ban, Uganda's curriculum reforms, and Ethiopia's integration of welfare in veterinary regulation.

The presentation stressed the need to mobilize resources for coordinated One Welfare programs that link welfare, AMR control, and disaster preparedness, given the recurrent droughts in the Horn of Africa.

ECCAS



The ECCAS region, represented by Dr. Hassane, underscored the absence of a dedicated regional framework despite having well-developed livestock and fisheries policies under the Regional Commission for Livestock, Meat and Fisheries Resources (CEBEVIRHA) and the Regional Animal Health Center (RAHC). The presentation proposed creating a Regional Animal Welfare Committee for Central Africa, housed within CEBEVIRHA, to harmonize standards, improve coordination, and promote awareness among Member States.

This proposal was widely supported, recognizing that Central Africa remains vulnerable to unregulated animal trade and welfare neglect, particularly in cross-border livestock corridors.



COUNTRY EXPERIENCES



TUNISIA



Tunisia traced its welfare legislation to early statutory provisions under the 1913 Penal Code and later under the 2005 Livestock Law. The country implemented ministerial orders setting welfare standards for housing, breeding, and identification, and incorporated welfare teaching at the National Veterinary School of Sidi Thabet.

The creation of institutional ethics committees and partnerships with WOAH and ICLAS reflected a deliberate effort to align with international standards. Municipal authorities adopted humane control of stray dogs through vaccination and sterilization, supported by SPANA Tunisia and the Animal Protection Association of Tunisia. Challenges remained in law enforcement, funding, and data collection, but Tunisia's approach positioned North Africa as a growing welfare hub.

MAURITANIA



Mauritania presented compelling evidence of the socio-economic importance of donkeys, which number over 560 000 nationwide. The species faced widespread neglect, overwork, and exploitation for the skin trade. In response, the government partnered with SPANA Mauritania and Save the Donkey Mauritania to deliver mobile veterinary services, train owners on humane care, and incorporate welfare education into the Green Schools curriculum.

Policy recognition of working animals has increased, with ministries now integrating welfare objectives into rural development programs.

KENYA



Kenya showcased one of the most advanced welfare systems in Africa, grounded in its Constitution (Articles 42, 43, 46, 69) and driven by the National Animal Welfare Strategy (2023–2027). Implementation was coordinated through the Animal Welfare Action Kenya (AWAKE) platform, uniting government, NGOs, academia, and private actors.

The government enforced the ban on donkey slaughter, dismantled illegal abattoirs, and strengthened county legislation such as the Nairobi City County Animal Welfare Act. Kenya also mainstreamed welfare in One Health programs, reflecting a holistic national approach.

ETHIOPIA



Ethiopia established a Department of Animal Identification, Traceability and Welfare under its Ministry of Agriculture and enacted Proclamation No. 1376/2025, a landmark law enshrining welfare principles. A National Animal Welfare Strategy with five thematic pillars guided policy, education, communication, and resource mobilization.

The government rolled out mobile veterinary clinics, national campaigns on humane handling, and regulations on live-animal transport. Ethiopia's institutionalized framework provided a model for replication across the continent.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE



Côte d'Ivoire adopted the Animal Welfare Law No. 2020-995, banning donkey-skin exports and introducing clear sanctions for cruelty. Implementation decrees regulated ownership, transport, and slaughter. The government institutionalized a National Day for Animal Welfare and implemented public awareness campaigns with partners including FAO, WOAH, USDA, Brook, and SWISS TPH. The presentation underscored animal welfare as a pillar of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, consistent with the Abidjan Declaration.

TANZANIA



Tanzania reported transformative investments totaling USD 85 million over five years to strengthen identification, vaccination, and welfare infrastructure, with USD 26 million already disbursed. Following the 2022 ban on donkey slaughter, the government integrated welfare into livestock and climate programs and established partnerships with 28 animal-welfare organizations.

Future plans included revising the Animal Disease Act and the Animal Welfare Act to harmonize them with the AWSA. Tanzania positioned itself as a continental champion of welfare enforcement and public education.

CAMEROON



Cameroon animal welfare focal point presented a robust national framework under the One Health–One Welfare paradigm. Welfare considerations were embedded in the National Development Strategy (SND30), and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms linked animal health, environment, and human well-being.

The government financed recruitment of 100 veterinarians, enhanced surveillance, and promoted community engagement with emphasis on youth and women. In closing remarks, the Minister reiterated that animal welfare is both a moral obligation and a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Key Outcomes and Recommendations

The session concluded that Africa had entered a new implementation phase for animal welfare participants agreed to:

- Accelerate REC-level domestication of AWSA and finalize the Central African Welfare Framework under ECCAS.
- Operationalize the Pan-African Donkey Strategy (2026–2035) through REC advocacy and Member-State action plans.
- Integrate welfare indicators into CAADP and STC reporting mechanisms.
- Strengthen education and professional development for veterinarians, para-professionals, and law-enforcement officers.
- Mainstream welfare into climate, One Health, and trade policies, including sanitary and phytosanitary measures.
- Enhance resource mobilization through AU, RECs, Member States, and donor partnerships.
- Promote community awareness and media advocacy to sustain behaviour change.

Common Challenges and Opportunities

Across all regions, countries reported persistent constraints in financing, weak enforcement of existing laws, limited training, and data scarcity. Insecurity in the Sahel and climate shocks further hindered implementation. However, significant momentum existed through:

Emerging regional policy frameworks;

- Integration of welfare in veterinary curricula and One Health strategies;
- Active NGO participation in field interventions; and
- Political recognition of welfare as part of food-system sustainability.
- Digital tools, such as mobile data collection and e-reporting systems piloted in Kenya and Tanzania, were identified as promising innovations for scaling monitoring and transparency.



SESSION EIGHT

AFRICAN UNION INTERAFRICAN BUREAU FOR
ANIMAL RESOURCES (AU-IBAR) AND
DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIO-
NALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH

The African Union Digital One Health Platform: Game Changer



Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki
AU-IBAR

Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki began by posing a fundamental question to the delegates: "What issues can we change?" She emphasized that the answer lied in simplifying the challenge and focusing on improving communication, coordination, collaboration, and capacity building. She noted that many stakeholders continued to use outdated practices because they lack clarity on their roles - a common reality across the continent.

Central to her message was the importance of data. Dr. Mbole-Kariuki stressed that data must drive action, and that decisions made without data are often misguided. She introduced the One Health Data Alliance Project, which envisions an Africa where the health of humans, animals, and ecosystems is interconnected and holistically managed. To achieve this, she called for a data-driven culture, asserting that "figures do not lie" and must form the bedrock of decision-making.

She then explored the role of digitalization, asking whether it was truly the solution or merely an enigma. Drawing a relatable analogy, she reflected on the early days of mobile phones: once rare, now indispensable. She noted that for many, especially women, losing a phone would feel like losing a lifeline. This, she argued, illustrated the transformative power of digital tools, and she urged stakeholders to embrace digitalization as the key to unlocking progress.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki expressed her hope that One Welfare initiatives would also move into the digital space, reinforcing that digital transformation was the future.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki explained how the AU Digital One Health Platform was used to present one clear agenda to African member states: the need for a digital One Health information policy and a supporting architecture.

This proposal was grounded in existing frameworks, including the AU Data Policy Framework, which guides how transformation, security, and digital governance should be approached, and the Digital Transformation Strategy, which envisions a future where poverty is eradicated and African ownership is prioritized.

She shared that a formal decision was submitted to the Specialized Technical Committee, asking for endorsement of both the policy and the platform itself. She emphasized that it was a landmark moment - the first time such a platform would be implemented across Africa, and a true game changer in the region's approach to integrated health management.

The platform's architecture focused on establishing robust structures that respect national sovereignty, enable interoperability, and support feedback loops. It also prioritized capacity building, especially in areas like data science, analytics, and policy. Dr. Mbole-Kariuki noted that very few professionals currently work with advanced data, highlighting a significant gap that must be addressed. The third pillar of the platform was governance, ensuring that the system is not only functional but also accountable. She clarified that the platform was not designed to burden member states with new data collection requirements. Instead, it aimed to integrate and share existing data more effectively. Member states had voiced frustration over repeated requests for data they had already gathered, prompting AU-IBAR to take a more innovative approach.

The platform connected various stakeholders, including AU specialized offices like Africa CDC, national One Health units such as those in Cameroon, Regional Economic Communities like ECOWAS and EAC, international One Health partners, and the private sector. Dr. Mbole-Kariuki made a direct appeal

to private sector representatives, encouraging them to share their data, which she acknowledged as valuable and underutilized. Her message was clear: collaboration and integration are essential to realizing the full potential of the Digital One Health Platform.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki emphasized that the driving force behind the platform was not just data collection, but the value of the data being collected. She explained that the platform was designed to deliver benefits such as data consistency, interoperability, documentation, quality assurance, and enhanced collaboration and communication. These elements were essential for meaningful action and informed decision-making.

The platform's thematic focus included transboundary animal diseases, vector-borne diseases, Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), foodborne illnesses, and environmental health. However, she stressed the importance of starting with manageable priorities - specifically, zoonotic diseases. These include zoonotic tuberculosis, rabies, anthrax, Rift Valley Fever, avian influenza, brucellosis, and AMR, all of which are deeply connected to animal welfare and environmental health.

She identified biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration as core sub-themes that must be addressed. Turning to the next generation, Dr. Mbole-Kariuki addressed the Gen Z participants, hailing the platform as their good work. She encouraged young people to take ownership of their data, build their own data products, and use the system to answer the questions that matter to them. This self-service model empowers users to drive their own agendas and contribute meaningfully to the One Health mission.

She invoked the metaphor of Africa's three-legged stool, a symbol of balance and interdependence. If one leg, representing animal, environmental, or human health, was weak or missing, the entire system would collapse. Dr. Mbole-Kariuki urged the audience to recognize that these three pillars must move forward together, or efforts in the One Health space would remain ineffective. She urged delegates to bring their raw data, contribute their use cases, and help shape the future of health in Africa through integrated, data-driven collaboration.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki outlined the three core modules of the Digital One Health Platform. The first was the Data Share Nexus, which empowered users to create and

share their own data products. The second was the e-Training Hub, designed to address Africa's critical shortage of data scientists. She stressed that without building local capacity in data quality, analytics, modeling, and prediction, the continent would continue to rely on solutions that lack contextual relevance. The goal was to equip African experts to interpret disease patterns, anticipate outbreaks, and partner effectively with development agencies.

The third module was the Decision Situation Room, a space tailored for policymakers. Rather than presenting complex statistical outputs, the platform offers simple, actionable dashboards that clearly communicate the implications of various decisions. This approach was intended to influence budget allocations and policy priorities from the ground up, rather than relying on top-down directives.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki used a vivid metaphor to explain the platform's data flow: first, users compile their data into pipelines; then, they perform analytics - "cracking the egg" visually; next, they manage data contracts, ensuring privacy and control; and finally, they produce a data product—the "fried egg" ready to be consumed and acted upon. She announced that the platform would begin rolling out in Kenya, Cameroon, Zambia, and through regional bodies like IGAD and ECOWAS, with a particular focus on developing a Climate Situation Room in IGAD. The emphasis was on smart, evidence-based interventions, not speculation or sentiment.

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki reiterated that it was a member state-driven agenda, with AU-IBAR and Africa CDC playing a supporting role. She called for effective action, stakeholder engagement, and interoperability, emphasizing the importance of public-private partnerships. Addressing the private sector directly, she urged them to contribute their data and collaborate fully.

Her closing message was both a rallying cry and a challenge: "Power is information in the hands of many. Stop hiding your data. Share, share, share. And let's make Africa strong again."

One Health Analytics Showcasing Concrete Use Cases in Africa



Mr Mamadou Djigo
One Health Analytics Program/ GIZ



Thapa Poornima
GIZ

Poornima, representing the GIZ One Health Data Alliance Africa Project, opened the session by thanking Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki for her insightful presentation and for demonstrating how the AU Digital One Health Platform was advancing health security across the continent. She then introduced the focus of her own presentation: to showcase two concrete One Health use cases that illustrated how data integration could address real-world health challenges in Africa.

Before diving into the case studies, Poornima provided an overview of the One Health Data Alliance Africa Project, with particular emphasis on the One Health Analytics Capacity Development Program. The project's overarching goal was to strengthen digitalized One Health governance and management across Africa. To achieve this, the initiative was structured around three main work streams.

Ms. Poornima continued by outlining the three main work streams of the GIZ One Health Data Alliance Africa Project. The first work stream operated at the continental level, aiming to strengthen the foundational principles for pan-African exchange and utilization of One Health information. This involved collaboration with partners such as AU-IBAR, particularly on the development of a One Health information architecture and policy that could serve the entire continent.

The second work stream focused on the country level, addressing the technological and institutional prerequisites for digitalized governance and man-

agement. The emphasis was on building data-sharing agreements among national partners to ensure smoother and more secure exchange of health information.

The third work stream was the Community of Practice, which centers on capacity development and stakeholder engagement at the intersection of digital health and One Health. She explained that the community was launched in 2023 as part of the Africa CDC's Digital Transformation Strategy. One of its key initiatives was the One Health Analytics Capacity Development Program, designed for young data practitioners across Africa.

Ms. Poornima explained that the program was officially launched during the Africa Health Tech Summit and brought together participants from across the continent who already had experience in data management. These individuals took part in training sessions focused on data integration and analysis, and were then encouraged to form teams to tackle real-world One Health challenges such as schistosomiasis, Rift Valley Fever, Malaria, and Anti-Microbial Resistance.

She concluded the segment by announcing that the delegates would hear from two teams, who would present their results and outcomes, offering tangible examples of how data integration could be used to address pressing health issues in Africa.

Ms. Poornima transitioned the session by inviting her colleague, Mr. Mamadou Djigo, to take the floor. As the lead of the One Health Analytics Program at GIZ, Mamadou was introduced as a key figure in

driving forward the use of data integration and analytics to tackle One Health challenges across Africa.

Mr. Mamadou Djigo began his segment by introducing the One Health Data Capacity Development Program, which was launched in the previous year. The program was designed with a clear objective: to enhance skills in data management, analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, while also encouraging participants to develop innovative use cases that address real-world One Health challenges.

He explained that the program was not only about technical training but also about fostering knowledge exchange and building a community of practice. The initiative attracted significant interest, with over 600 applications received from across the continent. From this pool, 20 participants were selected, representing seven African countries.

These selected individuals underwent intensive training and were then organized into teams to work on practical challenges. Mr. Djigo noted that the delegates would hear directly from two of these teams, who would present their use cases and outcomes, offering a glimpse into how data-driven approaches were being applied to issues such as schistosomiasis, Rift Valley Fever, Malaria, and Anti-Microbial Resistance.

Mr. Djigo elaborated on the outcomes of the One Health Data Capacity Development Program, emphasizing its success in enhancing participants' abilities in data management, analytics, and the development of innovative use cases. He noted that the program provided hands-on experience with real-world One Health challenges, supported by a network of mentors and experts who guided participants throughout the process.

Beyond technical skills, the program also focused on cultivating leadership and communication abilities, equipping participants to influence data-driven decision-making in their respective countries. Mamadou stressed that the ultimate goal was to ensure that these young professionals could apply their knowledge locally, contributing to stronger health systems and governance.

He then shared the timeline of the initiative. The call for applications was launched in September 2024, attracting over 600 applicants from across Africa. From this pool, 20 participants were selected, representing seven countries. The program officially kicked off with a workshop held in Kigali on November 1 and 2, followed by four online training sessions, a six-month project phase, and regular group presentations to track progress. Participants also benefited from 30 technical sessions, where they received targeted mentorship in specialized areas. A highlight of the program was a January meetup, where a participant, Justice Ashaba, presented his work. Dr. Djigo announced that the final workshop would take place the following day, giving each group the opportunity to present their achievements to the steering committee.

He concluded by inviting Group One, which focused on AI-powered surveillance, to begin their presentation, followed by Group Two, who would showcase their own use case. With that, the stage was set for the participants to demonstrate the impact of their work.

GROUP ONE

Amina Freighters, a participant from Nigeria in the One Health Data Alliance Capacity Building Program, took the stage to present her team's project: an AI-powered surveillance system for female genital schistosomiasis, developed through a One Health lens. She began by painting a vivid picture of the main challenge: misdiagnosis. She explained that many women suffering from female genital schistosomiasis were often mistakenly diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections or other gynecological conditions, leading to delayed treatment and emotional distress. She highlighted the scale of the issue, noting that over 200 million women and girls globally were affected, with more than 56 million cases in Africa alone. De-

spite these staggering numbers, the disease remained underreported and underdiagnosed, compounded by social stigma and a lack of integrated surveillance systems.

Amina emphasized that current data systems were fragmented, with health, animal, and environmental data siloed in separate domains. Her team's goal was to bridge these gaps using a One Health digital approach. They sourced data from SAGAL, encompassing health, animal, and environmental datasets. After collecting the data, they conducted feature engineering, data cleaning, and exploratory data analysis. The team then developed and tested three AI models:

Random Forest Classification, Logistic Regression, and XGBoost Classifier. These models were used to identify patterns and improve diagnostic accuracy, offering a promising pathway toward early detection and targeted intervention for female genital schistosomiasis across Africa.

Amina shared the results of her team's AI-powered surveillance tool, developed to predict and guide interventions for female genital schistosomiasis. The tool, named the One Health Female Genital Schistosomiasis App, performed two key functions: it classified risk levels and provided intervention guidance based on each prediction.

Using logistic regression, the model achieved impressive performance metrics: 97% precision, 95% recall, 96% F1 score, and 97% overall accuracy, with an AUC score of 1.00, indicating excellent separation between affected and unaffected individuals. These results validated the model's robustness and reliability.

Amina explained the key features used in the model, including infection counts, egg presence, female population data, floating vegetation indicators, and water contact intensity. She described the transmission cycle of female genital schistosomiasis, which began when snails released eggs into freshwater sources. Women and girls who come into contact with these

waters, often while washing, could become infected, with the parasites eventually affecting the genital tract.

She then walked the audience through the app's framework, which integrated epidemiological, environmental, health, and vector indicators. Users could assess risk by interacting with a simple dashboard that delivered clear diagnostic feedback.

In terms of policy integration, Amina proposed embedding the app into existing DHIS tools to enable real-time hotspot mapping. This would allow health authorities to target interventions more effectively. She also envisioned the creation of community digital health hubs, featuring mobile clinics, telemedicine, and improved local data systems. Lastly, she highlighted the importance of climate-smart planning, using rainfall and flood data to assess environmental risk factors and optimize intervention strategies.

Amina closed with a powerful reminder that One Health was not just about human health; it was equally about animal and environmental health. When one was compromised, the others inevitably suffered. Her team's work exemplified how integrated data and AI could drive meaningful change across all three domains.

GROUP TWO



Muscline Ganda
GIZ



Wangari Mutuku
GIZ

Muscline Ganda from Zimbabwe introduced the second use case developed under the One Health Data Capacity Development Program. Together with her colleague Wangari Mutuku, she worked on a project aimed at evaluating the impact of seasonal variability on Rift Valley Fever dynamics in livestock populations in Nyandarua, Kenya.

She began by explaining that Rift Valley Fever (RVF) is a zoonotic, mosquito-borne viral disease that pri-

marily affects ruminants such as sheep, goats, and cattle. The disease is associated with high rates of abortion and mortality, and outbreaks often lead to trade bans and movement restrictions, which in turn threaten food security.

While livestock vaccines for RVF do exist, Muscline noted that their side effects have hindered uptake, and more critically, no human vaccine is currently available, despite a case fatality rate of up to 20%.

She cited a 2020 study from Nyandarua which revealed that local farmers lacked awareness of RVF transmission dynamics and vector control measures, a gap that could exacerbate future outbreaks, especially given the nomadic livestock systems and frequent cross-regional animal movement.

The team's study aimed to identify risk factors and climate variables associated with RVF outbreaks, assess the influence of seasonality on seroprevalence and transmission, and develop predictive models for future outbreaks. Ms. Ganda outlined their methodology: they extracted climate data from WorldClim and combined it with animal health data from the Nyandarua study. After cleaning the data, they conducted descriptive analytics, spatial imaging using GPS coordinates, and predictive modeling, followed by visual mapping of the results.

She concluded by inviting Wangari Mutuku to present the team's findings and discuss their policy implications, setting the stage for the next part of the presentation.

Wangari Mutuku took over to present the results of their study on RVF dynamics in Nyandarua County, Kenya. She began by explaining that their team conducted extensive descriptive analysis to understand the current state of RVF in the region and how it might be managed more effectively.

Their findings revealed that breed, age, and sex of livestock were major predictors of RVF susceptibility. For example, female animals and certain breeds like Friesians were more likely to contract the disease. These insights were derived from a logistic re-

gression model, which helped visualize the risk factors in a way that could be easily interpreted by policymakers and practitioners.

The team also incorporated climatic variables into their model, particularly precipitation and temperature, given the mosquito-borne nature of the disease. Interestingly, while temperature showed no significant influence, rainfall emerged as a critical factor, higher precipitation correlated with increased RVF cases. Their projections showed a rising trend in cases through 2030 and 2040, underscoring the urgency of proactive measures.

Ms. Mutuku issued a direct message to stakeholders in Nyandarua County: to effectively prepare for outbreaks during rainy seasons by initiating vaccination campaigns and community education programs. She acknowledged the high cost of vaccinating entire livestock populations but suggested a targeted approach, focusing on the most vulnerable breeds, ages, and sexes to maximize impact with limited resources.

Echoing Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki's earlier remarks, Ms. Mutuku emphasized the importance of collaboration across sectors. Their model demonstrated that relying solely on animal data was insufficient; integrating environmental factors created a more reliable foundation for policy. She encouraged other regions, including Cameroon, to adopt and adapt their model for local use.

Ms. Mutuku concluded with a call for human health data integration, which would further enhance the model's predictive power and support more comprehensive surveillance. Her final appeal was clear: release the data, and let human, animal, and environmental insights work together to guide Africa's health interventions.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question 1

The Question and Answer session opened with a heartfelt reflection from one of the delegates, who expressed pride in witnessing the next generation step into leadership roles in disease intelligence.

He noted that efforts were underway to build a robust animal health workforce, not just for animal diseases but for cross-sectoral disease intelligence. He extended an invitation to the young professionals to join the technical working group on vector control, being established in collaboration with Africa CDC and the African Union, signaling a shift toward inclusive and forward-looking governance.

“We are now in the dynamic of developing a workforce, an animal health workforce focused on disease intelligence, not just for animal diseases but for disease intelligence as a whole. How can young professionals contribute to this effort?”

Answer

Dr. Hiver stated that they were actively looking to the younger generation to take the lead in this space. As the older practitioners transition out, it was reassuring to see capable hands ready to carry the torch. They were encouraged to connect with his colleague to become part of the technical working group on vector control, which they were establishing in collaboration with Africa CDC and the African Union. Their involvement was

vital to shaping the future of disease intelligence across sectors.

Question 2

A delegate then offered a comment of strong support for the data-sharing ethos underpinning the One Health platform. He praised the initiative's commitment to collaboration and transparency, before posing a three-part question.

He asked for more detail on the types of variables and data the platform seeks from contributors, how this aligns with existing platforms like WAHIS from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and how the system ensures data quality and avoids duplication.

Response

The platform aims to build on internationally recognized templates and indicators, such as those from ICDR and WOAH, to ensure harmonization and interoperability. The focus is on sharing, not collecting, data, starting with priority zoonotic diseases. The goal is to create an open arena where countries like Kenya can share existing datasets (e.g., on Rift Valley Fever), which can then be integrated into a smart intelligence system tailored to specific needs.

Discussions are already underway with FAO and Africa CDC is a core partner in this effort. Legal frameworks will be anchored in AU protocols, and data contracts will govern access and usage. These contracts ensure that data sharing is consensual, secure, and supervised by AU-IBAR, preventing unauthorized circulation and maintaining clarity on ownership and application.

He stated that he was a strong supporter of data sharing and collaboration for One Health. He had a three-part question:

- What types of variables and data are you looking for from contributors?
- How does this align with existing platforms like WOAH's WAHIS?
- How do you ensure data quality and avoid duplication?"

Response

It was cited that first, they were building structures based on internationally recognized templates and indicators, such as those from ICDR and WOAH. Their goal is to harmonize data sharing, not just data collection, starting with priority zoonotic diseases.

Second, they aim to align with existing platforms like WAHIS by integrating their standards into our framework. They were already in discussions with FAO and Empress, and Africa CDC is a core partner in this effort. Third, to ensure data quality and prevent duplication, they would implement data contracts. These contracts define who can access the data and under what conditions, supervised by AU-IBAR. This ensures clarity, security, and accountability in data sharing. Their vision includes an open arena where, for example, Kenya can share its Rift Valley Fever data, and others can access it through a smart, coded intelligence system tailored to specific needs.

The session closed with a renewed call for structured collaboration, emphasizing that data must be shared responsibly to unlock its full potential for Africa's health security.





SESSION NINE

**PANEL DISCUSSION: AU-IBAR DIGITAL
ONE HEALTH PLATFORM AND REGION-
AL COLLABORATION**

The panel discussion, held under the theme Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet, explored how digital transformation can drive One Health governance, coordination, and data-driven decision-making across Africa.

The session brought together key experts, including Mary Mbole and Professor James Wabacha from AU-IBAR, Dr. Kristin representing GIZ and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Martin from the Field Epidemiology Training Program, Dr. Joseph Nkoma from the Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi, and a medical doctor from IGAD, representing Djibouti. The discussion focused on enhancing collaboration and capacity building through digital tools, showcasing the ongoing rollout of the African Union's Digital One Health Platform, which seeks to strengthen the integration of data across human, animal, and environmental health systems.

Opening the session, Mary Mbole set the tone by challenging participants to rethink how they work, communicate, and collaborate in the One Health space. She emphasized that transformation must be anchored in data-driven action and that Africa's vision for sustainable health and welfare depends on leveraging digital technology. Through the AU-IBAR platform, the African Union is driving an agenda that promotes a Digital One Health Information Policy and Architecture, which provides a structured framework for data governance, transformation, and security.

The aim is to ensure that animal welfare and health interventions embrace digitalization to promote Africa-led solutions to poverty reduction and sustainable development. The policy framework and platform, endorsed by the AU Specialized Technical Committee, mark a historic milestone-representing the continent's first coordinated approach to integrating data for One Health implementation.

Dr. Kristin elaborated on Germany's support for One Health governance and management in Africa through GIZ. She traced the origins of this collaboration to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, when BMZ requested GIZ to develop a project enabling WHO and partners to improve data sharing and preparedness for future pandemics. During the initial assessment mission in 2021, GIZ identified AU-IBAR as a high-level African partner that already

recognized the central role of data in health and animal welfare. She explained that, while vast amounts of data exist, they often remain fragmented, poorly formatted, and underutilized in policymaking. With support from Germany, AU-IBAR has been able to strengthen digital capacity, promote data analytics training, and enhance cross-country collaboration.

The successful launch of the AU Digital One Health Platform demonstrates the growing importance of digital systems for health and welfare governance and underscores Germany's continued commitment to building resilient data ecosystems in Africa.

Professor Wabacha reinforced AU-IBAR's mandate to lead the continent's animal health and digital transformation agenda. He highlighted three main areas of action-popularizing the One Health policy framework, promoting awareness of the digital platform, and strengthening member states' capacity to collect, analyze, and use data effectively.

He emphasized that while individual teams across Africa are already generating valuable data, there is an urgent need for systems that connect these efforts to create a continental network. For instance, analytics conducted in Kenya should be accessible to researchers or policymakers in Gambia, enhancing regional collaboration. AU-IBAR plans to roll out training programs across selected pilot countries including Kenya, Cameroon, and Zambia by building capacity for African scientists to manage and sustain digital health systems.

Dr. Muturi, representing Kenya, shared lessons from Kenya's success in advancing the One Health digital agenda. He outlined three key enablers: first, a robust policy and governance framework established through inter-ministerial collaboration between the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Environment; second, continuous human capacity development, which includes training programs on digital literacy and knowledge transfer in partnership with universities; and third, technical capacity, leveraging Kenya's strong ICT infrastructure to support digital surveillance and community-level reporting. Community members, through simplified digital tools, can now report outbreaks in real time, while university youth champions provide technical support to government initiatives.

From Malawi, Dr. Joseph Nkoma discussed how digital technology is improving data standards, surveillance, and coordination between human, animal,

and environmental health sectors. Previously, data was collected manually and stored in silos, limiting access and utility.

Through digitalization, Malawi has developed integrated data systems and dashboards to support evidence-based decision-making by policymakers. E-learning initiatives have also expanded, with laboratories equipped for remote training and data sharing. Community engagement has been strengthened through mobile platforms and messaging tools like WhatsApp, enabling rapid information exchange and feedback loops.

Representing Cameroon, a panelist shared insights from their inclusive and phased approach to implementing the One Health digital strategy. The process began with stakeholder engagement across key ministries such as ministry of agriculture, health, animal health, and environment, to define shared objectives and data needs.

A consultative working group was established, composed of IT specialists, epidemiologists, statisticians, and policy advisors, ensuring alignment with both national and international data standards. Building trust was emphasized as a crucial element, with the government taking the lead in defining what data to share and how. Efforts are currently underway to develop a bilateral data-sharing agreement to formalize collaboration

and guide implementation.

The IGAD representative focused on the organization's climate-related initiatives through the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC). Established in the 1980s to combat drought and desertification, IGAD's work now extends to disease prediction and response through real-time climate data. With over 300 million livestock, 5 million refugees, and 20 million internally displaced persons in the IGAD region, the integration of climate data into disease surveillance is essential. ICPAC's local networks collect and analyze health and weather data monthly, while quarterly meetings bring together focal points to share new findings. The use of predictive models enables member states to mitigate or even prevent disease outbreaks, including cholera and other zoonotic threats, demonstrating the critical link between climate resilience and animal welfare.

In conclusion, the panel underscored that Africa's future in One Health lies in digital transformation, data integration, and collaboration across sectors and borders. The AU-IBAR Digital One Health Platform represents a groundbreaking step toward achieving this vision. By combining technological innovation, capacity building, and strong policy frameworks, Africa is setting the foundation for a resilient and data-driven health system that recognizes the interconnectedness of humans, animals, and the environment.





SESSION TEN

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Conference Resolutions

As Yaoundé, Cameroon, hosted the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference from July 27 to 30, 2025, co-organized by UNEP, AU-IBAR, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, and the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), delegates focused on the important theme: Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet.

This essential annual forum confirmed that animal welfare and environmental protection and stewardship are intrinsically linked, and that protecting one helps strengthen both ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Drawing on global frameworks such as the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, Agenda 2063, and the UNEP's UNEA 5 mandate, participants committed to developing comprehensive solutions across climate, biodiversity, agriculture, policy, data access and consolidation, and community conservation areas.

The emerging resolutions outline a bold continental plan: integrating animal welfare into development policies, enhancing sustainable food systems, strengthening legal and policy frameworks, and supporting local and indigenous conservation efforts - all aimed at building a humane, environmentally sustainable, and climate-resilient future for Africa.

Considering the discussion and agreements reached during the conference, the delegates of the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference have adopted the following resolution.

1. Urge African Union member states to integrate animal welfare considerations into national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, policies, and action plans.
2. Encourage African Union member states to promote and implement indigenous knowledge systems and practices that enhance animal welfare and environmental sustainability.
3. Encourage animal welfare organizations to participate in the Second African Climate Summit and urge the African Network for Animal Welfare, in collaboration with partners, to organize a side event during the summit to ensure animal welfare issues are effectively included in the Addis Ababa Declaration.
4. Call on African Union member states to incorporate animal welfare principles into agricultural policies, extension services, and value chain development, and to adopt and enforce science-based animal welfare standards in livestock production systems.
5. Urge African Union member states to promote climate-smart and ethical livestock practices and to adopt farming systems that lower greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, and support animal health.
6. Urge the African Union Member States to promote informed and evidence-based dialogue on animal sentience across species, encouraging inclusive engagement among policymakers, researchers, educators, and communities throughout Africa.
7. Urge African Union Member States to foster informed and evidence-based discussions on animal sentience across different species, promoting inclusive involvement of policymakers, researchers, educators, and communities throughout Africa.
8. Encourages the Friends of the UNEA 5/1 Resolution on Animal Welfare to continue their engagement with the Quadripartite Alliance and CSOs Friends of the Resolution to follow up on the implementation and to include animal sentience issues in the Nexus report.
9. Encourage African Union Member States, NGOs, and stakeholders to support and expand community-led conservation efforts that focus on both animal welfare and local livelihoods. Promote the use of innovative tools, including digital monitoring, wildlife-friendly technologies, and indigenous knowledge systems, to improve conservation outcomes and animal welfare.
10. Urge African Union Member States to collaborate with regional coordinators and country Animal Welfare

focal points to coordinate and improve animal welfare efforts across the continent. Encourage systematic documentation, reporting, and sharing of information on current and planned welfare initiatives. This strategy will promote better coordination, boost collaboration, enhance the implementation of animal welfare strategies, and reduce duplicate efforts across regions.

11. Encourage African Union Member States to support the operationalization and sustainability of the African Union Animal Resources Seed Centres of Excellence to promote biodiversity conservation of endangered indigenous animal breeds, which are vital for fostering sustainable, resilient, and animal welfare-focused agri-food systems.
12. Request the Government of Cameroon to coordinate the use of the Central Africa Regional Animal Resources Seed Centres of Excellence hosted in Cameroon as a biodiversity conservation knowledge and training hub, informed by climate change impacts and animal welfare principles.
13. Encourage African Union Member States to recognize that animal health and welfare are interconnected and linked to the environment. Promote multisectoral collaboration by integrating One Health and One Welfare data through the African Union Digital One Health Platform, which is essential for evidence-based decision-making and targeted investments.
14. Urge AU-IBAR and AW partners to provide technical and financial support to ECCAS Regional Animal Health Centre (ECCAS-RAHC) to develop and integrate regional and national AW strategies and establish a regional Animal Welfare network.
15. Call on governments and stakeholders to formally recognize working animals as valuable agricultural assets. This involves integrating their data into livestock and agricultural planning and censuses, strengthening veterinary skills and capacity, allocating dedicated budgets, raising awareness among owners and users, implementing effective policies, and fostering coordinated collaboration among all relevant stakeholders.
16. Encourage AU Member States to work with regional coordinators and national animal welfare focal points to document and report animal welfare initiatives. This will improve coordination, strengthen the implementation of welfare strategies, and reduce duplication across the continent.
17. Recommends that AU-IBAR present the adopted Pan African Strategy for the Preservation, Welfare, and Sustainable Utilization of donkeys, along with the action plan and the Abidjan Declaration on the African common position and moratorium on the mass slaughter of donkeys for the hide trade, at the upcoming 6th Steering and Technical Committee meeting for adoption and approval.
18. Urges AU Member States through AU-IBAR, in collaboration with relevant regional and international partners, to develop and implement a Continental Framework for Integrated One Health Surveillance and Data Governance, incorporating animal welfare as a core element and establishing One Health Data Hubs to enable cross-sectoral data sharing, analysis, and response coordination.

These conference resolutions outline a pathway for a unified continental strategy. Key actions include integrating animal welfare into national development plans, promoting sustainable and humane food systems, enhancing biodiversity and climate resilience, and strengthening policy and legal frameworks across member states. The adopted resolutions also emphasize the importance of empowering local and indigenous communities, utilizing traditional knowledge, and promoting initiatives that enhance data consolidation and access.

These collective commitments embody a shared vision: to align animal welfare with environmental and human well-being. Africa can create a more resilient, just, and sustainable future for all species by stepping up efforts, as inaction is not an option.

The resolutions were adopted on July 30, 2025, in Yaoundé, Cameroon.



OFFICIAL CLOSING CEREMONY

Government of Cameroon, Dr. Taiga, Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Government of Cameroon



Dr. Taiga delivered the official closing speech with a tone of pride, urgency, and continental solidarity. He began by recalling that in July 2025, the conference hall hosted the opening of the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference under the theme, Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet. He lauded the quality of presentations and the intensity of exchanges, which reflected the deep commitment of countries and organizations to advance animal welfare in harmony with environmental stewardship.

He highlighted that over the course of three days, delegates had engaged in rich discussions, shared knowledge, and confronted diverse experiences. These exchanges reaffirmed a collective commitment to building an Africa that is respectful to animal life, resilient to global challenges, and unified in purpose.

Dr. Taiga highlighted several key issues addressed during the conference:

- The impact of climate change on animals and ecosystems
- The integration of animal welfare into agricultural and veterinary policies
- The role of animal welfare in building resilient communities, especially among indigenous populations
- The urgency of establishing a harmonized legal framework
- The promotion of local and innovative community initiatives
- The strategic potential of digital platforms like One Health Africa

He also acknowledged the persistent challenges and the forward-looking perspectives that emerged, particularly through the Action 2025 initiative, which aims to accelerate the implementation of the Africa Strategy for Animal Welfare.

Dr. Taiga identified five priority actions for the continent including the adoption of good practices in animal welfare, community engagement to improve societal outcomes, strengthening of policies and legislative frameworks, empowerment of stakeholders and integration of animal welfare into education and training systems. He affirmed Cameroon's support for the resolutions adopted during the conference, especially those promoting integrated governance, mobilization of rural communities, and interstate partnerships.

He then outlined Cameroon's contributions under the leadership of President Paul Biya, which include the establishment of a national coordination center for animal agencies, currently operational as a surveillance network, institutionalization of One Health strategies, active for over 15 years, development of a climate-smart livestock strategy, a draft project integrating animal welfare dimensions and public financing for the deployment of over 100 veterinarians to improve animal health services

On behalf of the Republic of Cameroon, Dr. Taiga concluded by declaring the conference officially closed, and offered a stirring tribute:

“Long live animal welfare. Long live a resilient and inclusive Africa. Long live African unity. Long live Cameroon and its Head of State.”



ANNEX

LIST OF ATTENDEES

| | NAME | ORGANIZATION | COUNTRY |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Abegu Formick | MINEPIA | Cameroon |
| 2. | Aben Melvis Anep | Children For All Africa | Cameroon |
| 3. | Abongwi Lionel | ECO-AGRI ASSO | Cameroon |
| 4. | Aboubakary Oumarou | Green family | Cameroon |
| 5. | Adamou Ali | MINREX | Cameroon |
| 6. | Adiano Koanwe | | Cameroon |
| 7. | Agnem Natougnam | HIES | Cameroon |
| 8. | Agnes Haloni | ANAW | Kenya |
| 9. | Ahmed Abbas | Iraq Embassy | Kenya |
| 10. | Akwenjemmasah Florence | | Cameroon |
| 11. | Alain Marcial Nzemie Leuwat | IRIC (Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroun) | Cameroon |
| 12. | Alexis Nyandwi | AU IBAR | Rwanda |
| 13. | Amaching Mvumyo | MINREX | Cameroon |
| 14. | Amadjam Alkaissou | MINEPIA | Cameroon |
| 15. | Amadou Labbarang Tapare | GREFA | Cameroon |
| 16. | Amaring Mvongo | MINNEX | Cameroon |
| 17. | Amb. Callista Jennie Mutharika | Permanent Rep to UNEP and UNON | |
| 18. | Amb. Damptey Bediako Asare | Permanent Rep to UNEP & UNON | Ghana |
| 19. | Amb. David Tshikuku Tshibangu | Embassy Of The Democratic Republic Of The Congo In Kenya | |
| 20. | Amb. Gobopang Duke Lefhoko | Former Permanent Rep To UNEP & UNON | |
| 21. | Amb. Jeronimo Rosa Joao Chivavi | Permanent Rep to UNEP and UNON | |
| 22. | Ambassa Jikes | idees | Cameroon |
| 23. | Ammah Ahmadoue | | Cameroon |
| 24. | Andoh Rex | Mboa Hub | Cameroon |
| 25. | Angoula Luc | SIDAF | Cameroon |
| 26. | Annemarie Van Zijl | Donkeys for Africa | South Africa |
| 27. | Ariane Vanessa Atsafack Tsague | | Cameroon |
| 28. | Arrey Tambong Elijah | MINREX | Cameroon |
| 29. | Asumta Njuguna | Africa Network for Animal Welfare | Kenya |
| 30. | Atangana Elanga Boris | INTERIOR CAM | Cameroon |
| 31. | Ateba Elogo Declermond | CEDEP AFRIQUE CENTRALE | Cameroon |
| 32. | Augustine Nfor | AUGUST STUDIOS | Cameroon |
| 33. | Aune Amuthenu | GHPP (Global Health Protection Programme)/ FLI/ Central Veterinary Lab | Namibia |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 34. | Babilah Bobnia Blandine | MINREX | Cameroon |
| 35. | Baleba David Claude | UNHIMAS | Cameroon |
| 36. | Bayong Laurel | ifright | Cameroon |
| 37. | Bella Stella | | Cameroon |
| 38. | Bello Sinata Cyrille | MINEPDED | Cameroon |
| 39. | Bertrand Benoit Onana | IPAVIC | Cameroon |
| 40. | Beryl Okumu | World Animal Protection | Kenya |
| 41. | Bexigono Jeannot | CRTV | Cameroon |
| 42. | Bidima Jules | | Cameroon |
| 43. | Bilack Rose | GIZ | Cameroon |
| 44. | Bintu Umar Machina | Green Institute | Nigeria |
| 45. | Bissi Mpongo | MINREX | Cameroon |
| 46. | Biswick Mlaviwa | EAD | Malawi |
| 47. | Bofih Henri Magloire | MINEPIA | Cameroon |
| 48. | Boh Rodrigue | HYPA TECH | Cameroon |
| 49. | Borih Magloire | MINEPIA | Cameroon |
| 50. | Brian Otwori | KAPITI PLAINS ESTATE LTD | Kenya |
| 51. | Capt. Che Gilbert Ayunwi | International Organization for Animal Protection -Cameroon | Cameroon |
| 52. | Caspa Roseline | IRAD | Cameroon |
| 53. | Catherine Chumo | Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) | Kenya |
| 54. | Cedella Shikuku-Zamoyoni | ANAW | Kenya |
| 55. | Chi Tressy Magha | | Cameroon |
| 56. | Chouegouong T. Mireille | IRAD | Cameroon |
| 57. | Clement Noumsi | | Cameroon |
| 58. | Clovis Fogum | CANAL24 TV | Cameroon |
| 59. | Dachouee Olle | MBOA HUB | Cameroon |
| 60. | Daisy Masinde | ANAW | Kenya |
| 61. | David Oduori | Maasai Mara University | Kenya |
| 62. | Debra Ngonyo | Student | Kenya |
| 63. | Denis Kigano Mwangi | ILRI Kapiti | Kenya |
| 64. | Djai Pascal Dimancho | GYSUD- Cameroon | Cameroon |
| 65. | Djouba Meli | HYPA TECH | Cameroon |
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