

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

**Opening Remarks of the director of the African Union Inter-African Bureau
for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), Dr. Huyam Salih**

9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference

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

Date: 28–30 July 2025 | Venue: Hotel Franco, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Honourable Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries – Dr. Taiga

Executive Director, Africa Network for Animal Welfare - Josiah Ojwang,

O-i-C, Civil Society Unit United Nations Environment Programme - David

Ombisi

WOAH Regional Representative for Africa – Dr. Karim Tounkara

Representative of the United Nation Food for Agriculture Organization

Representatives of the Animal Welfare organizations

Representatives of the civil societies

Government representatives,

Academia,

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols Observed

1. 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, I hereby convey his heartfelt greetings and deep gratitude to the host country, Cameroon for hosting the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference, convened here in the vibrant city of Yaoundé, Cameroon.

2. On behalf of the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed partners—the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW)—and to all our co-organizers, participants, and stakeholders, for making this important gathering possible.

Distinguished guests

3. Over the years, the Africa Animal Welfare Conference has grown to become a continental platform of significance, bringing together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and animal welfare advocates committed to advancing the welfare of animals and promoting environmental sustainability in Africa.
4. From its inception in Nairobi in 2017 to our last meeting in 2024, the conference has continued to reflect the evolving challenges, opportunities, and shared vision that underpin our collective work. 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. Additionally, 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.
5. This 9th edition comes at a critical juncture. Across the continent, we are witnessing a confluence of challenges: biodiversity loss, climate shocks, unsustainable practices, and growing pressure on ecosystems. These realities demand urgent, inclusive, and transformative action. Our theme—***Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet***—is both timely and bold. It compels us to reimagine sustainability through a more inclusive, holistic lens. It resonates with the **African Union's Agenda 2063**, the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035), the **SDGs**, and the **Pan African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa 2035**, all of which recognize that a just and Africa's development in the present and future depends on the health of animals, ecosystems, and communities. It calls us to action—to deepen our commitment, innovate our approaches, and center animal welfare as integral to environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and human well-being.

Ladies and Gentlemen

6. Africa is home to extraordinary biodiversity and rich indigenous knowledge systems. Yet, it is also among the most vulnerable regions to environmental degradation and climate change. The imperative to act is not just ecological—it is ethical, economic, and generational. We must strengthen our legal frameworks, scale up sustainable agri-food systems, preserve habitats, and foster inclusive policies that empower youth,

women, and communities. These priorities are reflected in the conference sub-sub-themes and in the rich programme ahead.

7. 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, we 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. It is encouraging to note the growing alignment of national actions with AWSA and the broader regional efforts to integrate animal welfare into environmental, agricultural, and trade frameworks.
8. AU-IBAR does not merely serve as a technical convenor, it actively supports 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;
9. 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. 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.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

10. AU-IBAR is proud to be part of this movement that places animal welfare and environmental sustainability at the centre of our continental agenda. Over the course of this week, we shall 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.
11. As we engage in these deliberations, let us reaffirm our shared responsibility to safeguard our natural heritage not just for the animals under our care or the

ecosystems we steward, but for the generations to come. Let this conference be a springboard for stronger regional cooperation, integrated policy reforms, and long-term investments that reflect our values as custodians of Africa's future.

In Conclusion, I sincerely thank the Honorable Minister and the Government of Cameroon for graciously hosting this important conference, UNEP and ANAW for their continued leadership in convening it, and to all of you ladies and gentlemen for finding time to be here. I hope that during your stay, you will not only engage in meaningful discussions but also enjoy your time, make new friends, and strengthen your professional networks, because, indeed, **our networks are our net worth**. Let us make this moment count

Welcome to the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, Shukran, Asante Sana, Bondia