

OPENING REMARKS BY JOSIAH OJWANG, CEO OF AFRICA NETWORK FOR ANIMAL WELFARE (ANAW), AT THE 9TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE - ACTION 2025, HELD IN HOTEL FRANCO, YAOUNDE, CAMEROON FROM JULY 28 – 30, 2025

To the Chief Guest.....

Excellencies, distinguished guests, esteemed delegates, colleagues, partners, our conference sponsors, and friends, joining us here in the Serene city of Yaoundé and online from across Africa and the world, Good morning! Bonjour!

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is both an honour and my sincere pleasure, on behalf of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), and indeed the Conference Secretariat, to welcome you all to the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) 2025. This year's conference is a special milestone, not only because we gather in the vibrant city of Yaoundé in the evergreen nation, Cameroon, and with hundreds of delegates joining online participants, but also because our collective journey in animal welfare and environmental conservation that continues to gain momentum and significance every year.

Since its inception, nearly a decade ago, AAWC's vision was clear: to create a pan-African platform where stakeholders from across the continent and beyond could come together, share knowledge, and advance the cause of animal welfare. Since then, the conference has flourished, transforming from a modest gathering into a premier annual event on the continent's animal welfare calendar, serving as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and action.

Friends,

Over the years, across African cities from Nairobi to Addis Ababa, Accra to Gaborone, Kigali, to now Yaoundé - the Africa Animal Welfare Conference 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 united by the vision of integrating animal welfare with environmental stewardship across the continent. The discussions and resolutions arising from this conference have facilitated policy development, fostered cross-border collaborations, and supported grassroots initiatives, thereby contributing to positive outcomes for animals, communities, and ecosystems.

Notably, through sustained dialogue, collaboration, and advocacy at this annual conference, the AAWC galvanized regional consensus and strategic momentum, which proved instrumental in the development and eventual adoption of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution titled, *"Animal Welfare – Environment – Sustainable Development Nexus."* This 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.

Distinguished delegates,

This year, under the theme, *"Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet,"* we reaffirm our commitment to forging practical

solutions that safeguard both animal welfare and the environment, recognizing their inseparable connection to Africa's sustainable development.

Indeed, as ANAW, we are profoundly grateful to our 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 this conference enduring relevance and influence.

Similarly, we owe a debt of thanks to the Government and the people of Cameroon for graciously hosting us, embracing our cause, and providing a welcoming environment for this convening. Your support is a testament to Cameroon's growing leadership in animal welfare and sustainable development in Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support and collaboration of our cherished partners and generous sponsors.

Allow me, therefore, to express my deepest gratitude to the International Organization for Animal Protection (OIPA Cameroon), and especially their Team leader Gilbert Che, our steadfast supporting partner, who unrelentingly ran errands to ensure everything was in place. My sincere appreciation to our sponsors: SPANA, Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), World Animal Protection- Africa, Brooke East Africa, GIZ, Humane World for Animals, WTS, and the Center for Animal Law Studies (CALS). Your commitment and vision have been instrumental in making this conference, and its impact, a reality

To the incredible ANAW team, whose dedication and tireless efforts have made this gathering possible, and to the conference organizing committee who have worked diligently behind the scenes, thank you for your unwavering commitment, professionalism, and passion.

As we embark on this year's programme, let us be inspired by the progress we have made, challenged by the work that remains, and united in our resolve - together, to strengthen the actions that will ensure animal welfare and environmental integrity for generations to come.

And as I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a memorable conference experience, let us be reminded that when Africa unites for animal welfare, environmental conservation and sustainable development, progress is not only possible, it is inevitable.

God bless you all, and welcome to the 9th Africa Animal Welfare Conference, as we make history together.

Josiah Ojwang

CEO, ANAW.