



BROOKE - IGAD REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON DONKEY SKIN TRADE



Concept Paper

26th – 27th November 2019, Nairobi Kenya

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes Brooke-IGAD regional conference on donkey skin trade, a two-day meeting to be held in Nairobi at **Laico Regency hotel** from **26th to 27th November 2019**. The conference will consider several aspects of the donkey skin trade which is now a global issue of concern to Brooke and a crisis in Kenya. Recent dialogues and conversation with IGAD as well as the Government of Kenya have proposed a regional approach to address the issue of donkey skin trade, culminating in this event.

The conference will be attended by representatives from government (Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda) representing diverse range of roles such as the Chief Veterinary Officers, Directors of Livestock Production, Representatives of humanitarian and conservation organizations among others. Participants will also be drawn from County Governments and stakeholders in the donkey skin trade value chain including traders or merchants, owners of slaughter houses and organizations intervening on donkey welfare. Nonetheless, the key stakeholder to the conference will be the donkey owners and users from the region especially those who have been affected by the trade who will be able to utilize the platform to bring their concerns to the fore.

Consequently, the goal of the conference is to facilitate a dialogue, debate and awareness about the short term and long-term impacts of donkey skin trade on the donkeys, owners and the affected nations. In particular, the conference is geared towards developing resolutions and recommendations that will provide an entry point for banning the trade in donkey skins in Kenya and the wider region through appropriate policy and legislative interventions. This is part of the wider Brooke East Africa plan to protect and safeguard donkeys to ensure that donkeys as a species are not decimated and livelihoods of vulnerable communities are not interfered with.

The conference will discuss some worrying statistics in terms of unsustainability in donkey population offtake, relevant policy, culture and religion, theft as well as cross-border movement including from a broader disease /biosecurity control angle, environmental despoliation ensuing from slaughterhouse operations, links between the trade and other types of criminality, animal welfare in the donkey skin trade and the socio-economic impacts of the trade in short term and long term. The conference will include panels for debate and analysis as well as side/working meetings which will identify policy issues for discussion and a road map to achieve the key recommendations during the conference.

BACKGROUND

Donkeys remain essential working livestock to ensure water access, market access, women empowerment and social inclusion, supporting agriculture and a lifeline for multitudes of poorest communities thus instrumental in meeting some of the SDGs for IGAD countries. Reports from many countries across the globe have demonstrated that the donkey skin trade's demand – supply market equilibrium /momentum cannot be achieved.

Some countries started and failed, opened slaughter houses and later closed down. Countries such as Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal have banned exports of donkey products in recent years. The OIE has issued a statement recognizing the impact and consequences of the increased global demand and trade of donkeys and their products. Consequently, OIE has encouraged its members to implement international standards on working equids to protect donkey health and welfare, and to safeguard the livelihoods that depend on the animals.

The number of slaughter houses are increasing in Kenya despite the continued community outcry. There are four slaughter houses (Goldox Kenya Ltd in Baringo County, Star Brilliant Ltd in Nakuru County, Silzha Ltd in Turkana County and Fuhai Machakos Trading Co. Ltd in Machakos County) which have a combined capacity of slaughtering about 1000 donkeys per day. The slaughter houses were licensed for export only and that they would operate within legal frameworks. Promises by the industry to establish donkey breeding centers to balance offtake from the national donkey herd have never progressed. Meanwhile, a host of animal welfare and environmental regulations continue to be flouted by those operating the trade and over 350,000 donkeys have been slaughtered and no breeding farms have been established so far. With the licensing of slaughter houses, hundreds more donkeys have been killed illegally, stolen from homes and often butchered in the bush pushing donkey-dependent families into poverty. Moreover; Ethiopia and Uganda have reported donkeys are crossing informally into Kenya for slaughter; this uncontrolled movement may result in disease transmission and encourage theft of donkeys. A 2019 report by the Kenya Agriculture and Research Organization (KALRO) states that donkeys will become effectively extinct in Kenya by 2023.

Hence, Brooke and IGAD Center for Pastoral Areas & Livestock Development (ICPALD) are facilitating a two days conference as a dialogue and awareness about the short term and long-term impacts of donkey skin trade on the donkey, owners and nations. The conference will be supported by SPANA and The Donkey Sanctuary as well as the Government of Kenya. It will also provide an opportunity to formulate resolutions and recommendations that will result in policy and legislative interventions that enable the banning of the trade in donkey skins in the region.

STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference will be held over two days and will feature a number of opening speeches, as well as a keynote address. The keynote address will set the tone for the conference, and lay some of the groundwork for all of its debates and deliberations. Finally, the conference will include plenary and panel discussions and side events/meetings, to facilitate informal exchange and discussion that require concrete resolutions and recommendations.

THEME: Donkeys are Better Alive than Dead

The deliberations at the Conference will address;

1. Protection and conservation of donkeys both as work animals and a species
2. The socio-economic impacts of the donkey skin trade on donkey owning communities and service beneficiaries
3. Animal welfare, disease /biosecurity control and environmental consideration (including environmental impacts of slaughter operations and compliance).
4. Policy and legislation implications at regional and national levels including movement of animals and cross border aspects and compliance issues.
5. Donkey skin trade in the lenses of culture and religion
6. Linkages between illegal donkey skin trade and other types of criminality including wildlife crime.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants will be drawn from affected donkey owning communities especially women and youth, governments (Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda) representing diverse range of roles such as the Chief Veterinary Officers, Directors of Livestock Production, Representatives of humanitarian and conservation organizations, among others. Participants will also be drawn from County Governments, academia and stakeholders in the donkey skin trade value chain including; donkey owners, traders and organizations in donkey welfare.

For more information contact: BrookeEA@thebrookeeastfrica.org and kezy@zurievents.com