

8TH AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE - ACTION 2024

United Nations Complex, Nairobi, Kenya

30th September - 2nd October 2024

Theme:

Partnership actions to improve animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction and Background

The Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC), now gaining into its 8th year, has gradually established its presence as the premier continental forum and convening point of annual discussions on animal welfare, environmental and wildlife conservation, human health and sustainable development. It has become a must- plan for practitioners and stakeholders in animal welfare and related sectors of environment, human health and development, to engage and build capacity while taking stock of current and emergent trends of global matters that needs Africa's attention in this sector.

Africa is richly endowed with both domestic and wild animals, that are spread almost evenly across the continent and are intertwined with the socio-cultural and economic landscape of the communities. Animals therefore have significant place in the livelihoods of communities, either directly or through some indirect interaction with local cultures and economies. Many communities in Africa interact with their animals in largely rural and natural system of rearing, and wild animals tend to be in their natural settings mostly in protected areas.

According to World Population Prospects (2022), the population of Africa was estimated at over 1.2 billion people and the United Nations projects that this could double to 2.5 billion people by 2050. With this surge in population, there has been increased focus on the need for enhanced food production to feed people, and for continued development to provide the required public amenities for the increasing population especially in the urban areas. This scenario certainly impacts the region's natural resources in many ways. The increasing food demand beckons the need to exploit land and water bodies to feed the growing population while using mechanized agriculture and other contemporary farming methods. This has resulted to certain negative setbacks on forests, wetlands and the general terrestrial and aquatic natural resources hence negatively impacting on human and animals; and occasionally escalating the debilitating effects of climate change such as droughts and floods. Additionally, the need to build infrastructure such as construction of roads, ports, railways, high-rise buildings and other required developments to facilitate the modern human conveniences has resulted in environmental degradation.

These rapid happenings have sparked discussions on the need to balance the delicate interactions of development; conservation of the environment and the entire natural ecosystems; the consideration on welfare of animals; and the consequences to human health when we destabilize this balance. Further, the recognition of the significant contribution of animals to the livelihoods of most people in Africa and their value has acquired interest and this has helped to ignite the growing consciousness about the interlink between people, animals and the environment, and the reality of a shared destiny in this web of interaction.

The conference is an open attendance annual forum and largely attracts delegates from a diverse congregation of stakeholders among them academia, researchers, college students, government officials, civil society, United Nations staff, practitioners in veterinary and animal health and animal welfare professionals from Africa and other parts of the globe.

The conference is based on the philosophy that animals are sentient beings and should not suffer at the hands of people, as oftentimes happens. Its mission is to annually congregate animal welfare stakeholders to deliberate on critical issues that affect animals, the environment and people, and seek solutions to the prevailing challenges as they emerge.

From the 1st Conference that took place in Nairobi, Kenya in 2017, to the 7th Conference in Kigali, Rwanda in 2023, many pertinent matters have been recorded as worthy of attention as enumerated below:

- The recognition of a shared planet and destiny of animals, people and the environment, hence the consideration of mainstreaming animal welfare and environmental matters in all aspects of development in Africa.
- The need to promote sustainable production and consumption with sensitivity to animal welfare and the preservation of the environment.
- That there was a need to pursue partnerships with humanitarian agencies to improve animal welfare and especially animals in disaster situations.
- That Africa is a young continent with most of its growing population being young people, and hence the importance of involving youths in environmental and animal welfare matters required quick and proactive action.
- The need to recognise that all human beings have a responsibility to improve the welfare of animals and protect the environment to achieve a healthier life on earth for all species.
- That there is need to pay attention to animal welfare policies and legislation across the continent.

The conference has been prominent in complementing the work of African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) which spearheaded the development of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) as a way of consolidating synergy towards better animal welfare in Africa. It was reported during the 6th and 7th Africa Animal Welfare Conferences in Botswana and Rwanda respectively, that governments in Africa were at various stages of

domesticating the implementation of Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), coordinated through the Africa Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW).

The flagship outcome of this conference was the birthing of a resolution process at the 3rd Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2019 which commenced the process of achieving a resolution on mainstreaming animal welfare in the UN system. This was achieved by the passing of the Animal Welfare, Environment, Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution which was passed during the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) in Nairobi, in March 2022.

The 8th Africa Animal Welfare Conference-Action 2024

The 8th Africa Animal Welfare Conference is planned to take place at the United Nations Complex in Nairobi, Kenya, from 30th September to 2nd October 2024. It is planned as a hybrid event comprising in-person attendance and livestreaming for online participants. Delegates attending in-person will be expected to arrive in Nairobi on 29th September and depart on 3rd October 2024.

The proceedings will involve presentations on selected topics, speeches, panel discussions and question and answer sessions.

Theme: *Partnership actions to improve animal welfare and environmental sustainability.*

This theme is crafted with the conscious intention to maintain conversation and focus on actions regarding the connection of animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development in cognizance of the United Nations resolution on this nexus. The theme further calls attention to a reflection on inclusivity in terms of actions and partnerships that need to be realized towards enhancing the delicate relationship between animals, the environment and human health, and seek to keep a reminder of the shared planet. The clarion call embedded in the theme is that our actions (and sometimes inactions), will have effects on the welfare of animals, on the state of the environment and on human beings in terms of health and welfare.

The theme additionally takes cognizance that the detrimental effects of environmental degradation are becoming more pronounced on humanity and animals, and even extend to affecting global economies and livelihoods. The UN has unequivocally acknowledged that the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution pose a gigantic threat to livelihoods, social systems and global economies. There is therefore a call towards concerted and inclusive actions to tackle this crisis which is already having dire consequences on the environment, manifested through increase in global average temperatures resulting in prolonged droughts and floods, and disruptions in expected rainfall patterns hence impacting food production, with the overall effect of suffering and uncertainty for animals and human beings, and ultimately affecting human health and development.

The theme amplifies the position that through partnerships, every stakeholder will be brought on board in a consultative manner and be involved in planning, designing and delivery of agreed actions to ensure better animal welfare, enhanced environmental conservation and protection, and

therefore achieve a healthier planet for people and animals. Partnerships and inclusivity will oblige that all interested parties who are affected should together for joint actions towards addressing the prevailing challenges. It also denotes that no single group or party has all the solutions or resources required to effectively tackle the current challenges, hence the need to bring everyone on board for collective partnership actions.

The theme appreciates that any negative impact to the environment affects all animals and people on the planet, even if the effects may be gradual or more severe in some parts of the globe than others. It therefore exhorts us to form partnerships that will be avenues for inclusion in ensuring that everybody does their part in addressing these challenges. The simple message is that since we are all affected by this environmental predicament, we all have a role to play in addressing the triple crisis and its attendant consequences. This means that governments, NGOs, international bodies and regional/continental bodies (such as the African Union), communities and individuals must work together through conscious partnerships to take the agreed and necessary actions towards a better and healthier planet.

This theme desires to guide the conference deliberations and help to craft out the necessary inclusive actions that need to be taken, and the required partnerships that should be pursued to accommodate accelerated development in Africa without compromising the integrity of the environment and maintains good welfare of animals and safeguarding human health.

This Conference will leverage on its elevated position and diverse audience to speak to Africa through presentations, designated, speeches, panel discussions and Q and A sessions to emphasize on the centrality of the animal welfare, environment and sustainable development nexus. The forum will seek to incentivize the continental community to invest in inclusive actions and partnerships that will ameliorate the negative impacts where the balance of nature is already altered and take deliberate steps towards preventing any further detrimental activities that could grossly affect this delicate nexus.

3.Conference objectives

The objectives of the conference are:

1. To assess the necessary actions and determine partnerships that need to be developed in order to entrench among stakeholders and communities in Africa a responsibility of improving animal welfare and supporting environmental conservation in Africa.
- 2.To illustrate progress towards mainstreaming Animal Welfare in the United Nations through the implementation of the Animal Welfare, Environment Sustainable development nexus resolution.
3. To determine the implications of the interaction of animal welfare, people and the environment on Africa's development.
- 4.To provide a platform for advancing knowledge sharing, linkages and networking among stakeholders in animal welfare, wildlife, environment and related sectors in Africa.

5.To develop a cohort of sensitized animal welfare stakeholders in Africa who would champion and support the emerging animal welfare, sustainable development and environment agenda in the continent.

6.To reflect on the progress of implementation of Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) through the Africa Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW).

4.Participation of the Government of Kenya

The Conference organizers, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), African Union - InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW),have requested the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to UNON and UNEP, to request the invitation of the President of the Republic of Kenya. H.E. Dr William Ruto, to officiate the official opening of the 8th Africa Animal Welfare Conference on 30th September 2024. Additionally, the Kenya Mission to UNON and UNEP has been requested to invite the highest-level participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Republic of Kenya.

5.Expected Outputs and Outcomes

- To Review and commit to necessary action plans and possible partnerships that need to be taken towards enhancing animal welfare practices and environmental conservation in the continent.
- Enhanced support for animal welfare across Africa demonstrated through participation of government representatives, civil society, UN, international organisations and broad section of stakeholders in the conference.
- Conference report and conference resolutions

6.Conference Organizers

The Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) 2024 is jointly organized by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), African Union InterAfrican Union for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and Africa Network for Animal Welfare. They are supported by a Conference Organising Committee and Conference Secretariat, working in partnership with the Government of Kenya.

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