

REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON DONKEY SKIN TRADE 2019



26th – 27th November 2019, Nairobi Kenya

DRAFT COMMUNIQUE

We, Brooke-IGAD devoted a special conference to review and debate the current status, socio-economic and trade impact of donkeys in Eastern Africa. The Brooke-IGAD convened a regional conference on donkey skin trade in Laico Regency hotel, Nairobi, Kenya from 26th to 27th November 2019. The conference was attended by 201 participants drawn from 13 countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, China and UK. Among the participants were representatives of donkey owning communities and community groups, national and local governments and government agencies, religious groups, animal welfare/ humanitarian and conservation organizations, media, academia, owners of slaughterhouses and organizations intervening on donkey welfare.

Guided by the theme: *Donkeys are Better Alive*, the conference provided a forum for dialogue and awareness about the short term and long-term impacts of donkey skin trade on the survival of donkey species, owners' livelihoods and the affected nations leading to development of resolutions and recommendations that will provide an entry point for banning the trade in donkey skins in Kenya as well as Tanzania through appropriate policy and legislative interventions.

Key personalities that addressed the conference included; Dr. Wamalwa Kinyanjui on behalf of Dr. Solomon Munyua, IGAD/ICPALD Director, Hon. Gai Deng (East Africa Legislative Assembly), Bishop Anthony Muheria (Catholic Church), Sheikh Abdullatif (Jamia Mosque), Hon. Maria Nzomo (CEC-Trans-Nzoia and CECM Chair, Caucus on Agriculture, Livestock and

Fisheries), Dr. Henry Kiara (ILRI), Dr. Monicah Maichomo (KALRO-Director), Alexander Juras (UNEP-Civil Society Unit) and Petra Ingram (Brooke CEO).

Deliberations at the Conference addressed the following broad areas;

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.
7. Role of civil society and modalities for drafting resolutions for UNEA.

Therefore;

Being deeply concerned about the donkey welfare principles and slaughter practices across Eastern Africa and the threat to the survival of donkeys and livelihoods of their owners in the region and African continent,

Acknowledging the life-long value of working donkeys as a critical livelihood asset for rural poor, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists and a source of income, as draught animals especially for women in their domestic work, and for youths in urban and peri-urban areas,

Appreciating that donkeys are not traditionally bred for commercial purposes including for food or medicinal purposes and further that presently there are no practical and cost effective breeding technologies to fast track their breeding,

Further appreciating that donkeys are hard breeders (hard to conceive, carry a pregnancy to maturity and their gestation period is upto 13 months),

Noting that the findings of the field assessment by a team of experts from **Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)** that breeding programs established by export slaughterhouses before their licencing in Kenya are not working as intended, hence, have inadvertently fuelled increased theft and smuggling of donkeys from neighbour countries to meet the increasing local demand,

We therefore solemnly make the following resolutions:

1. **Collaborations and partnerships:** Given the porous nature of borders in the region, governments in the region should collaborate to find sustainable solutions including increasing investments in donkey breeding programmes as a possible long-term plan to stem the decline in donkey population.
2. **Stemming the rapid decline in donkey numbers:** National and local governments of Kenya and Tanzania are urged to consider enacting legislation to ban all trade in donkey skins, meat and associated products to allow the population of donkeys to recover from the steep decline since the slaughter started.
3. **Community level support structures:** It is proposed that the County (Kenya) and Regional (Tanzania) Veterinary Services form local technical committees which will initiate local level policies that will operationalize the halt/ ban of donkey slaughter. In Kenya, it is suggested that the team works through intergovernmental structures such as sector working groups, County Executive CECMs caucus and Joint Agriculture sector steering committee (JASSCOM).
4. **Control of cross-border smuggling:** It is suggested that the governments in the region and especially Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, strengthen security along their borders to curb cross border smuggling of donkeys as they pose serious risk of transmitting zoonotic diseases across countries.
5. **Data and information:** The proponents of the halting of the trade in donkey and donkey products undertake to collaborate to generate quality and timely data and information on the impact of donkey trade to inform decision making at local, national and regional levels.
6. **Global policy makers:** The meeting urged regional, continental and global policy makers and advocates to lobby counterparts in region and in countries affected by the trade to push for the imposition of sanctions to curtail the negative impacts of the donkey skin trade.
7. **Commonality of purpose:** It is proposed that security agents and communities collaborate in stemming out the rampant theft of donkeys and to implement initiatives to protect their animals while discouraging and reporting illegal donkey trade business.
8. **Community education:** It was agreed that all stakeholders will rigorously promote community awareness on donkey welfare.
9. **Wider awareness creation and publicity:** It was agreed that the concerns and subsequent action plans regarding donkey hide trade be strengthened within animal welfare and related strategies at country, regional, continental and global levels and relevant resolutions. Key platforms to include regional economic communities (e.g. IGAD, EAC, ECOWAS, etc), African Union bodies such as AU-BAR as well as global platforms such as UNEA.