

*Lead author: Julian Blanc; PPD coordinator – Frederik Staun; CSD coordinator – Fadi Abou Elias;  
Law coordinator – Stadler Trengove )*

**DRAFT TECHNICAL ASSESSEMENT BY THE SECRETARIAT**

**REVISED DRAFT RESOLUTION ENTITLED**

**ANIMAL WELFARE – ENVIRONMENT – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NEXUS**

***Submitted by Ghana, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Senegal, South Sudan,  
Ethiopia, and Democratic Republic of the Congo on 1 December 2021 (Revised)***

This draft technical note has been prepared by the UNEP Secretariat to facilitate consultations among Member States within the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on submitted draft resolutions for the resumed session of UNEA-5, as requested in paragraph 31 the [Chair's Summary of the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the annual subcommittee of the CPR](#) held 25 - 29 October 2021<sup>1</sup>.

This draft resolution seeks to initiate a process to integrate animal welfare into UNEP's mandate as part of its efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption. It calls on member states to protect wildlife and habitats and requests the Executive Director to: i) prepare a report on the nexus between animal welfare and sustainable development; to implement the outcomes of the report that are relevant to UNEP's mandate; and to develop an awareness strategy for the benefit of Member States; ii) to continuously engage on the topic with the CPR; iii) to promote animal welfare within UNEP and in its dealings with Member States, partners and other stakeholders; and iv) to report on progress in the implementation of the resolution at UNEA 6.

The Secretariat notes that no definitions of the terms *animal* or *animal welfare* are provided in the draft resolution.

- i) Relation to UNEPs Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work:** Livestock currently accounts for over 80% of the non-human mammalian and avian biomass on Earth<sup>2</sup>. In consequence, most human-animal interactions that have animal welfare implications<sup>3</sup> occur in the realm of farming and food systems. Livestock is a major contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, a major source of water and soil pollution, and an important driver of biodiversity loss through land conversion to agriculture. The environmental and sustainability aspects of this draft resolution are already addressed under the three thematic sub-programmes of the 2022-2025 MTS (Climate Action, Pollution Action and Nature Action). More specifically, Direct Outcome 2.12 of the Nature Action sub-programme seeks to transform food systems to support biodiversity and environmental sustainability. While aspects of this transformation could have implications, including tradeoffs<sup>4</sup>, for animal welfare, the Secretariat is of the opinion that the specific field of

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Chair also suggested that the secretariat will support our upcoming consultations on the draft resolution by providing technical guidance in writing for each draft resolution, with a technical analysis on the following three aspects: i) Relation to UNEPs Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work; ii) Legal aspects; and iii) Budget implications"

<sup>2</sup> Bar-On, Y. M., Phillips, R. & Milo, R. (2018) The biomass distribution on Earth. *PNAS* 115, 6506–6511.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this technical note, it is assumed that the scope of the draft resolution is limited to contexts in which humans can affect, positively or negatively, the welfare of animals, and excludes the natural interactions between wild animals in their ecosystems in the wild.

<sup>4</sup> Lonch, P., Haskell, M. J., Dewhurst, R. J. & Turner, S. P. (2017) Current available strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in livestock systems: an animal welfare perspective. *Animal* 11, 274–284.

farm animal welfare lies beyond UNEP's mandate, and that it is more closely aligned to the mandates of organizations such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)<sup>5</sup> and FAO. UNEP is already working closely with these two organizations and with WHO in the context of One Health, as envisaged in Outcome 2 of the Nature Action subprogramme, with a specific focus on strengthening the environmental dimensions of the One Health approach and improving collaboration while avoiding duplication of effort and transgression of mandates. Within the One Health Tripartite Alliance and beyond, OIE has explicit mandates on the health and welfare of both domesticated and wild animals. FAO also has an online [Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare](#). The issue of unsustainable agricultural intensification has been identified as a risk factor across human, animal and environmental dimensions in multiple areas of One Health, and animal welfare is already being considered therein, among many other aspects. UNEP is also working with FAO in many other areas, including on the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. In this partnership, the integration of animal welfare considerations in restoration of productive land and seascapes would be likely led by FAO.

With regards to wild fauna, Direct Outcome 2.11 under the Nature Action Sub-programme seeks to decrease levels of illegal and unsustainable use of biodiversity. While it may not be feasible to improve the welfare of animals in the illegal trade, progress on reducing the latter would likely contribute to improving the former, even if it is not a specific goal in this endeavour. It is however worth noting that the intent of the proposed draft resolution could potentially come into conflict with actions taken in the context of the sustainable management and use of nature, such as the removal of invasive alien and feral species from ecosystems.

Despite the linkages outlined above, and even though neither the MTS 2022-2025 nor the PoW 2022-2023 make any mention of animal welfare, the topics addressed in the resolution are already being addressed as part of the integrated approaches being implemented by UNEP in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies. There is no direct link between the proposed outputs of the draft resolution and existing and approved PoW indicators.

Although the preambular text of the draft resolution holds that animal welfare is an integral component of sustainability, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) make no mention of animal welfare. One recent systematic study recognized several linkages between the SDGs and animal welfare but concluded that advancing the SDGs would do more for animal welfare than advancing animal welfare would do for attaining the SDGs.<sup>6</sup>

- ii) Legal aspects:** It is relevant to note that there is no UNEA resolution dedicated to animal welfare. The draft resolution under review is potentially related to, and partly overlaps with several UNEA resolutions such as Resolution 1/3 (illegal trade in wildlife), 2/8 (sustainable consumption and production), Resolution 2/14 (illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products), Resolution 3/4 (environment and health), Resolution 4/1 (innovative pathways to achieve sustainable

---

<sup>5</sup> The mandate World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) focuses specifically on the health and welfare of both domestic and wild animals. In 2017, OIE adopted its [Global Animal Welfare Strategy](#), which focuses on developing [international standards](#), improving the capacity of veterinary services, and supporting Member States in the implementation of such standards. OIE's animal welfare standards are included in the OIE's [Terrestrial Animal Health Code](#) and [Aquatic Animal Health Code](#), as well as in the [Guidelines on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction in relation to Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health](#). The standards address issues such as animal transport, the slaughter of animals, the use of animals in research and education, and animal welfare in production systems, among others.

<sup>6</sup> Keeling, L. *et al.* Animal Welfare and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 6, 336 (2019).

consumption and production), Resolution 4/10 (innovation on biodiversity and land degradation), *inter alia*. Aspects of the resolution under review could be related to another resolution on Biodiversity and One Health that is being discussed by member states.

Concerning the work of MEAs, all the biodiversity-related MEAs acknowledge and support the rights of governments, indigenous peoples and local communities to derive benefits from the sustainable management and use of biodiversity. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Health Organization (WHO) established in 2012 a [Joint Work Programme on Biodiversity and Health](#). Under this Programme, an [Interagency Liaison Group \(ILG\) on biodiversity and health](#) was established in 2015, with UNEP as a [member](#). The second meeting of the ILG took place between 4-6 May 2020 and discussed, among other topics, the Draft Global Action Plan for Biodiversity and Health ([CBD/SBSTTA/24/9](#)). The draft action plan was developed in line with decisions [XII/21](#), [XIII/6](#), and [14/4](#) of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD and seeks to mainstream biodiversity and health linkages into national policies, strategies, programmes and accounts. Animal welfare is specifically mentioned in the draft Global Plan of Action for Biodiversity and Health which will be considered by the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24) in its twenty-fourth meeting. Additionally, the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) encompasses provisions related the welfare of animals in the captive breeding, preparation and transport of live specimens of CITES-listed species. In 2015, CITES and OIE signed an [memorandum of understanding](#) to strengthen collaboration between both organizations, including supporting capacity-building activities and developing relevant standards, guidelines and recommendations. Lastly, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) works to improve cetacean welfare through the operations of the IWC's Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues, which issued its report at the 67<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWC in 2014. An [Action Plan](#) was also developed, directing a programme of work to address some of the key human activities with the potential to affect cetacean welfare adversely, including large whales becoming entangled in fishing gear or other marine debris.

- ii) **Budget implications:** The estimated cost of undertaking the initial study proposed in the resolution as a full inter-governmental and stakeholder process, would be approximately \$4,560,000. This includes the cost of recruiting staff support; preparing the nexus report with extensive consultations and collaboration across UNEP Divisions, technical experts, and member states and all relevant UN agencies and stakeholders; preparing a project document and mobilizing resources for the subsequent implementation of the recommendations of the report and developing an awareness strategy. This estimate excludes the resources to be mobilized for implementing the recommendations of the nexus report, which cannot be costed at this time as the report has not yet been written. The timeline for the budget is four years. A new cost estimate would be provided at the end of this period, as the resolution does not specify an end point to the activities. There are no existing resources in the Secretariat to implement this resolution at this time, and the estimated costs would need to be covered from additional voluntary contributions.