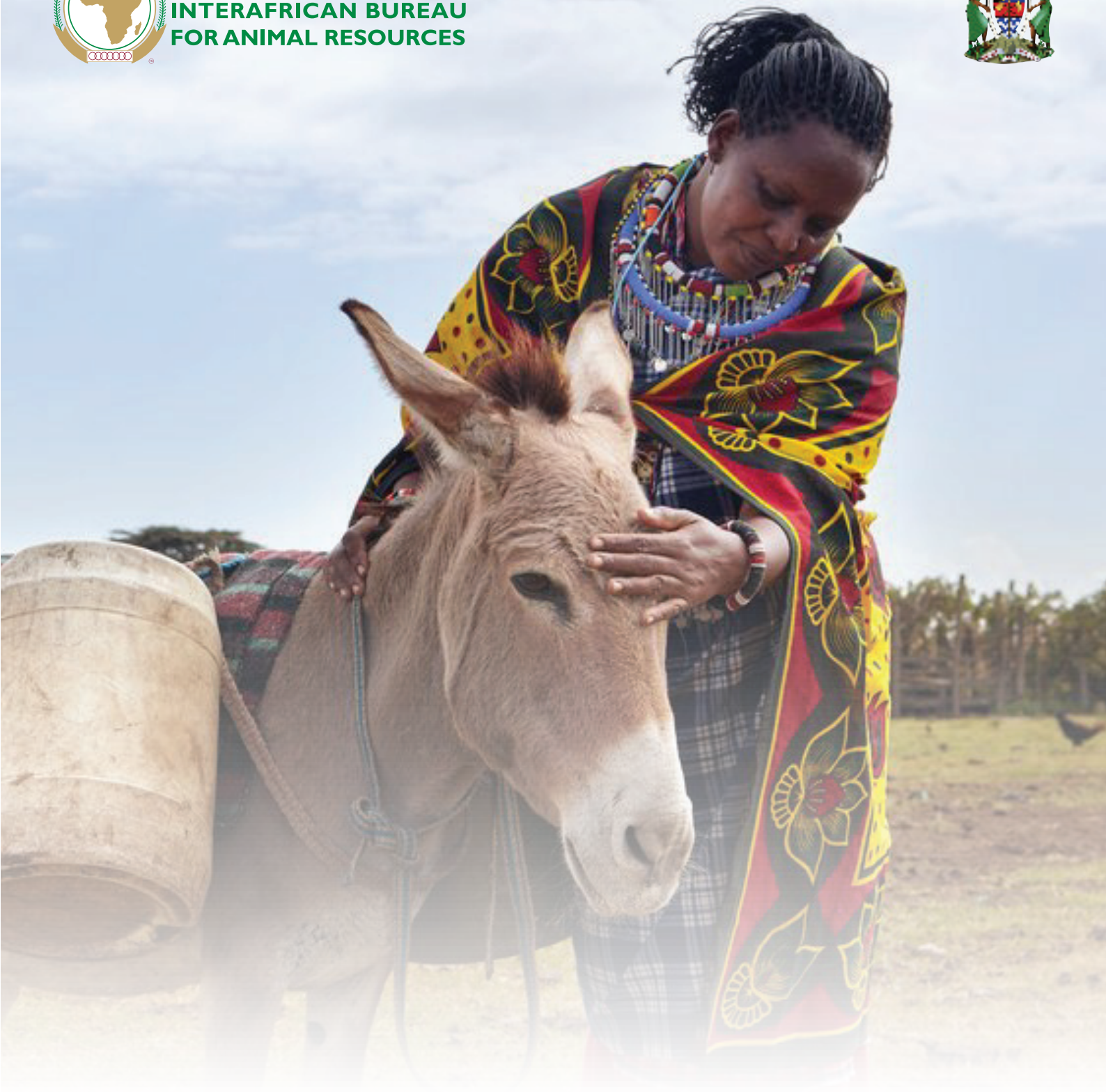




AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES



REPORT OF THE PAN-AFRICAN DONKEY CONFERENCE

Theme: "Donkeys now and in the future"

01 - 02 December 2022,
Kisenga LAPF International Conference Centre,
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania



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Conference Sponsors and Technical Partners



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Sincere gratitude goes to the African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Chief Veterinary Officers, Civil Society Organizations, Representatives of international organizations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - FAO, World Organization for Animal Health - WOAH), Research organizations (International Livestock Research Institute - ILRI, Tanzania Livestock Research Institute – TALIRI and the Kenya Agriculture & Livestock Research Organization - KALRO), Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other development partners, amongst others, for the political, financial and technical support offered.

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Abbreviations

AfCFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
AHSA	Animal Health Strategy for Africa
ANAW	Africa Network for Animal Welfare
APAW	Africa Platform for Animal Welfare
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IBAR	African Union Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources
AWSA	Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Communities of Central African States (ECCAS)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICPALD	IGAD - Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development
ICWE	International Coalition for Working Equids
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institution
KARLO	Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization
LiDeSA	Livestock Development Strategy for Africa
MS	Member States
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
RAWN	Regional Animal Welfare Network
RAHN	Regional Animal Health Network
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPANAS	Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad
TALIRI	Tanzania Livestock Research Institute
TDS	The Donkey Sanctuary
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAP	World Animal Protection
WOAH	World Organization for Animal Health
PADCo	Pan-African Donkey Conference
PFFPA	Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa



The donkey is one of the most important women-empowerment resources among the donkey-dependent communities in Africa.



Donkeys play a crucial role in helping women and children in their traditional domestic chores, and thus contribute to women and youth empowerment

Executive Summary

The first ever Pan-African Donkey Conference [PADCo] was held in Dar es Salaam on 1st and 2 December 2022, under the theme “**Donkeys in Africa Now and in the Future**”. The conference, was convened by African Union Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources [AU-IBAR] was attended by a wide range of African and International stakeholders, including Regional Economic Communities [RECs], Chief Veterinary Officers [CVOs], Civil Society Organizations [CSOs], Representatives of International Organizations (Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO, World Organization for Animal Health - WOAH), Research organizations (International Livestock Research Institute - ILRI, Tanzania Agriculture and Livestock Research Institute - TALIRI, Kenya Agriculture & Livestock Research Organization - KALRO), representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs], and Development Partners, among others.

The Conference highlighted the direct and indirect contribution made by donkeys at the household, community and government levels and noted that these contributions were not fully appreciated and recognized. Key among these, are the roles that the donkey plays in crop production, supporting other livestock, provision of transport for trade and households in fetching household commodities, including water and firewood. The role played by the donkey in supporting the empowerment of women, youths and families in Africa, who are their primary owners and managers, as well as supporting livelihoods for communities living in semi-arid and arid regions of Africa, has also not been adequately recognized. This has led the donkey not to be considered as a key livestock, which has led to its omission from key livestock development policies, strategies and agricultural frameworks.

The risk status of the donkey was also discussed with grave concerns being raised that the donkey faces extinction due to the high global demands for its skin and other products. This has currently led to the drastic reduction in the numbers of donkeys globally and in some African Union Member States. The Conference also discussed challenges faced by the donkey, including poor husbandry practices, low fecundity, increase in donkey diseases, low awareness about its welfare needs and cross border smuggling between African Union Member States. The conference highlighted the issues on donkey skin trade and its associated effects on illegal wildlife trade, loss of livelihoods for donkey-dependent communities, and the unsustainability of donkey farming as a strategy to cope with its declining population.

Several conclusions were made, key among them being to address factors leading to the threat to the survival of the donkey. It was also suggested that African Union Member States need to begin to consider the status of the donkey as a key livestock resource for Africans and especially women, youths, children and other resource-poor people.

The delegates came up with some resolutions, key among them being to lobby for the banning of the donkey skin trade across Africa, to develop a donkey re-population and conservation strategy and to provide resources for capacity development.

The conference ended with a declaration, referred to as the Dar es Salaam Declaration, that called on African Union Member States to ban the slaughter of donkeys for their skin and other products, for at least 15 years. This ban, when effected by African Union Member States, will allow for necessary infrastructure to be developed that will tackle the challenges being faced by the donkey and ensure that the African donkey populations are protected and conserved to support the donkey-dependent communities in the continent.



Donkeys play a crucial role in crop production across Africa, and this contributes significantly to the rural food and nutrition security, rural socio-economic growth, livelihood support, the Gross Domestic Product of African Union Member States and thus the Sustainable Development Goals for Africa

Background

Globally, donkeys were first domesticated in Africa, making the donkey a true African livestock, and hence a heritage of the continent. The donkey has significant impacts on households at the domestic level, by providing transport and other forms of labour, especially for communities in arid and semi-arid regions across the continent, who heavily depend on the donkey for transport. The donkey also directly supports agricultural activities, including providing labour during farm preparation, seed distribution, planting, weeding, harvesting and transportation of the agricultural crops from the field to the home and also to the market. They transport water for crops and animals, animal feeds and farm produce to the market. Through their services, donkeys support the welfare of other domestic farm animals directly or indirectly. Donkeys also provide their owners with a source of income when used in commercial engagements such as provision of transport services. The donkey contributes to environmental welfare, through their manure or through the manure provided from the crops and animals produced through their labour. Data shows that a working donkey contributes up to 15 times more income when it is alive, than when it is sold for slaughter (KARLO, 2019).

Data published in a recent publication by Brooke has demonstrated that the donkey's role in the communities and the direct and indirect contribution that it makes, is underestimated and often inadequately recognized in policy and other frameworks for livestock, agriculture and economic development. Whereas women are the main owners and handlers for the donkey in Africa, the role of the donkey in women empowerment is overlooked when policies are being developed, hence denying women and the animal the support required to optimize its contribution to their welfare.

Recent reports from many countries across Africa and across the globe have demonstrated that donkeys are now faced by a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin propelled by a traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties. From the USA, China, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, to Australia and Africa, the survival of donkey is being challenged.

The emerging threat from the donkey skin has exposed the animal to the risk of extinction putting the livelihoods of the donkey-dependent communities in Africa at jeopardy. There is therefore an urgent need for Africa to dialogue and deepen understanding about this threat and commit towards the protection of donkeys and donkey dependent livelihoods in policy and in practice.

From this background the Brooke Eastern Africa, in collaboration with Intergovernmental Authority on Development [IGAD] Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development – ICPALD; convened a regional conference in September 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme “Donkey are Better Alive” to sensitize stakeholders to the emerging precarious situation. The Nairobi conference called for a ban on the slaughter of the donkey for its skin.

This conference was followed by another one organized by Brooke West Africa in partnership with Economic Community of Western Africa States /Regional Animal Health Centre [ECOWAS/RAHC] in February 2020 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso whose theme was “**Asine Species Exploitation in**

West Africa". The conference also culminated in calls to ban the slaughter of donkeys for their skin. The Donkey Sanctuary has also published the Under the Skin reports, revealing the shocking scale of the global trade as it races to keep up with an ever-growing demand for the product thus calling for action to curb this trade, in the interest of both animal and human welfare.

The resolutions that were drawn from the conferences in West and East Africa, and data on the over exploitation of the donkey, has persuaded the AU-IBAR; as the specialized technical office of the African Union Commission [AUC], to initiate a platform upon which dialogues on the issues around the donkey, and their impact on the animal resources sector, could be discussed. It is against this background that the AU-IBAR, IGAD and the Tanzanian Government's line ministry responsible for livestock and agriculture, The Brooke, and other international and regional animal welfare organizations, organized a two-day conference whose theme was "**Donkeys in Africa Now and in the Future**".



Donkeys play a crucial role in providing access to water, especially in the arid areas where water scarcity is often acute, especially with climate change, and thus they enhance community resilience to Climate Change.

The loss of a donkey to the skin trade implies that women and children have to carry the water on their backs. This affects the quality of life, especially as women spend time fetching water instead of other life enhancing activities, and children may have to forego going to school in order to go to fetch the water.

Introduction

The AU-IBAR in partnership with Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, RECs –IGAD, ECOWAS, Economic Communities of Central African States (ECCAS), East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC); Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys [as Secretariat], as well as Animal welfare Organizations, convened the Pan-African Donkey Conference [PADCo] on 1st and 2nd December, 2022, at Kisenga LAPF International Conference Centre, in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, under the theme of “*Donkeys in Africa, Now and in the Future*”.

The conference was attended by 132 participants who attended in person and 85 who participated virtually. The delegates were drawn from government including Ministers or their representatives, Parliamentary representatives, Regional Economic Communities, Chief Veterinary Officers, representatives of Donkey-Dependent Communities, International organizations, Animal Welfare organizations, Research institutions, youth, experts on animal donkeys and equines welfare from across the world, academia, donkey owners, spiritual leaders, as well as the media houses.

The conference was organised in a hybrid model which included physical presence of presenters, speakers and participants and a virtual conference allowing participants to attend virtually. The conference was structured into sessions spread across the two days that included presentations, panel discussions and exhibitions.

Visit the conference website for more information: <https://panafricandonkeyconference.org/>

Overall Objective

The overall objective of the conference was to provide a platform for stakeholders in the value chains involving the donkey, to hold dialogues on the issues ailing the utilization of the donkey in Africa, towards arriving at a common policy position on the use, conservation and protection of the donkey in Africa.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Conference were to:

- Facilitate the African Union Member States (AU MS) to appreciate the socio-economic value of donkeys for African communities
- Enable AU MS to discuss the contribution of the donkey to socio-economic development
- Facilitate AU MS to review governance issues in the utilization of the donkey in Africa
- Enable AU MS to understand the impact of the donkey skin trade on donkey welfare and the welfare of donkey-dependent-communities.
- Expose to the AU MS the innovations and best practices for improving donkey welfare to support Africa's development

Expected Outcomes

The conference had the following expected outcomes:

- Dissemination of research on the status of the donkeys in Africa
- An expose of the contribution of the donkey to the wellbeing of society
- Dissemination of the best practices in support of donkey welfare in policy development, policy implementation and monitoring of donkey welfare
- Awareness about the over-exploitation of the donkey for the skin trade, and its impact on the Africa's development
- A resolution on the donkey slaughter for its skin in Africa
- Improved networking and partnerships for a sustainable exploitation of the donkey in Africa



Women empowerment: Donkeys crucially help women to provide water requirements for their families, especially in the remote rural areas

Workshop Proceedings

Session 1: Opening Session

The 2022 Pan African Donkey Conference opening ceremony was graced by Honourable Mashimba Mashauri Ndaki, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, United Democratic Republic of Tanzania, Honourable Dr. Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production, Chad, Honourable Dr. Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production – Senegal, Representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Animal and Fishery Resources, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire – Honourable Gouromen Kouakou Assoumany, Representative of Minister of Agriculture, Animal and Fishery Resources, Republic of Burkina Faso – Honourable Mbongo Wedne Victor - Secretary General, Honourable Hamisi Abdallah Ulega, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, United Democratic Republic of Tanzania, Mr Tixton T. Nzunda, Permanent Secretary Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, United Republic of Tanzania and Dr Nick Nwankpa Acting Director, AU-IBAR.



Official opening of PADCO, High level delegates including Eric Kiman, Board Chair, Brooke East Africa, Honourable Dr. Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production, Senegal, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, United Democratic Republic of Tanzania; Honourable Mashimba Mashauri Ndaki, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, United Democratic Republic of Tanzania, Mr Tixton T. Nzunda, Permanent Secretary Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, United Republic of Tanzania, Representative of AU-IBAR Director Prof James Wabacha

The conference began with welcoming remarks given by the Master of Ceremony, **Dr Mary Mbole-Kariuki** of the African Union Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) who, on behalf of the conference organizers, AU-IBAR, Brooke, and all of the conference partners, extended a warm welcome to all the conference delegates. She mentioned that the conference was an important one to spearhead conversation and action on the status of the African donkey especially regarding donkey skin

trade, protection and welfare. She mentioned that it was a privilege for the conference to be hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania a country that has taken affirmative action of banning donkey slaughter for the skin trade in order to conserve their donkey population. She mentioned that the conference was important for Africa to spearhead actions on the status of the donkey, to begin conversations on the policies and legislations that are needed to protect the donkey from exploitation for the donkey skin trade, and to consider enhancing its health and welfare. She closed by quoting Kwame Nkrumah's dream for a united Africa and tied this to the importance of Africa developing a united front with regard to the donkey skin trade.



Dr Mary Mbole-Kariuki of the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

The conference opening session was followed by opening prayers led by **Archbishop Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit** who gave a biblical context of animal welfare and encouraged all participants to take up their divine role to protect the donkey. He emphasised on the need for man to protect the resources endowed upon him by God and not to deplete them. He said that the future of the donkey rests with those of us who are present today, who have a capacity to lead them into extinction, as they have the capacity to protect them for posterity. He recalled that there is evidence of the donkey having served mankind for thousands of years. He recalled that the donkey's primary home is Africa, and in particular, the Horn of Africa, where it was first domesticated, before spreading throughout the rest of Africa and the world. He said that the donkey became man's friend, because of the role it played in supporting him whenever he was going through distress.



Archbishop Dr Jackson Ole Sapit – Head Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)

Sheikh Al Haji Musa Salum, prayed over the meeting and acknowledged that God, through His wisdom had gifted man with the donkey to enable him to move from one area to another and to undertake numerous household tasks and responsibilities. He mentioned that the donkeys and horses had been mentioned in the Holy Koran as important animals that provide assistance to man. He emphasized that it was therefore important that these animals were well taken care of, so that they would be able to provide this assistance.



Sheikh Al Haji Musa Salum - Chairman of the Inter-Religious Peace Committee of Tanzania

Dr Hiver Boussini - Senior Animal Health Officer (AU-IBAR), presented an overview of the meeting. He mentioned that the mandate of AU-IBAR was to support and coordinate the sustainable development and utilization of animal resources in Africa, to enhance food and nutrition security, and to contribute to the prosperity of the community of the African Union Member States. He stated that the broad mandate of AU-IBAR could only be executed through the strong collaboration with African Union Member States, RECs, development partners, Animal Protection Organizations, Intergovernmental Organizations, institutions of higher learning and the Private Sector. He highlighted that the Animal Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW), Regional Animal Welfare Network (RAWN) and Regional Animal Health Networks (RAHN) were important institutions that AU-IBAR collaborates with for the coordination of animal welfare activities within Africa. He further highlighted that AU-IBAR coordinates continental actions anchored on the overarching frameworks including Agenda 2063, CAADP/ Malabo commitments, Africa Continental Free Trade Area, (AfCFTA) and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others. He reported that the organization has developed, and spearheads the implementation, of various continental strategies, including The Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LIDES), the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHS), the Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa (PFPA), the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna, and so on. He also informed the delegates that the theme of the conference was **"Donkeys in Africa, now and in the future"** with the following sub-themes:

- Appreciating the socio-economic value of donkeys as key animal resource for African communities
- Discussing the role and contribution of donkeys to development, agriculture and climate change
- Administrative and legislative options for the development of Donkey species in support to poverty alleviation Understanding the Donkey Skin Trade - Implications of the donkey skin trade for donkey welfare and the welfare donkey dependent communities
- Innovations and best practices for improving donkey welfare and numbers to support Africa development



Dr Hiver Boussini – Senior Animal Health Officer (AU-IBAR)

Theme Exposition



Photo of Brooke Regional Directors from East Africa-left, West Africa -middle and Ethiopia Country Director - Right during the theme exposition session

Dr. Raphael Kinoti, Regional Director Brooke East Africa, unpacked the theme of the conference. He then explained that the donkey was domesticated in the northern part of Africa 6000-7000 years ago and that it is presently found in all regions of Africa, where it is mainly used for draft power. He also highlighted that there is an estimated population of 47 million donkeys in the world, comprising 185 ecotypes of donkeys (FAOSTAT, 2022)¹. He said that the largest number of these donkeys are found in Ethiopia, which hosts approximately 10 million donkeys, which is the largest number of donkeys found in any one country in the world. He articulated that the donkey plays an invaluable but invisible role to the livelihoods of the underprivileged cadre of society, mostly found in the least developed portions of our world; and especially in Africa. He noted that the donkey stands out as a highly climate resilient animal, due to its natural adaptive characteristics. Marginalized to remote neglected regions which are often occupied by the poor in society, the donkey; he noted, has over time developed unique characteristics, that have allowed it to cope with its natural environments, that have increasingly become more arid and desert over time.

Additionally, this versatile ability of the donkey to adapt itself to the increasingly changing and drying environments of Africa, can perhaps be attributed to the fact that it was one of the first animals to be domesticated within the continent.

¹ FAO S. FAOSTAT database. Food Agric Organ U N Rome Italy. 2022; <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en>

He proceeded to describe the unique characteristics that are found in the donkey as follows;

- An ability to vary its body size [ecotypes], a characteristic that enables it to adapt to the amount of feed and ambience that is available for it and thus enabling it to survive in a diverse range of environments.
- Long limbs and small cut hooves that enable the donkey to walk long distances and to navigate a wide range of harsh environments that include sandy, rocky and mountainous terrains with minimum injury to its hooves.
- An advanced digestive system that allows it to eat poor quality feeds and fully utilize what is often rejected by other animals.
- A coat colour that deflects heat and allows it to camouflage itself within its environment, which is a protective mechanism against predators.
- Large ears that assist the body to cool and regulate its temperature allowing it to survive in very hot environments.
- A grazing habit that allows it to graze easily throughout the day.
- A loud bray that allows it to communicate with other donkeys [and used by humans as an alarm warning system].
- The donkey has a gestation period of between 12 and 14 months, and only gives birth when the environment is safe and can guarantee the survival of the fowl.
- Donkeys live in families to enhance their security and have a working life of between 12 -15 years.

Emmanuel Sarr from Brooke West Africa outlined the social and economic contributions of the donkey, especially to those living in the arid regions in Africa. He highlighted that the donkey directly contributes to the development of the rural and urban people of Africa, where they are mainly used to transport goods. He stated that donkeys are becoming increasingly important for access to water as water stress worsens with climate change, especially in the arid and semi-arid areas of the continent. He gave the analogy of Dafur in Sudan, where the donkey is referred to as the “BMW”: Bread, Milk and Meat, in recognition of its integral role to the survival of the community. With reference to studies that have been carried out in Africa, he demonstrated the economic and social contributions from the donkey. For instance, in Burkina Faso, a country where 61% of the population lives below 1 US dollar a day, data shows that donkeys contributed USD 3.86 per day. This demonstrates that the donkey could be a useful resource to get out of poverty.

He informed the delegates that data from Ethiopia indicated that the average net monthly income from donkeys was USD 80.55, which made communities value the donkey as a buffer against financial insecurity. The Ethiopian donkey-beneficiary communities also reported that the most vulnerable members of their communities were those that did not possess a donkey.

Emmanuel shared data from Central Kenya where the donkey was ranked in value above cattle, because it contributed directly to the household through sustainable and consistent income generated through commercial services such as transport. The owners reported that the donkeys earned the households an average monthly income of approximately USD 73.77, which was favourably comparable to monthly wages of many informal fulltime jobs in Kenya. He mentioned that the donkey was an important buffer

for these communities in Kenya, where 70% of the population lived on less than one US dollar a day and 36% are food insecure with 35% of many children suffering chronic malnutrition. He stated that the donkey could be used as a buffer against the above challenges for these vulnerable individuals. He shared data from Senegal that revealed that households without equine power would farm smaller pieces of their land, and would stop production if they lost their animals, resulting in a 44 - 75% reduction of production of grains. The income generated from the equines in Senegal is primarily used for food, school fees and health expenses.

He concluded his remarks with the statement that in relation to the SDGs, the donkey contributes directly to eradication of poverty, reduction of hunger and the strengthening of food security and nutrition and access to water supply. The donkey also strengthens the practice of sustainable production of food and agricultural practices and the alleviation of women's burden of domestic work. He lamented that despite this the importance of the donkey, the value of the animal to communities that rely on it has not been recognized, and thus the animals suffer mistreatment, neglect and it is adversely mistreated through getting overworked, and that lately, its extinction in the continent is threatened through the unsustainable slaughter for its skin, driven by the demand for traditional medicine.

Johannes Kassim from Brooke Ethiopia raised concerns that the high demand for donkey skins for traditional medicine will lead to a drastic reduction in the numbers of donkeys in Africa. It is estimated that the traditional medicine industry requires 4.8 million donkey skins annually. This high demand could wipe out the entire African donkey population in only 10 years if no action is taken by all stakeholders. This would have a tremendous impact on Africa's donkey-dependent communities. He noted that the contribution of donkeys to the fight against poverty is largely unexplored. He concluded by observing that the argument that the donkey skins trade would positively impact African economies fails to take into account the immediate and negative effect that this would have on the donkey-dependent communities.

Opening remarks

Dr. Nick Nwankpa; Ag. Director AU-IBAR, speaking on behalf of the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural and Blue Economy and Sustainable Development, , thanked the Government of United Republic of Tanzania for hosting the Pan-African Donkey Conference 2022 and welcomed the participants to the event. He recognized the commitment of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to the conservation and development of animal resources and appreciated the various organizations and partners who sent high level delegates to represent them in the conference, which was a reflection of the importance they placed on the donkey. He recognized the long-standing partnership AU-IBAR has with Animal Welfare Organisations, and thanked them immensely for the financial and technical support to the conference. He made a special mention of The Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, for its generous investment into the conference, including providing the Secretariat and logistical services that made the conference a reality. He thanked the partner institutions for the strategic partnerships that advance the animal welfare agenda on the continent and recognized their commitment to improving the livelihoods of the African Community. This, he mentioned, had led to the development and endorsement of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa by the AU Heads of State Summit in February 2018. He reiterated the role that donkeys play across Africa, and reiterated the urgent need for action for a coordinated approach towards eradicating the unsustainable exploitation of the donkey. He concluded his remarks by calling on all African Union Member States, RECs, international organizations and institutions to include the equine species in the animal resource policies, strategies, programmes and projects, so as to enhance the harnessing of the animals as a resource in the animal resources sector. In closing, he expressed hope that the conference would come out with clear and strong resolutions on the sustainable exploitation of the donkey in Africa. He lauded Senegal for establishing and operationalizing a department on the equine species, and urged other AU-MS to emulate it.



Acting Director African Union Inter-African Bureau of Animal resources – Dr. Nick Nwankpa

Honourable Wendne Victor Bonogo, the Representative of the Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources in Burkina Faso, highlighted the importance of the socio-economic and cultural importance of the donkey in his country and reiterated the government’s commitment to ensure that donkey skin trade is banned in Burkina Faso.

Honourable Gouromen Kouakou Assoumany, the Director of Cabinet in Cote d’Ivoire, who represented the Minister of Fisheries and Animal Resources, expressed concern over the rampant illegal donkey skin trade in West Africa and called for collaborative action to ban the trade in Africa.



Honourable Gouromen Kouakou Assoumany; Representative of the Minister of Fisheries and Animal Resources, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire

Honourable Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production in Chad, in his remarks expressed his sincere assurance of the support of the government of Chad on the conference recommendations proposed.



Hon Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production Chad

Honourable Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal production, Senegal, acknowledged the significant yet barely recognized role the donkeys play in African communities' socio-economic wellbeing. He noted with concern the threat of the donkey skin trade to the animal's population and to the livelihoods of donkey-dependent communities in Africa. He proposed the drafting of a Declaration on the commercial exploitation of donkey skin trade and donkey products to be submitted to the Head of States during their Summit in February 2024, for their endorsement.

He reiterated the commitment of his President, His Excellency, Macky Sall, who is the current Chairperson of the African Union (AU) to support other African Member states in curbing the donkey skin trade.



Honourable Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal production, Senegal

Honourable Mashimba Mashauri Ndaki, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Prime Minister His Excellency Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa, , warmly welcomed the dignitaries and participants to the Pan-African Donkey Conference, 2022. He recognized the important role played by donkeys especially in the lives of women and youth. He mentioned that Tanzania is endowed with many livestock resources, including approximately 35.3 million head of cattle, 25.6 million head of goats, 8.8 million head of sheep, 3.2 million pigs, 92.8 million chickens and 600,000 donkeys.



Honourable Mashimba Mashauri Ndaki, Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries United Republic of Tanzania

In addition, the minister highlighted the ongoing indiscriminate slaughter of donkeys and the flourishing trade in donkey skins and donkey meat in Africa, which could ultimately result to the elimination of the animal in the continent.

He elaborated that in Tanzania, the Government has been using the Animal Welfare Act of 2008 and its Regulations of 2011 and the Animal Diseases Act of 2003 and its Regulations of 2007 to protect donkeys. Despite the efforts made by the Ministry to protect and develop donkeys in the country, he emphasised that there is still little success in rebuilding the donkey population as the population still remains low.

In conclusion, he highlighted actions that will be undertaken by the Ministry and stakeholders involved in the production, trade and welfare of donkeys, including sustaining a ban on donkey slaughter for export, increased investment in donkey production and development of a strategic breeding plan for donkeys; establishment of farmer-field schools for training on good husbandry practices; increased scientific research on donkeys by The Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI), increased awareness creation on importance of the donkey and its welfare and increased budgetary allocations by the government on donkey breeding programs, research and advocacy.

The minister reiterated the commitment of the government to uphold the donkey slaughter ban until the necessary conditions are fulfilled. He thanked the organizers of the conference AU-IBAR, Brooke EA and other Partners and assured them of the government's continued support. He then declared the conference officially opened.

Goodwill remarks

Eric Kimani, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Brooke East Africa, appreciated the host government of the United Republic of Tanzania and AU-IBAR for the leadership shown towards equine protection alongside other issues. He informed the delegates that The Brooke was founded in 1934 in Africa. He also articulated that equine draught power is the backbone of the economic activities and livelihoods of people across the Africa, and that the donkey played had socio-cultural to some communities in the continent, where it served as a tool of empowerment to women, contributing to their dignity and the quality of their life He appealed to the participants to join hands with Brooke and help reclaim the dignity of the donkey through collaborative action aimed at the protection and welfare of donkeys in Africa.



Eric Kimani- Chairman of the Bord of Directors for Brooke East Africa

Dr. Samuel Wakhusama, the Eastern Africa Regional representative of the World Organisation for Animal Health organization (WOAH), acknowledged the continued partnership that WOAHA has had AU-IBAR, RECs, Member States, Animal Welfare Organizations, and other stakeholders. He highlighted that this partnership stemmed from the common actions in relation to animal welfare and the development of the animal welfare strategy. In collaboration with the International Coalition for Working Equids (ICWE), amongst others, they work closely with member states to review their animal welfare strategies. On behalf of he WOAHA congratulated the conference organizers (AU-IBAR and Brooke) and the government of Tanzania for hosting the continental event. He noted that as part of its

mandate, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) develops international Standards aimed at improving animal health and welfare worldwide and has since adopted Chapter 7.12. on the Welfare of Working Equids and further in light of recent events around donkey slaughter for the skin trade, WOAHA issued a statement highlighting activities to protect donkey health and welfare



Dr. Samuel Wakhusama, Eastern Africa Regional Representative of the World Animal Health organization (WOAH)

Nyabenyi Tito Tipo, on behalf of Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, conveyed their deep appreciation to the organizers of the event. She highlighted the importance of the use of the donkey as draught animal and its contribution to food and nutritional security, as well as the improvement of the livelihoods of women and youth. She further noted that the donkey is instrumental in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as it plays a significant socio-economic role to the benefit of vulnerable households. The donkey is unique in terms of efficiency as a nature-based source of energy, its resilience under diverse environmental and working conditions. She argued that its benefits can be further optimized through taking effective care for the animal. She further highlighted that most countries lack structured management plans to support the welfare and health of donkeys, thus exposing them to indiscriminate exploitation. The ongoing efforts to protect the donkey has catalysed affirmative action resulting to ban of donkey skin trade across some Member States in Africa. She reiterated the importance of continental and global dialogue platforms to support donkey welfare and sustainable existence, as well as create awareness on the socio-economic and climate mitigation roles of the donkey. She highlighted the commitment of FAO, in collaboration with AU-IBAR and other stakeholders, to share information to assist policy dialogues targeted to donkey conservation and sustainable utilization. To promote inclusive and resilient food systems, the FAO will continue to support the management of animal health and transboundary animal disease issues. In conclusion, she urged all participants to consider donkey and donkey-dependent communities as a priority.



Ms Nyabenyi Tito Tipo - The FAO representative

Prof Elhadji Adakal Hassane, the ECOWAS representative, recalled the contribution of the donkey, especially in pastoralist regions, noting that it has helped communities to be resilient in times of climate change in the region. He concluded that there was a critical need to preserve the animal. He noted that the problem attributed to donkey slaughter was a serious concern to governments and donkey dependent communities thus calling for collective actions to address the matter.

Session 2: An Overview of the Status of donkeys in Africa

Status of donkeys in Africa

Dr. Hiver Boussini, Senior Animal Health Expert – AU-IBAR reported that the exact number of donkeys in Africa is not known but it is estimated that 27-30% of the world's donkeys are found in Africa, supporting the livelihood of over 600 million people in developing countries. He further noted that the global estimates of donkeys stand at 50.45 million worldwide (FAO, 2021) with the largest populations being found in China (11 million) followed by Ethiopia (8.8 million). Ninety five percent of the of donkeys around the world are kept specifically for work including providing transport services such as direct riding, pack transport or as pulling carts. Some communities milk donkeys, although this practice is not common. In a few countries, donkeys may be prized for their meat for local consumption or for export to countries where the meat is consumed. There has emerged an increased demand for donkey skins to produce traditional medicines, which is estimated to be about five million donkey skins per year.

Dr. Boussini highlighted mentioned that in Africa, the donkeys are integral to the economic structure of the rural populations and noted that there was need for the donkey's economic contribution to be recognised in national GDP statements. He noted that within Africa, the donkey is kept for use and not farmed and therefore the increasing over-exploitation with mass slaughter for skin trade is proving to be a major threat to its survival.

Dr. Boussini noted that the contribution of donkey to Africa was significant and could not be compared to that in Europe, where donkeys were primarily kept as pets. He further noted that the donkey formed an integral part of the livelihoods and survival of communities in arid and semi-arid regions of Africa, which has led to a concentration of donkeys in Sahelian West Africa, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and The Gambia; the Eastern African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea; the Northern African countries of Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco; and the Central African countries of Chad and Central African Republic.

Dr Boussini informed the delegates that the donkey population in Nigeria was large, but the numbers have fluctuated markedly raising concerns that in the forested West African countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau, donkeys are very few or inexistent. Similarly, he noted that there were very few donkeys in the forested and humid countries of Central Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Gabon.

Dr Boussini noted that donkeys are not included in animal resource policies, strategies and legislation of many countries in Africa. This was of concern especially because the donkey faces threats from mass slaughter and inhumane treatment in many African countries where there were no laws or policies that could protect it.

Speaking about equine population in Africa, Dr. Boussini presented data indicating proportions of working animals in Africa and noted donkeys made up the largest proportion in Africa at 47% (N=26.6 million), followed by camels (42%; N= 24.1 million), with horses and mules (N= 5.5 and N=489,935 respectively) making a combined contribution of 11% presented as a pie chart (Figure 1) and as a table [Table 1].

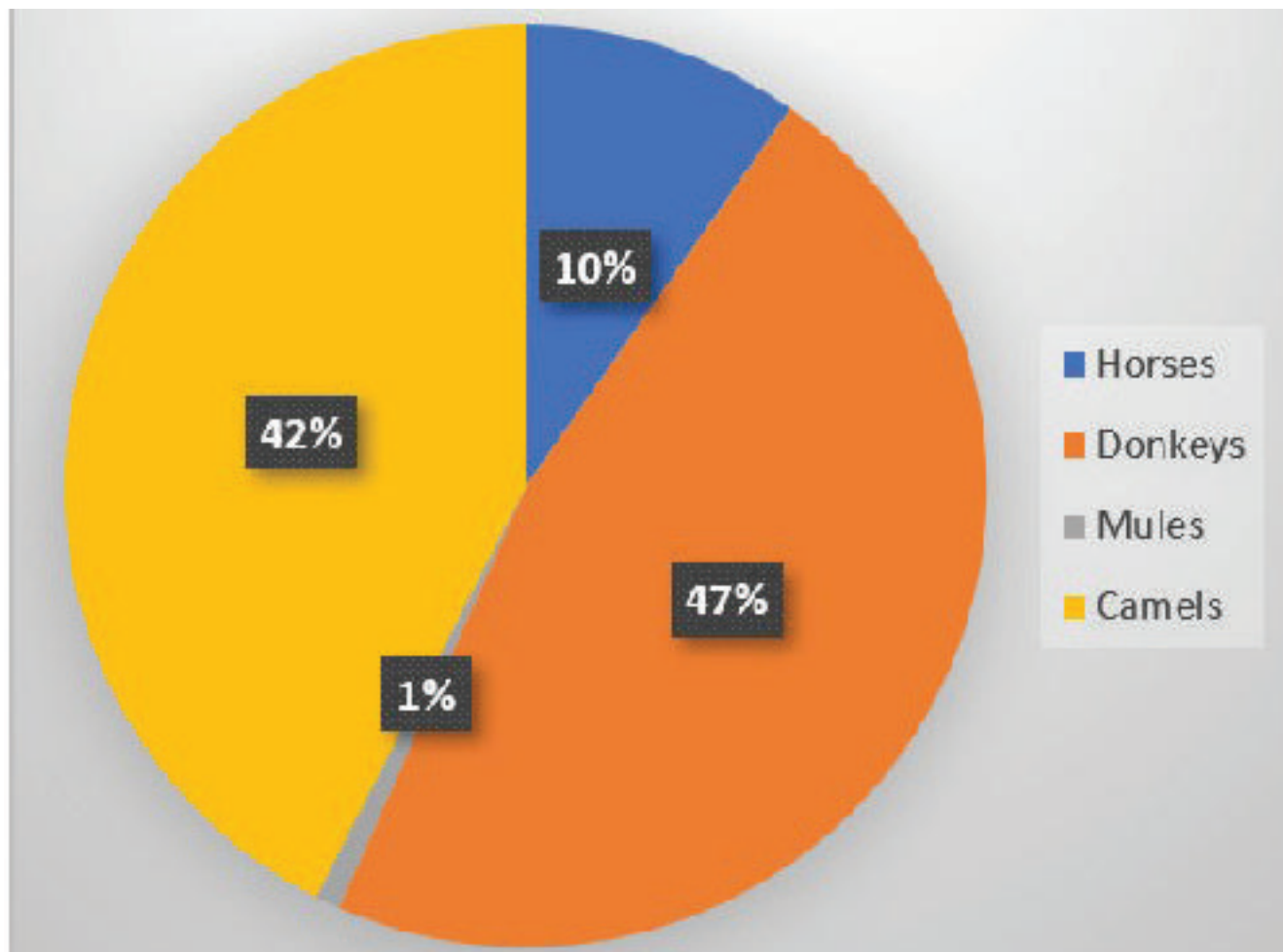


Figure 1: Proportion of Working animals in Africa, by species

Table 1: Reported number of working animals in Africa by species

Species	Numbers of animals in 25 African countries in 2018
Horses	5,531,325
Donkeys	26,688,989
Mules	489,935
Camels	24,160,391

Regarding donkey trade in Africa, Dr Boussini presented data on the average prices of live animals in Africa (Figure 2) with the highest average prices in Africa being for horses, with adult males fetching an average of USD 766, followed by adult female camels (USD 685) and adult male mules (USD 341). He noted that the donkey, despite the value it brought to communities, fetched the lowest price, averaging at USD 163 for adult males and USD 141 for adult females (Figure 2).

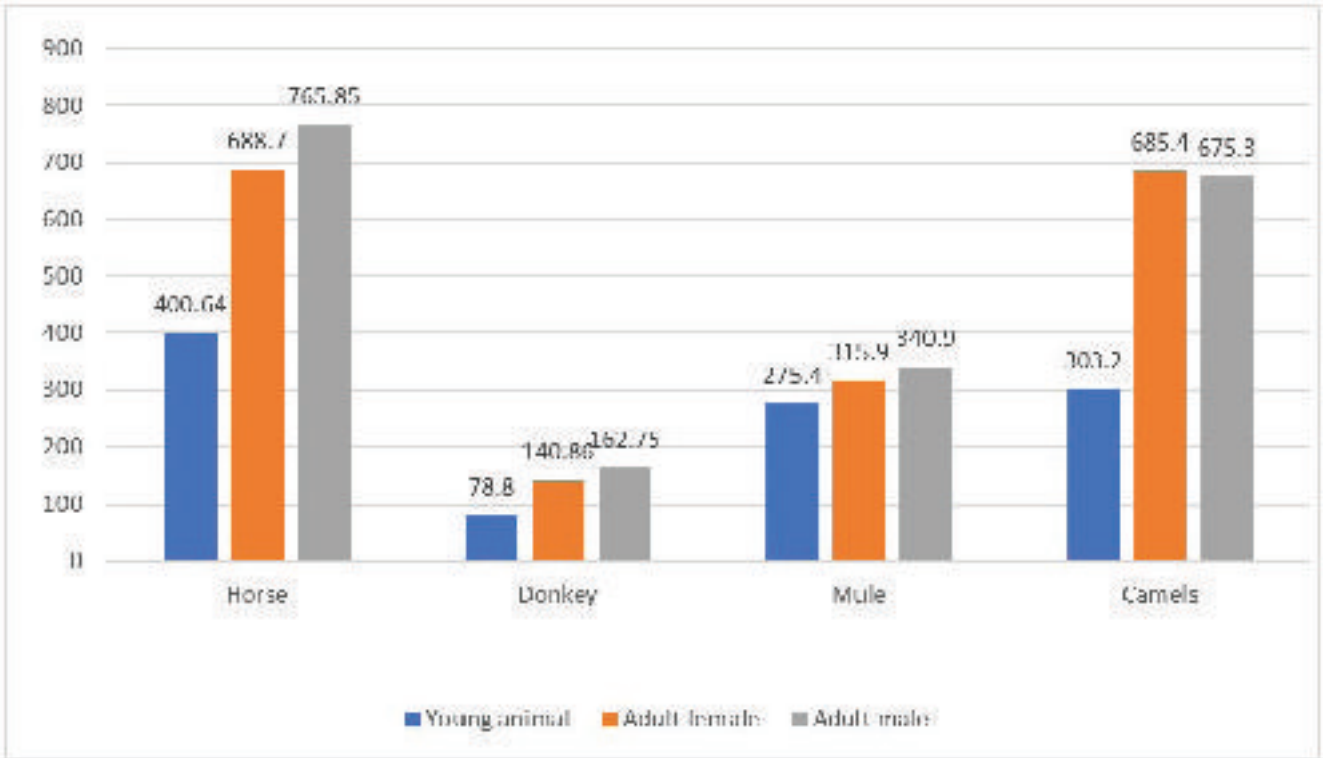


Figure 2: Average prices of live animals (USD)

When the importance of live animals and their products in the export market are considered, he drew the attention of the delegates to the fact that the highest value for donkeys comes from live exports, which was ranked at 8 out of 10, second only to live camels which were ranked at 9/10 (Figure 3). This implies that given their poor live process, several donkeys were being shipped out of Africa.

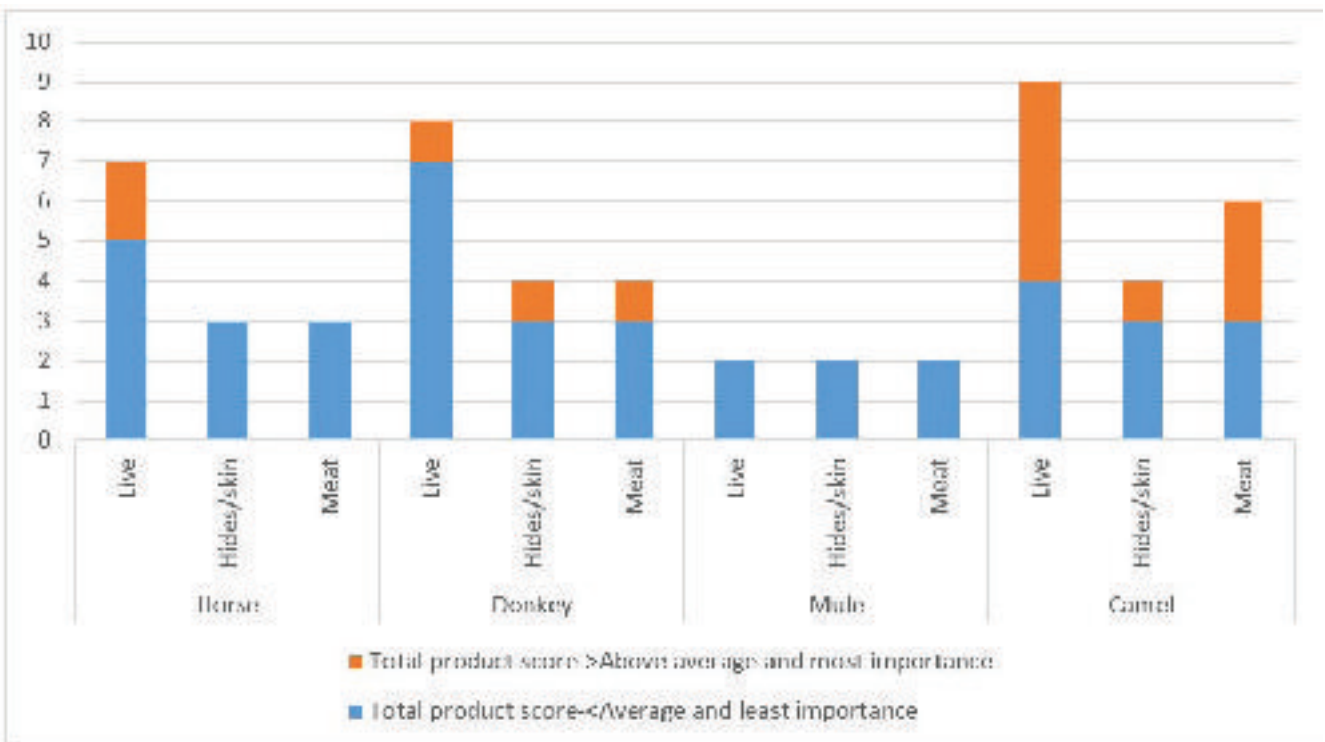


Figure 3: Importance of animal and products for export

He noted that in a survey done on donkey skin trade within Africa, 92% of the respondents indicated that there was no major donkey skin trade in their countries, while 83% said there was no recognized market for donkeys in those countries. Seventy nine percent of the respondents were not aware of the existence of donkey skin trade in their countries, while 86% said there were no opportunities for donkey skin trade in their country. Dr Boussini highlighted that 45% of respondents noted that threats to their country's donkeys predominantly came from other countries.

He emphasized that there was a global crisis affecting the donkey in Africa, which has only recently come to be known, and that this crisis was continuing to worsen. He proceeded to mention that the crisis was reportedly driven by the increase of the international trade of donkey skins which was being spurred by the demand to supply the traditional medicine industry. He raised concerns that the increasing demand for donkey skins and the slow reproduction rate of the donkey meant that in the very near future the donkey will be exploited to extinction. He therefore reasoned that there was an urgent need to address this concern at regional and global levels.

He highlighted the notable negative impacts of donkey skin trade as follows:

- Reduction in donkeys' population, and the corresponding threat of the extinction of the species.
- The impact on adolescent girls, and women who were already compromised by pregnancy and small children, because they were not spared from the burden of performing the tasks that the disappearing donkeys do, including carrying water, firewood and farm produce, with the resulting negative impacts on their health and development.
- The impact of shortage of donkeys on persons with disability and the elderly who could have lost their donkeys to the skin trade. The impact of this may be on their health, mobility and independence [i.e., increased dependency level].
- The reduction of donkey populations would have a negative impact on the few surviving donkeys
- That would be overworked, with a negative impact on their welfare
- Rising insecurity within communities during the donkey theft incidences or due to poverty,
- Increased rates of illegal cross border smuggling of donkeys

On donkey health and welfare, Dr Boussini informed delegates that the health and welfare of donkeys was often neglected, especially because their owners lack sufficient resources and knowledge of the appropriate care that donkeys need.

He mentioned that donkeys are also susceptible to most of the common transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses such as African horse sickness, equine infectious anaemia, the eastern, western and Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile Fever (WNF), Equine Viral Arteritis, Equine Herpesvirus, Equine Influenza and rabies. He mentioned that in recent years, especially since 2018, severely huge mortalities had been reported in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Central African Republic out of what was thought to be by Glanders, African Horse Sickness and Equine Influenza. Hence the urgency of developing disease prevention and control mechanisms for donkey diseases including the development and subsequent inclusion of donkey disease management in national and regional animal policies, strategies, programmes and projects. He emphasised

that the improvement of the health and welfare of donkey populations was crucial to advancing human well-being and socioeconomic development.

He informed delegates that AU-IBAR has the mandate of being the leading technical institution and is the main driver for the animal welfare agenda in Africa. Specifically, he mentioned the roles of AU-IBAR as:

- Coordinating and guiding processes for the implementation of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA).
- Enhancing collaboration, cooperation, coordination, partnership and promote information sharing with stakeholders' organizations.
- Supporting the formulation of Africa's common position(s) on animal welfare
- Advocating for political commitment for compliance with animal welfare decisions by the African Union Commission (AUC) and Member States.
- Ensuring the inclusion of working animals, especially Donkeys, Horses and Camels, in animal resource policies, strategies, programs and projects at national and regional levels;
- Advocating for the development and inclusion of working animals, including donkeys and their health care in the curricula of animal health courses and professional programs.
- Generating data on donkey populations, productivity, health care and trade in Africa to inform policy makers
- Calling for a coordinated Pan African Conference action on the exploitation and utilization of the donkey for the wellbeing of rural communities in the continent

In conclusion he said that there were opportunities to develop the donkey and to tackle the challenges being experienced in donkey trade, when the issue was approached from an inclusive continent-wide approach. He said that there was need for coordinated research and development in MS to ensure that the donkey is protected and that breeding and development of the donkey happens. He said that with regional and continental approaches that provide a common position on the donkey, the species would be protected and any negative effects on the donkey would be mitigated.

Why addressing the donkey numbers in Africa matters; East Africa's perspectives

Dr. Monicah Maichomo (Director – Veterinary Research Institute and the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Institute – KARLO] presented an overview of the donkey numbers in East Africa. She reported that in East Africa, livestock-dependent communities rank the donkey as the most important livestock. It supports day to day activities in homesteads, in terms of transport, fetching water and firewood. It is found in some of the driest environments in arid and semi-arid regions where it is well adapted to these environments.



Dr. Monica Maichomo – Director Veterinary Research Institute - KALRO

She reported that for some households in East Africa, a donkey earns approximately USD 110 per month compared to the income a family would earn if they hired themselves out for labour at USD 80 per month. She noted that a comparative analysis of the value of a donkey's services against its price as a live animal at the market, it is 15 times more valuable when alive than when sold for slaughter. The donkey supports most agricultural value chains, including facilitating agricultural production of crops and livestock fodder, providing water for the household and the other livestock, provision of mobility in rangelands and for transhumance, and it produces manure. It also supports agricultural value chains through transportation of produce to the market which directly supports the family's income generation. Despite the increase in motorized transport the cost of transport when a donkey is not used is not only significantly higher ($P < 0.05$) when a donkey is not used, but also it can access areas that are not accessible due to lack of roads. The donkey is also cheap, at purchase and maintenance, because it is so hardy that it hardly requires veterinary attention, it does not need to be refueled or maintained by skilled artisans like motorbikes, and once owned by a family it can live and provide services for many years, with the possibility of reproducing other donkeys to work for the family or for sale to generate more income.

Dr Maichomo highlighted that in 2018, the Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency reported a drop in donkey numbers from 1.5 million in 2016 to 595,000 in 2018. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya has about 1.2 million donkeys compared with 1.8 million a decade ago. Recent data indicates that approximately 1000 donkeys are slaughtered daily. She raised concerns about the declining numbers of donkeys in East Africa and said that this trend required urgent attention. She mentioned that the unregulated commercialization of the donkey and donkey products could disrupt rural livelihoods,

thus exposing the communities to further risks. She mentioned that indiscriminate slaughter, especially of females, posed risks to the future of donkeys. She said that the unavailability of breeding females due to their removal for slaughter, exposed the donkey population to the risk of the drastic population declines and these could go below the effective reproductive numbers from which the population may not recover. The donkey skin trade in East Africa is risking the reduction of the critical number of donkeys even further, besides contributing to illicit cross border theft and smuggling of donkey and thus spreading the problem further afield. She raised concerns on the donkey welfare, especially with reports emerging that between 28-30% of donkeys are not stunned before slaughter.

In conclusion, Dr. Maichomo called for preservation of the donkey to maintain effective reproductive numbers. She also called for increased surveillance and enforcement of laws on importation of animals to curb suspected cross border smuggling of donkeys for hide trade in order to minimize risks of transboundary diseases.

Session 3: Donkey farming, Welfare and Health Standards

Dr. Joe Collins, the Chief veterinary Advisor at The Donkey Sanctuary explored in details the question of whether Donkey farming can ever present a sustainable supply- chain for donkey skin trade? He presented an in-depth analysis of commercial farming of donkeys. He outlined the unique physical and behavioural characteristics of the donkeys have that are difficult to satisfy and meet when farmed in intensive farming systems. He informed the delegates that the donkey species over time has evolved to living in small groups of closely bonded individuals where they form strong emotional bonds that cause them great distress when they are separated from each other.

He mentioned that the intensive farming model, with high numbers of donkeys and large stockades, would not work for animals that lived in small and tightly bonded groups and that these environments would lead to the animal developing stress which would be associated with low fertility, compromised immunity, and low survival rates. He stressed that the stressed donkeys were vulnerable to diseases such as Herpes virus infection and Hyperlipaemia, which was a frequent cause of poor health in the donkey. He said that the commercial type of intensive production models further exposed the donkey to other conditions such as foot disorders and conditions. This would culminate in poor nutrition leading to poor body conditions including poor dental condition, health and infertility.



Dr. Joe Collins of the Donkey Sanctuary

He further highlighted that the feeding habits of donkeys; where they naturally graze and browse over long periods, for an estimated at over 16 hours per day. He mentioned that they feed on low calorie dense fibrous material and highlighted that the efficient feeding routines that are normally found in intensive farming commercial farms, for example where animals are fed twice a day, would not satisfy a donkey's behavioural needs and this would lead to the animals having low body condition scores especially if they are unable to consume enough calories to maintain their weight. He raised the concern that there is not enough data on donkey reproduction to date. He also highlighted that donkeys have relatively long gestation periods, that range from 353 days to 371 day (around 11.5-12.5 months) and varying conception rates being obtained through different breeding methods. He stressed that African donkeys mate naturally, and therefore natural conception formed the main method through which donkeys are bred. He mentioned that in China, on the other hand the main breeding method used is artificial insemination, with resultant variation in the results. This would be further complicated by the high abortion rates and high foal mortalities witnessed in these commercial set ups.

He said that the growth rate of donkeys, indicating that they grow very slowly, and take up to 24 months to reach maturity and a further 11 or 12 months to conceive and deliver a foal. He mentioned that it can take up to 36 months before they begin to contribute to a farm's productivity assuming that the donkey is able to conceive immediately and he therefore mentioned that it would be a few more months before profits are achieved. He emphasized that farming donkeys for skins would also take a considerable time before profits are realized because it would take up to two years for a donkey to reach a mature enough size to be slaughtered for their hide. He also mentioned that simulation data showed that it would take at least ten to fifteen years, if not much longer to build up herd sizes to meet the target demand of skins

for traditional medicine, assuming that the donkeys are kept under excellent conditions that enhanced their welfare and that the mortality rates were low. He quoted simulation reports that predicted that a herd of 1000 female donkeys would produce 854 slaughter weight donkeys annually over a five-year period, which was equated to 854 carcasses for meat and 854 skins for the production of traditional medicine. He said that assuming a constant growth rate, the donkey would not be ready for slaughter until after 24 months and that the commercial farm would be unlikely to produce any products for four years, raising questions on the viability of the farm.

Another issue that had been published in the Donkey Sanctuary reports; was that donkeys are known for displaying subtle or nonspecific signs of illness and this stoicism can make them challenging to diagnose with infectious diseases. He mentioned that this feature would make it extremely difficult to manage diseases in commercial intensive farms, because of high numbers of new individuals entering herds, and high traffic in and out of farms. He highlighted that donkeys can be asymptomatic when infected with some of the serious equine infectious diseases and particularly when people are inexperienced with them or where biosecurity measures are limited. This could result in disease outbreaks that have the potential of wiping out entire herds with associated losses to production through high morbidity and mortality rates. This unique characteristic probably explains the evolutionary benefit of donkeys being naturally inclined to exist in small family groups. He shared examples where outbreaks of influenza have led to mortality rates of 25% in a herd of 300 donkeys. He also mentioned that in commercial farms, high mortality rates of new-born foals have large impacts on the efficiency of donkey breeding, given that the foals hold the key for the continuity of the herd. He mentioned that infectious diseases could lead to reduction in fertility and infectious agents like salmonella could cause abortions or early embryonic losses. He also highlighted the fact that donkeys farmed intensively are likely to be stressed which can lead to altered immune states and increases in susceptibility to infections. He added that various misconceptions have surrounded the concept of intensive commercial farming of donkeys for the skin trade. These include:

- That donkeys can be reared quickly. The fact is that donkeys grow slowly and would take up to three years to be mature enough to harvest their skins.
- That intensive farming of donkeys does not carry a high risk of disease transmission.
 - Accurate data on diseases affecting donkeys is lacking. Without such data efficient methods for the treatment of donkeys would not be developed.
- That breeding animals are easily available. He mentioned that because donkeys have not been farmed, it would be difficult to find breeding stock, since no breeding programmes for donkeys have been undertaken.
 - Intensive donkey breeding and farming requires breeding stock of high quality. Without the a thorough phenotypic and genotypic characterisation of donkeys, it would not be possible to develop breeding stock.

In conclusion, he stated the intensive farming of donkeys would not lead to quick profits due the various factors that have been highlighted and that the answer to an increased demand for donkey skins cannot be found in farming donkeys commercially.

Animal welfare during slaughter; spread of donkey diseases during illegal movement

Dr. Samuel Wakhusama noted the conference accounts articulated by speakers in the conference who had highlighted that the demand for diverse products of donkey origin has escalated rapidly, which apparently had contributed to the escalation of legal and illegal trade in donkeys, causing major impacts on the livelihoods, the health and welfare of donkey populations and the environment. He mentioned that it was important to note that WOAHA works with Veterinary Authorities to ensure animal health and welfare standards, but the control of legal movement and monitoring illegal movement is not within its mandate. He articulated that as part of its mandate, WOAHA develops international Standards aimed at improving animal health and welfare worldwide. These standards are developed in a responsive, science-based and transparent process and are published in the WOAHA Terrestrial Animal Health Code and Aquatic Animal Health Code after being endorsed by its 182 Member Countries. These standards contribute to the improvement of animal welfare globally through the development of science-based standards. He proceeded to explain that the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7 covers the following areas:

- Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare (2003)
- Transport of animals by land (1998/2005)
- Transport of animals by sea (1998/2005)
- Transport of animals by air (1998/2005)
- Slaughter of animals for human consumption (2005)
- Killing of animals for disease control purposes (2005)
- Dog population management (2009) (2022)
- Use of animals in research and education (2010)
- Animal Welfare and Beef Cattle Production Systems (2012)
- Animal Welfare and Broiler Chicken Production Systems (2013)
- Animal Welfare and Dairy Cattle Production Systems (2015)
- Welfare of Working Equids (2016)
- Animal Welfare and Pig Production Systems (2018)
- Killing Methods for Farmed Reptiles for their Skins, Meat and Other Products (2019)

Dr. Wakhusama mentioned that the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7.5, is a section covering the slaughter of animals noting that it defines the best practices across the variety of slaughter practices taking into consideration different requirements ranging from institutions requiring the slaughter of large numbers of animals to those slaughtering a handful on a daily basis. He highlighted the four parts of this section, namely:

- General principles explaining scope, competencies and basic predispositions and expertise needed for humane treatment of animals during slaughter.
- Sections on handling practices and care of animals in lairages where best practices are more dependent on skills and experience.
- Sections or paragraphs dealing with restraint, stunning and slaughter provide some flexibility reflecting the size and character of the slaughtering establishment, species of animals slaughtered,

taking into account religious aspects as well as level of infrastructure to some extent.

- Unacceptable practices, on an animal welfare ground.

He also highlighted the areas contained in the section, namely:

- The staff and staff training requirements and competencies.
- The role to be played by the slaughterhouse management and supporting veterinary services.
- Animal Welfare plan.
- Lairage and care and management of animals in the lairage.
- Detailed information on stunning and stunning methods.
- Bleeding.

The Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7.12 is dedicated to the code regarding the Welfare of Working Equids and applies to horses, donkeys and mules that are destined, used for or retired from traction, transport and generation of income. Equids used in sports or competitions, leisure activities, research or kept solely for the production of meat or biopharmaceuticals, are excluded.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Wakhusama highlighted that there is need to manage the utilization of the donkey, bearing in mind the risk of spreading diseases between countries including the threat to public health from zoonotic diseases.

The contribution of donkeys to the socio-economic and livelihood needs of Donkey Dependent communities in Africa

Laura Kavata from Brooke East Africa introduced the Session noting that she has been working closely with the donkey dependent communities and that the session will reflect on the socio-economic and livelihood needs of donkey dependent communities in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. She presented documentaries that illustrated the donkey's contribution to household chores, farm labour and transport requirements, as well as the repercussions to families upon loss, theft, or sale of their donkeys. The repercussions include an increased number in the dropouts of the girl child from school and the social, emotional, and financial tribulations of the women who lose their donkeys. During the session, three representatives from Kenya and Tanzania, shared their experiences on the losses of donkeys and reiterated the call to ban donkey trade to ease the burdens the women in their community suffered after the loss of their donkeys.



Representatives of donkey communities of Eastern Africa, accompanied by Archbishop Dr. Jackson Nasore Ole Sapit of the Anglican Church of Kenya

The Contribution of the Donkey to Pastoralism in the IGAD Region

Dr. Ameha Sebsibe – IGAD representative reported on the contribution of donkeys to pastoralism, highlighting that seventy percent of the IGAD region is Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) which is home to about 50 million people. These areas are rich in ruminants and equines. The region has over 19 million donkeys which are key pillar of family life in ASALs.



Dr. Ameha Sebsibe – Head, Livestock and Fisheries
IGAD Center for Pastoral Areas & Livestock Development (ICPALD)

Dr. Sebsibe, stressed that the donkey contributes to households in the ASAL regions by among other things; Fetching clean water each day thus lessening the burden on women and school going girls; Providing transport for farm produce from the field to the home or market, building materials and fodder; Public transportation through donkey carts; Provision of nutrition from donkey milk, meat and blood, which are consumed by the people of northern regions of Kenya for example in Turkana County; Alleviating poverty and creating job and opportunities in ASALS Mobility in transhumance as pastoralists move about in search of fodder and water, and transportation of relief food, as well as human and animal health service providers or patients, and general transport of people through terrains where other modes of transport cannot work

He highlighted the various challenges facing the donkey in the IGAD region include Inhumane treatment, cruelty and abuses by owners and handlers, especially where donkeys are stolen and where they are legally or illegally trekked on foot for long distances to markets, Inadequate veterinary services, Lack of prioritization by most governments and their failure to recognize the donkey among important livestock, and thus omitting it from critical policy and program development, and Threat of extinction from the massive slaughter to supply the demand for its skin.

He further noted that IGAD remained concerned about the rampant suffering and difficulties by the donkey-dependent families who had lost their donkeys to the slaughter for the skins. He lamented that the main beneficiaries from the donkey slaughter and donkey skin trade were the brokers, the formal donkey traders and the donkey skin exporters, at the very high socio-economic, socio-cultural and livelihood costs to the affected communities. He emphasized that to ensure sustainability of the banning of the donkey skin trade and enhance the contribution of donkeys in ASALS some key steps need to be undertaken, including: Awareness creation on the negative impact of donkey skin trade, harmonization and co-ordination of actions to ban the donkey skin trade, by IGAD Member States and formulation and implementation of robust policies and legislations that are inclusive and supportive of the working animals, and the communities.

China, Africa, and the Market for Donkeys: Keeping the Cart Behind the Donkey

Dr Lauren A. Johnston, from the South African Institute of International Affairs., informed the delegates that the donkey was consumed in China, mainly in the form of donkey burger. However, since 2000s it has mainly been used as an input for 'ejiao'. She elaborated that ejiao had a 3,000-year history as a medicinal item, that has been understood to help sustain beauty and health.



Dr Lauren A. Johnston, South African Institute of International Affairs

Dr. Johnston enlightened the delegates that in the past ejiao was only available to the emperor and went on to note that this product that was only accessible to one person, has now become available to the common man, so long as one can afford to buy it. She explained that the Gross Net Income [GNI] per capita in China was approximately USD 11, 980. This high score implied a huge demand for ejiao which was currently utilizing more than five million donkey skins per year; with more than half of them being imported. She highlighted the fact ejiao was now a seven billion USD industry that has serious implications for the worldwide.

She mentioned the **importance of understanding the ejiao supply chain** and went ahead to enlighten the delegates on the dominant Chinese producers of ejiao. The Chinese ejiao supply chain was dominated by one major producer, Dong, holding 60% of the market share, and three medium sized producers, Fu brand (with a 15% market share) and Taiji and Tongretang (Each with 10% of the market share). She advised that African Union MS need an effective way to cooperate and negotiate with the four producers, and especially with Dong, that produces that largest amount of ejiao, if there was going to be an effective intervention to prevent the extinction of the donkey

She informed the delegates that the donkey skin imports into China has resulted in lower donkey skin prices in China and that this has had a big impact on the embedded “Common Prosperity” campaign that seeks to elevate the donkey. Among other production constraints the lack of a price incentive to produce the donkeys in China, the sourcing for them had shifted to abroad. Dr Johnston therefore emphasised the **importance of understanding the focus of the China-Africa trade policies** and how the donkey skin trade had broadly impacted the agricultural sector, where the loss of the donkeys

compromised the performance of this sector. She closed the session by urging the African MS to ensure that they align their campaign to stop donkey skin trade to China's goal to foster common developments in Africa because at the moment, the impact of the donkey trade implies that the continued skin trade was happening in contradiction to China's goal to support the development of agriculture in Africa. She emphasized that the Chinese community was not aware of the impact of their demand for ejiao on communities in Africa.

She therefore advised that the advocacy campaigns may target influencers such as artists, borrowing from the experiences acquired through past effective campaigns that used influential artists to champion against the demand for ivory and other wildlife products.

Session 4: Threats of Donkey Skin Trade

This session was moderated by Dr Mwenda Mbaka, the Animal Welfare Expert from the AU-IBAR, who mentioned that the session was meant to highlight the contribution of the donkey to the socio-economic, socio-cultural and livelihood needs of donkey-dependent communities in Africa.



Dr. Mwenda Mbaka – Animal Welfare Expert (AU-IBAR)

The Session was graced by 6 presentations from Dr Philip Wayuta Mshelia, Department of Veterinary Medicine Ahmadu Bello University, Dr. Edith Kabesiime [Wildlife Campaign Manager, World Animal Protection, Janneke Merckx (Tactical Response Officer, The Donkey Sanctuary); Teferi Abebe Kidane Country Director Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA) ; Prof Erick Vitus Komba - Director General Tanzania Livestock Research Institute, Prof. Hezron Emmanuel Nonga, Director of Veterinary Services, Chief Veterinary Officer & OIE Delegate for Tanzania and Josephat Ngunyo, Executive Director, Africa Network for Animal Welfare

Trends in donkey slaughter and skin trade across African Union Member States

Dr. Philip Mshelia presented on the trends in donkey slaughter and skin trade across Africa. He noted that the domestication of the donkey has made a major contribution to the development of African livestock and that some rural populations across the continent are dependent on the donkey for their household daily needs. He further explained that the donkey skin trade in Africa has had a serious negative impact on community livelihoods, contributed to cross border donkey smuggling and encourage theft of donkeys, where they are trafficked in countries such as Chad and Cameroon destined for west Africa. He mentioned that West Africa is one of the gateways to the donkey skin market. Donkeys are also sourced from North, West and Central Africa and transported to countries that have a long history of donkey meat consumption. He highlighted that transboundary routes used for migration of livestock are used to transport donkeys to markets, many of which are located along border points of West African countries.



Dr. Philip Mshelia -Ahmadu Bello University- Nigeria

He went on to mention that the donkey trade was regarded as a risk for the stress that compromised the immunity of the animals, and hence a constraint to their health, as well as being a risk for the spread of transboundary equine diseases.

Dr. Mshelia gave examples of evidence of illegal donkey trade, violations of decrees that had been arrived at to combat the illegal donkey trade, in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, including an association between the illegal donkey skin trade and illegal wildlife trade; whereby the latter posed hazards to the integrity of the fragile African ecosystem. He concluded by emphasizing the need for strong policies and

legislation that would protect donkeys from cross border smuggling, indiscriminate slaughter and illegal trade, as well as building the political goodwill for investment and support to implement the policies and legislations.

The Donkey Skin Trade: A Trojan horse for criminality and biosecurity risk for human and animal health on a global scale

Janneke Merx presented data that she and Simon Pope have collected over the last three years. She mentioned that since 2019 The Donkey Sanctuary had increasingly become aware of the links between the Donkey Skin Trade and criminality and particularly the illegal wildlife trade. This first came to their awareness when they came across donkey products being listed on Business-to-Business sites, where traders were offering large quantities of donkey skins for sale, often from countries with existing bans on donkey products for export. She mentioned that these sites not only offered donkey products but also products from CITES protected species such as pangolins, rhinoceros, tigers and elephants. Further investigation of these traders showed that alongside donkey skins other illegal items were also offered for sale including class A drugs, weapons, and human body parts.

She informed the delegates that the worldwide multi-billion-dollar wildlife trade is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world with not only serious implications for global conservation efforts but also hinders social and economic development. She mentioned that the illegal global wildlife and animal trade poses a threat to national and global security and undermines efforts of national governments and intergovernmental bodies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. She mentioned that wildlife trafficking is orchestrated by transnational organized crime syndicates, who use the same routes used to traffic illegal products and drugs to traffic animal wildlife products and now donkey skins.



Janneke Merx – Tactical Response officer, The Donkey Sanctuary

She said that The Donkey Sanctuary commissioned research by Oxford University's WildCRU and Said Business School to investigate the role that donkey skin trade played in the arena of highly organised crime. She said the study, which was published early 2022, showed that donkey skins are offered for sale and shipped alongside illegal wildlife products. She mentioned that the study identified hundreds of traders, registered across 55 countries and 20% of those traders also offered illegal wildlife items for sale including pangolin, rhinoceros, elephants, tiger and more. The study showed that donkey products are offered within this practice, which is referred to as "parallel trafficking". She mentioned that the illegal sale of these items, including donkey skins were also offered on social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, twitter and YouTube. She highlighted that this was possible because online platforms often don't have policies in place to protect against the sale of the illegal species and in cases where they do exist, the sheer magnitude of the sales makes enforcement of the policies difficult. She highlighted that the traders often bribed customs and port officials to allow such exports to take place. She presented data that showed that over the last five years, over 75,000 donkey skins were seized, highlighting that these were the only ones which were caught; hence the numbers were most likely higher.

She mentioned that the lack of HS codes for donkey skins makes illegal donkey skin trade difficult to track. She concluded by mentioning that the trade of donkey skins was huge and is propagated by ignoring national laws and uncovers the convergence of criminality with the illegal trade of donkey skins, illegal wildlife trafficking and drug trafficking.

The link between Donkey Skins Trade and illegal wildlife trade

Edith Kabesiime of the World Animal Protection mentioned that approximately 1.3 trillion animals are killed annually through human activity, for clothing, food, medicine, as euthanized pets and other human activities. She highlighted a UN report that highlighted that wildlife trade was one of the main causes of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. She mentioned that wildlife trade had two sides, the legal wildlife trade, which is regulated and quantifiable, and the illegal side which is not easily quantifiable and has been estimated to be approximately 50% of the legal wildlife trade.



Edith Kabesiime of the World Animal Protection

She mentioned that the drivers for illegal wildlife trade are money, the increasing demand for traditional Asian medicine, with the demand for Chinese traditional medicine driving up the highest demand. She mentioned that an analysis of CITES data on volumes of illegal flora and fauna used for Chinese medicine, China is leading.

She mentioned that the World Animal Protection is working in Africa and in China to raise awareness of the negative effects of the donkey skin trade on African animals, including the donkey and lion, which were concealed within the ambit of donkey skin trade. She cited data that they had collected data that showed that the donkey is now among the top 10 animals being illegally exploited in Africa with 13 African countries at the intersection of this illegal trade. She concluded by highlighting the importance of African Union Member States coming together to partner and develop a holistic approach to deal with the illegal trade, that would include a ban on donkey skin trade, with supporting legislative frameworks.

The Economic Effects of the Donkey Skin Trade

Teferi Kidane from Society for the protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA) highlighted the direct value of the donkey coming from market sales, direct domestic and agricultural labour, and donkey hiring while the indirect value comes from Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Social network value, time capital, amongst others. He mentioned that it was important to highlight the real value of the donkey especially in the African context posing typical examples drawn from across the continent; including the fact that the loss of a donkey could lead to over 50% of the farm produce being lost. He emphasized that the socio-economic benefits of donkey ownership outweighed the costs on an individual community and gender basis in west and southern Africa respectively:



Dr. Teferi Kidane from Society for the protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA)

He then went on to highlight four threats to the African donkey population namely; Environmental catastrophes, Disease outbreaks, Road Traffic Accidents and Trade in Donkey skins for the production of Chinese. He mentioned that the reduction of donkey numbers would have great impacts on communities as outlined in Figure 4:

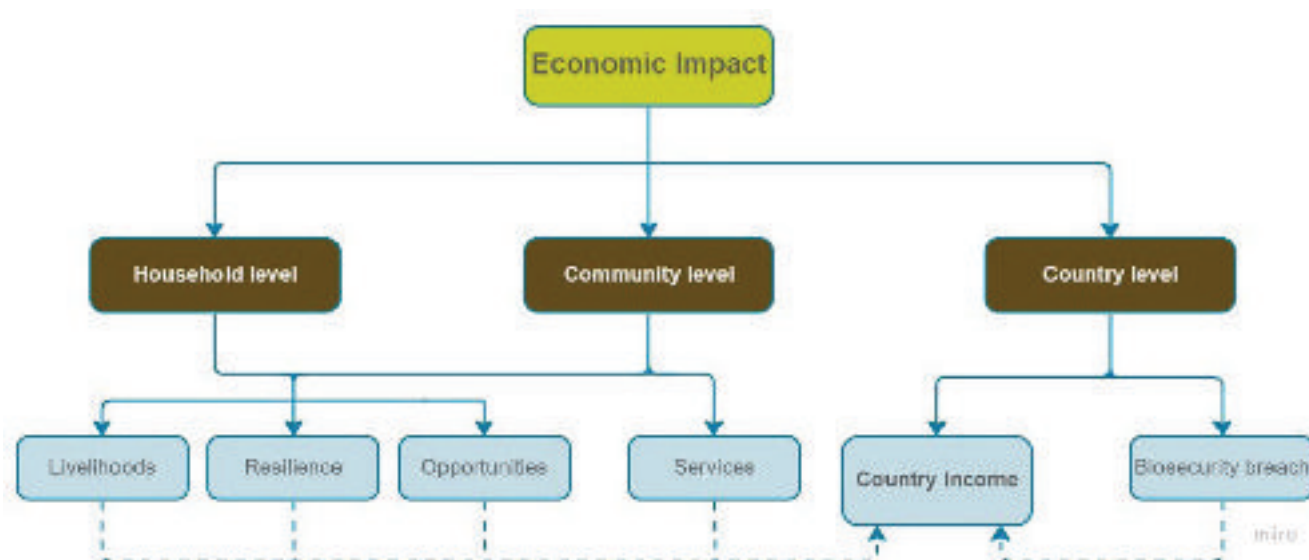


Figure 4: The negative impact of reduction of donkey numbers in African communities

He highlighted the negative impact at the community level directly and indirectly. The direct impacts were felt on livelihoods, infrastructure and resilience, while the indirect impacts included time and opportunity costs for women; school absenteeism and food insecurity. He mentioned the importance of protecting the donkey because Africans depend on donkeys for their livelihoods, social structures, economy and resilience. He reiterated that donkeys were invisible workers who were vital to communities and country economies alike.

He emphasized that there is need to protect the donkey through awareness creation on the importance of donkeys, efficient veterinary and disease surveillance systems and combatting the unsustainable slaughter of donkeys to supply the donkey skin trade. However, to emphasize the high level of consciousness about the value of the donkey to communities, he presented the anecdote of a community uprising against a donkey slaughterhouse established in Ethiopia, which compelled the government to heed the wishes of the community. He concluded by making a rallying call to governments to put in place pragmatic policies and legislations that protect against inappropriate use of working animals

Implications of donkey slaughter on community livelihoods

Prof Erick Vitus Komba, Director General for Tanzania Livestock Research Institute began by highlighting the importance of the donkey to the communities of Tanzania, especially for the resource poor households. He mentioned that the donkeys in Tanzania and in many communities across Africa, were raised using traditional management practices. He explained that despite the ban in Tanzania, the donkey population numbers have increased very slowly due to natural causes.



Prof Erick Komba of the Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI)

He outlined the two roles that donkeys play in Tanzania, with 78% of them as working animals and non-working roles for production of meat, manure and milk, the latter which is believed to have medicinal value, for dowry negotiations and prestige. He mentioned that one of the most important roles that the donkey played was the relief that they gave to women and children who would otherwise perform these roles if the donkey was not there.

He mentioned that the handling of the donkey in Tanzania did not always follow humane treatment, with some people cutting the donkeys tendons to limit their mobility. He also mentioned that donkey slaughterhouses that were established did not always treat the donkeys in humane ways and they slaughtered in very unhygienic methods and did not care to check if the donkey was pregnant. They also did not care about the environment and their practices resulted in polluting the environment. He mentioned that the donkey slaughter companies often failed to follow the conditions that were outlined for their operations, including the number of animals to slaughter. He indicated that the companies were only authorised to slaughter 20 animals a day, but often went up to 100 animals per day.

He outlined the following implications of donkey slaughter for communities including; loss of income to households, increased school drop-outs, poor health of vulnerable groups (women and children); theft and smuggling of donkeys, which affected human relations within communities.

He also outlined challenges the donkey faced, especially in the inhumane treatment from their owners and managers. He highlighted other effects of donkey trade on smuggling of animals across borders and the risk of this on the spread of diseases across borders.

He concluded by saying that the slaughter of donkeys has a negative impact for communities and that African communities were most affected by the donkey skin trade.

Experiences in the journey to effect Ban on Donkey slaughter for Skin trade in Tanzania

Prof Hezron Nonga, Chief veterinary Officer, Tanzania, reported that in 2018, the Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency recorded a huge drop in donkey numbers from 1.5 million in 2016 to 595,000 in 2018.



Prof Hezron Nonga, Chief veterinary Officer, Tanzania

He highlighted that in Tanzania the donkey trade and slaughter began in 2014 with the establishment of two Chinese owned companies. This led to the prices of donkeys increasing from almost negligible amounts to USD 120 - 132 for adult donkeys and USD 30 - 40 per donkey skin. The slaughterhouses were permitted to slaughter 40 donkeys per day. Between 2014 to 2017 a total of 62,325 donkeys were slaughtered. The companies also used to buy raw skins from outside the facility, which promoted theft, smuggling and inhumane bush killing of donkeys. This was occurring against a backdrop where the exact number of donkeys in Tanzania was unknown and the fact that the donkeys were known to have a low reproduction rate. The over-mentioned challenges led to banning of donkey trade in Tanzania in July 2017. However, despite this ban, the number of donkeys continued to decline in Tanzania, fueled by thriving donkey trade in neighboring countries.

He further noted that that donkey continued being stolen in Tanzania as well as increased smuggling of donkeys to neighboring countries. Illegal and inhumanely slaughtered donkeys were encountered through the evidence of numerous skin dressed donkey cadavers being found in bushes indicating continuation of donkey killing regardless of the ban. This had a negative impact on the ban on donkey slaughtering because out of the ban, the Government of Tanzania did not realize any revenues, and yet the numbers of donkeys in the country continued to decline. Despite this challenge, he emphasized that the Government of Tanzania was steadfast, in its aspiration to protect the interests of its citizens. The ban on donkey slaughter and the donkey products trade was re-instated following the report from the Task force on 1st October, 2021 and continue to reinforce the ban despite the challenges faced. In his conclusion, he called for a continental ban on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins, which he said would help protect Tanzania from illegal slaughter activities even in neighboring countries, which appeared to fuel donkey theft in his country.

UNEA Resolutions 5/1, an opportunity for donkey conservation efforts in Africa

Josephat Ngunyo and Wachira Kariuki, of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare presented highlights on how the UNEA 5 Resolution 1 was an opportunity for donkey conservation efforts in Africa.



Josephat Ngunyo – Executive Director of Africa Network for Animal Welfare

The duo recalled the 3rd Africa Animal Welfare Conference [AAWC], held in 2019, where it was recognised that animal welfare issues had been left out of the global environmental agenda.

This led to the delegates agreeing on the need to develop a resolution specifically touching on animal issues. They said that the 3rd AAWC, thus became the genesis of the UNEA 5 Res.1., which called upon the United Nations to recognize the nexus between Animal Welfare, Environmental Welfare, and Sustainable Development. The Resolution requested UNEP to interrogate and produce a report on the Nexus, and also to spearhead Resource Mobilization from the Global Community to implement the Resolution.

They noted that from the issues articulated in conference, the donkey had an impact on environmental welfare, through its manure, economic empowerment of communities so that they don't become too poor and desperate to abuse the environment for basic survival, and also through the services it provides to agriculture [which in its own way has one of the most significant impacts on the environment, while at the same time being a critical pillar in Africa's pursuits for the sustainable development goals]. They articulated that poor animal welfare caused immunosuppression to donkeys, and thus increased the risk of public health crises such as the spread of zoonotic diseases. The nexus between the welfare of the donkey, the welfare of the environment and sustainable development is therefore quite evident.

The duo urged the delegates to ensure that they as they dialogue on the policy issues to address the future of the conservation and utilization of the donkey in Africa, they ensure to be conscious of the approaches articulated in the preambular clauses of the UNEA 5 Res.

Session 5: Panel Discussions

Under the moderation of Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki (AU-IBAR), the session was delivered through 3 panel discussions.

Panel 1: Panel question: Is there cause for alarm regarding the status of the donkeys in Africa?

The panellists included Prof James Wabacha (AU-IBAR), Prof Hezron Nonga (Tanzania, CVO) and Dr. Otieno Mtula (of the donkey Sanctuary)

The panellists concurred that there was cause for concern, given the fast-dwindling population, the naturally low fertility of donkeys, the lack of breeding technologies to improve reproduction, the lack of appropriate policies and other legal frameworks to support the care afforded to donkeys and their general development. The absence of legislation and other frameworks to safeguard donkeys, combined with the poverty levels of donkey owners in the face of climate change, leaves donkey owners and the donkeys themselves vulnerable. Poverty and lack of support mechanisms to enhance their awareness of the actual critical role the donkey plays in their livelihoods causes them to yield to the temptation of selling their animals to donkey dealers. In addition, there are no systematic procedures in place to meet customer demand for products created from donkey skins. African nations do not necessarily

comprehend the entire value chain of the donkey skin trade, leaving them subject to exploitation by traders.

Panel 2: Panel question: What should Africa do about the Donkey Health and Welfare in order to ensure its sustainable contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa?

The panellists were Dr. David Balikowa (EAC), Prof Lauren A Johnston (South African Institute of International Affairs), Dr Lawrence Ndingiya (CVO Zimbabwe) and Penny Ward (WHW)

The panellists agreed that Africa must immediately cease the slaughter of its donkeys for the donkey skin market. Africa must additionally invest consistently in the collecting of data to aid the design of policies and other structures that will protect its donkey populations. The continent must also find ways to rehabilitate and protect its diminishing donkey population in order to safeguard the livelihoods of its donkey-dependent communities. These initiatives need to go hand in hand with systematic awareness and sensitization creation for those in authority to appreciate the need to adequately invest in the rebuilding of the donkey populations in Africa, as well as building the capacity of the donkey owning communities to provide adequate welfare for the donkeys, in order to improve fertility, reduce stress-related mortalities and to perform their livelihood and socio-economic support duties.

Panel 3: Panel question: What key Interventions can governments in Africa take to safeguard the socio-economic and livelihoods contribution of the donkey in Africa?

The panellists included Dr. Mwenda Mbaka (AU-IBAR); Edith Kabisiime (WAP) and Kally Fadiga, CVO Cote d'Ivoire

The panellists agreed that AU Member States need to promptly put an end to the unsustainable industry of donkey skin trade. They said that this was necessary in order to protect national economies household incomes of donkey-dependent communities, growth of the agricultural sector, especially in the arid and semi-arid rangelands where the bulk of the continent's livestock reside, to climate change resilience of the donkey-dependent communities, especially as water stress worsens, the women and empowerment achievements which have been made through building their capacity to engage in gainful agriculture which is significantly anchored on the services from the donkeys, the growth of the livestock sector, especially among the small scale producers who are the majority in Africa, and the gains made in enhancing social security through conflict resolution mechanisms which are anchored on sustainable rural economies where conflicts over scarce resources abound. Additionally, AU member states need to invest in the development of technologies or strategies that will assist in restocking the donkey population to levels commensurate with the needs of donkey-reliant communities. To achieve this objective in a sustainable manner, AU member states need to develop or revise their policies, strategies, and laws to ensure robust mechanisms for the protection of the donkey and donkey-dependent communities, as well as make provisions for their implementation. The governments are urged to set up the framework for collective Pan-African approaches over donkey issues, so that the actions or inactions of one government do not compromise the goals of another nation. A Pan-African approach during the recovery period will be

crucial to the rebuilding of donkey populations, in view of the need to prevent transboundary equine diseases and the extreme depletion of donkey stocks in some regions, and therefore an accessibility to the areas where the donkeys are available will be important. The panellists also observed that there is an urgent need to conduct donkey specific research to elicit the opportunities that may exist, and also for an early detection of challenges for timely interventions.

Session 6: High level panel Discussions

This session was moderated by Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki (AU-IBAR) and Emanuel Sarr (Brooke West Africa).



The high-level panel discussion was held at Serena Dar-es- Salaam and graced by Dr. Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production, Chad, Honourable Dr. Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production – Senegal, Representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Resources, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire – Honourable Gouromen Kouakou Assoumany, Representative of Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Resources, Republic of Burkina Faso – Honourable Wendne Victor Bonogo, Honourable Hamisi Abdallah Ulega, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, United Democratic Republic of Tanzania, The COMESA Regional Economic Community representative – Dr. Yoseph Shiferaw Mamo.

The Deputy Minister welcomed participants to the venue and reiterated that Tanzania remains steadfast in ensuring that donkey skin trade is completely extinguished in Tanzania. The other Panelists supported the commitment with the Minister of Livestock and Animal Production – Senegal, Dr. Aley Saleh Diop and Dr. Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production, Chad undertaking their own commitment to support the stoppage of the donkey skin trade, when it was advanced to the Committee of Ministers responsible for the Animal Resources.

The Moderator posed to the panel the first question "What would you recommend to the African Union Commission [AUC] to be Africa's position on the commercial exploitation of donkeys for Traditional Medicinal Use?"

Honourable Hamisi Adballah Ulega – Deputy Director for livestock and fisheries began emphasizing the need for increased scientific research to enable the presentation of evidence to governments and policy makers. He highlighted that the outcomes of scientific research will guide the governments and policy makers to formulate robust donkey-skin trade related policies and regulations, as well as enforce stringent legal deterrent actions against perpetrators. He said that was the only way to stop the illegal donkey skin trade that has resulted in the wanton slaughter of donkeys. He raised the concern that unless these actions are put in place, the posterity may not get to experience the value of the heritage the donkey is to Africa.

Honourable Dr. Aly Saleh Diop, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production – Senegal, reiterated that the donkey was of great importance in Senegal, where it played an important role in providing transport, draught power and income for the donkey- dependent communities. He highlighted that Senegal had banned donkey Skin trade in 2017 and encouraged the AU Member States to draft the “Dar-es-Salaam Declaration” which will be presented to His Excellency President Macky Sall – Senegal and AU President for endorsement at the AU summit in February 2023.

Dr. Abderahim Awat Atteib, Minister of Livestock and Animal Production, Chad further supported the pronouncement made by his peer, Dr. Diop, Minister of Senegal and reiterated the commitment of Chad to ensure that the Declaration is endorsed by the President of Chad.

Honourable Gouromen Kouakou Assoumany, Representative of Minister of Agriculture, Animal and Fishery Resources, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire highlighted there had been a significant decline in donkey population sizes in his country, with reported illegal movement of donkeys from Mali, through Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana where they were shipped off to China. He also supported the call to action to ban donkey skin trade through coordinated action. Dr. Joseph Mamo – COMESA and Honourable Wendne Victor Bonogo of Burkina Faso, concurred with the sentiments expressed by the rest of the Panelists.

The ministers and other speakers reaffirmed the pledges made at the opening ceremony. They reiterated a call for the construction of farmer field schools where donkey owners can be educated on the special values of donkeys in order to place greater focus on their protection and other aspects of their welfare. Regarding donkey skin trade, alternative uses, and conservation measures, they stated that a 15-year- moratorium on donkey slaughter was important to implement promptly, so that the proposed conservation and donkey development measures can be actualized. They urged the AU-IBAR and its stakeholders to formulate the Declaration as agreed, for transmission to the AUC for endorsement by the Committee of Heads of States.

Conference Conclusions

The following conclusions could be made:

Donkey production

- a. The donkey is a foundation to food production, food security and agribusiness to a widespread community of small-scale agricultural producers around Africa. Small scale producers cater for about 80% of food for Africa, and by extension the drivers a significant component of agribusiness in the continent. The donkey's contribution to these food value chains from production to distribution needs to be recognized and an investment in studies to profile this contribution supported.
- b. The low reproduction rates of donkeys means that continuous slaughter of the animals has an incremental negative impact on the overall population numbers of the donkey, as extraction exceeds replacement, and this is therefore driving the donkey population towards depletion.
- c. The inability of donkeys to reproduce fast enough, compared to the demand for it skin, as well as the lack of breeding and reproduction programs for donkeys, means that the high demand for the animals cannot be met.
- d. There needs to be concerted efforts to develop a structured donkey value chain to harness the full donkey potential.
- e. There is no viable alternative to replace the role of the donkey, given that majority of the users of the donkeys lack the capital to purchase and invest in the maintenance expenses of alternative technologies. In any case, other types of available technologies cannot be used over some of the terrains where the donkeys are used.
- f. Although empirical evidence is compelling that the exploitation of the donkey for the skin trade is not sustainable, there is need to generate evidence data through conventional methods to enhance decision making based on compelling evidence-based about the donkey's contribution to socio-economic, socio-cultural, environmental, gender & women empowerment, climate change resilience, country GDPs and other aspects where the role of the donkey often passes unrecognized.

Donkey skin trade

- a. Donkeys are not farmed and hence the introduction of commercial slaughter of donkeys for their skins in such a setting threatens their existence.
- b. This in turn leads to financial losses because of the financial and non-financial contribution they make on communities who depend on them for their survival.
- c. Donkey skin trade could generate income. However, this would have negative impacts on households, communities and the country.
- d. There is need therefore need for African Member States to seriously consider whether there is value in maintaining donkey trade or whether a more serious approach should be taken, including banning the trade altogether.
- e. Given the cross border and international nature of the trade in donkey skins there is need for a regional approach to be undertaken to address the donkey trade.

The threat to the survival of the Donkey

- a. The donkey numbers are seriously threatened by illegal trade, because illegal trade is uncontrolled and therefore there is no conscious decision making on when to reduce the rate of slaughter based on the statistics from the regulatory authorities. This necessitates discussion on regional approaches to curb illegal cross border smuggling of donkeys, given that the transfer of commodities out of their country of origin where the culprits illegally obtain them, is a strong incentive to sustain the illegal acquisition and trade in the merchandise.
- b. The returns from the slaughter of the donkey is not commensurate to the benefits of the animal when it is alive.
- c. AU MS need to come up with common regional and continental common positions on the exploitation of the donkey, which anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of donkey skin trade on the preservation of the species.

The status of the donkey as a livestock resource

- a. The lack of government policies or programs dedicated to address the high demand for the donkey by investors, and the lack of a clear sustainability model by the investors, skews the balance against the donkeys towards reduction and their eventual extinction.
- b. The conservation, management and development of the donkey needs to be included in the Animal resources policies, strategies and legislations of AU member states.
- c. There is a great need for research to be undertaken to bring the actual scientific evidence on the plausible approaches, if any, for donkey breeding and management to an efficient level to cope with the needs of the global donkey-dependent communities.
- d. There is need for the establishment and or creation of dedicated services that focus on equine development in AU MSs.
- e. The balance sheet for the benefits of the donkey, compared to its value when alive and when used for skin trade is heavily skewed against the donkey skin trade in Africa

Donkey welfare

- a. Generally, there is poor welfare of the donkeys during transportation and slaughter, and reports indicate that there is poor control / enforcement of sanitary measures. There is no application of animal welfare or sanitary standards during illegal movement and slaughter, and thus this causes grievous suffering to the animals, as it is also a serious threat to disease spread
- b. Where available, there is need for enforcement of controlled and humane slaughter of donkey for human consumption as provided for in available laws and legislation in the East African countries.

Conference Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

1. 1. Member states to;
 - a. Institutionalize actions towards the banning of the donkey skin trade across Africa.
 - b. Develop and provide resources for, including to ensure the inclusion of working animals; especially donkey and other equine welfare and health in the curriculum of animal health and other relevant animal science professionals.

- c. Build a data base on donkeys and other equids' productivity, health care and trade in Africa to inform policy makers for decision making and planning
2. Member states with the support of RECs, AU-IBAR international organization, technical and development partners and, animal welfare organization to;
 - a. Develop/review, and continuously monitor the implementation of policies, strategies and programs for the development of donkey and other equines within the animal resources sector in Africa.
 - b. Promote donkey/equine breeding and conservation programs to support the livelihoods of communities
 - c. Enhance partnerships, investments, collaboration and coordination for development and utilization of the Donkey resources
 - d. Enhance community awareness on the dwindling numbers of donkeys and the actions the communities need to undertake in conserving, utilizing the sustainable development of the donkey
 - e. Support capacity building for extension services to donkey owners' and organizations at all levels
3. AU-IBAR and partners to coordinate the studies on socio-economic study on donkeys and equids contribution to livelihoods, national GDP, poverty alleviation and economic growth
4. AU-IBAR and partners to tap into the warm Africa-China Trade and Technology-Transfer Relations to champion for the protection of Africa's donkey populations



African Union Commission Session in Progress - Consultative formulation of a Common Position on issues affecting the wellbeing of the African Union Community, which is operationalized through continental policies and strategies that are domesticated for implementation at the Member State level; taking into consideration the unique situation of a country.

Conference Resolution

The conference:

TAKES NOTE of the need for increased awareness creation and to generate more compelling evidence-based narratives on the socio-economic importance and contribution of donkeys to the GDP and poverty alleviation in Member States

URGES the African Union, through the AUC Specialized Technical Offices, to support the development of policies, strategies and programs on the exploitation of the donkey, at the national and regional levels, for increased production of donkeys and for their enhanced productivity

URGES the adoption of African common position on the exploitation of the donkey to anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of the donkey skin trade so as to ensure the preservation of the species with the ultimate goal of improving food and nutrition security, safeguarding the livelihoods of the donkey dependent communities, and to ensure its contribution to sustainable economic growth

ENDORSES the “Dar-Es-Salam Declaration on Donkeys in Africa now and in the Future”

URGES MSs to, based on the available evidence of the alarming decline of the numbers of donkeys in the continent, put a ban at least for the next 15 years on donkey skin trade on the slaughter of donkeys for export

URGES the African Union Member States to establish regulatory systems and to ensure their enforcement, with regard to the commercial exploitation of the donkey for its skin

REQUESTS the AUC, through AU-IBAR, to formulate and to bring forward to the next STC meeting in 2023, the 2022 PADCo resolution on the exploitation of the donkey in Africa for its skin, for inclusion in the continental (AU) and global development agenda (UN).

REQUESTS the AU Commission, RECs and MSs with the support WOAHA, FAO and animal welfare organizations and other key relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a continentally coordinated program to enhance the conservation, development and management of the donkey and other equid resources in Africa.

Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on donkeys in Africa Now and in the Future

We, the Ministers in Charge of Livestock and Animal Production from Chad, Senegal and Tanzania and Representatives from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, CVOs present, RECs present, CSOs present, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations present, during the Pan African Donkey Conference convened by the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources and held in Dares-Salaam, Tanzania from 1-2 December 2022.

RECOGNIZING the socio-economic contribution of the donkey to livelihoods in Africa

DEEPLY concerned about the unsustainable development and utilization of the donkey in Africa

CONCERNED about the paucity of data to inform evidence-based policies, strategies, legislation and programs on the development and utilization of the donkey as a species

ALARMED at the inadequate inclusion of donkeys and other equids in the national animal resources development policies, strategies, programs, and investment plans

Further **ALARMED** by the rapid decline in donkey population in Africa, caused by the demand for their skins for the production of Traditional Chinese Medicine

REQUEST the AUC, through AU-IBAR, to bring the resolution on the development of donkeys and other equids, for inclusion in the continental and global development agenda to the next STC meeting in 2023

URGE the AU-MS to invest in increasing awareness and the generation of compelling evidence about the socio-economic importance and contribution of donkeys to the GDP of AU Member States

URGE the African Union Member States, with support from the AU-IBAR, to develop policies, strategies, programs and legislations on donkey exploitation at national and regional levels for increased production and productivity

URGE the AUC to propose to the AU Committee of Heads of State to endorse the proposal of putting an immediate ban on donkey slaughter in Africa for their skins for a minimum of 15 years.

REQUEST The AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs, and the AU Member States with support from the FAO, WOAHA, Animal Welfare Organizations, Development Agencies, and other stakeholders, to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a coordinated program on the development of the donkey and equids resource



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The donkey is often an invisible helper, and an invisible helper - and thus often misses in the animal resources development policies and strategies, with its welfare tragically neglected