



AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES



COMMUNIQUE

PAN AFRICAN DONKEY CONFERENCE

Theme: Donkeys in Africa Now and in the Future

1st and 2nd December 2022

Kisenga LAPF International Conference Centre, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



Introduction

1. The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in partnership with Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Regional Economic Communities - IGAD, ECOWAS, EAC, SADC and Animal welfare Organizations convened the Pan-African Donkey Conference from 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 meeting was attended by about 132 individuals physically and >70 digitally from various African nations, including ministers and ministerial representatives from Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Regional Economic Communities consisting of EAC, IGAD/ICPALD, ECOWAS, and COMESA, as well as international agencies such as FAO and WOA, Parliamentary members from Nigeria and Sudan, and Chief Veterinary Officers.

2. In addition, representatives of donkey owners/users and recorded voices of donkey users/owners from across Africa were present, as were donkey and equine specialists from outside Africa. Animal welfare organisations present included Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, which served as the conference's secretariat, The Donkey Sanctuary, World Horse Welfare, Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANNA), Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW), and World Animal Protection (WAP), as well as research organisations Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KARLO) and Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI). Academics, researchers, the head of the Anglican Church of Kenya, the head of the Muslim community in Dar es Salaam, and other stakeholders in animal protection and animal welfare were also present. Additionally, media and artists participated in this continental conference.
3. The goal of the conference was to create a forum for stakeholders, led by governments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of African Union member states, to discuss the role of donkeys in Africa. This would increase understanding of the state of donkey exploitation in Africa, so strengthening a unified policy stance. This shared viewpoint would produce promises to conserve the animal, which is threatened with extinction due to its overexploitation in the skin trade, and pave the way for the creation of a policy position and practise to increase the visibility of donkeys in sustainable development.
4. The specific objectives of the conference were:
 - Facilitating the African Union Member States (AU MS) to appreciate the socio-economic value of donkeys as key animal resource for African communities
 - Enabling AU MS to discuss the role and contribution of donkeys to development aspects including agriculture and climate change
 - Facilitating AU MS to review administrative and legislative options for the development of Donkey species in support to poverty alleviation
 - Enabling AU MS to understand the Donkey Skin Trade; the implications of the donkey skin trade for donkey welfare and the welfare of donkey dependent communities.
 - Exposing the AU MS to innovations and best practices for improving donkey welfare and numbers to support Africa's development
5. The expected outcomes:
 - Research on the status of the donkeys in Africa, and their contribution to the wellbeing of society disseminated

- Best practices in support of donkey welfare in policy development, policy implementation and monitoring of donkey welfare for posterity in Africa shared
- Awareness on the over-exploitation of donkeys for the skin trade as a threat to the existence of donkeys in Africa's development created
- A resolution to put in place policies, strategies and legal instruments on the trade of donkeys and their products including the skin trade proposed
- Consensus amongst African policymakers and stakeholders on the future of the export of donkey skins or their products built
- Networking and partnerships for donkey species exploitation in Africa improved

Opening Ceremony

6. The opening ceremony was chaired by the Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Hon. Mashimba Mashauri Ndaki (MP), representing Hon. Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa, the Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania who was the guest of honor.

The session was marked by several remarks and speeches from the Ag. Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa; the Deputy Minister for of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania, Hon Abdalla Hamisi Ulega (MP); the Permanent Secretary of Livestock Fisheries, Tanzania, Hon. Tixon Nzunda, the Minister of Livestock and Animal Production of Chad Hon Dr Abderahim Awat Atteib; the Minister of Livestock and Animal Production of Senegal Hon. Aly Saleh Diop, a representative of the Minister of Animal Resources and Fisheries on Burkina Faso, Hon. Wendne Victor Bonogo; the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Animal Resources and Fisheries of Cote d'Ivoire Hon. Gouromenan Kouakou Assoumany, Representative of WOAAH [Dr. Samuel Wakhusama], Representative of the UN-FAO [Ms Nyabenyi Tito Tipo, Clergy from the Anglican Church Most Rev. Dr Jackson Ole Sapit and the Moslem Faith, Sheikh Al-Haji Al-Hadi Musa Salum.

7. Speaking on behalf of the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural and Blue Economy and Sustainable Development, Dr. Nick Nwankpa; Acting Director, AU-IBAR, thanked the Government of URT for having accepted to host the Pan-African Conference and welcomed the participants. He recalled the importance and the socio-economic role of donkeys in community livelihoods and the fight against hunger and poverty, especially in rural communities. He noted that mass slaughter for trade in donkey skins was a serious threat to their sustainable existence, if not addressed, noting that an Africa regional approach will be critical to address the issue. He also called for the preservation of this species and its inclusion in animal resource development policies, strategies, programs and projects.
8. Statements from the Minister Livestock and Fisheries Tanzania, Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire lauded the choice of Tanzania for the debut PADCo, and the support of AU-IBAR and the Civil Society Organizations in the development of the Animal Resources Sector. They acknowledged the significant yet barely recognized role the donkeys play in African communities' socio-economic wellbeing and noted with concern the threat of the donkey skin trade, the animal's population and to the livelihoods of donkey-dependent communities in Africa, for which it has been banned in several countries. They reiterated their commitment to support the Conference Declaration regarding the donkey skin trade and urged the AU-IBAR to present the conference Declaration to the African Union Member States for endorsement

9. In their speeches, the religious leaders [Christian and Muslim religions] mentioned the numerous references to the donkey in the Holy Scriptures, the value of donkeys to humanity, and religious teachings on animal care. The need to safeguard donkeys from the dangers associated with the commerce in their skin was renewed.
10. Statements were also issued by intergovernmental organizations including WOAHA who pointed to the need for continued collaboration in addressing and adherence to welfare standards and also pointed out the threats of transmissible diseases from the illegal and uncontrolled cross-border donkey skin trade. The FAO reiterated the contribution of the donkey to both crop and livestock agriculture in Africa, and hence the need to preserve the species
11. RECS, including IGAD/ICPALD, EAC, COMESA and ECOWAS, highlighted the contribution of the donkey, particularly in pastoral regions, noting that donkeys have aided communities in the region to be resilient in the face of climate change. They stressed the need of protecting the species.

Summary of Ministers' Statements

12. In their remarks, the ministers acknowledged that their governments were initially persuaded that the donkey skin trade was beneficial to their country and its citizens through well-articulated project proposals and business plans that promised to transform the socioeconomic benefits of the country's citizens. However, conflicting evidence surfaced from actual donkey slaughter for the skin trade. The recognition of the misrepresentation of business proposals and realities by traders and proponents of the donkey skin trade has led to bans and other limitations on the slaughter of donkeys for the skin trade in several African nations.
13. Countries that had outlawed donkey slaughter reported that the rising danger to the livelihoods of impacted communities prompted them to restrict donkey slaughter for skin commerce. They bemoaned that the ongoing slaughter of donkeys in several African countries exposed their communities to donkey theft and exportation to countries where donkeys are being slaughtered. They stressed the necessity for other nations to agree to adopt a continental ban in order to safeguard donkeys across the continent. They urged the conference to present new evidence to persuade the African Union Heads of State Summit to adopt a unified position on the exploitation of the donkey in Africa.

Statement from the Owners of Donkeys: The donkey owners gave impassioned descriptions of the horrible pain they had undergone at the hands of donkey thieves and negligent family members involved in the sale of their donkeys. The Tanzanians praised their government for its intervention and protection against donkey skin trading and urged the conference's political leadership to advocate for a ban on the practice. They promoted the Kiswahili chant "Masiha yangu, punda wangu" / "Punda wangu, maisha yangu," which translates literally as "My life is my donkey" / "My donkey is my life." This was supposed to indicate that they consider donkeys indispensable to their survival, i.e., that they will perish without them. In order to maintain the long-term survival of the species, they also noted that the continent's university curricula lack sufficient information on donkey conservation, exploitation, and management. The government's research revealed that the rate at which donkeys were being extracted for the donkey skin trade was disproportionately high compared to the rate of donkey multiplication through reproduction; as a result, driven by commercial interests, the donkeys were being rapidly extracted from the communities through the sales of vulnerable community members and through theft.

Workshop Proceedings

The conference consisted of two days of interactive presentations, video pieces, panel discussions, and plenary sessions.

14. Status of the Donkey in Africa:

An overview of the status of the donkey in Africa revealed the urgent need to address the various issues pertaining to the donkey, such as the lack of accurate data on donkeys, poor welfare, and over-exploitation of donkeys for the skin trade, which contribute to the declining population of the species, thereby posing a threat to the Animal Resources Sector, livelihoods, and a worsening of climate change.

Donkey owners and users from around Africa proved the socioeconomic, cultural, and intrinsic value of donkeys to their life as a friend, a family member, and for some, a co-wife. They noted that “if a donkey is taken away, they become donkeys” because they must do what the donkey will help them do. They also noted that donkeys helped them earn a living, keep their children in school, and make life bearable in low-income areas where government and infrastructure services are inadequate or non-existent.

It was acknowledged that donkeys had a naturally low rate of productivity and that they play a vital function in ensuring socioeconomic stability.

Given this context, and in light of its role as the Specialized Technical Office of the AUC for the conservation, management, and development of the Animal Resources Sector, the AU-BAR examined the fundamental issues and determined that the lack of recognition of the donkey as a resource in animal resources sector development policies, strategies, legislation, programmes, and projects contributed to the threat to their existence. It convened the PADCo as a forum for discussing the trends of donkey exploitation in Africa in order to identify gaps and agree on corrective measures.

15. Donkey Welfare and Health

Given the low reproductive rate and poor animal welfare practises in the utilisation of the donkey in Africa, it was generally acknowledged that breeding and farming donkeys to supply the skin trade is not commercially viable, and that the trade in donkey skins is gradually evolving into that of wildlife trade due to the amount of illegal trade across international borders.

In Africa, equines and donkeys in particular contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals by bolstering the livelihoods of communities that depend on them. Therefore, it is imperative that governments recognise the lifelong value of working donkeys as a livelihood asset by including them explicitly in national livestock surveys and policies. It was also acknowledged that there was widespread poor control and enforcement of sanitary measures in the value chains of donkey trade, which was a serious threat to the spread of diseases, especially during movements of the animal. Evidence had clearly shown that there was a negative balance-sheet when comparing the value of the services from a living animal, and the value of the animal once slaughtered for its skin.

16. Contribution of the donkey to livelihoods

- Donkeys are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of African communities [directly and indirectly] and contribute significantly to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and other frameworks developed and implemented in Africa.

- The session also addressed the fact that donkeys provide financial security through direct and indirect income creation. The possession of a donkey confers a greater socioeconomic and social status, and millions of women, men, boys, and girls rely on donkeys for assistance with vital chores. Without donkeys, many women will assume the role of the donkey.
- The conference also underscored the need for AU Member States to acknowledge that the donkey is essential to the transhumance lives of pastoralists; to food production, food security, and agribusiness; and to a vast array of small-scale food production systems. Given that small-scale producers provide around 80% of Africa's food and, by extension, a large contribution to agribusiness across the continent, the importance of the donkey in this sector must be emphasised by all.
- Presentations clearly demonstrated a negative balance sheet when comparing the value of the services provided by a living donkey to the value of the animal after its skin has been extracted. In general, the presentations indicated that a surviving donkey earned households and nations 15 times more than one that was sold for slaughter.

17. Threats of Donkey Skin Trade to Donkeys and the associated Livelihoods in Africa

- It was observed that many African countries had engaged in the trade legally by licensing slaughter houses but illegally through bush slaughter and shipments of skins illegally.
- It was also discovered that the legal and criminal donkey skin trade in Africa has increased significantly in recent years. However, the market is currently falling as the quantity of donkeys decreases. It was also established that legal slaughter has facilitated criminal slaughter by providing a manipulable outlet. There is evidence of a link between the Donkey Skins Trading and illegal wildlife trade, which heightens the danger of biodiversity loss and the spread of zoonotic illnesses associated with illegal wildlife trade. Similar networks are active in both the illegal wildlife trafficking and the donkey skin trade. This trend poses a threat to livelihoods and frequently results in the impoverishment of impacted communities.
- It was also highlighted that despite Tanzania's efforts to resolve these issues by prohibiting the slaughter of donkeys for their skins, their efforts were undermined by donkeys being stolen or sold to traders for slaughter outside the nation. So that the aspirations of one country are not compromised by the acts or omissions of another AU member state, a consensus resolution on the trade in donkey skins must be made at the continental level. Member States were asked to view the escalating threat posed by the donkey skin trade as a group, "leaving no one behind."
- A specialist in China-Africa Trade Relations noted that the Chinese community lacked information about the harmful effects on the lives and livelihoods of the offending African populations. Therefore, it was argued that part of the campaign for the preservation of the donkey in Africa required sensitization of the demand market in China, similar to the use of celebrities in China during campaigns against the use of elephant and rhino horns in Traditional Chinese Medicine and other cultural uses. In addition, it was emphasised that China's Belt and Road Initiative ambitions in Africa presented a chance to tap into China's political goodwill in order to not only rebuild the donkey population in Africa, but also discourage the extraction of donkeys for Traditional Chinese Medicines.

High level Panel Discussions

Three (3) panel discussion were organized involving Ministers, RECs, Animal Welfare organizations, Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs), and international institutions as follows:

High Level panel: Panelists reiterated the need for a continental approach to the threat posed by donkey skins, given that countries that had licensed slaughter from a trade perspective recognized that the

trade had severe negative effects on their citizens, donkeys, and noncompliance with laws, which led to the closure of slaughterhouses and bans. In addition, they acknowledged the negative impact of illegal trade, and as stewards, they will advocate for a ban on the slaughter of donkeys, as well as a boost in donkey research, including reproduction, public and community awareness, and animal welfare. After 15 years, when the entire issue, including the question of revenues, will be better understood, they may allow trade.

Panel 1: Concerning the question, “Is there cause for alarm regarding the status of the donkey in Africa?” The panelists concurred that there was cause for concern, given the fast-dwindling population, the low fertility of donkeys, the lack of breeding technologies, and the poor care afforded to donkeys. The absence of specialized legislation and other frameworks to safeguard donkeys, combined with the poverty levels of donkey owners in the face of climate change, leaves donkey owners vulnerable. This 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 comprehend the entire value chain of the donkey skin trade, leaving them subject to exploitation by traders.

Panel 2: Concerning the subject, “What should Africa do about Donkey Health and Welfare, in order to ensure its sustainable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa?” The panelists agreed that Africa must immediately cease the slaughter of its donkeys for the market for Traditional Chinese Medicines and related goods. 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.

Panel 3: Regarding the issue, “What key interventions can Governments in Africa take to safeguard the contribution of the donkeys to the socio-economic and livelihoods needs of donkey-dependent communities in Africa?” It was discussed that AU Member States must promptly put an end to the unsustainable industry of donkey skin trading. The donkey skin trade has detrimental effects not just on national economies but also on the household incomes of donkey-dependent communities that are vulnerable. Additionally, AU member states must 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 must develop or revise their policies, strategies, and laws pertaining to the protection of the donkey and donkey-dependent communities, as well as provisions for their implementation. The governments must set the framework for a collective Pan-African approach to donkey concerns, so that the actions or inactions of one government do not compromise the goals of another nation.

Statements from the Gala Dinner: The ministers and other speakers reaffirmed the pledges made at the opening ceremony. However, they advocated 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 offered a number of elements that they desired to see included in the Dar es-Salaam Declaration. They urged the AU-IBAR and its stakeholders to prepare the Declaration’s appropriate language for transmission to the AUC for adoption at the continental level.

Statement from Partners, during the closing Ceremony: The partners acknowledged the timeliness of AU-IBAR’s initiative to convene the PADCo, and expressed their anticipation that this would remain a

sustained platform for dialogue on the donkey and other equines. They reiterated their commitment to support the AU-IBAR in its aspirations to implement the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, towards better lives for animals and the prosperity of African society.

Conference Appendices

1. Endorsed conference recommendations [Appendix i]
2. Endorsed conference resolution [Appendix ii]
3. Endorsed 'Dar es Salaam Declaration on the Donkeys in Africa Now and in the Future' [Appendix iii]

APPENDIX 1:

Recommendations

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

APPENDIX II

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 WOA, 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.



APPENDIX III

‘Dar es Salaam Déclaration 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 called by the demand for their skins for the production of Traditional Chinese Medicine

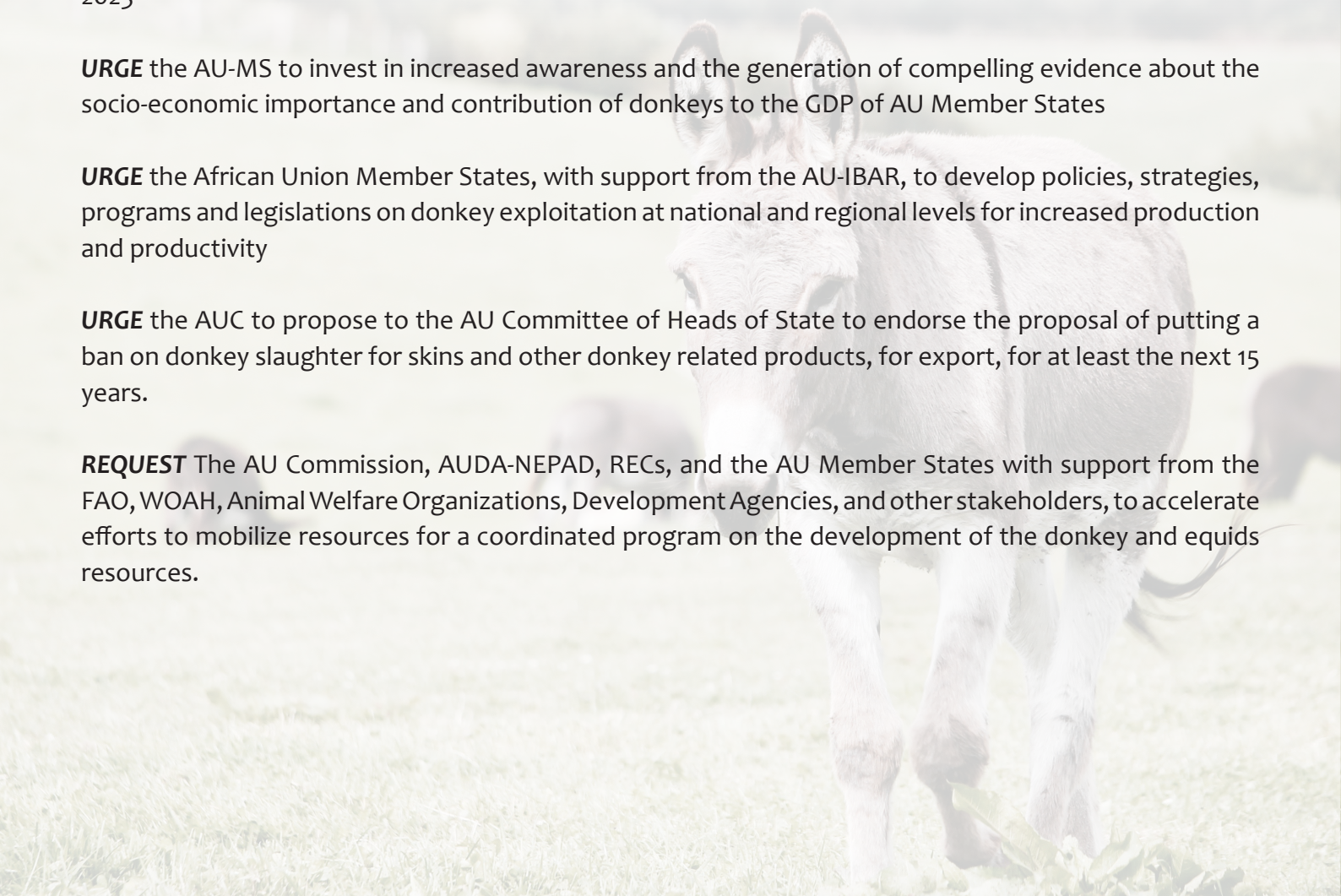
REQUEST the AUC, through AU-IBAR, to bring the resolution on donkeys and other equids’ development, for inclusion in the continental (AU) and global development agenda (UN) to the next STC meeting in 2023

URGE the AU-MS to invest in increased 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 a ban on donkey slaughter for skins and other donkey related products, for export, for at least the next 15 years.

REQUEST The AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs, and the AU Member States with support from the FAO, WOA, 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 resources.



APPENDIX IV

List of Participants

1. BURKINA FASO
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Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources
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2. CHAD
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Ministre
Ministere de l'élevage et des Productions
3. COTE D'IVOIRE
Mr Gouromenan Kouakou Assoumany
Directeur De Cabinet / Director of Staff
Ministere Des Ressources Animales Et
Halieutiques / Ministry Of Animals And Halieutics
Resources
4. Nigeria, Senator
Senator Muahmmad Bima Enagi
The Senate National Assembly
5. Parliamentarian
Hon. Garba Datti Muhammad
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House of Representative National Assembly,
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6. SENAGAL
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15. NIGERIA
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16. RWANDA
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19. SUDAN

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20. TANZANIA

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21. ZIMBABWE

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22. COMESA

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23. EAC

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24. ECOWAS

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27. Ms Nyabenyi Tito Tipo

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28. Dr Samuel Wakhusama

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29. USAID

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30. KALRO – Veterinary Research Institute

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33. World Animal Protection
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34. Anglican Church of Kenya
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Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya
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35. Arusha Society for the Protection of
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CEO
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36. Inades Formation Tanzania
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37. Inades Formation Tanzania
Mr Fadhili Geoffrey Nyingi
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41. Association of Donkey Owners in Kenya
(ADOK)
Mrs. Margrate Namoo Enole Mpatiany
Vice Chairperson ADOK,
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42. Africa Network for Animal Welfare
Mr. Josephat Ngonyo
Executive Director
, Nairobi, Kenya
43. Africa Network for Animal Welfare
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44. Brooke Ethiopia
Mr. Yohannes Kassim Fako
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45. Brooke Ethiopia
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46. Brooke Ethiopia
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47. Brooke UK
Dr. Greer Wild
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48. Brooke UK
Miss Kylie Thurley
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