



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION, TRADE AND
INVESTMENT AND AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON
AN OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY TO ASSESS THE THREAT TO DONKEYS DUE TO
RELENTLESS DEMAND FOR THEIR SKIN, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DONKEY-
DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

25th – 29TH JULY, 2022

**Clerk's Chambers
EALA Headquarters, 3rd Floor
EAC Headquarters
Arusha – TANZANIA**

November 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rt. Hon. Speaker,

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is one of the Organs of the East African Community (EAC) established under Article 9 of the Treaty. This latter bestows upon the Assembly three cardinal functions: legislation, oversight and representation under Article 49. The Assembly largely exercises the oversight function through its Committees and Members.

Article 49 (2) (d) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community provides that the Assembly shall discuss all matters pertaining to the Community and make recommendations to the Council as it may deem necessary for the implementation of the Treaty.

Rule 86(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly provides that, “***any citizen of the Partner States, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Partner State, shall have the right to address, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, a petition to the Assembly on a matter which comes within the Community’s field of activity and which affects him, her or it directly***”.

During a joint Committee meeting of Communication, Trade and Investment (CTI) and Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources (ATNR) held in the month of November, 2018, the Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO), a registered Non-Governmental Organisation and other concerned citizens of the EAC petitioned the East African Legislative Assembly to investigate the threat posed to donkeys due to the increased trade in their skin.

The above therefore informed the decision to delegate a joint committee on CTI and ATNR to undertake an oversight activity in the EAC Partner States of The Republic of Kenya and The United Republic of Tanzania to assess the threat to donkeys due to relentless demand for their skin and its impact on the donkey dependent communities in the East African Community.

2.0 BACKGROUND

During the month of November, 2018, the Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO), a registered Non-Governmental Organization and other concerned citizens of the EAC petitioned the East African Legislative Assembly to investigate the threat posed to donkeys due to the increased trade in their skin. The petition highlights grave concerns that the donkey crisis poses to the environment, animal rights, human health and the livelihoods of the donkey-dependent communities. Among others, the petitioners urged

the Assembly to urgently halt donkey skin trade, and come up with appropriate interventions to contain the threat to donkeys in the region.

The global donkey skin trade, which has developed to service demand from China for the production of a traditional remedy known as *ejiao*, is causing deep and widespread concern amongst donkey-dependent communities in East Africa. Owing to a decline in China's own domestic donkey population over the past twenty years, consumer demand for *ejiao* cannot be serviced entirely by donkeys from China's national donkey herd. This means that every year, traders are scouring the earth to source the three million skins needed just to keep up with current demand and production.

Trade in donkey skin is a thriving and lucrative business. Donkey hides are a scarce commodity but on high demand in China where they are used to manufacture Chinese traditional medicine called ***ejiao***. (*It is a gelatinous substance obtained by rendering and processing of donkey hides*). It is used in food, drinks and beauty products. The presumed clinical uses of ***ejiao*** which have made it a much sought after ingredient are; anti-aging and rejuvenating effects, enriching blood and stopping bleeding, improving blood circulation, treating conditions like anemia, improving the human immune system, and treating insomnia and dizziness.

The principal source of donkeys for the trade outside China is Africa, with donkeys from East Africa forming the greater proportion of offtake over the past three years. This offtake has been unrelenting, and has now impacted so negatively on national donkey herds in East Africa that donkeys are being described as having become "scarce" in areas where they were previously plentiful. Poaching of donkeys is rife, particularly since the decline of more readily available donkeys. In tandem, donkeys have increased in price (by 300% in Kenya over a six-month period in 2018), meaning that donkey-dependent communities affected by theft cannot afford to buy replacement.

To this effect, Chinese demand for donkey hides sharply rose in 2009 almost depleting the donkey population in China. At that time, China had the largest donkey population in the world, a position that they lost to Ethiopia whose donkey population stood at 8,542,747 donkeys according to 2018 statistics. This has resulted in the Chinese move searching for supplies in the global markets and Africa has been identified as the convenient spot.

According to the report by the Donkey Sanctuary: Under the Skin - November 2019, it was noted that, at current levels, half the world's donkey population could be lost to the trade within the next five years. Other publications also indicate that the trade in donkeys poses a substantial and increasingly recognised bio-security risk. Donkeys are being illegally transported across national borders to both licenced and unlicensed slaughter houses. When transported by foot they are known to spread diseases to local herds along the way. Besides, donkey diseases also pose a danger to human health.

It has also been reported that the donkey slaughter industry is struggling to deal effectively with the substantial amount of waste material generated from the trade, with offal, bones and carcasses being disposed of inappropriately and often in contravention of environmental regulations. This has adversely affected neighbouring communities and farmers, with local water supplies being compromised and waste sites attracting carrion birds, feral dogs and rats.

According to animal welfare activists, the trade continues to demonstrate substantial animal welfare concerns at every stage, from source to slaughter. Sourcing of animals is indiscriminate, with sick, injured animals all entering the trade chain, as well as pregnant mares and mares with foals at hoof. Transportation is lengthy, often with animal enduring journeys by truck over several days without food or water, and then being held for days before slaughter. Systemic ineffective stunning has also been witnessed.

In the exercise of the Assembly's representation and oversight mandate, the joint Committee with support from the Donkey Sanctuary, undertook visits to specific donkey-dependent communities in Kenya and Tanzania including donkey abattoirs, donkey rearing communities, government officials and civil society organizations/animal protection societies to assess the threat to donkeys due to relentless demand for their skin and the impact of the said threat on the donkey dependent communities within the East African Community from **1st – 4th May, 2021**. The Committee prepared a report, tabled before the Assembly on 25th November, 2021 during the 2nd Meeting of the 5th Session of the 4th Assembly held in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Committee found *inter alia* that donkeys are critical livelihood asset in some communities in the Region hence the need to regulate the trade in donkey skin. The Report made several recommendations to the Council of Ministers including the need to develop a common policy and law on the slaughtering and movement of livestock. Specifically, the Committee recommended that there was need to visit other sites such as Shinyanga (United Republic of Tanzania) and Turkana (Republic of Kenya), and other Partner States namely: Republics of Uganda and South Sudan in order to expand the scope of interaction with the donkey-dependent communities.

The Report generated further interest in the Committee on the need to comprehensively deal with the issues related to donkey skin trade. Due to the missing information the chair representing the joint Committee requested the Assembly to grant them time and with support from the Donkey Sanctuary from 25th to 29th July 2022 undertook a second phase of the activity to obtain a deeper understanding of the matter by:

- i) updating the information available from the Republic of Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania by broadening the scope of assessment to include Turkana in Kenya and Shinyanga in United Republic of Tanzania;

- ii) gathering information on the donkey situation and the impact of the donkey skin trade from the Republics of Uganda and South Sudan; and
- iii) establishing the viable and sustainable solutions to combat the threat to donkeys in the region.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

The overall purpose of the activity was a response to a petition to the Assembly alerting of an impending donkey crisis. This required determination of the facts on the ground before any meaningful legislation could be done. The specific objectives of this activity were:

- i) tracking the genesis and trend of this trade;
- ii) assessing the impact of donkey skin trade on the livelihoods of donkey-dependent communities, environment and animal rights;
- iii) engaging with departments responsible for EAC Affairs, Trade and Agriculture/livestock in the partner states to assess their response and the legal regime in place for the protection of the donkey species;
- iv) visiting the slaughter houses/abattoirs and listen to the views of the donkey products exporters;
- v) enlisting the views and proposals of stakeholders on the sustainable measures to regulate donkey skin trade;
- vi) updating the information available from the Republic of Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania by broadening the scope of assessment to include Turkana in Kenya and Shinyanga in United Republic of Tanzania; and
- vii) gathering information on the donkey situation and the impact of the donkey skin trade from the Republics of Uganda and South Sudan

4.0 METHODOLOGY

During the oversight activity, the Committee:

- i) undertook an on-spot visits to the slaughter houses and affected communities;
- ii) held meetings with the affected communities and enlisted their views on the subject matter;
- iii) held meetings with officials/representatives from the Ministries responsible for EAC Affairs, Trade, Agriculture/Livestock, local government authorities, and Civil Society Organizations.

5.0 FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS:

The Committee made the following findings while undertaking the oversight in the Republics of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan.

5.1 REPUBLIC OF KENYA

In 1999 the Government of Kenya gazetted donkey meat as food and in 2016, slaughter houses/abattoirs were licensed to slaughter donkeys for export. However, by 2018, four abattoirs had been licensed and a total of **8,383** donkeys were being slaughtered per month. Animal welfare groups petitioned the government to intervene in the business due to the fast depreciating numbers of the donkey population. In response, on 24th February 2020, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture got approval from the committee of Cabinet Secretaries (National Development Implementation Committee) to ban slaughter houses for export. This was informed by the need to prevent and protect the donkey population in Kenya from an alarming rate of decline and threatened extinction.

5.1.1 Interaction with Star Brilliant Abattoir: Naivasha, Kenya;

- i. The committee observed that since February 2020, the slaughter house had stopped work due to the Legal Notice 63.2020 from the government of Kenya that revoked their license despite the heavy investment in machinery at their plant. However the company had challenged the decision and were waiting for courts determination. ***(High court ruling of 5th May 2021 at Naivasha was in favor of Star Brilliant Abattoir-Ref: attached copy of the ruling Annex I)***
- ii. The committee discovered that while still in production, Star Brilliant Abattoir alone was slaughtering in excess of 50 donkeys a day. The all licensed slaughter houses annual mean rate of 5.1% of donkeys slaughtered was five times higher than the donkey population growth rate of 1.4%. The committee observed that if unchecked this would result in the extinction of the donkey specie in Kenya.
- iii. Whereas the investors of Star Brilliant abattoir contend that they never violated any law, and were aggrieved that the Ministry had not followed fair administration while revoking their license, the Committee observed that it was the only reasonable decision that government could take. The investor never owned a stock farm, never had strategies for sustainable supply, but was instead depleting the few donkeys that were kept by a largely peasant population.
- iv. The committee observed that economically, Kenya as a country was not benefiting much from the business. Donkey skin, the most prized of the donkey products was

100% exported to china raw, 95% of the Meat was frozen and exported to china. Only bone meal was consumed locally by animal feed processors. The value chain employed very few people on contract basis, there was no evidence of tax records and no evidence of social responsibility programmes within the community.

- v. The committee observed that whereas it was much harder to rear a donkey herd to maturity than cattle for example and the fact that the donkey ultimate value was higher, the price of donkeys was so low. Price range of 110 -140 per kg, with donkeys slaughtered at the facility weighing between 125 -140 Kgs meant the average price of a donkey in Kenya is 17,500 Kshs. This is so low compared to what it takes to raise a donkey. It cannot substitute the work the donkey does rural families in Kenya.
- vi. It was concluded therefore that the state of business in its current form was much more detrimental to the communities that reared donkeys than beneficial. It was skewed to the advantage of the abattoir owners.

Interaction with GOLdox International

The committee visited the GOLdox International and interacted with the manager who gave them a history of the facility and its activities. He explained to the Committee that they have not been operating since 2019. He further gave the following information:

- i) That during the pick of operation, the company was slaughtering up to 300 donkeys a day and directly employed about 400 persons. After meeting with the Directorate of Veterinary services, it was agreed they reduce slaughter to 50 donkeys per day and operated 9 months in a year. This implied that each slaughter house was expected to strictly observe 3 months chill off to allow donkeys to grow. He concurred that they are expected to invest in donkey production programmes to ensure sustainable supply of donkeys and avoid extinction of donkeys in Kenya.
- ii) The manager explained that even after the court revoked the ban on slaughter the ministry has not allowed them to re-start operations. In order to remain afloat, the company resorted to production of other products for survival such as kokoto mining, processing of gelatine from bone and skin of other animals such as camel, among others.
- iii) The manager took the team around the facility to appreciate the investment. He showed them the now defunct slaughterhouse, meat and meal bone processing plant and the gelatine processing plant. He explained that they had recently started producing gelatine from camel skins but the venture was not sustainable.
- iv) The Committee visited the donkey farm which had about 600 donkeys but the donkeys were out grazing but only a few young donkeys were in the stalls. The

manager explained that they were having problems maintaining the farm since they were not utilizing the donkeys and this frustrations resulted into the completely closure of the Machakos plant.

5.1.2 Interaction with Representatives of Donkey rearing Communities;

The committee held a meeting with representatives of farmers and donkey rearing communities from the counties of Nakuru and Baringo. The Committee witnessed a community outcry over the ravages of trade in donkey skin. The population in the area appealed to the Assembly to help them in their fight to save their herd. The Committee made the following observations:-

- i. Donkeys play a key role in livelihoods of communities. Farming, the main economic activity of these communities has the donkey play a significant part of the process. Donkeys pull the ploughs used in farming, transport water for domestic use, carry firewood, and finally transport farm produce to markets or to the graded roads for onward delivery to buyers. To them, a donkey is a working animal not food;
- ii. The Committee found out that because of the high demand from the abattoirs, donkey theft had become rampant with some families seeing all their stock wiped out;
- iii. To replenish the insatiable demand from the abattoir, illegal crossing of donkeys from the United Republic of Tanzania was on rise. Some of the animals brought in were stolen as confirmed by the border communities. But even those genuinely bought were smuggled coastwise through ungazetted routes. The committee observed that there was a looming danger addition of spread of animal diseases due to the unregulated border crossing of animals;
- iv. The Committee took note of the appeal from the donkey farmers that the trade should be stopped. Fencing had only provided temporary relief to them but donkey thefts were still on a high rate and illegal slaughtering was still taking place.

5.1.3 Interaction with Civil Society Organizations

The Committee interacted with Civil Society Organizations under the ADWOK umbrella, (Alliance for Donkey Welfare Organizations in Kenya) and BROOKE (Action for Working Horses and Donkeys). ADWOK presented a memorandum to the committee in respect of the relentless demand for donkey skin that had caused a negative impact on donkey dependent communities in the East African Region. ***(Memorandum Attached – annex II)***. The Committee made the following observations:-

- i. The Committee noted the concern of the Civil Society Organizations in their agitation for policy framework for the welfare of donkeys and donkey dependent communities. Failure of a protection policy rendered the lives of women and adolescent girls who did the chores of rural family work to bear the blunt of donkey extinction;
- ii. The Committee observed that there was little or no consultation between government and the donkey keeping communities before a law allowing the gazetting of donkey meat as food and later licensing export abattoirs.
- iii. The Committee noted the concern of Animal Welfare Organizations petition urging the Legislative Assembly to task the government to halt the slaughter and export of donkeys sighting the adverse effects the trade has had on the donkey dependent communities, the barbaric manner in which the animals were being handled and the fact that the rate of slaughtering would deplete donkey stocks in Kenya by the year 2023.

5.1.4 Presentation from the Government Representative

In the presentation from the Director of Livestock under the Ministry of Agriculture, allayed fears of near extinction of the donkey specie in Kenya. The population of Donkeys was 1.8 million in 2009 and by 2019 despite the slaughtering for export that was taking place, the total herd had grown to 1.9 million. This was an unexplained trend considering the fact that the gestation period of a donkey is between 12 – 14 months and there had been no deliberate breeding process. The most reasonable explanation was that donkeys could have been brought in from neighboring countries. However the Committee made the following observations:-

- i. The Committee observed that though the Republic of Kenya had gazetted the donkey meat as food and licensed companies to slaughter it for export, there was no deliberate policy from the government for its protection. It was not included in the countries livestock policy and interventions like animal vaccination were not extended to donkey herds;
- ii. The Committee was informed that the government had realized the importance of the donkey and a conversation about the donkey welfare had started. A donkey production manual of 2019 had been developed and conversation on sustainable rearing was beginning to take shape;

- iii. The Committee took note that the policy paper authorized by the department of livestock had resulted in the ban of slaughter houses. The government however allayed fears that precedents were not in favor of the government in court.
- iv. The Committee was informed that the Government of Kenya had allowed slaughter of donkeys in the Turkana region who were to adhere to Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures in handling the animals for consumption but unfortunately this attracted investors who have taken this opportunity to a higher level and after erecting four slaughter houses in the Country started exporting donkey meat and skin to china. The slaughter houses were established in four Counties namely; Nakuru, Baringo, Turkana and Machakos. After realizing the danger the slaughter houses were causing to the donkey populations, the Government of Kenya suspended the licenses of the slaughter house operations. Several meetings have been held to streamline the operations before lifting the ban, including:
 - a) The slaughter houses are required to run a breeding farm of donkeys where breeding programmes will be observed to ensure sustainable operations;
 - b) They are expected to have farmer outreach programmes to carry out and ensure animal health services are taken care of to ensure sustainable production;
 - c) They slaughter houses are expected to enter contract farming with specifically identified farmers for supply of legal donkeys to curb theft from other farmers and;
 - d) To authenticate the source of the donkeys slaughtered each animal delivered to the slaughter house is expected to be accompanied by a certificate from the local chief where it's coming from, among others.
- v. It was also observed that to-date none of the slaughter houses has been able to meet these conditions and therefore, the court ruling on the matter, the government has not assigned the inspectors to the slaughter houses. This poses a strain to the investor and the entire establishment for the slaughter houses looks like wasted efforts.

The Risks to donkeys in Kenya arose as a result of the following:

- i) The demand for donkey products on the China market has been increasing at an alarming rate.
- ii) The number of donkeys slaughtered currently exceeds the birth rate posing a danger of extinction of the donkeys in Kenya. It was learnt that it takes a

- donkey 3-4 years to give birth or reproduce and usually have a gestation period of 11-14 months. The number of animals slaughtered at each abattoir has been 300-500.
- iii) Smuggling of donkeys across borders in the EAC Partner states. The EAC Regional level interactions are not regulated and therefore traders have been witnessed to be trading donkeys across Partner states without proper documents and procedures to show the sources and destinations of the animals across the region. This can escalate malpractices to harm the donkeys' survival and existence.
 - iv) Increasing incidents of donkey theft from farmers. There has been reports and allegations by the animal welfare activists that farmers are increasingly losing their donkeys. This has not been the case 5 years ago. This has been tied to the authorization of donkey slaughter through a gazette notice in 1994 and the opening up donkey products marketing with china.
 - v) Donkeys purchased from the farmers don't reflect the true international value of the animal whose products are traded internationally. and
 - vi) Reduction in the number of slaughtered animals from 300 to 50 per day.

5.2 UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

5.2.1 Presentation from Veterinary Services Tanzania

Dr. Stanford Ndibalema, the Director of Veterinary Services Tanzania, informed the Committee on the situation of donkey in Tanzania whereby he said that donkey keeping in Tanzania has been there for long time and most areas where these animals are found is Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Dodoma, Singida, Morogoro, Tanga, Zanzibar and Pemba. In this area's most donkeys are reared by the societies (household) with low income. The donkeys' production in Tanzania is only for traditional purposes therefore the grazing is done natural and there is no diseases control programme and treatment which results to the low increase of the number of donkeys.

He further said that the production capacity of donkeys is very slow because of the local breeding and there is no studies which has been done on how to do the breeding in a modern way. Another reason why the population of donkeys is low is that the health of donkeys are not taken care of and also since this business started the rate of donkeys has gone down and to a large extent they are stolen as well from the donkey –breeding communities and sold at very low prices to Chinese organizations. The gestation period is more than 11 month at times, which is another reason for low population.

5.2.2 Donkey Slaughter Trade

In Tanzania this trade started in 2014 by two Chinese companies, named **Huacheng International** in Dodoma and **Fang Hua Investment Ltd** in Shinyanga. Before the trade started the price of donkeys' raised from Tsh.150, 000 – 200,000 (70 -90 USD), since October 2020, and Tsh 1800 per Kg live weight (adult: 130-200Kg) Raw Donkey skin. The price, which they buy from the community ranges from Tsh 30,000-70,000 depending on the size of the skin. Since 2014 to date a total of **62,325** have been slaughtered by the Chinese companies in Shinyanga and Dodoma however the government ban to this trade resulted to the closure of the Huacheng International in June 2019.

Table 1: Number of Donkeys Slaughtered from 2014 to 2021

Period/financial year	Number Slaughtered
2014-2017	20455
2017-2018	19427
2018-2019	9933
2019-2020	10980
2020-2021	1530
Total	62325

Source: information from Huacheng International and Fang Hua Investment Ltd

5.2.3 Ban on Donkey Slaughter

Tanzania banned the donkeys slaughter in 2017 due to the following challenges:

- i. The donkey population was dropping at an alarming rate leading to its extinct in Tanzania;
- ii. The donkey slaughterhouse were going against animal welfare, humane slaughter and poor abattoir hygiene;
- iii. Unknown rate of breeding of donkeys which led to fears their disappearance.
However the ban of donkey slaughter led to rampant smuggling due to existence of donkey slaughter houses in the neighboring countries as well illegal and non-humane slaughtering for skin removal.

5.2.4 Measures taken by the Government

The government of the united Republic of Tanzania took the following measures:

- i. The government held meetings with Chinese company owners to discuss on how to do this business by reducing the number of donkeys slaughtered in a day;
- ii. The Companies agreed to invest in donkey keeping, management and raising production by Establishing donkey keeping demonstration farms, recruiting of contact farmers, training and regular visiting;
- iii. The Companies were to submit in their donkey Production and sustainability plans to the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, and committed themselves to implement the plans/proposals as the awaited for a common solution with the neighboring countries;
- iv. In February 2018 again, the two companies (Huacheng International and Fang Hua Investment Ltd) each were allowed to slaughter not more than 30 donkeys per day; and
- v. Issuing of 6 months renewable provisional Permits.
- vi. There should be donkey focused census to help conserve the fragile

5.2.5 Current Situation of the Slaughter Houses in Dodoma and Shinyanga

- i. The Committee was informed that both facilities in Dodoma and the Fang Hua Investment in Shinyanga have been closed. Since October 2020, in particular the fang hua investment was shut down after its operating licence was revoked by the Export Processing Zones Authority after defying the licence conditions as provided by the Export Processing Zones Authority Act Cap 373 of 2012. The company therefore, is supposed to seek a new Investment Certificate from Tanzania Investment Centre in order to operate. However, the all machines and the tools used for the whole slaughtering process were in the factory and fresh meat and skin stored in the cold rooms. There were about 230 donkeys which were ready for slaughtering by the time the government closed the factory and 200 donkeys were confiscated by the government;
- ii. The implementation of Sustainable plan proposed by both companies is not satisfactory;

- iii. Most of the donkey keepers were already advised by the donkey investors to rear enough donkeys because of the high demand for donkeys and also as per the directions from the government before closing the factory, the factory management trained the community surrounding the factory by supporting them to produce more donkeys in order to make sure that there is a sustainable donkey's population;
- iv. It was also observed that, due to previous environmental concerns from National Environment Management Council (NEMC) and other neighbouring households the owner of the factory took several initiatives to overcome the problem. One of the initiatives taken was to establish another small unit to recycle the wastes from the main factory such as bones to produce animal food and extract oil from the same bones;
- v. The company had supported the donkey keepers community financial which increased the number of donkeys as per table below;

Table 2: Showing the Number of donkeys acquired per Municipality given to donkey keepers from finances provided by the Fang Hua investment Ltd

No	Municipality	donkey keepers	Number of donkeys
1	Shinyanga Municipality	9	56
2	Kishapu District Municipality	35	266
3	Shinyanga Rural District Municipality	34	236
4	Kahama Municipality	17	156
5	Ushetu District Municipality	44	355
6	Msalala District	23	206
7	Maswa District Municipality	29	117
8	Bariadi town Municipality	8	23
9	Bariadi District Municipality	13	77
10	Itilima District Municipality	9	27
11	Busega District Municipality	7	47
12	Meatu District Municipality	51	462
	Total	279	2028

Source: Information from Fang Hua Investment Co Ltd

5.2.7 Presentation from Arusha Society for the Protection of Animals

The Chief Executive Officer Mr. Livingstone Masija, from Arusha Society for the Protection of Animals, thanked the Committee for inviting him to give his presentation on donkey Sanctuary. In his presentation the following was made:

a) The effect of the trade to the community

- i. Increased burden to women and children due to the reduction of donkeys in their community;
- ii. Increased school drop outs due to lack of transport provided by donkeys as well children are forced to stay home and do the chores which could be done by the donkeys for example fetching water and carrying luggage;
- iii. Dramatic increase in donkey theft and smuggling;
- iv. Increased Poverty thus unable to maintain their livelihood;
- v. Difficult to replace donkeys since the cost of buying a donkey has increased from 50,000 Tanzanian shillings to 300,000 Tanzanian shillings;
- vi. Prone to spread of diseases due to improper disposal of skinned donkeys;
- vii. Interrupt with general animal welfare (handling, transportation, slaughtering).

b) Contribution made by the Donkeys

- i. Donkeys are pathway out of poverty and can be the difference between hardship and modest survival;
- ii. Collect water, firewood, charcoal and logs for construction;
- iii. Transport for families to attend health clinics and children to attend school;
- iv. They increase income by transporting goods to markets;
- v. Agriculture/farming.

6.0 REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

During the interaction with stakeholders the committee was informed of the following;

- i. That the demand for donkeys in China has increased to 4.8 million per year and yet the population of donkeys in Uganda is estimated to be at 8000 donkeys. These donkeys are mainly kept in North Eastern Uganda in the districts of Bukwo, kween, Kapchorwa. In these districts, these donkeys assist in fetching water, carrying heavy loads including food, market goods;

- ii. Donkeys are not listed amongst animals to be slaughtered in Uganda;
- iii. There was a donkey abattoir in Tororo district opened by a Chinese investor and due to public outcry, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) visited the abattoir and found out that it was not licensed thus closing it;
- iv. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) had just conducted a national livestock census and thus they would be requested in due course to provide the statistics regarding the population of Donkeys;
- v. MAAIF has enforcement (Agriculture Police) that will be advised to tighten surveillance on donkey trade along the border crossings;
- vi. National Environment Management Authority's mandate is conservation to ensure human and environmental benefits are realized. Therefore, there is need to move to the affected districts to stop the illegal trade in the donkeys;
- vii. The Genetic traits of the donkeys might be more beneficial than the skin hence there is need for more research to find out why China has so much demand;
- viii. Donkeys are thought to be very resistant to diseases and thus some people ignore them to recover on their own when they get infected;
- ix. Given the porous nature of borders along Uganda-Kenya border line, there is need for government of Uganda to control of Cross Border smuggling of donkeys by strengthening surveillance against donkey movement along the border line.

7.0 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

During the interaction with stakeholders the committee was informed of the following:

- i. That the geographical location of donkey dependent communities in South Sudan are found in four states that include Eastern Equatorial, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Western Bahr el Ghazal;
- ii. The communities that keep donkeys in these states are pastoralist, living in semi-Arid areas. However, other pastoralist living in other parts of the country, such as Jonglei state have started adopting donkeys as means of transport as they relocate to new areas;
- iii. There is some trade in donkey between South Sudan and Sudan, and between South Sudan and Kenya. Given the unregulated nature of trade it's very difficult to estimate the number of donkeys involved and value of trade. However to note is

that the trade involved is in the live donkey, so there is no direct trade in donkey skin;

- iv. There is no legal frame work for the protection and management of livestock, donkey inclusive;
- v. The stakeholders admitted that South Sudan has limited knowledge about the trade in donkey skin;
- vi. There are no estimates of the exact number of donkeys in South Sudan. The estimated population of donkeys and horses ranges from 500,000 to 700,000. This indicates that donkeys and horses in South Sudan are treated as one family.

7.1.1 Importance of Donkey to the donkey dependant community:

- i. The milk of donkey is used for treating hypertension, while inhaling smoke from burning donkey dung is used as treatment for whooping cough;
- ii. Dung is also used as manure in farms;
- iii. Means of Transport for example, taking goods to the market, used as an ambulance, used for drawing plough and cultivation in agriculture, moving families from one place to another, used to help reach in swampy areas and to carry water for irrigation for kitchen and gardens;

8.0 General Observations

The Committee made the following observations:

- i. The Committee observed that the existence of donkey slaughter houses across the region and the nature of the porous borders a cross the EAC region has led to increased rate of smuggling of Donkeys;
- ii. The Committee observed illegal and non-humanely slaughtering for skin removal from donkeys. Many of the donkey carcasses are found in bushes without skins indicating continuation of donkey killing regardless of the ban in the United Republic of Tanzania;
- iii. The Committee observed that there is need to engage the research institutions within the region to explore the opportunity that is hinged on the high demand for donkeys to china and be able to have breeding innovations and centres for donkeys.

- iv. There is an investment opportunity for trade in terms of foreign direct investment where there is need to acquire breeding technology to ensure that as a region we benefit from this seemingly lucrative business.
- v. There is need to work closely with Customs to develop specific codes for the products of donkeys.
- vi. As EAC we do not have a harmonized system code and thus as a region custom is having challenges handling certain trades across the borders. For example, all meat regardless of which animal it came from might be having the same code. Traders or Shippers exporting donkey skins and products can simply designate their cargo under one of the internationally recognized Harmonized system or HS codes which is the standardized numerical method of classifying traded products and these traders or shippers are under no obligation to provide any more detailed description of the consignment. The HS Codes do not include every product in details and thus this routinely exploited by exporters who provide either ambiguous descriptions or no description at all.
- vii. Trade in processed donkey skin has been flourishing in recent years in China. And so has been the demand for donkeys. Yet the breeding of donkeys cannot cope with the demand. Donkeys are said to have an average gestation period of around 12 months and they usually give birth to one foal every 3-4 years.
- viii. The Committee observed a non-coordinated approach between the government and the local communities dependent on the donkey in combating the smuggling of donkeys;
- ix. The high demand for donkeys has significantly increased their prices and this would eventually increase incidents of donkey theft;
- x. The Committee observed with concern the non-sustainability of the trade in donkey skins due to the decline in donkey population and the future of industries remain unknown. The reduction in donkey population has led to fears that donkeys will soon be rare;
- xi. The Committee observed that donkeys play a key role in the communities that depend on them for livelihood;

- x. The Committee in Uganda observed that this is a new trade and there is no statistics from customs regarding the trade in donkeys but there is need to find out who licensed the donkey slaughter house in Tororo district;
- xi. The committee observed that for the case of South Sudan there is no direct trade in donkey skin however, it noted that the trade was involved in live donkeys mostly between South Sudan and Sudan.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following to the Assembly:

- i. Urge the Council of Ministers to propose a common policy and law within the EAC region to control the slaughtering and movement of livestock;
- ii. Urge the Sectoral Council responsible for Agriculture and Food Security to include donkeys in their livestock policy;
- iii. Urge the Council of Ministers to direct the EAC Secretariat to design sensitization programmes for communities to stop the neglect and treatment of donkeys as a mere beast of burden yet it's crucial for their livelihood;
- iv. Urge the Council of Ministers to initiate at the EAC level a well-funded donkey production project with clear expectations of its outcomes, for example increased donkey population in the EAC region by a certain percentage say by 2027;
- v. Urge Council of Ministers to direct Partner States to put in place regulations or laws to govern the trade in donkeys given the complex nature of trade and the documented threat to the species. This protect the donkeys against excessive exploitation;
- vi. Urge the EAC secretariat to collaborate with other stakeholders to find sustainable solutions including increasing investments in donkey breeding programmes as a possible long-term plan to stem the decline in donkey population to sustain the supply intended for slaughter;
- vii. Urge the EAC secretariat to document and research on the insights into the donkey trade which will serve as a basis for further measures including regulations, restriction of trade, formulation or review of existing laws and ultimately come up with long-term solutions;

- viii. Urge the Council of Ministers to direct Partner States through their National Animal Genetic Resource Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC & DB) to include donkey as one of the animals they can breed for sustainability.

10.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the committee echoes that donkeys remain a critical livelihood asset in some communities in the East African Community. Millions of people in East Africa and worldwide rely on donkeys for their livelihoods and as the demand for donkey skins has increased, vulnerable communities have become victims of the international skin trade. If the current rates of donkey slaughtering continue, the impact on global donkey populations could be disastrous and lead to several millions of people losing part, or all, of their livelihoods. As the crisis facing donkeys continues, it is more important than ever that investment is made into humane and sustainable solutions, where the demand for *ejiao* is met without compromising the welfare of donkeys, the survival of communities or health of the people and environment. The Committee would like to appreciate Hon. Gai Deng and the Late Hon. Mathias Kasamba for their efforts towards securing the Grant for the activity, the Donkey Sanctuary - United Kingdom for accepting to fund the activity, office of the CTC for drafting the Grant agreement, Office of Clerk and Office of Speaker. The joint Committee therefore recommends that the report be adopted by the House.