

4 OCTOBER 2022

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR ANIMALS?

A conversation on policymaking
to protect animals



ONLINE EVENT | REPORT

EVENT ON WORLD ANIMAL DAY 2022

THIS REPORT:

On 4 October 2022, the World Federation for Animals (WFA) hosted an online conversation to explore what policymaking can do for animals worldwide. Speakers elaborated on their experience leading successful policy reforms to protect animals at the municipal, national, regional, and international levels. In this context, the event allowed policymakers and members of the animal protection movement to learn from good practices and ways to overcome structural challenges. WFA's CEO, James Yeates, moderated the event.

This is a summary of the event's key messages. A recording of the event is available at [WFA's YouTube Channel](#).

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Foreword

World Animal Day is a day in which we give visibility to all animals. We recognise their individual, intrinsic value as sentient beings and as wonders of nature. While we know helping animals benefits people and the planet too, this is a day to celebrate animals for and in themselves.

World Animal Day is also a day to celebrate the people and organisations who help animals, with compassion and ambition, at local, national and international levels. By joining together, we can help motivate, inspire and empower one another in the challenging and vital work we all do.

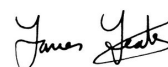
This inaugural World Animal Day event gathered inspiring voices from the global south and north. These experts have led the design or reforms of local, national, regional and international policies to make the world a better place for animals. It gave us a chance to dive into their experiences and decode how we can ensure policy making - as a vital part of the efforts to protect animals - can help us drive systemic transformation and long-lasting improvements for animals' well-being worldwide.

The conversations also provided a rare and exceptional opportunity for policymakers to connect and learn from good practices to overcome the structural challenges we all face. In this guise, it was great to hear how speakers valued the WFA and saw its value in improving collaboration and effectiveness of our sector. Of course, this value is of the WFA as a federation: of our global members working together, as well as with policymakers and other supporters on the side of the angels.

Thus the event also encouraged us. We heard from policymakers about how we can and must work together to make a big difference. Our speakers encouraged us to keep on the pressure - knowing that even conservative politicians will move under united and strong pressure from change. We were reminded that the fight to protect animals is not one of a few isolated individuals but *"a fight for survival itself, for dignity itself, that it is connected to life itself on the planet, with the dignity of human beings and with the beauty of life"*. And we were told in no uncertain terms that we need *"a real union of the different animal protection associations which can go in the general interest of animals and by moving forward together."*

As one speaker said, *"This is my wish for the year to come and for the years to come. By moving forward grouped, federated and united, things will move faster than we're moving today. Because on the political side, the scattering of many animal protection associations ultimately serves the fact of sometimes doing nothing. I really believe that this federation is absolutely important and essential."*

I took enormous inspiration from this, giving me extra drive and confidence for the next year's work. I thank the speakers, organisers and everyone who attended such an inspiring event. And let us thank each other: all the fantastic WFA members and others who help animals worldwide. Together we will make it.



James Yeates
CEO of WFA

Key messages from the speakers

- Increasing coordination and learning between policymakers across world regions that advocate for improvements in animal welfare was identified as beneficial and the World Federation for Animals well-placed to facilitate this.

The topic of live animal exports in the policy agendas of both the EU and Colombia was an example of where joint work could benefit progress. *"If we have stronger standards together that we can, for example, lay on the table of the World Trade Organization, the stronger we would be by bilaterally recognising these standards"*, said Member of the European Parliament Tilly Metz.

Specifically, speakers expressed a desire for WFA to create a space in which policymakers could connect regularly and have the chance to learn from each other's experiences to advance faster in animal welfare agendas, as well as discuss potential joint strategies.

- In the same vein, collaboration between policymakers and animal protection organisations was seen as a strategic asset to overcome strong lobby interests around the world. Examples were shared by different speakers where, despite the agri-food industry or hunting groups lobbies, their joint work with NGOs allowed them to advance reforms that benefit animals.

During the event, policymakers spoke of the instrumental role NGOs have played in helping them materialise their animal protection agendas, be it locally, nationally or internationally. During the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations, *"civil society organisations were helping governments understand what we tried to do while maintaining our ambition throughout the negotiations, and putting a lot of pressure on governments in Geneva but also in capitals to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible. It really was an outstanding work what these 190 organisations [of the "stop funding overfishing" coalition] did"* said former Chairman of the Chairman of the Negotiating Group on Rules of the WTO, Santiago Wills. MP Garba Datti also highlighted contributions by NGOs in his efforts to ban the killing and exporting of donkeys in Nigeria, for example: *"Our opposition proposed a bill that, instead of banning it, looks to regulate the donkey trade. It envisages the ranching of donkeys. However, the findings of a study commissioned with the Donkey Sanctuary showed that donkeys are slow breeders and might not be profitable to ranch. They came to Nigeria and presented their findings to the Senate to stop such a bill from becoming a law."*

- A gradual approach in policymaking was a common thread during the conversation. Most speakers identified the need to introduce reforms for animal welfare progressively in order to secure their passing, for example, understanding that *"in order to reduce animal suffering and save lives at scale, sometimes it is necessary to reach agreements with other political sectors that lead us to regulatory measures, not necessarily prohibitionist, but that allow us to move forward."* as explained by Senator of Colombia Andrea Padilla.

Andrea Padilla

Senator of Colombia and former councillor of Bogotá. Ms Padilla led key regulations to end animal cruelty and improve the lives of animals in the capital city, including a ban on live animal commercialisation in marketplaces, agreements to discourage bull- and cockfighting in Bogotá, and the recognition and inclusion of animals in the Development Plan of the Bogotá metropolitan area.

During the event, Ms Padilla elaborated on one of her successes as a councillor in Bogotá:

"Putting an end to bullfighting in Bogotá was one of the most interesting legal fights we gave."

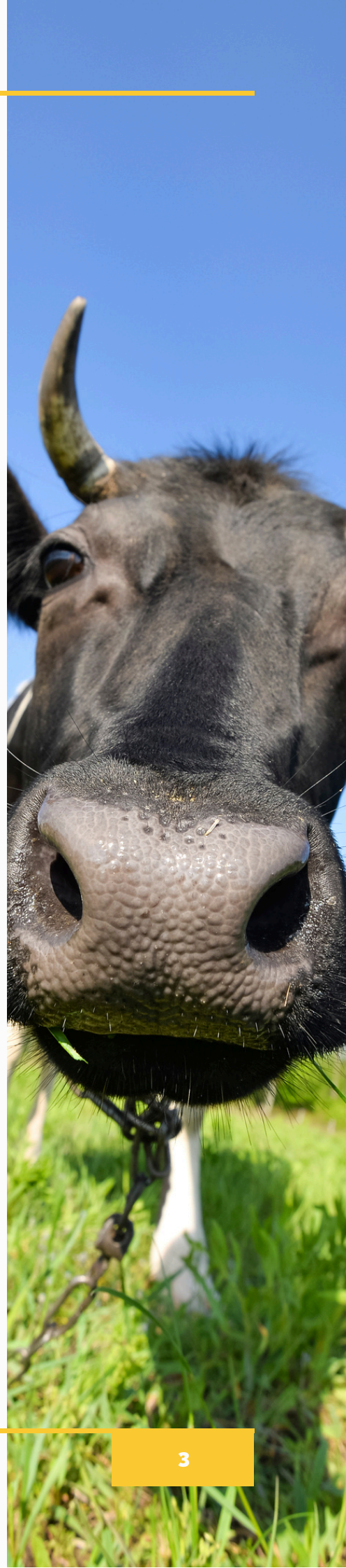
In Colombia, only Congress can prohibit bullfighting, but we had a ruling from the constitutional court that said that, while bullfights could be done, the cruellest behaviours against animals should be eliminated. The court further recognised that the brutal practices should be discouraged by governments. In this context, we used two concepts in the Constitution: territorial autonomy and the legal principle of subsidiary rigour. These establish that territorial entities can make environmental laws stricter within their jurisdiction. We introduced conditions to carry out bullfights: eliminating the instruments that hurt the animals, prohibiting the animal's death in the show, increasing the tax burden, prohibiting the entry of minors, and banning the sale and consumption of alcohol. All these made the show of little interest to the organisers. As a result, this year, for the first time in the history of Bogotá, no organiser was interested in holding bullfights under these conditions."

On another success, she added, *"In the same way, we managed to prohibit the sale of animals in market places by making use of a small provision that was in a sanitary norm that prohibited having live animals in places where food is produced, stored, and sold."*

When asked about the role played by animal protection organisations, Ms Padilla noted their substantial contribution in mobilising public and political support, including across party lines, demonstrating this isn't a partisan issue but one with strong citizen support.

She added, however, that sometimes NGOs do not support policies and regulation that improve animal welfare and instead only focus on fundamental changes like the prohibition of practices. She invited them to understand that progress can often only be made progressively and through compromise with political actors, which still reduces animal suffering and saves lives.

As a senator, Ms Padilla will work towards a ban on live cattle exports, the transition of zoos to wildlife sanctuaries or refuges, and a ban on cruel animal shows. Her agenda will also include looking to phase out the use of cages in livestock farming and to recognise and support the thousands of largely female animal rescuers in Colombia.





Loïc Dombrevail

Veterinarian and former Mayor of Vence (France) and Member of Parliament. Mr Dombrevail was the general rapporteur of a landmark bill against animal abuse in 2021. It banned wild animals in circus shows within two years of the law's passing, enacted an end to the use of wild animals in dolphinariums, outlawed mink farming, and prohibited the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores by 2024.

In his role as the mayor of Vence, Mr Dombrevail put in place a decree forbidding the presence of circuses with wild animals, which was tolerated by the higher authorities despite the subject being outside mayors' jurisdiction.

He subsequently advanced the issue at the national level: *"When I was a Member of Parliament and supported the law against animal abuse, I realised to what extent there was a discrepancy between the expectations of French citizens on the importance of the animal issue and the consideration of this by elected officials."* Mr Dombrevail added that this could be due to the significant influence of hunting and agriculture lobbies. *"To overcome these obstacles, we had to embrace an approach of transition and progressive evolution. Undoubtedly slow, even if these are advances, but progressive evolutions of change and no sudden break."* He explained how the law against animal abuse was centred around strengthening criminal penalties in the event of mistreatment of pets, for which there was more consensus (vs hunting or farming issues), and for wild animals in captivity.

Animal protection organisations, Mr Dombrevail stated, provided crucial support with technical contributions during the drafting of the law and raising visibility in the media to aid the

passing of the law.

An example is the inclusion of a ban on selling animals in pet stores, which animal protection NGOs had been proposing for a long time. This law section was approved by the National Assembly, against the government's opinion. *"For this to happen, the NGOs' media support was extremely important, along with efforts to bring people together and reach a consensus. The Senate had refused to ban the sale of animals in pet stores as well as the compulsory sterilisation of stray cats by municipalities. We had to negotiate with the Senate and propose an agreement: to keep the ban on the sale in pet stores and take a little more time to estimate sterilisation costs and resources needed. We made a compromise. Unfortunately, that generated strong attacks from certain animal protection NGOs, complaining that cats in the municipalities had been neglected."* Mr Dombrevail concluded by referring to the work of NGOs as indispensable despite the few obstacles posed by a few. He invited them to unite and advance as closely as possible to support legislative and regulatory policies.

Mr Dombrevail invited WFA and policymakers to regularly connect and share information on best practices to advance animal welfare worldwide.

Tilly Metz

Member of the European Parliament, President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup, and shadow rapporteur for the Greens for the Farm2Fork strategy, among other roles. Ms Metz has led critical work in the European Union to improve the welfare of animals during transport, phase out the use of animals for scientific experiments and tests, and end cage farming in agriculture by 2027.

MEP Metz highlighted key initiatives she has been involved in:

- End the Cage Age initiative, which collected 1.4 million EU citizens' signatures calling to phase out the use of cages in animal farming. As a result, the European Commission will propose by 2023 to phase out and finally prohibit the use of cages for a number of animals in agriculture by 2027.
- She was the Chair of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport which prepared a report with recommendations adopted by the European Parliament (EP) to, for example, establish a 4 hours maximum journey time for poultry and end-of-career animals, and include science-based species-specific provisions for horses, cats and dogs, and fish. A revision of the regulation on animal protection during transport is expected by 2023.
- Actively advocated ending animal testing. Despite the availability of "new alternative methodologies" for testing, animals continue to be used massively in research, for testing toxicity and by the Pharma industry. In September 2021, the EP passed a resolution to end animal experiments in the EU.

On the role animal protection organisations have played, MEP Metz explained **"the inquiry committee on the protection of animals during transport would not have existed without the investigations done by NGOs. They brought it to the media; they made a scandal out of the situation of the animals on vessels. They brought it to the wider public."** Ms Metz highlighted that NGOs were also instrumental in increasing the reach of multiple petitions to improve animal welfare in Europe.

She added, *"I would like to see more coordination between the different NGOs defending animals. They could have much more impact if they would work closely together and coordinate their actions"*.

Ms Metz emphasised that it is important for NGOs to better understand the pace of the policy processes. On this, she referred to the recommendations adopted by the EP on animal transport *"As an animal defender, these recommendations don't go far enough. We wanted a clear ban on the transport of live animals outside the EU, (...), we wanted a clear limit of the transport duration to eight hours, and we wanted for all unweaned animals clearer measures. But what we have is a step forward. (...) What's important now is the revision of the regulation on the protection of animals during transport that is to come"*.





Santiago Wills

Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Mr. Wills served as Chair of the Fisheries Subsidies negotiations, which successfully concluded in June 2022. After more than two decades of negotiations, WTO members agreed to tackle harmful fisheries subsidies that encourage unsustainable fishing in the oceans.

"It is estimated that around 35 billion US dollars are granted in subsidies to fishing a year worldwide, and out of those, it's estimated that about 22 billion US dollars are harmful fisheries subsidies. Why harmful? Because it enables overfishing, it enables over capacity, and it ends up in the hands of some fishers engaged in illegal fishing, for instance, or other types of illegal activities on the sea. Our mandate in the WTO was to negotiate an agreement that would eliminate and prohibit those harmful subsidies to the fishing sector. We now have a multilateral binding enforceable agreement between 164 members of the WTO on fisheries subsidies".

While the negotiations lasted for 21 years, Mr Wills began chairing these only in 2019. Working with 164 governments, they combined multiple proposals to form a single-text proposal and began text-based negotiations. On 17 June 2022, WTO members adopted an agreement on fisheries subsidies which prohibits subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and subsidies for fishing stocks already overfished. The agreement also indirectly tackles some of the support granted that creates overcapacity and overfishing by ending subsidies for fishing on the unregulated high seas.

The support of numerous civil society organisations, such as those members of the "stop funding overfishing" coalition, was lauded as a fundamental element of the negotiations. It meant inspiring delegations to keep the ambition throughout, "putting all the pressure on governments so that they conclude an agreement with sustainability elements and, in this case, the protection of the fisheries stocks as the core element of the agreement, negotiated in an organisation that traditionally has been focused solely on trade." Civil society, he added, was also instrumental in helping government representatives in Geneva and the capitals understand the technical aspects of the agreement, including the science behind assessing fish stocks.

For World Animal Day, Mr Wills expressed his wish for "**the protection of animals and animal rights stops just being a well-intended initiative but that the vast population and especially policymakers start looking at it as a responsibility. If that's something that changes, if the mindset changes, we are many steps forward.**"

Garba Datti-Babawo

Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Nigeria. Mr Garba Datti led the first passing of a bill to ban the killing and export of donkeys, their carcasses, and derivatives out of the country. Since, he has continued to advocate for its final approval in the Senate.

Increasing demand for donkey skin, used in a traditional Chinese remedy known as Ejiao, has decimated donkey populations in Nigeria. Fears for the extinction of and compassion for these animals' suffering in the transport and killing led MP Garba Datti to become a staunch advocate for their protection.

Under Mr Garba Datti's leadership, a bill for the protection of donkeys passed unopposed in the House of Representatives in 2019. It stipulates 10-year imprisonment for the killing and export of donkeys, their carcasses, and derivatives out of the country. Since, the bill has been in the Senate awaiting its consideration.

The opposition has, in turn, proposed a bill that, instead of banning it, looks to regulate the donkey trade. It envisages the ranching of donkeys. To overcome this, and ensure the final passing of his original Bill, Mr Garba Datti has been working with NGOs and research institutes to educate policymakers and the general public about the impracticalities and inefficiencies of breeding donkeys.

During the event, Mr Garba Datti elaborated on the proactive and instrumental role NGOs, such as The Donkey Sanctuary, the Africa Animal Welfare Network, and the Brooks, have played in support of the protection of donkeys and the bill. They have also drawn timely attention to the country's current legislation and enforcement gaps. *"They have been very helpful in the drive to actualise the prohibition and the killing of donkeys in Nigeria and other African countries"*.

He added, *"With events like this organised by WFA, where people from different continents involved in animal welfare policy and legislation are brought together, we can expand our knowledge and network worldwide. This coming together of speakers from different continents is a good step forward for protecting animals"*. He felt this was a much-needed investment for African countries, where he feels animal advocacy is still growing.

"I think our effort is yielding results. People are showing interest in animal welfare. They are beginning to see the benefits of protecting animals. But because of cultural and socio-economic issues, we need to continue pushing. And for this, we need the support of many NGOs."



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