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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
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**REPORT OF THE FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND ENVIRONMENT**

[Excerpt]

Donkey species preservation in Africa: “DONKEY IN AFRICA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”

169. The 5th STC urged AU Member States to increase their commitment to protect all animals, including wildlife and other living species, and the Global Community to ensure that any use of natural resources, including terrestrial, ocean, sea and marine resources, is ecologically sustainable and humane, particularly the humane and sustainable farming practices. Further, the STC noted that the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for Animal Genetic Resources underlines the importance of animal genetic resources for the development of animal production to meet future challenges. The STC recalled the Strategic Priority 10 of the GPA that highlights the need to establish national conservation policies, strategies and establish or strengthen in situ and ex situ national conservation programs.

170. The STC further noted that despite the significant contribution made by the donkey in Africa, especially in rural areas, the donkeys are now faced with a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin, propelled by a traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties. Also, the STC noted that donkey farming to meet the demand for skins is scientifically proven to be unsustainable as donkeys have low fertility and long reproduction cycles, low welfare awareness and cross border smuggling between neighbouring African Member States.

On the report on donkey species preservation in Africa, the STC:

171. **TOOK NOTE** of the report of the 2022 Pan-African Conference on Donkey Species exploitation in Africa “Now and in the future”;

EX.CL/1471(XLIV) Page 23

172. **RECOGNIZED** the socio-economic contribution of the donkey to livelihoods in Africa, and the concern about their welfare and unsustainable utilization in Africa, the lack of data to inform evidence-based policies, strategies, legislation and programs and the inadequate inclusion of donkeys in the

national animal resources development policies, strategies, programs, and investment plans;

- 173. RECOGNIZED** the alarmingly rapid decline in donkey population in Africa caused by the demand for their skins for international trade **AND ALSO RECOGNIZED** that unlike other animals, donkeys have very low reproductive rate affecting their population numbers and **URGED** the Commission to spearhead research on breeds and establish breeding programmes for the donkey species;
- 174. REQUESTED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to lead, plan and coordinate an African common position and moratorium on the exploitation of the donkey through its slaughter in Africa for the exploitation of its skin 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;
- 175. REQUESTED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to develop a Pan African Strategy for the Development of Donkey Species in Africa and action plan for increased production and productivity;
- 176. REQUESTED** the AU Commission, RECs and MSs with the support WOAHA, FAO and animal welfare organizations and other key relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a continentally coordinated program to enhance the conservation, development and management of the donkey and other working equid resources in Africa.