



World Federation for Animals

wfa.org

Jessica Bridgers

Deputy CEO

jessica.bridgers@wfa.org

Chapeau

We recommend the Chapeau sets the stage for a future that balances the health and wellbeing of humans, animals and the environment by acknowledging the relationships between humans and animals explicitly. Below are some suggested concepts for consideration:

- Recall the 2019 [IPBES global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services](#) which found that the dominant drivers of harm to nature over the past 50 years are systems of production and consumption that rely on the inhumane use of animals (intensification of livestock agriculture leading the land-use change and the direct exploitation of wildlife). It therefore follows that applying an animal welfare perspective to developing the systems of production and consumption of the future will deliver significant tangible benefits to nature and our collective sustainability. The pathway to 'living in harmony with nature' must include a more humane relationship between all sentient beings (animals and people).
- Millions of people around the world depend on animals for their livelihoods, and poor animal health has the potential to exacerbate inequalities. Animals with poor health and welfare are unable to work or otherwise contribute and are more likely to spread disease, whereas animals with good health and welfare can have higher productivity and a reduced carbon footprint.¹

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

Chapter 1 must call for transformational change over business as usual. It is important to acknowledge that while technological solutions can address some of the problems the world currently faces, only transformational change can enable a holistic and truly sustainable pathway to addressing and preventing global crises and creating a liveable future for all life on earth. Therefore, we believe it is important that the Pact emphasizes the need for systemic transformation across all sectors, noting the role that technology and innovation may play as part of these wider systemic transformations.

Barriers to transformative change must be addressed, including by changing and/or repurposing policies and institutions that incentivise biodiversity loss and the overexploitation of animals and ecosystems.

¹ FAO. 2023. [Pathways towards lower emissions - A global assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation options from livestock agrifood systems](#).



Further, we have arrived at our current global tipping point in large part due to our prioritizing the growth of the economic and social pillars at the expense of the environmental pillar and nature. It is essential to use an integrated and balanced approach across the three dimensions of sustainable development, ensuring that environmental concerns are placed on equal footing to economic aspects.

We recommend that Chapter 1 could reiterate wording from the [Agriculture, food security and nutrition resolution of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly](#):

- *“Calls for increased ambition and urgency of action to protect working animals and to strengthen global efforts to ensure that animal health and welfare can contribute to addressing challenges and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/1 of 2 March 2022, entitled “Animal welfare-environment-sustainable development nexus”,³⁷ and emphasizes the importance of the One Health approach and other holistic approaches that deliver multiple benefits to the health and well-being of people, animals, plants and ecosystems;*

We also recommend building on the outcomes of COP28 in Dubai, including the growing awareness of the role of food systems in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the need to transition to a more sustainable food system, recognising that any path to fully achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement must include agriculture and food systems.

In terms of financing, we further recommend a recommitment to implementing in particular SDG Target 12.C and phasing out harmful subsidies, in particular those agricultural subsidies which contribute to various forms of unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

It is also urgent to close the global biodiversity financing gap, and in line with Target 19 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to raise, by 2030, at least USD 200 billion annually in domestic and international funding from all public and private sources.

In addition, economic development and poverty reduction strongly depend on improving the state of the environment. Investing in the health of nature and animals, and adopting poverty-environment strategies underpinned by human rights and environmental standards would lead to better sustainable development outcomes.

Tackling financial crime, including money laundering from the illegal wildlife trade, through the establishment of transparent regulatory frameworks for financial flows, is also part of the solution to address obstacles to sustainable development.

Chapter II. International peace and security

In Chapter II we encourage acknowledgement of recent general comments from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Committee on the Rights of the Child, the role of poaching and wildlife trafficking in organized terrorism, and the complex relationships between climate change, hunger and food insecurity, violence and conflict, and forced migration.

So as to promote conflict prevention, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and refrain from the use of force, recognize and act upon the [United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)



[adoption of General Comment 26](#), including the right of children to freedom from all forms of violence, such as exposure to violence inflicted on animals. Adoption of [UN General Comment 26](#) places a legally binding strict obligation on signatories to the Convention. The General Comment also recognizes the importance of positive interactions between children, animals, and the rest of the natural world. These obligations may be achieved through humane education, legal protections and remedies, and enforcement.^{2,3,4}

So as to counter terrorism, address and eliminate illicit and legal forms of poaching and wildlife trafficking and trade which currently fund organized terrorism and threaten human security, including in forest dependent communities. These interlinked threats can be addressed through bans, sanctions, and enforcement of international treaties including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the United Nations Resolution on Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife.^{5,6,7} Further, wildlife crime must be recognised as a serious and predicate crime, as it has become a major form of transnational organized crime, worth billions of dollars, and it relates to other forms of crime, including corruption, illicit drugs, fraud, firearms and money laundering.

Address the need for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and sustaining peace by recognizing the complex relationships between climate change, hunger and food insecurity, violence and conflict, and forced migration. These complex relationships require holistic solutions including attention to food systems that drive greenhouse gas production and the inefficient use of water, land, and grains. Drawing on insights by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, just transitions to low-carbon agriculture, including those that move away from industrial animal farming, are essential to the transition to lower carbon production, improvements in resource utilization, and the mitigation of desertification.^{8,9,10,11}

² Committee on the Rights of the Child. General comment No. 13 (2011). [The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.](#)

³ European Link Coalition. 2023. [NGO Thematic Report Informing on UN General Comment 26 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child & Unification With UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

⁴ UK Centre for Animals Law. 2023. [Lawyers Welcome UN CRC's General Comment on Child Rights Acknowledging the Impact Both Positive and Negative Interactions with Animals.](#)

⁵ US Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs. 2015. [Poaching And Terrorism: A National Security Challenge Statement of Assistant Attorney General John C. Cruden for the House Committee On Foreign Affairs Subcommittee On Terrorism, Nonproliferation, And Trade.](#)

⁶ US. Department of State (2009-2017). [Wildlife Trafficking.](#)

⁷ UN General Assembly. 2015. [Adoption of Resolution on Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife.](#)

⁸ US Department of State. 2022. [The Intersection Between Climate Change, Food Security, Migration and Displacement.](#)

⁹ Agrawal et al. *PLOS Global Public Health*. 2023. The interrelationship between food security, climate change, and gender-based violence: [A scoping review with system dynamics modeling.](#)

¹⁰ Abel et al. *Global Environmental Change*. 2019. [Climate, conflict and forced migration.](#)

¹¹ Blattner. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*. 2020. [Just Transition for Agriculture? A Critical Step in Tackling Climate Change.](#)



Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

Our [Common Agenda Policy Brief 5](#) asserts the need for a “global, multidisciplinary conversation in order to examine, assess and align the application of AI and other emerging technologies.” It advises establishment of a “high-level advisory body for AI within the framework of the Global Data Compact”, one which could include, “Member State experts, relevant United Nations entities, industry representatives, academic institutions and civil society groups that would meet regularly to consider emerging regional, national and industry AI governance arrangements.”

It further suggests that “Relevant United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization through its recommendation on the ethics of AI and the World Health Organization (WHO) through its Ethics and governance of artificial intelligence for health: WHO guidance, could support stakeholders in developing sector-specific due diligence and impact assessments.” UNESCO’s 2021 “Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence”¹² cited there (a framework that was adopted by all 193 Member States) highlighted AI’s potential impact on “human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, democracy, social, economic, political and cultural processes, scientific and engineering practices, animal welfare, and the environment and ecosystems.” It would be vital then that civil society representing all of those interests should be engaged as participants in the deliberations.

As for UNESCO’s reference to “animal welfare, and the environment and ecosystems”, a prior Communication from the European Commission (2019)¹³ had asserted “For AI to be trustworthy, its impact on the environment and other sentient beings should be taken into account. Ideally, all humans, including future generations, should benefit from biodiversity and a habitable environment. Sustainability and ecological responsibility of AI systems should hence be encouraged.”

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

So as to ensure the meaningful, inclusive, and effective engagement of youth as well as the need to think and act in the interests of Future Generations, States must commit to the United Nations General Assembly recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, including a rights-based approach to a healthy environment. Children experience the effects of climate change and environmental degradation more intensely and are subject to the short-term and cumulative, long-term effects of warming temperatures, air and water pollution, and climate-related disasters.¹⁴

¹² UNESCO. 2021. [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#).

¹³ European Commission. 2019. [COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence](#).

¹⁴ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Environment Programme, and UN Development Programme. [What is the Right to a Healthy Environment: Information Note](#).



Chapter V. Transforming global governance

The development of measures to complement or progress beyond GDP must take into account the indelible connections between the health and wellbeing of humans, other animals, and our shared environments and ecosystems. GDP is generally insufficient in that it fails to prioritize rights and wellbeing while also discounting fundamental aspects of economies including social, environmental, and ecological determinants of health. Current alternative measurement and assessment tools are gradually moving to include concepts such as wellbeing. However, they generally neglect to include the connections between the health and wellbeing of humans, other animals, plants, and the rest of the natural world. Tools and metrics used to measure progress must move beyond commodification to determine the impact of proposed or existing global, national, and local policies, practices, and financial commitments on people, animals, and the planet.^{15,16,17,18}

In this regard, it will be important to recall that the UN General Assembly, in its annual resolution on the *Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development*:

42. *Notes the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in its assessment report on the diverse values and valuation of nature, and stresses that achieving a sustainable and just future requires institutions that enable a recognition and integration of the diverse values of nature and nature's contributions to people, and that the transformative change needed to address the global biodiversity crisis relies on shifting away from predominant values that currently overemphasize short-term and individual material gains to nurturing sustainability-aligned values across society;*

The recognition and integration of the diverse values of nature's contribution to people will provide benefits that extend beyond just the issue of biodiversity and are an essential element to deliver the policy coherence called for in SDG target 17.14 and allow for a truly integrated and balanced approach to sustainable development across the three dimensions of sustainability. Without a greater effort to truly value nature and to bring such a valuation into the existing effort to identify measures of progress beyond GDP, our collective ability to deliver on the mission, goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda will be fundamentally hampered.

The Pact should support the adoption of a new global agreement to end wildlife crime, in order to address gaps in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife, and effectively implement SDG 15.7. This could take the form of an additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

¹⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2019. [The Economy of Well-being Creating opportunities for people's well-being and economic growth.](#)

¹⁶ World Health Organization. 2022. [WHO launches a new initiative to place well-being at the heart of economic recovery.](#)

¹⁷ Özler, B. 2023. [Is it time for development economists to start considering the welfare of non-human animals?](#) World Bank blogs.

¹⁸ Stanford University. 2022. [The Economics of Animal Welfare Conference.](#)

