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ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES

Third WOAHA Animal Welfare Global Forum

Animal welfare and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

KEYWORDS

#animal welfare, #conference, #Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), #WOAH Global Animal Welfare Strategy, #World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).



Photo by [Gregory Hayes](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The Animal Welfare Global Forum, a key activity of the Global Animal Welfare Strategy (GAWS) of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly OIE)[1], aims to bring together representatives from the global animal welfare community to foster dialogue on complex animal welfare topics. The Third WOAHA Animal Welfare Global Forum, held virtually on 26 and 28 April and 4 May 2021, explored whether improvements in animal welfare can contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs envision a future in 2030 without poverty and hunger; a future that is protected from the worst effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity. Despite the SDGs having a broad scope, any reference to the contribution of domesticated animals, wild animals, and aquatic animals is limited, and animal welfare is not mentioned at all. Since one of the objectives of the WOAHA Seventh Strategic Plan (2021–2025)[2] is to contribute to achieving the SDGs, this Global Forum held by WOAHA in 2021 opened up a dialogue on the role of animals and their health and welfare in achieving these goals.

Organised in collaboration with the Swedish Agricultural University (SLU), the WOAHA Forum explored whether improvements in animal welfare can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and vice versa. A key part of the Forum measured how participants viewed the relationship between animal welfare and each of the SDGs, using a semi-

quantitative scoring system, along with qualitative comments. The methodology used had been developed by the SLU in a previous forum[3].

The programme included several presentations to immerse participants in the topic, including break-out group sessions. Divided into small groups, participants were asked, individually and then as a group, to score the link between animal welfare and the SDGs and vice versa, and to discuss the rationales for their scores.

Over all, the scoring indicated a strong positive impact on animal welfare from achieving the SDGs, and a positive impact on the SDGs by improving animal welfare, in four of the SDGs: Numbers 3: 'Good health and well-being'; 12: 'Responsible consumption and production'; 14: 'Life below water'; and 15: 'Life on land'. Moreover, scoring for SDGs 5: 'Gender equality'; 7: 'Affordable and clean energy'; and 10: 'Reduced inequalities', indicated a weak positive impact.

In her closing remarks, the Director General of WOA, Dr Monique Éloit, noted that the final results of this study would be considered by WOA in its work programme on animal welfare, to achieve the objectives of the WOA Seventh Strategic Plan and contribute to the SDGs.

Report of the third WOA Animal Welfare Global Forum

Reports of the first two sessions of the Forum

REFERENCES

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WOAH (founded as OIE) is a global organisation, working to ensure the health of animals across the world. Since 1924, we have focused on the complexities of animal health. We disseminate information on animal diseases and use science-based strategies to limit their potentially negative impact on society.

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