

GUIDANCE FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS

Engaging the United Nations High Level Political Forum

and the Sustainable
Development Agenda

2018





Connecting the Animal Protection Movement

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Introduction

In July 2017, World Animal Net (WAN) attended the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York. It was one of only two animal protection organizations to do so, with The Donkey Sanctuary attending the second week of the Forum. Through World Animal Net's participation at the HLPF and many of the preparatory processes that led up to it, it became clear that a guidance document on engagement and advocacy in this venue, prepared specifically for the animal protection sector, would greatly increase the ability and speed with which more animal protection organizations can become involved with advocacy for animals at the HLPF and the United Nations.

WAN notes that over the course of 2017, interest in participating in the HLPF has risen dramatically among animal protection organizations due to a number of factors. One of these factors is the continued development of a "Thematic Cluster" on Animal Issues that is forming within the civil society advocacy facilitation mechanism that feeds into the HLPF.

With this in mind, WAN has endeavored to create this guide for wide use among animal protection organizations. It seeks to facilitate the rapid onboarding of animal protection organizations in preparation for advocacy in the 2018 HLPF cycle by outlining the basic processes, mechanisms and terminology needed to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the HLPF, in addition to lessons learned, examination of short and long-term goals of engagement and effective framing of animal protection issues within the High Level Political Forum and the Sustainable Development Agenda. It is intended to serve as a reference document for developing plans for 2018 animal advocacy through the HLPF.

The guide has been produced as an outcome document from WAN's International Policy Forum, a collaboration of animal protection experts in international policy representing the U.S., Brazil, South Africa, China, Australia, Egypt, the UK, France, Taiwan, and India, as well as the interests of companion animals, farmed animals, animals in research, wildlife and working animals. The members of the International Policy Forum hope that the guide will be useful for you and your organization as you embark on the HLPF journey, and World Animal Net looks forward to working with you to be a voice for animals at the United Nations.

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Basics

What is the High Level Political Forum?

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is a platform at the United Nations (UN) tasked with monitoring and reviewing progress on internationally agreed goals on sustainable development. In 2015, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were replaced by the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To accompany this new agenda, the HLPF takes the place of the Annual Ministerial Reviews and Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) which reviewed progress made each year on the MDGs.

The HLPF is key in the monitoring and review of progress on the Sustainable Development Agenda. However, the HLPF is additionally mandated to “provide political leadership and guidance; to address new and emerging sustainable development challenges; and to enhance the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.”

The HLPF is convened every year under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. The next time the HLPF will convene under the General Assembly will be in 2019, at which time the HLPF processes will be reviewed and updated if needed. The UN Secretariat prepares an annual SDG Progress Report, and every four years a more comprehensive Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) is produced. This report has a more comprehensive analysis for decision-makers, and supports the HLPF in strengthening the science-policy interface in sustainable development.

The secretariat for the HLPF is hosted by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development (DESA DSD). DESA DSD is a critical provider of information and processes pertaining to the HLPF to civil society.

Each year the HLPF reviews a subset of the 17 SDGs. In 2018, the theme of the HLPF will be “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” The goals under review will be:

- 6 (water)
- 7 (sustainable energy)
- 11 (sustainable cities and settlements)
- 12 (sustainable consumption and production)
- 15 (terrestrial ecosystems)
- 17 (means of implementation).

SDG 17 is reviewed every year.

How Can Civil Society and Animal Protection Organizations (APOs) Engage with the HLPF?

Civil society, including Animal Protection Organizations (APOs), engages in the HLPF through the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) system. The MGoS system was developed at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Agenda 21, and was reaffirmed at the Rio +20 conference in 2012. The MGoS system is comprised of nine original major groups:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- Non-Governmental Organizations

- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Business and Industry
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers

Since the development of these groups, it has been recognized that there is need for space for other stakeholders to participate and represent their interests. Because of this, new interest areas can be developed into officially recognized bodies under the MGoS system. However, these new groups are identified as “stakeholders” rather than “Major Groups.” New stakeholder groups include a stakeholder group for the aging, the disabled, volunteers and others.

Each MGoS group can submit a position paper to DESA ahead of the HLPF. The official statements from the 2017 HLPF can be found on the [HLPF website](#).

Additionally, all official oral statements made on the floor at official HLPF sessions, not to be confused with ECOSOC sessions which also take place during the HLPF, must be made through an MGoS. Each Major Group receives one seat from which to speak from at the HLPF. The remaining stakeholder groups receive three seats to speak from. This can cause problems for stakeholder groups because there may be more than three groups who wish to take a seat and make a statement. In addition, these seats are only identified as “stakeholder” seats, and not by the issue they represent, lowering their profile as compared to the nine original Major Groups.

The MGoS system has a Coordination Mechanism (CM), the role of which is to interface with DESA on modalities (procedures) of MGoS participation, and to act as an information conduit between DESA and civil society. MGoS as an inclusive entity acts primarily to facilitate the voices of civil society at the HLPF, and therefore does not typically advocate in its own right on issues beyond ensuring and widening civil society participation.

Inputs into the HLPF

There are various types of inputs that feed into the HLPF ahead of the actual meeting. These include Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSD), and statements from Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS).

During the HLPF, the main ways civil society can input into the HLPF are through:

- statements made on the floor during official sessions (via MGoS)
- coordinated questions during VNRs
- hosting or attending side events
- official oral statements made or written testimonies submitted to general debate sessions, via ECOSOC or MGoS. If these are made through ECOSOC, this opportunity is limited to organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC. If this is made through the MGoS, the statement is constrained by consensus among all members of the specific Major Group.

At the 2017 HLPF there were three additional opportunities for input from MGoS, which may or may not occur in the 2018 HLPF:

- an official session on MGoS perspectives on the HLPF and SDG implementation
- a side event cohosted by DESA, MGoS, and VNR countries
- a breakfast between MGoS and VNR countries.

Additionally, there is the opportunity to lobby member states by setting up meetings and developing

relationships with permanent missions and through networking at side events, after official sessions, and at the Vienna Café and halls of the UN.

Pros and Cons of the MGoS System for APOs

The main benefit of the MGoS system for APOs is that ECOSOC accreditation, a lengthy process which can take upwards of one year, is not required for membership to the group. All APOs are permitted to join the Non-Governmental Organization Major Group (NGO MG), which is one of the nine original Major Groups. The requirements to join the NGO MG are to fill out a survey outlining the APO's interests and areas of focus and to join the NGO MG Google Group, which keeps members updated on issues and opportunities through email lists.

Once these steps are taken, an APO can immediately begin working with the members of the NGO MG to progress issues of animal welfare within sustainable development at the UN. From this perspective, the MGoS system broadens the opportunity for APOs around the world to participate in the HLPF. However, it is worth noting that while organizations without accreditation are able to participate in many aspects of the NGO MG's work, a grounds pass obtained through an accredited organization is required to attend the HLPF, and oral statements on behalf of the NGO MG can only be made by individuals representing accredited organizations.

The downside to this "all in" process is that the NGO MG comprises nearly infinite areas of focus. Thus, the issue of animal welfare and protection risks being drowned out among the myriad issues raised in the group. This effect is further magnified when looking at the MGoS system as a whole. Amplifying the issue of animal welfare within the NGO MG and MGoS will be important to getting animals on the agenda at the HLPF and the UN.

A subgroup within the NGO MG, called a Thematic Cluster, can allow special focus issues a better venue for coordination on common interests and sharing expertise. If properly managed and certain criteria met, Thematic Clusters can become their own stakeholder groups formally recognized by DESA DSD, standing parallel to the other Major Groups.

The Thematic Cluster on Animal Issues which is now in development could drastically improve the position of animals at the UN and within the Sustainable Development Agenda by amplifying the voice of animal protection issues within the NGO MG and preventing it from being drowned out by other interests.

Components of the HLPF and High Level Segment (HLS)

The HLPF has five major components:

- SDG Review
- Thematic Reviews
- VNRs
- General Debates
- Side events

In 2017, the first week of the HLPF was dedicated to SDG and Thematic reviews. There was one session covering each SDG under review. The separate thematic review sessions looked at specific themes in relation to the overarching theme of the HLPF. For example, in 2017, sessions examined the theme of poverty eradication as it related to small island developing states or Major Groups and Other Stakeholders' perspectives. In the last day of the first week, there were two additional sessions which

examined how interlinkages between the SDGs can be used to advance sustainable development and an especially important session on the science-policy interface and emerging issues.

The High Level Segment (HLS), took place during the second week and was comprised of VNRs and General Debates. The week culminated in a joint Ministerial Declaration on sustainable development between the HLPF and ECOSOC. The HLPF component of the declaration took place on the second to last day of the session, and was attended by representatives of all member countries participating in the HLPF. The ECOSOC component took place on the very last day, after most NGOs and government delegations had left, and was attended only by the 54 rotating member state delegates to ECOSOC. During this week there was significant, and often confusing, overlap of HLPF and ECOSOC processes.

Throughout the HLPF there are side events which focus on specific topics relating to the HLPF and sustainable development. These provide a forum for targeted communications on issues that cannot be reviewed during official sessions to the same degree of specificity.

Attending the HLPF

The HLPF takes place at UN Headquarters in New York City, USA. To gain access to headquarters, attendees are required to have a grounds pass. There are three main ways to acquire a grounds pass:

1. If your organization has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, your organization can nominate you to attend the HLPF and provide you with either an annual or temporary grounds pass. Each organization in consultative status has a set number of annual and temporary passes that they may make available to its personnel or other guests.
2. If your organization does *not* have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, you will need to either:
 - a. Identify an organization with consultative status which is willing to provide you with a grounds pass; or
 - b. Secure a grounds pass through the NGO Major Group. The NGO Major Group has a pool of passes that are distributed among its members by the Organizing Partners. This is the least certain way of securing grounds passes because of the broad range of NGOs active in the NGO MG and the fact that animal protection is currently a less prominent issue. Additionally, these passes will likely be assigned shortly before the HLPF which will complicate travel arrangements, particularly for international attendees. Advocates wishing to attend the HLPF are advised to secure a pass through their own or another organization.

In addition, attendees will need to register to attend the HLPF, and should monitor the HLPF website for registration to become available.

If an organization foresees ongoing work on the Sustainable Development Agenda and the HLPF, it is advisable for the organization to obtain consultative status with ECOSOC in its own right. The application for accreditation is generally due on June 1 of each year, and the accreditation process takes a year to complete. For more information about the process of applying and the varying accreditation levels, see [this brochure](#) and the [UN's NGO Branch website](#).

Animal Protection Organizations known to hold consultative status include, but are not limited to:

- International Association against Painful Experiments on Animals (1972)
- The Humane Society of the United States (1996)
- Center for Respect of Life and the Environment (An HSUS affiliate) (1996)
- World Animal Net (2001)
- International Fund for Animal Welfare (2002)

- World Animal Protection (2013)
- Organizzazione Internazionale Protezione Animali (OIPA) (2014)
- Vier Pfoten (Four Paws) International (2015)
- Compassion in World Farming (2017)

If you know of an animal protection organization with consultative status not yet on this list, please contact World Animal Net.

Advocacy Opportunities Leading Up to the HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

In 2017, 43 countries presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The VNRs are intended to review progress in SDG implementation at the national level and “facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned... strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.” These are country-led initiatives that follow guidelines provided by the UN, and the reports are compiled in the VNR library.

The VNR process, ideally, should involve a national consultative period and involvement from civil society, including NGOs. However, because the VNRs are conducted by the countries themselves, some VNR processes are more inclusive of NGOs than others. In 2017, a survey found that NGO experiences in the VNR process were varied. It is not known whether any APOs participated in their country’s VNR for 2017.

For APOs in 2018 VNR countries, it will be important to engage with the appropriate government departments early in the process to determine how the government will be handling inputs from civil society. More information about the 2017 VNR process is available [here](#).

There are 48 countries that have agreed to conduct a VNR in 2018:

Albania	Hungary	Qatar
Andorra	Iceland	Republic of the Congo
Armenia	Ireland	Romania
Australia	Jamaica	Saudi Arabia
Bahamas	Kiribati	Senegal
Bahrain	Lao People’s Democratic Republic	Singapore
Benin	Latvia	Slovakia
Bhutan	Lebanon	Spain
Cabo Verde	Lithuania	Sri Lanka
Canada	Mali	State of Palestine
Colombia	Malta	Sudan
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Switzerland
Ecuador	Namibia	Togo
Egypt	Niger	United Arab Emirates
Greece	Paraguay	Uruguay
Guinea	Poland	Viet Nam

Actions Taken in 2017

There was no known APO activity in the 2017 VNR process.

Proposals for 2018

Early national advocacy for animals in VNRs is an important opportunity, particularly in countries that have already taken positive action for animals. The promotion of animal issues in VNRs will not only educate stakeholders on the issues, but also can potentially set a precedent for future consideration and inclusion of animal issues in VNRs. WAN is aiming to engage local organizations in VNR countries and encourage them to participate in VNRs.

A briefing on how to discuss animal welfare within the context of the UN and sustainable development should be prepared to assist national APOs in developing compelling advocacy and inputs to their country's VNR. APOs with knowledge of active and effective APOs working in 2018 VNR countries are encouraged to share this information with them.

Regional Forums on Sustainable Development

Several months before the HLPF there are a series of preparatory meetings, called Regional Forums on Sustainable Development (RFSD), which are carried out in collaboration with DESA DSD. There is a regional forum hosted by each of the five regional commissions of the UN. In 2017, these were:

- Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); held in Geneva, 25 April; Input from this to the 2017 HLPF is available [here](#).
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); held in Bangkok, 29-31 March; Input from this to the 2017 HLPF is available [here](#).
- Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); held in Addis Ababa, 18-19 May; Input from this to the 2017 HLPF is available [here](#).
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); held in Rabat, 3-5 May; Input from this to the 2017 HLPF is available [here](#).
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); held in Mexico City, 26-28 April; Input from this to the 2017 HLPF is available [here](#).

Each forum is organized differently. For example, the ECE Forum used “Round Tables” on certain overarching themes to solicit input from attendees. The subject matter for each forum is, of course, specific to that region.

The outcomes of these forums are presented in reports to the HLPF and presumably impact the Ministerial Declaration of the HLPF. The RFSD outcomes are also presented in one session at the HLPF.

At the time of writing only tentative 2018 RFSD dates have been announced.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN attended the ECA [RFSD in Addis Ababa](#). RAPAD Morocco attended the [ESCWA meeting in Rabat](#) as a WAN affiliate. These were opportunities to learn about these processes and conduct basic advocacy for animals.

Proposals for 2018

Local organizations should be encouraged to contribute to their RFSD. Briefings should be prepared for

each region. These should springboard off the 2017 outcome documents for each RFSD (above) to assist organizations in fitting animal welfare into the issues being discussed within their regions, as well as the goals under review for next year. Encouraging organizations to present specific policy examples, where they exist, may be helpful.

Advocacy through MGoS

Leading up to the HLPF, the MGoS Coordinating Mechanism generally has several opportunities to influence the planning of the HLPF. Because the MGoS' role is to facilitate civil society participation at the HLPF, this advocacy focuses not on specific issues (such as animal protection), but rather on widening the opportunity for civil society participation and for pushing for stronger outcomes of the HLPF. For example, in 2017, the MGoS held a meeting with the President of ECOSOC and participated in a HLPF planning retreat. In these venues, MGoS pushed for better opportunities for civil society to be involved in VNR preparation and sessions at the HLPF. They also called for a Ministerial Declaration that provides concrete policy recommendations.

Some of these opportunities are limited to the MGoS Steering Committee, which consists of a representative from each Major Group and each Stakeholder group. Others are open to broader participation from MGoS representatives and members.

It is in the interest of APOs to push for wider opportunities for civil society engagement and for stronger outcomes of the HLPF. APOs interested in learning more about the MGoS Coordination Mechanism can access the [Terms of Reference, further documents](#) pertaining to the group and subscribe to the [mailing list](#).

Actions Taken in 2017

No known participation from APOs during these processes in 2017.

Proposals for 2018

Opportunities through the MGoS should be monitored and supported as necessary/possible.

Position Papers of MGoS

Each MGoS has the opportunity to prepare a joint position paper that is provided in advance of and as an input to the HLPF. The NGO Major Group (NGO MG) 2017 position paper can be found [here](#). To our knowledge, World Animal Net and Thinking Animals United were the only APOs contributing to this statement in 2017. These organizations were successful in getting animals included in the statement summary:

"We call for a new development paradigm which furthers the well-being of humans, nature and animals, and which sees as its ultimate aim the achievement of equity and justice, to 'leave no one behind.'"

Animal welfare was also included in the position statement regarding SDG 2 (food security):

"Food waste should be reduced and available food redistributed, rather than intensifying agricultural production at the expense of biodiversity and animal welfare."

Additionally, the phrasing from the summary quote above was included in the [UN Secretariat's summary of the position statements from the MGoS](#).

Despite this, there are challenges associated with the preparation of NGO MG position statements. These are largely due to the fact that the NGO MG has a large membership with a diverse array of interests, and all of these groups, for obvious reasons, want to ensure their key issues are addressed satisfactorily in the NGO MG statement. In addition, there are times where the interests of these groups can be at odds. In other cases, there is a lack of awareness of the cross-cutting nature of animal welfare that can lead to suggested inclusions of animals and their welfare being removed during revisions of the statement.

The 2017 position statement certainly opened the door to the inclusion of animals and animal welfare in future NGO MG position statements. The developing Animal Issues Thematic Cluster (AITC) will take a lead role in supporting stronger inclusion of animals in 2018's statement. The NGO MG has organized a drafting committee to work on the 2018 statement, and there are several members of the AITC active in this group. Members of the AITC will also be collaborating on their own position statement on the SDGs under review, and this will assist in feeding into sections of the NGO MG position statement.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN and Thinking Animals United submitted comments and suggestions through the process of drafting the NGO MG Position Statement.

Proposals for 2018

WAN proposes that many more APOs should join the NGO MG and AITC, as membership is not restricted to organizations with ECOSOC status. The more APOs who are able to advocate for inclusion of animals in NGO MG considerations, the stronger statements and outcomes are likely to come from the group and be made to the HLPF.

Other Potential Advocacy Opportunities Ahead of the HLPF

There are several other potential opportunities for advocacy leading up to the HLPF, such as influencing other UN bodies. For example, the UN Environment Assembly, Committee on Food Security and others make inputs into the HLPF, and in many cases APOs can engage these processes. While the UN Environment Assembly and Committee on Food Security prior to the 2018 HLPF have already taken place, there are also a number of reports and conferences that may feed into the HLPF. It is helpful for APOs to be aware of the content of such documents.

In 2017, the HLPF was preceded by the [Oceans Conference](#), which took place from 5-9 June 2017, and the [Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation](#) for the SDGs which took place 15-16 May. The former was intended to highlight SDG 14 (oceans) and provide in depth analysis of the related issues and was attended by World Animal Protection and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). It is possible that there will be another such conference on a different topic that will precede the 2018 HLPF, and APOs should monitor for opportunities to intervene if so.

The latter, known as the STI Forum and organized under the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, is intended to bring the science, technology and innovation sector together to discuss how these could assist the implementation of the SDGs. The STI Forum is set to take place annually. An online knowledge sharing platform on STI is also in development.

Actions Taken in 2017

World Animal Protection and International Fund for Animal Welfare attended the Oceans Conference.

Proposals for 2018

APOS should continually monitor whether it may be possible to influence the input of intergovernmental organizations to the HLPF and for events that feed into the 2018 HLPF.

Ministerial Declaration

While the Ministerial Declaration is technically an outcome document from the HLPF and was agreed by the HLPF on July 19 and by ECOSOC on July 20, the declaration is drafted by member states with the help of co-facilitators in the months prior to the HLPF. Much of the negotiations for this document take place behind closed doors, and by the first week of the 2017 HLPF, the ministerial declaration was under “silent procedure,” meaning that no further negotiations were to take place. However, several countries broke the silent procedure in 2017, leading to a flurry of activity within the MGoS lobbying member states to reach an agreement that maintained a strong Ministerial Declaration.

The reason for this is because agreements from the UN tend to take place under consensus, meaning that negotiations take place until a document is produced which all member states can support. MGoS had concerns that if this process broke down in only the second year of the post-2015 agenda, that the integrity of future agreements and HLPF would be eroded. Although the Ministerial Declaration was ultimately agreed, it did not pass as a consensus document because the United States of America called for a vote on several paragraphs of the agreement.

It is important to note that the lobbying that did take place by the MGoS during the 2017 HLPF had to do with encouraging consensus and attempting to avoid weakened language. This was not an opportunity for new issues to be raised or added to the document, or for MGoS to propose any other substantive changes.

Therefore, the best time for MGoS to engage in the drafting of the Ministerial Declaration is leading up to the HLPF. The process leading up to the Ministerial Declaration includes the drafting of an elements paper by the co-facilitators, an informal dialogue with stakeholders, and informal consultations among Member States, which included space for the participation of representatives of MGoS. The civil society organization Together 2030 provided an in depth look at this process in their [report of the 2017 HLPF](#).

In late May of 2017, MGoS and Member States were involved in an informal discussion with experts on recommendations for the Declaration. This took place the day before formal negotiations on the Declaration began. There were also two rounds of intergovernmental negotiations which allowed for interventions from MGoS that took place during June 2017 as the Declaration was drafted.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN submitted some suggestions to the NGO MG during the Ministerial Declaration drafting process.

Proposals for 2018

Together 2030 seems to have strong engagement with the process leading to the Ministerial Declaration. The NGO MG also provided structure for engagement in the process as well.

Opportunities for civil society to participate in the drafting of the Declaration in 2018 should be monitored. APOs that are members of the NGO MG, Together 2030, or other MGoS should submit their suggestions for the Declaration to these groups, following each group’s protocols for doing so, in order to have these suggestions taken into account and potentially included in the interventions made by the groups.

Advocacy Opportunities at the HLPF

Participation in Official Sessions during the First Week of the HLPF

The first week of the 2017 HLPF (and presumably 2018 HLPF) was dedicated to thematic reviews and SDG implementation reviews. Thematic reviews examine the overarching theme of the HLPF (in 2018, Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies) and intersections with other key themes, such as “Multi-stakeholder Perspectives” or small island developing states. The SDG implementation reviews focus on just one of the SDGs and its implementation.

The format for these sessions typically begins with a series of panelists and discussants organized by a moderator. After the speakers have concluded, the floor is opened to statements from member states, intergovernmental organizations, and MGoS.

At these sessions, the only inputs from civil society come from the MGoS. Individual organizations, including those with ECOSOC status, are not allowed to speak on their own. The MGoS are provided 12 seats. Each of the 9 original Major Groups receive a dedicated seat with their Major Group’s name (NGO, Women, Indigenous People, etc.). The remaining three seats read simply “Stakeholder 1,” “Stakeholder 2,” etc. and are for the “other stakeholders” such as disabilities, ageing, etc. In the future, more Stakeholder Groups will be formed, since Thematic Clusters developed under the NGO MG can eventually become full-fledged stakeholder groups. The limited number of seats for Stakeholder Groups means that as the number of stakeholder groups grows (and if there is at some point a Stakeholder Group representing the interests of animals) competition for these seats will increase, unless the procedures for participation are revised.

Each Major Group has its own process for determining who will represent the Major Group at each session by sitting in these seats. When the session opens to statements from the floor, those sitting in the seats must press a button to register intent to speak. The moderator is responsible for choosing who speaks, and this does not always seem to be done on a first come, first served basis. Not all Major Groups will have a chance to make a statement at each session.

In 2017, each organization with ECOSOC status was allowed one representative to attend each session as an observer on a first come, first served basis (i.e., the first 100 or so organization representatives to arrive were given a ticket for the gallery seating of the conference room where the sessions took place). After an hour into the morning and afternoon sessions, if there was room in the gallery, seating was opened to any individuals with a valid grounds pass. Sitting in the gallery allows only the ability for firsthand observation of the proceedings, and confers no benefits from an advocacy perspective. For those unable to enter the gallery, there was an overflow conference room available where the proceedings were livestreamed. To some degree, use of the overflow room was preferable because the livestreamed proceedings, along with transcripts, were easier to see than from the gallery.

The NGO MG is responsible for deciding who sits in the NGO MG seat and speaks on behalf of the NGO MG for each session. In 2017, those interested in speaking were instructed to fill out a Google form to register their interest to speak in a particular session. However, in reality, not enough volunteers were always available to speak, and so at daily NGO MG meetings there was often an open opportunity to volunteer. WAN did this on a number of occasions, including implementation reviews of SDG 14 and SDG 17, and thematic review of the science-technology interface. In each case, WAN was added to a team of others who were interested in speaking, and together with the other interested organizations a joint statement was prepared.

The caveat to drafting these statements is that the statement must stay within bounds of the NGO MG

position statement. Therefore, in terms of animal issues, there was some limit to what could be added. For statements for both SDG 14 and 17, WAN was successful in interjecting consideration for “humans, nature and animals.” However, there was more leeway to add a stronger statement for animals within the NGO MG statement on the science-policy interface, as this was not specifically included within the NGO MG paper. WAN was happy to have the following statement made regarding animal welfare as an emerging issue:

“Science and research are, and will be, crucial in tackling the grand challenges set out in the 2030 Agenda. But often, findings are disregarded in the policy-making process.

In doing so, opportunities are missed.

For example, the fight against anti-microbial resistance and climate change will not succeed without effective collaboration between scientists and policymakers on the cross-cutting issue of animal welfare.

Fortunately, global institutions such as the World Bank and FAO are now taking action in this field. The World Organization for Animal Health has developed internationally-agreed science-based welfare standards.

But without a means of addressing emerging issues systematically, in innovative and effective ways, the UN risks being left behind. Ensuring the profile of scientific inputs in the 2030 Agenda will play a major role.

Governments too must do their bit.”

Among the thematic review sessions, there was in 2017 a session specifically for highlighting MGoS. This was the “Multi-stakeholder Perspectives” session that took place on the second afternoon of the HLPF. This consisted of a series of panels with predetermined speakers. The NGO MG was responsible for selecting the representative who had 3-5 minutes to speak, and this seems to have taken place prior to the HLPF. The program for this session can be viewed on [pages 7 to 9 of the Annotated Program](#). This session was not structured for interventions from the floor, but speakers from civil society were intermixed with member state respondents. It is important to note that stakeholder groups, as opposed to the nine Major Groups, also received the opportunity to speak. This is worth considering as a benefit of creating a stakeholder group for animals.

Lastly, in May of 2017 there was a call from DESA for nominations of expert speakers for the sessions of the first week from civil society (and presumably other sectors). This is another opportunity for APOs to potentially have animals and animal welfare represented, if relevant expert speakers can be identified.

Overall, there is uncertainty about the direct advocacy benefit of these sessions, given that the Ministerial Declaration had already been drafted, behind closed doors, prior to the HLPF. The main utility of making sure animals and animal welfare are included in statements at these sessions is to mainstream discussion of these issues in discourse at the UN.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN was successful in incorporating the well-being of animals into NGO MG statements on SDG 14 and 17, and co-drafted a stronger and more specific intervention on animal welfare as an emerging issue during the Science-Policy Interface and Emerging Issues session.

Proposals for 2018

There should be wider representation by animal protection organizations at the 2018 HLPF. Those in

attendance should volunteer to speak for sessions relative to their expertise, if not to actually do the speaking, but at minimum to have a hand in drafting these statements and insuring that animals are included.

The NGO MG has developed a working group that will compile a list of experts who can be nominated as panel speakers. WAN is a member of this working group and can liaise with animal protection organizations to make sure that animal protection experts with expertise in relevant fields/SDGs can be added to the NGO MG's list of experts.

VNRs and Coordinated Questions

The second week of the HLPF, confusingly called the High Level Segment, allotted space for the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The VNR review sessions provided a platform for countries to present their VNR reports, and was intended to provide an opportunity to allow peer learning about effective implementation of the SDGs. Some sessions took place “panel style” where multiple countries presented their VNRs before the floor was opened to interventions. In these cases, questions from the floor were directed to all countries that had presented. Alternatively, other sessions were conducted as single presentations, where each country's presentation was followed by an opportunity for questions before the next presentation began. Each country was able to choose the presentation layout depending on its preference

DESA unexpectedly changed the protocol for gallery seating for this segment of the HLPF. This shrunk the number of MGoS representatives who could attend as observers, and placed the tickets for gallery seating in the hands of each individual Major Group to mete out. The NGO MG received less than 10 tickets per session, and opportunity was, understandably, given first to those from the countries presenting their VNR at the specific session, contingent on those attending the VNR sessions to report back on the outcomes of the session at the next NGO MG meeting. However, there were often leftover tickets which gave others the opportunity to attend. There was, as in week one, an overflow room for those who could not sit in the gallery, and when open seats were available security opened gallery seating to those with a grounds pass after the first hour of the session.

Forty-three countries presented VNRs in 2018. For obvious reasons, there was much criticism as to how 43 countries could meaningfully present and review their VNRs in just three days. There was also additional criticism because of the severe limits that were placed on interventions from Major Groups.

For each country undergoing a VNR, the MGoS system (as a whole, not individual Major Groups) had the opportunity for only one question, with a small chance of being able to ask two during panel presentations. Major Groups individually did not have the opportunity to ask their own questions. Initially, DESA requested inputs for questions through a Google form, but ended up changing the procedure on VNR question generation on the fourth day of the HLPF, creating instead working groups (called caucuses) who generated the questions. There was underrepresentation of countries in many circumstances.

The caucuses facilitated the MGoS to develop the single question collaboratively during the last days of the first week of the HLPF. Governments then had the opportunity to review and reject questions prior to their presentations. In some cases, governments set specific limits on issues they did not want included in questions from MGoS/civil society. For example, Indonesia specifically said that the MGoS question could not discuss LGBTQI or indigenous peoples.

Most disappointingly, after MGoS had developed their questions, there were some cases that they were not even called upon to make their intervention by the moderator. For example, during India's

presentation, which was particularly contentious due to its lack of involvement or transparency with civil society during the year of preparation, MGoS never had an opportunity to intervene.

Because of the limitations to civil society during the VNRs, this segment of the HLPF is less useful, and in most cases, it is likely unnecessary for APOs to use resources to attend. The presence of ministers from VNR countries at the HLS may provide a direct lobbying opportunity for APOs. However, the way in which UNDESA limited MGoS participation in this segment of the HLPF is concerning and must be addressed.

Actions Taken in 2017

APOs did not participate in VNR interventions at the HLPF because there were no APO representatives present from the countries presenting VNRs at the 2017 HLPF.

Proposals for 2018

Participation in the VNR presentations of the HLPF should springboard off of any work done during the VNR process in the year leading up to the HLPF. If there is success in including animals, animal protection or any related issues in any country's VNR report, which should be finalized before the HLPF, steps to facilitate participation of local APOs involved in the VNR process at the HLPF should be considered. However, given the extreme limitations to civil society engagement at the HLPF, attendance of any organizations to the HLPF for the sole purpose of engaging in the VNR process there is less advisable. This should be revisited if the participation procedures for this segment of the HLPF are revised. The procedures of the HLPF are set for review and revision in 2019.

Instead, organizations can work through the NGO MG or other groups prior to the HLPF to assist in advocating for a more transparent and inclusive VNR process going forward.

MGoS VNR Breakfast

During the High Level Segment of the HLPF, DESA hosted an MGoS VNR breakfast which allowed civil society to engage with delegates from VNR countries. This opportunity was of limited advocacy value. Only two representatives from each Major Group were allowed to attend. Understandably, those representatives were from VNR countries. Each Major Group had its own process to determine who its representatives would be. Discussion points were decided among NGO MG leadership and the representatives in attendance.

Feedback from MGoS representatives who attended the breakfast was that many countries did not attend, and the representatives had only two minutes to make a statement. This was not seen as a positive opportunity for MGoS participation.

Actions Taken in 2017

No APO representatives attending the 2017 HLPF were from VNR countries, so no action was taken on this issue.

Proposals for 2018

Similar opportunities to the VNR Breakfast should be watched for in 2018. With the AITC in development, there may be stronger language in the NGO MG position paper which could trickle into talking points. However, activities like this, especially when representation is limited to just two representatives from each group, will be limited in utility until the Animal Issues Cluster becomes established as its own

stakeholder group. The 2019 revisions to HLPF organization may eliminate or, hopefully, improve these opportunities.

General Debates

The other component of the High Level Segment of the HLPF is the General Debates. These are sessions where delegates and civil society can make brief statements, and there are technically two ways that civil society can make a statement. The first way is to contribute to a statement through a major group. Alternatively, individual organizations with special or general consultative status through ECOSOC can make and submit statements.

In terms of working through a Major Group, each of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders has one opportunity for a statement, and each group is responsible for determining a process to choose a speaker from among its representatives. The statement is drafted with help from NGO MG members to ensure that it advances the group's wider aims of ensuring a space for civil society to speak as well as key themes from the group's position paper.

The MGoS were given a specific time slot within which all would make their statements. This was set for Thursday, July 20, during the last session of General Debate. This was also the time that NGOs in consultative status were given to speak. It is important to note that the HLPF formally took place from July 10-19, not July 20. The July 20th General Debate took place solely under ECOSOC, rather than jointly under ECOSOC and the HLPF. This is problematic because ECOSOC has only 54 member states serving it at any one time, as opposed to being attended by all member states as the rest of the HLPF was. Thus the reach of civil society statements made during the General Debate was limited.

WAN did encourage the NGO MG speaker to include animals in the statement. However, the statement was shortened before being presented and this was not included in the final statement.

The MGoS who submitted a statement in 2017 included:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- NGOs
- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Business and Industry
- Farmers
- Persons with Disabilities
- Volunteers
- Education and Academia Stakeholder Group
- FFD (Financing for Development) CSO (Civil Society Organization) Group
- Together 2030

Alternatively, organizations with consultative status at ECOSOC which wish to make a statement at the General Debate can do so in their own right. This means that animal protection organizations with this status can be bold in their statements for animals. These arrangements are coordinated by the [NGO Branch of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination](#), as opposed to DESA, which coordinates statements from the MGoS. Note that only organizations with special or general status have the opportunity to make oral statements to ECOSOC. Organizations with roster status can only attend as

observers.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN advocated for the inclusion of animal well-being in the NGO MG statement during the General Debate. This was taken into consideration, but the statement was shortened and this was removed. WAN did not make a statement on its own behalf using its status with ECOSOC, but plans to do so in 2018.

Proposals for 2018

For APOs that do not have special or general status with ECOSOC, it is not necessary to attend the General Debates.

The AITC should encourage the inclusion of animal concerns into the NGO MG statement during the 2018 HLPF.

For organizations with special or general status, WAN advises contacting the [NGO Branch of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination](#) for more information on how to make a statement during the General Debate early in 2018. WAN will attempt to make a statement independent of other stakeholder groups during the 2018 HLPF/HLS General Debate, because this would ensure the specific interests of animals and animal protection constituency would be raised. Other APOs in consultative status are encouraged to make statements on their own behalf as well.

Side Events

Process of Side Event Applications

Side events are an important advocacy opportunity for civil society at the HLPF and other UN processes. These are typically sessions that focus on a particular topic or issue as it relates to the SDGs and 2030 agenda. They are often hosted in partnerships between governments, intergovernmental organizations, MGoS, and, in some cases, NGOs. They are short events, lasting only 1 hour 15 minutes in 2017, and which typically consist of a panel of speakers with time for questions.

Side events provide an opportunity for dialogue among stakeholders, including government officials. They also provide a platform to explore perspectives that are not addressed or not addressed in detail within other HLPF discourses.

In 2017, WAN applied for a side event along with Humane Society International, Compassion in World Farming, A Well Fed World, Brighter Green and the Good Food Institute that would have been presided over by Amina Abaza, who was at that time Minister of Animal Welfare and the Environment in the Women's Government of Egypt. The goal of the side event was to highlight the inherent unsustainability of industrial animal agriculture and to promote alternatives that can provide healthier, more equitable and humane solutions to world hunger and food security while eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity, with speakers who would examine how animal welfare could be leveraged to achieve the implementation of the SDGs under review at the 2017 HLPF (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and 17).

Unfortunately, the side event was not accepted by DESA. However, upon examination of events that were formally accepted by DESA, it is apparent that the vast majority of accepted side events were hosted by governments or intergovernmental organizations. Side events submitted by NGOs alone were generally not accepted. Side events that were not formally accepted were still included on the UN side event agenda, and were invited to host at nearby UN-related venues. WAN and co-applicants opted not to host the side event off-site. However, it appears that if similar circumstances arise in 2018, a side event not invited to take place within UN Headquarters can still be successful and could be considered if there is

appropriate bandwidth for marketing and funding.

The process for side event selection in 2017 was problematic and controversial. While the side event application deadline was in early May, many NGOs did not receive notification as to whether their events were accepted until nearly two weeks prior to the HLPF (late June). This created significant controversy within the NGO community, particularly because visa deadlines for non-U.S. citizens had already passed. A sign-on letter was circulated and submitted to the President of ECOSOC. This letter resulted in dialogue between civil society and DESA DSD. While it has been promised that 2018's process will be better managed, APOs should be prepared for a significant amount of uncertainty and limited timeframe for planning side events.

Attending Side Events

In 2017 many side events were tangential or unrelated to animal welfare, but provided an opportunity to learn issues, understand UN processes, communication and terminology. For events that address issues which are related to animals, it is helpful to be prepared to raise questions after the presentations that ask the panelists to address any interlinkages or intersections with animals.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN, Humane Society International, Compassion in World Farming, A Well Fed World, Brighter Green, the Good Food Institute and Amina Abaza, former Minister of Animal Welfare and the Environment in the Women's Government of Egypt, applied for a side event addressing animal agriculture's interlinkages to 2017's SDGs.

WAN attended a number of side events, and intervened to raise the issue of animal welfare when relevant.

Proposals for 2018

APOs should consider applying for a side event for the 2018 HLPF. Themes and content should be considered after briefings for the SDGs under review and 2018 theme have been completed. It will be important to find a sympathetic Permanent Mission to co-host and submit the side event since this will increase the likelihood that the proposal will be accepted.

WAN also recommends APOs coordinate attendance of relevant side events and active engagement on animal welfare issues in these sessions at the 2018 HLPF.

Direct Lobbying

Attendance at the HLPF provides the opportunity to meet with representatives of national Permanent Missions. In 2017, the Women's Major Group and the NGO MG tracked meetings between their representatives and permanent missions. After the silence procedure of the Ministerial Declaration was broken, both groups encouraged their members to contact Missions to encourage specific outcomes. These meetings were structured as to further the interests of the respective Major Groups, because individuals and organizations were meeting with Missions as representatives of that group.

However, it is possible for organizations to contact permanent missions and try to set up a meeting in their own right. This could be a good advocacy opportunity. If specific member states could be persuaded to promote animal welfare, their suggestions will carry greater weight within ECOSOC (and other organs of the UN). The [UN Blue Book](#) provides the contact details for Permanent Missions.

Actions Taken in 2017

In 2014, Akisha Townsend Eaton, WAN's former Policy and Legal Resource Advisor, met with Brazil and several other permanent missions. WAN did not engage any permanent missions in 2017. It is not known if other APOs have met with Permanent Missions in the specific context of the HLPF in 2017.

Proposals for 2018

APOs should explore the opportunity of engaging permanent missions ahead of, and potentially during, the HLPF.

Opportunities through the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders

Promotion of Press contacts, Events and Individual NGO Position Papers through Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Website

The Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) does not generally conduct its own advocacy, but through the MGoS Coordination Mechanism (CM) the MGoS facilitates participation and sharing of information from the MGoS to a broader audience. More information about the MGoS can be found in [this blog](#) written by the MGoS CM 2017 co-chairs, Naiara Costa and Emilia Reyes.

In 2017, the organization Action for Sustainable Development provided a section of their website for use by the MGoS CM. This became a platform where press contacts representing thematic clusters or major groups, civil society side events, and civil society organization position statements and press releases were made available. Organizations made their resources available by sending them to MGoSHLPF@gmail.com.

The platform can be viewed on the [Action 4 Sustainable Development website](#).

Actions Taken in 2017

No APO position papers were posted on the website in 2017. There was not at this time a formalized thematic cluster on animal welfare, so there was no press contact included.

Proposals for 2018

APOs should prepare position statements, press releases and press contacts for posting on the MGoS website (and beyond).

Opportunities through the NGO Major Group Fostering Alliances with other NGOs

A major benefit of the NGO Major Group (NGO MG) is that it provides an opportunity to network and form alliances with organizations working outside the realm of animal protection. There are many groups who are sympathetic to animal welfare issues, or find that aspects of their work align with the goals of APOs. Ultimately, having a diversity of voices supporting animal welfare at the UN is important. If organizations working on issues currently considered more central to the 2030 agenda can incorporate and promote animal welfare, the message will likely be better received.

However, the NGO MG is a collaborative organization. It is recognized that there are a diversity of issues represented, but it is also a volunteer-facilitated organization, meaning that individuals from organizations with their own specific missions are undertaking a significant amount of work to ensure that the diverse voices of civil society are represented at the UN, even if those voices do not align with

their own mission. Thus, the NGO MG can only function when members are cooperative. APOs should take care to provide support to the functioning of the NGO MG where possible.

Actions Taken in 2017

WAN worked collaboratively with other members of the NGO MG to ensure that animals were included in a number of NGO MG interventions during week one of the HLPF.

Proposals for 2018

The AITC should continue with its collaborative approach in organizing its work within the NGO MG. APOs should provide additional support the NGO MG's work where possible.

Promotion of Individual NGO Position Papers

The NGO MG promotes papers and position statements of individual members by posting them on the NGO MG website.

Actions Taken in 2017

Thinking Animals United prepared a position statement on the SDGs under review in 2017 and how these relate to animal welfare and conservation.

Proposals for 2018

The AITC should jointly prepare a statement for the 2018 HLPF, incorporating expertise from all members. This report should be completed in time to inform the NGO MG position statement (early in 2018).

Development of the Animal Issues Thematic Cluster

The Animal Issues Thematic Cluster (AITC) is currently being developed. This has been spearheaded by Thinking Animals United, with support from World Animal Net and Nonviolence International. Thematic clusters act as reservoirs of expertise on specific issues. It is also possible for thematic clusters to become stakeholder groups in their own right under the MGoS system. Becoming a standalone stakeholder group would amplify the voice for animals at the UN.

Actions Taken in 2017

Thinking Animals United has taken the lead in bringing member organizations into the cluster. With co-organizers World Animal Net and Nonviolence International, the AITC hosted its first introductory meeting in December 2017.

Proposals for 2018

The AITC will create its own position statement on animals and the intersections with the SDGs. It will contribute to the NGO MG position paper. Early in 2018, the cluster should create a roadmap that will guide its engagement in the 2018 HLPF and preparatory events. The cluster should also develop a plan to fulfill the requirements to become its own stakeholder group in coming years.

Key Objectives for the Animal Protection Movement at the UN

Why Advocate for Animals at the UN?

There have in the past been efforts by APOs to advocate for animals at the UN, but these efforts have not yet resulted in concrete action. However, the international policy environment as it relates to animal welfare has undergone significant changes since many of these efforts took place. There are now standards for animal welfare that 181 countries have agreed to implement, there are Regional Animal Welfare Strategies covering every continent, and the World Bank is leading work to insure that agricultural development and investments focus on responsible and humane “good practice” in the field of animal welfare. Many countries are moving to implement national animal welfare legislation as well. Policymakers around the world are beginning to recognize the need to address animals in a modern and up-to-date way.

Because of the inter-governmental, regional, and national progress being made on animal welfare, it is only a matter of time before the UN will address animals in a meaningful way, but APOs will have to step up at the national, regional and international level to ensure this happens.

In 2015 the UN transitioned from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals which comprise the 2030 agenda. While a handful of APOs were involved in the development of the goals, targets and indicators for the new Sustainable Development Agenda, to the best of WAN's knowledge, 2017 was the first year that APOs engaged the new agenda in a full and systematic manner.

The relevant UN organ to animal protection issues is the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). ECOSOC is also the only main organ of the UN that has a process in place facilitating involvement by NGOs (although the General Assembly has faced pressure to formalize a process as well). Ultimately, APOs will have to push for meaningful progress for animals at the UN through ECOSOC, but will be most successful if concurrently developing relationships with permanent missions to also influence the General Assembly.

While resolutions and declarations from the UN are not legally binding, they are aspirational, provide moral weight to the animal protection cause, and can serve to raise awareness internationally (for example, the UN's [Resolution on World Wildlife Day](#)). They can also lead to the development of stronger international legal instruments and provide a tool with which countries can push for implementation and enforcement of animal protection legislation at a national level. For these reasons, advocacy at the UN is essential to moving the animal protection movement forward on a global level.

Status of Animals in the UN System and HLPF

Discussion of animals is infrequent at the UN, including at the HLPF, and when animal issues are raised it tends to be in the context of human well-being. There appears to be little knowledge of animal welfare issues and how they intersect with the SDGs or sustainable development among HLPF participants.

The focus of the HLPF is human welfare and rights. In many cases, even protection of the environment is promoted only in terms of its utility to humans as a resource. Therefore, it is important to amplify and shift the conversation on animals and nature at the UN.

Immediate Goals

In WAN's view, the immediate goal for APOs at the UN should be to start the conversation on animal welfare. For the issue to gain traction, framing will be important. WAN believes that three major strands will need to be linked to animal welfare for it to gain traction at the UN:

- Linking animal welfare to SDGs and respective targets and indicators as a cross-cutting issue
- Framing animal welfare as an emerging issue, bolstered by scientific evidence from the fields of animal sentience, animal welfare science, one health/one welfare and conservation
- The need for policy coherence in policies and solutions promoted by the UN

Linking to SDGs as a Cross-cutting Issue

Animal welfare will need to be linked to the SDGs to gain traction. For example, SDG 3 (health) cannot be achieved without addressing the treatment of animals in intensive agriculture and the contribution of this sector to antimicrobial resistance and SDG 13 (climate change) cannot be achieved without addressing the contribution of animal agriculture to greenhouse gases and climate change.

The more specific these linkages can be made, the better. Each SDG has a set of targets and indicators. The targets are actions that must be taken to consider the SDG implemented. For example:

"By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons"

The indicators are outcomes that can be used to assess progress on particular indicators, for example:

"Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height $>+2$ or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)."

Where possible, it will be important to show that specific interventions on animal welfare can assist progress on specific targets. Research and briefings on these should be completed early in 2018. Special attention should be given to SDGs under review in 2018.

The SDGs and their respective targets and indicators can be found on the [Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#).

An important theme of the 2030 agenda is that all 17 SDGs are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This comes from the push to eliminate "silo thinking." Solutions that are "cross-cutting," i.e. can help achieve numerous SDGs at once, are important. Animal welfare is indeed a cross-cutting issue and should be promoted as such.

Advocating Animal Welfare and Related Solutions as Emerging Issues

The HLPF is mandated to address emerging issues and to strengthen the science-policy interface. Because animal welfare and sentience has been overlooked by the SDGs, it is important to show that scientific knowledge is growing on the issue (and related issues that affect animal welfare, such as the overconsumption of animal products in Western diets), and that it is something that needs to be addressed going forward.

At the HLPF itself, there was little formal discussion of emerging issues beyond the one Thematic Session on the Science-Policy Interface and Emerging Issues, at which WAN was able to promote the inclusion of animal welfare as an emerging issue through the NGO MG intervention. The most substantial discussion

of emerging issues as mandated by the HLPF appear in the Global Sustainable Development Reports (GSDR).

The GSDR is produced with a goal of strengthening the science-policy interface, and one of the underlying issues it aims to address is that of emerging issues. The first GSDR was published in 2014, and provided a prototype for future reports. The 2015 GSDR hosted an open call from scientists as to emerging issues that need to be addressed by policymakers based on lessons learned from a similar call in preparation for the 2014 report. The 2016 GSDR proposes a structure and process for future emerging issue identification. The next GSDR will be published in 2019. It is therefore worth monitoring GSDR processes for opportunities for civil society to engage, or opportunities to alert researchers or other intergovernmental organizations working in relevant fields to opportunities to weigh into this process.

The [2015 GSDR report](#) provides summaries of emerging issue briefings that were received during the open call for submissions, categorized by SDG. While animal welfare was not explicitly raised, the following appeared in the report's discussion of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (p. 138):

"The linkages between emissions from agriculture and livestock rearing, on one side, and food consumption patterns, on the other, are sketched out in a brief that touches on health and sustainable consumption and production.⁵⁸³ The authors point out that in many countries per capita caloric consumption is, on average, about 500 kcal per day (or 20 per cent) greater than needed – curbing this overconsumption would have obvious health benefits, but would also mean that the production of these calories and the attendant resources could be re-directed or avoided. With respect to food waste – an issue addressed in SDG target 12.3 – the brief states that 30 to 40 per cent of food is wasted due to losses in storage and transport, and lack of portion control. Finally, dietary choices also have an impact. Emissions from plant-based foods for human consumption are on average smaller than for meat, because the efficiency of producing food calories or protein can be four to twenty times greater without the intermediate step of feeding livestock."

In relation to SDG 14 (oceans), there were inputs highlighting the unsustainability of aquaculture if current practices continue.

The scientific briefings received and accepted for the 2014, 2015, and 2016 GSDRs can be viewed [here](#). Again, while animal welfare or sentience research are not being raised (or potentially are not being accepted), there are some topics being raised that are favorable to animal welfare. For example, several submissions raise the issue of the unsustainability of the livestock sector, [the need for alternatives and protein substitutes](#), and [synergies between sustainable and healthy diets](#). There are also a number of submissions dealing with aquaculture.

The [2016 GSDR chapter on emerging issues](#) focuses on outlining a process to 1) identify potential emerging issues and 2) classify and assess. The following sources were used to compile the 2016 GSDR:

- High level reports from bodies such as the World Economic Forum, Global Opportunity Report, and the UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board;
- Selected issues from emerging issue identification mechanisms within the UN system (such as UNEA);
- A snapshot of emerging issues and research priorities identified by national academies of sciences;
- Selected issues from leading academic journals; and
- A summary of relevant points from crowdsourced science briefs.
- The 2016 GSDR proposed criteria for filtering issues that are truly emergent on a global scale:
- The extent to which issue in question related closely to the SDGs;

- whether the issue is a potential threat or opportunity of global or at least international relevance;
- whether management of the risk or harnessing of the opportunity depends on international action and cooperation; and
- whether the issue is expected to persist (non-transient) and whether or not a clear increasing trend can be established.

The 2016 GSDR also notes that UN bodies, such as UNEA and UNESCO, are likely to increase their involvement in emerging issue identification in the coming years. Advocates should watch these various bodies for opportunities that will feed up into emerging issue identification within the Sustainable Development Agenda.

In 2017 WAN contacted a number of scientists to respond to a call for inputs into the 2019 GSDR spanning the fields of animal welfare science, animal sentience, connections to human health, and innovation in protein alternatives. Submissions were made by Marc Bekoff, PhD and scientists at the Good Food Institute, among others. The call for these inputs closed on December 1, 2017.

Policy Coherence

At the HLPF there is a strong emphasis on the need for “policy coherence.” Policy coherence simply means that policies created across policymaking bodies should be mutually enforcing, facilitating the achievement of agreed common objectives. To ensure policy coherence, policies promoted by the UN, specifically those for implementation by national governments, should take animal welfare into account.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has created standards for animal welfare for animals in agriculture, research, working animals and dog population management. These standards have been agreed by 181 member countries. To support the implementation of these standards, there are now Regional Animal Welfare Strategies (RAWS) covering every continent. Notably, the new Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) states that animals should be treated as sentient beings (emphasis added).

In addition, the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union, which came into force in 2009, recognizes animals as sentient beings.

In the development and recommendation of policies and solutions from the UN into the Sustainable Development Agenda, the argument can be made by animal protection organizations for policy coherence in respect to animal welfare and the basic standards that have been agreed by the majority of UN member states. Policies promoted through the HLPF should support the implementation of OIE animal welfare standards or, at the very least, not hinder implementation of these standards by national governments.

Long Term Goals

Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) and other Declarations

The Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) and other related initiatives have a history reaching back to at least the 1950s. However, animal protection has moved steadily forward since that time, with all regions of the world now having animal welfare strategies and many countries adopting and updating their national animal protection legislation. The World Organisation for Animal Health now has baseline animal welfare standards for various animal issues (with more in development), which have been agreed by 181 countries.

As a Declaration by the United Nations General Assembly, UDAW would be non-binding, but could

recognize the sentience of animals and human responsibility towards them as an issue of global importance. A declaration such as UDAW could further propel countries to pass their own legal protections for animals.

UDAW was originally proposed by World Animal Protection (formerly World Society for the Protection of Animals) in 2000, and went through several hopeful progressions, kicked off by the Manila Conference in 2003. The Manila Conference convened 19 governments, with the European Council and United States as observers and concluded with [its own declaration](#). In 2005 an intergovernmental committee was established to further promote UDAW. UDAW was endorsed by a number of national veterinary associations, the OIE, the FAO and the Council of the European Union. Over 40 governments and 2 million individuals [have expressed support for UDAW](#).

In 2011 a new draft was proposed which took into account comments from member states. This draft can be viewed on the [database of Global Animal Law](#).

World Animal Protection is now the secretariat of UDAW, with support from a steering committee which includes the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), World Animal Net and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Related campaigns, such as the Universal Declaration for Animal Rights (UDAR), should also be considered in the development of future campaigns. Jean-Marc Neumann published an essay in the journal *Animal Law* in which he assesses the reasons why the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights, which was proclaimed at (not by) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1978, a venue chosen by the Director General of UNESCO, was doomed to obscurity:

1. Only one organization initiated and defended the project (the International League of Animal Rights and its national Leagues)
2. Push-back from the animal-use industry
3. Lack of financial and logistical resources necessary for the project
4. The fact that the project was Francophone limited its scope
5. In some aspects the declaration was too radical, while in others it was too conservative, meaning that it could not be widely adopted.

Additionally, it should be noted that one of the major hindrances to progress for UDAW has been the inability of the the animal protection movement to broadly agree on the wording of any version of UDAW, coming down to the perennial debate between rights and welfare and the fact that any universal declaration necessarily is reduced to the lowest common denominator that can be agreed to by member states.

In charting a path forward, it is recommended that the members of the AITC collaborate with the UDAW steering group to conduct a stocktaking of progress, current situation, and proposals for a path forward. It has been suggested that UDAW could be strategically linked with a resolution on World Animal Day, as the latter may be easier and quicker to achieve as a progression after successful recognition of World Wildlife Day (more on this below) and helpful in raising the profile of animal welfare, thus facilitating future acceptance of UDAW. Lastly, it is recommended that the UDAW initiative be widened as a collaborative process supported by the AITC and the broader animal protection movement. In the current climate, acceptance of a declaration of animal rights at UN level is not a political reality, but UDAW has a history and support base which could be built on with strategic, proactive and concerted advocacy. Although detractors say it is not perfect, the route to broad acceptance rarely delivers perfection, and acceptance of UDAW would undoubtedly be a useful step on the UN ladder, providing both an immediate advocacy tool and an opportunity to be built on subsequently.

Resolution on World Animal Day

The first World Animal Day was organized by Heinrich Zimmermann, the writer and publisher of a German magazine called Mensch und Hund/Man and Dog on March 24, 1925 in Berlin. It was later moved to October 4, and was endorsed by a congress of the world's animal protection organizations in 1931. Since then, World Animal Day has grown into an international movement, with [hundreds of events taking place across the world](#) each year.

The United Nations recognizes numerous awareness days throughout the year, including World Radio Day and International Day of Human Space Flight. Surely there is scope for a day recognizing animals as well.

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a [resolution](#) recognizing World Wildlife Day, to take place on March 3 of each year. March 3 was originally designated as World Wildlife Day at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), held in Bangkok, Thailand in March of 2013. The CITES resolution was sponsored by the Kingdom of Thailand. This outcome was then transmitted to the UN General Assembly.

The resolution on World Wildlife Day recognizes the many streams of ongoing UN and intergovernmental work on wildlife and conservation issues, including the “intrinsic value of wildlife and its various contributions,” the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the outcome of the Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”, CITES and its resolution on World Wildlife Day, UN General Assembly [resolution 67/189](#) expressing concern about environmental crimes and wildlife trafficking, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Given these streams, to achieve a World Animal Day recognition at the UN it may be worthwhile to consider raising awareness of animal welfare, the “intrinsic value of animals and their various contributions” and the links of one health/one welfare conceptual approaches at various streams within the UN, particularly the HLPF, UNEP (which cohosted a conference on Animal Welfare with the African Network for Animal Welfare in 2017), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organisation for Animal Health. Recognition of animal welfare as a cross-cutting or emerging issue in HLPF outcomes could be particularly useful.

Tapping into Harmony with Nature and Shifting the Development Paradigm

There is now a “head of steam” rising to replace the current development paradigm, based primarily on economic growth (measured by GDP), as it is recognized that constant growth is not possible or desirable in a world with finite resources, an increasingly degraded environment, and burgeoning inequality and social ills. The two leading contenders are the UN's own Harmony with Nature initiative, and Happiness/Well-Being.

The UN Harmony with Nature initiative recognizes that economic growth has been achieved at the expense of the natural world, as well as of many human populations. A recent UN Concept Note stresses the “urgent need for society to replace the current anthropocentric worldview with a holistic system of governance”, where “humanity would accept the reality that its well-being is derived from the well-being of the Earth and that living in harmony with nature is a necessary means to sustaining human well-being and human rights”.

The 2017 World Happiness Report also mentions the need for a move away from the focus on growth, and includes the following examples from the OECD and UN Development Programme (UNDP):

In June 2016, the OECD committed itself “to redefine the growth narrative to put people’s well-being at the centre of governments’ efforts”.

Recently, the head of the UNDP spoke against what she called the “tyranny of GDP”, arguing that what matters is the quality of growth. “Paying more attention to happiness should be part of our efforts to achieve both human and sustainable development” she said.

Most countries across the world now use measures of happiness/well-being and sustainability, in addition to GDP. But what is missing (in all but Bhutan) is the use of these as a primary focus and aspiration of national development. There is enormous scope for advocacy to push for such policy change – preferably with an alternative primary development paradigm which combines these – such as that supported in the NGO MG, i.e. one which “furthers the well-being of humans, nature and animals, and which sees as its ultimate aim the achievement of equity and justice, to ‘leave no one behind’.”

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AITC	Animal Issues Thematic Cluster
APO	Animal Protection Organization
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna
CFS	Committee on Food Security
CM	Coordination Mechanism
CSD	Committee on Sustainable Development
DESA	DSD Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSDR	Global Sustainable Development Report
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
HLS	High Level Segment
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGoS	Major Groups and other Stakeholders
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGO MG	Non-Governmental Organization Major Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
RFSD	Regional Forum for Sustainable Development
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UDAW	Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare
UDAR	Universal Declaration of Animal Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WAN	World Animal Net



This guide will be updated annually to assist in preparation for the United Nation's High Level Political Forum.

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