

2008 WORLD ANIMAL DAY (WAD) SPEECH
BY GHANA'S AMBASSADOR TO WORLD ANIMAL DAY
(UJAKPA MARTIN MABEIFAM)

Definition of World Animal Day

This is a day set aside:

- to celebrate animal life in all its forms
- to celebrate humankind's relationship with the animal kingdom
- to acknowledge the diverse roles that animals play in our lives – from being our companions, supporting and helping us, to bringing a sense of wonder into our lives
- to acknowledge and be thankful for the way in which animals enrich our lives

History of World Animal Day (WAD):

World Animal Day was started in 1931 at a convention of ecologists in Florence as a way of highlighting the plight of endangered species. Since then it has grown to encompass all kinds of animal life and is widely celebrated in countries throughout the world. October 4 was chosen as World Animal Day as it is the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

Participants of World Animal Day (WAD)

It is intended as a day of celebration for anyone in the world who cares about animals. It is not restricted to any one

- Nationality
- Creed
- Religion
- political belief or ideology.

World Animal Day in Ghana

As far as the Nkwanta Kindness Clubs (NKC's) and the Society for the Welfare of Animals-Ghana(SWAGH) are concerned, World Animal Day(WAD) at a District level and in a Rural Area in Ghana dates as far back as 2003. With Ghana Society for the Protection and Care of Animals(GSPCA) concerned and World Animal Day celebration in a city setting, World Animal Day may date back before 2003. Ever since then, the Nkwanta Kindness Clubs (NKC's) and the Society for the Welfare of Animals-Ghana(SWAGH) have celebrated each year's World Animal Day in the very possible way ever available. This year round, the Nkwanta Kindness Clubs (NKC's) and the Society for the Welfare of Animals-Ghana(SWAGH) together with

the Dodowa Kindness Clubs(DKC's) are celebrating World Animal Day(WAD) in a special way that gives it a National colour than ever before.

Just to look briefly into the groups mentioned above;

The Nkwanta Kindness Club is an Animal Kindness Club that sprung up in the Nkwanta District of the Volta Region in 2003 under my leadership but through the joint efforts Rev. Godwin Fiagome Dela, Dr. Eric Obeng Bempong and the Ujakpa family.

The Dodowa Kindness Club is also an Animal Kindness Club that sprung up in the Dangme West District of the Greater Accra Region in 2005 under my leadership but through the joint efforts of Master Amamu Stephen Ocansey, Master Tonto Baffour Kwadwo, Master James Azamatsi, Master Godson Channor, and Master Gabriel Dinu.

The quest of the founders of the Nkwanta Kindness Clubs and the the Dodowa Kindness club to promote Animal Welfare Nationally and not only District wise led to the formation of the Society for the Welfare of Animals-Ghana(SWAGH) in the later part of 2005.

A lot of challenges face the three groups mentioned above and as a result, we have not been able to achieve all our objectives as planned. Despite this handicap, We have always tried our best to make the little impact wherever possible. Through our work, a lot of people in the Nkwanta District have become conscious of animal welfare issues. Here a few individuals have also come to understand animal Welfare issues and with activities of this nature and our educational campaigns that will last for the next month, a lot of people here will also become conscious of animal welfare issues. Regionally, it was by hearing of what we have been doing on Animal Welfare in Ghana that moved Steve Idowu Omoarukhe and Elisha Adewole of Nigeria to come down to Ghana to learn on Animal Welfare from us. Also Christiano Afronto of Guinea Bissau got moved by same circumstances to study Animal Welfare from us. Through our efforts, Steve is currently Nigeria's Ambassador to World Animal Day and Christiano Afronto is Guinea Bissau's Ambassador to World Animal Day. Internationally, World Society for the Welfare of Animals(WSPA) recognized our work and awarded us thrice in three different years. Institute of Animal Care Education (IACE) in UK also recognized our work and together with Sheffield College sponsored two members of the clubs to study on animal Welfare in UK for two weeks. Zoological Society of London (ZSL) also awarded one of our members in recognition of the work we are doing. In summary, we are trying our best to do the best in our reach and hopefully, we all shall someday come to understand the need for a high standard of Animal welfare in this Country.

Need for Today's Meeting

Today's meeting is a meeting that has been organized as part of activities to mark this year's World Animal Day. We are seeking to use today to make all participants sited here to understand:

- who we are
- what we are about
- our need for your co-operation in most of our activities
- our need for your support in our activities
- World Animal Day Celebration

Earlier in this speech, I talked about who are but just to reiterate it. The organizers of today's occasion and the expected month long occasion of World Animal Day in Ghana come from four different groups and these are the Nkwanta Kindness clubs(NKC's), Dodowa Kindness clubs(DKC), the Society for the Welfare of Animals – Ghana(SWAGH) and the office of Ghana's Ambassador to World Animal Day. Due to lack of funds, the first three groups have decided to join the office of Ghana's Ambassador to World Animal Day to celebrate the occasion of World Animal day in Ghana every year until they are financially capable to run their planned year wise programmes. By this, quite a good number of Ghanaians would be touched by our WAD message to be compassionate to Animals and to protect the environment which serves as a habitat for all.

Our main objective is to promote kindness and high welfare standards to all animals and we are working at achieving this through the use of educational campaigns to Schools, Churches, Mosques, conferences/meetings, other public groupings, individuals, Animal Farmers and anybody who in one way or the other has something to do with Animals like us sited here. We believe that Animals are creatures that were created by God for a purpose. All areas of life, be it Religion, Science, Ethics, Education and so on, all believe in this. Our campaign isn't against the use of animals for the very purpose for which they were created but rather our campaign is against the manner or way in which animals are used to achieve these purposes. Example, the rearing of farm Animals in a natural environment for meat is acceptable to us but an inhumane method of farming to provide meat is not acceptable. **Biblically** it can be proved that animals have the right not to be mistreated or killed without Cause. Just to mention a few out of the many, K. B Napier of Bible Theology Ministries once said, "Scripture does not support the abuse of lower species, for example, scriptures says, "oxen that tread corn are entitled to eat some of it in return". The book of proverbs 12:10 say's, "A righteous man regardeths the life of his animal (beast); but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel". Few realize as they should the sinfulness of abusing animals or leaving them to suffer neglect. The question is: are you part of this few or not? Think about it. In the book of Numbers 22: 33, we hear of an angel saying, that for the act of Prophet Balaams Ass(animal), he would have killed him and saved the ass's life. Surprised!!!!!!? read more on this in the book of numbers 22 from the Bible.

Islamically, it can be equally proved that animals have the right not to be mistreated. An article once by Reza Gharebaghi said, " According to Islamic principles, humanity is not allowed to do everything to living things

and must only take their lives if necessary. Animals represent Allah's might and wisdom and humanity must pay attention to their health and living conditions". The Quran and Hadiths raise quite a number of issues when it comes to how animals should be manipulated. Just to mention a few. The holy prophet of Islam, "Muhammad" (PBUH) said that there is no beast of burden that does not pray to God every morning so that the Lord will bestow it an owner who would give it enough forage and water and would not overload it". 'Ali Ibn Abu T' (PBUH) once said, "Be obedient to Allah regarding his Subjects and the lands at your disposal, for you are responsible even for the survival of animals".

Scientifically it has been proved that Animals are sentient and deserve to be treated with respect. They need not be subjected to unnecessary pain. The major cause of environmental degradation, including the greenhouse effects, water pollution, the yearly bush fires problem in the northern sector of Ghana, loss of both arable land and top soil, for example, can all be traced to the exploitation of animals. In all these cases, to act to protect the affected animal (who first suffer) is to act to protect the earth first.

Ethically it has been proved that animals have the right not to be mistreated. In an article taken from the internet on Friday, 1st August, 2008 at about 1:44pm, the article had it that, "Justice is the highest principle of ethics. **We are not to commit or permit injustice so that good may come, not to violate the rights of few so that many might benefit.** Slavery, Child labour, Racism and Sexism just to mention a few sometime ago when it was accepted as good allowed this, but time proved this wrong and now, it's currently the turn of animal Rights".

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "**The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be measured by the way its animals are treated**". I hereby use this occasion to thank all organizations within the Animal welfare Industry who have made it possible for good animal welfare standards to be maintained in Ghana.

Ever since contacting all seated and represented here, you have all been very supportive and we appreciate it so greatly. Currently, our work is supported and run 100% by our dedicated volunteer members and two full time workers. It is also funded 5% by the General public, 25% by our Volunteers and full time employees and 70% by Ghana's Ambassador to World Animal Day. Like Oliver-twist, My humbly appeal to you is to consider to continue supporting us in any possible way that would enable us achieve the noble goal of promoting excellence in Animal Welfare in Ghana. The support could be in terms of ideas, kind, cash, logistics, educational materials or any other form like attending a meeting of ours like this one. Spreading our message to as many people as possible. For others who aren't here but in one way or the other would hear of our message and willing to help or join us, please do not hesitate to contact us. Do so through any of the following:

- Tel: 0246754889, 0246495356, 0245045697
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24TH September, 2008

OFFICE OF GHANA'S AMBASSADOR TO WORLD ANIMAL DAY (WAD)

(A celebration of animals and their contribution to our lives)



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WEBPAGES TO FIND INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF WORLD ANIMAL DAY(WAD), SOCIETY FOR THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS – GHANA(SWAGH) AND OFFICE OF GHANA'S AMBASSADOR TO WORLD ANIMAL DAY

1. Ghana's Ambassador to WAD webpage:
<http://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/Ambassadors/Webpages/Ghana.asp>
2. Link to Ambassador's webpage:
<http://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/Ambassadors/Webpages/AmbassadorIntro.asp>
3. PLAN TOWARDS 08 WAD in Ghana:
http://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/2008_events.asp?region=Africa
4. World Animal Day Home page:
<http://www.worldanimalday.org.uk/index.asp>
5. Ghana's WAD Ambassador's Visit to Sheffield College, UK:
<http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/index.cfm?parentid=be407c76-b057-4f9a-8da8-e4c63b2b1d43>
6. Ghana's WAD Ambassador's Visit to London Zoo:
<http://www.neotericdesign.co.uk/compass/newsletter/newsletter1.pdf>
7. 2006 World Animal Day celebration in Ghana:
wspa-international.org/publicfiles/KCNLetterSept06.pdf
8. Ghana's WAD Ambassador's appeal for support:
<http://www.neotericdesign.co.uk/compass/newsletter/newsletter2.pdf>