

2009 World Animal Week (WAW) Celebration
Chief Executive Officer's Speech
Society for the Welfare of Animals – Ghana
Ghana, W/A

Mr. Chairman, our dear guest speakers, invited guest, representatives from participating Institutions and Organizations, members from Society for the Welfare of Animals – Ghana, members from our sister Societies and Associations, brothers and sisters of our dear nation Ghana, Greetings to you all.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling upon me to deliver my speech.

Every Tom, Dick and Hurry here is a busy person and therefore taken time off your busy schedule to attend this seminar is an act in itself, commendable. Therefore, on behalf of SWAGH, I commend you all for your presence here today.

Just to give a brief History of SWAGH.

SWAGH is an acronym that stands for Society for the Welfare of Animals – Ghana. SWAGH is a Non Governmental Organization that receives no funding from Government. SWAGH seeks to promote the standards of Animal Welfare in Ghana. Core among these standards is the promotion of kindness to Animals. Though records of SWAGH have it that, the Organization originated in 2003, it dates as far back as 2001. It started as Animal Welfare Kindness clubs in the Nkwanta District of the Volta Region and in April, this year, got National Legal recognition as a Non Governmental Organization.

World Animal Day, this is a day set aside through out the Whole world to mark Animals and their contributions to human life. Celebration of World Animal Day in the World dates as far back as far as 1931. It began in a convention of ecologist in Florence, USA, as a way of highlighting the plight of endangered species and ever since has grown to encompass all kinds of Animal life. This day is not restricted to any particular Nationality, Creed, Religion or political belief. Instead it's a day set aside for any one who cares about Animals. To many, it doesn't make sense to pull resources together to mark this day. Additionally some also question why

SWAGH has chosen to promote Animal Welfare and Rights and not Human Rights or more pressing problems in Society. Just to clarify a few issues to these people: Animal Welfare and Rights is a necessary and integral action that must be undertaken in our quest to protect the Environment and our mother Planet, the Earth. If it wasn't so, Religion, Science, ethics, Governments and great minds the world has ever produced, would not have supported it. Mahatma Gandhi , the man accredited so much as the father, founder and leader of political Movements in India, once said, "The greatness and moral progress of a nation is measured by the way it's animals are treated". Go read Prov. 12: 10, in our holy book, the Bible and you will find out that, a Goodman regards the life of his Animal. Also go read the Quran and you will find out that, every Animal prays to God each morning, to bestow on it, an owner who would forage it enough, give it enough water and not overload it. Ethics even goes further, by saying, "we are not to commit or permit injustice so that good may come". I think, you will all agree with me that, all mentioned rhyme, harmonize and synchronize together very well. It is therefore in view of these that the theme for this year's celebration, "speak for an Animal, speak for the environment" was chosen and none other else. So the hosting of World Animal day in Ghana by SWAGH and SWAGH's quest to promote Animal Welfare and rights are just in the Right direction.

This year's celebration brings it to six, the number of World Animal Day celebrations that SWAGH has hosted in Ghana. Apart from the achievement of hosting the celebration of World Animal Day in Ghana, SWAGH has also impacted the World Community in the little way that we could. Locally, SWAGH has been able to influence the people of Nkwanta District about Animal Welfare and rights. People in Dodowa are also becoming conscious of Animal Welfare issues. Regionally, when Steve Idowu Omoarukhe, Nigeria's Ambassador to World Animal Day, Elisha Adewole, an Agric student from Nigeria and Solomon Benjamin, president and founder of Foundation for peace Building & Awareness Walk wanted to broaden their knowledge on Animal Welfare and Rights, they turned to no other experts, than those in SWAGH. Internationally, In recognition of our work, the Institute of Animal Care Education (IACE) and Sheffield College in UK sponsored two members of SWAGH on a three week trip to the UK to broaden their knowledge on Animal Welfare. Also Zoological Society of London, (ZSL) awarded a member of SWAGH, a student fellow. Finally but not the least, the African

Regional headquarters of WSPA, World Society for the Protection of Animals, formerly based in Kenya, recognized our work and in response awarded Nkwanta District SWAGH kindness clubs thrice.

Despite our successes, SWAGH face a lot of Challenges. Prominent among them is funding and Human Resource problem. As said earlier, SWAGH receives no funding from Government. Currently SWAGH Funding comes from member's dues and donations from friends of SWAGH. Funds from these two sources are just not sufficient to cater for the year to year operations of SWAGH. Because of this, SWAGH is not able to increase it's current staff number and even with the current staff of five, only two are full time workers. I therefore humbly make a plea to all seated here to assist us in any little way you can. The little you give can make a difference. Also It is in view of solving the Human Resource problem of the Organization that this seminar is being organized to assist our fifteen member volunteers learn from experts, our invited guest and employ in their work for the 2009/2010 year.

To all seated here and all who have made SWAGH come this far, on behalf of SWAGH, I say thank you and wish you all God's blessing and protection.

Thank you.