

08– 03 – 2024

- News: African Union
- Recently, during the 37th African Union Summit, 2024 in Ethiopia, African heads of state unanimously agreed to a historic ban on the trade of donkey skin, thereby prohibiting the killing of donkeys across the continent for their hides.
- This is a significant outcome following the Dar es Salaam declaration adopted at the first African Union-Inter african Bureau for Animal Resource (AU-IBAR) Pan-African Donkey Conference in December 2022.

Dar es Salaam Declaration

- The Dar es Salaam declaration was signed in Tanzania during the Pan African Donkey Skin Conference, organised by the African Union-Inter african Bureau for Animal Resource (AU-IBAR), where government ministers gathered to understand the harmful effects of the donkey skin trade on animals and communities in Africa.
- It underscores the rapid decrease in Africa's donkey population and advocates for increased investment in research, policies, and legislation to safeguard the species.

- It advocates for an African Union Commission resolution proposing a 15-year halt on the commercial slaughter of donkeys for their skins, alongside the creation of an African donkey strategy addressing exploitation, production, and productivity, to integrate these concerns into the global development agenda.

Reason behind Donkey Skin Trade

- The donkey skin trade, which is largely unregulated, involves cruel practices such as viciously slaughtering donkeys for their skins, which are then exported to China.
- The trade is illegal in some countries and legal in others causing cruelty and suffering to donkeys globally.

Uses

- The collagen from the donkey skins is used to create a product known as ejiao (a traditional Chinese medicine) which is then used in food, drink, and beauty products.

Negative Effect

- **On Donkeys:** The treatment of donkeys throughout the skin trade, from sourcing to slaughter, has caused intense suffering, with hundreds of thousands slaughtered over the past decade.
- **On Owners:** The global trade in donkey skin jeopardises efforts towards achieving at least nine out of the 17 United Nations sustainable development goals, including ending poverty, as donkeys are crucial to millions of people for whom equid ownership serves as the sole means to escape extreme poverty.
- The donkey skin trade significantly impacts women and children, reducing economic and educational opportunities by depriving them of the support of these animals, which are crucial for completing tasks efficiently. E.g. fetching water, and using as a draught animal.

African Union (AU)

- African Union is the political continental union consisting of 55 countries of Africa, except various territories of European possessions located in Africa which replaced Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
- Recently, it was decided that African Union (AU) will join the G 20 grouping.
- AU was announced in the Sirte Declaration in Sirte, Libya on 9th September 1999.

- Founded in 26th May 2001 in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** & its secretariat is located there.
- Most important decisions are made by **Assembly of AU, a semi-annual meeting of Heads of State and Government of its members.**
- 12th Extra-Ordinary Summit of African Union saw **54/55 members (except Eritrea) signing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).**
AfCFTA seeks to create a single continental market for goods & services.
- It establishes the **largest free trade agreement since the creation of WTO.**
- Recently, India has extended \$15 million financial support to Niger as a support for organizing AU Summit.
- **Membership of Male has been suspended** following the military coup in the state.