



## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

*[Women, Water and Working Animals]*

[Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, 2-3pm (GMT), Virtual]

Organized by: [The International Coalition for Working Equids (ICWE) - Brooke, The Donkey Sanctuary, SPANA, World Horse Welfare]

**TWO PAGE MAXIMUM**

### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

On Thursday 23 March, Brooke and the [International Coalition for Working Equids \(ICWE\)](#) hosted a virtual side event as part of the [UN 2023 Water Conference](#), discussing the crucial role of women and working equids in water projects around the world.

Valentina Allen, Chair of ICWE and Head of External Affairs at Brooke was joined on the panel by Lorena Barrantes San Román, Regional Coordinator of [World Horse Welfare](#), Kasum Athukorala, Regional Chair at GWP South Asia, Chair at [NetWater](#) and SC member of Women for Water Partnership, Isidore Della, National Director of [Inades-Formation](#) Burkina Faso, Johnson Lyimo, Executive Director of [Meru Animal Welfare Organisation](#) and Gebre Terefa, Community Training Officer at [SPANA Ethiopia](#).

ICWE is comprised of leading working animal NGOs Brooke, [The Donkey Sanctuary](#), [SPANA](#) and [World Horse Welfare](#). It was established to work with the [World Organisation for Animal Health](#) and its members to improve the welfare of working animals globally.

### **Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))**

Lack of access to fresh water causes terrible suffering to working animals around the world, every single day. Water is becoming increasingly hard to find, and thousands of working horses, donkeys and mules are suffering as a result. Right now communities are struggling as the effects of the pandemic squeeze their already scant resources and, as global warming continues, this problem is ever more urgent. Brooke is helping communities and their animals

**Commented [1]:** To download the file as a word document and edit, click:  
File -> Download -> As Word

access clean water close to their homes, supporting the attainment of the UN's SDG 6 – clean water and sanitation.

The global water crisis is a multi-faceted challenge and as such it requires multi-faceted, cross-sectoral solutions. It can only be solved through inclusive, diverse partnerships. We urge all stakeholders working towards the Water Action Agenda to commit to generating solutions that include all sectors, including animal health and welfare. It is only by working together that we can address the water challenges that lie ahead.

#### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- In many communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America, working horses, donkeys and mules play an essential role in the transport of water. Women and children often have to travel vast distances to obtain this vital and scarce resource. For many, this journey is made easier thanks to a working animal, usually a donkey. The water transported by animals is used by families to drink, cook, maintain basic hygiene, water crops, and provide drinking water for other farm animals.
- Yet, the contribution of these animals is not recognised in research, policy, programming or financing. It is not included in measures of water security or food security. As a result, communities whose water provision depends on their donkeys often lack knowledge and skills needed to keep their animals healthy and in good welfare, and they often lack the resources necessary to access veterinary care.
- Panellists discussed how water provision projects around the world are implemented through intersectional partnerships and involved locally owned solutions, with an emphasis on the role of women as drivers and owners of local water solutions.
- Valentina Riva said: "Working animals provide access to crucial services such as healthcare and education and enable community resilience. Yet their socioeconomic is frequently taken for granted, along with their health and welfare."

#### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Valentina Riva said: "Women, animals and children are an investment to society... women and girls spend up to two hundred million hours per day collecting water. We need to invest in the infrastructure that we have and raise awareness so we can solve the water crisis."
- Isidore Della said: "Integrated action is what we need in these climate stressed times. Let's bring working animals and women together in a way which supports them both."
- Lorena Barrantes said: "Life without women and water wouldn't be possible; they are fundamental for millions around the world. We must centre policies around intersectional alliances for development. Working together is the only way to face these challenges and leave no one behind."
- Gebre Terefa said: "Women and children can spend half a day walking to collect water. We need to target their needs when we design our programmes. Greater collaboration is needed between development and animal welfare sectors to devise holistic approaches to ensure safe access to water in areas reliant on working animals."
- Kusum Athukorala said: "All programs supporting donkeys should also have a component on gender and climate adaptation."