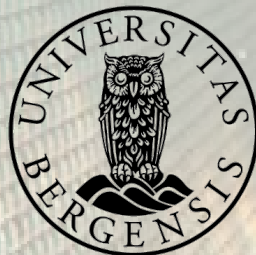
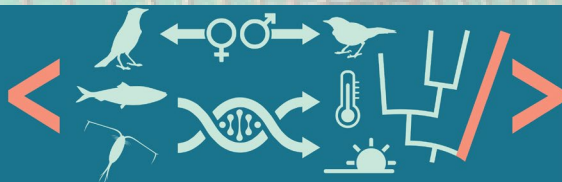

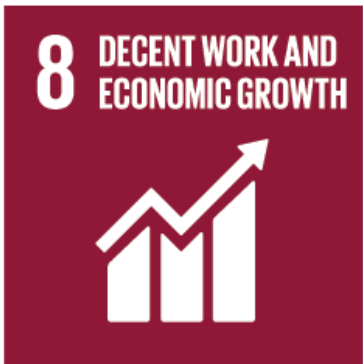


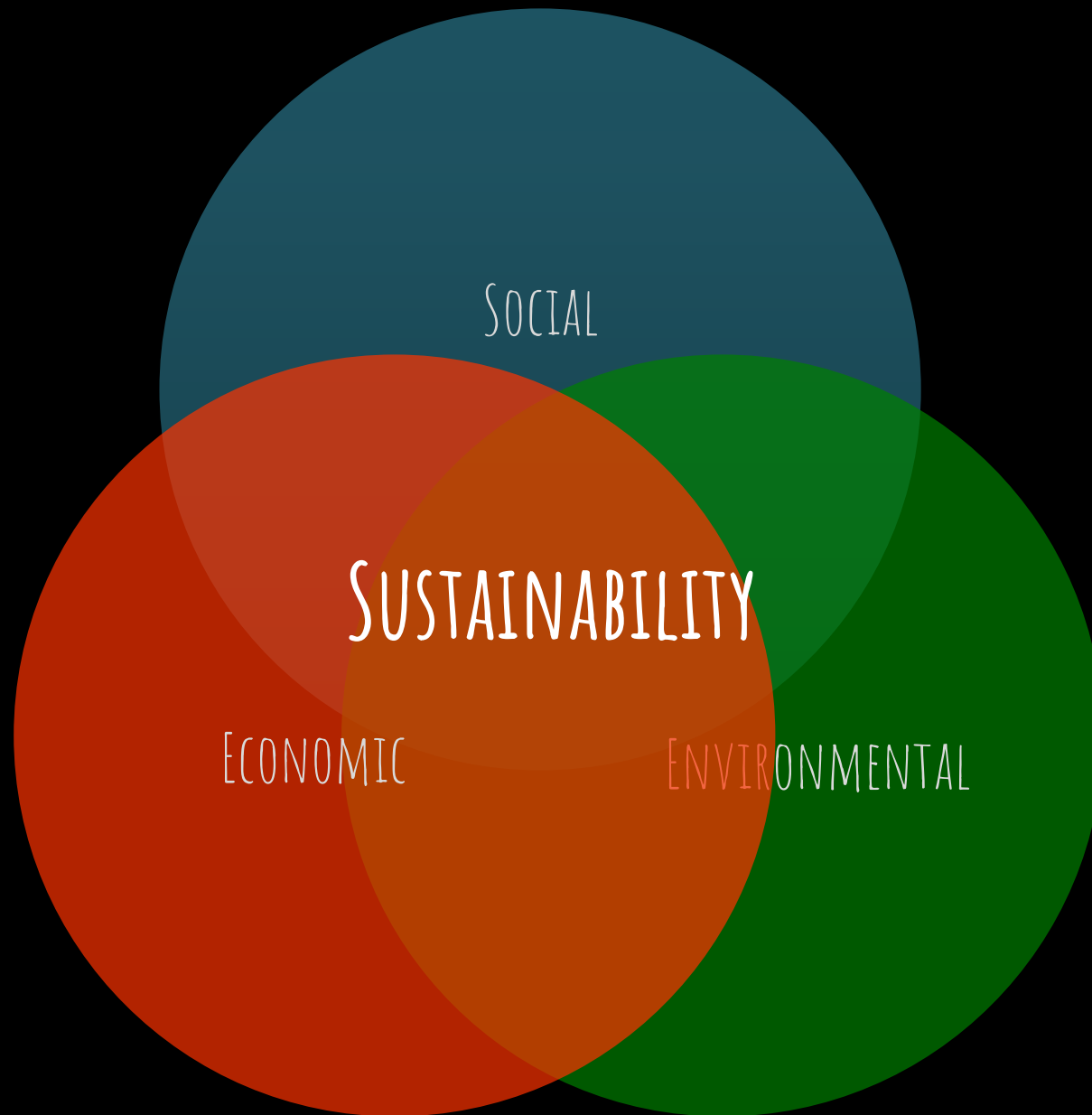
# The UN perspective

Theoretical  
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## SOCIETY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Animal rights in sustainability discourse

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research is to verify the approach to the issue of animals and their rights adopted in events on sustainable development with global repercussions promoted by the United Nations Organization, in order to characterize the perspective and comprehensiveness of animal rights awareness. It expounds on lines of philosophical thinking regarding animals and their rights and how they are inserted in the discussion of sustainable development and sustainability. It is a qualitative research of an exploratory nature and its development is defined by a survey of United Nations documents. The results show a chronological sequence of initial concern with animal habitat, subsequently increased by the concern with animals in extinction and, more recently, the broadening of the perspective towards animals in general and in different contexts, ergo a more conscious approach to animal rights.

**Keywords:** Animal rights; Sustainable development; Social and environmental plans and programs; Awareness of society.

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“...the absence of a document widely cited by various academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic articles: **The Universal Declaration of Animal Rights**. Although it is cited as having been declared and endorsed by UNESCO at a session in Brussels in 1978, the survey showed that such information is incorrect, and the document referred to **does not exist in UNESCO’s files and records.**”



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## Animal rights

Antonia Martin

Animal Welfare Year has just ended and with it a brave and on the whole successful attempt to bring together the most fispiparous body of individuals this side of a school of amoebae. Animal lovers have the reputation of being a touchy lot, a reputation that various public quarrels like the great RSPCA dirty linen display of 1975 and this year's putsch at the annual meeting of the League Against Cruel Sports do little to counter.

Nearly seventy national and local animal societies came together to launch the year, the idea of Clive Hollands, director of the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Vivisection. The assortment of organisations joining in, from the Cats' Protection League to Compassion in World Farming, gives some clue to the medley of interests involved. Dull it wasn't, as the ad says, and scratchy it could have been, but the year coincided with, probably contributed to, the profound reappraisal the animal welfare movement is currently undergoing.

In the public eye, it may not yet have sloughed off the old notion that it is the fief

of retired brigadiers and battling women spending their thwarted maternal instincts on animal substitutes. If this was ever a fair picture, it is not so now as something akin to revolution slowly seeps through the ranks. Animal welfare campaigners are becoming increasingly militant. They have realised the importance of unified action even if only for limited objectives at first, like the dozen or so farm animal welfare groups who have decided to give priority to the campaign to ban the export of live food animals.

The notion of animal rights has been gaining ground among certain young philosophers for several years. They have been taking apart our ingrained assumption that animals exist for us to use as unscrupulously as we please for food, experiments or sport, arguing for a reappraisal of our treatment of animals in moral terms and examining our responsibility in the whole dark and messy area. Richard Ryder, Oxford psychologist and newly-elected chairman of the RSPCA Council, launched a declaration against 'speciesism' at a recent RSPCA symposium in Cambridge. Speciesism, a word Ryder coined, is discrimination against other species because we have decided they have no moral rights — as we once denied black men the right not to be slaves.

In France, Professor Georges Heuse, of the International Institute of Human Biology, has been masterminding the Universal Declaration of Rights of Animals, now

**Chart 2 - Events and Documents addressing the Theme of Animal Rights in Sustainable Development**

| Event/Date and Venue<br>DOCUMENT  | Themes addressed related to Animal Rights   |
|---|---|
| <p>The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment<br/>(Stockholm/Sweden, 1972)<br/>Document: Environmental Manifest</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm that human beings cause to other living beings;</li> <li>• Safeguarding wildlife for future generations;</li> <li>• Human beings' duty to preserve and administer the wildlife heritage and its habitats;</li> <li>• Inclusion of wildlife conservation in economic development plans.</li> </ul> |
| <p>The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development – Earth Summit - Rio 92 / ECO 92<br/>(Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 1992)<br/>Document: Agenda 21</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to look after the animals;</li> <li>• Research on the relationship of the fauna with environment to foster the preservation of both.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity<br/>(Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 1992)<br/>Document: -</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals in extinction;</li> <li>• The way humans treat other species;</li> <li>• Caring for other living beings that inhabit the Earth;</li> <li>• Protection for the fauna.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Millennium Summit (New York/USA, 2000)<br/>Document: Millennium Development Goals (MDG)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing marine and terrestrial biodiversity destruction.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Presentation - Earth to Paris (Paris/France, March 2000)/Official public launch at the Peace Palace (The Hague/Netherlands, June 2000)<br/>Document: Earth Charter</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating all living beings with respect and consideration;</li> <li>• Protecting wildlife from poaching and trapping;</li> <li>• Impeding forms of fishing that cause extreme, prolonged or avoidable suffering;</li> <li>• Avoiding or eliminating the capture and destruction of species.</li> </ul> |

**Harm caused by humans, but focus on wildlife and habitats.**

**Need to look after. Fauna-environment relationship.**

**Extinctions. The way humans treat other species. Conservation.**

**Biodiversity.**

**Respect & consideration. Protecting wildlife. Reducing suffering of wild animals. Avoiding capture.**



**Chart 2 - Events and Documents addressing the Theme of Animal Rights in Sustainable Development**

| Event/Date and Venue<br>DOCUMENT   | Themes addressed related to Animal Rights  |
|--|--|
| <p>Mauritius Strategy<br/>(Mauritius, 2005)<br/>Document: Mauritius Strategy</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructing a community capable of conserving the species and their habitats;</li> <li>• Illegal fishing and fisheries management;</li> <li>• Coastal and marine resources for the conservation of trans-seasonal and migratory fish species.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20 (Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, 2012)<br/>Document: The Future we Want</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of a convention on illegal international trading in wild fauna and flora species threatened with extinction.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development<br/>(New York/USA, 2015)<br/>Document: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving marine and terrestrial animals and promoting fauna protection;</li> <li>• Illegal fishing and the replenishment of fishery stocks;</li> <li>• Animals in extinction, urgent measures against illegal hunting, protected fauna trafficking and trading in illegal wildlife products;</li> <li>• Reducing natural habitat degradation to curb biodiversity loss;</li> <li>• Maintenance of genetic diversity in regard to farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species.</li> </ul> |

**Conservation. Fisheries management.**

**Protecting wild fauna and flora.**

**Protection of wild animals. Habitat degradation. Biodiversity loss. Maintenance of genetic diversity in regard to farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species.**





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**“...no expressive changes have taken place in the 46 years since the first United Nations event and document. One could go so far as to say that the initiatives to effectively include animal rights on the agenda of sustainable development discussions viewing them as sentient beings with the right to life and to not suffering are still very timid.”**



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



“The welfare status of the fish has direct implications for their **production** and for the sustainability of the industry as a whole. Fish kept under good welfare conditions are **less stressed** and **less susceptible to diseases** and therefore they **require less medication and treatment**, show **better growth rates** and **food conversion** and ultimately provide a **better-quality product**. Finally, the **economic benefits are obvious**. In addition, **consumers care about welfare issues** potentially associated with intensive production practices, and they expect from the fish farmers that the welfare of farmed fish is addressed.”



# WELFARE CONCEPTS

- Definition of welfare according to Broom (1986): **The welfare of an animal is its state as regards its attempts to cope with its environment**
- Can welfare be reduced to the absence of negative factors such as injury and disease?
- Should the principles of the “Five Freedoms,” (to stand up, lie down, turn around, groom themselves and stretch their limbs, Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Committee 1979) also include positive measures such as the freedom to express normal behaviour?



# Codified “Five freedoms”:

- 1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst:** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
- 2. Freedom from Discomfort:** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease:** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4. Freedom to Express Normal Behavior:** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.
- 5. Freedom from Fear and Distress:** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.



# WELFARE CONCEPTS

- Still-unresolved question of **whether fishes are sentient animals**
- Fish do experience stress and fight-or-flight responses, as can be seen through hormonal changes
- But are fish experiencing feelings and emotions and are they conscious of pain and fear?

**....although there exists substantial neuroanatomical, physiological and ethological evidence that fish are sentient.**



# Conclusions and recommendations

...” recent years have seen a rapid change regarding knowledge on the **cognitive abilities of fish**, moving from seeing fish as “**pea brains**” to recognizing fish as organisms with **complex behavioural and social abilities and needs.**»

- EIFAAC recommends a **function-based approach to fish welfare**
- Aims to achieve good health and growth of cultured fish
- Relies primarily on practical and robust welfare indicators such as growth performance or absence of disease.
- Humane attitude in the practices of harvesting, stunning, killing, exsanguination and evisceration is required to **optimize fish welfare and product quality.**



Food and Agriculture  
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# Conclusions and recommendations

“It needs to be emphasized that the function-based approach appears to be appropriate given the **current state of knowledge**. However, given the rapid growth of the understanding of the **biological, social and environmental capacities and needs of fish**, this approach urgently needs **continuous development** and timely **updating** to ensure **improved welfare conditions** and **welfare monitoring techniques** for cultured fish.»