



AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND MAJOR GROUPS STATEMENT AND KEY MESSAGES AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 15TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

4th MARCH 2015, DUSIT THANI LAKEVIEW HOTEL, CAIRO, EGYPT

Your Excellency Hon. Dr. Binilith S. Mahenge, Minister of State Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania and AMCEN President;

Your Excellency Dr. Khaled Mohamed Fahmy Abdel Ael, Minister, Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt;

Mr. Achim Steiner, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UNEP;

The Director & Regional Representative, UNEP- ROA, Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye;

Excellency Ministers of Environment from various countries across the African continent;

Representatives of Regional Economic Integration Bodies;

Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed;

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to stand before you, on behalf of African civil society, to articulate our perspectives on the agenda of this 15th Session of AMCEN, which we have no doubt will provide direction for the African continent as we head towards the new Sustainable Development Goal Conference in New York and the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris all taking place this year.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, inspired by the consultative spirit of AMCEN, the African Civil Society under the auspices of Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, bringing together diverse groups from the youth, Indigenous Peoples, farmers, faiths, NGOs and networks, met and came up with a collective key message which we are already sharing with delegates. We hope that our views will be considered when making final decisions for this session.

We sincerely appreciate the space you have accorded civil society in this important process, and particularly thank UNEP Regional Office for Africa, the African Union, COMESA and the

Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting, participating and sharing with us during the pre-AMCEN Consultative Workshop and Major Groups Forum held on 1st of March 2015 .

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we meet here again, an exercise which has become a routine, to review the progress on international climate change and Post-2015 SDGs dialogue processes and Africa's involvement, our gains and losses.

During our workshop, we wondered whether it is worth participating any longer in the UNFCCC processes which have come and gone without delivering any concrete outcomes as the growing impacts of climate change continue to stand in the way of our development aspirations. The last two decades have been characterised by unfulfilled promises and commitments by developed countries but still we feel that the multilateral process under UNFCCC is the only sure way to deliver fairness and justice for poor countries and communities.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen; in the Copenhagen, Cancun, Durban, Doha, Warsaw and Lima climate conferences, the rallying call for Africa has been that the outcome of the negotiations must be, at a minimum, to keep Africa safe, ensure food security and agree a fair sharing of the atmospheric space between North and South.

We should not hold back from putting pressure on rich countries to change excessive production and consumption systems while protecting and compensating communities affected by their historical actions. Discussions around the new climate change agreement should be preceded by the rich countries honouring the promise they have already made as a signal of good faith. This may not be the case as the Lima Climate Talk has demonstrated the shifting of goal post by the developed countries on many fronts. Despite the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, we are worried that it may not be properly financed as the experience with other funds such as Adaptation Fund shows.

1. On the Road to Paris: The new climate agreement: The African civil society call upon African governments/ministers to urge developed countries to communicate emission reduction targets as iNDCs that commensurate to keeping global average temperature well below 1.5°C and against principles of equity -historical responsibility, capacity, the right to sustainable development.

African should also ensure the transfer of finance and technology via strengthened institutions like the GCF, the Adaptation Fund, and the Adaptation Committee is part of its demands in Paris UNFCCC-COP21

We call on DCPs to mobilize at least USD 1 trillion and monetize/materialize pledges to the financial entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention so as to meaningfully implement adaptation intervention and low carbon development strategies.

We further call for full operationalizing the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage and its full inclusion in the 2015 agreement. Also, focusing on provisions to address the rights and needs of climate displaced people and for managing risk.

Developed countries and other partners to make available to African countries the support needed in preparing and communication their intended nationally determined contributions and, to ensure that the support covers all elements of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action and fully align with Lima Call for Climate Action and is implemented in a country driven and country owned manner

2. On the Post 2015-SDGs and processes that will conclude in New York, we call on AMCEN to engage and proactively create spaces, for the participation of environment and climate change experts and African Civil Society from the Environment sector. It is critical for AMCEN to emphasize that success will depend on the efforts of millions of citizen volunteers working towards the realisation of a broadly shared vision. There is a need to mobilise and focus citizen participation on a scale without precedent.

3. On the Management of Africa Natural Capital: Africa's is dependent on its natural capital. We therefore urge Government to ensure that the utilisation of natural capital is by Africans for Africa, in a sustainable and equitable manner. Threats and key drivers of degradation such as extractive industry activities and land grab should be managed and addressed. Environmental governance

should be strengthened and should involve communities and Civil society in determining how the natural capital are used so as to create jobs and benefits for current and future generations. Public institutions should be strengthened in order to avoid pilferage and corruption.

4. On Illegal Trade in Wildlife: We commend the decision EX.CL/Dec.832 (XXV) of the 23rd African Union Summit in Malabo to develop African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna. We urge AMCEN to fast track the development of this strategy, in an open and inclusive process that involves Member States, African Union Commission, UNEP, UNECA, AfDB, CSOs and Private Sector.

5. On Principle 10: Sustainable development can only be guaranteed if citizens have access to information, participate effectively in the decision making and have access to justice when such rights are denied or tempered. We call on AMCEN to start and accelerate to adoption of an African Regional Convention on Principle 10. AMCEN should sensitize their populations on Principle 10. This could be done by assessing the application of rights to information, public participation and access to justice at national level, and produce implementation mechanisms and safeguard good governance of Principle 10 to emphasize environmental justice through special environmental codes systems.

6. On broad participation in UNEA: As the strengthened and upgraded UNEP is poised to play an effective role as a follow-up to Rio+20 in integrating three dimensions of sustainable development, we recommend that the Committee of Permanent Representatives allows full participation of Major Groups. Major Groups already accredited under UN ECOSOC should be recognized by UNEA, while elected MGSF Regional Representatives should be accorded speaking rights at the Committee of Permanent Representatives and UNEA. Broader partnerships between UNEP and other organizations as a means to fulfill its mandate should always be promoted, with UNEP not limiting itself to policy formulation but also implementation.

7. Inclusive participation in regional processes:

Gender: 80% of small scale food producers in Africa are women who depend on natural resources therefore, women should be involved in the agriculture and environment policy formulation, programs and projects design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels with measurable indicators. African government through its relevant organs like AUC, AfDB, ACPC, RECs and other agencies like UNEP, UNECA, NEPAD etc should support and strengthened the work of African Working Group on Gender and Climate Change.

In furtherance to the Assembly/AU/Dec.538(XXIII) on climate change, particularly on developing a CAHOSCC Women and Gender Programme on Climate Change (CWGPCC) to engage women and gender in climate change related actions, we request AMCEN to work with Member States and other partners to put in place relevant mechanisms to implement the decision ahead of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP21) to be held in Paris, France at the end of the year

Youth: In line with the *Lima ministerial declaration on education and awareness raising*, we urge African government to support youth innovation, entrepreneurship and green jobs through formal integration of environmental and climate education in school curriculum and while showing our appreciation for the just-released new book '*Accelerating Youth Action towards Africa's greener future*' we urge AMCEN to institutionalize and provide financial support to relevant youth organizations and initiatives in Africa.

I thank you all.



Mithika Mwenda

PACJA Secretary General, on behalf of the African Civil Society and Major Groups