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Status of implementation of the decisions taken by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session and of other related activities over the period July 2006–May 2008

Report of the secretariat

I. Introduction

A. Foundation, mandate and activities of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was established in December 1985, following a conference of African ministers of environment held in Cairo, Egypt. Its mandate is to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa; to ensure that basic human needs are met adequately and in a sustainable manner; to ensure that social and economic development is realized at all levels; and to ensure that agricultural activities and practices meet the food security needs of the region.
2. AMCEN has continued to give guidance in respect of key political events related to multilateral environmental agreements. AMCEN has also led the process for the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). AMCEN prompted and encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to prepare a comprehensive regional report on the state of Africa's environment, entitled *Africa Environment Outlook*. Furthermore, AMCEN successfully facilitated the revision of the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention). Measures have been taken to strengthen the linkages between AMCEN and the region's two marine and coastal conventions, namely, the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention) and the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention).
3. AMCEN has continued to pay particular attention to the implementation of environmental conventions established pursuant to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the

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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol (the Rio conventions).

4. The recently published *History of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1985–2005)* gives an objective account of the achievements and challenges of the Ministerial Conference. The history of AMCEN was reviewed through three different periods marked by significant shifts in the political context in which the Conference was operating. It is evident from this that there has been continuity in the performance of AMCEN. The measures adopted in seeking solutions to environmental concerns in Africa have consistently been participatory and consultative during the entire history of the Ministerial Conference.

B. Institutional arrangements

5. Since the first session of AMCEN, a number of programmes and initiatives have been developed to facilitate the effective implementation of its mandate for environmental protection in Africa. Of particular note are the development of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative and the publication of the Africa Environment Outlook report. In addition, the decisions taken at various meetings of AMCEN were implemented successfully when resources were available.

6. Regular sessions of AMCEN are nowadays held once every two years. Since its creation, sessions have been held in various African capitals and sponsored by development partners, UNEP and African States.

7. The UNEP Regional Office for Africa serves as the secretariat to AMCEN.

8. The objective of the present report is to inform participants at the twelfth session of AMCEN of the status of implementation of decisions taken by the Ministerial Conference at its eleventh session and other follow-up activities mandated by AMCEN at other formal meetings convened by the President during the intersessional period.

9. The report on the activities undertaken during the period from June 2006 to May 2008 focuses on the following five main issues:

- (a) Status of implementation of decisions taken by AMCEN at its eleventh session;
- (b) Status of implementation of the programme of work for the period from June 2006 to May 2008;
- (c) AMCEN-related meetings and conferences;
- (d) Major activities initiated and undertaken by the President of AMCEN during the intersessional period;
- (e) Participation of the AMCEN secretariat in activities related to the June 2007–May 2008 programme of work.

C. Status of implementation of the decisions taken by AMCEN at its eleventh session

10. At its eighth session, AMCEN decided to restructure its subsidiary institutional structure into a geographically balanced bureau, an intersessional committee and an inter-agency technical committee. AMCEN instructed the secretariat to revise the AMCEN constitution to reflect those institutional changes. Document UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/9/2/Add.1, prepared by the secretariat, contained proposals for such changes and was considered by AMCEN at its ninth session. The outcome of those deliberations was inconclusive. Nevertheless, the ministers modified AMCEN operations to reflect a new vision and strategy for the Ministerial Conference within the context of emerging African initiatives. A further review of the AMCEN constitution was therefore required.

11. At its ninth session, AMCEN adopted the Kampala Declaration on the Environment for Development, which provided policy guidance on many issues pertaining to the effective implementation of the AMCEN programme of work within the framework of emerging initiatives in Africa and the challenges of the new global economic order. AMCEN instructed the secretariat to revise the AMCEN constitution on the understanding that the secretariat should initiate a process for further intergovernmental consultations, taking into account the need to follow closely the evolution of initiatives of the African Union and NEPAD.

12. At its tenth session, AMCEN adopted the Sirte Declaration on the Environment and Development, which provided policy guidance on many issues related to the effective implementation

of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, including the AMCEN work programme. AMCEN directed the secretariat to conduct another round of intergovernmental consultations and incorporate the review comments of member States into the draft revised constitution and submit it for consideration by the Conference at its eleventh session.

13. At its eleventh session, AMCEN decided to defer any discussions on the constitution until the evolving structures of the African Union, with respect to the specialized technical committees, became clearer.

14. Eleven decisions were adopted by AMCEN at its eleventh session on the following themes, discussed in greater detail below:

- (a) Implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative;
- (b) Institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of the implementation of the NEPAD environment initiative;
- (c) AMCEN constitution;
- (d) Status and use of the AMCEN general trust fund;
- (e) Implementation of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues;
- (f) Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa environment information network;
- (g) Integration of environmental dimensions into disaster risk reduction programmes in the context of the Africa regional strategy for disaster risk reduction;
- (h) Implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;
- (i) Green Wall for the Sahara initiative;
- (j) Resource mobilization for the implementation of environmental projects and programmes at national, subregional and regional levels;
- (k) African Environment Facility.

1. Decision 1: Implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

15. Following the tenth session, the momentum behind implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative increased considerably. A brief update on the status of implementation of the action plan is provided below. The detailed version of the report is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4.

16. It is noteworthy that the African Union Commission, the NEPAD secretariat and AMCEN are each implementing various aspects of the action plan. AMCEN is responsible for the implementation of its work programme, which is an integral part of the action plan. In this regard the work programme of AMCEN for the period 2006–2008 was based mainly on the thematic areas in the action plan, as well as on policy and advocacy and on environmental law.

17. Under the guidance of AMCEN, the activities undertaken within the context of the implementation of the action plan can be grouped as follows: implementation of aspects of the action plan by member States; implementation of the 2007–2008 work programme of AMCEN.

18. Ministerial-level consultative meetings on the subregional environmental action plans for Eastern, Central, Southern, North and West Africa were held from 28 to 30 March, on 7 and 8 April, from 25 to 27 April, on 4 and 5 June, and from 25 to 27 June 2007 respectively. The main objectives of the meetings were, first, to review the finalized subregional environmental action plans with the view to having them endorsed by the ministers of environment in the respective subregions and, second, to discuss the modalities, where appropriate, for submitting the action plans to the respective councils of the regional economic communities. It is worth noting that all the subregional environmental action plans were endorsed by the ministers of the various subregions, who requested the respective vice-presidents to submit the action plans to AMCEN at its twelfth session, scheduled to be held in South Africa in June 2008.

19. The development of the NEPAD national action plans for the environment for Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mozambique are nearing completion. These involved participatory and consultative processes in the above-mentioned countries.

2. Decision 2: Institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of the implementation of the NEPAD environment initiative

20. AMCEN is guiding the process of implementing the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative, particularly through the implementation of its work programme.

21. The evolution of the structures of the African Union is advancing and the revitalization of AMCEN is progressing steadily. Furthermore, the need for harmonization of the structures of AMCEN, the African Union and the NEPAD secretariat has been recognized by those bodies. Further consultations with the African Union Commission are expected, in view of the outcome of the ninth and tenth summits of the African Union, held in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007 and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2008 respectively, with regard to the general audit of the structures and organs of the African Union, including the Commission.

22. The eighth ordinary session of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2007 marked a milestone for AMCEN with regard to the implementation of the work programme of AMCEN for the 2007–2008 biennium. Decision EX.CL/Dec.322 (X) of the Executive Council of the African Union reads as follows:

“The Executive Council

“1. *Takes note* of the report of the eleventh regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Brazzaville, Congo in May 2006;

“2. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made in strengthening the working relations between the Commission and AMCEN towards the adaptation of the mandates, structure and activities of AMCEN with a view to integrating them into the activities of the Commission and its specialized technical committees in accordance with the requirements of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water of February 2004;

“3. *Endorses* the decisions and the Brazzaville Declaration on the Environment adopted by the Conference of Ministers;

“4. *Supports* the proposal to establish an African environment facility at the African Development Bank and calls upon the African Development Bank to facilitate the establishment of the said facility;

“5. *Urges* all Member States and development partners to contribute to the Fund after its establishment;

“6. *Requests* the Commission, the NEPAD secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as other development partners to support AMCEN in the implementation of its programme of work for the biennium 2007–2008.”

3. Decision 3: Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

23. Decision 3 of the tenth regular session of AMCEN held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in June 2004, noted with appreciation the efforts made by the AMCEN secretariat to facilitate the completion of the document on the revised AMCEN constitution. It also noted that only a few countries had submitted comments on the draft constitution and therefore requested the secretariat to circulate the draft revised constitution immediately, both in English and in French, to all African countries for their review and comments.

24. The secretariat was further requested to incorporate the comments of member States into the draft revised constitution and submit it for consideration by AMCEN at its eleventh session. This was duly accomplished and the draft document was submitted to the eleventh regular session through the Bureau of AMCEN. At its eleventh session, AMCEN decided to defer any discussions on the constitution pending the complete establishment of the structures of the African Union, in particular its specialized technical committees.

4. Decision 4: Status and use of the general trust fund for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

25. The implementation of the AMCEN programme of work continues to be limited by financial constraints. A report on the contributions by member States of AMCEN and use of the general trust fund is contained in UNEP/AMCEN/12/5.

5. Decision 5: Implementation of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues

26. The implementation of the strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues has been carried out by the UNEP Chemicals Branch as follows (see UNEP/AMCEN/12/4):

- (a) Holding a symposium on illegal international traffic in hazardous chemicals;
- (b) Nominating national Strategic Approach focal points and establishing inter-ministerial or inter-institutional arrangements to oversee implementation of the Strategic Approach at the national level;
- (c) Implementing the Strategic Approach on an inclusive multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral basis;
- (d) Commencing preparation for national action plans for implementation of the Strategic Approach;
- (e) Including sound chemicals and hazardous waste management considerations in national planning strategies and programmes, where appropriate;
- (f) Exploring possible regional approaches to implementation of the Strategic Approach, including holding of regional and subregional consultations and development of a regional action plan for Africa;
- (g) Ensuring active participation of the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD secretariat and subregional organizations such as the Arab Maghreb Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Basel Convention regional centres and other bodies in the implementation of the Strategic Approach;
- (h) Ensuring that the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals, (IOMC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank give priority to the needs of African countries when developing activities to support implementation of the Strategic Approach;
- (i) Encouraging international and regional partners to support efforts to strengthen the ability of the Basel Convention regional centres to undertake capacity-building for chemicals and hazardous waste management in related multilateral environmental agreements in Africa.

6. Decision 6: Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa Environment Information Network

27. A total of 34 countries have participated in the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) initiative. Twelve of these participated in the pilot phase, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Seychelles, Senegal, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. Twenty-two additional countries were included in the second phase of the implementation of AEIN, namely Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Niger, Morocco, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Namibia, Mauritania, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania.

28. A publication on environmental change in every African country (*Atlas of Our Changing Environment*), with accompanying report on that country's progress toward achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 7, has been produced by UNEP in partnership with a number of other organizations. This publication, which gives a visual portrayal of the dramatic changes being wrought on Africa's landscapes, will be launched at the twelfth regular session of AMCEN.

29. At its eleventh regular session, AMCEN requested the Executive Director of UNEP to continue mobilizing financial support for capacity-building through the Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa Environment Information Network processes and to support the production of the third Africa

Environment Outlook report as one of the main components of the programme of work of AMCEN. In this regard, an inception meeting for the third report in the Africa Environment Outlook series, *AEO-3*, was held in Cairo, on 1 and 2 August 2007. This scoping meeting was aimed at establishing the principal focus for the report, taking into account the “current environment and development debate in the Africa region and other global processes”.

Decision 7: Integration of environmental dimensions into disaster risk reduction programmes in the context of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

30. In response to decision 7 of the eleventh session of AMCEN, UNEP continued to implement activities to promote the integration of environmental dimensions into disaster risk reduction in the African region through the participation in meetings, workshops, and colloquiums and with the organization of conferences.

31. UNEP jointly organized the West Africa subregional conference on hazards and risk reduction, with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO) under the auspices of the African Union and ECOWAS. The conference identified the main natural and technological hazards in the subregion and agreed on the priority capacity needs and actions to be taken to reduce disaster risk within the framework of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. The conference was attended by ministers and other high-ranking government officials from 15 countries of the sub-region, together with representatives from the African Union, ECOWAS, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Bank, WHO, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD), the Regional Training Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications (AGRHYMET) and UNEP.

Decision 8: Implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

32. It will be recalled that, in compliance with the decision of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session, UNEP initiated a pilot project on the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in Africa, which covered the following six countries: Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda and Tunisia. The main aim of the Bali Strategic Plan pilot project was to help the countries to develop national capacity-building and technology-support plans on the basis of existing assessments. The needs and priorities identified were to form the basis for the development of specific project proposals. Lessons learnt from the pilot project were to inform the design of the next stage of the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

33. At its eleventh session, in its decision 8 on the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, AMCEN reaffirmed its position on the plan and called on member States and UNEP to expedite its implementation in Africa. At its twenty-fourth session the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum decided to incorporate the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan into the work programme of UNEP. Measures have been taken to effect this decision.

34. Since the Governing Council of UNEP decided to mainstream the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, measures are being taken by UNEP to effect this decision, including the development of the medium-term strategy for 2010–2013. UNEP developed this strategy in consultation with its Committee of Permanent Representatives, the secretariats of UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements and representatives of civil society and the private sector. The following six cross-cutting thematic priorities were identified (listed in alphabetical order):

- (a) Climate change;
- (b) Disasters and conflicts;
- (c) Ecosystem management;
- (d) Environmental governance;
- (e) Harmful substances and hazardous waste;
- (f) Resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production.

35. Details on the UNEP medium-term strategy for 2010–2013 may be found in document UNEP/GCSS.X/8. This strategy places renewed emphasis on measures to help UNEP become more effective, efficient and results-focused, through:

- (a) Significantly enhancing its capacity to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;
- (b) Further embracing its role as the environment programme of the United Nations;
- (c) Ensuring its actions are founded on sound science;
- (d) Fully implementing results-based management.

9. Decision 9: Green Wall for the Sahara initiative

36. In July 2005, Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, proposed to the African Union at its fifth ordinary summit an initiative for the establishment of a so-called “Green Wall for the Sahara”. Specifically the initiative was designed to combat the advance of the Sahara desert southwards and to improve the livelihoods of the inhabitants of the Sahelo-Saharan zone. It was envisaged that the initiative would mainly be carried out in the following countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saharawi Arab Republic, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, the Gambia, and Tunisia.

37. The African Union Commission has led implementation of the decision on the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative and an overview of this will be presented at the twelfth session of AMCEN.

10. Decision 10: Resource mobilization for implementation of environmental projects and programmes at national, subregional and regional levels

38. A session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 24 to 26 April 2007 (see Ouagadougou Declaration in the annex to the present document). This major event introduced the new Global Environment Facility approach in addressing one of the key environmental problems in Africa – land degradation – through country partnerships that would channel resources to the grass roots, in order to ensure a greater impact. The Facility envisaged investing \$130–\$150 million in this programme. It was also hoped that this would serve as leverage to encourage a further \$500–\$750 million in co-funding.

11. Decision 11: African Environment Facility

39. As stated in paragraph 21 above, at the tenth ordinary session of the African Union, by decision EX.CL/Dec.322 (X), the Executive Council of the African Union:

- (a) Supported the proposal to establish an African environment facility at the African Development Bank, calling upon the Bank to facilitate the establishment of such a facility; and
- (b) Urged all member States and development partners to contribute to the Fund after its establishment;

40. Following that decision, the secretariat held further discussions with officials of the African Development Bank in the margins of the forty-second annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the African Development Bank, held in Shanghai, China, in May 2007. One of the topics under discussion was the proposed working visit of the President and other members of the Bureau to the headquarters of the African Development Bank in Tunis for further talks on the establishment of the African Environment Facility. The secretariat also held discussions with officials of the African Development Bank in the margins of the international conference on international solidarity on climate change strategies for the African and Mediterranean regions, held in Tunis in November 2007.

D. Other activities undertaken over the period June 2006–May 2008

41. As stated earlier, the work programme of AMCEN is an integral part of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative. The implementation of the AMCEN work programme is making steady progress. Elements of a report on this issue may be found in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4. Reasonable progress continues to be made in the work programme of AMCEN.

1. Meetings of the Bureau of AMCEN

42. Three meetings of the Bureau of AMCEN were held between June 2006 and May 2008.

43. An extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN was held in August 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa. The issues discussed included the following (see UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/5):

- (a) Follow-up to the eleventh regular session of AMCEN (including the role of the Bureau during the tenure of its members);
- (b) Some key matters of relevance to Africa arising from the Global Environment Facility Assembly held in Cape Town on 29 and 30 August 2006;
- (c) The support given by South Africa and Egypt to other African countries to develop their designated national authorities for the Clean Development Mechanism;
- (d) Sustainable hydropower in Africa;
- (e) The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

44. Benin, Congo, Egypt and Rwanda were represented at the ministerial level.

45. The Bureau agreed that there was a need for the development of a communications strategy to mobilize support for AMCEN from other partners to complement that being provided by UNEP. On resource mobilization, the Bureau agreed that the active dialogue between AMCEN and the African Development Bank should be stepped up. It will be recalled that, as part of the implementation of the NEPAD environment initiative, subregional environmental action plans were being developed for adoption by AMCEN at its twelfth regular session. Members of the Bureau agreed that each would present its respective subregional environmental action plan to the twelfth session. That would be consistent with the lead roles which the Bureau members were expected to play.

46. The Bureau discussed matters arising from the debate on the recommended decision of the third Assembly of the Global Environment Facility on the proposed amendment to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility; and a mechanism for feedback (from African representatives on the Global Environment Facility Council) and consultations on Global Environment Facility-related matters. It was recalled that Congo had proposed an additional amendment, to recognize the Global Environment Facility as a financial instrument for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the Global Environment Facility Instrument. The Bureau reiterated its concern that the Global Environment Facility had not implemented the decision made at its second Assembly to create a financial mechanism to deal with land degradation and desertification. In accordance with the decision of the Bureau, the President of AMCEN submitted a letter to the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility seeking redress.

47. The twenty first meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN was convened in Nairobi on 13 November 2006 to consider a variety of issues, including the following (see document UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/4):

- (a) Report of the twentieth meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN;
- (b) Matters arising from the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN;
- (c) Matters related to the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;
- (d) Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, held in Beijing from 16 to 20 October 2006; and
- (e) Work programme of AMCEN for the period 2007–2008.

48. South Africa was represented at ministerial level, while senior government officials represented Congo, Egypt, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

49. The Bureau discussed and adopted its programme of work, as outlined in document AMCEN/BUR/21/1/Add 1.

50. In accordance with the directives given by AMCEN at its eleventh regular session, held in Brazzaville in June 2006, the secretariat modified the draft indicative work programme of AMCEN for the biennium 2007–2008, incorporating the viewpoints of the experts group. The secretariat made a presentation on the modified draft indicative work programme drawing the attention of the Bureau to its adoption by the eleventh regular session of AMCEN. After exhaustive discussions the Bureau approved the indicative work programme and requested that their views should be incorporated in the modified indicative work programme.

51. The twenty-second meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN was convened in Johannesburg in November 2007 to consider, among others, the following issues (see UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/3):

- (a) The report of the twenty first meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN, held on 13 November 2006;
- (b) Establishment of the African Environment Facility;
- (c) Progress reports:
 - (i) Status of the implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative over the period July 2006–August 2007;
 - (ii) Status of implementation of the decisions taken by AMCEN at its eleventh regular session and other related activities over the period July 2006–August 2007: report of the secretariat;
- (d) Joint meeting of the conferences of parties to the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions, scheduled to be held in Cape Town from 11 to 14 September 2007;
- (e) Twelfth session of AMCEN, scheduled to be held in South Africa in May 2008 (theme; dates and venue);
- (f) Follow-up on capacity-building in climate change in the region.

52. At its twenty-second meeting, held in Johannesburg on 5 and 6 November 2007, the Bureau considered and adopted a provisional agenda for the ministerial segment of the twelfth session, which is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/1. The Bureau also identified “Enhancing the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development” as the theme for the twelfth session of AMCEN.

2. Preparatory meeting for the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

53. AMCEN held a preparatory meeting for the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Nairobi on 14 November 2006. The main purpose of the preparatory meeting was to deliberate on issues of relevance to Africa. The discussions led to the development of strategies and agreements on an African common position on important issues that were considered at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol held in Nairobi from 6 to 17 November 2006.

3. Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and its Disposal

54. AMCEN participated actively in the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, held in Nairobi from 27 November to 1 December 2006. Following the incident of toxic waste dumping in Côte d’Ivoire on or about 19 August 2006, the secretariat of AMCEN provided further support to the African delegates to strengthen their participation. The parties adopted a decision requesting parties in a position to do so, to provide technical and financial assistance to Côte d’Ivoire to help it implement its emergency plan in particular and further requested the Executive Director of UNEP to assist in the mobilization of financial resources.

4. Eighth session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

55. The AMCEN secretariat provided technical support to the African delegation that attended the eighth session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Madrid in September 2007. The main items on the agenda for the eighth session were the programme and budget; review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements; the Committee on Science and Technology; follow up to the Joint Inspection Unit report and strategy development to foster the implementation of the Convention; arrangements for regional coordination units; promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies; and follow-up to the relevant decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable

Development. The meeting was reported to be only partially successful, since the programme and budget could not be approved. That issue was, however, rectified subsequently.

5. Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee

56. Financial constraints meant that Inter-Agency Technical Committee meetings could not be held during the intersessional period. The secretariat did, however, hold discussions with African experts in the margins of the meetings on the *Atlas of Africa's Changing Environment*, held in Cairo in August 2007, and the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in Monaco in February 2008. Urgent measures are required to ensure that the Inter-Agency Technical Committee meets at least once in the intersessional period.

6. Joint meeting of the conferences of the parties to the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions

57. A joint meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions was held in Johannesburg on 8 November 2007 under the auspices of AMCEN. It will be recalled that there are six thematic areas and one cross-cutting programmatic area for the action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD. One of the six thematic areas is coastal, marine and freshwater resources. This is being implemented through the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions, which were adopted in 1981 and 1985 respectively. In view of the considerable progress made in the implementation of aspects of this thematic area, the joint meetings of the conferences of the parties had as their underlying theme the concept of "Building on success".

E. Major activities initiated by the President of AMCEN during the intersessional period

58. The President of AMCEN has been the spokesperson for the member States during key environmental meetings. He convened consultation meetings during the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of UNEP held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2007; the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

59. The President of AMCEN participated in the third Global Environment Facility Assembly that was held on 29 and 30 August 2006 in Cape Town. The President was able to make a special case to the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility, urging concerted efforts to formalize the issue of the Facility becoming a financial mechanism for land degradation.

60. The President of AMCEN and the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility convened a meeting of AMCEN on the TerrAfrica/Global Environment Facility Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management in sub-Saharan Africa, held in Ouagadougou on 24 and 25 April 2007. The outcome of the meeting was a ministerial declaration (see the annex to the present document) which was submitted to the Global Environment Facility Council at its June 2007 meeting for approval. It was envisaged that approval for the strategic investment programme would galvanize its implementation, which would mark a major step towards securing adequate investment in sustainable land management activities in Africa.

61. The above-mentioned ministerial declaration was a reflection of the collective resolve of AMCEN and the Global Environment Facility to tackle issues relating to the more sustainable management of land resources in Africa. It was also an expression of the political commitment of African ministers to address the issue of sustainable land management. Furthermore, it was a clear testimony to the international community that the strategic investment programme was a priority for Africa and that steps should be taken for its immediate implementation.

62. The President of AMCEN convened consultative meetings on subregional environmental action plans for Eastern, Central, North, Southern, and West Africa. The outcome of these meetings will be presented to AMCEN at its twelfth session, to be held in Johannesburg in June 2008.

63. The President of AMCEN participated in the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, held in Nairobi in November 2006. Among other issues this meeting considered the emerging problem of e-wastes and the illegal dumping of toxic wastes in Côte d'Ivoire.

64. The President co-chaired the first joint meeting of the conferences of the parties to the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions, held in Johannesburg on 8 November 2007.

65. He participated and delivered a statement at the international solidarity meeting on climate change strategies for the African and Mediterranean regions, held in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007 organized by the Tunisian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development under the patronage of the President of Tunisia.

66. The President participated in the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali in December 2007. He also participated in special and bilateral meetings in the margins of these two meetings of particular interest to Africa.

67. The efforts made by the President of AMCEN to promote the position, priority areas and concerns of the African continent have been recognized on many occasions, particularly during the afore-mentioned sessions of the conferences of the Parties to the Rio conventions and of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

68. The President participated in the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Forum, held in Monaco in March 2008.

69. The efforts of AMCEN have enabled some progress to be made in the implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative, presented in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4.

70. The President participated and made a presentation during the Ministerial Conference on Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2007

F. Documents produced by the AMCEN secretariat during the intersessional period

71. The AMCEN secretariat produced or facilitated the production of the following documents during the reporting period:

- (a) *Atlas of Africa's Changing Environment*;
- (b) *History of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1985–2005)*;
- (c) Report of the eleventh session of AMCEN;
- (d) Report of the subregional environmental action plan for Central Africa;
- (e) Report of the subregional environmental action plan for Eastern Africa;
- (f) Report of the subregional environmental action plan for Northern Africa;
- (g) Report of the subregional environmental action plan for Southern Africa;
- (h) Report of the subregional environmental action plan for West Africa.

G. Participation of the AMCEN secretariat in activities related to the programme of work

72. The action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD have been prepared at the continental level. As part of the implementation of the initiative, work has been launched on the preparation of subregional environmental action plans and national environmental action plans. In this context the secretariat co-organized ministerial consultative meetings on the respective subregional environmental action plans: Nairobi for Eastern Africa (28–30 March 2007); Brazzaville for Central Africa (7–8 April 2007); Gaborone for Southern Africa (23–24 April 2007); Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for North Africa (4–5 June 2007); and Accra for West Africa (25–27 June 2007). The subregional environmental action plans were endorsed by ministers of environment of each of the five subregions. These are being submitted to AMCEN at its twelfth regular session for endorsement.

73. Similarly, the AMCEN secretariat undertook visits to Maputo, Accra, Addis Ababa, Tripoli and Yaoundé, in connection with the development of the NEPAD national action plans on the environment in the aforementioned countries.

74. The AMCEN secretariat was instrumental in building synergies with activities undertaken by UNEP divisions and the secretariats of other conventions by means of the presentation of technical papers, technical reviews, meetings and follow-up activities through the AMCEN network. The following list outlines some of the activities in which the AMCEN secretariat played a role during the intersessional period:

- (a) Participation in and making technical inputs to an experts meeting on mainstreaming environment and sustainability into African universities. The Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into African Universities (MESA) Partnership worked with 87 academics and 67 universities in May 2007 and set up a network and partnership framework for mainstreaming environment and sustainability in Africa. The main achievements were in the areas of curriculum change at the professional and university level;
- (b) Co-organizing the conference of African ministers of environment on the TerrAfrica/Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa, held in Ouagadougou on 24 and 25 April 2007;
- (c) Participating in the second stakeholders meeting on the Ethiopian Millennium Summit on Environment for Development, held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 May, 2007;
- (d) Facilitating the ninth international high-level seminar on sustainable consumption and production, held in Arusha from 10 to 12 December 2006;
- (e) Participating in and making technical inputs to the African experts workshop on reviewing the effectiveness of environmental impact assessment systems, held in Addis Ababa on 12 and 13 April 2007;
- (f) Providing technical support to African delegations attending the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2007;
- (g) Providing technical support to the African delegation attending the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Nairobi from 6 to 17 November 2006;
- (h) Providing technical support to the African delegation attending the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, held in Nairobi from 27 November to 1 December 2006;
- (i) Providing technical support to the African delegation participating in the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Madrid in September 2007;
- (j) Participating in and providing technical support to the TICAD Ministerial Conference on Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development, held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2007;
- (k) Providing technical support to participants attending the regional preparatory meetings for senior government officials from African countries, held in Lusaka in October 2007, and in Tunis in November 2007.

Annex

Declaration of the session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa

Ouagadougou, 24–25 April 2007

We the Ministers of Environment of Africa attending the session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Ouagadougou, on 24 and 25 April 2007, on the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa,

Desiring to secure ecosystem services that provide livelihoods, food security, and economic growth for 700 million people in Africa,

Collectively sharing the view that a strong and sustained engagement by the Global Environment Facility and its partners is needed to upscale sustainable land management at local, national, and regional levels as well as efforts to protect highlands, other ecosystems and natural resources to overcome the multiple threats of land degradation and to advance toward the Millennium Development Goals,

Recalling the recognition by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the African Union that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification constitutes an important tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,

Further recalling that since 2003 the Global Environment Facility is serving as a financial mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Recognizing the repeated calls for action to enlist large-scale donor support to Africa to combat land degradation and its threat to livelihoods, food security and to the local, regional and global environment,

Reaffirming the utmost importance of the Global Environment Facility principles that the implementation of the strategic investment programme, should be country-driven and country-owned,

Recalling the priority focus of the international community expressed in, among others, the declarations of the G-8 and the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, on supporting Africa's development and productivity increases by securing environmental sustainability,

Welcoming the commitment by the Global Environment Facility to focus on long-term engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa by providing significant grant financing to support the programmes of African leaders in scaling up sustainable land management,

Confirming and reiterating the motivation of African countries and regional partners to advance the sustainable land management agenda as illustrated in the 2006 Bamako and Brazzaville declarations by Africa's agriculture and environment ministers that endorsed TerrAfrica and the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa,

Appreciating the progress made by the African Union to advance the sustainable land management agenda under the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the comprehensive African agriculture development programme,

Taking into account the support given to the sustainable land management agenda by civil society in the September 2006 Montpellier Appeal,

Concerned about the impacts of climate change on Africa's rural production systems and ecosystems,

Concerned about the fragmented and sectoral nature of donor support to the sustainable land management agenda,

Intending, based on national priorities, to mobilize domestic and international resources and to reinforce donor and sector alignment to support concrete activities designed to upscale sustainable land management at country level in sub-Saharan Africa,

Understanding that the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme aims to support sub-Saharan countries in improving natural resource-based livelihoods by reducing land degradation, and that it intends to contribute to this goal via improved enabling environments that will drive sustainable land management upscaling on the ground,

Underscoring the need for synergistic implementation of national adaptation programmes of action under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and national, subregional and regional action programmes under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Commit ourselves to advance the sustainable land management agenda at local, national and regional levels and agree on the following actions:

1. *Request* that the Global Environment Facility Council approves the Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. *Collectively call* on donors and development partners to join Sub-Saharan Africa in scaling up sustainable land management under this partnership.
3. *Urge* donors and development partners to align and harmonize their activities to build and share knowledge and develop investment to support African countries, regional economic communities, the African Union through its New Partnership for Africa's Development in line with efforts to scale up strategic land management in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this regard we reaffirm our commitment, through institutional and capacity building efforts within the TerrAfrica and the Strategic Investment Program (SIP) framework, to support and strengthen NEPAD and African institutions' leadership of the sustainable land management agenda.
4. *Call* for a concerted approach to deal simultaneously with the national adaptation programmes of action and national, subregional and regional action programmes to be funded from the Global Environment Facility, and in this regard, call for a decision at the next session of the Conference of the Parties/Meeting of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the housing of the adaptation fund within the Global Environment Facility so as to ensure continuity in programmes dealing both with land degradation and adaptation issues.
5. *Call* upon the Global Environment Facility to simplify its procedures in order to facilitate speedy implementation of the strategic investment programme and, in this regard, take note with appreciation of the new streamlined Global Environment Facility project cycle to be presented to the Global Environment Facility Council in June 2007. Other development partners are called upon to do likewise.

Show appreciation to the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility for initiating the strategic investment programme and encourage her to continue giving priority to Africa.

Adopted in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
25 April 2007
