



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Distr.
General

UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1/Add.1
31 January 2008

Original: English

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Twelfth session

Expert group segment

Johannesburg, 7–9 June 2008

Annotated provisional agenda of the expert group segment

Introduction

1. According to paragraph 1 of article 9 of the constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the Conference shall hold its ordinary sessions once every two or three years. The offer by the Government of South Africa to host the twelfth session of AMCEN was accepted by AMCEN at its eleventh session, held in Brazzaville, Congo, from 22 to 26 May 2006, and by the AMCEN Bureau at its twenty-second meeting, held in Johannesburg on 5 and 6 November 2007.
2. Pursuant to that offer by the Government of South Africa, it was agreed that the twelfth session of AMCEN would be held in Johannesburg from 7 to 12 June 2008. The session would consist of an expert group segment from 7 to 9 June 2008 and a ministerial segment from 10 to 12 June 2008.
3. In that connection, at its twenty-second meeting, held in Johannesburg on 5 and 6 November 2007, the AMCEN 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 chose “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.
4. A few weeks before the opening of the twelfth session, the secretariat will distribute an information note contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF.1. A complete list of the documents which have been prepared for the twelfth session of AMCEN is provided in annex I to the present document.

I. Objectives and overview of the ministerial segment

5. The main objective of the twelfth session of AMCEN is to provide a platform for environment ministers to review the progress made in the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), with a view to enhancing its implementation. The twelfth session will also provide a forum to address emerging environmental challenges in Africa, particularly those related to climate change. The ministers will deliberate on substantive issues of importance to Africa which must be addressed in the context of the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD and the AMCEN work programme for the period 2009–2010. They will also review progress made towards the establishment of the African Environment Facility for the implementation of environmental projects and programmes. The ministers will also review progress made towards establishing AMCEN as a specialized technical committee of the African Union.

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6. The expert group will bring selected topical issues to the attention of ministers for their deliberation. Ministers will be invited to dwell on the future status and role of AMCEN, taking into account the established and evolving structures of the African Union and the initial measures taken to consolidate the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative into the overall NEPAD process.

7. In considering follow-up processes to the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, in particular climate change, invasive alien species, land degradation and desertification, and also certain emerging issues, ministers will be invited to assess the progress made since the eleventh session of AMCEN, held in Brazzaville from 22 to 26 May 2006. In the light of the assessment, they will review some of the policy, advocacy and programmatic measures of the Conference, including: environmental law; regional and multilateral environmental agreements in Africa; environment and health; environmental assessment; capacity-building; disaster risk reduction; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative; and sustainable consumption and production in Africa.

8. The ministers will also deliberate on the development of subregional environmental action plans for all the subregions of Africa, in conformity with the project on capacity-building approved by AMCEN at its tenth session held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 26 to 30 June 2004, with a view to adopting the subregional environmental action plans. The ministers will also be kept informed about the national environmental action plans prepared for the five pilot countries.

9. The ministers will also consider the status and use of the AMCEN trust fund. The available records show that the rate at which member States have been contributing to the fund has remained rather slow, hampering the effective implementation of AMCEN decisions. There is, therefore, a pressing need for ministers to make critical assessments and give further guidance as to how contributions to the trust fund can be enhanced.

10. AMCEN sessions have traditionally been funded mainly by donors – in particular, in recent years, by the Government of Norway and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The over-reliance of AMCEN on development partners to fund its sessions is unsustainable. There is, therefore, a need to enhance efforts to mobilize additional resources in line with decision 8 adopted by AMCEN at its ninth session, relating to resource mobilization and the state of the general trust fund.

11. The publication *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* will be launched at the twelfth session.

12. The Conference will consider for adoption the final draft of the revised AMCEN constitution (UNEP/AMCEN/12/7), which was revised pursuant to the recommendations of ministers at the eighth session of the Conference, held in Abuja, Nigeria, endorsed at the ninth session, held in Kampala, Uganda, and referred for further consideration at the tenth and eleventh sessions, held in Sirte and Brazzaville respectively.

13. The Conference will adopt decisions reflecting its discussions under the various items on its agenda.

II. Items of the provisional agenda

A. Item 1: Opening of the segment

14. The representative of the President of AMCEN, the Minister of Tourism and Environment of Congo, will chair the expert group segment of the regular session, while the representative of the Vice-President of the AMCEN Bureau from Egypt will serve as Rapporteur. In the absence of either of these Bureau members, however, a Bureau meeting will be convened on the eve of the opening of the twelfth session, on 6 June 2008, to take stock of the management of the Conference and decide which of the Bureau members present will be assigned responsibilities during the twelfth session, consistent with the provisions of the constitution.

15. The AMCEN Bureau currently comprises the following members:

1. President: Congo
2. Vice-presidents: Benin, Rwanda, South Africa
3. Rapporteur: Egypt

16. Representatives of United Nations agencies, the African Union, the NEPAD secretariat, the subregional economic communities of Africa, the African Development Bank, and other bilateral and multilateral partners are expected to attend the session.
17. The representative of the President of AMCEN will make opening remarks.
18. A list of documents for the session may be found in annex I to the present document.

B. Item 2: Organizational matters

19. The expert group segment of the twelfth session of AMCEN will have before it a provisional agenda (UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1) to consider for adoption. A work programme of the meeting is contained in annex II to the present document.

1. Election of officers

20. Consistent with the provisions of the AMCEN constitution and the existing rules of procedure, the expert group segment will be conducted under the auspices of the Bureau of the eleventh session. Accordingly, Congo will serve as chair, while Egypt acts as Rapporteur. The vice-chairs will be Benin, Rwanda and South Africa.

21. Regional consultations will be encouraged for the election of office bearers for the next biennium. The elections will be aimed at filling the posts of President and Rapporteur. A Vice-President will be elected from each of the remaining regions. A breakdown of the office-bearers since 1985 will be circulated and may be used in consideration of this sub-item.

2. Adoption of the agenda and the programme of work

22. The expert group may wish to adopt its agenda and work programme on the basis of the provisional agenda as contained in documents UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1 and annex II to the present document.

23. The secretariat will list the various working groups and drafting groups and the chair will invite experts to consider joining one or other of the groups. Each member of the expert group will have to make his or her choice known to the secretariat by the close of the first day.

C. Item 3: Consideration of the report of the secretariat

24. The AMCEN secretariat will present its report to the meeting. The report is contained in documents UNEP/AMCEN/12/4 and Add 1.

D. Item 4: Implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

25. Reports will be presented on the progress achieved since the eleventh session of AMCEN, held in Brazzaville in May 2006. The NEPAD secretariat will also make a presentation on the overall implementation of NEPAD, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the capacity-building component of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

E. Item 5: Presentation by the African Union Commission and the NEPAD secretariat

26. The African Union Commission will make a presentation on a topical and substantive environmental issue of top priority to Africa. The Commission will include an element on the Africa Environment Day, with a view to securing renewed commitment and or action by African countries. It will be recalled that the decision to commemorate 3 March of every year as Africa Environment Day was adopted by the African Union heads of State in July 2001. In a statement by the African Union Commission on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Africa Environment Day on 3 March 2007, the day serves to demonstrate the recognition by African heads of State of the indispensable role of the environment and environmental resources in our general well-being.

27. Through the above-mentioned decision, African countries, under the leadership of their Governments, are called upon to strive to protect and sustainably use and manage the region's environment and natural resources to enhance the social and economic developments of the continent.

The day provides an opportunity for collective and individual reflection on the approaches and strategies adopted in the preceding 12 months and mapping a vision for the years ahead.

28. The NEPAD secretariat will make a presentation on the development of the NEPAD subregional environmental action plans for the five subregions in Africa. It will be recalled that a major capacity-building programme is embedded in the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. The need to develop institutional and human capacity was unanimously recognized by the African Union at its second ordinary assembly, held in Maputo in July 2003, as key to achieving the successful implementation of the action plan; by AMCEN at its special session held in Maputo in June 2003; by the partners' conference on the environment initiative of NEPAD, which considered the implementation of the action plan, held in Algiers in December 2003; and by AMCEN at its tenth regular session, held in Sirte in June 2004, and its eleventh regular session, held in Brazzaville in May 2006.

29. Participants at all the above-mentioned meetings had called for a programme on capacity-building to be carried out as a high priority, to facilitate implementation of the action plan. To that end, the subregional environmental action plans for the five subregions of Africa and the NEPAD action plans on the environment are being put into effect for five pilot countries.

F. Item 6: Consideration of the draft indicative work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the biennium 2009–2010

30. The AMCEN work programme for the biennium 2009–2010 contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/3 will be presented for consideration. It is noteworthy that one of the main objectives of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD is to complement the relevant African processes, including the work programme of the revitalized AMCEN, with a view to improving environmental conditions in Africa so as to contribute to the achievement of economic growth and poverty eradication.

G. Item 7: Status of the general trust fund for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

31. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the AMCEN work programme, which is an integral part of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. Implementation of the AMCEN work programme is being undertaken by UNEP in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the NEPAD secretariat, the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, and a number of institutions and organizations, such as the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. Nevertheless, significant achievements could have been made if implementation had not been constrained by a severe shortage of financial resources. The AMCEN trust fund was designed to remedy that problem, among others. Although more countries have made contributions to the fund since the ninth session, the rate of payment by member States remains slow.

32. The secretariat will brief the meeting on the status of the AMCEN trust fund and the expert group may wish to agree on ways to enhance countries' contributions and the use of funds accruing as interest on the sums of the trust fund. A report on the status of the trust fund may be found in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/5.

H. Item 8: Presentation of the publication: *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment*

33. The secretariat will make a presentation on the publication *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment*. The Atlas is a complementary publication to the Africa Environment Outlook report, a flagship publication of AMCEN. It is the first fully comprehensive publication which depicts environmental change in all African countries in a single consolidated report. Through a combination of satellite images, graphs, maps and photographs, the atlas provides visual scientific evidence of changes taking place on the African landscape. It illustrates the huge environmental challenges facing Africans and the need for urgent action.

I. Item 9: Consideration of the second draft of the revised constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

34. In decision 4 adopted at its ninth session, AMCEN decided that the secretariat should recruit a consultant or consultants to work further on the revised constitution, guided by the initial comments in the preambular paragraphs of the decision. The revised constitution prepared pursuant to that decision was circulated in Sirte in June 2004. Upon the request of AMCEN at its tenth session, that document was re-circulated to the Conference's member States for a second round of in-country consultations. At the request of AMCEN at its eleventh session, discussion on the document was deferred until the twelfth session. The re-revised draft constitution will be presented to the Conference at its twelfth session.

J. Item 10: Adoption of the report of the meeting

35. The Rapporteur will present an overview of the report of the meeting, including the draft decisions, and request that the report be considered for amendment and adoption under the guidance of the chair of the expert group segment.

36. The chair will invite the meeting to make comments, paragraph by paragraph. Only comments of substance will be considered and these must, of necessity, be submitted to the Rapporteur in writing.

37. The chair will request that the report be adopted in principle on the understanding that the comments from the floor will be integrated by the secretariat into the final report, which will be produced in English and French.

K. Item 11: Other matters

38. Major issues of interest not included in the agenda will be discussed.

39. It is proposed that any Government that introduces any other matter should be in a position to provide the secretariat with a copy of a background document for circulation during the session. An English version of such text must be made available. Should there be need for a decision to be taken, a draft text should also be provided, and this too must be made available in English.

L. Item 12: Closure of the meeting

40. The Chair will invite the Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa and the Director responsible for Environment in the African Union Commission to make their concluding remarks before declaring the meeting closed.

Annex I

List of documents

UNEP/AMCEN/12/1	Provisional agenda of the ministerial segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda of the ministerial segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/3	Report of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/4	Status of implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development from June 2006 to June 2008
UNEP/AMCEN/12/4/Add.1	Status of the implementation of decisions taken by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session and other related activities during the period from June 2006 to June 2008
UNEP/AMCEN/12/5	Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/6	Overview of implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development for the reporting period June 2006–May 2008 and efforts made to mobilize resources
UNEP/AMCEN/12/7	Draft revised constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1	Provisional agenda of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/3	Draft indicative work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (2009–2010)
Information documents	
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/1	Information note on the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/2	Subregional environmental action plans and the NEPAD national action plans on the environment -- Introductory document
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/3	Report of the twenty-second meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/4	Report of the twenty-first meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/5	Report of the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Annex II

Expert group meeting, 7–9 June 2008

Work programme

6 June 2008

1000–1700 Registration of participants

7 June 2008

0800–0930 Registration of participants

0930–1030 **Item 1:** Official opening ceremony

1030–1045 **Tea and coffee break**

1045–1115 **Item 2:** Organizational matters

- Election of officers
- Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
- Establishment of drafting groups

1115–1145 **Item 3:** Consideration of the report of the secretariat

1145–1215 **Item 4:** Implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

1215–1300 **Item 5:** Presentation by the African Union Commission

1300–1430 **Lunch**

1430–1500 **Item 5:** Presentation by the NEPAD secretariat
(cont'd)

1500–1530 **Item 6:** Consideration of the draft indicative work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the biennium 2009-2010

1530–1545 **Tea and coffee break**

1545–1615 **Item 7:** Status of the general trust fund for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

1615–1645 **Item 8:** *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment*

1645–1715 Formation of drafting groups

8 June 2008

0900–0930 **Item 9:** Consideration of the second draft revised constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

0930–1000 Introduction of the break-out sessions

1000–1020	Tea and coffee break
1020–1230	Meeting of the working groups and drafting groups
1230–1400	Lunch
1400–1800	Meeting of the working groups and drafting groups (cont'd)

9 June 2008

0830–1000	Meeting of the working groups and drafting groups (cont'd)
1000–1300	Consideration of reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report on the plenary sessions• Report of the working and drafting groups• Draft indicative work programme of AMCEN• Draft Johannesburg declaration• Draft decisions
1300–1430	Lunch
1430–1630	Preparation of the report of the expert group segment by the drafting team
1630–1730	Items 10–12 Adoption of the report of the expert group session; any other business and closing ceremony
