



Distr.: General
13 April 2015

Original: English

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Fifteenth session
 Ministerial segment
 Cairo, 4–6 March 2015

Report of the ministerial segment

I. Introduction

1. The ministerial segment of the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was held at the Dusit Thani Lakeview Hotel in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015.
2. It was attended by representatives of States members of the Conference, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations agencies, the secretariats of various environmental conventions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

II. Opening of the session

3. The opening of the session began at 4.40 p.m. on Wednesday, 4 March 2015, with an introduction by the master of ceremonies and welcoming remarks by Mr. Khaled Fahmy, Minister of Environment of Egypt, who welcomed the participants to the fifteenth session, saying that Egypt was privileged to be hosting it 30 years after the beginning of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Cairo. The work of the Conference was truly impressive, especially with regard to its role in bringing together countries to face challenges linked to the environment and sustainable development, and the impressive attendance at the meeting was testimony to its impact and importance.

A. Welcoming remarks

4. Welcoming remarks were made by Mr. Binilith Mahenge, Minister of State for Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania and outgoing President of the Conference; Ms. Olushola Olayide, who read remarks by Ms. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission; and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

5. In his remarks, Mr. Mahenge expressed appreciation on behalf of the Conference to the Government and people of Egypt for hosting the session and to all member States, UNEP and the African Union Commission for their support for the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania during its presidency. Reviewing the work of the Conference since its fourteenth session, held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, he highlighted the guidance provided to the African climate change negotiators in developing the key messages and common position of Africa that were taken to the climate change negotiations in Doha, Warsaw and Lima; work in the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change that culminated in the adoption of the High-Level Work Programme on Climate Change Action in Africa; and the publication of the first Africa Adaptation Gap Technical Report, the third Africa Environment Outlook report and the Africa Mountains Atlas, among other things. Several decisions adopted at the fourteenth session of the Conference had been implemented or were being implemented, although many issues such as the development of regional flagship programmes, active participation of African countries in the post-2015 development agenda process, implementation in Africa of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and steps to achieve more sustainable use of natural capital and to combat the illegal trade in wildlife, remained high on the agenda at the current session and in the period ahead. He stressed

that the session was taking place against a backdrop of unprecedented challenges in the areas of climate change, food insecurity, poverty and environmental degradation, but at the same time a number of forthcoming events in 2015 would provide opportunities to address those challenges, including the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015, the adoption of the sustainable development goals by the United Nations General Assembly in September and the third international conference on financing for development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July. African environment ministers had the possibility of influencing the course of sustainable development on the continent and should work towards achieving sustainable development with the continent's own resources.

6. In her remarks, Ms. Tumusiime conveyed the gratitude of the African Union Commission for the support of member States for events held in the 2014 Year of Agriculture and Food Security to raise awareness of key issues for Africa. Their collective efforts had culminated in the adoption of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods during the twenty-third session of the African Union Assembly, held in Malabo in June 2014, thus maintaining the momentum of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. The fifteenth session of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was being held shortly after the adoption of Agenda 2063, with its emphasis on sustainable development, at the twenty-fourth session of the African Union Assembly, held in Addis Ababa in January 2015. She expressed her conviction that the current session would enable the consolidation of preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. Singling out several issues of particular interest to Africa, she said that it was essential to act quickly in view of the multiplicity of challenges facing the continent. Science-based information was essential for effective negotiations; to that end, in Malabo the African Union Assembly had adopted the High-Level Work Programme on Climate Change Action in Africa, and in January 2015 it had urged all member States to implement the programme. She noted that the African Union Commission had continued to achieve progress in a number of areas, including the African climate change strategy, Africa Environment Day and the draft guidelines on the Nagoya Protocol. In conclusion, she thanked the United Republic of Tanzania for its recent coordination of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change.

7. In his statement, Mr. Steiner said that it was inspiring to be in Cairo, the city that had given birth to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment 30 years earlier, especially as that anniversary coincided with Egypt assuming the presidency of the Conference in a symbol of the renewed engagement of Egypt with issues of sustainable development and environment in Africa. It was fitting, on that occasion, to recognize the pioneering work of Mostafa Tolba, a son of Egypt and former Executive Director of UNEP, who had played a key role in the early evolution of the Conference, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the environmental agenda generally. When the first session of Conference was convened, the world had not had the environmental institutions, legislation and policies that it had currently, and the environmental agenda had been considered marginal to the core objective of development. Currently, Africa was at the forefront of the global environmental agenda, demonstrating that the environment was central to development and showing boldness, innovation and reform in integrating the three pillars of sustainable development. The challenges were daunting, including the energy gap, ecosystem degradation and particularly climate change, the economic and social consequences of which were becoming all too visible. Climate change, however, could be viewed not just as a threat, but also as an opportunity to tap renewable energy resources to leapfrog a generation of energy infrastructure and avoid the hugely damaging twentieth-century fossil fuel path followed by much of the rest of the world.

8. Other major challenges threatening Africa's ability to make full use of its natural capital included deforestation, charcoal burning and illegal trade in wildlife. Those were not only sectoral issues, but had massive social and economic implications for the peaceful and efficient functioning of society as a whole, for example as the source of funding for large-scale criminal activities that threatened peace and security. Returning to the matter of climate change, he stressed that adaptation needed to be given the same prominence as mitigation, and it was incumbent upon Africa to ensure that that point was strongly made, and the voice of Africa clearly heard, in the forthcoming climate change deliberations, including the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He praised the part that Africa had played in phasing out ozone-depleting substances under the Montreal Protocol and called for similar efforts in facing the next major challenge under the Protocol of how to deal with hydrofluorocarbons. In conclusion, he saluted the Conference for its efforts to support a transition towards an inclusive green economy in which environmental issues were addressed in a way that was compatible with sustainable development and healthy societies.

B. Recognition ceremony

9. There followed a ceremony in which the Prime Minister presented Mr. Tolba, Mr. Steiner and Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director, UNEP Regional Office for Africa, with sculptures in recognition of their long and effective service on behalf of the environment and sustainable development.

C. Remarks by the Prime Minister of Egypt

10. The Prime Minister of Egypt, Mr. Ibrahim Mahlab, welcomed the members of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and other participants to Egypt. In the struggle for independence, he said, the countries of Africa had shared their pain, and currently they shared common hopes for a brighter future for the continent. He congratulated the ministers for all they had achieved during the 30-year existence of the Conference in directing the environmental policies of Africa towards conserving natural resources while supporting development. Policymakers needed to adopt a common vision to respond to the challenges facing the continent, particularly climate change, which would have profound implications for production and consumption in the coming decades. It was important to mobilize resources to create new job opportunities for young people and enable them to fulfil their potential to contribute to the development of the continent. Women, too, should be empowered, and their roles and needs taken into account in the development of environmental policies for Africa.

11. Of crucial importance to the development of the continent, he continued, were the three elements of water, food and energy. The three were closely interrelated and of critical relevance to the challenge of climate change. It was vital, in that regard, to strike a balance between the development needs of African countries and the conservation of natural resources. There was wide consensus that the sustainable use of natural resources would help to eliminate poverty, achieve development objectives and ensure peace and security. Efforts should be made to maximize the benefits that could be derived from natural capital, including through transboundary cooperation, without infringing on equity and justice. Traditional knowledge had helped the people of Africa over hundreds of years and resources had been used wisely to combat disease and assist food security, and lessons could be learned from that tradition. Finally, he said, there was a need to cooperate with partners to mobilize the required resources, including through technology transfer, to finance regional and subregional projects and establish institutions that could empower the people of Africa to move the sustainable development agenda forward.

D. Opening remarks

12. Opening remarks were made by Ms. Annick Girardin, Minister of State for Development, France; Mr. Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India; Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity; Mr. Timo Makela, Representative of the European Union Commissioner for Environment; Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer, Global Environment Facility (GEF); Mr. Anthony Nyong, African Development Bank; Mr. Husam Abudagga, World Bank Acting Country Director for Egypt; and Mr. Augustine Njamnshi, speaking on behalf of civil society organizations.

13. Ms. Girardin, in her remarks, said that two key meetings would be held in 2015 to build a world without carbon and without poverty: the first was on the sustainable development goals at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, and the second was on climate change, the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. Those in developing countries, although largely not responsible for climate change, could not focus only on poverty and not on saving the planet; conversely, a failure to address poverty by developed countries could doom the climate change negotiations to failure. Reducing emissions and supporting renewable energy and water initiatives on the African continent would lead to a more sustainable world, and the vision of a world without carbon and poverty was a shared one. At the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties, the responsibility of France would be to foster dialogue to enable a binding agreement to limit the temperature rise of the planet to 2°C. Progress had been made to date, and confidence and transparency would be key to the achievement of a successful outcome. Stressing that France would listen to and stand by African States, she said that the climate alliance in Paris must involve all States and stakeholders. Possible agreement in Paris would entail four key pillars: the agreement should be legally binding on all; should involve nationally defined emissions reduction contributions by all countries consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; should deal squarely with the means of implementation, in particular financing; and should emphasize solutions that could be put in place immediately to achieve the goal

of limiting the temperature rise to 2°C. The four pillars could lead to a balanced agreement but would be impossible to achieve without Africa, a continent that had always played a constructive role and could help to build bridges between countries. Success at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties needed Africa, and Africa needed success at the twenty first session.

14. In his remarks, Mr. Javadekar said that he was honoured to be invited to the current session. India, he observed, echoed the aspirations of Africa; it had stood with Africa in its struggle against colonial rule and apartheid and it was ready to take that spirit of cooperation to a new level. There were several parallels between the Indian subcontinent and the African continent: although Africa was much larger, the populations of the two were of a similar magnitude, and both had huge potential for the development of renewable energy resources. In addition, both India and Africa placed great emphasis on the proper management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as on intergenerational equity. Many of Africa's proposed sustainable development goals resonated with India's national objectives, and the country was making great strides in such areas as water and sanitation provision, financial support for the poor and gender equity. On the matter of climate change, he said that negotiations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change should be firmly based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. There should be equitable sharing of the carbon space, with the developed countries vacating that space to accommodate the emerging economies and respecting the right of developing countries to achieve development while moving to a greener growth trajectory. India, cognizant of its responsibility to future generations, had been proactive in taking action to fulfil its obligations under the Montreal Protocol ahead of schedule, but there was a pressing need for technology transfer to enable India and other developing countries to maintain their progress in combating climate change and global warming. Leveraging the necessary resources, however, was very difficult, especially as pledges to the Green Climate Fund had been inadequate for the task. Time was short, and it was essential to sort out those issues before the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

15. Ms. Figueres said that Africa must take timely action to address climate change to prevent further increases in food insecurity, water stress and negative health impacts that could otherwise lead to catastrophic losses of lives and livelihoods. She called for a two-pronged response: accelerated adaptation at the national and local levels through holistic national adaptation plans, together with deep and rapid emissions reductions based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity. Concurring with the Executive Director of UNEP that Africa's need to change its ways was an opportunity to reshape its future, she said that the international climate change framework could serve as a platform for investment and future prosperity. In enhancing its agricultural practices, for example, Africa could become the "food garden of the world", and its efforts to provide energy-deprived populations with electricity could stimulate a renewable energies boom that would play a central role in sustainable development. In regard to the latter, she drew attention to some of the many initiatives already launched by African countries to convert their energy-generating capacity to both off-grid and on-grid renewables, a complete list of which would be available through the Green Growth Africa initiative proposed by Morocco. The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change would be a major opportunity for Africa to reshape its future, and she called for the continent's leaders to streamline their draft negotiating text to ensure the adoption of a beneficial agreement. In the meantime, she suggested that African countries should begin to identify any additional financial vehicles that they might require at the seventh Africa Carbon Forum in April 2015; that they develop their intended nationally determined contributions; that they ensure ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol; and that they submit adaptation and mitigation projects for the 2015 Momentum for Change Awards.

16. In his remarks, Mr. de Souza Dias commended the consideration being given to the draft African Union guidelines for the coordinated implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Saying that the Protocol could contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as broader issues such as poverty eradication and sustainable development, he congratulated the African Union for spearheading its ratification and implementation, noting that 27 of the 59 countries that had ratified it to date were African. At its first meeting, in October 2014, the Conference of the Parties to the Protocol had established a firm foundation for its operationalization, and the African Union guidelines could further contribute to that end. The maintenance of biodiversity, he said, should not be perceived as a problem but as an opportunity to support the achievement of broader social and economic goals, and he called for the promotion of the sustainable use, restoration and conservation of biodiversity in all aspects of sustainable development, stressing that investment in biodiversity was the true measure of biodiversity as natural capital. Other means of strengthening the implementation of the Convention included the adoption of more integrated and regional approaches, and he urged the Conference to prepare at its next session for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention, strengthening the involvement of regional and international organizations. In conclusion, he welcomed the interest expressed by the Government of Egypt in hosting the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2018.

17. Mr. Makela, in his remarks, welcomed the first opportunity for a representative of the European Union Environment Commissioner to take part in a session of the Conference. The European Union and Africa shared a number of concerns regarding the environment, notably with regard to climate change, the post-2015 development agenda and illicit wildlife trafficking, and several key issues had been identified for cooperation between the European Union and the Conference. Increasingly, environmental issues had a global dimension and it was in the interests of all parties to address them together. The European Union had undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 per cent between 1990 and 2030 and hoped that African countries would similarly develop ambitious intended nationally determined contributions as a strong signal to other regions with higher emissions. He said that the European Union was aware of the importance of adaptation to African countries and supported their aim of achieving strong provisions on adaptation under a new climate change regime. The European Union was proposing a global partnership for poverty eradication and post-2015 sustainable development with appropriate and ambitious commitments for all member States that took account of levels of development and national contexts and addressed the needs of the least developed countries. On the issue of wildlife trafficking, the European Union was ready to intensify cooperation with African countries and had defined a new strategy for supporting wildlife conservation in Africa.

18. Ms. Ishii commended the Conference for its early initiation of preparatory work for the important global meetings taking place in 2015 and for the chosen topic of the current meeting, the management of Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and poverty reduction. That was the most important issue facing the continent, and a unified African voice on it would send a powerful signal to the participants in the 2015 meetings. In its sixth replenishment cycle, the Global Environment Facility had proposed a number of initiatives and programmes that would support Africa's agenda in the coming period: valuation of natural capital, tackling the illegal wildlife trade, adaptation to climate change, sustainable use of water resources and promoting a resilient fisheries industry. Focusing in her statement on food security and agriculture in Africa, she said that the challenge for the global community was to pursue today's aspiration for prosperity without undermining opportunities for future generations. The carrying capacity of natural capital and ecosystem services, fundamental to sustainable development, was being pushed to the limit. Agriculture had a huge environmental footprint and the global challenge was to reduce it while feeding the growing world population, particularly in Africa where there was a significant food deficit and the lowest crop yields in the world. In its commitment to help African countries meet the challenges they faced, GEF was launching a new flagship programme offering an integrated approach to food security in Africa and help to Governments and smallholders in the sustainable management of natural capital and intensification of small-scale agricultural production. The new programme represented a paradigm shift in agricultural development that placed Africa's natural capital at the centre of investment decisions aimed at achieving long-term sustainability and resilience.

19. In his remarks, Mr. Nyong expressed appreciation on behalf of the President of the African Development Bank for the invitation to attend the current meeting, and he welcomed the Conference's return to the site of the founding of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment 30 years earlier. He applauded the outstanding achievements of the Conference in the time since then, and he expressed confidence that through collective efforts African countries would address outstanding and critical environmental and sustainable development issues. The African Development Bank had established the African Natural Resource Centre to support efforts to harness Africa's natural capital for sustainable development. It had also invested over six billion dollars to support climate resilient and low carbon development in Africa, and it would continue to support the active participation of the African group of negotiators in the negotiations leading up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

20. Mr. Abudagga, in his remarks, drew attention to the World Bank's flagship TerrAfrica partnership of sub-Saharan environment and agriculture ministers and international partners, co-chaired with the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which formed part of the Bank's efforts to address Africa's continuing vulnerability by building the resilience of ecosystems and livelihoods within the framework of its mission to eradicate poverty and to sustainably boost shared prosperity. The partnership, he said, had secured some \$3 billion for sustainable land and water management projects and had brought land degradation, climate adaptation and resilience linked to development to the forefront of the dialogue in national and global policy forums. He requested the Conference to support the new TerrAfrica business plan for 2015–2020 and to endorse the African Landscapes Action Plan as a basis for collective action to achieve concrete solutions through, among other things, policy changes, institution-building and technological development.

21. In his remarks Mr. Njamshi called upon the States members of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to bring pressure to bear on rich countries to honour their unfulfilled commitments and change the unsustainable production and consumption patterns that contributed to Africa's increasing vulnerability. He urged them to ensure that those countries presented emissions reduction targets as intended nationally determined contributions at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change; monetized transfers of finance and technology transfers via strengthened institutions; took steps to ensure the meaningful implementation of adaptation and low-carbon development strategies that included risk management and efforts to address the rights and needs of populations displaced as a result of climate change; and agreed to the full participation of African environment and climate change experts in the negotiations to finalize the post-2015 development agenda. He furthermore urged member States to ensure the sustainable and equitable utilization of Africa's natural capital by Africans for the benefit of Africa while investing in the transformation of African genetic resources on the continent and fast-tracking the development of an African common strategy for combatting illegal trade in wildlife. Meanwhile, he said, civil society was also keen to see the adoption of an African regional convention on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, to ensure that citizens had access to information and an effective participatory role in decision-making, which was crucial to sustainable development, as well as in the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly, with regional representatives of the major groups and stakeholders, especially women and youth, granted speaking rights at sessions of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Assembly itself. It was crucial, he said, not to ignore the capacity of African civil society.

E. Launch of publications

22. Following the opening remarks, a brief ceremony was held to launch the second *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report and the Africa Mountains Atlas.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

23. The following countries were elected to serve on the Bureau for the period 2015–2016:

<i>Subregion</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Position</i>
Central Africa	Gabon	Vice-President and Rapporteur
Eastern Africa	Uganda	Vice-President
North Africa	Egypt	President
Southern Africa	Namibia	Vice-President
West Africa	Niger	Vice-President

24. Upon assuming office as President, Mr. Fahmy expressed appreciation to his predecessor for his efforts of the previous two years and pledged to follow in his footsteps in working with fellow ministers to move from project design to implementation in order to tackle the problems and challenges confronting every country in Africa. Although the Conference was a gathering of environment ministers, those problems and challenges, whether in the realm of climate change or biodiversity, were economic in nature. The countries of Africa were rich in culture and resources, yet their resources had not yet translated into financial wealth commensurate with their abundance, and only by standing united could the ministers rectify that situation.

B. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

25. The representatives agreed to discuss biodiversity and the illegal wildlife trade and its implications for Africa under agenda item 4. The representatives accordingly adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/15/1/Rev.1) as orally amended:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group.
4. Ministerial policy dialogue:

- (a) Managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication;
 - (b) Illegal trade in wildlife and its implications for Africa;
 - (c) Biodiversity;
 - (d) Outcomes and analysis of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
5. Matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
 - (a) Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
 - (b) Development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes;
 - (c) Trust Fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
 6. Consideration of draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages.
 7. Venue and date of the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
 8. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment.
 9. Other matters.
 10. Closure of the session.

C. Organization of work

26. The President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment introduced the draft programme of work and the list of documents for the ministerial segment contained in annexes I and II to the annotations to the provisional agenda (AMCEN/15/1/Rev.1/Add.1).

IV. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group (agenda item 3)

27. Mr. Ladislaus Kyaruzi, Chair of the expert segment, presented the report of the segment (AMCEN/15/EGM/L.1). Outlining it, he said that elements of all the discussions on the key topics of climate change, sustainable development and the management of Africa's natural capital and related issues would be reflected in the draft Cairo Declaration and the set of draft decisions prepared by the experts, which would be submitted for consideration and possible adoption during the ministerial segment.

V. Ministerial policy dialogue (agenda item 4)

28. On Thursday, 5 March 2015, the participants at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment met in four ministerial dialogues on four themes: managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication; the illegal wildlife trade; biodiversity; and outcomes and analysis of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties. The dialogues consisted of presentations followed by debate and questions posed by the ministers and other high-level participants.

A. Managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication

29. Introducing the sub-item, Mr. Richard Munang, Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, gave a presentation highlighting the contrast between Africa's abundant natural resources and the widespread poverty among its people. He outlined the contributions to the continent's gross domestic product (GDP) of various sectors of the natural wealth of the continent – minerals, fisheries, forests, wildlife and arable land – indicating also the proportion of global resources that each represented. Africa's natural resources had underpinned the continent's economy and continued to represent a significant development opportunity for her

people, accounting for 77 per cent of total exports and 42 per cent of government revenues in 2012. Despite those resources, however, Africa remained the poorest continent, with over 300 million people living on less than \$1 a day, high youth unemployment and a rising population. In view of those problems and the threat that the economic challenges posed to security and stability, he said that it was crucial to address the factors contributing to the loss of natural capital, such as illicit financial flows, trade irregularities and environmental crime. In addition to the loss of assets, Africa was also suffering soil degradation, estimated to be causing associated economic losses amounting to \$68 billion annually. In the face of declining official development assistance, it was important to consider practical steps to mobilize internally generated finances from natural capital to implement the post-2015 development agenda and ensure financial resilience and sustainable wealth creation.

30. In the ensuing discussion, suggestions were made for stemming the loss of natural capital and better utilizing environmental assets for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

31. A number of representatives stressed the need for better governance. One representative said that with better governance and greater security and stability, more resources would have been preserved for future generations. Environment ministers had inadequate resources to expend on governance and it was important to raise the stature of environmental bodies to enable them to deal effectively with the management of natural resources.

32. Several representatives raised associated issues of financing. One speaker said that the financial and material capacity of the environment programme in his country was limited and that it was important to develop reliance on internal capacities and mobilize resources domestically, for example from land rehabilitation. African Governments needed clear strategies and programmes for reversing illicit flows and making full use of the continent's huge natural potential. The ability to generate resources internally to fund sustainable development was said to be at the heart of the challenge facing Africa in its transformation agenda. One representative said that innovative funding mechanisms had been discussed but their implementation was slow in coming.

33. One representative cautioned that the exploitation of natural capital should not be a substitute for international funding and official development assistance. Africa was in great need of capacity-building, technology and financial support, and natural resource wealth should not be allowed to jeopardize Africa's position in negotiations on climate change, sustainable development and international financing for development. While encouraging foreign assistance, however, he said that partnerships should be in line with the strategies of African countries

34. With regard to official development assistance, another speaker said that funds should not be subject to conditions that hampered access to them, and he insisted that they should be based on Africa's own definition of priorities. One way put forward for making better use of development assistance and improving the management of natural capital was to ensure that programmes developed had clear monitoring indicators.

35. Another representative highlighted the importance of local processing of raw materials to create added value and resources for funding development.

36. Several speakers emphasized the importance of coordination. One said that regional coordination was key to implementing frameworks for sustainable development and utilization of environmental assets for economic transformation and poverty eradication. In that context he expressed appreciation to the African Union Commission, the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the New Partnership for Africa's Development for implementing the regional flagship programmes. Another, however, cautioned against the proliferation of uncoordinated initiatives.

37. One representative emphasized the need for improved communication and advocacy so that Africa could speak with one voice. The region was lagging behind in the understanding of natural capital and needed to be able to demonstrate the importance of issues raised, such as the problem of illicit financial flows.

38. A number of speakers took up the subject of illicit trafficking in flora and fauna as a major cause of loss of natural capital. For several countries ivory poaching was a major problem, while others cited illegal trade in timber. (The subject was discussed in greater depth under agenda item 4 (b)). Concern was also expressed at the worrying levels of other crime associated with trafficking. In addition to steps already taken, initiatives to tackle consumer countries of trafficked wildlife were also called for.

39. One representative highlighted the danger of radicalization arising from poverty and youth unemployment. Young people witnessed the depletion of marine resources and pollution of territorial

waters by foreign vessels, as well as deforestation caused by charcoal production, but did not enjoy the benefits of those activities. Environmental grievances had contributed to radicalization in many areas of his country.

40. One representative stressed the importance of healthy and productive land as the foundation for sustainable development. He welcomed the high number of ratifications of the Nagoya Protocol among African countries and stressed the importance of access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits as an opportunity for adding value to natural resources. It had also been demonstrated that when communities benefited from their biodiversity and natural resources, the conservation and protection of natural capital was assured.

41. One representative called for the development of a natural capital accounting system. She warned of the limitations of measuring growth in GDP, which only reflected income and not sustainable growth. She also called for natural products to be correctly valued to take account of ecosystem loss. Such innovative systems required expertise that was lacking on the continent and required investment in capacity-building and technology.

B. Illegal trade in wildlife and its implications for Africa

42. Introducing the sub-item, Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister for Forest Economy and Sustainable Development of Congo, gave a presentation on the International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, to be held in Brazzaville from 27 to 30 April 2015, which his country was organizing pursuant to a decision on the subject adopted by the African Union Executive Council (EX.CL/Dec.832(XXV)). He said that the conference sought to respond to the need for African Governments to work together, with the support of relevant international organizations and stakeholders, to identify their own means of curbing a growing trade that had serious implications not only for endangered species of their flora and fauna but also for their national economies, security and the social and economic well-being of the population. As for the specific objectives of the conference, participants would be expected to take stock of past and present initiatives, determine priorities, develop guidelines and a roadmap and provide input for a common African strategy and policy for coordinated action to combat the trade, including proposals for sustainable funding mechanisms, to be submitted to the Executive Council for adoption at its twenty-seventh ordinary session in June 2015. Support for the event was being provided by UNEP and the African Union Commission.

43. Ms. Angele Luh, UNEP, drew attention to a working document containing an annotated outline of the draft African common strategy on combating illegal trade in wild flora and fauna for the period 2015–2024, which had been developed in consultation with the Government of Congo and other relevant partners and which, among other things, identified the problems, gaps and challenges associated with the illegal trade in Africa and the benefits derived by national economies and local communities from the legitimate trade and provided an assessment of the financial and technical resources available to take action and a forecast of the likely future consequences of a failure to do so. The specific objectives, she said, were to increase political commitment, to enhance regional action, to build capacity and raise public awareness and to improve national and regional governance, while the details and overall vision would be developed based on the guidance received from member States. As for the deadline for finalizing the draft strategy, she said that the African Union Commission had requested that it be ready in time for the June session of the Executive Council.

44. In the ensuing discussion, general appreciation and support were expressed for the proposed draft common strategy and international conference on an issue that threatened natural capital and, hence, the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of African countries. One representative, however, said that the June 2015 deadline for finalizing the draft strategy was too short and suggested that time should be allowed for further consultation. Several representatives expressed particular appreciation for the proposal to include consumer countries among the conference participants, as their support was crucial to the fight to end illegal trade in wildlife, with one pointing out that taking stock of existing initiatives would serve to build a database. Key elements to be considered in the forthcoming discussions included the need to strengthen national legislation, with the imposition of stiffer penalties for offenders and measures such as the destruction of seized goods and a clear distinction between illegal and legal trade; the need to enhance cooperation between customs and law enforcement agencies at the subregional, regional and global levels, given that individual countries could not win the fight alone; the need to ensure that the trafficking of wildlife was more widely regarded as a criminal activity of similar importance to drug smuggling; the need to enhance regional and subregional platforms for research, capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and communications systems; and the need to promote sustainable livelihoods for local communities and involve them in conservation efforts, given that as long as they were sharing the benefits they would

not become involved in illegal trade, and the need to take into account such questions as compensation to local farmers for the destruction of crops by local wildlife.

45. Following the discussion, Ms. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission, thanked the ministers for their guidance and assured them that the issues raised – especially in regard to sustainability, the distinction between legal and illegal trade, engagement with consumer countries and the dangers of depleting biodiversity – would be considered at the forthcoming conference in Brazzaville. It was important, she said, to take serious note of those issues because the draft strategy had to be developed through a broad and inclusive intersectoral approach that involved the participation of all stakeholders, above all at the country level.

46. Mr. Djombo, thanking the ministers for their contributions, said that the draft strategy would be distributed to them for comments, which later would be reflected in a revised version to be considered and further revised at the Brazzaville conference. In regard to the short deadline for the submission of comments, he said that it had been unavoidable owing to the timetable established by the African Union Commission and he urged them to offer concrete proposals rather than general statements.

C. Biodiversity

47. Introducing the sub-item, Mr. Ahmed Abou Elseoud (Egypt) said that although Africa was the richest continent in terms of biodiversity it faced significant challenges due to the increasing rate of biodiversity loss. The African Union was concerned at the lack of clear and effective coordination between countries in matters relating to biodiversity. He outlined steps taken by the African Union Assembly to encourage coordination between member States and by the Conference to support the development of the African Union Policy Framework for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, undertaken in a series of consultative meetings with the involvement of all stakeholders. The guidelines were a valuable tool providing greater legal transparency, ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits and creating incentives to conserve biodiversity, and the strong and coherent African group of negotiators had further enhanced coordination in addition to promoting the African common position in international negotiations. Highlighting the linkage between biodiversity and climate change, he said that the latter was affecting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development and combat poverty, and he expressed concern at the slow pace of progress made with regard to financial support to developing countries for biodiversity at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in the Republic of Korea in October 2014. Following lengthy negotiations with developed countries, a set of preliminary targets had been agreed upon that had not fully met the expectations of African countries. In conclusion, he urged the representatives at the current session to endorse the guidelines on the implementation of the Protocol to protect the interests of the continent.

48. In the ensuing discussion, there was consensus as to the value of the rich diversity of ecosystems in Africa and a shared commitment to their conservation. Several representatives commented on the opportunities for sustainable development provided by the green economy, underlining that such development was bound up with the effective management of natural capital. Many representatives outlined initiatives taking place in their own countries in that regard. The challenges facing biodiversity were, however, significant, and the impacts of climate change were of particular concern. A number of representatives called for greater coordination and cooperation between African countries on matters relating to biodiversity and for stepping up conservation efforts. A few representatives said that all countries should comply with international environmental legislation and agreements. One representative drew attention to the importance of protecting Africa's genetic heritage and ensuring that its valuable resources were not exploited by more developed nations. National sovereignty should be respected, with legal frameworks in place to protect natural capital, and compensation should be paid where appropriate. Another representative expressed concern over loss of biodiversity due to multiple threats including agriculture, which had had negative impacts on biodiversity such as deforestation. He added that, in addition to contributing to the global agenda, African countries should implement national policies to address the impacts of climate change.

49. Gratitude was expressed for support provided by international partners such as UNEP in the promotion of biodiversity, with calls from one representative for greater support in the future to enable the scaling up of environmental programmes and a suggestion by another for the establishment of a network of environmental management authorities to provide a technical implementation platform for the Conference. Concerns over funding were expressed by several representatives and, in particular, over the level of funding agreed to by developed countries. One representative said that global biodiversity funding should be coordinated more effectively in line with the capacities of individual States. Noting that some less developed countries were not in a position to fund programmes on issues

such as climate change, one representative said that additional funding was required at the regional level to supplement state efforts to preserve natural capital. Another representative, commenting on the contrast between the rich natural capital of many African countries and the poverty experienced by many of their people, said that although external support was welcome internal resources should also be mobilized and strategies developed to harness natural resources, and he urged endorsement of the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa.

50. In response, Mr. Elseoud reiterated the importance of endorsing the African Union guidelines for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and, with regard to coordination mechanisms, underlined the value of the African group of negotiators in promoting an African agenda. Concerted efforts by Governments to achieve sustainable development were essential in view of the link between biodiversity and climate change.

D. Outcomes and analysis of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Presentations

51. Following an introduction by the Chair of the ministerial segment a number of presentations were made under the sub-item.

52. The co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif (Algeria) and Mr. Daniel Reifsnyder (United States of America), made statements on the preparatory processes for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

53. Mr. Djoghlaif said that the aim of the preparatory process undertaken by the Ad Hoc Working Group was to pave the way for the formulation of an ambitious universal agreement on how to limit global warming. He thanked the African group of negotiators for the contribution it had already made to the process and said that he looked forward to their further cooperation leading up to the twenty-first session. A further meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group would take place in Bonn in June, at which a major challenge would be to shorten the long draft text of the agreement into something more concise and manageable.

54. Mr. Reifsnyder reported on progress to date, including at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group in Geneva in February 2015, at which the “elements” text from the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties in Lima in December 2014 had been converted into a text that would serve as the basis for the negotiations in Bonn. The Geneva meeting participants had also engaged in important conceptual discussions, for example on cycles for mitigation and adaptation and the role of markets and non-markets under the new agreement. He reiterated that the guidance and leadership of African representatives, including environment ministers, the group of negotiators and the African Union, were vital to the success of the process.

55. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation summarizing the findings of the second report on Africa’s adaptation gap. He said that the reality of climate change was already being experienced by Africa, citing recent examples of severe floods, droughts and other natural events that were adversely affecting human lives and livelihoods, especially in the predominantly rain-fed agricultural sector, leading to famine, malnutrition and poverty. In addition, sea level rise was projected to affect millions of people living in coastal areas of the continent. The Cancun Agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a level that would keep the global average temperature rise below 2°C, reached at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancun, Mexico, in November 2010, were not sufficiently stringent for Africa, which would feel devastating impacts even from a rise of 1.5°C. It was therefore vital to close the “adaptation finance gap” to enable Africa to adopt adaptation measures that would reduce those impacts. Little of the global financing for adaptation, however, was coming to the continent. Alternative solutions had been considered, for example levies on transactions in the four key sectors of extractive industries, finance and banking, international trade and transportation, and tourism, but adding such alternative sources to current sources still left a shortfall. Many countries were resorting to committing national resources to adaptation, but that was severely stretching already limited resources, and it was vital to complement national efforts with international funding.

56. Mr. Nagmeldin Goutbi Elhassan (Sudan), chair of the African group of negotiators, gave an overview of the current negotiations leading up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties. The fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, he said, had

highlighted that global warming since 1950 had been unprecedented in historical times, with huge impacts on agricultural production and access to food, severely compromising livelihoods in Africa. It had also been clearly demonstrated that global warming was a human-induced phenomenon, and urgent action was therefore needed to stabilize the global rise in temperature below 2°C. Negotiations on how to achieve that in the long term had commenced in 2007, when parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change had realized that current efforts were insufficient. In that year the Bali Action Plan had been formulated to chart a way forward, but concerted global action and commitment were still lacking, for example in such areas as capacity-building for developing countries and the means for implementing required measures. Consequently, at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban, South Africa, in December 2011, the Durban Platform had been established, setting out a process by which parties would commit to a new international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to be formalized in 2015 and to take effect in 2020. The agreement would also establish funding levels to support developing countries in financing efforts to combat climate change, hence the importance to Africa of the current series of negotiations. It was vital during the negotiations to pay due regard to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which was an integral component of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was also essential for African countries that adaptation and mitigation have equal standing in the new agreement.

57. Another member of the group of negotiators gave a presentation on strategic considerations related to the Durban Platform negotiations. Africa, he said, had considerable geopolitical weight in the negotiations, and heads of State in the continent were pushing for a rise in global temperatures of not more than 1.5°C, based on scientific findings, the principle of equity, and the relative importance of adaptation and mitigation requirements. Currently, the trajectory of emissions projected a rise in temperature in excess of 2°C. It was essential therefore to carry out periodic assessments of activity in order to understand the global position on the trajectory over time. Poverty eradication was an important priority for Africa, and the continent's ability to alleviate poverty arising from climate change depended on a complicated balance between the emissions trajectory, the associated rise in temperatures and the availability of funding and contributions to cover the incremental costs arising from those phenomena. The new agreement would come into effect in 2020, which in itself could create problems for national planning in Africa, given that most African countries had planning cycles of five years that might not coincide with that date. Importantly, the adaptation needs of African countries needed to be quantified in order to guide the levels of funding needed. National ownership and priorities should be recognized; currently, much funding was centred on mitigation, while the needs of most African countries were more in the area of adaptation. Other strategic considerations included the organizational challenge presented by the negotiation process, which was a procedural as well as a substantive process, including much bilateral engagement and formulation of alliances. Other elements of the process included gathering strong scientific evidence on future levels of emissions, the formulation of proposals to fill the resulting energy gap and the preparation of investment plans to submit to the Green Climate Fund to start mobilizing additional funding.

58. Another member of the group of negotiators gave a presentation on the adaptation gap. The present target was a rise of no more than 2°C, she said, but the current emissions trajectory indicated a rise more in the area of 3.7°C–4°C, which would have devastating consequences for Africa. In addition, the cost of meeting the adaptation needs of Africa until 2020 were estimated at \$7 billion–\$15 billion a year, while current funding inflows were no more than \$1–2 billion a year. It was important to increase adaptation measures in agriculture and to link mitigation ambition to adaptation needs and residual impacts. Finally, she offered information on how a global goal for adaptation might function and its implications for Africa.

59. Another member of the group of negotiators gave a presentation on financial aspects of the climate change negotiations. The negotiating positions of the developed countries, he said, were consistent with their shirking of their legal obligations and responsibilities to the developing world. Some partners, unfortunately, were trying to rewrite the fundamental principles of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. As a result, in the lead-up to Paris, developing countries needed binding agreements to cover the period 2015–2020 without any indication as to how much finance was going to be available. Some progress, however, had been made with the Green Climate Fund established under the Durban Platform, under which a number of meetings had been held at which decisions had been made on the essential elements and prerequisites of the fund and an initial capitalization of \$10 billion had been obtained, with the United States as the largest contributor. For African countries, the next question was how to gain access to the money in order to ensure appropriate investment at the national level. Countries needed to be more active in preparing projects and deciding on the types and levels of investment they required.

2. Discussion

60. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives praised the African group of negotiators for its continuing hard work in representing Africa in the negotiations leading up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. A number of representatives said that Africa needed to speak with one voice during the negotiations to ensure that its needs and aspirations were satisfied. In that regard, some representatives said that there was a need to simplify and clarify the current draft of the agreement to be concluded in Paris so that it gave concise guidance on the way forward in addressing global and regional climate change. A number of representatives drew attention to the climate-induced challenges facing Africa, including drought, desertification, flooding, threats to biodiversity and loss of livelihoods, and expressed the hope that the particular vulnerabilities of the continent would be recognized in any agreement reached in Paris. One representative said that some African States had not been fully included in the negotiating process and that it was necessary to ensure that all States were properly informed and consulted. The representative of Angola said that her country, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, was ready to make available co-facilitators to assist in regional information sharing and coordination during the period leading up to the session.

61. There was a consensus that both adaptation and mitigation should be given equal prominence in any agreement emanating from the Paris meeting in December. Several representatives said that adaptation would facilitate mitigation and that the key to adaptation was sustainable development, including the preservation of biodiversity and forest resources, the development of renewable energy and other measures. Some representatives stressed the importance of building on previously negotiated agreements, such as the outcomes of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Algiers Declaration on Enhanced Solidarity for Peace and Prosperity, agreed at the seventeenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-aligned Movement in Algiers in May 2014.

62. Many representatives stressed the importance to Africa of adequate funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, both in the period 2015–2020, following the adoption of a new agreement in Paris in December 2015, and in the period beyond 2020, when the new agreement would take effect. Some representatives expressed confusion as to the various funding options available, the activities that could be financed under the various options, the means by which countries could gain access to funding and the criteria that would be applied in the assessment of whether funding was applicable to a range of national circumstances. With regard to the Green Climate Fund, several representatives said that there was a need for transparency to ensure that the funding available was new, additional, adequate and predictable. One representative said that capitalization of the fund was essential to closing the finance gap for adaptation and mitigation, while another called upon developed countries to fulfil their commitments to capitalize the fund. Several representatives highlighted the need for capacity-building and technology transfer to assist African countries in adapting to and mitigating climate change, while some praised the initiative of Morocco in setting up a national competence centre for climate change.

63. It was agreed that developed countries should accept that they were responsible for inducing the great majority of historical greenhouse gas emissions, as well as their consequent obligation to provide sufficient resources to address the adaptation gap. Several representatives said that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was enshrined in the Framework Convention on Climate Change and should be fully recognized in any agreement formulated at the climate change conference in Paris. Some representatives said that the Paris agreement should recognize developing countries' right to develop. Several representatives alluded to the current discussions on the proposed sustainable development goals and their relevance to the impact of climate change on Africa. One representative said that it was vital that sufficient resources be available to ensure that the sustainable development goals achieved a greater measure of success than had the Millennium Development Goals, including through sustained partnership, collaboration and coordination at all levels, supported by the leadership of the United Nations. Another representative said that any efforts to combat the effects of climate change should give full recognition to the vulnerability and needs of women.

64. A number of representatives said that it was important to ensure that scientific evidence was brought to bear in convincing the global community of the need to close the financing gaps based on realistic greenhouse gas emission trajectories, as described in the IPCC fifth assessment report. Several alluded to severe risks facing the African continent if the average rise in global temperatures exceeded 2°C. On the development of indicators, one representative said that there was a need to have a critical mass of scientists in Africa cognizant of climate change and with the knowledge and experience needed to develop such indicators. Another representative said that the indicators developed should not concentrate on mitigation, but should also include adaptation, should focus on renewable energy,

should be voluntary and should not hamper national development. Some representatives expressed appreciation for the offer of Egypt to host a workshop on the preparation of the intended nationally determined contributions.

65. Members of the African group of negotiators responded to the issues raised. The Chair of the group thanked the ministers and others for their comments, saying that they would prove very useful in refining the African position for the climate change conference in Paris. He stressed that considerable effort had been made to ensure that the African position was based on robust scientific data on emissions levels, the adaptation and mitigation needs of the African continent and the resources required to bridge the adaptation financing gap. Adaptation was critical to Africa, and that had been clearly communicated at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lima. On the matter of Africa speaking as one voice, he said that in developing the common African position the negotiators had consulted many experts, other partners and climate change focal points in all African countries on key issues. The working document would be circulated among focal points in the coming weeks. On the matter of financing, he stressed the importance of ensuring that sufficient resources were available to enable implementation of the agreed measures and to enable countries to develop their national adaptation plans. In that regard, capacity-building was of great significance, and he welcomed initiatives, such as the proposed workshop on the preparation of intended nationally determined contributions, that would facilitate the sharing of experiences on technical and other issues.

66. Another member of the group of negotiators said that Africa would wield considerable influence in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, with an Algerian co-chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, South Africa chairing the Group of 77 and China and Angola acting as chair of the Least Developed Countries Group, among others.

67. Another member of the group of negotiators said that efforts had been made to simplify access to GEF funding for climate change and to ensure that adequate funding was available for adaptation. Of the \$10 billion mobilized for the Global Climate Fund, 50 per cent had been allocated to adaptation, with half of that amount to go to African countries. In addition, under the funding rules, countries had considerable freedom to ensure that funding was in line with national priorities and to choose their own implementation partners. He stressed the importance of strong mechanisms to ensure transparency in financing, from the initial award, through the process of disbursement, to the use of the funds. In addition, funding needed to be additional to whatever was available through existing channels to ensure that it was not diverted from other uses. It was important, he said, to capitalize on what had already been done, because many countries had already worked on national adaptation plans, programmes of action, technical needs assessments, national communications and other measures. Finally, he clarified that GEF funding was available in the near future, while the development of indicators would inform funding for the post-2020 period, although current funding decisions had the potential to facilitate future adaptation efforts.

68. Another member of the group of negotiators gave assurances that the African negotiating position gave full recognition to the important role played by women in climate-related sectors.

69. In conclusion, the Chair of the ministerial segment thanked the African group of negotiators for its work and the African ministers of environment and other representatives for the guidance that they had given in helping the group of negotiators refine the African position for the climate change conference in Paris.

VI. Matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (agenda item 5)

70. Noting that item 5 of the agenda, including its sub-items (a) (Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment), (b) (Development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes) and (c) (Trust Fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment), would be debated during the discussion and adoption of the declaration and decisions of the current session, the Conference elected not to hold separate discussions under the item in plenary.

VII. Consideration of draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages (agenda item 6)

71. In a closed session, the ministers and other high-level participants considered the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, adopting it as orally amended (see annex I).

72. They then considered the nine draft decisions that had been discussed during the expert segment, adopting draft decisions 15/1, on sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital in the context of Agenda 2063; 15/2, on the African common strategy on combating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora; 15/3, on the African Union guidelines for the coordinated implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization; 15/4, on strengthening African leadership in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process; 15/5, on the African strategy on climate change; 15/6, on the report on the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and activities of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment; 15/7, on the Africa Environment Outlook and Africa Environmental Information Network; 15/8, on intended nationally determined contributions; and 15/9, on climate change and Africa's preparations for the 2015 agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see annex II).

73. During discussion of the draft Cairo Declaration, with regard to the text on the establishment of an African Diplomatic Corps coordination mechanism (para. 63), Mr. Kelebert Nkomani (Zimbabwe), Chair of the African Diplomatic Corps based in Nairobi, reported that consultations on the mechanism were under way and that participants had acknowledged the value of such a mechanism in strengthening the capacity of the African group of negotiators by providing it with inputs for the final talks on the post-2015 development agenda. He also expressed concern, however, that at the current pace of progress the mechanism might not be ready in time to have an impact. Recalling that it would operate within existing technical structures and incur no additional costs, he appealed to ministers of the environment to seek the aid of their Governments' foreign affairs ministries with the aim of accelerating the process.

VIII. Venue and date of the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (agenda item 7)

74. The representative of Gabon conveyed an offer from his Government to host the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Libreville in the first half of March 2017, along with celebrations on 3 March to mark Africa Environment Day.

75. The representative of Algeria conveyed an offer from his Government to host the sixth special session of the Conference early in March 2016, a time that would coincide with Algeria's National Day marking the beginning of that country's path to independence.

76. Welcoming the offers from Gabon and Algeria, the Conference decided that its sixteenth regular session would be held in Gabon in 2017 on dates to be determined by the Bureau and that the Bureau would decide on both the need for and dates of the sixth special session proposed to be held in Algeria in 2016.

IX. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment (agenda item 8)

77. On the afternoon of Friday, 6 March 2015, the Conference adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report that had been circulated at the meeting (AMCEN/15/L.1 and Add.1), as orally amended and on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be entrusted to the secretariat, working in conjunction with the Rapporteur.

X. Other matters (agenda item 9)

78. The representative of South Africa asked the Conference to support Mr. Jeremiah Lengoasa, its proposed candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization. Outlining the role of the Organization in the protection of humanity and the environment, she explained that a new Secretary-General would be elected at the seventeenth session of the World Meteorological Congress, to be held in Geneva in May 2015. The South African candidate had already been endorsed by the Executive Council of the African Union during its Summit in Malabo in June 2014 and had the experience and qualifications for the position, having served as the Deputy

Secretary-General of the Organization since 1 March 2010. The Conference agreed to support Mr. Lengoasa's candidacy.

XI. Closure of the session (agenda item 10)

79. Following the customary exchange of courtesies the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was declared closed at 3 p.m. on Friday, 6 March 2015.

Annex I

Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recognizing the commendable role that the Conference has played in the 30 years since its establishment in Cairo in 1985, especially in facilitating consensus-building and enhancing Africa's effective participation in global and regional dialogue and action for the achievement of the continent's environmental and sustainable development interests,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want",

Recognizing that the Rio+20 Conference reaffirmed the Rio principles on sustainable development as contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992,

Welcoming the special declaration of the Assembly¹ of the African Union at its twenty-fourth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2015, on illicit financial flows,

Welcoming also the decision of the Assembly² at its twenty-third ordinary session, held in Malabo on 26 and 27 June 2014, on the post-2015 development agenda,

Welcoming further the decision of the Assembly³ at its twenty-fourth ordinary session on the report of the High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda,

Welcoming the decision of the Assembly⁴ at its twenty-third ordinary session in which it decided that the African Peer Review Mechanism should be an autonomous entity within the African Union system,

Recalling the decision of the Assembly⁵ at its twenty-second ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2014, approving the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy,

Recognizing that disaster risk reduction is a pillar for the integration of ecosystems and climate change requiring a multisectoral approach in order to be effective and that disasters are increasingly causing ecosystem degradation leading to loss of lives and investment,

Recalling the establishment in Johannesburg, South Africa, in June 2008 of the African chapter of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment to promote gender-responsive sustainable environmental management within Africa and enhance representation and involvement of women in decision-making in the areas of environment and sustainable development at all levels,

Recognizing that hydrofluorocarbons are not ozone-depleting substances and that the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is leading to an increase in the production and consumption of these substances and that the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons has environmental benefits,

Noting, however, that for Africa, the limited availability of alternatives to hydrofluorocarbons and the need for effective mechanisms for technology transfer and adequate funding from the Multilateral Fund for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol require in-depth consideration,

Recalling resolution 1/5, on chemicals and waste, of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme,

¹ Assembly/AU/Decl.5.(XXIV).

² Assembly/AU/Dec.518(XXIII).

³ Assembly/AU/Dec.560(XXIV).

⁴ Assembly/AU/Dec.527(XXIII).

⁵ Assembly/AU/Dec.496(XXII).

Noting the outcomes of the African Sustainable Transport Forum, including the Action Framework, adopted by ministers of the environment and transport at the first ministerial meeting of the Forum, held in Nairobi from 28 to 30 October 2014,

Welcoming the Arusha Outcomes, the main findings and recommendations of the First African Regional Mountains Forum, organized by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society, the Africa Mountain Partnership Champions Committee, the East African Community, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Austrian Development Cooperation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Arusha from 22 to 24 October 2014,

Recognizing that air pollution contributes to more than 7 million premature deaths worldwide every year, with an estimated 776,000 deaths occurring in Africa from both indoor and outdoor air pollution, and that poor air quality is a cross-cutting issue and negatively impedes sustainable development in all economic sectors, people's productivity and health,

Acknowledging that green economy can be a vehicle to achieve all 17 draft sustainable development goals and that increasing investments will help in achieving the economic, social and environmental goals outlined by the global community,

Recognizing the nexus between land productivity, food security and poverty eradication in Africa,

Recalling the Rio+20 outcomes to monitor land degradation and restore degraded lands in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Welcoming the decision⁶ of the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-third ordinary session, by which it adopted the Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights,

Welcoming also the decision⁷ of the Assembly at its twenty-fourth ordinary session on Africa's engagements at the United Nations Climate Summit, held in New York in September 2014, and at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Lima in December 2014,

Recognizing that Africa's natural capital is crucial to supporting human, animal and plant life, in addition to its considerable capacity for wealth creation,

Hereby declare our resolve:

1. Natural capital of Africa

1. To acknowledge the important contribution of the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa in pursuing sustainable development and implementing the African Green Economy Partnership Regional Flagship Programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

2. To request the African Union Assembly to mandate the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows to make recommendations on how to (a) reverse the illicit flow of financial resources arising from natural resources and (b) industrialize and add value in harnessing natural capital and to propose actions and measures to member States and regional institutions in that regard;

3. To agree to increase productivity in the use of natural resources in enhancing economic and social benefits for poverty reduction, job creation and sustainable development;

4. To recommend that the status of natural capital in national planning and financing be elevated to that of strategic national resources and be managed and used in that context in order to secure its sustainability and contribution to economic development and environmental stability;

5. To agree to support activities on marine ecosystems, the development of marine spatial planning and area-based planning, marine protected areas and valuation and natural capital accounting tools in collaboration with regional seas programmes, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and regional fisheries management organizations;

⁶ Assembly/AU/Dec.529(XXIII).

⁷ Assembly/AU/Dec.556(XXIV).

6. To agree to support the preparation of periodic reports by regional seas programmes on the status of the oceans, including land-based sources and activities and governance, biennially for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
7. To call on United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, development partners, regional organizations, stakeholders and civil society to promote social and environmental entrepreneurship and to provide financial and technical support by fostering cooperation, knowledge-sharing and technology development on good practices in building inclusive green economies, aligning such efforts under the African Green Economy Partnership and associated delivery platforms, such as the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, Africa Mining Vision and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable production and consumption patterns;
8. To reiterate our support for the regional seas programmes in Africa as regional platforms for the implementation of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and Agenda 2063 on ecosystem-based management approaches for marine resources in the exclusive economic zones and adjacent waters;
9. To urge member States to integrate green economy into development planning, use green economy to mobilize additional resources, create jobs, targeting in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector, promote entrepreneurship and skills development and to call upon United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and development partners, regional organizations, stakeholders and civil society to promote social and environmental entrepreneurship and to provide financial and technical support by fostering cooperation and knowledge-sharing on good practices;
10. To note progress made in the preparation of the draft African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, and to call upon member States to attend the International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, to be held in Brazzaville in April 2015;
11. To call upon member States to develop and implement a shared mountain agenda and strategy for Africa involving all relevant stakeholders;
12. To agree to use the African Mountain Atlas to take national and regional action to strengthen sustainable mountain development, including the development of appropriate institutions, policies, laws and programmes, as well as strengthen existing transboundary and regional frameworks on sustainable management of African mountain ecosystems;
13. To agree to establish and strengthen institutional arrangements for sustainable mountain development, including centres of excellence, and to strengthen the Africa Regional Mountains Forum as a forum of knowledge, information exchange and policy dialogue;
14. To agree to develop a governance strategy, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and regional seas conventions, on oceans and seas in Africa for the effective management of the region's shared maritime resources and call for a regional conference to address the matter by 2016;
15. To agree to develop and implement a regional strategy and partnership programme on environmental law and institutions so as to strengthen their effectiveness in supporting the harnessing of the natural capital of Africa in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
16. To agree to strengthen the effectiveness of environmental law in Africa by:
 - (a) Developing and implementing a regional implementation strategy and partnership programme on environmental law and institutions;
 - (b) Harnessing the opportunities resulting from the post-2015 development agenda processes to promote the use of environmental law and institutions for sustainable development;
 - (c) Strengthening or creating partnerships between civil society, Governments and development partners to mobilize resources for the implementation of environmental law;
 - (d) Strengthening the role of existing regional and subregional integration institutions, including the African Union structures and regional economic communities;
 - (e) Fully implementing key multilateral environmental agreements, including the Rio Conventions, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary

Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;

17. To welcome the expansion of the mandate of the African Court of Justice and Human and Rights to have jurisdiction over issues related to the illicit exploitation of natural resources ;⁸

18. To agree to support activities for the protection and restoration of wetlands in Africa;

2. Post-2015 development agenda

19. To reaffirm that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development;

20. To stress that all countries should focus on the Rio Principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;

21. To underscore that the emphasis on concessional development assistance, attributable to a donor-centric worldview, has dominated the development discourse so far, and that while the international community needs to do better at this unfinished business, far more needs to be done, as access to markets in trade and access to technology for development are also priorities for developing countries;

22. To stress that redressing the unfair rules of the contemporary world economy that encroach upon the limited policy space available for developing countries is a necessity in order to secure needed policy space for developing countries to ensure country ownership of national development pathways;

23. To also stress the need to set a framework that should alter the parameters of the international economic system in support of development by creating an enabling international environment to allow each and every country to pursue developmental objectives according to their own priorities with policies of their own choice, and to reaffirm that this should be the strategic objective of the post-2015 development agenda and that this should be the transformational change we are aiming at achieving: to create an international enabling environment for development, by addressing the questions of trade, reform of the international financial system, global governance, debt, repatriation of illicit funds and cooperation in the fields of finance and technology, in order to support the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development;

24. To underscore that international action for systemic reforms should be formulated as explicit commitments with appropriate time frames, going well beyond the generalities of goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals;

25. To reiterate that the success of the post-2015 development agenda will largely hinge on the provision of adequate, predictable, sustainable, new and additional means of implementation and continued development assistance to the developing countries, and that delivery on the means of implementation will require broad and deep cooperation through the revitalization and strengthening of the global partnership for sustainable development to renew and scale up official development assistance commitments made by developed countries and examine best ways to augment previous commitments with clear time frames;

26. To stress the importance of additionality by way of increased and predictable financial resources, large-scale technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms and the provision of capacity-building support to developing countries;

27. To reaffirm that technology is a key means of implementation, that it is the single most important or even the only lever of change for achieving sustainable development, and that without a breakthrough in international cooperation in the field of technology, shifting to a more sustainable path will be very difficult and burdensome for developing countries;

28. To endorse the African Environmental Education and Training Action Plan 2015–2024, supported and funded as a living document, and to propose that the Action Plan prioritize youth participation in sustainable development learning and action, higher education, teacher education and technology-enhanced learning innovation in the context of the regional flagship

⁸ Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, article 28 L *bis*.

programmes of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Action Plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union Agenda 2063;

29. To call for the establishment of a global United Nations facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies;

30. To reaffirm that the right to development is the overarching right and that, together with equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, provides the guiding principles as part of the Rio Principles that should govern the global approach to sustainable development;

31. To stress that all measures, even the unilateral measures, taken to address environmental challenges, including climate change, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or disguised restriction on international trade and should aim at enhancing the accessibility of developing countries' exports and services to international markets and not negatively affect them;

32. To underline that the various actions taken with regard to formulating environment-related guidelines and specifications, including those related to carbon and water footprints, and the impact of such guidelines on developing countries, should be assessed through consultations with African countries, and that adequate support should be given to African countries before implementing those guidelines to avoid any negative impact on African countries;

33. To stress that the provision of means of implementation represents a cornerstone of all the development-related discussions on the global agenda in 2015, starting with the new global framework for disaster risk reduction up to the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals;

34. To also stress that ensuring the adequacy, predictability and sustainability of the means of implementation is as important as ensuring their continuity, and in this regard to highlight the importance of accurate and periodic assessments of the needs of African countries and to ensure the linkages between the provision of support and national and global needs assessments in a way to enhance national actions, policies and capacities to achieve the development goals, including those set forth in the various global agendas;

35. To underscore the importance of increasing voluntary commitments within official development assistance to reflect the commitment of developing countries to support national efforts in the new ambitious development agendas, and to reiterate the importance of securing a fair and equitable share of the global means of implementation to Africa in line with the complexity of challenges that the continent faces, from poverty eradication and the diversification of economies to climate change and disaster risk reduction;

36. To mandate the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, with the support of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other agencies in close consultation with member States, to develop appropriate indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the sustainable development goals and targets on land degradation neutrality;

37. To call for the establishment of accelerated frameworks for the implementation of the regional flagship programmes through collective and coordinated resources mobilization efforts and foster strategic partnerships;

3. Disaster risk reduction

38. To call upon member States to support the common African position and attend, as well as effectively contribute to, the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015;

39. To agree to apply disaster risk reduction principles and measures in development to prevent future disasters and achieve the goals of sustainable development and resilience, including through ecosystem-based approaches and risk-sensitive environmental management;

40. To highlight the specific challenges faced by developing countries, in particular African countries, and their limited capacity to respond to disasters, in the areas of developing resilience of infrastructure, health services, drought, desertification and livelihoods, and in this regard to stress the crucial role of enhanced international cooperation through the provision of adequate, additional, predictable and sustainable means of implementation that include finance, technology transfer and capacity-building, to enhance our national efforts in the implementation of the new framework of disaster risk reduction;

4. Combating desertification

41. To welcome the African drought conference being organized by Namibia and to be held in Namibia from 11 to 15 May 2015, and to commend Namibia for that initiative and urge member States to actively participate;

42. To express appreciation for the ongoing collaboration with development partners under the 10-year-old TerrAfrica partnership of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, created under the United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification process to further scale up investment, knowledge-sharing and coalition-building for sustainable land and water management;

43. To welcome the TerrAfrica business plan for 2015–2020, including the Africa landscapes action plan, which was developed in 2014 by TerrAfrica partners, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development, member States, eco-agriculture partners, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme and others;

44. To welcome the possibility of building together a global alliance that would promote a shared vision of resilient landscapes for resilient people by leveraging existing initiatives;

45. To agree to strengthen existing institutional arrangements for the regional coordination of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention work programme on the continent;

46. To call upon development partners and other stakeholders to support the implementation for the Great Green Wall initiative;

5. Air pollution and hazardous wastes

47. To urge member States to use the experience, expertise and institutions of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons while continuing to use other existing mechanisms for accounting and reporting of emissions of these substances;

48. To request the parties to the Montreal Protocol to work towards establishing an open-ended contact group during its meetings in 2015 onwards to consider, among other things, financial and technological support to Africa to manage hydrofluorocarbons that might result in phasing down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, taking into account the cost-effectiveness and safety of substitutes and environmental benefits;

49. To agree to implement the priority transport areas outlined in the Africa Sustainable Transport Forum Action Framework to address road safety, reduce vehicle emissions and improve energy efficiency and enhance sustainable urban transport as a means of effectively implementing the sustainable development agenda;

50. To agree to enhance data collection and monitoring in the areas of road accidents, health impacts and infrastructure development, adequate financing, capacity-building and advocacy for sustainable transport programmes to facilitate the achievement of the sustainable development goals;

51. To enhance air quality monitoring and modelling and to develop an Africa-wide air quality framework agreement on air quality management;

52. To agree to enhance air quality management in Africa in the areas of policies, legislation, institutional framework, management systems, public awareness, capacity-building and networking;

53. To request the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme to accelerate resource mobilization for the implementation of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa;

6. Africa's preparations for the agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

54. To welcome with appreciation the decision of the African Union Assembly⁹ on the high-level work programme on climate change action in Africa;

⁹ Assembly/AU/Dec.538(XXIII).

55. To note with appreciation the work of Committee of African Heads of State on Climate Change and the guidance that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment receives from that body, and to affirm our commitment to implementing the directives given by the Committee to address climate change on the continent, in particular the key political messages of the Committee as adopted in September 2014;

56. To welcome with appreciation the work of the African Group of Negotiators on the preparation of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to held in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015;

57. To request member States to implement the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change high-level work programme on climate change action in Africa at the national level, and as appropriate, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and partners;

58. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to prepare a report on climate change and Africa's economic growth and submit the report and its findings to the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its sixteenth session;

59. To encourage all member States to communicate their intended national determined contributions to the secretariat of the Convention;

60. To take note of the initiative of Egypt to hold a workshop and the offer of Morocco and Ghana to use their centres of excellence to deliver the level of support needed to help build the national capacities of member States in all relevant areas of climate change, and to encourage other member States to do the same;

We, African ministers of the environment, also declare our resolve:

61. To request member States to consider enhancing the role of the Africa Peer Review mechanism in addressing its accountability processes on sustainable development matters with the aim of achieving greater integration of its three dimensions;

62. To take note of the initiative by Ghana to convene a meeting of the chief executive officers of national environmental management authorities and agencies to discuss how to implement decisions of the Conference and flagship programmes at the country level and to call on member States to attend the meeting, to be held in August 2015;

63. To support the work of member State missions led by the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, the Permanent Representative Committee in Addis Ababa and the African Group in New York in their efforts to develop and implement a coordination mechanism for collaboration among the missions aimed at strengthening the role and effective engagement of all African diplomatic missions in African Union and United Nations processes through effective interaction, collaboration and exchange of information;

64. To agree to continue supporting the work of member States' diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, New York, Brussels, Nairobi, Geneva, Paris and Washington, D.C., and to request them to incorporate in their strategic diplomatic issues Africa's environment and climate change agenda so as to enhance the continent's transformation processes;

65. To urge member States, in collaboration with the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, to identify African regional environmental priorities that require support by the United Nations Environment Programme for its medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and beyond, while taking into account the proposed sustainable development goals, existing regional frameworks and plans such as Vision 2063, programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and regional flagship programmes, among others;

66. To launch the African Network for Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, and to agree to develop and implement a policy and strategy for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment aimed at mainstreaming gender in the environment in Africa for the effective participation of women in development policies, programmes and decision-making at all levels so as to unlock their full potential as drivers of sustainable development;

67. To urge member States to continue clearing their outstanding mandatory contributions to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

68. To express our appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other organizations for their continued support for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

69. To mandate the President of the Conference to convey the priorities and position of Africa contained in the report of the fifteenth session to all parties, including external partners and organizations, with a view to enlisting their support, and to report to the Conference at its next session;

70. To mandate the President to represent Africa and to present this declaration, decisions, key messages and other matters relating to the environmental dimension of sustainable development in Africa of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to:

(a) The meeting of African Ministers of finance and planning, to be held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 31 March 2015, with the aim of increasing the political visibility of the importance of Africa's natural capital, and to examine the possibility of convening a joint meeting for African ministers of the environment, finance and industry for that purpose;

(b) The High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda;

(c) The Africa Group Negotiators on the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda;

(d) The Africa Group in the third International Conference on Financing for Development;

(e) The Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change;

and to report to the next session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

71. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit the report of the fifteenth session of the Conference, including the recommendations of the Cairo Declaration and the annexes thereto, to the Commission of the African Union for further action by the African Union policy organs;

72. To pay tribute to the President of Egypt, His Excellency Abdel Fattah El Sisi, and the Government and people of Egypt for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants and the excellent facilities made available to them and for their generous support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fifteenth session, which contributed greatly to its success.

Annex II

Decisions adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fifteenth session

Decision 15/1: Sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital in the context of Agenda 2063

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Aware that sustainable and optimal management of the natural resource base or its natural capital is an essential element towards achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication in Africa,

Mindful of the importance of natural capital in Africa, including forests, mountains, wetlands, mining, oil and gas, fish exports, wildlife and tourism, in contributing a major share of the continent's gross domestic product,

Concerned about the negative impact of the illicit trade in Africa's natural capital on the growth rate of African countries,

Aware that infrastructure development, industrialization and value addition undertaken in a way that harnesses the potential of Africa's natural capital endowment would significantly contribute towards achieving sustainable development resulting in poverty eradication and development on the continent,

Recalling that the Eighth African Development Forum, held in Addis Ababa in 2014, and the joint annual meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance also recognized the importance of natural capital in contributing to the achievement of Africa's development goals,

Recalling the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa adopted in Gaborone in May 2012,

Welcoming the Assembly of the African Union's Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows¹ adopted at the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2015,

Welcoming also the decision on the post-2015 development agenda² adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its twenty-third ordinary session held in Malabo on 26 and 27 June 2014,

Welcoming further the decision on the report of the High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda³ adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its twenty-fourth ordinary session,

Decide:

1. To agree to take measures at the national, regional and international levels to combat the illicit trade in Africa's natural resources and reverse illicit flows, and ensure the restitution of such resources to their countries of origin;
2. To agree to put in place appropriate policies and institutional measures, taking into consideration the findings of the report entitled *Africa's Adaptation Gap 2: Bridging the Gap – Mobilizing Sources*, so as to:
 - (a) Harness the full potential of Africa's rich natural resources endowments;
 - (b) Ensure that the use of natural resources benefits the countries that possess them in an inclusive manner;

¹ Assembly/AU/Decl.5(XXIII).

² Assembly/AU/Dec.518(XXIII).

³ Assembly/AU/Dec.560(XXIV).

- (c) Create value addition in sustainably managing natural resources while ensuring the protection of ecosystems and minimizing environmental degradation;
- (d) Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns;
3. To strengthen international cooperation to promote research and development and technological innovations, as well as capacity development for sustainably harnessing the continent's natural resources;
4. To request the Assembly of the African Union to mandate the existing High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa to make recommendations on how to:
- (a) Reverse the illicit flow of financial resources arising from natural resources;
- (b) Industrialize and add value by harnessing natural capital;
- and propose actions and measures in that regard to member States and regional institutions;
5. To mandate the President, in consultation with members of the Bureau and other member States, to represent Africa and present this decision to:
- (a) The eighth joint annual meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to be held in Addis Ababa from 25 to 31 March 2015, with the aim of increasing the political visibility of the importance of Africa's natural capital and consider the possibility of convening a joint meeting for African ministers of the environment, finance and industry for that purpose;
- (b) The High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda;
- (c) The African group of negotiators on the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda;
- (d) The Africa group participating in the third International Conference on Financing for Development;
- (e) The Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change;
- and report thereon to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its next session.

Decision 15/2: African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decision of the Executive Council⁴ of the African Union on African wild flora and fauna conservation and illegal trade in wildlife adopted at its twenty-fifth ordinary session, held in Malabo from 20 to 24 June 2014, in which the Council requested the Commission, with the support of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Criminal Police Organization, the Taskforce of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and relevant partners, to prepare an African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna to be reported on during the ordinary session of the Executive Council to be held in June 2015,

Recalling also the Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows⁵ adopted at the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the African Union Assembly, held in Addis Ababa from 30 to 31 January 2015, in which African Heads of State and Government expressed concern at the increasing scale and extent of illicit financial flows from Africa, particularly from extractive industries and natural resources, which constitute a drain on the resources required for Africa's development,

⁴ EX.CL/Dec.832(XXV).

⁵ Assembly/AU/Decl.5.(XXIV).

Recalling further resolution 1/3 on illegal trade in wildlife, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its first session,

Recalling the strategic and operational decisions taken on enforcement matters by the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, held in Bangkok from 3 to 14 March 2013,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora,

Recognizing the broad scope of illegal trade in wild fauna and flora at domestic and international levels, and expressing concern that the unsustainable utilization and conservation of African wild fauna and flora and the dramatic escalation of illegal trade in these species in recent years is depriving African nations of their natural capital and cultural heritage, thereby also undermining sustainable development and, most of all, the biodiversity in the region,

Recognizing also that wildlife crime causes immense loss for States and local communities, impacts livelihoods and ecosystems and negatively impacts sustainable utilization and tourism,

Recognizing further that the illegal wildlife trade can be effectively tackled only if both the demand for and supply of illegal wildlife is eradicated wherever in the world it occurs,

Aware that there are many actors and multiple ongoing programmes of work and initiatives on combating illegal trade in wildlife and that there is therefore a need for Africa to develop a common strategy and a shared understanding so as to consolidate its efforts and common position,

Welcoming the process to develop the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna,

Expressing appreciation for the support provided by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Criminal Police Organization, the World Customs Organization, the Taskforce of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the World Wildlife Fund and relevant partners, in the preparation of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna,

Decide:

1. To agree that the process that was embarked upon to develop the draft African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna should continue at the International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, to be held in Brazzaville from 27 to 30 April 2015;
2. To also agree that the common strategy should have a shared understanding that includes, inter alia:
 - (a) Improvement in understanding of the drivers of demand and supply and development of tools needed to strengthen action to reduce illegal demand for and supply of wildlife;
 - (b) Establishment of an inter-regional cooperation mechanism and partnerships to fight illegal trade in wildlife and share expertise and knowledge to further reduce demand for illegal trade in wildlife;
 - (c) Improved understanding of the role of communities that live close to wildlife in addressing and combating illegal trade in wildlife to derive benefits from conservation and sustainable use of wildlife;
 - (d) Establishment of national, regional and subregional networks for regional wildlife law-enforcement to promote increased sharing of best practices and experience, communication and cooperation links;
 - (e) Continued strengthening of law-enforcement capacity, including in training and equipment;
 - (f) Identification of means of implementation, including mobilization of resources, capacity-building and technology transfer, in addition to roles of the various regional and subregional institutions;

3. To encourage stakeholders, in particular from Africa, to contribute to the development of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna;
4. To agree to strengthen national legislation on illegal trade in wildlife, to recognize wildlife crime as a serious crime and to ensure that those involved in aiding the criminal acts are held accountable and do not benefit from their crimes;
5. To also agree to strengthen cooperation in legal and sustainable trade in African wildlife by, inter alia, providing information on wildlife parts and derivatives, traders and national legal frameworks regulating trade and supporting secure supply chains for legal and sustainable trade in wildlife;
6. To provide an enabling environment for local communities to be involved in the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife as a means to combat illegal wildlife trade;
7. To urge member States to attend and actively participate in the International Conference on Illegal Trade and Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, to be held in Brazzaville from 27 to 30 April 2015;
8. To agree to consider the final draft of the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna at the sixth special session or the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as may be decided by the Bureau of the Conference.

Decision 15/3: African Union Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Reiterating our commitment to the decision of the Assembly of the African Union on the report on Africa's participation in the Nagoya Conference on Biodiversity,⁶ in which the Assembly called for the inclusion of biodiversity among the priorities of the African Union and encouraged States members of the Union to become parties to all the protocols to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Acknowledging that a coordinated structure provides a link between the political and technical processes and also provides guidance to the negotiators and enhances Africa's visibility in the negotiations process, and in this regard calling on the African Union to approve the establishment of the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity with a view to their taking a proactive role in the Convention and its related protocols,

Reiterating the support given by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment through its decision 14/8, adopted at its fourteenth session, to encourage the work undertaken by the African Union Commission in the development of African Union guidelines for the coordinated implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization,

Taking note with appreciation of the work of the African Union Commission in completing the development of the African Union Strategic Guidelines,

Having considered the African Union Strategic Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the accompanying Practical Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing in Africa, which were prepared under the guidance of the African Union Commission and validated by access and benefit sharing experts from African Union member States,

Decides:

1. To adopt the proposed African Union Strategic Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and to take note of the accompanying Practical Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa;

⁶ Assembly/AU/Dec.352(XVI).

2. To invite the African Union Assembly to consider the Guidelines with a view to their adoption;
3. To call upon African countries and stakeholders in matters of access and benefit sharing to take into account the coordination approaches proposed in the Strategic Guidelines;
4. To request the African Development Bank, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme, to take the necessary measures to support the operationalization of the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity with a view to their taking a proactive role in the Convention on Biological Diversity and its related protocols.

Decision 15/4: Strengthening African leadership in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decision adopted at the sixth session of the Conference, held in Nairobi on 14 and 15 December 1995, to establish an African regional coordination unit to promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Recalling also the endorsement of the Regional Coordination Unit at the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in July 1996 to make the Unit operational and work out practical ways and means of enhancing its effectiveness,

Recalling further the decision adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-first ordinary session, held on 26 and 27 May 2013, on the need to strengthen African leadership in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process⁷ and the decision adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-second ordinary session, held on 30 and 31 January 2014, on enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Africa,⁸

Recognizing the diversity of the African region in terms of geography, culture, language and population, and recalling the emphasis given to Africa in Article 7 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Recognizing also that Africa has the largest number of parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification severely hit by desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought, and the largest affected areas in the world,

Recognizing further the significant feedback loops between climate change and land degradation, which exacerbate the negative impact on people and the planet,

Recognizing the importance of agriculture for African countries and its role in maintaining food security and the importance of addressing agricultural issues from an adaptation perspective and as possible adaptation co-benefits,

Noting that the Regional Coordination Unit for Africa was relocated to the secretariat of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Bonn, Germany, in June 2014,

Decide:

1. To support the hosting of the Regional Coordination Unit for Africa at an institution within the geographical boundaries of Africa, at the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa or the Regional Office for Africa of the United Nations Environment Programme;
2. To welcome proposals for the hosting of the Unit under one of the three institutions, analyse the comparative advantages of each institution and submit the results to country parties for their selection;
3. To welcome and take ownership of the Unit as African ministers of the environment to ensure that adequate finances are sourced and committed within Africa for the functioning of the Unit;

⁷ Assembly/AU/Dec.479(XXI).

⁸ Assembly/AU/Dec.492(XXII).

4. To agree on the importance of outcomes and analysis of the sessions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a stand-alone agenda item at future sessions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

5. To request the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to follow up on decisions of the Conference of the Parties in that regard and complete the process undertaken and the interactions conducted with relevant regional institutions in order to relocate the Unit as soon as possible;

6. To support, inter alia, the exchange of experiences in the implementation of subregional action programmes, in facilitating regular consultative processes and in developing cooperation between relevant subregional organizations, including the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of Central African States;

7. To support the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation, notably with a view to achieving greater synergies in the implementation process of the three Rio conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

Decision 15/5: African strategy on climate change

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decision of the Executive Council of the African Union on the negotiation process for the African common position on climate change,⁹ in which the African Union Commission was requested, in collaboration with partners, to elaborate a comprehensive African strategy on climate change to deal with short-, medium- and long-term climate change issues in Africa,

Recalling also decision SS.IV/1, adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fourth special session, in which African ministers of the environment decided to request the African Union Commission to circulate the final draft of the African strategy on climate change to member States for comments and further input, upon which the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was urged to convene a meeting of the Bureau to consider input from member States and endorse the strategy,

Decide:

1. To take note of the draft comprehensive African strategy on climate change along with its matrix of implementation prepared by the African Union Commission as a framework for integrated and coordinated mechanisms designed to give strategic support to regional economic communities, member States and other stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with climate change;

2. To mandate the Bureau to consider the draft comprehensive African strategy on climate change for approval and onward transmission to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its next session for possible endorsement, following which the draft strategy would be submitted to the Summit of the African Union to be held in January 2017 for possible adoption.

Decision 15/6: Report on the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and activities of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

⁹ EX.CL/Dec.500(XV)Rev.1.

Having considered the report of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi on its activities and preparations for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Having received a presentation by the secretariat of the Conference on the need to develop a gender strategy and policy for the Conference taking into account past decisions in which ministers reiterated the need to address the particular needs of the most vulnerable, including women and children,

Having considered the report of the secretariat on the regional flagship programmes and the proposed action plan,

Having considered also the report of the secretariat on goodwill ambassadors;

Decide:

1. To take note of the report of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, and in this regard request the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to consult with the African Diplomatic Corps on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report;
2. To request the African Diplomatic Corps, in the context of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, to undertake the necessary consultations on the calendar of the United Nations Environment Assembly and propose appropriate action at the second session of the Assembly;
3. To request the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, in consultation with the African Network for Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, to develop a gender strategy to be considered at the next regular session of the Conference;
4. To adopt the report of the secretariat of the Conference on the regional flagship programmes, as amended, and in this regard request the secretariat of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency to actively take the leadership and coordination role assigned to it by the Conference on the flagship programmes and to accelerate their implementation;
5. To hold a joint meeting with African ministers of finance to develop modalities for ensuring that the trust fund of the Conference receives funding on a regular and predictable basis;
6. To postpone action on the draft decision on the goodwill ambassadors and to revisit the matter at the next regular session of the Conference, and request the secretariat to develop detailed terms of reference for the function of the goodwill ambassadors, including financial implications, in relation to Conference structures and oversight for the activities of the holders of the office.

Decision 15/7: Africa Environment Outlook and Africa Environmental Information Network

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Stressing the importance of the Africa Environment Outlook and Africa Environmental Information Network processes as a means to build the capacity of African countries and to assess Africa's state of the environment in the context of sustainable development,

Expressing support for the Africa Environment Outlook and Africa Environmental Information Network processes for assessing the progress in achieving the sustainable development goal targets and in building the capacity of African countries and institutions,

Recalling decision 14/5 and other decisions adopted by the Conference on the Africa Environment Outlook process and the Africa Environmental Information Network,

Recognizing the importance of the continuous assessment of the state of the environment in Africa,

Reaffirming the need for the standardization of environmental data through the Africa Environmental Information Network as a decision support tool for African countries,

Decide:

1. To request African countries to continue supporting the development of the Africa Environment Outlook as one of its regular tools for reviewing the state of the African environment to support decision-making at the national and regional levels;

2. To request the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to continue supporting Africa Environmental Information Network activities;
3. To invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to support African countries in building and strengthening national and regional capacities in environmental information management through the Africa Environmental Information Network and other environment information network processes at the national level;
4. To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to continue mobilizing resources to support the preparation of future Africa Environment Outlook reports and support the capacity-building of African countries in thematic and integrated environmental assessment and reporting.

Decision 15/8: Intended nationally determined contributions

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as set out in its Article 2,

Recalling also the relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, in particular its decisions 1/CP.17, 2/CP.18, 1/CP.19 and 1/CP.20,

Recalling further paragraphs 9 to 12 of decision 1/CP.20,

Reiterating our commitment to developing a balanced protocol, another legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention that is applicable to all parties;

Decide:

1. To encourage all African countries to consider adaptation and mitigation components when communicating their intended nationally determined contributions in order to achieve the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2;
2. To invite developed countries and other partners to make available to African countries the support needed for preparing and communicating their intended nationally determined contributions and to ensure that such support covers all elements of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action and is fully aligned with the Lima Call for Climate Action and is implemented in a country-driven and country-owned manner;
3. To welcome the methodological guidance prepared by the African group of negotiators in its report on intended nationally determined contributions considerations for Africa, and invite all African countries to consider its recommendations, as appropriate, when elaborating their intended nationally determined contributions;
4. To accept the offer by Egypt to organize a workshop on the intended nationally determined contributions in Cairo in 2015, taking into account the special circumstances of African countries, in order to further consolidate a common African understanding on the intended nationally determined contributions.

Decision 15/9: Climate change and Africa's preparations for the 2015 agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Cairo from 4 to 6 March 2015 at the fifteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decisions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fifth special session, held in Gaborone from 15 to 18 October 2013, on strengthening the international climate change regime through the full, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol thereto,

Recalling also the guidance of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, in particular the key political messages on climate change adopted by the Committee at its preparatory meeting in advance of the Climate Summit convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York in September 2014,

Expressing appreciation to the United Republic of Tanzania, as the outgoing President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, for its outstanding achievements in providing political direction and maintaining the unity of Africa in the pursuit of its interests in the climate change negotiations,

Expressing appreciation also to the African group of negotiators for representing the interests of Africa in the climate change negotiations and the constructive manner in which they have advanced the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process,

Welcoming the outcome of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Lima in December 2014, as providing a sound basis for an agreement that respects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, recognizes the equal priority of adaptation and mitigation and recognizes adaptation investments by developing countries, for possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-first session, to be held in Paris in December 2015,

Noting that a current agreed global goal of limiting average global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius risks warming of over 3 degrees Celsius on the continent of Africa and represents extremely dangerous interference with the climate system,

Noting also with grave concern the findings of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which scientists restated the observed acceleration of human-induced changes in the climate system, including sea-level rise, with negative implications and projections for the African continent,

Recalling the findings of the publication *Africa's Adaptation Gap 2: Bridging the gap – mobilizing resources*, in particular the findings which indicate that Africa's adaptation costs could rise to \$50 billion per year by 2050 in a below 2°C world scenario and that such costs could double to \$100 billion per year by 2050 under a scenario that has the world warming by more than 4°C by 2100,

Stressing Africa's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, in particular its adverse effects on ecosystems, food production, and social and economic development in Africa; and noting further the urgent need for all countries to take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change,

Recognizing that agricultural production plays a key role in ensuring food security and sustainable socioeconomic development in Africa, and that there is a need to enhance the adaptation of agriculture to climate change impacts taking into account possible adaptation co-benefits,

Recognizing also that climate change impacts in Africa are projected to adversely affect several economic sectors and, as a consequence, African countries' growth in terms of gross domestic product as well as expenditures,

Concerned by the inadequate mitigation ambition with respect to the pre-2020 period by developed countries which has resulted in the current ambition gap of 8 to 12 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions,

Concerned also about the lack of clarity by the developed countries on their commitment to mobilize the \$100 billion per year by 2020 to support the rising costs of adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, particularly in Africa, owing to its levels of vulnerability and development,

Noting that the Green Climate Fund's initial resource mobilization has resulted in pledges of more than \$10.2 billion, and expressing our appreciation to the countries that have made pledges to the Green Climate Fund,

Concerned that, while African countries are engaged in readiness and pilot activities to reduce emissions from the forest sector and enhance the capacity of their sinks through the implementation of the enhanced mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD-plus), it is not clear when and how the commitment to provide adequate and sustainable financial resources to pay for the net emission reductions and removals shall be met due to the voluntary nature of this initiative,

Reaffirming our commitment to achieving an ambitious legally binding agreement in 2015 in line with the principles and provisions of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, ensuring parity in the content and legality of mitigation and adaptation activities, and their means of implementation,

Decide:

1. To urge the African group of negotiators to maintain the unity of the group and to continue to represent African interests in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process;
2. To also urge African countries and all parties to the Kyoto Protocol to ratify and implement the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol;
3. To call upon all developed countries to urgently implement ambitious mitigation commitments with a view to closing the current ambition gap of 8 to 12 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions;
4. To reaffirm that any agreement adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first session, to be held in Paris in December 2015, should be in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, in particular the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and equity;
5. To reaffirm that any agreement adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first session should enhance the implementation of the Convention and its annexes, be consistent with science and equity, and further enhance a multilateral rules-based system in a balanced and ambitious manner;
6. To agree to achieve an agreement that provides parity between mitigation and adaptation, noting the increased burden for adaptation in developing countries from inadequate aggregate mitigation efforts and, further, that such an agreement should ensure that mitigation ambition keeps the world on track for a global average temperature increase by the end of the twenty-first century that is well below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;
7. To call for the operationalization of the global responsibility for adaptation, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, through a global goal for adaptation that enhances the implementation of adaptation commitments, takes into account adaptation needs and associated costs, including support for developing countries, as well as recognizing the investments made by developing countries;
8. To also call for adaptation support under the global goal for adaptation, consistent with developed country commitments under paragraph 4 of article 4 of the Convention, to provide support through the full range of adaptation actions, including national adaptation plan processes, and formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans;
9. To further call for the full operationalization of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts and for the proposed climate change agreement to have a separate section on loss and damage, including provisions for support to countries in Africa;
10. To call for the enhancement of mitigation ambitions in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Convention with a view to achieving the target of average global warming that is well below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;
11. To urge all developed country parties and other parties included in Annex II to the Convention to provide climate finance as a means of enhancing action towards achieving the objectives of the Convention;
12. To urge also that the provisions of the proposed 2015 agreement in relation to finance take into account the commitment of \$100 billion dollars annually by 2020 as the basis for climate finance, ensuring additionally the predictability and sustainability of resources, and include a clear burden-sharing process for calculating the contributions to be made by developed country parties;
13. To call on the Board of the Green Climate Fund to ensure that resources are allocated as soon as possible and no later than the end of April 2015, and to further support countries' preparation to access funds by making available adequate additional readiness resources;
14. To urge developed country contributors to the Green Climate Fund to ensure the timely disbursement of their contributions, by no later than the end of April 2015, in order for the Board to allocate resources as soon as possible;
15. To call on the Board of the Green Climate Fund to support the preparation of the country programmes for identifying country strategies and plans in response to climate change and to list, within the context of the country programmes, the projects and activities to be submitted for funding;

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16. To urge that closing the ambition gap requires global partnerships, including new forms of cooperative initiatives to accelerate and scale up action;
17. To call on the Green Climate Fund and all partners to support the full operationalization of the African group's renewable energy initiative in order to set in motion concrete pilot activities and projects with a view to demonstrating the full potential of such incentives and laying the foundation for rapid and massive scaling-up;
18. To request the United Nations Environment Programme to update the Africa's Adaptation Gap report yearly and to invite African centres of excellence, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Climate Policy Centre, the Regional Service Centre for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme and other development partners, including the World Bank, to support the operationalization of the findings of the second *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report;
19. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to prepare a report on climate change and Africa's economic growth and present its findings to the next session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
20. To call for the establishment under the proposed 2015 climate change agreement of a framework for undertaking technology assessments, providing for the financing and implementation of technology needs assessments, and identifying and defining options for developed countries to enhance access by developing countries to technologies, address barriers to technology transfer and provide an appropriate enabling environment;
21. To call also for the establishment of an international capacity-building mechanism to ensure the coherence of the technology-related cross-cutting issues described in paragraph 20 of the present decision while facilitating the implementation of adaptation and mitigation in developing countries;
22. To urge that the international capacity-building mechanism under the proposed 2015 agreement be supported through the financial and technological mechanisms under the Convention and be linked to adaptation-related institutions;
23. To urge also the continuation of the forum on response measures and the establishment of a mechanism to avoid and minimize the negative economic and social consequences of response measures taken by developed country parties in relation to developing country parties and, in particular, to address policy issues of concern, such as unilateral measures;
24. To reaffirm our support for the promotion of gender balance and gender sensitivity in developing and implementing climate policy, as well as the improvement of the participation of women in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of their representation in bodies established pursuant to the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol thereto, and welcome the request made to the African Union Commission by the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-third ordinary session to develop a women and gender programme on climate change under the auspices of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change in order to engage women and gender in climate change-related activities.¹⁰
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¹⁰ Assembly/AU/Dec.538(XXIII).