

*African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Seventeenth session Ministerial segment
 Durban, South Africa, 14 and 15 November 2019

Draft decision 17/1: Taking action for the sustainability of environmental and natural resources in Africa

We, African ministers for the environment,

Having met in Durban on 14 and 15 November 2019 at the seventeenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the outcomes of previous sessions of the Conference that have inspired individual and collective action by member States, stakeholders and other partners,

Noting that taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity is essential for the African continent in order to find common solutions to environmental challenges,

Taking cognizance of the formulation of an African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy strategy and recalling the definition of a blue economy set out therein,

Determined to advance an action-oriented approach that addresses gaps and opportunities in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference as a contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as Agenda 2063 of the African Union,

Decide:

I

Taking action on decisions

1. To agree to take necessary action to accelerate the implementation of past and future decisions of the Conference;
2. To evaluate progress in the implementation of the decisions and declarations of the Conference prior to its eighteenth session;
3. To agree to expand or create environmental policy harmonization structures, including interministerial committees to monitor progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;
4. To involve non-state actors, such as the private sector, civil society, academia and development partners, in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;
5. To welcome the proposal for a science-policy-business forum to contribute to the provision of information to policymakers for informed decision-making on environmental issues, and request the secretariat to formulate a concept note on such a forum for consideration and possible adoption at the eighteenth or nineteenth sessions of the Conference and provide the Conference with relevant information to facilitate decision-making and consideration at those sessions;
6. To expedite the implementation of decision AMCEN 13/4, in which the Conference called on countries that had not yet paid their contributions to urgently meet their obligations and to provide additional resources to the trust fund;
7. To prioritize, plan and budget for in the country annual programmes, plans and budgets of the ministries or entities responsible for the environment, as appropriate, the contributions made to

the Conference and the implementation of its decisions, and invite parties to report in an accountability framework on the implementation of the present decision;

8. To invite the secretariat to undertake bilateral discussions with States to ensure the payment of their outstanding contributions to the trust fund and report on country commitments to fulfil their obligations at the eighteenth session of the Conference;

II

Blue economy

9. To welcome the formulation of the African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy strategy and to contribute towards its implementation in line with the mandate of the Conference, and invite the secretariat of the Conference, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, to prepare a report on the matter, in consultation with member States, taking environmental considerations into account, for consideration by the Conference at its eighteenth session;

III

Circular economy

10. To request the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic communities and other partners to support the contextualization of the circular economy to the needs and resource profiles of African countries and prepare the necessary toolkits for building the capacity of those countries;

11. To ensure that the concept of the circular economy includes a comprehensive approach to address plastic pollution based on the full life cycle of materials, including plastics, from design and production to waste prevention and management, while ensuring coherence and coordination with activities undertaken by existing regional and international instruments;

12. To develop a regional programme to promote and upscale the circular economy and, in that regard, request the African Union, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic communities and other partners to support that programme;

13. To promote the circular economy through an integrated approach, which involves stakeholders, the development of policies, research and development, and encourages and incentivizes private, public and community sector-driven green initiatives;

14. To promote and strengthen existing regional, subregional and national governance structures for the sustainable implementation of the circular economy;

IV

Bamako Convention

15. To request the United Nations Environment Programme to work closely with the Government of the Congo, the African Union and other relevant partners in the organization of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa;

16. To encourage member States that have not done so to ratify the Bamako Convention;

V

Biodiversity

17. To endorse the establishment of a core group to facilitate the coordination of the African group of negotiators in developing a common regional position to strengthen Africa's voice, and mandate the African group of negotiators on biodiversity, established by decision AMCEN 14/8, to articulate African perspectives, priorities and common positions during all the negotiations of the open-ended working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, in February 2020;

18. To adopt Africa's biodiversity priorities as endorsed at the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 November 2018, and to emphasize the critical

need for adequate provision of financial resources, access to technology and capacity enhancement commensurate with the level of ambition of the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

19. To adopt the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience as Africa's commitment to implement the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, and invite all member States to swiftly embark on its implementation, building on existing initiatives and programmes, and invite the United Nations entities, the African Development Bank, development partners and relevant organizations to provide all necessary support to implement the Pan-African Action Agenda;

20. To call for the establishment of a global biodiversity fund to provide a dedicated and sustainable flow of financial resources to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

21. To implement the initiative of the Government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and land and ecosystem degradation;

22. To request the African Union Commission, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, other relevant entities of the United Nations, civil society and local communities to support and promote that initiative;

23. To welcome the offer of the Government of Egypt in convening a meeting for all stakeholders to advance discussions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and support the above-mentioned initiative;

24. To develop a regional cooperation framework on advancing the biodiversity economy that enhances the value of biological goods and services, integrates natural capital accounting and scales up investment in the sustainable utilization of biological resources as part of Africa's transformation;

25. To request the African Union to hold regular African biodiversity summits, at least every four years, to provide policy direction and guidance and raise awareness of socioeconomic issues and of the environmental importance of biodiversity in Africa;

26. To encourage member States to attend, at the level of Heads of State and Government, the summit on biodiversity being convened in 2020 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/234 of 20 December 2018 to provide political direction to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and raise the visibility of biodiversity and its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

VI

Land degradation, desertification and drought

27. To request member States and development partners to support the implementation of land degradation neutrality transformative projects and national drought plans, and to promote appropriate action to combat desertification and drought under the drought initiative of the Convention to Combat Desertification;

28. To encourage member States to use the drought toolbox and to strengthen their preparedness for drought and early warning systems through enhanced regional and national institutional efforts;

29. To invite the African Union Commission to provide all necessary support to representatives of the African region in the intergovernmental working group to explore effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention to Combat Desertification;

30. To request development partners, international financial mechanisms, the private sector and other stakeholders to boost investments and technical support aimed at combating desertification, land degradation and drought and achieving land degradation neutrality and resilience-building;

VII

Maputo Convention

31. To encourage member States that have not done so to ratify the 2003 Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Maputo Convention);
32. To invite member States to offer to host the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention, in 2020;
33. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Union Agency for Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the African Development Bank and the World Wide Fund for Nature, among others, to support the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention;

VIII

United Nations Environment Assembly

34. To agree that the theme for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly should focus on nature-based solutions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, thereby addressing the priority of utilizing Africa's rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems to empower African countries and, in particular, local communities, to advance their socioeconomic development in a sustainable way and to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation;
35. To request the representatives of the African group of States in Nairobi to include issues of common interest to Africa in the negotiations under the theme of nature-based solutions, focusing in particular on securing means of implementation for African countries in the form of finance, appropriate technology transfer on a concessional and preferential basis and capacity-building;
36. To encourage the African group of States to further engage and develop a common African approach to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, prior to that session in 2021;
37. To participate in the ad hoc open-ended expert group established under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Assembly to effectively address the issue of plastic pollution in all environments with the aim of reaching an ambitious outcome at the fifth session of the Assembly, in 2021;

IX

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

38. To request the African Union Commission and partners to establish a platform for African negotiators on matters pertaining to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in order to foster a coherent African position and enable African countries to speak with a common voice in global negotiations;

X

Poverty, environment, gender and youth

39. To enhance measures and strategies for the sustainable utilization and fair and equitable sharing of natural resources to eradicate poverty and enhance job creation and economic activities for women and the youth;
40. To improve access to natural resources by women and the youth in order to strengthen security of tenure, ownership and access to rights for women and the youth;
41. To establish platforms and networks for women and the youth that enhance their involvement in the management of natural resources;

XI**Africa Environment Partnership Platform**

42. To request members States and regional institutions to work closely with the African Union Agency for Development and provide the needed technical and financial support for, and participate in, the multi-stakeholder Africa Environment Partnership Platform and provide the requisite data to enrich the geospatial portal;

XII**Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment thereto**

43. To urge Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to adopt an action plan preventing the market penetration of obsolete equipment in Africa while facilitating access to secure and energy-efficient technologies on the continent;

44. To also urge African States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol as soon as possible.

ADVANCE