

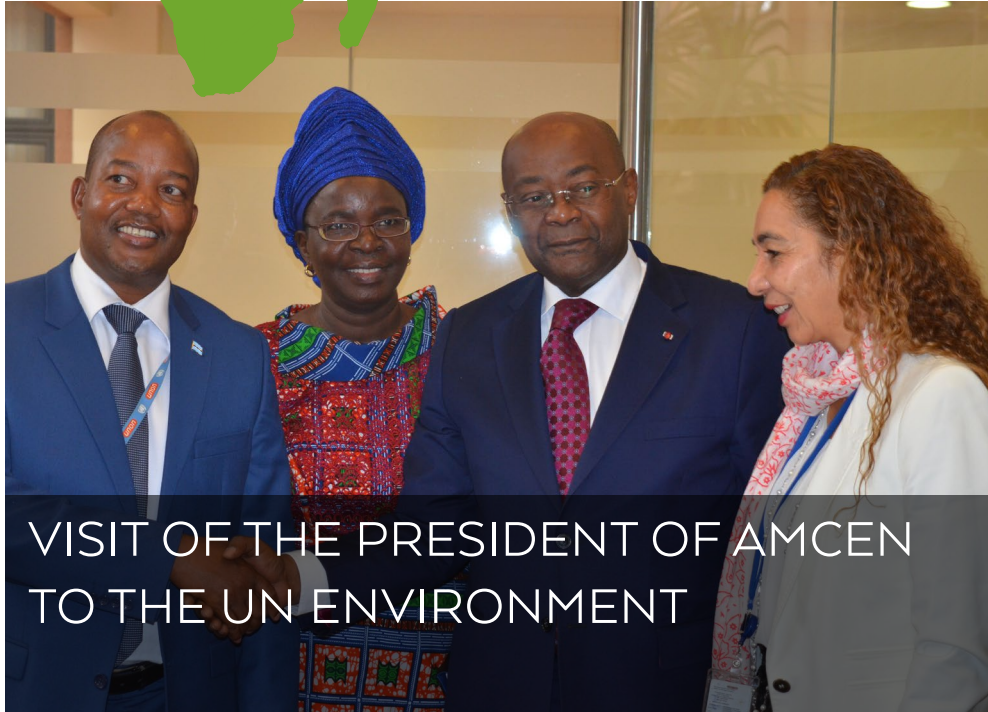


UN
environment

UN ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

AFRICA OFFICE

JULY-AUG 2017



VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF AMCEN
TO THE UN ENVIRONMENT



● AMCEN



● ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY



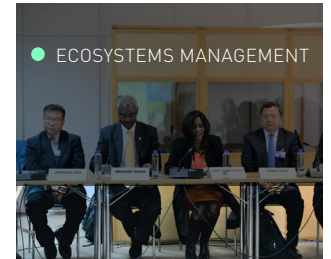
● CHEMICALS AND WASTE



● GENDER



● AGRICULTURE



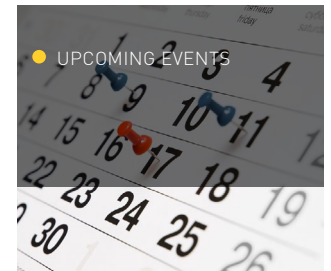
● ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT



● POLLUTION



● POVERTY AND THE
ENVIRONMENT



● UPCOMING EVENTS



CALENDAR



CONTACT



AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN)



HOME



CALENDAR



CONTACT

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF AMCEN TO THE UN ENVIRONMENT



The President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) called upon African countries to put the environment at the heart of their national development plans during his two-day visit to the UN Environment Headquarters.

H.E. Mr. Pacôme Moubelet-Boubeya, Minister of Forest, Sea and Environment of The Republic of Gabon and President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and his team were received by Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment and Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director and Regional Representative of Africa Office.

Mr. Moubelet-Boubeya said that the environment is key to the achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. He reiterated that the UN Environment Assembly is the right forum to bring challenges that are facing Africa to the attention of the world.

"We are committed to make the next Assembly a success for the interest of our African Nations," says Mr. Moubelet-Boubeya.

The President of AMCEN also met with the Nairobi-based African Diplomatic Corps and representatives to UN Environment. He was briefed on the African environmental agenda as well as interests and challenges.

"We need to speak with one voice to be heard at UN Environment Assembly and other key international environmental fora," said the President. "To be able to make significant contribution and impact, we have to be well

prepared and present at the next Assembly," he told the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi.

Mr. Moubelet-Boubeya also met with the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, H.E John Moreti, High Commissioner of Botswana, who briefed him on the resolutions that the African countries intend to present to the Assembly.

Prior to his appointment as Minister of Forest, Sea and Environment, Mr. Moubelet-Boubeya occupied different high-ranking positions in his Government. He was the Minister of Education, Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gabon.

Gabon has been leading on conservation and the fight against wildlife crimes in Africa. The Gabonese President, H.E Ali Bongo Ondimba is a founding member of the Giants Club, a forum that brings together African Heads of State, global business leaders and elephant protection experts to secure Africa's elephant populations and the landscapes they depend on. Mr. Bongo is also the current Coordinator of the Committee of the African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).

AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT



AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY



MINIMIZING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Since the 2005 Humanitarian Reform, environment has been identified as a priority cross-cutting issue by humanitarian actors. Nevertheless, current humanitarian action in Sudan provides few incentives to take into account the alarming rates of ecosystem degradation.

Disasters and conflicts often impact the environment in ways that threaten human life, health, livelihoods and security.

Sudan faces an increasing number of environmental challenges which are at the same time sources of conflict and disasters, such as environmental degradation and the over-exploitation of natural resources, especially the unsustainable use of forests and groundwater resources.

Relief and recovery operations that follow disasters and conflicts can sometimes cause as much environmental damage as the crises they were designed to respond to.

Unsustainable approaches used in the humanitarian response can leave disaster and conflict prone regions on dependent trajectories that continue to overexploit natural resources and the environment. These trajectories propagate a vicious circle of ecosystem degradation, poverty and food

insecurity, as forest dwelling communities and subsistence farmers depend on what have become degraded ecosystems to sustain their livelihoods and income-generation opportunities. A large humanitarian presence, which is designed for rapid and intense operations, all too often leaves behind a trail of polluting waste, concentrated resource overuse and heavy, unsustainable urbanization.

A failure to address these environmental risks from the onset and insufficient inclusion of environmental considerations in relief operations can undermine the relief process by affecting availability, access and quality of water, food, land and energy. This causes in return additional loss of life, displacement, aid dependency and increased vulnerability.

At global level, UN Environment leads the United Nations efforts on the environment. Building on the capacities and resources of the country, together with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), UN Environment Sudan supports efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of humanitarian action while building-up resilience to new crises. Currently, 60 organizations across all humanitarian sectors that applied for financing through the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF) have been trained on approaches and tools



related to environmental mainstreaming into humanitarian planning and response in Sudan.

This year, 53 Sudan Humanitarian Funds (SHF) project proposals with a combined value of 17,2 Million USD and serving approximately 1,14 M beneficiaries were screened on environmental impact and mitigation measures. The aim of this initiative is to minimize the possible negative environmental impacts of these operations to ensure they do no harm with regard to longer-term vulnerability and development. Coordination amongst all stakeholders involved is key to the success of this effort, resulting in the close cooperation of humanitarian and early recovery actors, authorities, donors, and affected people on environmental concerns.

AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

TURNING TRAGEDIES INTO OPPORTUNITIES: OVERCOMING AFRICA'S LEAD CHALLENGE

The world remembers well the innocent children killed in the tragedy of Thiaroye-sur-Mer in Senegal. The killer not only took the lives of people, but destroyed wildlife and the environment. But rather than war or natural disaster, in 2008 lead was to blame.

Following the death of 18 children in Thiaroye-sur-Mer, investigating authorities identified lead poisoning from local recycling of discarded car batteries as the silent threat stalking the seaside community.

Lead is a well-known toxic substance with wide-ranging negative health effects. Studies have shown that high blood lead levels lead to reduced IQ, hearing loss, hyperactivity, shortened concentration span and poor school performance in children.

"Lead from used batteries is a major issue in Africa. When lead is recycled in an unsafe environment, it can affect children and pregnant women," says Percy Onainwa, Executive Director, Center for Cleaner Production Technology and Hazardous Waste Management, Nigeria.

"We have seen cases of lead poisoning in various countries in Africa – such as Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal. The poisoning has killed children, and affected soil, water and the atmosphere."

Lead-acid batteries are widely used in Africa to power everything from cars, to telecommunication equipment, to backup electrical systems. But when these batteries reach the end of their life, efforts to recycle their lead cores causes widespread environmental contamination.

"Lead is considered to be the workhorse of the rechargeable battery systems for its reliability, low cost, and good operational life," says UN Environment Chemical and Waste Management Coordinator Abdouraman Bary. "But inappropriate recycling of used batteries in many African countries poses a high risk for both human health and the environment."

Representatives from ten African countries gathered in Ougadougou on July 19-21 to discuss the environmental, health and socio-economic impacts of used lead-acid battery (ULAB) recycling in the Africa region. This was at a meeting organized by UN Environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Burkina Faso.

Countries also discussed regional, sub-regional, and national strategies to address sound ULAB recycling.



"Industrial sectors in Ghana lack pollution control mechanisms. This includes smelters of lead in used batteries, which poses a serious environmental and health threat," says Lambert Faabeluon, Director of Standard, Compliance and Enforcement at Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency. "With help from international experts, we have introduced new measures to control pollution."

As most African countries lack adequate recycling facilities, many unlicensed battery re-conditioners and illegal recyclers of used lead-acid batteries continue to enter into this unregulated field.



JULY-AUG. 2017

AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

GENDER



WOMEN TAKE LEADERSHIP ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The official photo of the President of Gabon H.E Ali Bongo Ondimba with African ministers of the environment taken at the opening of the 16th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was uncommon.

The photo paints a picture of motivated, independent and optimistic African women who are a driving force in this rapidly developing continent. A clear signal that resonates beyond this ministerial conference: women are today leading on the environment agenda in Africa.

Climate change is negatively affecting many regions in the world but the impact is more visible in Africa as the continent has limited economic resources to adapt and is highly reliant on natural resources.

Men and women don't bear the same brunt of climate change in Africa. Women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men because they are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. Women and girls can spend hours a day collecting water, making them especially susceptible to changes in climate.

African governments are still overlooking gender issues in vital economic sectors such as agriculture. This comes at a heavy price for African economies. A recent study by the World Bank concluded that closing the gender gap in agriculture would increase Tanzania's GDP by \$105 million and Uganda's by \$67 million. The report also demonstrates that closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity could potentially lift as many as 238,000 people out of poverty in Malawi, 80,000 people in Tanzania, and 119,000 people in Uganda.

Women constitute 56 percent of Ugandan farmers and make up more than 70 percent of agricultural production, nutrition and food security, at the household level, according to the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET). Closing the gender gap in the agriculture sector will require new policies and approaches. One option that could be considered is to help women farmers access substitutes for household labor, such as hired workers and labor-saving technologies. This resonates well with this year's theme of the African Ministerial conference on the Environment "«Investing in Innovative Environmental Solutions to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa».



African women provide household energy supplies by gathering fuelwood for cooking, lighting and heating. They have to spend most of the day traveling long distances for firewood. They also continue to suffer from serious health issues related to indoor pollution.

The energy use by rural women for cooking is unsafe and polluting. Transportation of fuel is often physically demanding and can potentially expose women to risks. They are also likely to suffer sexual violence when they go to the field to collect fuel, especially in conflict areas.



AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT



JULY-AUG. 2017

AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

GENDER



WOMEN TAKE LEADERSHIP ON THE ENVIRONMENT

African governments' commitment to promoting gender equity is evident. Most African countries have ratified key international instruments such as the convention on 'Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women'. They are also integrating this commitment into policies and national development plans. But a lot still needs to be done to achieve concrete results on the ground. Governments still need to allocate appropriate resources for gender issues. In Uganda, for example, financial allocations for gender issues have not exceeded 0.43% of national budget. This makes the integration of gender equity into development planning challenging.

At the same time, there is some good news from the continent which shows some progress on gender issues. The Global Gender Gap Index shows that last year, South Africa ranked 15th out of 145 countries in terms of closing the pay gap between women and men. However, 31 percent of South African companies still have no female representation in senior leadership roles and only 10 percent of the country's CEOs are women.

Challenging misconceptions around women and career aspirations is not easy. Gender awareness among policymakers and practitioners across all levels is vital. Meanwhile, African leaders seem to have understood the game: more women at leadership positions will certainly bring positive change, especially where it is critically needed - the environment.





JULY-AUG. 2017

AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

SWITCH AFRICA



HOME



CALENDAR



CONTACT

YOUTH REAPS PROFITS FROM SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

By adopting sustainable agricultural practices, Herman Agathe has managed to increase his flock from 4 to 126 animals. He has goats, sheep, pigs, chicken, ducks and cows in his herd. Based in Roche Bon Dieu, Rodrigues Island in Mauritius Herman is an exceptional 18-year old who has managed to reap benefits from his hard work.

Herman was first introduced to sustainable agriculture in 2015 when he attended a series of trainings organized by Centre de Formation Agricole Frere Remy, a SWITCH Africa Green grantee. There, he got an opportunity to interact with other farmers and experts and learned about various concepts on sustainable agriculture, book-keeping and business management.

Initially having poor records for his business, he worked hard and smart to apply the new ideas and innovative concepts he learnt to his farm. Herman has managed to grow the numbers of the animals he has, trading them for profit. For instance, he reaps good profit when he sells his goats, whose price ranges from MUR 4,000 – MUR 6,000 (\$115 - \$170). Herman in turn sells the organic manure he gets from his animals, with a 50kg bag selling for MUR 50 (\$1.50). The animals produce about 15 bags of organic manure per month. He has also started processing pig sausages to generate new income.

Notably, Herman has managed to build himself a house from the profits generated from his business. Also, progress has been a topic of presentations Herman has made at various forums including the Regional Networking Forum that took place in Uganda in May 2016, and most recently the Mauritius National Networking Forum that took place on Rodrigues in May 2017.

“I want to lease land to be able to embark on crop production,” he said of his plans to expand his farming activities. He is optimistic that with the training received he will be able to expand and successfully run a big farm. Herman lives with and supports his extended family of five from the income he generates.



AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT



AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT



AFRICAN AND CHINESE SCIENTISTS AGREE TO COOPERATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists from leading institutions in China and Africa have agreed to take a holistic view to address impacts of climate change. This was the outcome of a two day conference on south-south scientific cooperation between China and Africa held in Nairobi 4-5 September 2017.

The conference was opened by Prof. Judi Wakhungu, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya. In her address, Prof. Wakhungu called for more attention to be paid to alleviating the impacts of climate change on ecosystems and livelihoods in arid and semi-arid areas. She welcomed the cooperation between China and Africa, noting the important role that UN Environment plays to nurture and support such mechanisms.

The scientists agreed to pursue the nexus approach when designing and implementing climate change interventions at the regional and country level.

The nexus approach addresses the inter-linkages and interdependencies between phenomena. The scientists will focus on the nexus between climate change, ecosystems management and human livelihoods.

Climate change is top on the global agenda as it has both environmental and developmental dimensions and this is evidenced by the landmark Paris Agreement. It requires a multifaceted approach that brings different disciplines together to develop innovative and integrative solutions with a menu of options to inform policy making.

The conference brought together 70 scientists and policy experts from 10 African nations and China, representing 40 national and international organisations from China and Africa. It was convened under the auspices of the UN Environment International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP), a joint effort by UN Environment and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Participants agreed that future cooperation should pursue three goals:

- Promote awareness and knowledge of the Climate, Ecosystems and Livelihoods nexus;
- Develop policy recommendations – including innovative, integrative solutions – to support the work of policymakers and to strengthen the science-policy interface.



To achieve those goals, a standing mechanism will be developed under which UN Environment will provide a platform to support future China-Africa cooperation on the nexus approach. Cooperation will build on the existing institutions, networks, centres of excellence and ongoing programmes in both Africa and China.

AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT



POLLUTION



HOME



CALENDAR



CONTACT

BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS IN KENYA



The UN Environment is engaged in a number of initiatives to support the effective implementation of the ban on plastic in Kenya.

Erik Solheim, UN Environment Head, hosted a breakfast round table with the Kenya Vision 2030 Chief Executive Officers on Wednesday 16th August. This first meeting was part of a series of conversations to engage with Kenyan citizens, stakeholders and key actors from both government and private sector, and invite them to share their views on the ongoing conversations on environment and sustainable development related issues.

UN Environment and Safaricom signed an MoU aimed at heightening the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focus on protecting, and conserving the environment. The MOU will provide a framework for cooperation and understanding, and facilitate collaboration and implementation of activities and projects that contribute to selected areas of the SDGs. The selected SDGs include Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life below Water and Partnerships.

UN Environment also participated in a panel discussion at an exhibition on alternative eco-friendly packaging. The Ecosystems Division's Director, Ms. Mette Wilkie represented UN Environment. The panel discussion clarified issues such as the use, manufacture and importation of plastic bags, the dangers posed by their usage, and alternatives.

Over 40 exhibitors attended the event to showcase alternative bags and packaging material- including material made from recycling the invasive hyacinth weed.

To document the impact of plastic on the health of animals, UN Environment, in collaboration with Dagoretti slaughterhouse in Nairobi, developed a documentary showing the large amounts of plastic ingested by cows. The documentary showed that more than 20 bags can at any one time be found in each cow slaughtered. These bags are ingested by cows grazing in fields littered with human trash. They can't digest them and when their systems get clogged with plastic, they die from starvation.

RWANDA INCREASES EXPENDITURE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES WITH TANGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



For seven consecutive years, the Government of Rwanda has applied, through the annual budget call circular, a checklist for integrating environment and climate change in annual sector and district plans and budgets. The UNDP-UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative has played an instrumental role in developing and building capacity for the application of the checklist.

The application of the checklist and other policy and budget coherence tools developed by the Initiative together with the Government has resulted in substantive increases in expenditure on environment and natural resources as a percentage of the total public expenditure. Expenditure has increased from 0.4% (12.7 billion RWF) in 2009/10, to 2.5% (39.4 billion RWF) in 2012/13, to 6% in 2015/16 (111 billion RWF equivalents to US\$ 132 million).

The increase in expenditure on environment and natural resource sustainability is contributing to poverty reduction and the achievement of national development goals.

For example, forest coverage has increased by 0.3% of the total land size, adding 8,157 Ha , and generating US\$ 3.84 million and 23,227 jobs. A total of 2,303 Ha of sensitive ecosystems have been rehabilitated and the number of households with access to electricity has increased by 23%, from 508,000 in 2015 to 627,214 in 2016. As a result of these environmental improvements, Rwanda is on track to meet the national target of reducing people living in poverty to below 30% by 2018.

Through various initiatives the Poverty-Environment Initiative is working in Rwanda with the Government to further attract investments for inclusive environmental sustainability. For example, 2.4 billion RWF (equivalent to around US\$3 million) has in 2017 been granted by Rwanda's Green Fund for the implementation of the Nyandungu Urban Ecosystem (wetlands) Project. The objective is to enhance biodiversity, raise awareness on wetland conservation, reduce flood risk, create green jobs, and promote tourism.



MALAWI HAS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND OBTAIN SUBSTANTIAL RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Malawi is a land-locked country in Africa with a large rural population that is mainly dependent on agriculture. The well-being of Malawians and the country's economy thus depend on the well-being of the country's natural resources including good nutrient soils for agriculture, healthy fisheries and forest ecosystems. Unfortunately, population growth, poverty and climatic variations are increasing the pressure on cultivable land and accentuating the degradation of these natural resources.

A new study finalized by the Poverty-Environment Initiative and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Planning in December 2016 and officially launched in Lilongwe on 15th June 2017 quantifies the poverty-environment connections in Malawi and identifies sustainable pathways for poverty reduction and economic growth.

The study finds that among rural and peri-urban households, 18% of incomes come from natural resource products, such as charcoal, fuel wood, honey and mushroom, and another 17% of incomes are derived from agricultural produce. This means that healthy environment and natural resources are essential for household incomes as well as people's well-being.

The poverty-environment nexus also has a bearing at the national or macroeconomic level. For example, the study finds that a one percent increase (US\$ 300,000) in public investments for sustainable environmental and natural resource management would in turn raise the annual gross domestic product (GDP) by US\$ 17 million. That is a significant return on investment that makes environmental, social and economic sense.

On the other hand, a one percent reduction in forest cover alone translates to a loss in income of nearly US\$ 24 million per year. This is crucial as Malawi currently has the highest deforestation rate in southern Africa. Moreover, solid fuels (fuel wood and charcoal) meet 98.7% of the total energy needs for local populations. Concerted efforts to reduce deforestation rates and promote alternative green sources of energy are needed.

The study calls for a more integrated approach to environmental, poverty and economic development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In light of the findings it recommends increased investments in environmental and natural resource sustainability to achieve poverty, food security, economic as well as sustainability goals.

The UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Ms. Claire Medina, complemented by highlighting that "from the findings of the study it is clear that Malawi can significantly reduce poverty and the vulnerability of people to food insecurity by increasing budgeting and public expenditures to the most important sectors of the economy including the environment and natural resources".



AFRICA OFFICE
NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENTS



HOME



CALENDAR



CONTACT

18-20 OCT
2017

High Level Conference on the
implementation of Paris agreement
in Africa
Libreville, Gabon

6-17 NOV
2017

The UN Climate Change
Conference
Bonn, Germany

4-6 DEC
2017

The UN Environment Assembly
Nairobi, Kenya



AMCEN

ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY

CHEMICALS
AND WASTE

GENDER

AGRICULTURE

ECOSYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT

POLLUTION

POVERTY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

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NOF Block 2, Level 1, South-Wing
P.O. Box 30552, 00100
Nairobi, KENYA
Email: communication.roa@unep.org

www.unep.org/africa