

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE OF NEPAD

3 February 2003

Presented on behalf of African Civil Society Organizations by

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1. We, representatives of the Africa Civil Society, met in Nairobi, Kenya from 01 – 02 February 2003 in the context of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum organised by UNEP during its 22nd session/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for civil society organisations to discuss on recommendations to be integrated into the Action plan of the NEPAD Environment Initiative, which is under preparation.
2. We note with appreciation that UNEP with support from the GEF is putting special emphasis on Africa and NEPAD during this GC which is indicative of its determination to accelerate implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg (South Africa) in August - September 2002.
3. We, the members of Africa civil society, commit ourselves to the vision of sustainable development and environmental governance.
4. We note the framework for Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the NEPAD, which is being further developed into action plans for program areas.
5. Whereas, the framework for action provides a sound basis for the development of action plans, we noted significant gaps which include among others:
 - a. The five principles of the Framework are too broad and lacking in specificity to provide meaningful guidance for actions.
 - b. NEPAD can be more useful by increasing the level of implementation carried out through CSOs. These CSOs must be adequately funded to work with the communities.
 - c. CSOs are not represented on the Steering Committee on the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD.
 - d. The plan does not specify the role of civil society/NGOs.
 - e. The necessary integration between environment and social and economic development is not present in the action plans.
 - f. The social and economic dimension of poverty and environment is not clearly articulated in the programme area and does not reflect the on-going initiatives on poverty and environment.

- g. The Environment and Health action plan does not include activities on the most pressing health concerns of Africa, like HIV/AIDS and lack of access to clean water and sanitation.
 - h. The imbalances in funding between Desertification and Climate Change conventions are not addressed.
 - i. The need for partnerships and building of frameworks to enable investments to take place is not recognised sufficiently.
 - j. The potential to exploit synergies amongst existing conventions is not sufficiently addressed.
 - k. Empowerment of CSO's to take advantage of new mechanisms like the CDM to forge relationships and secure resources from industry and other partners needs to be achieved.
 - l. The definition of forestry needs to be further elaborated and the vision for this element needs to be more global.
 - m. The threats to biodiversity in Africa need to be expanded and issues like conflict, community access, cultural diversity and benefit sharing need to be included.
 - n. In respect of water resources the Dams and Development Programme and the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams needs to be integrated into the Action Plans.
6. We note with concern that the principle of participation by civil society is not included in the principles in the Framework. We therefore urge that this principle be recognised as the underpinning of all action plans and that national governments include CSO's in their national NEPAD initiatives.
 7. We strongly believe that for the Governing Council to achieve sustainable development and environmental governance in Africa, it should take into account the recommendations made by the Africa Civil Society with respect to the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
 8. We note that the overriding problem with previous development initiatives in Africa was implementation, therefore we believe that NEPAD can be very useful if it undertakes project implementation with the collaboration of CSOs.
 9. We recognize the need for adequate capacity for CSOs to be actively involved in the implementation of the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action. We therefore recommend that a major capacity building initiative towards the CSOs and the communities is developed under the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
 10. We acknowledge that eradicating poverty is a priority for achieving sustainable development in Africa. Accordingly, we, civil society organizations of Africa, recommend that the NEPAD Environment Initiative Plan of Action fully addresses poverty eradication as a cross-cutting issue.
 11. We, Civil Society Organizations, are in the process of establishing a structure of CSOs to enable our engagement in the NEPAD Environment Initiative Plan of Action. It is therefore our submission that CSOs should be represented in the various working groups, the steering committee and other decision-making mechanisms within the NEPAD process.

12. We strongly believe that peace is a pre-requisite for sustainable and call on African governments and the international community to adopt measures within the NEPAD Environment Initiative Plan of Action to ensure adequate conflicts prevention and resolution of conflicts over transboundary natural resources management.
14. We urge the Governing Council to ensure that traditional knowledge, practices and innovations are included in the action plans for natural resource management.
15. We reaffirm that sustainable development requires active participation of women and men on an equal footing and at all levels of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We therefore call for the integration of gender equality in all activities encompassed within the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
16. We reaffirm our engagement with NEPAD, despite our insufficient involvement in its formulation, and urge African leaders to partner with African Civil Society.

Dated Saturday, 01 February 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya.