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## *African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

### **African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

#### **Fifteenth session**

Ministerial segment

Cairo, 4–6 March 2015

## **Annotations to the provisional agenda**

### **I. Introduction**

1. In accordance with paragraph 1 of article 9 of its constitution, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment holds its ordinary sessions once every two or three years. An offer by the Government of Egypt to host the fifteenth session was accepted by the Conference at its fourteenth session, held in Arusha from 10 to 14 September 2012.
2. Pursuant to that offer, it was agreed that the fifteenth session would be held in Cairo from 2 to 6 March 2015. The session will consist of an expert group segment, to be held from 2 to 4 March, and a ministerial segment, to be held from 4 to 6 March. The opening ceremony for the ministerial segment will take place on the afternoon of 4 March 2015.
3. In this regard, the Bureau of the Conference considered and adopted a provisional agenda for the ministerial segment of the fifteenth session (AMCEN/15/1/Rev.1). The Bureau also chose “Managing Africa’s natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication” as the theme for the session.
4. The secretariat has distributed an information note on the fifteenth session (AMCEN/15/INF/1). A complete list of the documents prepared for the session is set out in annex I to the present document.

### **II. Objectives and overview of the fifteenth session**

5. The main objective of the fifteenth session is to provide a platform for African ministers of the environment to deliberate on how to harness Africa’s natural capital – in essence its natural resources, vast biodiversity and diverse ecosystems – and how this could help the region in achieving sustainable development, creating jobs for the increasing number of young people and contributing to the eradication of poverty.
6. The fifteenth session will offer an opportunity to deliberate on substantive follow-up actions related to the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), held in June 2014, the outcome of the African Union summits and other major international and regional environmental meetings. In particular, deliberations will take place on the illegal trade in wildlife and the post-2015 development agenda, including the proposed sustainable development goals.
7. The ministers participating in the fifteenth session will review and analyse the outcomes of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Lima in December 2014. The ongoing climate change negotiations have entered a critical stage towards the 2015 legal agreement and the fifteenth session will provide an opportunity to review issues at stake for the continent and agree on a roadmap in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris later in 2015.
8. The ministers will also consider issues related to the Conference, including the development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes, the review of the environmental action plan for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the operationalization of the specialized technical

committees of the African Union and the implications for the Conference, and the draft work programme of the Conference. The ministers will also deliberate on the status and use of the general trust fund of the Conference. The latest records show that member States continue to contribute to the fund at a rather low rate, hampering the effective implementation of the activities of the Conference.

9. The expert group will bring a number of other issues to the attention of ministers for their consideration, such as the proposed African group of negotiators on biodiversity; the outcomes and analysis of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in South Korea in October 2014; the African Union's draft 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 to the Convention on Biological Diversity; the African Union's draft African climate change strategy; the Gaborone Declaration for sustainable development in Africa; enhancing the implementation and effectiveness of environmental law in Africa; and issues related to coastal and marine ecosystems.

10. The ministers are expected to adopt a declaration, decisions and key messages reflecting their discussions under the various items of the agenda.

### **III. Items of the provisional agenda**

#### **Item 1**

##### **Opening of the meeting**

11. The outgoing President, the Minister of Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania, will preside over the official opening ceremony and the Minister of Environment of Egypt will serve as Rapporteur. A detailed programme for the official opening ceremony will be developed in consultation with the host country and circulated prior to the opening of the meeting.

12. The outgoing President will introduce the Bureau members and the opening speakers, including the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

13. The outgoing President will invite a dignitary from Egypt to officially open the ministerial segment.

14. After the official opening of the meeting, there will be a short coffee break to allow the dignitary from Egypt to depart. Thereafter, the meeting will be re-convened and other speakers will be given the opportunity to make their opening remarks.

15. A vote of thanks to the representative of Egypt, high-level guests, the Executive Director of UNEP and other delegates will be offered by one of the outgoing Vice-Presidents.

#### **Item 2**

##### **Organizational matters**

###### **(a) Election of officers**

16. The outgoing President will present the outcome of the sub-regional consultations on filling vacant seats on the Bureau in the manner prescribed by the constitution of the Conference and will make his final remarks as President.

17. The outgoing President will invite the new President to assume his place on the podium and make his maiden speech. At that point, there will be an official handover of the presidency of the Conference from the United Republic of Tanzania to Egypt.

###### **(b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

18. The President will introduce the provisional agenda (AMCEN/15/1).

19. The President will introduce the draft programme of work as set out in annex II to the present document and draw attention to the list of documents for the ministerial segment set out in annex I.

###### **(c) Launch of the second *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report**

20. The second *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report will be launched at the fifteenth session of the Conference. The report provides an overview of the current and future needs for adaptation and options to meet these needs using different policy measures at the international, continental and national levels.

21. The ministerial segment will be adjourned and representatives will be invited to attend a dinner hosted by the Government of Egypt. It is expected that *Africa Mountains Atlas* will be launched during the event. The atlas recognizes the immense contribution of Africa's mountains to economic and human development and the need to value the ecosystem goods and services that mountains provide, which are essential to achieving the development agenda of the region.

### **Item 3**

#### **Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group**

22. The Chair of the expert group will present the report of the expert group segment, which will include a summary of the proceedings and the recommendations and draft decisions developed (AMCEN/15/EGM/L.1). The Conference may wish to take note of the report and consider the draft decisions under the appropriate agenda items.

### **Item 4**

#### **Ministerial policy dialogue**

23. The ministerial policy dialogue will focus on managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication; post-2015 activities, including sustainable development goals; illegal trade in wildlife and its implication for Africa; the 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; and matters related to the Conference.

##### **(a) Managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication**

24. Africa is blessed with abundant natural capital which is a critical economic asset. Key natural capital assets continue to be used in an unsustainable manner, however, meaning that the stream of economic and social benefits generated from these resources is being reduced over time. This state of affairs threatens the achievement of priority development goals, including poverty reduction, food security, improved health and job creation.

25. A key challenge is to turn this recognition into national actions that bring about a more sustainable and pro-poor use of natural capital. There is an urgent need to move the value of natural capital from the periphery to the centre of development planning. Ministers will be expected to deliberate on some of the key steps needed to achieve a more sustainable use of natural capital by taking into account policies and strategies to support the economic transformation and growth of Africa. The secretariat has prepared a discussion paper on the subject (AMCEN/15/3).

##### **(b) Post-2015 activities, including sustainable development goals**

26. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The future we want", inter alia, set out a mandate for the establishment of an open working group to develop a set of sustainable development goals. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has since concluded its work and has proposed 17 specific goals with 169 associated targets. In September 2014, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the working group's proposal as the main basis for negotiating the final sustainable development goals in the post-2015 development agenda. The environmental dimension is articulated across the whole sustainable development agenda.

27. In December 2014, the United Nations Secretary General issued a synthesis report on the post-2015 agenda, which brought together various elements needed for a successful agenda and provided a key contribution for the ongoing intergovernmental negotiation processes in the run-up to the September 2015 Summit.

28. The post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the sustainable development goals will be formally adopted by the General Assembly at the September 2015 Summit. Discussions will continue in the coming months, during which member States will be expected to negotiate the final parameters. It is envisaged that some technical proofing of the proposed targets will be required. There is also a need to ensure synergies between the negotiations and the Financing for Development process and technology facilitation. The third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July, is part of the effort to ensure synergies.

29. The continued engagement and active participation of African countries is therefore crucial to ensuring that the priorities and aspirations of the continent are taken on board in the lead-up to the September 2015 Summit.

*Illegal trade in wildlife and its implication for Africa*

30. One of the key issues discussed during the high-level segment of the United Nations Environment Assembly was the illegal trade in wildlife, focusing on the escalation in poaching and the surge in related environmental crime. In its resolution 1/1, the Environment Assembly adopted a ministerial outcome document calling for action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which has major economic, social and environmental impacts, contributes to damage to ecosystems and rural livelihoods, undermines good governance and the rule of law and threatens national security.

31. At its twenty-fifth ordinary session, held in Malabo from 20 to 24 June 2014, the Executive Council of the African Union considered the issue of the illegal wildlife trade and adopted a decision calling on the African Union Commission, with the support of the Conference and other relevant partners, to prepare an African common strategy on combating the illegal trade in wild flora and fauna and to report on the strategy to the Executive Council at its ordinary session in June 2015. The decision also welcomed the offer by Congo to host an international conference on the illegal trade and exploitation of wild flora and fauna in Africa. Ministers will be expected to deliberate on some of the elements to be considered for the strategy.

**(c) 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**

32. In its fifth assessment report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that the warming of the climate system is unequivocal and that since the 1950s many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and the oceans have warmed, amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea levels have risen and concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased. This gloomy picture calls for more serious and urgent global and national efforts to address climate change.

33. The global climate change negotiations have reached a critical phase in discussions on the agreement of a new legal instrument under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is expected to be adopted in 2015. It is crucial that the developmental priorities of Africa be considered in the agreement. The Conference will review and analyse the outcomes of the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Lima in December 2014. The Conference will consider issues at stake for the continent and agree on a roadmap in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris later in 2015.

34. The above state of affairs requires adequate preparations by Africa in order to enable the continent to effectively engage in the negotiations. The role of African leaders, ministers and the African group of negotiators will be crucial in this regard.

35. Mr. Nagmeldin Goutbi Elhassan, the Chair of the African group of negotiators, is expected to provide an overview of and update on the continuing climate negotiations. The secretariat has made available a report on the status of the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and emerging issues (AMCEN/15/4).

36. The Secretariat will give a presentation on the findings of the second *Africa's Adaptation Gap* report. The report provides an overview of the current and future needs for adaptation and options to meet these needs using different policy measures at the international, continental and national levels. .

## **Item 5**

### **Matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment process**

**(a) Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

37. Both the 1991 African Economic Community Treaty (Abuja Treaty) of the Organization of African Unity and the 2000 Constitutive Act of the African Union provide for the establishment of specialized technical committees as one of the organs of the continental body. By its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII), adopted in Malabo in 2011, the African Union Assembly requested that the committees be made operational from January 2013 and that all the sectoral ministerial conferences be abolished thereafter. At its fourteenth session, the Conference adopted a decision

inviting the Assembly of the African Union to reconsider the decision to abolish the sectoral ministerial conferences, including the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, to allow for further consultations and to request the establishment of a specialized technical committee on the environment, given the increasing importance of the environmental dimension in sustainable development in Africa and the world.

38. By its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.526 (XXIII), adopted in Malabo in June 2014, the African Union Assembly agreed that given the importance of the ongoing global consultations on the issue of environment and taking into account the need to defend the interests of Africa, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment be allowed to pursue the negotiations with concerned partners until they are concluded (AMCEN/15/REF/2). However, the long-term status of the Conference needs to be clarified (see AMCEN/15/EGM/6). A brief presentation will be made by the secretariat on this sub-item.

**(b) Development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes**

39. At its fourteenth session, the Conference agreed to develop and implement regional flagship programmes as a means to contribute to the effective implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20 in Africa. The decision was subsequently endorsed by the Executive Council of the African Union at the twentieth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2013. At subsequent working sessions, convened by the African Union and the Conference, draft concept notes were prepared for the respective flagship programmes and these were endorsed by the Conference during its fifth special session, held in Gaborone in October 2013 (AMCEN/15/REF/1).

40. At its fifth special session, the Conference also adopted a decision calling for the establishment of a steering committee within the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency to guide the overall development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes. The steering committee, on the other hand, was requested to establish such programme coordination committees and working groups or other relevant bodies as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the regional flagship programmes. A representative of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency will provide an update on the progress made in the development of the regional flagship programmes and proposed next steps.

**(c) General trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

41. The general trust fund of the Conference was established to provide full or partial financial support to the functioning of the Conference organs and the implementation of its activities. However, the most recent records show that member States continue to contribute to the fund at a rather low rate, hampering the effective implementation of the activities of the Conference. There is a pressing need therefore for ministers to make a critical assessment and provide further guidance on how contributions to the trust fund can be increased.

42. A representative of the secretariat will report on the status of the general trust fund and ministers may wish to agree on ways of increasing countries' contributions. A report on the status of the general trust fund is set out in document AMCEN/15/EGM/5/Rev.1.

**Item 6**

**Consideration of draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages**

43. The President of the Conference will introduce the agreed draft declaration, decisions and key messages.

**Item 7**

**Venue for the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

44. The sixteenth session of the Conference is to be hosted by a member State from Central Africa. In order to ensure better planning, the secretariat has proposed that the agenda, date and venue of the sixteenth session be agreed upon in the form of a decision. In the absence of any offers to host the session, the President will propose that the sixteenth session be hosted by UNEP in Nairobi, the seat of the secretariat.

**Item 8**

**Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment**

45. The Rapporteur will introduce the draft report of the ministerial segment.

**Item 9**

**Other matters**

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

47. It is proposed that any Government that introduces any other matter should provide the secretariat with a copy of a background document for circulation during the session. An English version of any such text must be made available. Any draft decisions submitted by Governments should also be made available in English.

**Item 10**

**Closure of the session**

48. The President will bring the session to a formal close after the customary exchange of courtesies.

## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Document</i>
<b>Working documents</b>	
AMCEN/15/EGM/1	Provisional agenda for the expert group segment
AMCEN/15/EGM/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda for the expert group segment
AMCEN/15/EGM/3	Report of the secretariat (2012–2014)
AMCEN/15/EGM/4	Draft work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the biennium 2015–2016
AMCEN/15/EGM/5	Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCEN/15/EGM/6	Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implication for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCEN/15/EGM/7	Enhancing the implementation and effectiveness of environmental law in Africa
AMCEN/15/1/Rev.1	Provisional agenda for the ministerial segment
AMCEN/15/1/Rev.1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda for the ministerial segment
AMCEN/15/3	Managing Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and poverty reduction
AMCEN/15/EGM/L.1	Report of the expert group segment
<b>Information documents</b>	
AMCEN/15/INF/1	Information note on the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCEN/15/INF/2	Information note by the United Nations Environment Programme on the illegal trade in wildlife: the environmental, social and economic consequences for sustainable development
AMCEN/15/INF/3	Information note by United Nations Environment Programme on environmental sustainability for human well-being in the post-2015 development agenda
AMCEN/15/INF/4	Regional African road map for the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production
AMCEN/15/INF/5	Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda
AMCEN/15/INF/6	Progress report on implementation of the regional flagship programmes
AMCEN/14/6	Report of the ministerial segment of the fourteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCEN/SS/V/2	Report of the ministerial segment of the fifth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
<b>Reference documents</b>	
AMCEN/15/REF/1	Concept notes of the regional flagship programmes for the implementation of Rio+20 outcomes
AMCEN/15/REF/2	African Union decision on the report of the Commission on the operationalization of specialized technical committees
AMCEN/15/REF/3	United Nations Environment Assembly resolution on illegal trade in wildlife

AMCEN/15/REF/4	African Union decision on illegal trade in wildlife
AMCEN/15/REF/5	United Nations Environment Assembly summary of ministerial dialogue on illegal trade in wildlife
AMCEN/15/REF/6	The Marrakech Declaration: A 10-Point Action Plan to Combat Illicit Wildlife Trafficking
AMCEN/15/REF/7	Declaration of the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade
AMCEN/15/REF/8	Approved proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals
AMCEN/15/REF/9	Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
AMCEN/15/REF/10	Gaborone Declaration for sustainable development in Africa
AMCEN/15/REF/11	African Union draft strategy on climate change
AMCEN/15/REF/12	Draft African Union access and benefit-sharing guidelines
AMCEN/15/REF/13	Draft framework for the coordination mechanism of the chapters of the African diplomatic corps

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## Annex II

### Programme of work for the ministerial segment, 4–6 March 2015

Wednesday, 4 March 2015

<i>Time</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Opening meeting</b>	
3–4 p.m.	Opening ceremony
4–4.15 p.m.	Coffee break
4.15–5 p.m.	Other invited speakers
5–5.15 p.m.	Adoption of the agenda
5.15–5.30 p.m.	Organization of work
5.30–6 p.m.	Launch of the second <i>Africa's Adaptation Gap</i> report
6 p.m.	Adjournment
6.30 p.m.	Official dinner hosted by the Government of Egypt Launch of the <i>Africa Mountains Atlas</i>

Thursday, 5 March 2015

<i>Time</i>	<i>Description</i>
9–9.30 a.m.	Item 3 Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group
<b>Ministerial dialogue</b>	
9.30–11 a.m.	Item 4 (a) Managing the natural capital of Africa for sustainable development and poverty eradication
11 a.m.–noon	Item 4 (b) Post-2015 activities, including sustainable development goals
12–1 p.m.	Illegal trade in wildlife and its implication for Africa
1–3 p.m.	<i>Lunch break</i>

**Ministerial dialogue (continued)**

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| 3.– 4.30 p.m. | Item 4 (c)<br>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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of and update on the ongoing negotiations</li><li>• Findings of the second <i>Africa's Adaptation Gap</i> report</li></ul>       |
| 4.30–6 p.m.   | Item 5<br>Matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;</li><li>(b) Development and implementation of the regional flagship programmes;</li><li>(c) General trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.</li></ul> |
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**Friday, 12 September 2014**

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**Closed meeting**

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| 9–9.30 a.m. | Presentation of President's summary on the ministerial dialogue                |
| 9.30–noon   | Item 6<br>Consideration of draft declaration, draft decisions and key messages |

**Closing meeting (open)**

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| Noon–12.15 p.m.  | Item 7<br>Venue for the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment |
| 12.15–12.45 p.m. | Item 8<br>Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment  |
| 12.45–1 p.m.     | Item 9<br>Other matters  |
| 1–1.30 p.m.      | Invited brief statements   |
| 1.30 p.m.        | Item 10<br>Closure of the session  |
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